



MAD MULLAHS, OPPORTUNISTS, AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS: THE VIOLENT PASHTUN CYCLE

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“Their superstition exposes them to the rapacity and tyranny of a numerous priesthood – “Mullahs,” “Sahibzadas,” “Akhundzadas,” Fakirs,” – and a host of wandering Talib-ul-ilms, who correspond with the theological students in Turkey, and live free at the expense of the people.”

Winston Churchill, The Story of the Malakand Field Force: An Episode of Frontier War, 1897

“He is forbidden colourful clothes or exotic music, for they weaken the arm and soften the eye. He is taught to look at the hawk and forget the nightingale. He is asked to kill his beloved to save the soul of her children. It is a perpetual surrender – an eternal giving up of man to man and their wise follies.

Ghani Khan, The Pathans, 1947

Invariably, when there is an emergence of extreme violence within Pashtun society, their clergy will be deeply involved. The exact opposite is true when the Pashtuns are at peace: the mullah class is quiet and remains within its mosques and madrassas. There is a long modern history of a pattern of opportunistic mullahs suddenly taking advantage of local or regional unrest to advance themselves over the traditional sources of tribal governance, maliks and khans. It is this pattern of conflict between opportunists and traditionalists that lies at the foundation of much of the violence seen among the Pashtuns. This violence appears to take the form of a cycle that repeats itself when local social and political circumstances permit the opportunist mullahs to gather enough followers to take control of their region. The period of the cycle depends on the underlying social or political stimulus that created the unrest in the first place. One thing seems sure: the displaced maliks eventually recover their status at the expense of the generally weaker mullah class and gradually restore order. In normal times, there seems to be a symbiotic relationship between maliks and the mullahs with the clergy often being responsible for announcing and implementing the decisions made by secular jirgas headed by maliks. Violence emerges within this time-tested system when mullahs attempt to gain power and authority over the traditional secular leadership of the Pashtun tribes.

It had made little real difference if the political or social instability the mullahs used to gain power resulted from the occupation of tribal lands by Sikhs, annexation by British and Indian soldiers, coups that overthrew the last of the traditional Durrani Pashtun rulers of Afghanistan, a series of assassinated communist rulers, a Soviet invasion, or the arrival of Americans and western Coalition forces charged with restoring order – and installing the maliks and khans to their proper positions as the ruling class. In all cases, the tension and instability resulted from resistance to the goal of imposing centralized secular control – maliks and khans – over a rural, tribal periphery where the uneducated population could be rallied quickly to the support of the emerging opportunistic mullahs claiming to represent God’s Will to people prone to believe their messages. Added to the susceptible population, these practiced orators frequently claimed a heritage derived from religious, respected ancestors and claimed an ability to perform miracles to demonstrate that they were the “instruments of God’s Will.” While focusing their supporter’s attention on the external factors threatening their tribal way of life, their first targets were the traditional, secular khans and maliks whose normal authority restrained the mullah class and kept them in their mosques and madrassas. The secular side of Pashtun governance stood in the way of the opportunists seeking to elevate their status and gain both funds and the power new positions would provide.

A current case study: Sufi Mohammad, his Son-in-Law, and His Pupil

Currently, this historical pattern is repeating itself during the unrest in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and its Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Lying adjacent to the chaos of Afghanistan, three of Pakistan's previously autonomous regions, Dir, Swat, and Chitral, were combined in 1975 into the current Malakand Division under the laws of Pakistan instead of the old local Sharia and Pashtunwali legal systems. Along with the new laws came the government's responsibility to resolve problems that were soon in coming. In 1975, a dispute between the national government and powerful local commercial interests over forest royalties led to demonstrations, violence, and negative local views of the national government emerged that soon allowed local religious groups to begin to assert themselves.

Into this volatile mix came Sufi Mohammad, a veteran of the Afghan Jihad against the Afghan communists and their Soviet allies after he returned to the region after the last Russian combat units departed Afghanistan in 1989 and he created the Tehreek- e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM, or Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Laws). After his experience with the successful war in Afghanistan – in most cases, led by mullahs –, Sufi Mohammad, a Maulana , (or senior cleric), appears to feel that the political environment in the NWFP was ready for expansion, but not necessarily for the Islamic law that he preached. Sufi Mohammad may have also seen that the time was ripe for personal advancement – and this was at the expense of the secular authorities of the region. While his overt agenda was obvious, Sufi Mohammad soon used his jihadist reputation, combat experience gained in opposing Afghanistan's communists and Soviet troops, and resources available through the Islamist network to build his organization into a regional power.¹ The question must remain open regarding his motivation. Was it to bring Islamic law to the region under his family's control or an opportunity for personal advancement?

These mullahs seldom act completely alone and generally draw trusted aides from their family and “student network” into the fray. In the case of Sufi Mohammad, he had nearby help who ran his TNSM organization following his his arrest by Pakistani authorities. His son-in-law, Maulana Qazi Fazlullah, is a 28-year old radical cleric who recently managed to rally sufficient support to force the Pakistani military to negotiate a truce in the Swat region of the NWFP.²

Sufi Mohammad's second-in-command, Bajaur's Maulana Faqir Mohammad, has managed to hold Sufi Mohammad's TNSM together and actually enlarge its power base during Sufi Mohammad's imprisonment. He and Fazlullah have entered into truce agreements with the new Pakistani government, but neither is trusted to follow through with commitments made. Both are expected to send portions of their forces into Afghanistan to fight, regardless of truce agreements made with Pakistan.³

With this current set of mullah opportunists, there is an additional factor to be considered. All need funding, arms, and training to continue to expand and with their clerical training, they all learned to speak Arabic. This allows them to tap into the same funding networks that allowed Afghan Wahabbi Jamil al-Rahman and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar to conduct operations against the communists and other jihadi networks. The money trail led back through Pakistan to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and TNSM is suspected of having similar connections. And given the presence of al-Qa'ida in the

1. Jamestown Foundation provides an excellent overview of Sufi Mohammad and his TNSM at <http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374119>.

2. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/07/swat_joins_talibanis.php

3. <http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369868>

region, TNSM leaders are suspected of facilitating their movements and providing sanctuary in return for money, training, and weapons.

Because of their international connections, these mullahs are suspected of belonging to a large extremist conspiracy seeking to force Sharia law throughout the Muslim World. But it is equally possible that they are still Pashtun opportunists, simply using al-Qa'ida in an effort to retain control of the region where they are located as they enrich themselves. Clues to their motivation may be found in the parts of Afghanistan's violent history.

A case study from the recent past: the Alizai's subtribe, the Hasanzai, and the "Akhundzadas."

Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, his father and uncles, also used their connections to religion to gain control of a similarly broad region, this time in Afghanistan's Helmand province. The confusing term, *Akhundzada* [son of a religious scholar]⁴ is an honorific used essentially as a surname by these members of the Hasanzai, an Alizai sub-tribe, as they rallied rural supporters to take control of most of Helmand province – and its lucrative opium trade.

Coming from Musa Qala district in northern Helmand Province where traditional tribal influences – and the maliks and khans – remained strong, Mullah Mohammad Nasim Akhundzada, Sher Mohammad's uncle, set the tone for Helmand's religious opportunists as he became a prominent commander in Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's Harakat-e-Inqilab-e Islami resistance group that opposed the Soviets and the Afghan communists. Anecdotal information suggests that he fought harder against other jihadi parties, particularly the guerrillas affiliated with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, than against the Soviets. But the opportunity to assert the power of the "Akhundzadas," his religious family descended from a notable Islamic scholar, an Akund, came with the arrival of the first of the communists.

The communists, or Khalqis, began to pressure the traditional land-owning class in 1978 soon after the last of the Durrani rulers, Mohammad Daud Khan, was overthrown. Under communist pressure, the khans left the region and their role was gradually usurped by the Akhundzada family and their tribal allies. As the communist government began to lose control of the countryside, Mohammad Nasim Akhundzada's mujahedin assumed more and more control.

A general analysis of this period done in the West looked at the families opposing one another, their jihadi party membership, but managed to miss the crucial variable – that scholars routinely ignored or misunderstood its significance. The contending leaders' connection to their subtribe and the status of each in the Alizai hierarchy were critical variables seldom entered into the analytical calculus. Here is an example of excellent work – to a point:

“...Over the following years, three families from among the Alizais of northern Helmand led the *jihad*. Apart from the Akhundzadas, the two other families were that of Abdul Rahman Khan and of Abdul Wahid, with the one important survivor among the *khans* being Abdul Rahman, whose family of well-established traditional *khans* was locked in a conflict with the Akhundzadas leading Abdul Wahid and Abdul Rahman Khan to join forces against the rising star of the Akhundzadas...”⁵

4. <http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft458006bg&doc.view=content&chunk.id=ch2&toc.depth=1&anchor.id=0&brand=eschol>; Edwards, David B., *Heroes of the Age*, pg. 134.

5. Antonio Giustozzi and Noor Ullah, *Tribes and Warlords in Southern Afghanistan, 1980-2005*, Crisis States Research Centre, pg. 10.

At the basic foundation of this conflict were the subtribe differences within the Alizai tribe. The Akhundzadas were responsible for driving out the khans, the traditional and secular powers within their particular subtribe, the Hasanzai, as this religious family took control of their subtribe and began to expand their “fiefdom” southward into parts of Helmand occupied by a wide variety of Afghan settlers having no local tribal affiliation. The growing power of this opportunist family began to threaten the position of two other northern subtribes with Akhundzada goal of undermining the subtribe of Abdul Rahman Khan and the Khalozai of Abdul Wahid Rais al-Baghrani. Unfortunately, the available literature fails to list Abdul Rahman Khan’s Alizai subtribe⁶, but it definitely was not Hasanzai or Khalozai. His power center was the town of Girishk and his followers later made a final stand there against the powerful Akhundzadas following the Nasim’s assassination near Peshawar, Pakistan, as powerful forces contended for the wealth of the opium trade.

The control of most of the opium trade provided the funds Mullah Nasim needed to control much of Helmand province. Mohammad Rasul, Sher Mohammad’s father, provided the religious justification for the Akhundzada participation in the opium trade:

“Islamic law forbids the taking of opium, but there is no prohibition against growing it. We must grow and sell opium to fight the war.”⁷

But others were also interested in obtaining the opium profits. Abdul Rahman Khan, in seeking support, allied himself with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s Hezb-e Islami (HIG) even though Hekmatyar had shown no desire to support traditional leaders, such as the land-owning khans. Fight after fight occurred over this “strategic material” and Mullah Nasim was eventually assassinated, presumably by Hekmatyar’s fighters. This resulted in a bitter battle between the Akhundzada supporters and Abdul Rahman Khan’s fighters at Girishk where Abdul Rahman Khan’s forces were defeated. Abdul Rahman subsequently left Afghanistan for France where he lived as an exile.

The conflict between the Akhundzada family and Abdul Wahid Rais al-Baghrani is much like that with Abdul Rahman Khan. Both Abdul Rahman and Abdul Wahid were traditional subtribe leaders at the head of their loyal followers as the religious “opportunists” challenged yet another traditionalist who viewed himself as the “rais,” or “director” of Helmand’s Baghran District. In this case, there was yet another, more important, tribal factor in operation as these two Alizai subtribes continued to fight. Abdul Wahid’s Khalozai subtribe was the “Khan Khel” or leading subtribe of the Alizai tribe and its status was being challenged by the Hasanzais under the Akhundzadas.

The “Khan Khel” is an important concept within the Durrani, if not all of the Pashtuns. In the case of the Barakzai, their Khan Khel, the Mohammadzai, provided Afghanistan’s most recent kings. The Saddozai, the Khan Khel of the Popalzai, also provided kings in the country’s earliest days. It is only natural to see conflict develop between Mullah Nasim Akhundzada’s family that took control of the Hasanzai subtribe and Abdul Wahid Rais al-Baghrani, the leader of the Alizai tribe’s Khan Khel, the Khalozai, as mullahs attempted to displace the last of the secular, traditional controls over the entire Alizai tribe.

The “warlords” of the Alizai tribe were also divided in the Jihadi parties they supported during the fighting against the Soviets. The Akhundzada family joined Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi’s Harkat and Abdul Rahman Khan allied his followers with HIG, but Abdul Wahid went in a third

6. A careful review of open source and classified materials revealed very little information regarding the subtribe affiliation for Abdul Rahman Khan. He was probably from Kajaki District and is reported to be either Ibrahimzai or Khalozai. This important factor has not been clearly determined during the last 20 years.

7. Orkand Corporation, Afghanistan’s Southern Provinces, 1989, pg. 165.

direction by entering the Jamiat-i Islami party of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, a party dominated by Tajiks. Their reasons for the choices made remain unknown, but it may be as simple as opposition to the selection made by the others as they joined separate parties because of their inter-tribal animosities – further splitting the Alizai tribe. But at the bottom of the animosities lay a single factor as religious “opportunists” challenged the secular dominance of the traditional khans, represented by both Abdul Rahman Khan and Abdul Wahid Rais al-Baghrani.

Curiously, the emergence of the “Akhundzada” family as religious opportunists appears to be an isolated occurrence within the region of Afghanistan dominated by the Durrani Confederation. While serving to illustrate the malik vs. mullah theme very well, these opportunists may have emerged from the chaos of the early communist period due to the presence of Helmand province’s lucrative opium industry. Opium was probably the reason for the fighting between Mohammad Nasim’s Harakat and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s HIG, represented in Helmand province by Abdul Rahman Khan. It was far more common to see religious opportunists challenging the authority of secular khans and maliks in regions of Pashtun territory where confederations did not exist, such as Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier Province and its Federally Administered Tribal areas.

Historical background: A pattern begins to emerge.

The periodic emergence of religious “opportunists” within Pashtun society frequently resulted in open warfare as this pattern of mullah vs. malik was repeated. Generally, there was a “provocation” that justified the mullah’s calls for violence, such as the rescue of the young Hindu girl who eloped – or was kidnapped – with a young Muslim man that provided a reason for the Faqir of Ipi to declare Jihad against the British. Similarly, Usama Bin Ladin followed a nearly identical pattern with his complaints about the presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Gulf War to establish his “provocation.” There were other opportunists who took immediate advantage of events to press forward their claims to leadership and the power that followed their success. Interestingly, the current problems seen within Pakistan’s Pashtun population developed long ago.

“About the year 1823 appeared one of those religious impostors on the arena of Yusafzai politics who have at all times and seasons beguiled the incredulous and simple Pathan race for their own ends, and have been the means of creating discord, up-heaving society, and fomenting rebellions which have been checked and crushed with the utmost difficulty. The career of Pir Tarik in the 17th Century, and that of Sayad⁸ Ahmad of Bareilly and the Akhuud of Swat in the 19th century, show but too clearly what single men are able to perform amongst the credulous Pathans. This man was Sayad Ahmad Shah⁹, a resident of Bareilly, who, after visiting Mecca-Kabul, suddenly appeared in the Peshawar district with about 40 Hindustani followers, and gave out that he had been commissioned to wage a war of extermination against the Sikhs and other infidels. It was just the time to

8. This paper uses the original rendering of this name.

9. Allen, Charles, *The Hidden Roots of Wahhabism in British India*, *World Policy Journal*, Summer, 2005. Allen wrote “The man credited with importing Wahhabism into India is Syed Ahmad of Rae Bareilly (1786–1831), who returned from pilgrimage in Mecca in 1824 to begin a holy war against the Sikhs aimed at restoring the Punjab to Muslim rule. But the argument that Syed Ahmad picked up his ideas of Wahhabi intolerance and jihad while in Arabia is untenable. The reality is that he had already accepted the basic tenets of Wahhabism long before sailing to Arabia, as a student of the Madrassa-i-Ramiyya religious seminary in Delhi and as a pupil of its leader, Shah Abdul Aziz, son of the reformer Shah Waliullah of Delhi. Shah Waliullah is the key figure here—a man as much admired within Sunni Islam as a great modernizer (the historian Aziz Ahmad rightly describes him as “the bridge between medieval and modern Islam in India”) as Abd al-Wahhab is reviled. The one, after all, was a follower of the tolerant, inclusive Hanafi school of jurisprudence and a Naqshbandi Sufi initiate, while the other belonged to the intolerant, exclusive Hanbali school, was viciously anti-Sufi and anti-Shia, and deeply indebted in his prejudices to the notorious fourteenth-century jurist of Damascus, Ibn Taymiyya—the ideologue whose reinterpretations of militant jihad are today cited by every Islamist. Yet these two key figures have far more in common than their respective admirers are willing to accept. Not only were they exact contemporaries, they almost certainly studied in Medina at the same period—and had at least one teacher in common.”

raise the spirits of the Yusufzais and other Pathans, which had been lowered by the crushing defeat they and the Peshawar sardars had received from Ranjit Singh at the battle of Nowshera, by religious exhortations. Followers speedily surrounded the new prophet, who was aided by Mir Baba of Sadum and the Khans of Zeyda and Hind. A numerous army, animated by a zeal of fanaticism, though wanting in discipline, was now at his disposal; his own Hindustani band had been increased by recruits till it numbered 900 men. In addition to this the Peshawar sardars, feeling the influence of the movement and hoping to break the Sikh rule, joined in the crusade against their oppressors.”¹⁰

The people the British referred to as “Hindustani Fanatics” in their reports had arrived in what was to become northwest Pakistan and they brought something with them that took deep root in the immediate region: Wahhabism. The British records continue:

“Sayad Ahmad had now seated himself so firmly as to take tithes from the Yusufzais, and his power was independent of the khans who derived their authority from him, amongst whom was Mir Balm Khan, of Sadhum. His army was not very numerous, composed chiefly of Hindustanis and fanatics, but when-ever [sic] required he could summon a host of Pathans. Looking upon the Durránis as enemies, he kept them constantly under alarm by threatening Hashtnagar, and inciting the Khaibaris to annoy them on that side, many of which tribe took service with him, being inimical to the Barakzai sardars, who had stopped the allowances formerly made them by the Saddozai Princes.”¹¹

At this point in Afghanistan’s history, the “Saddozai Princes” – from the Popalzai tribe that ruled the nation from its inception – had been replaced by the Khan Khel of the Barakzai tribe, the Mohammadzai. Interestingly, some of the hostility currently seen between the Government of Afghanistan where Popalzai Hamid Karzai serves as president and receives considerable support from the Durrani Confederation may have developed through the long ago influence of the leader of the “Hindustani Fanatics.” Soon they moved from Swat after settling in the remote village of Sitana.

“Sitana¹² is a village on the right bank of the Indus river, at the east foot of the Mahaban mountain, 13 miles above Topi. The village was originally made over by the Utmanzai to Syud Zanian, from Takhta-band in Buner. His descendants allied themselves to Sayad Ahmad, who settled in Sitana, and they aided him in all his ambitious struggles to establish a Wahabi empire of Muhammadan reformers on the Peshawar border. The ablest of the Sitana Syads was Syad Akbar, who, in 1849 or 1850 was chosen to be badshah or king of Swat.”¹³

Sayad Ahmad Shah established similar centers of supporters in British-ruled India before departing for the border region adjacent to Afghanistan. Patna¹⁴ was one of his most important centers and he received reinforcements from India during his campaigns against the Sikhs¹⁵ and as long as he remained the local spiritual authority he was accepted. Insisting that his puritanical Islamic orders be followed, he soon entered the secular domain by giving orders outside his religious authority:

10. Cavagnari, P.L.N., Selections From the Records of the Government of the Punjab, 1875, pg. 44.

11. *Ibid*, pg. 44.

12. Allen, *God’s Terrorists*. Sitana is located at Tarbela Lake and is nearly submerged.

13. Balfour, Edward, *The Cyclopedia of India and Southern Asia*, 1885, pg. 206.

14. There is a Pashtun connection here, as well. Hafizullah Emadi wrote in *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, pg. 29, that “The Indians referred to the Pashtuns as Pathans, a derivative of the word Patna, where a small number of them had settled in the Patna Region of India in the Fourteenth Century.” This curious connection puts Patna’s Pashtun population into a supporting role for the “Hindustani Fanatics.”

15. Spain, James W., *The Pathan Borderland*, pg. 88.

“It is impossible to say how long this priestly rule and anomalous power of the Sayad might have existed, or to what extent it might have swelled, holding in restraint a wild, brave and independent people, and overpowering, with its undisciplined hordes the regular armies of ruling chiefs in a manner which served to give some color to the popular superstition that he possessed the faculty of silencing guns and rendering bullets harmless, had he not, in the pride of his success, forgotten to be moderate, and ventured to impose upon his subjects a strict and oppressive regime, from which even their superstitious reverence revolted.

“Attended by but few followers at Panjtár, he avoided all stately pretensions, and maintained the appearances of a life passed in devotional exercises, fastings and prayer; but, with all this affectation of pious zeal, his mind was bent on intrigue and ambitious scheming. His paid retainers were scattered over the country, collecting fines and dues, and reporting the most trifling incidents to their master. Even the exactions and insolence of his soldiery might have been borne, but he now began to interfere with Pathan customs, and found too late that he was thereby exceeding his bounds. The Afghans have retained many peculiarities contrary to Muhammadan law and usage, and the strictly orthodox have been shocked at the open sale of their daughters carried on by them. Sayad Ahmad ordained that this practice should cease; and, to assist in its abolition, decreed that all Patháns should give their daughters in marriage at an early age, without receiving money, and if not then betrothed they might be claimed by their nearest relatives. This domestic interference, combined with the sayad’s growing demand for wealth, determined the Yusafzais to throw off the yoke, and at a secret council a day was appointed for the slaughter of his soldiers and agents throughout the country. The proposed massacre was spoken of in the interval under the phrase of threshing makai¹⁶, and a signal was concerted of lighting a bonfire when the work was to commence. It seems probable that the Peshawar sardars [Barakzai Durrani] were associated in the plot, for on the stated Friday, whilst the fires of Yusafzai notified the carnage enacting there, they slew Maulvi Mazhar Ali, the agent left with them, and Faizulla Khan, Hazárkhaníwála, who had aided the sayad on his visit to Peshawar, and by whose abandonment of them they had been compelled to make terms.

“Several thousands were slain on this occasion, and the excited Ahmad Shah escapes....”¹⁷

The new religious leader exceeded his religious authority by placing demands that had an impact on Pashtun culture and the Yusafzai tribe turned on him. But the violent Wahabbi sect had arrived among the Pashtuns of future Pakistan and more would be heard from them. Later, Sayad Ahmad Shah was killed fighting the Sikhs and punitive operations and raids conducted by the British forced the “Hindustani Fanatics” to retreat further into more inaccessible areas in Dir, Swat, and Bajaur. Driven from Sitani, they moved their colony to Chamarkand¹⁸ in Bajaur.

A British intelligence assessment on the “Hindustani Fanatics” prepared in 1895 concluded:

“...[I]t will be seen that during the past half century the Hindustanis have come into collision with us on no less than six occasions; each time they have suffered severely and been obliged to shift their residence, but, as was stated at the beginning of the report, they still remain a factor for mischief, although in a less degree than formerly, in any complication which may arise with the independent tribes on this part of the Punjab frontier.”¹⁹

16. Makai is a grain that is milled into flour.

17. Hastings, G.G., Report of the Regular Settlement of the Peshawar District of the Punjab, 1878, pg. 49.

18. Spain, pg. 88. Chamarkand is situated in Bajaur, FATA., Pakistan, its geographical coordinates are 34° 41' 23" North, 71° 13' 20" East and its original name (with diacritics) is Kūz Chamarkand.

19. Mason, A.H., *Report on the Hindustani Fanatics*, Simla. 1895, pg. 15.

The report was correct, except the part regarding “in a less degree than formerly” and within two years the British would have yet another uprising. The population of the Lower Swat region had been cooperating with local authorities and trade had developed between nearby Bajaur and adjacent areas. The Swatis were described as “contented.” A reporter for “The Times” reported on an abrupt change in their attitude:

“Yesterday, without the least warning, the attitude of the population of the Lower Swat Valley underwent a sudden change. The first news which reached Malakand was that a disturbance had taken place at Thana, near Chakdara bridge. A few hours later further news was received that the “mad mullah,” a priest who is apparently known locally, had gathered about him a number of armed men with the view of raising a *jihad*.”

The reporter concluded: “Malakand, which is a fortified position, is too strong to be stormed, but the garrison must be reinforced in order that the Swat Valley may be kept clear and that Chakdara may be relieved. Unless this be done, the rising may spread among the neighboring clans. The news of the attack quickly became known along the frontier, and it may possibly have an effect in Waziristan, stimulating the tribesmen there to action....”²⁰

The Times’ reporter made a very accurate prediction and the tribesmen were soon “stimulated.” The “mad mullah,” or Lewanai²¹ Faqir, claimed to have “been visited by all deceased Fakirs” and relied upon the usual assertions that bullets would be turned to water and that a pot of rice would feed multitudes. Mobilizing the Pashtuns against the British was a comparatively easy task for Saidullah²², the Lewani Faqir.

Adopting a page from the Shi’a, the Hindustani Fanatics remained together in spite of the loss of their charismatic leader by insisting that Sayad Ahmad Shah was not dead and he became their equivalent if the Persian’s “Hidden Imam.” Soon, Saidullah would be positioned to take advantage of this belief within a highly superstitious population and utilize the legend of the Fanatic’s Hidden Imam to good effect against the British, much like Sayad Ahmad had done against the Sikhs 70 years earlier.

Saidullah, the Lewanai Faqir, reappeared in the Swat region after an extended absence to proclaim that he had been visited by Sayad Ahmad, the Fanatic’s Hidden Imam, and that he had been instructed to drive the British from Swat and the Vale of Peshawar. But in failing to accomplish these goals, Saidullah was able to start a process that is still present in the region as he managed two accomplishments that remain imbedded within the Pashtun population. He was able to introduce the Hindustani Fanatic’s fanaticism into the region’s Pashtun population in what is Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier Province and its Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA. Second, Saidullah managed to inoculate the Pashtuns living there with the belief that their homeland was a special “domain of Islam” requiring defense against occupation by Infidels.

No one knows the reason for Sayad Ahmad Shah, his sons, and his Fanatic followers to depart from Patna in eastern India to return to the Yusufzai tribal region near the border with Afghanistan. But there had to be a particularly good reason for them to emigrate into a situation that was certain to include violence. Whatever this was, their motivation to return to what was probably their original homeland was sufficiently powerful to

20. Edwards, David B., *Heroes of the Age*, pp. 173-175.

21. Edwards, pg. 187. Edwards points out that the term *Lewani Faqir* also translated to “mad faqir,” but to the Pashtuns indicates a madness that is more of an “intoxication” while in close proximity to God.

22. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age*, pg. 187.

mobilize a logistics and reinforcement system that remained in Patna to sustain the Fanatics in the west. Periodic reinforcements and funds were sent from Patna to support the Fanatics for decades.²³

Specific locations may have great significance for primitive, tribal peoples and for the Hindustani Fanatics and their supporters, some place in the Swat region may have been viewed as a “Promised Land,” possibly an area from which they had been forced to migrate centuries before. There may have been a specific geographic location, possibly “Black Mountain,” involved in the Fanatic’s leadership being able to mobilize their followers. Special places rooted in tribal legends have been significant in past migrations, as the movement of the Fanatics probably had a similar attraction.

For example, the route the Jews took to their “Promised Land” included a segment from Mount Nebo to Jericho, a route that required the migrating Jews to cross the Jordan River. The straight route between Mount Nebo and Jericho passes through the location on the Jordan River where John the Baptist lived as a hermit and where Jesus was probably baptized. The reason this particular location on the river drew this level of religious significance? This was probably the crossing point where the Jews entered into Israel with the Arc of the Covenant, making this location special to many, if not most, Jews – much like the unknown “something” that drew the Hindustani Fanatics to Swat.

Charles Allen, in his book *God’s Terrorists*, explained another possible connection. During a period between his religious studies, Sayad Ahmad joined the mercenary cavalry band of Amir Khan of Tonk, where he may have functioned as a “chaplain” rather than a cavalryman. Given his future, it is equally possible that he served with a military group in order to gain experience and training for what he had planned for later in his career. His connection to the hill tribes in the vicinity of the Afghan border may be the subject of speculation, but Amir Khan was from the region near Bruner and Sayad Ahmad may have learned about the Yusefzai tribes from Amir Khan.²⁴

Regardless of their motivation, the courage of the Fanatics in the face of overwhelming odds when in battle and their fiery sermons to the indigenous Pashtuns appear to have made a lasting impact on the Pashtun residents of the region, making it relatively simple to invoke the name of the Fanatics’ “Hidden Imam” to initiate a significant revolt against the British.

Prayer, however, generally fails to turn British bullets into water, bread is seldom in an endless supply from a single basket, and Lewanai Faqirs seldom succeed in the long run. But in this case, he set the stage for yet another of the rebellious, opportunist mullahs. In order to connect this mullah to the 1897 fighting, the circumstances of the original Hindustani Fanatics must be reviewed.

Following the demise of Sayad Ahmad Shah, his lieutenants continued to feud with local Pashtun leaders and into the squabble stepped a well-intentioned religious student named Abdul Ghaffur who attempted to mediate and get negotiations started. The Pashtun leader agreed, but in the first meeting his throat was cut by the Fanatics who viewed him as an Apostate. Under these circumstances, negotiations quickly broke down and Abdul Ghaffur was soon discredited and shunned by his people.

After additional years of training, Abdul Ghaffur returned to Swat in 1840, was proclaimed an Akhund, or “saint,” and he used his piety and knowledge of Islam to become the most respected leader in Swat, the Akhund of Swat. He soon anointed the secretary of the late Sayad Ahmad Shah

23. Allen, Charles, *God’s Terrorists: The Wahabbi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad*, pg. 14, has a discussion of support received from Patna.

24. Allen, *God’s Terrorists*, pp. 35-36, 81.

as the Badshah, or King of Swat, and made him the ruler of the Swatis and the nearby Bunerwals in an attempt to stop their feuding. This connection was difficult for many people to comprehend as Abdul Ghaffur was a Naqshbandi Sufi and he had proclaimed the Fanatic, Sayad Akbar Shah, now to be the local ruler.

The context of the period helps understand this political move by Abdul Ghaffur. According to the Akhund's grandson, the tribes wanted a ruler capable of preventing a British take-over, but if the Akhund had selected any local the other tribes would have resented this. As a result, an outsider was selected to lead the feuding tribesmen against the British.²⁵

The results of this "alliance" initiated a system of belief that the Lewanai Faqir reinforced a generation later as he also opposed the British. The Swat region was shown to be a special place for Muslims, dar ul-Islam²⁶ – an abode of peace – from which a great jihad would be launched against the infidels occupying Muslim lands. Following a period of calm, war was soon initiated again as the Fanatics and their allies lost again, but their Pashtun supporters continued to absorb the concept of "jihadism" and reinforced the belief that their land was uniquely suited as a base for the expansion of true Islam.²⁷ These were facts that the Lewanai Faqir used to great advantage a generation later in Swat as the Hindustani Fanatics and the local Naqshbandi Sufis began to blend into what appears to be a hybrid branch of Islam – a very violent one.

David Edwards provides a warning for today's politicians in his review of the Lewanai Faqir's insurgency:

"A number of the local chiefs who were on the British payroll spoke out against him, but their exertions seem to have helped rather than hindered his cause. The recent introduction of a policy of providing allowances for local leaders seems to have created resentment and suspicion in the populace, and the efforts of allowance holders to detain the Fakir appear to have crystallized these resentments and suspicions and drawn the people to a leader who stood ready to oppose all aspects of colonial intrusions into the region."²⁸

Enter Hadda Mullah

The Akhund of Swat had a special student, a murid named Najmuddin and later known as the "Hadda Mullah," and he would oppose the Afghan king, a man referred to as the "Iron Amir," Abdur Rahman, as he also fought the British. Najmuddin picked up where his student, the Lewanai Farir, also referred to as the "Sartor Faqir," left off after fighting the British in previously described conflicts.

David B. Edwards, in his excellent "*Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines of the Afghan Frontier*," described the Hadda Mullah: "The Mulla

25. Allen, *God's Terrorists*, pg. 114.

26. The "Abode of Peace" is a location where Muslims can practice their faith freely. The lands outside of this "Abode" is the "dar ul-Harb," the Land of War. The Fanatics and their Pashtun allies led by opportunistic mullahs would make the most of this contrast.

27. Other opportunist leaders, such as Osama Bin Laden, would later notice the religious aspects of the tribalism among this particular group of Pashtun tribes and their view of "jihadism" and that their lands were the dar ul-Islam from which the great jihad would emerge. This mindset appears to remain deeply ingrained within the independent Pashtun tribes.

28. Edwards, David B., *Heroes of the Age*, pg. 185.

of Hadda was portrayed as an exemplary figure of a kind rarely encountered any more.”²⁹

After receiving the Akhund’s permission, Najmuddin began to teach all four Sufi orders at his center near Jalalabad. It was through his connection to the Akhund that Najmuddin, the future Hadda Mullah, would become well respected in the region. Edwards noted that the son of a nameless Akhund, Najmuddin, was soon viewed as the spiritual son of the Akhund of Swat.³⁰ Connected to all four Sufi orders in the region, as well as to the remaining Fanatics, the Hadda Mullah was soon positioned to influence a very large number of people.

As with the original Hindstani Fanatics, Hadda Mullah selected the location where he would establish his religious center for maximum impact. In this case, the connection is known. Hadda is located a short distance from the city of Jalalabad in an area controlled by the Afghan government, and its Iron Amir, but Nasmuddin could easily relocate eastward a short distance into British India and the friendly Pashtun tribes living there. Additionally, his Sufi center was built on the remains of an old Buddhist temple and Hadda Mullah demonstrated that he had power over idols used to build his mosque and religious center.³¹

Eventually, Hadda Mullah was involved in a dispute with Amir Abdur Rahman – who tried to convince members of the Afghan clerical establishment to declare Hadda Mullah a Wahhabi – and the besieged Mullah fled east into Shinwari territory and later into Mohmand tribal lands. He was soon to play a role much larger than did his student, the Lewanai Faqir, who lacked the resources required to spread the insurgency beyond the span of control represented essentially by his voice. Hadda Mullah was far better prepared to act than was his murid.

As Hadda Mullah, Najmuddin was located near a large city, Jalalabad, and he had access to a continuous flow of visitors seeking religious advice and guidance. In his role as leader of the Sufi center where all the schools of Sufi thought in the region was presented, he had access to a broad swathe of tribal members on both sides of the Afghan-British India border. Whether this was Najmuddin’s original intent or serendipity will never be known, but Hadda Mullah was able to move against British interests with an insurgency having an organizational structure not seen previously in the Pashtun tribal region.

Najmuddin capitalized on his religious reputation and personal charisma to rally distant tribes to his war, but the “Sufi network” between distant religious centers allowed him to rally even the most distant tribes to his standard.

Mohmand tribal territory was ideal for his centralized strategy. While there, he was safe from British reprisal operations and he could communicate freely with his “spiritual cousins,” the descendents of the Akhund – the Mianguls – and other former Students of the Akhund of Swat. Again, David Edwards provides the necessary insight:

“In addition, the Mulla also maintained contact with several leaders who, like himself, had some prior connection with the Akhund of Swat, including the sons and grandsons of the Akhund, the so-called Mianguls of Swat, and the Palam Mulla of Dir who, like Hadda Sahib, was one of

29. Edwards, *Heroes*, pg. 129.

30. Edwards, *Heroes*, pg. 137.

31. During recent history, another opportunist mullah took control of Hadda. Yunis Khalis lived where Hadda Mullah taught and Hadda Mullah’s legacy brought recognition to Khalis he might not have attracted in a lesser known location.

the deputies of the Akhund. The Mulla also drew heavily upon his own deputies (the name of Sufi Sahib of Barikot is mentioned most often and prominently in British dispatches) for assistance in rallying support from inside Afghanistan, and he also kept in frequent communication with other religious leaders like himself, such as Mulla Said Akbar and the Akka Khel Mulla (the principal religious leaders of the Afridis) and the Karabagh Mulla, the dominant religious figure in Kohat District.”³²

Like the other mullah revoluts, Hadda Mullah’s violent campaign against the British, however, soon fell apart. There were a variety of reasons, most of which were logistical, as tribal expectations of the Mullah’s promises to “provide” food in the quantities he promised his followers failed to develop. Ammunition was also a problem. Military defeat was followed by monsoon rains that damaged the food and other supplies – as well as Hadda Mullah’s reputation as his followers drifted away. But the “opportunist mullah network” was far from relinquishing their goals.

Hadda Mullah’s aggressiveness in his effort to consolidate his control into areas adjacent to Swat, and into Swat, was to have a lasting effect within the region. Once he supported the claim of a local leader, Umra Khan, to the throne of Chitral, the descendents of the Akhund of Swat, the Mianguls, began to separate themselves from the Hadda Mullah’s supporters. According to the excellent analysis by Sana Haroon:

“This split ended the possibility of a Swat amirate controlled by Hadda Mullah and a religious base in that area. But Hadda Mullah still managed to successfully consolidate his authority in the Tribal Areas.”³³

This separation remains in effect today and the region surrounding Swat seems to be an entirely distinct operational area than in South Waziristan.

Haji Sahib of Turangzai Takes His Turn

As has been explained, the opportunist mullahs need some form of foreign provocation to rally the tribes to a common goal. Following the end of World War I, the Greeks and their western allies provided evidence of their enmity toward the Muslim World and, once again, mullahs began to rally their followers.

The final treaty of the First World War was between the Greeks, formerly a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire that won its independence around the time that Sayad Ahmad Shah was relocating his Hindustani Fanatics to Swat, and Turkey – all that remained of the Ottoman Empire and the seat of the Caliphate that loosely held the reins of the Muslim Ummah. While the Turks fared better than the Greeks in this final series of negotiations, they made no attempt to claim their former Arab provinces and the seat of the Caliphate was lost due to the modernizing Turks. This perceived attack on the Muslim religious establishment created a reaction among the Pashtuns, as the opportunist mullahs began to work their followers into the usual frenzy and one of Hadda Mullah’s lieutenants was in the epicenter of the developing unrest. An explanation in special English is provided at Khyber.org:

“The detachment of Greece from the Ottoman Caliphate in Turkey resulted in wide-scale reprisals from Muslims in Afghanistan, the Frontier,

32. Edwards, *Heroes*, pg. 194.

33. Sana Haroon’s *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*, pp. 50-51.

and India. Widespread protests were made throughout the region. An open rebellion was launched against the British by all the tribes from Chitral to Waziristan. Haji Sahib Turangzai also took part in an armed struggle under the leadership of Hadda Mullah Sahib when British cantonments at Malakand and Chakdarra were attacked in 1897. He fought the enemy at the fronts of Malakand, Batkhela, Pir Kali, and Chakdarra. After the demise of Hadda Mullah Sahib in 1902, *Maulana Muhammad Alam* was appointed his Khaleefa [Caliph]. Maulana Muhammad Alam was also known as *Sufi Alam Gul*. After this great loss, Haji Sahib Turangzai gave a renewed pledge to Hadda Mullah Sahib's new Khaleefa. In return, Sufi Sahib gifted [presented] him with his sword and turban and appointed him his Khaleefa as well."³⁴

In addition to Sufi Alam Gul, a key mullah from Bajaur, the Babra Mullah, who was another murid of Hadda Mullah, was instrumental in convincing the Haji of Turangzai to oppose the British.³⁵

The Haji of Turangzai, actually named Fazal Wahid, participated in the successful revolt against the British that was initiated by the Lewanai Faqir and continued by Hadda Mullah. In spite of the size of the general uprising of the tribes supporting these latest revolting mullahs, their efforts failed.

By 1908, the Haji of Turangzai was back in Mecca a second time and when he returned to the frontier he had a new strategy to oppose the British. He began to open schools – madrassas – in order to keep the British colonial authorities from indoctrinating young Pashtuns.

His grandson, Ghani Khan, stated in an interview:

“...[T]hey had founded about 30 or 40 schools with the Haji of Turangzai. There was a crowd of them, and the Haji of Turangzai was one of them, my father was one of them, they were mostly priests (mullahs). And they said that we have to educate the children to be anti-British from childhood. In school they used to make us read ... Ye Badsha Hamara (this King of Ours, a pro-British chant), this sort of thing. They said that from childhood they (the British) teach them loyalty and everything. But we should make a school where we can produce revolutionaries and workers. They made this one big school in our village and little schools here and there and everywhere, usually in the mosques. And the British attacked them, so my father and the Haji of Turangzai, everybody ran away (to the tribal areas of NWFP, outside British jurisdiction). The Haji of Turangzai was a very handsome man. There was a Pir (holy man) who had died in the tribal territory, and as usual in his old age he had taken a beautiful young girl, and he died, of it I suppose. So then he left this Sajjada (inherited landed estates belonging to a holy man), his whole Pirhood and everything, to this beautiful young widow. And there arrived the Haji of Turangzai. They were related to us. He was a dacoit and that sort of thing in those days. Very violent as it was usual in those days with Hashtnagar Khans at that age. These people had nowhere to stay, these political refugees. So they told Haji Sahib to marry the girl. She fell in love with him as soon as she saw him. They said become a Pir here and we will have at least somewhere we can stay. So Haji Sahib married her. Then he really gave up all the evil deeds when he saw all these people coming and kissing his hand and feet and offering him gifts. He went to Mecca, and became a Haji, and became famous as the Haji of Turangzai. Everytime we started a civil disobedience or something here against the British, he would tell the Mohmand tribesmen whose Pir he was, “Come on, the doors of heaven are open!” And they would come and start shooting in all this area. And then the Afridis (in Khyber District) might also get infected and they would start shooting, popping here and there.”³⁶

34. <http://www.khyber.org/people/sarfaroshan/HajiSahibTurangzai.shtml>

35. <http://www.khyber.org/people/sarfaroshan/SyedAmeerJanBabrhayMullah.shtml>

36. <http://www.afghanan.net/poets/ghaniinterview.htm>

By the end of his activities, he had opened 120 madrassas for young Pashtuns. Later he was arrested by the British, released for a lack of evidence against him, and in 1913 the colonial authorities attempted to gain his support by having him preside over the dedication of what is now Islamia College in Peshawar.

Again and again, the Haji of Turangzai was involved in violent acts against the British. In 1927 he called for a large jirga at his home in Ghizaibad where he hoped to draw the more peaceful lowland tribes into attacks, but they were receiving British subsidies and were warned that they would be bombed like the Haji's Lashkar of hill tribes if they participated in the latest revolt.³⁷

But the Haji of Turangzai was the key node on history's time line when the Afghan-Pakistan frontier is considered. While originally a dacoit, or a member of a robber gang, his travels were the key to his life – and much of the continuing extremism within Pakistan's Pashtuns.

Trained in the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya tradition initially, he went to Deoband and subsequently traveled with a group from there in their trip to Mecca. In Mecca, he met with Haji Imdadullah, a Wahhabi leader, and promised to take up the movement of Sayyad Ahmad to continue to oppose the British. But when he returned to the border region and sought a spiritual teacher, he found Hadda Mullah. Having sworn *bayt*, or fealty, to both Imdadullah and Hadda Mullah and having been exposed to the Deobandi approach to Islam while he was in contact with Maulana Mahmudul Hasan at Deoband, the Haji of Turangzai became unique in the religious lines that created so many “disturbances” on the Frontier³⁸. In addition to his contact with Deobandi and Wahhabi trends in Islam, he was taught the broadest of Sufi approaches by Hadda Mullah who received permission from the Akhund of Swat to teach all four prominent Sufi schools from Hadda. The Haji of Turangzai became even more of a “hybrid” than was Hadda Mullah and he was under the influence of Wahhabi Sayyad Ahmad and the Deobandis. And so were the people who followed him, those same superstitious Pashtuns Winston Churchill commented on during the Malakand campaigns.

Haji's Three Sons and a “Son-in-Law?”

The Haji of Turangzai had three sons, also political activists who were identified by confusing identical names, Badshah I, Badshah II, and Badshah III.³⁹ Of the three brothers, Badshah I appears to have been the most active and he participated in Lashkar formation and fighting on numerous occasions. Information is available to suggest that he was supported behind the scenes by the Afghan monarch and was active in working against the rulers of Swat and their allies. The Haji of Turangzai died in 1937 and his movement gradually began to lose its potency. It began to fail politically following the formation of Pakistan, but it left behind a unique legacy of Sufism blended into both Wahhabism and Deobandism that persists in the region.

One aspect of the Haji of Turangzai's campaign against the British continued following his death and remains active in the Northwest Frontier Province. His reported “son-in-law,” Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was active in the Pashtun Peace Movement that he created. While he was widely reported

37. See Sana Haroon's *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*, pg. 142, for a detailed study of this phase of the Haji of Turangzai's life.

38. Haroon, *Frontier*, pg. 55.

39. Haroon, *Frontier of Faith*. Sana Haroon has a good review of the Badshahs throughout her book.

to be the son-in-law of the Haji of Turangzai, this was likely the result of effective British propaganda during the period.⁴⁰ But regardless of the connection, Ghaffar Khan was a highly effective leader and his Red Shirt Movement has had a continuing impact on Pakistani and regional politics.

Hussain Haqqani provides a good summary of the Red Shirts:

“Although Muslim, Pashtuns generally sided with the anti-British nationalism and were late, and reluctant, in embracing the Muslim separation of the All-India Muslim League’s campaign for Pakistan. Pashtun leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan launched the Khudai Khidmatgaar (Servants of God) movement, known as Red Shirts because of their uniform, and supported the Indian National Congress. So close was the association between the Red Shirts and the Congress that Ghaffar Khan became known as the “Frontier Ghandi.” Even in the 1946 election that led to the emergence of the Muslim League as the representative of the Muslims throughout British India, Ghaffar Khan’s Red Shirts and the Congress remained the dominant political force among Pashtuns and controlled the elected provincial government on NWFP.

“When the creation of Pakistan appeared inevitable, Ghaffar Khan demanded the Pashtun areas be allowed independence as Pashtunistan, a demand that was not accepted by the British. A referendum on whether to join Pakistan was subsequently held in NWFP – a referendum that Ghaffar Khan and his supporters boycotted – and participating voters chose inclusion in Pakistan.”⁴¹

And while Ghaffar Khan’s Pashtun movement chose poorly by retaining its association with one of India’s early political parties and pressed for an independent Pashtunistan rather than join Pakistan, his legacy is also nearly as powerful on the frontier as is that of his relative, the Haji of Turangzai. Today’s Awami National Party is the direct descendent of the Red Shirt movement and it’s leader, Asfandiyar Wali Khan, is Ghaffar Khan’s grandson and leader of the party.⁴² The party recently gained control of the Northwest Frontier Province’s parliament and has displaced the coalition of religious parties that controlled the province prior to the election.

The Faqir of Ipi Appears on the Scene

His real name was Mirza Ali Khan and he was a Pashtun from Waziristan. His religious studies were unremarkable for the period, but he was soon to emerge as a crucial figure in the long, lingering revolt against the British. Additionally, he seemed to emerge from a background that was unaffiliated with either the near-hereditary resistance that emerged through either Hadda Mullah or the Akhund of Swat. In that regard, Mirza Ali Khan was quite unusual.

A careful evaluation of his religious training, however, revealed an interesting connection. His *Pir*, or religious guide, was Naqib of Chaharbagh who operated a madrassa in the vicinity of Jalalabad, Afghanistan, and was one of two Jalalabad-area madrassas affiliated with the Naqshbandi-Mujeddediyya school that was also connected with Hadda Mullah.⁴³ Mirza Ali Khan was also connected to the Hadda Mullah, but more indirectly

40. Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, *Tendulkar, Dinanath Gapal*, 1967, pg. 237; see <http://www.afghanan.net/poets/ghaniinterview.htm> for corroboration that the Haji of Turangzai was a relative of Ghaffar Khan.

41. Haqqani, Hussain, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, 2005, pg. 161.

42. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asfandiyar_Wali

43. According to Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, pg. 163 and Sana Haroon’s *Frontier of Faith*, pg. 59, the Hazrats of both Chaharbagh and Butkhak were affiliated with the Hadda Mullah. This connects the Faqir of Ipi to Hadda Mullah through one of the mullah’s affiliates, Naqib of Chaharbagh.

than those opportunist mullahs preceding him.

Like the other revolting mullahs, Mirza Ali Khan, now the Faqir of Ipi, reacted to a provocation that allowed him to focus the anger and frustration of the region's Pashtun tribes against the British colonial authorities. In February 1937, a young Hindu girl was kidnapped by a young Pashtun and taken to Waziristan where she converted to Islam, took the name "Islam Bibi," and married her abductor while the British Political Agent in Waziristan pressed the tribes for her release.

Troops from the Frontier Corps Tochi Scouts surrounded the village where the girl was held as an additional show of force in the form of British attack aircraft circled overhead. While the tribal elders were negotiating with the elders, the British were able to gain access to the girl and moved her to safety. But the implied insult created by rescuing the girl while negotiating with the elders was too much for the tribesmen who soon raised two large lashkars that attacked the British and their supporters. Into this tribal anger appeared an equally enraged Faqir of Ipi and his cries for jihad.

Soon the British forces at their Miram Shah and Mir Ali forts were surrounded and air strikes were ordered against the tribesmen to break the pair of sieges. The revolt continued and by June 1937 it had spread through all of Waziristan as combined air and ground attacks were required to break Pashtun insurgent formations.

The Faqir's insurgency continued year after year as neither side could find a way to win, but like Ghaffar Khan's political secession movement and its Red Shirts, support for the Faqir of Ipi's revolt began to recede once Pakistan became a reality. After 1947, Pakistani Air Force formations replaced those of the British to conduct bombing attacks as sporadic outbreaks of tribal violence continued into the 1950's.

But the Faqir of Ipi never surrendered – nor was he reconciled with the new rulers of Waziristan, Pakistan. His supporters eroded gradually over time as the Waziristan rebellion slowed to an end. The Faqir remained in hiding near the border with Afghanistan where he died on April 16, 1960 – bringing an end to the direct link to the Hadda Mullah and his connections to the Hindustani Fanatics who created the religious culture where the northern Pashtuns accepted an environment that allowed religious violence and fanaticism to thrive.⁴⁴

Conclusion: There are two diverging trends within the religious extremists in northwestern Pakistan and, once again, the general future might be predicted from the past. The separation of the two groups began long ago with the Hadda Mullah's goal to absorb Swat and its allied "statelings" into an enlarged base of operations at the expense of the descendants of the Akhund of Swat. Currently, one line of these extremists, Sufi Mohammad, Fazlullah (his son-in-law), and Faqir Mohammad seem to be seeking to re-establish the control of Swat once held by the Akhund and his family. They are also planning to institute Sharia, rules that will gradually come into conflict with Pashtunwali that is administered by secular authorities, the khans and maliks.

To the south, Baitullah Mahsud is seeking to capture the legacy of the extremist mullah line that separated from the Akhund of Swat and coalesced through the Hadda Mullah and to the Haji of Turangzai and his three sons. It was not an accident of geography that placed Baitullah's

44. There are numerous books and articles available regarding the Faqir of Ipi. See Alan Warren's *Waziristan, the Faqir of Ipi, and the Indian Army: The North West Frontier Revolt of 1936-37* (Oxford, 2000).

deputy in Ghaziabad and inside the Haji of Turangzai's mosque and shrine to state conditions for negotiations with the Pakistani government. His goal involves the mobilization of additional Pashtun followers through invoking the legacy of a dead mullah who opposed the British and foreign rule for much of his life.

But in the end, both Sufi Mohammad and Baitullah Mahsud will see their causes advance as long as they only invoke religion. As these religious extremists seek to gain control over tribal activities normally regulated by tribal custom and Pashtunwali, they will gradually lose support of their followers and begin to follow the pattern set by Sayad Ahmad Shah and the Hadda Mullah as their power starts to erode. The population will slowly shift back to malik and the government control over time. This process may be delayed by through the presence or threatened presence of "infidels" – American and Coalition forces – and can be hastened through the delivery of rural development projects channeled through the maliks while disguising the source of the support.

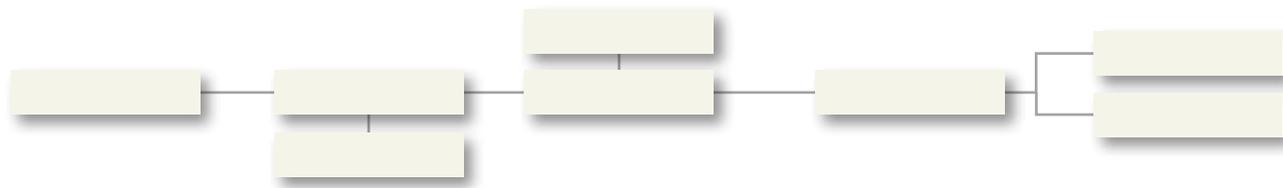
The current "opportunist" mullahs learned lessons well from the success of Mohammad Nasim Akhundzada and the rest of his family – to include his nephew, Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, who moved close to the secular government of Hamid Karzai and recently served as Helmand Province's governor. The opportunist's strategy remains simple: Rid the region of the traditional leaders, the maliks and khans that normally suppressed their power, and they can control the tribes themselves. It is no accident that Sufi Mohammad, his "religious cartel," and Baitullah's Mahsuds are attacking maliks and khans in rural Pakistan.



TRIBAL ANALYSIS CENTER

Traditional anthropological research conducted among tribes inhabiting remote areas where insurgents and criminals operate has become increasingly difficult to implement. Studies carried out among people living in small-scale societies now are nearly impossible due to the physical dangers associated with the civil and religious unrest found in those areas. Swat, for example, has become so dangerous that Frederick Barth's studies only could be repeated at the risk of the investigator's life. Similar research is not feasible among Burma's Rohingya tribes located on both sides of the border with Bangladesh, as well as with the Pashtuns in Afghanistan's interior and within Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where even Pakistan's army enters with reluctance.

Given the difficulties of conducting direct fieldwork in conflictive areas, the Tribal Analysis Center utilizes an indirect approach. Using multidisciplinary research, we seek to collect and analyze data obtained from a wide variety of sources, both current and historical. In the absence of new ethnographic fieldwork to update our base of knowledge, the Tribal Analysis Center compiles and summarizes existing research and documents on tribal societies, combining this material with contemporary press reports and articles. We assume that much can be gleaned from well-informed observers who are not anthropologists, ranging from journalists and travelers to government officials.



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