**The Islamist Historical Connection with the Swat Insurgency**

If one carried out an analysis of the main reasons for the growth and continuation of insurgency in Swat, some obvious factors come to notice that definitely have a bearing on the future and explain how the insurgency will finally play out? One thing can be stated without any doubt that such movements are not external to us. They have their roots within Pakistan.

All that has happened is that an external stimulus provided the last destabilizing particle on top of the heap of deficits and faults that finally moved the pile into an avalanche.

According to this analysis the following important other factors in the field of history, governance and economics combined to create and drive the conflict in Swat. They continue to remain and will rekindle militancy unless reforms are instituted:-

• This part of the sub-continent was selected by the faction of concerned Muslims of the sub continent who believed in Wahabism and wanted to launch a Jihad against the Sikhs in the KP and later the British who took over the suzerainty from them. This call for Jihad originated after the East India Company won the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The Indian Muslims through the family of Shah Waliullah began a movement to protect Islam in India. The center of this movement was in Patna in Eastern India.

• According to this narrative, the leaders of the movement decided that they would provide the leadership while the Pakhtuns of the Frontier will do the fighting against the Sikhs and later the British. Syed Ahmed who was the leader of the Patna Jihadis traveled with a band of fighters to the Frontier via Sind, Baluchistan and Afghanistan before entering Peshawar via the Khyber Pass in 1826.

• They established Jihadist camps at various places in KP including Sitana in Hazara and in the Buner mountains of Malakand. They fought against the Sikhs and British in different areas including Peshawar, Swat, Buner and Hazara. They practiced a Wahabist version of Islam and were the followers of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya that is based on Salafi doctrine that believed in the Islam as practiced by the first three generations of Muslims. Ibn Taymiyya defined Jihad as “unrelenting struggle against all who stood in the way of Islam’s destiny.”

• The theory of Jihad and Salafism was institutionalized at Deoband seminary near Delhi. It is one of the most effective institutions that taught Salafist Jihad. One of Deoband’s most renowned students was Maulana Mahmood ul Hasan. He founded Samaratut Tarbiyat in 1877 after graduating from Deoband and that became the training school for fedayeen. Pakistan’s Jui (Jamaat Ulema Islam) and its leaders Fazlur Rehman and Samiul Haq remain the personification of Jihad in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

• Interestingly, when Amir Abdur Rehman became the Ruler of Afghanistan he too promoted the application of Jihad against the British. Thus the Pathans of Afghanistan and Pakistan act in unison. It is not by accident that the Jui led the creation of the Jihadi fighting groups in Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion of December 1979. They were the teachers of the Afghan Taliban and remained very close to Bin Laden. They worked closely with the Saudi cleric Bin Baz who spread the influence of Salafism and spent $ 70 billion on Islamist missionary work globally– he helped establish 10,000 Madressahs in Pakistan by assisting the Jui and other parties.

• Abdullah Azaam the savant of Salafist Jihad and Bin Laden’s mentor was a part of this network. His definitive Fatwa, “Defense of the Muslim Land,” issued in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, is a masterly exposition of the duty of Muslims when confronted with invasion of their land. This Fatwa is as relevant today for many Islamists as it was 1979.

• It may be noted that it was the MMA coalition that ruled KP from 2002-2007 the Jui was its major component. They were the teachers of Jihad. It is indeed strange that the security planners did not see this link. That the insurgency in both Pakistan and Afghanistan grew into a formidable problem is mainly due to the influence of the Jui. Thus from the viewpoint of Salafist Islam Jui performed an outstanding service but in doing so the Pakistani state was de-stabilized and many people lost their lives and properties.

• It appears that the Jui wants to emerge as the only force in the Pakhtun belt along both sides of the Durand Line that separates Afghanistan from Pakistan. Recently a Jui legislature in the KP assembly called for abolition of family planning as it was preventing the birth of more Jihadis and was thus un-Islamic.

• As noted before, Swat was radicalized two hundred years ago, when Syed Ahmed and his Jihadi warriors first came to fight and later when the British began their Forward Policy of expanding into Chitral. The people of Swat and Buner fought against the British in the Malakand operations of 1897 under the banner of Sartor Mullah. Clearly people of Swat with their historical links to Islamist movement will act in reflex mode once the call for Jihad is given. 83% of the households in Swat said that they are influenced by religious personalities (Annex-1, Fig 47).