

Doc ID: AFGP-2002-600088

Title: Mustafa Hamid's Analysis of Mujahidin Activities

Author: Various

Date: Events take place in 1989, written some time after 1996

Length: 61 pages

Synopsis

Mustafa Hamid discusses and analyzes the events surrounding the mujahidin in 1989. Specifically, he is interested in the failures of the mujahidin, the failure of attack on Jalalabad, and the wider attacks by the US, Israel, Pakistan, and other countries and entities against the Islamist movement after the Soviets left Afghanistan. He also compares the overall progress of the campaigns in Palestine and Afghanistan.

Key Themes

While the document contains a fair amount of narrative that details Hamid's travels in Afghanistan, Abu Dhabi, and Pakistan in 1989, the bulk of the document is devoted to a somewhat pessimistic analysis of the failures of the mujahidin and the outside forces that were conspiring against them in 1989.

The failures of the mujahidin

After ten years of fighting, the mujahidin formed a provisional government in Rawalpindi, but the various mujahidin organizations were still more powerful than the government, which largely remained in exile in Pakistan. Hamid assesses that the mujahidin need to form a more powerful permanent government.

The failure and implications of Jalalabad

The mujahidin staged an attack against the city of Jalalabad, and were beaten back with great losses. According to Hamid, Jalalabad was a major defeat for the mujahidin. While the government's equipment and training were better, the morale of the mujahidin was better, but they were too weak to make a direct attack. Consequently, Jalalabad was a bad choice for an attack. Arab jihadis were 'tricked' into going to Jalalabad and dying in droves. Hamid also seems to believe that recruitment of many Afghan Arabs was in part a US ploy to get them to die in Afghanistan. Hamid had serious misgivings about the continued enthusiasm of the Arabs (by such people as 'Abu Ubaydah) for dying in Jalalabad. The Western media focused disproportionately on Jalalabad, proclaiming it to be the central battle of the war, and thus called the mujahidin a failure when they lost the battle. Hamid argues that the Pakistani ISI intervened to make sure that the city would not fall: first, the mujahidin advanced along a route that looked to be successful, but the Pakistani ISI agent in residence stopped the advance until government forces had moved up and surrounded the Arabs, who refused to withdraw, and were destroyed. Although this happened under the watch of then-ISI director Hamid Jul, Mustafa Hamid doubts he knew of or approved the operation. Nevertheless, the Western media, in a move orchestrated by the US, began blaming Hamid Jul for the loss of Jalalabad, and turned against the mujahidin, proclaiming that the new threat after Communism was Wahhabi Islam.

The failure of the attack on Malani and Nadad

Hamid also describes a trip he took to the front with Haqani's assistant Mawlawzi Nizam-al-Din, where the mujahidin were attempting to attack the forts of Malani and Nada. Hamid fell into an ambush, but survived. The planned attack against the forts failed, largely because the Jarbiz tribe was apparently playing both sides, and took weapons for themselves, calls for mediation weakened the jihadis, and the attack was postponed, possibly because some commanders had been bribed.

The role of al-Qa'ida

In this document, Jalaludin Haqani first conceives of the plan to take Khost (covered later in AFGP-2002-600090 and AFGP-2002-600092). Al-Qa'ida assigned people to help Hamid plan the attack, however it then pulled them to participate in the failed attack against Jalalabad. Hamid believes that the strategy of 'Abu Abdullah (probably Usama bin Laden) is gravely mistaken, but the young jihadis follow him blindly.

Pakistan turns against the mujahidin

Pakistan's machinations were partly responsible for the failure of the attack on Jalalabad, and more generally for the failure of the mujahidin. Hamid argues that once the US put Benazir Bhutto's government in power, in order to consolidate her position, she fired Hamid Jul, the director of the ISI. The mujahidin thus lost their last major supporter within Pakistan. Some leaders began looking into accepting a political solution.

The al-Qa'ida 'hijacking' and the death of 'Abdullah 'Azzam – Intrigue from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the US, and Israel

Hamid recounts a conversation he had with 'Abu 'Abdullah (probably Usama bin Laden) after they were deported from the Sudan, where 'Abdullah analyzed the events of 1989. He identified two important events for the mujahidin in Pakistan. First, Muhtassib, a former member of al-Qa'ida, was accused of taking part in a plot to blow up a plane traveling from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia. Second, the ideological leader of much of the jihadist movement, 'Abdullah 'Azzam, was assassinated. Hamid believes that 'Abdullah al-Mani', the director of the Saudi Red Crescent in Peshawar, and his associate, Abu 'Umran, were involved in framing him. Muhtassib wanted to send a suitcase to Jeddah, and Abu 'Umran agreed to help him, but at some point put explosives in the suitcase, and sent Muhtassib to the airport such that he would be captured and tortured by Pakistani intelligence. As for 'Abdullah 'Azzam, who was killed in a bomb attack the next day, Abu 'Abdullah claimed that Saudi Arabia and Israel both wanted to kill him because of his opposition to their policies, and the Saudis, in the form of 'Abdullah al-Mani and his organization, seem to have carried out the attack.

Opposition to 'Azzam

In the background, the US and the UK (as well as Israel) ramped up negative international media coverage of the mujahidin, and convinced Pakistan through Interpol that there were hijacking threats from the mujahidin. 'Azzam's assistant Tamin al-'Ani also died during an operation in the US. Under this theory, the plane hijacking plot had to be 'uncovered' before the assassination of 'Azzam in order for the Pakistanis and the Saudis to justify their crackdowns on the mujahidin, and to ruin the worldwide reputation of the mujahidin, and label them as terrorists. Although the US expected that the Arabs would retaliate for the death of 'Azzam (thus decreasing their reputation even further) instead they did nothing for fear of repercussions.

Hamid himself assesses that 'Azzam was killed due to the Palestinian issue. The war in Afghanistan led to the discovery of jihad by thousands of young Muslim men, and to the formation of Hamas, an explicitly Islamic movement, in the Palestinian territories. The PLO and Israel both considered Hamas to be a threat, and secretly began colluding to defeat Hamas and Islamist movements in general. The Muslim Brotherhood also was irritated by the Islamist movement, and warned 'Azzam away from Palestine. As a result of all these factors, 'Azzam's enemies decided to kill him. Hamid continues later that 'Azzam contradicted himself on US aid, since the mujahidin were receiving US aid, even while 'Azzam denied this. This, and his other blunders, such as his close public relationship with Hikmatiar even as Hikmatiar's men staged an ambush against another Afghan leader (Ahmad Shah Masud) in the Farkhar Massacre, led the jihad movement to

weaken and lose support. Hamid believes that this was also a plot by the US to keep the mujahidin off-balance.

Comparison of Palestine and Afghanistan

Hamid also compares the conflicts in Palestine and Afghanistan. In both conflicts there is international involvement. In both cases, the US replaced previous powers in the region, although the Jews, who secretly control the world, saw their influence increase as a result of establishing a state in Palestine. In terms of military strategy, in both cases, the Arabs were weak, and without strategy. In Afghanistan, they depended on the ISI. As far as training, in Palestine, the Muslim Brotherhood volunteers were the best trained (Hamid is talking in particular about Israel's war of independence in 1948), while in Afghanistan, the mujahidin were poorly trained at first, but rectified this later on. In the fighting itself, the Arab countries knew Israel was going to win, and allowed volunteers to go anyway. In Afghanistan, the West encouraged Arab volunteers, and Arab countries facilitated their travel. This was followed, however, by a liquidation of the mujahidin after the wars were over. In the case of Palestine, Egypt turned on the Muslim Brotherhood. In the case of Afghanistan, the US and the international media smeared the mujahidin, and eventually succeeded in getting the mujahidin kicked out of Pakistan, as well as attacked by intelligence services back in their home countries.