

Taliban Concern Over Panjshir

Saroja Desai*

Professor, Department of Political Science, Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru, India

Abstract: Panjshir, paradise on earth with geographical specifications for Afghanistan, is the main concern for the Taliban. It's a small area having nearly 1 lakh population with plurality but significantly unique with its natural resources and natural boundaries. Capturing Panjshir would definitely help Afghanistan for its future economic, trade and commerce policies. Economy conditions of Afghanistan are not conducive for its growth and Taliban have understood that. They need to figure out the ways to generate resources as the funds with US is seized and they cannot access it anymore. Panjshir would definitely support Taliban inclusive government to some extent. This and the historical reasons made Taliban to acquire Panjshir.

Keywords: Panjshir, Taliban, Inclusive government, Geographical location, Natural resources, Emerald, Afghan national resistance front.

1. Introduction

Panjshir, sometimes spelled Panjsheer or Panjsher, is a picturesque valley location that signifies Dare – Ye – Panjsher and has a literary meaning of Valley of Five Lions. Situated in north central Afghanistan, roughly 150 kilometres from Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, and near the Hindukush Valley, it is home to nearly a million people, including Afghanistan's largest ethnic Tajik population. Tajiks are Persian speaking Iranian ethnos native to Central Asia, living primarily in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Tajiks are the largest ethnicity in Tajikistan, second largest in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Tajiks are Iranians who speak Persian.

Panjshir is a long, narrow valley girded on either side by steep mountains, with only one major point of exit and entry when approaching from Kabul, topography that makes it difficult to conquer because incoming militaries are forced to approach through a narrow gorge. The Valley is the major potential centre for emerald mining. The valley has the fame of having commented as gemstone in the 1st Century AD and the history of it reveals its silver mining and coin minting as well.

2. Discussion

Because of its location, the Panjshir valley in Panjshir province is a natural stronghold. It is the epicentre of the Afghan National Resistance Front, also known as the Second Resistance. The Panjshir Resistance is led by Ahmad Massoud, Amrullah Saleh, and Bismillah Khan Mohammadi. The Panjshir Valley is still Afghanistan's final bastion of resistance to the Taliban. Afghan ambassador to Tajikistan Zahir Aghbar

has said that this province will function a stronghold for resistance against the Taliban by Amrullah Saleh, the primary vice chairman of the erstwhile Afghan government who has claimed himself because the acting president of Afghanistan.

The image of Amrullah Saleh, the caretaker head of state, was displayed at the Afghan embassy in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The Hindu Kush valley is located north of Kabul. This was a stronghold of the resistance against the Soviets in the 1980s and then the Taliban in the 1990s. Amrullah Saleh was born and raised in the Panjshir province. It was the resistance zone because it was always there. Panjshir valley means the valley of the five lions. The name acknowledges a legend that says back within the 10th century, five brothers managed to contain the floodwaters. They built a dam for Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, it's said.

The valley is the epicentre of what is being called the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan or the Second Resistance. Ahmad Massoud, Amrullah Saleh, Bismillah Khan Mohammadi are the leaders of the Panjshir Resistance. This is also being called a renewed Northern Alliance. Northern Alliance was the coalition of rebel groups that opposed the Taliban rule between 1996 and 2001. Apart from Ahmad Shah Massoud, Amrullah Saleh, the alliance included Karim Khalili, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Abdullah Abdullah, Mohammad Mohaqiq, Abdul Qadir, Asif Mohseni and so on.

Afghanistan is too huge for Pakistan to consume, and Talibs can't manage it. Don't include a chapter in your histories on humiliation and kowtowing to terror groups." Ahmad Shah Massoud's son, Ahmad Massoud, has sought assistance from the West. He wrote in the Washington Post, "In an opinion piece published in the Washington Post, "Today, I'm writing from the Panjshir Valley, preparing to follow in my father's footsteps as a mujahid.

We have stores of ammunition and arms that we've patiently collected since my father's time, because we knew today might come. The Taliban isn't a drag for the Afghan people alone. Under Taliban control, Afghanistan will doubtless become ground zero of radical Islamist terrorism; plots against democracies are going to be hatched here once more.

The Panjshir Valley, within the Hindu Kush mountains north of the Afghan capital Kabul, has long been the guts of military resistance in Afghanistan and appears love it is becoming the centre of a gathering of "resistance" forces against Taliban rule. Overthrown Afghan vice chairman Amrullah Saleh – who declared himself the "acting president" of Afghanistan has

*Corresponding author: drsarojadesai@gmail.com

joined Massoud's forces. Since mid-August, forces opposed to the rule of the Afghan Taliban have gathered in the valley under the leadership of Ahmad Massoud, son of the famed Afghan resistance fighter Ahmad Shah Massoud.

Between 1980 and 1985, at least nine major Soviet offensives to reclaim the Panjshir Valley were unsuccessful, with Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces repelling wave after wave of military operations that included ground forces, airborne units, and helicopter assaults. Allowing Soviet forces into the valley and then crippling or eliminating them was a frequent technique used by Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces at the time.

Between 1980 and 1985, the Panjshir Valley witnessed a minimum of nine unsuccessful major Soviet offensives to retake the region, with Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces resisting wave after wave of military operations that involved ground forces, airborne units and helicopter assaults. A common tactic by Ahmad Shah Massoud's forces at the time was to allow Soviet forces into the valley and to then cripple or cut them off with fire from the upper ground of the mountains. After the Soviet withdrawal, the collapse of the Afghan government at the time, and the first Taliban takeover, the area saw renewed fighting from 1996 as Massoud's forces fought against the Taliban under the banner of the multi-ethnic Northern Alliance.

Taliban forces remained unable to dislodge the Northern Alliance from its Panjshir stronghold until 2001, when Massoud was assassinated during a targeted suicide attack in Takhar province, just two days before the 9/11 attacks on the US. The ensuing US invasion removed the group from power. Twenty years later, as US and NATO forces withdrew from the country following a peace deal between the previous and therefore the Taliban, its forces swept across Afghanistan, capturing 33 out of 34 provinces during a lightning offensive over several weeks.

The one province that remains outside of their control is Panjshir. Whether the West wants to fund Massoud's mujahideen remains to be seen. But he was speaking from one of the most well-defended geographic positions in the country that has become synonymous with resistance: The Panjshir Valley. Located in eastern Afghanistan, near the Afghan-Pakistan border, the Panjshir Valley has been a place that has garnered an almost mythical status when others have tried to take it.

In the 19th century, the region was untouched by the British Empire as they attempted to conquer Afghanistan. On a side

note, the broader British occupation of Afghanistan was also a failure like America's today.

Its geographical location isolates it from the rest of the country, with only one access point through a narrow passage created by the Panjshir River. This makes it easy to defend and the Hindu Kush mountain range act as a natural defence against incursions. Future governments of Afghanistan should be non-aligned and should strive to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a site for political, intelligence, military and economic rivalries, he said. The Taliban have postponed the formation of a new government in Afghanistan for the second time. It is their decision as the insurgent group struggles to give shape to a broad-based and order management is another important issue that will come under discussion during the visit of Hameed, it said. Pakistan was often accused by the Afghanistan government of giving the Taliban military aid, a charge denied by Islamabad. Hameed's visit to Kabul came as Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa met with British foreign secretary Dominic Raab earlier in the day and said that Pakistan will assist in the formation of an inclusive administration in Afghanistan.

3. Conclusion

The Taliban did not want to have any internal or external enemies, and intended to form an inclusive government in Afghanistan, a Taliban spokesman said here on Tuesday. "Afghanistan will have a robust, Islamic government," he said, adding the Taliban leadership was working and consulting on the name and specification of the new government.

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