

Pakistan had been supporting the Afghans for the last 20 years or so and had played a major role in consolidating the regime of Taliban. She was the first country to recognize their Government and had been their active supporter but failed to convince Taliban to hand over Usama Bin Laden to US. She was left with no choice but to join hands with the rest of the world to combat against Taliban. A decision, which will have far reaching effects on the future of Pak-Afghan relations.

There have been ugly demonstrations led by Islamic fundamentalist parties in various parts of Pakistan against the decision of the government. The demonstrations are NOT in favour of terrorism but against the US policy towards the Islamic countries in general and towards Palestinians in particular. Albeit, some genuinely feel that Usama Bin Laden was not involved in the 11th September incident due to lack of information provided by the US newsmedia.

The recognized criteria necessary for an armed resistance movement to succeed is: first, a loyal people who would support the effort at great risk to themselves, a local population, the majority of whom would supply shelter, food, recruits and information. Second, the need to believe implicitly in the cause and for him to be willing to sacrifice himself completely to achieve victory. Third, is the favourable terrain with over two-thirds of Afghanistan covered by inhospitable mountains known only to the local people. Fourth, a safe haven - a secure base area to which the guerrilla could withdraw to refit and rest without fear of attack. Fifth, and possibly most important of all, a resistance movement needs outside backers, who will not only represent his cause in international councils, but are a bountiful source of funds.

The Taliban have all the basic attributes of successful guerrilla fighters. They believe passionately in their cause; they are physically and mentally tough; they know their area of operations intimately; they are extremely courageous with an inbred affinity for weapons, and they operate from mountain areas, which give them both sanctuary and succour. But they stand isolated. They wont find a safe haven in Pakistan, nor any outside help from anywhere. They will have to fight the battle alone till the last round but not the last man.

Any attempt by Taliban to fight a conventional war or a pitch battle to defend cities, towns, airfields and other vital ground would be suicidal. Their strength lies in the guerilla war only. On the other hand, the US seems to be relying heavily on airpower to compensate for their inability to meet Taliban on equal terms on the ground. At the tactical as well as strategic level the US is depending heavily on firepower, rather than infantry manpower, to destroy their elusive opponents; and this alone would not defeat the Taliban. The Americans, seems to be following the same old tactics of Vietnam, search and destroy, by pounding it from the air. So far, the gigantic air strikes and missile attacks carried out by US and Great Britain all over Afghanistan have