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1. Introduction

It has been my fate for several years to listen to members of the Afghan Taliban Movement, to try to make sense of who they are, what they stand for and how they might decide to pursue a less violent course¹. I was more than a little impressed to find that a fellow seeker of the truth about the Taliban, in the pursuit of personal relationship which must underpin such understanding, had succeeded in bringing a founder of the Taliban Movement to Scotland. It seems that the senior Talib was captivated by the combination of tribes, tartans and deer-stalking in the mountains. Should we be surprised that an Afghan, associated with a Movement reputed to approach all issues from the perspective of Shariat, should bond so well with Scotland? Apparently the imaginative encounter between the Afghan cleric and the Scottish moor is but another iteration of a two hundred year process which had linked the identities of the gun-toting men in these two remote parts of the world.

When I heard of the latest Afghan – Scottish encounter, I was busy exploring a resource which promised to help me in that perpetual challenging of understanding and explaining the Taliban. While pressing a Kandahari Taliban commander for his version of news of NATO operations in Helmand's Marja District, he played me an MP3 track from his phone, which turned out to be a newly composed ballad about the fighting in Marja. I was impressed. The resemblance was perhaps more to an Irish ballad than to anything Scottish. And in Irish music we might have described the style of unaccompanied singing as *sean nós*. But for me, it was the words which were important. They were certainly pro-Talib and there was probably more imagination than factual description. But they told what the commander friend wanted to hear and to communicate about the developments in Helmand.

It turns out of course that the pro-Taliban taranas are everywhere. There is a proliferation of poets composing and singers performing verse to describe and praise the Taliban and the struggle as they see it. I have spent enough time being put off by the slick graphics but stilted propaganda in the videos put out by the Taliban's elusive Cultural Committee to despair of using them to communicate anything real. Taranas are a different kind of source material, offering a fresh insight on the Movement. The significance of the taranas is that they show how Pashtun popular culture, in the milieu where the Taliban are rooted, represents the Movement. The balladeers compose more spontaneously than the professional propagandists. Their words are probably a better guide to how sympathetic Pashtun society sees the Taliban than are the propaganda CDs, although we can distinguish some of the ballads which are approved of and indeed commissioned by the propagandists. Of course the taranas portray an imagined version of the Taliban and their struggle which has resonance with both the fighters themselves and the part of the Pashtun population which they seek to influence as part of the struggle.

¹ I am indebted to Thomas Ruttig for insightful comments on the manuscript

This paper analyses the language and narratives in a substantial collection of taranas to document how the balladeers represent resistance to the current order in Afghanistan and those who are engaged in the struggle. It considers the relationship between Pashtun and Muslim identities in these narratives of resistance and returns to the question of why Scotland should capture the imagination of an Afghan mullah.

2. Pashto resistance rhetoric in the literature

In his seminal article on propaganda and Afghan resistance², Edwards argues that in the early Islamist movement, before and after the Soviet intervention of 1979, the accessibility of the technology to produce political pamphlets allowed young political activists to appropriate Islam as a tool for mobilization, without dependence on the traditional guardians of religious tracts, the clergy. Technology available in Kabul, Peshawar and Quetta has moved on since the early pamphleteering. The propaganda effort in support of the resistance to post-2001 international intervention in Afghanistan has utilized both the old methods (night letters) and newly available technologies of the internet, text messages and videos.³ Attention has recently been drawn to a Pashtun cultural resource which seems to feature in the information war, which both precedes modern media technology and has been spread by the new technologies – the Pashto language *tarana* or ballad. Johnson, aided by Alex von Strick, draws attention to the circulation of taranas in Kandahar city⁴. Encountering them there inspired him to read up on the form of Pashto poetry and to collect a selection of taranas from Kandahar. He considers them effective Taliban propaganda.

But precisely because they are rooted in Pashtun culture we need to look at them rather differently from authorized products of the Cultural Committee of the Islamic Emirate – the shadowy body whose name is stamped on “official” Taliban video CDs, like a Film Censor Board. Poets, like Edwards’ pamphleteers, possess their own pens and often have a degree more control of their message than true propagandists, who edit videos to order. Pashto poetry has been much studied in English and French since the nineteenth and early twentieth century collectors discovered Khushhal Khan Khattak and Rahman Baba. Although the tarana writers belong more to popular vernacular culture than high literature, they observe many of the conventions of rhyme and metre noted in the study of Pashto literature⁵. This popular literature is mostly written without official blessing of the Movement. Often singers perform it live before their audiences and fans play and listen to it voluntarily, buying audio CDs and exchanging MP3 tracks. We should consider the tarana poetry not just as propaganda, but as part of contemporary culture in the Pashto language, something which tells us about Pashtuns as well as about propagandists.

Because the taranas blend propaganda with popular culture they offer an interesting window to the complex identities underpinning armed resistance to the Afghan government and its international allies.

² (Edwards, 1993 52/3)

³ (Foxley, 2007) (Motlagh, 2009) (Nathan, 2008) (Schmeck, 2009)

⁴ (Johnson & Waheed, 2011, Vol 22)

⁵ (Rafi & Loewen, 2010) (MacKenzie, 1958)

The Taliban Movement, the most visible component of the armed resistance, is still often presented as projecting an Islamic identity and a programme based on Shariat⁶. However in one of the earliest references to the identity politics of the Taliban, Glatzer suggests that the Taliban actually come from a tradition which can happily draw on both the idea of being a Muslim and the idea of being a Pashtun.⁷ The tarana poets are all Pashtun but they include some who are madrassah boys turning their hand to poetry, and many others who are amateur poets writing about resistance but not themselves part of the madrassahs or Taliban Movement. The taranas are a good place to look for the creative tension between Muslim and Pashtun identities within the resistance.

Pashtun culture and the concepts of its tribal code, Pashtunwali, are nowadays much written on, if less understood. The western fascination with Pashtun culture is not new. Glatzer describes the process of construction of Pashtun identity as an outcome of inter-cultural cooperation. According to this process, the Europeans who encountered the Pashtuns in their homeland in the first decades of the nineteenth century constructed in the English language an image of the Pashtun as a noble, tribal warrior, exotic and violent, but graced with the virtues of tribal society. The head of the first British diplomatic mission to Afghanistan, Mountstuart Elphinstone pioneered the construction of this identity. He was a Scot and contemporary of Walter Scott and explicitly drew parallels between Pashtuns and the highland tribal society idealized by Scott. The 1841-42 defeat by Pashtun fighters of a Victorian army provided an impetus to British authors in constructing the Pashtuns as a worthy enemy. The project became intercultural when Pashtuns in their “self-representation” articulated the same attributes and virtues attributed to them by the Victorians. In reading the taranas as Pashtun popular culture in a time of conflict, we can explore the latest phase of the intercultural project, to see what has been created by the latest welders of identity along the Pakistan Afghanistan border.

3. Introduction to the collection of resistance ballads

The paper draws upon a collection of some seventy-one Pashto language taranas. All of these taranas primarily circulate in their recited form – as separate audio tracks or the backing the videos. Most are available as audio CD’s sold by Islamic oriented music shops. The researcher supervised the collection of these audios and videos from strongholds of support for the Afghan insurgency in northern Pakistan. Items were collected from Mir Ali and Miranshah in North Waziristan and from Shamshatu Refugee Camp and the surrounds of Peshawar. These were ideal collecting grounds for the genre as there is significant popular support in these places for the jihad in Afghanistan. The taranas were collected in places which can rightly be considered the heart of the “safe-haven” in Pakistan where Afghan resistance fighters have sheltered since 2001. Because so many aspects of Afghan culture are segmented, it is important to note that most of the taranas included in this collection were collected in Waziristan and north western Pakistan and are the works of poets from the East and South East of Afghanistan, or their sympathetic Pashtun hosts from the Pakistan side of the border. The body of poets represented in the collection is different from those operating further west in Baluchistan and Kandahar.

⁶ (Case & Robert, 2010)

⁷ (Glatzer, 1998)

The collection from the rebel music shops has been supplemented by several individual items supplied by interested Afghans. For example a member of the Hekmatyar household and a Quetta Taliban commander both supplied personal favourites. The criteria for inclusion of taranas in the collection was that they must be recently composed and must address sympathetically themes related to the post-2001 armed resistance to the Government of Afghanistan. The selection has been made to include a large number of poets – in most cases only one or two ballads per poet have been used. A majority of taranas have been included which have been composed and performed with an element of spontaneity. The balladeer can be understood to be expressing sympathies for the resistance which he genuinely believes and which he expects will find resonance with the audience. However a sub-set of taranas has also been included, which have been used and often commissioned by professional resistance propagandists. These are the soundtracks to the often gruesome videos of conflict in Afghanistan. There is significantly less spontaneity in the commissioned pieces, which were clearly written to convey a specific message, as dictated by the propagandist. Audio tracks of the most popular taranas circulate widely in the constituencies sympathetic to the latest *jihad* in Afghanistan in an almost viral fashion – being copied from phone to phone. The full length propaganda videos in contrast have more restricted circulation, depending both on access to video players and the inclination of the audience. This collection is fairly typical of the range of music that any enthusiastic listener of rebel music along the Pakistan Afghan border, from Zabul eastwards, could be expected to listen to.

In terms of method for editing and preparing for analysis, a research assistant noted the names of poet and performer and the details, if available, of where the ballad was first performed and whether used in formal propaganda. In keeping with practice of the Pashto and Persian poets, most writers have inserted their name into the last lines of the ballad, although in some cases these may not be the original author. The research assistant transcribed the poems into Pashto and prepared a rough translation. The researcher then prepared the final translation and conducted the analysis on the original transcribed Pashto text.

Most of the poets and performers are amateurs, living in communities where there is significant support for the ongoing armed resistance in Afghanistan. As an indication of the artistes' physical proximity to the conflict, at least one of the performers was killed in a Waziristan drone strike. The collection includes both a song sung by him and another written in his memory. Several of the artistes are themselves madrassah students and perform in their own institutions.

The ballads in the collection can be categorized according to the poetic forms used to address the resistance themes and the extent to which they appear to be spontaneous and creative or commissioned and functional. Categories appearing are :

The elegies (12) – These are laments written for fallen fighters, some anonymous, others for named men, often addressed as comrades. The most powerful of the laments is “Talib has been painted with blood, or is it the rubies of Badakhshan”, which subtly chronicles the life of a poor boy educated in a madrassah, who left his books to go and fight for righteousness, but ended labeled as a terrorist and shot dead. The audience of sympathizers found the tragedy so moving that the tarana has become popular as a telephone ring tune. Also notable was the only poem with a reference to international

militants (Al Qaida and the ilk). “Who is this red blood covered youth?” is a meditation on the body of a foreign fighter, presumably in Waziristan. There is universality to its regret of a young death far from home and indeed the poem is reminiscent of Faiz Ahmad Faiz’s piece in memory of the foreign students who died in the Iranian revolution.

The functional pieces (17) – These are the poems with the most apparent link between the poet and the Taliban propagandists. They seem to have been commissioned by someone in the movement and fulfill a specific function in the resistance information warfare. For example the poem may be used as sound track to Taliban video propaganda, to mark an occasion or to convey a specific resistance message. An example of the gruesome is “I am the suicide bomber, do not collect my body parts”, used, appropriately enough, to accompany a martyr video. An example of the direct messaging is “Do not take dollars on the heads of mujahedin”, used as part of the Waziristan militants’ counter-espionage efforts. It threatens collaborators with dire consequences, some of which are illustrated in the accompanying video. The rest of the functional pieces are mainly descriptions of fighters, used to accompany video footage of battles. One description of a group of fighters trekking through the mountains is reminiscent of a school poetry assignment, composed as a commentary on the video clip it accompanies.

The pamphlets (27) – These are the poems composed on political themes which retain an element of spontaneity, at least in the sense that it was not obvious that they had been commissioned by the resistance leadership. They are thus poems of the resistance supporters rather than resistance hierarchy. The most recurrent theme is that of the historical inevitability of Afghan victory over invaders and many of the treatments are replete with bluster. Typical of this would be the warning to the foreign armies the resistance oppose : “Do not run away - you are a prisoner of your fate, hang on – you have been trapped”.

The panegyrics (10) – These are the poems addressed to and praising a figure from the resistance. Most sing praise of an unnamed hero. But there is also a hymn of praise for Mullah Omar, head of the Afghan Taliban Movement, (“Our dear Mullah Omer, our life Mullah Omer”) and one for Hakeemullah Mahsud, head of the Pakistani Taliban Movement (“Let me sacrifice my youth, the deputy of Baitullah has come”). The leadership pieces are interesting because the praise is an inversion of the invective they are more often the object of in English. But the songs to the unnamed resistance fighters are interesting because of their expression of love and tenderness and celebration of the beauty of the resistance fighters. Fairly typical sentiments from the genre would be : “Mujahid your body is more beautiful than a red rose” and “Dear ghazi, embrace me”.

The pastoral pieces (3) – These are the poems composed in celebration of places in Afghanistan. The struggle is a theme not far in the background. But the poets locate their usual calls to struggle in a celebration of the beauty of the land. The pastorals show resistance poets at their most lyrical, with shades of their classical Pashto forebears. The most lyrical of this genre is “Beautiful Zabul, let me be an offering to your lush orchards, let me be a sacrifice to your plains.”

The satire (2) – The bombast of resistance rhetoric might seem exotic to a reader accustomed to reasoned arguments or toned down emotions. But there is also a tradition of satire in the region, which

finds its way into the resistance poetry and the pieces could easily be imagined as political skits for American or British television. President Obama has a dialogue with President Karzai in couplets “Very well Karzai, just flatter me a bit, and be my slave” and “All of the country would be on fire for me, don’t go”.

4. Cultural foundations of the resistance narrative

The language used in the taranas provides a fascinating window onto how the sympathetic poets imagine the Taliban, their rivals and the struggle. The poets use imagery, cultural references and concepts drawing on Pashtun, Afghan and Islamic cultural frameworks. They use the language to legitimize and glorify contemporary resistance and those who participate in it, in so doing, constructing a composite warrior identity, which is simultaneously Pashtun, Islamic and Afghan. As well as lionizing the resistance fighters, the poets render them familiar, as much of their diction refers to places and people easily recognizable for a rural Pashtun. In the hands of the balladeers, Taliban fighters become noble warriors who embody what is good in all the cultural frameworks Pashtuns relate to and who are as familiar as their brothers or neighbours. The way in which the balladeers locate the Taliban fighters in the familiar contrasts sharply with the dominant tendency to exoticise the Taliban in western treatments or indeed in descriptions by unsympathetic Afghan writers. In the crudest version of this, Taliban get labeled as “Al Qaida” and foreign to Afghanistan.

The balladeers’ construction of a composite identity for resistance fighters contrasts with western portrayals of the Taliban Movement’s suggesting an exclusive Islamic identity. Accounts of the genesis of the Movement describe its origins in Pakistan’s Deobandi madrassahs and in those anti-Soviet mujahedin fronts round Kandahar which had recruited from the madrassahs. The essential Taliban identity, according to the crudest western narrative, was constructed from the Islam taught in the Deobandi institutions and involved a suppression of Pashtun or tribal values. Once the Taliban were in power, the regime repeatedly asserted its Islamic credentials, such as through a complex legislation project, putting in place some of the building blocks of an idealized Islamic state. The post-2001 Taliban Movement has continued to mobilize primarily among Pashtuns. However, a well-documented pattern of attacks against Pashtun tribal elders in areas the Taliban have sought to dominate has helped to sustain the idea that the movement again elevates its Islamic identity above its Pashtun identity. Understanding the relationship between the Islamic and Pashtun elements of the Taliban’s identity is an essential part of the challenge of understanding the place of the Taliban within Pashtun society.

The starting point for describing Pashtun identity is generally the tribal code, Pashtunwali. Accounts of the Pashtuns typically start by asserting that they represent the largest tribal society in the world, in that all Pashtuns have a tribe based on claimed ancestry. The lineages provide a rationale for a complex pattern of relationships, alliances and rivalries between the different Pashtun tribes, but they ultimately all claim descent from a common ancestor, Qais⁸. The code consists of a large body of customary law, governing the behavior of members of the tribes.

⁸ (Caroe) p8

To offer an initial overview of the way in which the ballads present a composite identity, the researcher performed a crude content analysis, noting the occurrence of Pashtu key words used as symbols, and imagery or with a significance beyond their literal meaning. These key words are categorized according to the cultural framework within which they are significant - whether they are drawn from an Islamic framework or a Pashtun one and within the Pashtun cultural framework, whether they relate to the Pashtunwali honour code or other dimensions of Pashtun identity. The term Afghan is also tracked, as an indicator of the reference to a national framework, going beyond the bounds of the Pashto speaking people. The number of ballads in which each key word occurred at least once, in some grammatical form, was taken as a crude indicator of the extent to which balladeers relied upon the word and its associated cultural connotations in constructing the resistance identity.

Frequency of significant words in the ballad collection

Term, Pashto	Transliteration	Literal translation	Significance	Frequency
TERMS WITH SIGNIFICANCE IN PASHTUNWALI HONOUR COMPLEX				
توره	Tora	Sword	Physical embodiment of honour code	7
ننگ	Nang	Honour, pride	Ideal attribute	15
غیرت	Ghairat	Courage, pride	Ideal attribute	13
شرم	Sharm	Shame	Ideal attribute	6
TERMS WITH SIGNIFICANCE IN ISLAM, CONTEXTUALISED IN AFGHANISTAN				
غازی	Ghazi	Infidel-slayer	Righteous fighter	23
مجاهد	Mujahid	Holy warrior	Righteous fighter	14
ایمان	Iman	Faith	Ideal attribute	8
طالب	Talib	Religious student	Locates with religious institution and movement	9
کفر	Kufr	Unbelief	Threat to true religion	5
صلیب	Saleeb	Cross	Crusader, threat to religion	7
قران	Koran	Koran	Physical embodiment of religion	8
TERMS WITH SIGNIFICANCE IN PASHTUN LITERARY AND POPULAR CULTURE				
خاوره	Khaora	Soil	Popular-literary tangible manifestation of land	12
سنگر	Sangar	Bunker	Familiar location	23
کلی	Killai	Village	Idealized location of Pashtun community	2
غر	Ghar	Mountain	Symbolises toughness of Pashtun homeland	15
زمری	Zmaray	Lion	Popular-literary image of courage	11
BADGE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY				
افغان	Afghan	Afghan	National identity	11

The Pashtunwali code and the notion of the ideal Pashtun revolve around the term *nang*, embodying connotations of honour, shame, dignity, courage and bravery⁹. The word is used in noun form as a personal attribute and in an adjectival form, *nangialai* ننگیالی, one who has *nang*. It is also used in the negative form as a slur, *benanga* بیننگه, indicating the absence of *nang*. The key symbol of this personal honour and dignity underpinning Pashtunwali is the *tora* توره sword. The ideal Pashtun is ever prepared to defend his honour and dignity using this sword. *Toryalai* توریالی is also used as a name or epithet, such as *toryalai Pashtun* – a Pashtun possessing the sword of honour. A closely related component of *nang* is *ghairat* غیرت courage – honour. Likewise *sharm* شرم shame encapsulates the idea of modesty and limits to, or offences against, honour and dignity. It can be used in the verbal form *sharmedel* شرمیدل to be ashamed and the negative form *besharm* بیشرم without shame. The final concept of the *nang* complex listed by Glatzer is *namoos* ناموس modesty and privacy, generally as applied to women, in the sense of that aspect of honour which is maintained through women being able to observe due decorum, protected by the inviolability of the home.

The balladeers employ four of Glatzer's five key terms of the pashtunwali honour complex in their descriptions of contemporary resistance. It seems that the honor complex is indeed an important part of the identity the balladeers construct for the contemporary Taliban fighters and the context of their struggle. Moreover the Pashtunwali terms are frequently used alongside Islamic ones, as the most concrete illustration of the composite nature of this identity.

Nang and ghairat in the ballads

The terms drawn straight from the Pashtunwali honour complex occurring most frequently in the ballad collection are *nang* (used in one or other of its forms in 15 ballads) and *ghairat* (used in 13 ballads). The balladeers assert that today's resistance is both driven by honour and creates the conditions in which honour can be displayed. Not only do today's fighters embody honour, the (Pashtun) people more generally are honourable, which is why there is such a supply of fighters. In this assertion of honour, the balladeers often introduce *nang* and *ghairat* together. This both scans well in the poems and emphasises the wholeness of the idea of physical courage and trueness to the code of values. Some examples illustrate how the words *nang* and *ghairat* are used in the collection of ballads.

The most general use of *nang* and *ghairat* is simply to assert that Afghanistan remains a place where people exhibit honour and courage and to call upon those addressed by the balladeers – resistance fighters, recruits and members of a broader Pashtun community to stay true to those values.

Even the downtrodden and poor man is full of courage and honour here

ډک له ننگ او غیرت خوار او غریب دلته

⁹ (Glatzer, 1998)

(t127)

Decorate yourself with courage and honour

په غیرت او ننگ سینگار شه

Abbasi 10

I have always offered my head for the pride and honor of my country

دوطن په ننگ غیرت می سر ورکړی همیشه ده

(Armani t21)

The balladeers claim for themselves a role in the preservation of honour because it is their role to record and proclaim it. Thus :

You should never cease from poems full of honour

نه به پریردی له غیرته ډک شعرونه

(Darvesh 99)

Again are the poems of courage and honour

بیا د غیرت او ننگ تپی دی

Saqib t59

Mother I shall turn from friend of the oppressed to the honour of the oppressed

زه مظلوم یار په مظلوم ننگ کرم وه مورجانی

(Muslimyar t34)

The latter example is in the Persian – Pashto tradition of wordplay on the poet’s name. The poet’s name Mazloomyar means friend of the oppressed.

The balladeers directly locate honour on the battlefield. Although Pashtunwali itself is much broader than being a martial code, the balladeers most frequently associate invoke honour associated with bravery in fighting. Thus :

They have won on the battlefields of courage

دنگ میدان کښی یی گتلی میدانونه

(sangari t23)

Fakhre Zaman was a brave man of the battle field

دافخرالزمان خو ننگیالی مرد میدان و

Hanifi t135

While the above examples explicitly refer to warlike honour, the other occurrences of nang and ghairat, without actually mentioning the battlefield, also have martial connotations.

The balladeers associate the Pashtunwali terms with another symbol of Pashtun honour the turban.

Your turban is honourable

شمه دی غیرتی ده

(Raeem)

The balladeers use their assertion that the Pashtun people are still honourable as a direct threat to the foe. The persistence of this honour makes it self-evident that the fate of the enemy will be miserable and gory!

Honourable people will remain in the country, enemy

غیرتی خلق به پاتی په هیواد کښی شی دښمنه

Younus Wazir t19

The negative use of nang is significant. The balladeers use the insult of being without honour, benang, for those accused of collaborating with the foe. Associating with the other or the foreigner is tantamount to betrayal. Just as they employ the key terms of the honour code to encourage Pashtuns to participation in the resistance, they accuse those who either fail to participate or work against it as having been stripped of honour, or indeed of selling it. Thus :

Today, now that you have given your hand in the hands of others, dishonourable one

تا چی نن ورکړی بی غیرته دچا لاس کښی لاس

(Faizan 4)

But some Afghan sellers of honour, enslaved to the infidels,

خو خینو افغانانو د ستا له ننگ فروشانو دکفر غلامانو

(Qani 03)

Tora in the ballads

The sword in Pashto is an example of a symbol through which pre-Taliban folk wisdom already linked the ideas of being a Pashtun and being a Muslim, through the martial tradition¹⁰. The balladeers repeatedly juxtapose this symbol of the honourable Pashtun warrior with other symbols which invoke the Islamic identity. They imagine the Pashtun sword protecting both the physical symbol of Islam and the metaphysical attributes of the Muslim. Thus :

Have sword in one hand and Quran in the other hand

يو لاس كښى توره په بل كښى قران دى

(Asmat 138)

I have sword in hand, I am going to win my belief

توره مى راخيستى خپل ايمان گتم

(Luqman Khan)

The balladeers' use of nang, ghairat and tora is sufficiently frequent to establish that the Pashtunwali honour code has an important part in the construction of their resistance narrative. However the version of Pashtunwali which comes across is a stripped down one – a sort of “Pashtunwali lite”. Other aspects of the honour complex are notable missing. Only one poet uses *namoos*

وطن کوروطن گور وطن ناموس دئ

Our country is home, our country is a grave and our country is honor for us

Sherzad

Sharm in its various forms is used by only four of the poets. For example :

نورى د ظلمونو هر خوا ته شرم شور دئ، د ظلم پيالى

The slogans of the oppressors spread the sounds of shame on every side

Hashemi

Furthermore fully elaborated versions of Pashtunwali, recorded in scholarship and still often articulated by Pashtun exponents of the code include multiple other terms to describe correct behavior and

¹⁰ (Bartlotti & Khattak, 2007) They offer a simple proverb : “The sword protects Islam”

arrangements for dispute resolution. These terms are entirely missing from the balladeers' narrative. The balladeers restrict themselves to these key terms because they suffice for their portrayal of the Pashtun warrior – they have selectively focused on the most directly martial terms, finding no use for the terms that denote reason and reconciliation as alternatives to fighting. Additionally it is entirely possible that many of the balladeers themselves have a superficial knowledge of the Pashtunwali code. The madrassahs and refugee communities where many of the balladeers have been raised, clearly transmit elements of Pashtun identity, but perhaps, as often suggested, this is a diluted form.

References to Muslim identity in the ballads

Islam and the idea of being Muslim certainly figure in the balladeers' resistance narratives. But the choice of terms to denote Islamic identity is rooted in the context of the Pashtun resistance. The terms occurring in most ballads which refer Islamic identity are also explicitly martial – *ghazi* and *mujahid*. Both are Arabic-root forms of Islamic warrior which in principle could be used to describe one who has fought for Islam in any time or place. But *ghazi*, the slayer of infidels, has an historical significance in Afghanistan because the nineteenth century antecedents of the Taliban, the bands of fighters led by mullahs, who operated outside royal or tribal structures adopted the term *ghazi*. Famously the *ghazis* played the catalytic role in the 1841 slaying of British envoy McNaughton and the Victorian writers became sufficiently familiar with the term that they adopted it into English. For the English equivalent, they used the term “fanatic”. Following that convention I too have retained the word *ghazi* in the translations. Establishment figures from the Durrani dynasty have also adopted the epithet *ghazi*, such as Ghazi Wazir Akbar Khan, hero of the First Anglo-Afghan War and Ghazi Amanullah, instigator of the Third. In the current generation, Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupation globalised the terms *jihad* and *mujahid*. When the balladeers use *ghazi* and *mujahid* as the most common epithets for their description of contemporary Pashtun warriors, a Pashtun audience with the slightest sense of history would understand the dual reference. By dubbing a fighter *ghazi* the balladeer both asserts his Islamic credentials and suggests that he fights in the tradition of forefathers who resisted British incursions. In designating a fighter *mujahid*, the poet both implies that the fight is a *jihad*, or Islamic just war, and suggests that today's fighter continues the resistance to external aggression waged against the Soviets by the *mujahedin* of the 1980's. The poets also make multiple references to the idea of *shaheed*, or religious martyr, a usage which also echoes previous Afghan conflicts, where sympathizers designated all the rightful fallen (sometimes on both sides!) as martyrs.

There is added political significance to the balladeers' selection of Afghan-Islamic epithet. They deliberately make scant use of the term *Talib*. Only nine of the poems make any use of the term *Talib* and most of these restrict themselves to the singular form, rather than the plural *Taliban*. The choice of *mujahid*, *ghazi*, *talib* or *Taliban* is basically determined by whether the poet seeks to emphasise that the fighter belongs to the specific movement headed by Mullah Omar (the Taliban Islamic Movement) or that he is a generic holy warrior, in the broader and pre-Taliban tradition. Poets use the term *Taliban* in the most overtly propagandist verses. For example Jawad composed the ballad accompanying a propaganda video with war footage from Nuristan. This area was barely even controlled by Mullah Omar during the Taliban government 1996-2001 and fighters there are always open to the accusation of being more closely related to Pakistan-based salafist networks than the original Kandahari-led Taliban

movement. Hence the importance of the easterners and Nuristanis asserting their official Taliban credentials.

مونږه دغازيانو طالبانو کامیابی غواړو

گران افغانستان کښی بیا نظام اسلامی غواړو

We want the success of ghazi Taliban

We want once again an Islamic system in great Afghanistan

Jawad

The use of talib in the singular seems to be a way for the balladeers to engage a sympathy with the original Islamic student, which the political Movement simply might not command. In popular Pashtun culture, as well as being dedicated to religious learning, the talib is humble and indeed oppressed, dependent upon alms, suffering in holy poverty. The most effective of the sympathy-engaging addresses to a talib is that of Hashimi, which describes the body of a slain madrassah boy. The ballad was first performed before a live audience in a refugee camp mosque, where sympathy for the idea of Islamic war would be widespread but few people had links to the Kandahari Taliban movement. In such a setting a lament for “dear talib” was more appropriate than a slogan for the Taliban movement.

طالب په وینو رنگ ده او که لال د بدخشان ده

Talib is covered in red blood, or is it the rubies of Badakhshan

Javeed hashimi

More prosaically, a ballad sung by a shopkeeper from Waziristan seeks blessings on the individual fighter

ورځه ورځه الله دی مل شه طالب جانہ، کامیابی دی غواړم

Go and may Allah be with you, Talib Jan, I wish you success

Samssor

But even the propagandist can find reason to use the singular familiar form. This composition was used to accompany a Taliban video. Referring to a “dear” talib emphasises the contrast between the power of the United States and its humble but pure foe :

په لړزه سپینه مانی ده له طالب جانہ

The White House trembles at dear Talib

Saqib Wazir

After the Islamic warrior epithets, the two symbols of Islam invoked by most balladeers are iman and Koran. Iman or faith is one of the five pillars of Islam. As a core tent of Islam, faith's role in the identity of being Muslim parallels that of the honour complex ideas in the identity of being Pashtun. The Muslim Pashtun warrior must possess iman just as he must exhibit nang. And acts against the resistance, such as paid collaboration, compromise faith and Islamic identity, just as they dishonor a Pashtun.

په غشو دډالرو يی داغی کړلو ایمان

He has stained his belief with the arrows of dollars

Hassan

The balladeers, in a decidedly conventional manner, use references to Koran to symbolise the body of belief and law according to which they Muslims must order their lives. The Koran symbolizes that which they must defend and the order for which they must fight.

شوپه برخه دی بچو ددی قران حکمرانی دا درب مهربانی

Your sons are under the rule of Quran; this is the blessing of creator

Turabi

The balladeers also draw from the diction of Pashto religious discourse to designate that which must be opposed – the opposite of the identity of the Muslim. Five poets use the idea of *kufir* unbelief as a metaphysical idea and seven use the cross as a physical symbol, to represent the enemy. These references, calculated to incite hatred against another religion, mainly occur in the most directly propaganda poems. This suggests that those responsible for the insurgent propaganda campaign may be more enthusiastic about an agenda of hating Christians than are the more spontaneous balladeers, who are slightly happier to love their own religion than to hate others. The usage of the cross image deliberately references history because in Pashto usage, the cross symbolizes not so much Christian faith as the military aggression of Christian armies. Those balladeers summoning people to resist the cross are invoke the Crusades, sometimes using the plural, ones-of-the-cross i.e. crusaders. As an example of the explicit crusader reference :

صلیبیان یی په گوندو کړل

He has compelled crusaders to flee

Hammasi

And as an example of referencing the cross :

ای فداشی په گوندو صلیب دلته

Stay true to the defeat of the Cross here

Unknown

As examples of the reference to kufr for harsh condemnation of the collaborator :

دکفر ولعنتو ته جوازونه جوړوی

He provides covers for ungodliness and profanity

Hassan

And :

خو ځینو افغانانو د ستا له ننگ فروشانو دکفر غلامانو

But some Afghan sellers of your honour, enslaved to the infidels

Qany

And in a propaganda video the poet imagines the potent effect on unbelievers of the slogan of Muslim faith, the takbeer, or cry of Allah o Akbar :

ستا چی د سپیڅلی تکبیر غږ شی، کفری جهان له ویری ورته غورشی

When you raise the cry of Allah o Akbar, the infidel world listens to it in fear

Irfani (propag cd)

In addition to the diction, a few of the poets make more elaborate Islamic references, to construct the links between previous righteous wars of Muslim history and contemporary reference. Two liken the resistance fighters to the *ababil* swallows who rained down stones on the Yemeni king Abraha, to prevent him destroying the holy kaaba. Others reference the River Nile and compare the contemporary tyrants against whom they struggle with the Pharaohs, who symbolize oppression in Muslim-Afghan imagery.

One poet invokes the ultimate image which imagines unity between the Pashtun warrior and Muslim history :

Look at the sword of Khalid Bin Waleed

I am going to win the land below and the sky above

توره د خالد بن وليد گوره

لاندی ځمکه څه بره اسمان گتم

Luqman

One of the popular Pashtun origin myths has it that the senior general of the Prophet Mohammad, Khalid bin Waleed, summoned a distant relative from the mountains to the east, to come and embrace the new religion¹¹. This man, one Qais, returned to the mountains and went on to father the entire Pashtun people. The sword of Khalid bin Waleed symbolizes the Pashtun link to the Muslim armies, since those armies were first raised.

Secular images of land and battlefield

The balladeers employ another set of terms and images, which are clearly rooted in their identity, but which do not obviously flow from the honour-complex version of Pashtunwali or Islam. The two objects which they mention most frequently are sangar or bunker and *ghru*, mountain. The sangar has existed literally in both historic Afghan and contemporary warfare. As you travel through hill country, you can often make out defensive positions on the commanding heights, some of which date from antiquity, some of which are still manned. The reality of post-2001 warfare is that most fighters are involved in covert or mobile warfare, in which bunkers have less place than in earlier conflicts. However the poets refer to the sangar, a hallmark of “frontier warfare” familiar to the ballad audiences, as a symbol for today’s battlefield. This is another military term, used in Pashto and the neighbouring languages, which passed into English in the nineteenth century, for which reason it is retained in the translations here. As an indication of how heavily the poets rely on the sangar to imagine the conflict, it appears in as many ballads as the ghazi hero epithet.

Some of the poets make joint references to *sangar* and *ghra* mountain, conveying the idea of mountain warfare in line with those hilltop positions. There are also multiple references to mountains independent of sangars. The balladeers use the mountain as a central image in conveying the idea of the land of the Pashtuns and of Afghanistan as a country. This too seems to be a part of the “cross-cultural project”, part of the idea that because Pashtuns have historically defeated invading armies in the mountains, victory for today’s mountain-invoking fighters is assured. Another frequently used image (twelve poems), is that of the soil or land, خاوره. This is used both figuratively and as a metaphor for the Pashtuns’ territory, which has to be defended. The references to the soil suggest that the poets imagine the struggle as one of territorial resistance. Whether they refer to soil under which the fallen hero must be buried, or explicitly to defence of the soil-land, the balladeers build the notion of the resistance fighters being connected to the land, in a way that is easily neglected when focus is on the Taliban’s Islamic identity. Another image used repeatedly as part of the poets’ “warrior complex” – the set of

¹¹ (Caroe)

A key strand of identity which must be distinguished is the national identity, that of Afghan, which in common contemporary usage embraces all ethnicities of those who are native to the country Afghanistan. The term Afghan is used more frequently in the ballads than the term Talib or Taliban. Although many of the poems describe local struggles with no real reference to nation or country, the eleven balladeers who use the term Afghan, as the people in whose name the resistance fights, do so to assert the national nature of the conflict.

Analysis of the cultural references in the ballads suggest that the balladeers try to construct a composite identity for those involved in the resistance they describe, an identity which encompasses but extends beyond a scripture-based Muslim identity. They try to universalize the religious appeal of the fighters by dubbing them ghazi and mujahid more than they refer to fighters as talib. The balladeers then construct a warrior identity which embraces the basics of Pashtun honour code with righteous defenders of religion, but which is supplemented by ideas of the brave Afghan defenders of land, mountains and ramparts. Appeals to defend the sacred religion are only one among multiple cultural resources which the balladeers employ in praise of the fighters.

5. Narratives of the conflict

Inevitably, those of us trying to understand the Taliban and the Afghan resistance look to the ballads not just for form and cultural themes but for straight narrative. Given that there are strong grounds to consider that many of the poets are authentic voices of communities which have supplied and supported resistance fighters and their works find resonance in those communities, it is important to know what they say of the conflict.

1. Is it a global, national or local struggle

The struggle, as represented in the creative work of this wide selection of sympathetic poets, is unambiguously local and national. The fighters, whom the balladeers praise so effusively, fight for Afghanistan or their part of it. Many of the poems convey a sense of intensely local struggle. The poet talks of the resistance fighter as a known and familiar person, the land and mountains are familiar, the fighter talks to his mother and fellow villagers. The place names invoked are of real places from the Afghan battlefield, names the poet would expect his audience to know. One set of poems associated with a particular resistance front operating in eastern Afghanistan repeatedly refers to the Tor Ghar mountain range in which they operate. The ballad of Helmand sings of Marja and Musa Qala, places that Taliban and NATO really did fight over in 2010, when the ballad was composed.

Going beyond the familiar and the local, many of the poems also are constructed to convey an idea of national struggle. The resistance fights for Afghanistan. This is done prosaically by vowing to capture the

capital (“To safeguard the sound of Allah o Akbar, until Kabul with their comrades”) or the country (“We want once again an Islamic system in Afghanistan”) and more poetically by invoking the country as the beloved (“My dear, dear, dear Afghanistan, I shall sacrifice my head; I shall not begrudge it to you”). The references to Afghan history compound the sense of national struggle. If a Pashtun fighting in a province in the east of the country invokes the nineteenth century British defeat in Maiwand in the south west, the implication is immediately that the fighter’s local struggle is part of the larger national one, in the historical tradition.

The only way in which the poets internationalise their narrative is by the repeated references to the foreign invaders and the oft-repeated sense of pride that they are standing up to the world, on home ground. Indeed, the way in which so many of the poems celebrate the losses inflicted on NATO, the resistance against the “arrogant ones” strongly suggests that, for the Taliban poetic sympathizers at least, the whole point of the conflict is not to win but to be seen to be fighting heroically against a stronger enemy.

There is barely even a hint of ideas of global jihad. The few references to Islamic history outside Afghanistan are used only to sanctify to cause inside the country. Only two out of the seventy-one poems touch on international militants and these are in themselves revealing. The elegy to the fallen foreign fighter captures the empathy for these militants which undoubtedly exists at least in Waziristan. But the poem pays tribute to the nobility of sacrifice and laments the pain of dying young, far from home. It does not touch upon the cause. There is one exception, a true poem of global jihad :

“We are bringing the Khilafat and the fair politics of the pure Quran in the world

We shall overthrow oppressors from this world, our endeavour is to bring justice”.

This is composed by Peshawar-based jihadi intellectual Mohammad Dost, who developed his poetic career in Guantanamo¹². After a period of freedom, when he was able to assemble some of his prolific output, he was again detained by Pakistani intelligence, joining the ranks of the “disappeared”.

The likes of Mohammad Dost, widely read and schooled in Guantanamo, inhabit a different intellectual world from the rest of the resistance poets, something which has inspired him to imagine a global Islamic movement for justice, something which simple does not arise anywhere else in the collection.

2. The burden of Afghan history in the narrative

One of the most recurrent themes in the ballads is that of how Afghan history does not just inspire the contemporary struggle, it predetermines it. However the references and glimpses of Afghan history which the poets offer are, perhaps unsurprisingly, limited and one dimensional. These Pashtun poets’ historical narrative is rooted in the imagining of the clashes with Victorian Britain. They make occasional passing references to founding figures – Mahmud Ghaznavid gets a mention as an illustrious conqueror

¹² (Coghlan, 2005)

from the region and Ahmad Shah Baba, founder of the Durrani dynasty and another conqueror is invoked. Thereafter the only Afghan historical personages worth mentioning are Wazir Akbar Khan, a hero of the First Anglo-Afghan War and Malalai, heroine of Maiwand in the Second Anglo-Afghan War. But numerous poems make direct or indirect references to these conflicts and rather fewer to the defeat of the Soviet Union in the 1980's and all go on to proclaim that Afghanistan is therefore a "graveyard of empires" – a place where the skulls of previous invaders are buried in the ground. This is the premise of the pamphlet-style poems which proclaim the defeat of NATO, the inevitability of them being forced to flee. On one level the accounts are clichéd and suggest a remarkably limited knowledge of Afghan history, in terms of the gallery of personages and events that they refer to. However, they offer an authentic picture of the imagined Afghanistan which is offered to the young men who are encouraged to go and join the resistance. They really are being told that they are under an historical obligation to follow in the footsteps of Wazir Akbar Khan, that they must fight against a foreign enemy which is Britain, Russia and American merged into one, and that ultimate victory is assured but that they may have to be sacrificed along the way.

3. What the resistance is fighting for and against

The narrative emerging from the poetry is far less clear about what the resistance is fighting for than it is about the necessity of fighting against the foreigners. Even with regard to the need to fight for religion, the poet who claims "we want an Islamic system" is one of the propagandists and the other poets are far less prescriptive. They imagine the resistance fighters as righteous and acting in defence of the religion of Islam. But there are no other references to what an Islamic system might look like or even any invitation to fight for one. The poetic imagination concentrates on blessing the fight rather than imagining the "end state". If one were to sum up the poets' narrative of the struggle, it is to achieve an Afghanistan free of foreigners because it is self-evident that a country free of foreigners and inhabited by the honourable and god-fearing Afghans will be a better place. This narrative crops up in dozens of the ballads and is most likely the main narrative that young fighters internalize before going to fight.

The narrative offers a few more insights on who or what the resistance is directed against, beyond the foreign invaders. There are multiple references to tyrants or oppressors and the balladeers make it clear that the talib or mujahid upholds social justice, siding with the oppressed and fighting against the oppressor. The other key attribute of the enemy, against which the resistance must fight is arrogance. The poets use several adjectives to describe the haughtiness of the foreign invaders.

Given that the poets imagine the fight as being against the foreign armies, relatively little room is left in their narrative for the struggle against domestic foes. The two pieces lampooning Karzai are an exception but it is their satirical form which obliges the poet to employ a degree of realism in the shape of named leaders. Otherwise the main references to domestic enemies concern the accusations of collaboration. The only Afghans the poets explicitly acknowledge as the enemy are the collaborators – those who spy for, take money from, offer friendship to or in other ways associate with the foreigners. This is quite an achievement in resistance narrative, although casualty figures tell a rather different story and suggest that the resistance kill many Afghans, the poets who inspire the resistance offer them almost no pretext for killing their countrymen and only tell them to kill foreigners and spies.

6. Conclusions and significance

The first point to note about the resistance ballads is that they exist and represent a vibrant part of contemporary Pashtun culture. Although this selection of poets, chosen for their sympathy to current armed resistance in Afghanistan, does not speak for all Pashtuns, they certainly speak for more than themselves. Some of them speak for a particular niche, such international Islamist Mohammad Dost or Dervesh, with his hymn in praise of Hizb-i-Islami. A handful of propagandists write according to the requirements of the Cultural Committee of the Islamic Emirate, rather than just according to their own creativity. However a larger number of the poets most likely find resonance in communities along both sides of the Afghan border and some would most likely bring tears to the eyes in Kabul's presidential palace. They present the resistance imagination rather than mechanical propaganda. The poetry represents a significant part of the imagination of a key group engaged in struggle in Afghanistan. It is an imagination worthy of note.

This resistance imagination can be considered a significant cultural resource available to those who seek to mobilize the Pashtuns to fight. It offers narratives of why they must fight, promises glory to the individual fighter and victory to the people as a whole and offers consolation in the face of loss. The resistance imagination goes far beyond the conventional stereotypical promises of paradise (but includes these as well). If a Pashtun can internalize this imagination, resistance is an affirmation of who he is and to fail to resist or to collaborate would be to become the "accursed one".

The way that the poets use the Pashto language to construct their narratives of resistance offers some insights into the cultural politics of identity in the resistance. They imagine a composite identity for the resistance, whereby the resistance is simultaneously Pashtun, Muslim and Afghan. This is a construction which contrasts distinctly with notions that resistance is dominated by a madrassah-based movement and rejects non-Islamic elements of identity. The Pashtun component of the identity they construct in these writings is both broad and narrow. The language and cultural references show that it draws on the concepts of honour in the much-studied Pashtunwali code. But the poets employ only Pashtunwali-lite, stripped of many of its concepts. The poets also employ ideas and cultural references which are important and meaningful for Pashtuns but which go beyond the honour code or Pashtunwali. They of course draw on any aspect of culture or identity which can contribute to the idea of the warrior. But they also express attachment to land, the mountains and the natural environment, appreciation of beauty and love as aspects of the cultural foundations of resistance.

An extension of this cultural politics of identity within the resistance shows that the resistance is broader than just "Taliban", so that poets are far more apt to use more generic terms for resistance fighters which do not tie them to Mullah Omar's Movement. In addition there is almost no space in the resistance imagination for Al Qaida. The Pashtun struggle is for Afghanistan and in the imagination the only international element is pride at fighting foreign armies in Afghanistan.

The poetry of the resistance ballads is both rich and clichéd, ranging from the deeply human, moving and lyrical to the dry or bombastic. Much of the poetry seems to be a continuation of what has previously been described as a cross-cultural project between English-speaking and Pashtun imaginations, to develop the idea of Pashtun as rugged mountain fighter. This is why an Afghan mullah, veteran of the Taliban, should warm to Scotland. The lion-like mountain-dwelling ghazi creature beloved of the tarana writers was originally in part inspired by Elphinstone's idea of Pashtuns as the Scottish Highlanders of Asia. In the Highlands, the mullah can find a place his own balladeers sing of, if by other names.

The lyrical evocation of Afghan beauty, the silken black locks atop every talib's shoulders, and the personal but universal laments over youthful death notwithstanding, the dominant narrative which emerges from the collection of ballads is that young Pashtun Muslims are obliged to follow their grandfathers' footsteps into mountain sangars and from there confront the latest foreign invading army, which they are fated to defeat and drive out. Judging by the resilience of resistance recruitment and persistent violence, however problematic the historical clichés might be, it seems that this is an imagination which still has power to inspire action and which is therefore worthy of note.

It would seem that any Afghan considering how to find ways out of current conflict would be well advised to study this imagination, in the search for alternative narratives. Even the resistance-approved poets might have some cultural resources available for such a project, for they too can imagine peace :

Oh my sweet country, I shall definitely build you, I shall fulfill this promise to you,
Dear, I shall convert your grey deserts to flowers, I shall fulfill this promise to you
Dear, there will be no more war, disputes, disunity and difference

ای زما خوره وطنه خامخا دجوړوم داو عده پوره کوم
سپیری دبنتی به دی گرانه په گلونو بدلوم داو عده پوره کوم
نوربه نه وی گرانه تا کبني بیا جنگونه او جگری نفاقونه تفریقی

Turabi

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7. Appendix – Tarana First Lines

Songwriter	First line, English	First line, Pashto
unknown	Oh another star fell down from the blue sky of literature	اخ ولويد ناگهانه يو بل خُلاده ستورئ د ادب له شنه اسمانه
Saqi wazir	Who is this red blood covered youth?	دا په سروينو رنگين زلمئ چي څوک دئ
Abdul Baseer Jawad	Come let us kiss his delicate white body	راځئ چي بڼکل يي کړو نازک سپين اندامونه
Jan Muhammad Hanifi	Hurry, oh pen, to write martyrs on the paper	زرشه اي قلمه شهيدان په کاغذ وليکه
Noorullah Faizi	My friend of the madrassah, your martyrdom puts stains on my heart	زما ديوي حجرې طالب اشنا ، زار ستا شهادت راکړو په زړه باندې داغونه
Masoom Khan Watany	O 'heart you want them but martyrs Naseebullah and Hameedullah are not coming back, are not coming back	زړگيه ته يي غواړي بيرته بيا نه راځي شهيد حميدالله نصيب الله نه راځي
unknown	Now they consign him to a stranger's grave, they are throwing dust on my dearest friend	نور يي پرديس پرديس لحد لره ورسپاري ، اړوي په گران جانان مي خاوري
unknown	You were looking like a lion, dear ghazi	لکه زمري به بڼکاريډلي غازي جانانه
Shiekh Irfani	Your beautiful curls are brown with dust, it seems like dew settled on a flower	په خاورو دخړپر بنايسته کاکول ده، بڼکاري داسي چي پروت شبنم په گل ده
Mulvi Manzoor Ahadi	Recognise me, recognize me. I have taken a bullet in my heart	ومي پيژنئ ، ومي پيژنئ ما په زړه مرمئ خورلي دي
Javeed hashimi	Talib has been painted with blood, or is it the rubies of Badakhshan	طالب په وينو رنگ ده او که لال د بدخشان ده ، په خړ تابوت کښي ايښئ

Noorullah Faizi	Martyr is going on long journey, collecting his home, will never come again	شهيد روان په لوى سفر ده ، كډى نغارى بيا به رانشى
Saqib Wazir	Attacking the enemy, like lions	د زمرو په شان په دشمن حمله كويڼه
Hilal Raees	You are not men of the battlefield, you have fled every time, we know you people very well,	نه يئ د ميدان ژنى هر خاى په شا تللى يئ ، ښه مو پيژندلى يئ ، ښه مو پيژندلى
Hanif Saagir	Do not take dollars on the heads of mujahedin	دمجاهدو په سر مه اخله ډالرونه
Sherzad	I am the suicide bomber, do not collect my body parts	فدايى يمه توتى مى تولوى مه
saqib Wazir	Again he has a rifle in his hands, the White House trembles at dear Talib	
Luqman Khan	I am going to the battlefield, to win as a Muslim	
Saeed Nazir	Run away westerner, the Talib has come	تښته مغربيه چى طالب راغئ
Rafeeq Haqyar	Ghazi again fire your rifle at the enemy	بيا دزيركى ډزى وكړه په دښمن غازى
Ghayoor wazir	Once again the clash of unsheathed swords is heard in the sangars of jihad	جهاد په سنگروكښى بيا دسپينوتوروشرنگ دئ
Khalid Ghufrani	Decorated with rockets, beautiful young men head towards the sangar dancing	سينگار په راكتونو ښكلى خوانان سنگر ته خى په اتنونو
Bezzra wazir	Salaam to the soldiers of our village, let me be a sacrifice to the ghazis	زمونږ د كلى سربازانو سلام سلام غازيانو درنه قربان شم
Jihad Mal	I build sangars in the black, Black Mountains, I awake the youth	په تورو توروغرو كښى سنگرونو جوړومه ، خوانان راويښومه
Bezzra wazir	Oh grave, welcome my worthy friends, throw flowers handsome young men are coming towards you	لحده كړه يى استقبال دى قردان ، پرى وشينده گلان درخى ښكلى خوانان

Qasid wazir	Mother do not move me, my hands and feet have been cut	مه مي خوځوه موري لاسونه پښي مي پري دي
Wafadar zadran	The one who is the enemy of his own earth and nation and nation, brother!	څوك چي دشمن
alam zeb dervish	I am firm in my belief, I am neither eastern nor westerner	كلک په خپل ايمان يمه ، نه شرقی يم نه غربی يم
Unknown	Congratulation for this great sacrifice O'young, Congratulation for this great sacrifice O'young	
Muhammad wadood Armani	I have been born in sorrows	زه غمونو کښي پيدا يم
Qari Hassan	My friend is again preparing his pockets for dollars	اشنایي بيا دالروته جیبونه جوړوي
Younus Wazir	Those who sell their heads, desire the goblets of Kusr-paradise, Sleep no more on the bed of shame, comrade, my shameless comrade	چي سوداگری دخپل سر غواړي جامونه دکوثر ، چي سوداگری دخپل سر
Hamid ullah wazir		
Abdullah Jihadi	I shall sacrifice my head; I shall not begrudge it to you	سر به قربان کړم دریغ به یی نه کړمه له تا نه
Ahmed Takal	What an intoxicative spirits are, our every piece of land is mujahed	څه خماری حماسی دی ، هر ډگر مو مجاهد دی
Jawad Malang	Their arrogance has been broken, they must escape	مات یی شو غرور تښتی به ضرور
Saeed Sangari	Your heart will be blackened to the world and from yourself, westerner, for westerner here are Afghans	زړه به دی تورکړی له دنیا نه غربی غربی له ځانه له ځانه غربی دلته افغانان
unknown	Young ghazi, the enemy is under pressure here	غازی ځوانه تنگ راغلی رقیب دلته

Muhammad Aslam Zakir	Oh colonizer, the mountains are still sleeping, don't think that mountains are soft	غليمه اوس خو لا ويده دى غرونه ،خيال دى او نه نشى چى پاسته دى غرونه
Qari Manzoor	Our home is on the roof of the world, again fire rains on the foreigners	دنړئ په بام مو كوردئ ، په اغيار مو بل سوراوردئ
Hazrat Ali Mushfiq Wazir	This training ground is full of warnings for the oppressor, Mangretai is a place of reckoning for the westerners	ظالم ته ډكه دعبرت يوه درسگاه ده ، منگريټئ مغربيانوته حشرگاه ده
unknown	Became a hero of the world, become a hero of the world	
unknown	Do not run away - you are a prisoner of your fate, hang on – you have been trapped	
Khadeem Dewana	These people say you and I should go to our destination, let us go to the bunker	تبتيدئ نه شى بيا اسير دخپل تقدير يى ،صبر شه راگير يى داخلق داوايى زه او ته به خپل منزل ته خو ، خه چى خو مورچل ته خو
unknown	The revolution will go forward with the help of those youngsters	داانقلاب به په هم دغو زلمو وړاندئ خئ
Abdul Qayum Asmat	They are going to the mountains of the Shinwaris	دادشينوارد په غرونوروان دى
unknown	The army of the madrassahs has taken the field,	پسى راوتى دى ددين دمدرسو لښكرى ،
Younus Wazir	When you run for Washington your cousins will be following you, your cousins will be following you	ته چى درومى واشنگټن ته تربوران به درپسى وى ، تربوران به درپسى وى
Muslim Dost	If we are living in prison's black cages, we are living in hope of merit	كه دزدان توروپنجر وكښى اوسو ، د ثوابونو په اسرو كښى اوسو
nasratullah Qany	Your sons are lions, will preserve you from enemy	بچيان دزمريان دى تا به ساتى له دښمنه
Sheer Azam Nekmal	They have seen death, NATO has become wise,	او يى ليدل مرگونه ، ناټو هوبنياره شوه
: Almas Haqyar	For sure, accept my skill in war	په ايټمى خواكو مى د جنگونومهارت ومنه

Shaheen khstwal	We to not tolerate rule by others in our country, we do not tolerate the arrogant in our country	واک دبل وطن وطن کبني نه پريږدو ، مونږه کبرجن وطن کبني نه پريږدو
Abdul Basir Jawad	Now we shall see red in the brown deserts and black mountains	اوس به سره گوروخړودشتوتورو غرونوکبني
Mulana Badroodin	Accursed one, now that you have come, look to your exit	عينه چي راتللي نو دتللو لاره گوره
Faizani	Why, why you have sell off the religion for few dollars	ولي ولي ولي دين دخرخ کړوپه ډالرباندي
Saqib Wazir	Dear ghazi, embrace me	غازي جانانه را غاړيوزه
Samssor	Go and may Allah be with you O' talib Jan, be success	ورځه ورځه الله دي مل شه طالب جانه ، کامياب دي غواړم
Shahid Fida	Long live the mujahedin of all Laghman, who fought on the battlefield like men	زنده اباد مجاهدين دتول لغمان ، چي جنگيزي په ميدان لکه نران
Azad Khan Mehsood	Let me sacrifice my youth, the deputy of Baitullah has come	زاربي له ځوانئ شمه ، نائب د بيت الله راغئ
Abbasi	My dear mujahid became a heart in sweet hearts	جانانه مجاهده خوږوزرونو کبني زرگئ شه
Abdullah Darveesh	The ghazis are going towards the sangar, with the sound of Allah-o-Akbar	سنگر ته درومي غازيان روان دي د تکبير نغري وهينه
Elyaas Mazloom yar	Mujahid your body is more beautiful than a red rose	دسره گلاب نه دي ځواني ډيره بنايسته ده مجاهده
Elias Mazloom yar	I am going to the bunker, dear mother give me leave	سنگرته ځمه رخصت راکړه وه مورجاني
Abdullah Hammasi	Our dear Mullah Omer, our life Mullah Omer	په مونږگران ملاعمر زمونږځان ملاعمر
Saeed Nazir	Young ghazi, wandering in the Black Mountains	په تورو غرو کبني سرگردانه غازي زلميه

Abdul Majeed Jawad

An offering to the rivers, pines and chinars

زاري له سندنوله نبتتر له چنارونو

Abdullah turabi

My sweet country I shall keep this promise to you

اي زما خوږه وطنه خامخا دجوړوم داو عده پوره كوم

Mansoor Raaem

Beautiful Zabul, let me be an offering to your lush orchards, let me be a sacrifice to your plains

بنایسته بنکلی زابله ستا له شنوباغونه زارشم له دبتتو نه دی
قربان شم

Unknown

All of the country would be on fire for me, don't go

Tilla Gul

Very well Karzai, just flatter me a bit, and be my slave