

From Bilateralism to Cold War Conflict

*Pakistan's Engagement with State and Non-State Actors on its Afghan
Frontier, 1947-1989*

Submitted in fulfilment of the D.Phil in History

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Short Abstract

From Bilateralism to Cold War Conflict: Pakistan's Engagement with State and Non-State Actors on its Afghan Frontier, 1947-1989

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The purpose of this thesis is to assess Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan before and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. I argue that the nature of the relationship was transformed by the region becoming the centre of Cold War conflict, and show how Pakistan's role affected the development of the *mujahidin* insurgency against Soviet occupation.

My inquiry begins by assessing the historical determinants of the relationship, arising from the colonial legacy and local interpretations of the contested spheres of legitimacy proffered by state, tribe and Islam. I then map the trajectory of the relationship from Pakistan's independence in 1947, showing how the retreat of great power rivalry following British withdrawal from the subcontinent allowed for the framing of the relationship in primarily bilateral terms. The ascendance of bilateral factors opened greater possibilities for accommodation than had previously existed, though the relationship struggled to free itself of inherited colonial disputes, represented by the Pashtunistan issue. The most promising attempt

to resolve the dispute came to an end with the communist coup and subsequent Soviet invasion, which subsumed bilateral concerns under the framework of Cold War confrontation. Viewing the invasion as a major threat, Pakistan pursued negotiations for Soviet withdrawal, aligned itself with the US and gave clandestine support to the *mujahidin* insurgency. External support enhanced *mujahidin* military viability while exacerbating weaknesses in political organization and ideology. Soviet withdrawal in 1989 left an unresolved conflict. Faced with state collapse and turmoil across the border, heightened security concerns following loss of US support, and intensified links among non-state actors on both sides of the frontier, the Pakistan government drew on its recently gained experience of working through non-state actors to attempt to maintain its influence in Afghanistan. There would be no return to the relatively stable state-state ties prevailing before 1979.

Long Abstract

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On 24th December, 1979, the military forces of the USSR intervened in Afghanistan in a bid to prop up the increasingly isolated communist government in Kabul. The Soviet invasion set off political shockwaves across the region and in the United States. Fears of Soviet expansionism abounded, particularly in Pakistan, which shared an extensive and porous border with Afghanistan along the Durand Line; a border across which Afghan refugees were already beginning to cross in their hundreds of thousands. Pakistan soon pledged itself to a leading role in international efforts opposing the Soviet presence. As interlocutor in the United Nations brokered Geneva negotiations, Pakistan engaged directly with the Afghan government on the issue of Soviet withdrawal. Moreover, in concert with its allies, especially the United States and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan trained, provided sanctuary, and funnelled weapons and funds to the Afghan *mujahidin*, an array of groups engaged in armed insurgency against the Soviet occupation.

The successful negotiation of the Geneva Accords and the withdrawal of Soviet troops in February 1989 seemed compelling justification for a confrontational policy that had initially

been perceived as very high-risk by much of the Pakistani establishment and public.

Pakistan's emergence as the regional actor with the most influence in Afghanistan and the substantial military and economic aid it had received from the Western bloc during the war were significant ancillary benefits. Yet the overall picture was of a more mixed legacy. In the aftermath of the war, Pakistan saw its relationship with the US deteriorate to breaking point, while critics linked such phenomena as the proliferation of weapons and drugs in society, and the emergence of militant organizations, to the consequences of waging a clandestine war..

The bulk of the Afghan refugees remained, unwilling to return to a country where a new multi-sided civil war had begun among Kabul and various *mujahidin* factions, each with its own external backer. Pakistan found itself involved in continuing conflict in Afghanistan, which towards the end of 2001 prompted a new military intervention, this time by the US.

How did Pakistan perceive the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and why did it come to embrace a policy of negotiations and covert proxy war? Did its policies and their outcomes reflect historical trends in the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship or were they driven by an externally imposed Cold War logic? What role did Pakistan's involvement, along with that of the US and other actors, play in influencing the development of *mujahidin* political organization and ideology? Such questions offer important insights into the nature of the Afghan *jihād* and its mixed legacy, yet have still to be satisfactorily answered.

This neglect largely owes to the Afghan conflict being subsumed by US-centric narratives. In the first instance, Afghanistan is seen as the decisive battleground of the Cold War, the final repudiation of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' of Soviet intervention, with victory there catalyzing

the overthrow of communist governments by popular movements in Eastern Europe and the eventual disintegration of the USSR. In the second instance, Afghanistan is seen as symbolic of a post Cold War world where terrorists, civil wars and rogue states emerge as the new threats to US interests and efforts to maintain order. While not invalid, such narratives make impossible a full appreciation of the concerns that animated actors in Pakistan and Afghanistan, or of the ways in which their policies and politics responded to and were transformed by the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

There have been a number of studies which offer a much needed balance by focusing on political and historical developments in Afghanistan and assessing the Soviet intervention from within that perspective. However, despite Pakistan's centrality to the strategy to bring about Soviet withdrawal, few of these studies treat its role extensively, and issues related to its involvement are often poorly substantiated. There is a similar dearth of literature on Pakistan's bilateral ties with Afghanistan before 1979. Even among Pakistan specialists the relationship was understudied, regarded as secondary to the more important ties with India and the United States. Given this lack, it is unsurprising that attempts to situate the Soviet intervention in the context of the relationship remain tentative.

In this thesis, I address this gap in the scholarly literature by assessing Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan before and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. I argue that the nature of the relationship was transformed by the region becoming the centre of Cold War conflict, and show how Pakistan's role affected the development of the *mujahidin* insurgency against Soviet occupation.

My inquiry begins by assessing the historical determinants of the relationship, arising from the colonial legacy and local interpretations of the contested spheres of legitimacy proffered by state, tribe and Islam. I then map the trajectory of the relationship from Pakistan's independence in 1947, showing how the retreat of great power rivalry following British withdrawal from the subcontinent allowed for the framing of the relationship in primarily bilateral terms. The ascendance of bilateral factors opened greater possibilities for accommodation than had previously existed, though the relationship struggled to free itself of inherited colonial disputes, represented by the Pashtunistan issue. The most promising attempt to resolve the dispute came to an end with the communist coup and subsequent Soviet invasion, which subsumed bilateral concerns under the framework of Cold War confrontation. Viewing the invasion as a major threat, Pakistan pursued negotiations for Soviet withdrawal, aligned itself with the US and gave clandestine support to the *mujahidin* insurgency. External support enhanced *mujahidin* military viability while exacerbating weaknesses in political organization and ideology. Soviet withdrawal in 1989 left an unresolved conflict. Faced with state collapse and turmoil across the border, heightened security concerns following loss of US support, and intensified links among non-state actors on both sides of the frontier, the Pakistan government drew on its recently gained experience of working through non-state actors to attempt to maintain its influence in Afghanistan.

In the course of this analysis, my thesis contributes to the debate on a number of questions, including:

- What were the parameters within which the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship developed between 1947-79? To what extent were Pakistan's policies informed by their colonial heritage and to what extent by the country's new ethos as an anti-colonial independent nation-state? What does the Pashtunistan dispute reveal about contested notions of state sovereignty and legitimacy in the region?
- Did the Pakistan government view the Soviet invasion primarily as a security threat, or as a means to enhance its regional and international standing? How did it discuss and develop its policy options in response to the invasion? Did it push for confrontation or did it only reluctantly join the anti-Soviet alliance? Can its policies and their outcomes be explained with reference to historical trends in the bilateral relationship or are they an outcome of the region becoming the centre of a protracted Cold War conflict? What insights does this case have to offer us about the nature of Cold War interventions in the Third World in general?
- Did the Pakistan government try to control the politics of the *mujahidin* and, if so, what were its reasons for so doing? What was its contribution – and that of external supporters in general – to the development of *mujahidin* unity, political organization and ideology? What does their contribution reveal about the importance of political, as opposed to military, factors and the tension between indigenous legitimacy and external backing in insurgent and revolutionary warfare?
- Were local conceptions of Islam and the state and trends of political Islam in the region responsible for the casting of the conflict as an ideological, global *jihad* against communism? Or did the violence of the ensuing conflict in fact distort these trends from their historic emphases?

A relationship as complex as that between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the period 1947-89 cannot be fully captured by any single historiographic approach. In this thesis, I use a mix of approaches, varying my methods according to their appropriateness to the topic area under focus and the nature of available source material. In studying the state-state relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan from 1947-79, and that between Pakistan and the US in the 1980s, I rely mainly on official documents, previously untapped material from Pakistani and US government archives, and oral interviews. For assessing the historical antecedents of the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship, I consult texts on anthropology and intellectual history and make use of the key concept of legitimacy in my analysis.

In considering the effects of Pakistan's involvement on *mujahidin* political organization I rely on intelligence reports and accounts by the CIA and ISI, periodicals of *mujahidin* organizations and independent Afghan sources, interviews, and other material. To interpret this material, I rely on empirical and theoretical literature on revolutionary warfare and counterinsurgency to assess the movement in terms of key indicators of political organization. In assessing the role of ideology in the *jihad*, my point of comparison is with respect to other political Islamist movements and text-based intellectual history. Material I use includes the writings of *mujahidin* organizations and contemporary Islamist movements, interviews, and other sources. My approach borrows from political science in constructing a loose typology to identify different ideological strains in the resistance movement.

The thesis is organized as follows. In chapter one I set the stage by introducing the concept of legitimacy and investigating the historical ties between state, tribe and community-based relations, and Islam in the regions that would become Pakistan and Afghanistan. British policy towards the frontier Pashtun tribes, the efforts of Muslim revivalists to reassess the relations between Islam and the state, and the emergence of varied strands of nationalism in the late colonial era form an important part of the inheritance of the nascent Pakistani state.

In chapter two I trace the development of Pakistan's bilateral relations with Afghanistan from 1947-79. The inherited Pashtunistan dispute, symbolic of cross-border Pashtun ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan's northwest frontier regions, bedevils relations between the states. However, the retreat of imperial rivalry following the British withdrawal from the subcontinent opens up space for a working relationship with managed frictions. The most promising attempt to resolve the dispute founders when the communist takeover and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan thrusts the region once more into the centre of superpower competition.

In chapter three I show how Pakistani policymakers perceive the Soviet invasion as a major security threat and gradually develop, in fits and starts, a three-pronged policy response. This policy includes negotiations for Soviet withdrawal, clandestine military support to the *mujahidin* insurgency and a security pact with the United States.

In the following three chapters I depart from a chronological narrative to trace the outcomes of different aspects of these policies. In chapter four I characterize the Afghan *jihad* in terms

of key indicators of political organization, namely unity, linkages, parallel administration and negotiations, and analyze the effects of Pakistan's involvement in each case. Pakistan's role in influencing the politics of the *mujahidin* and trying to maintain control over the *jihad* emerges as a mixed one, driven by security concerns and structural divergence of interests between insurgent movement and host state. Similarly, aid from the US and Pakistan, while instrumental in maintaining the military viability of the movement, has the effect of reorienting *mujahidin* interests from indigenous to foreign bases. Finally, Pakistan's role in international negotiations, while arguably unavoidable given Soviet-Kabul objections, discourages the *mujahidin* from developing their own negotiating strategy.

In chapter five I examine the ideology of the *jihad*, showing that while there is considerable exchange between Afghan and foreign – Pakistani, Arab and other – influences, they never develop into a coherent political vision. By the end of the war, there remains a mishmash of different ideological tendencies which, while able to agree on the goal of driving out Soviet forces, lack any consensus on what the future 'Islamic' order entails.

In chapter six I trace the development of the Pakistan-US relationship in the 1980s, showing that, despite protestations to the contrary, it is driven not by a broad strategic understanding but by the specific concerns and circumstances resulting from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Underlying apprehensions, regarding common strategic interests, US reliability and Pakistan's nuclear program, remain unresolved, foreshadowing the breakup of the relationship after the Soviet withdrawal.

Finally, in the conclusion I draw together the findings of earlier chapters to analyze the period of Soviet withdrawal and the resulting mixed legacy of the *jihad*. I show how the collapse of state authority, the devastating effects of the war, *mujahidin* organizational and ideological weaknesses, and the flawed nature of the final settlement all contribute to continuing conflict in Afghanistan. Turmoil across the border, intensified links between non-state actors on both sides, the Pakistani state's experience of pursuing its interests through non-state actors, and its heightened security concerns following the loss of US support, all compel continued Pakistani involvement in internal politics in Afghanistan. The Soviet withdrawal thus leaves a relationship very different from the relatively stable state-state ties prevailing before 1979.

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Undoubtedly, all my teachers, family, friends and mentors down the years have affected my intellectual development in one way or another, and so can claim some credit (or blame) for this dissertation. Listing everyone, however, may not be the most practical or even a possible approach. So let me begin by begging your indulgence if your name does not appear in the following pages. Your role is not diminished by my failure to mention it, and there is after all some virtue in being an unsung hero. But allow me to mention as many of those who have contributed most directly to this project as I can.

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support at several junctures. In the final months before submission, he stepped in as a secondary supervisor to help see the project through to its conclusion.

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My interviewees were extremely generous with their time and their insights. Many helped in a number of ways besides answering my questions. Often, they put me in contact with additional people to interview; some shared books or documents. Fida Yunas gifted me an

entire set of all the books he had written on Afghanistan. I have listed most of their names in the bibliography; the wishes of those who preferred to remain anonymous have been respected. Without their contribution, there would have been far too many gaps and unanswered questions in this thesis. Here, I must also thank Loren John, who transcribed many of the interviews for me.

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All these contributions have been of immeasurable value, but the responsibility for the resulting work is mine. Where I have touched close to the truth in my arguments, then the credit for that, as for all insight and knowledge, belongs to Allah, and where I have erred, the fault is mine. And Allah knows best.

Note on Transliteration

There are at least four languages – Arabic, Farsi, Pashto and Urdu – from which names and terms regularly appear in this text. I use the standard transliteration format for each language, a task complicated by the fact that many words and names are common to multiple languages. Where possible, I prioritize ease of reading in transliteration. I omit all diacritical marks except ‘ or ’ for ‘*ayn*. Where a word or name is in common usage in the English language, I default to the common spelling, thus Ali instead of ‘Ali. However, where a writer or historical figure spells their name in a particular way, I default to that spelling for that individual. Plurals of words are denoted by adding an ‘s’ to the singular, thus *fatwas* instead of *fatawa*, *qadis* instead of *qada’*a. I make a few exceptions to this rule, such as ‘*ulama* or *mujahidin* or in the names of organizations such as the *Khudai Khidmatgaran*. In all quoted texts, I retain the original spelling.

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Introduction: Between Bilateralism and Great Power Rivalry

On 24th December, 1979, the military forces of the USSR intervened in Afghanistan in a bid to prop up the increasingly isolated communist government in Kabul. The Soviet invasion set off political shockwaves across the region and in the United States. Fears of Soviet expansionism abounded, particularly in Pakistan, which shared an extensive and porous border with Afghanistan along the Durand Line; a border across which Afghan refugees were already beginning to cross in their hundreds of thousands. Pakistan soon pledged itself to a leading role in international efforts opposing the Soviet presence. As interlocutor in the United Nations brokered Geneva negotiations, Pakistan engaged directly with the Afghan government on the issue of Soviet withdrawal. Moreover, in concert with its allies, especially the United States and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan trained, provided sanctuary, and funnelled weapons and funds to the Afghan *mujahidin*, an array of groups engaged in armed insurgency against the Soviet occupation.

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while critics linked such phenomena as the proliferation of weapons and drugs in society, and the emergence of militant organizations, to the consequences of waging a clandestine war. The bulk of the Afghan refugees remained, unwilling to return to a country where a new multi-sided civil war had begun among Kabul and various *mujahidin* factions, each with its own external backer. Pakistan found itself involved in continuing conflict in Afghanistan, which towards the end of 2001 prompted a new military intervention, this time by the US.

How did Pakistan perceive the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and why did it come to embrace a policy of negotiations and covert proxy war? Did its policies and their outcomes reflect historical trends in the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship or were they driven by an externally imposed Cold War logic? What role did Pakistan's involvement, along with that of the US and other actors, play in influencing the development of *mujahidin* political organization and ideology? Such questions offer important insights into the nature of the Afghan *jihād* and its mixed legacy, yet have still to be satisfactorily answered.

The neglect in part stems from the Afghan conflict being subsumed into the narrative of Cold War triumphalism. In this narrative, the withdrawal of Soviet troops was considered a decisive repudiation of the 'Brezhnev Doctrine,' by which the USSR claimed the right to intervene militarily to maintain communist governments in power.¹ The subsequent collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe and disintegration of the USSR reinforced this

¹ For example, in Peter W. Rodman, *More Precious than Peace: The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 8-10, 315-23, 349-50. For a re-evaluation of Brezhnev's role in the doctrine of Soviet intervention, see J.M. Gwozdzowski, "Soviet Doctrine Justifying Military Intervention from 1945 to 1989" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1994).

tendency to see the Afghan conflict as simply one element in Ronald Reagan's successful globalist strategy, which involved a renewed arms race and support for anti-communist regimes and insurgents across the Third World.² Thereafter, excepting the efforts of a few Afghanistan specialists, the continuing civil war in that country received limited attention in public or scholarly discourse. The situation changed only in the late 1990s, and especially after the attacks of 11th September, 2001, when the region came to be perceived in a more negative light as the epicentre of terrorism.³ The subsequent US military intervention in Afghanistan has since spawned a great volume of literature almost exclusively focused on contemporary US concerns of 'terrorism' and 'counterinsurgency.'⁴

While neither narrative is invalid, in a regional sense they are ahistorical. Each represents the dominant US perspective of the time while marginalizing regional perspectives. Afghanistan is treated first as a site of great power contestation and second as a 'problem' to be managed. Similarly, Pakistan, depicted earlier as a 'plucky,' if not altogether desirable, Cold War ally,⁵ has since the mid-2000s been portrayed as cynically manipulating both Afghanistan and an

² See John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), Rodman, *More Precious than Peace*, Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), and Milton Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House, 2003).

³ The latter characterization emerges before 9/11 in John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 1999). For a more recent example, see Frank Shanty, *The Nexus: International Terrorism and Drug Trafficking from Afghanistan* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011).

⁴ As one example, perusal of the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database for PhD dissertations related to Afghanistan in the last five years yields a significant proportion of theses related to US military strategy, state-building, security provision and other aspects of counterinsurgency doctrine. For an incisive critique of the limitations and blind spots of this type of scholarship, see Eqbal Ahmad, "Counterinsurgency," in Carolee Bengelsdorf, et al, eds., *The Selected Writings of Eqbal Ahmad* (Columbia University Press, 2006), 36-64. Though the nature of revolutionary liberation movements like the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF), with reference to which the article was written, differs in significant ways from that of the Taliban insurgents, Ahmad's arguments retain considerable validity.

⁵ For example, in George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War* (New York: Grove Press, 2003)

alternately naive or complicit US government, typically for Islamic extremist ends.⁶ Such appraisals make impossible a full appreciation of the concerns that animated actors in these countries, or of the ways in which their policies and politics responded to and were transformed by the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

Dissident scholarship and recent historiography have challenged the triumphalist narrative of the Reagan legacy and, indeed, the conceptualization of the Cold War more broadly.⁷ Scholars have employed a subaltern perspective to question the characterization of the Cold War era as a relatively peaceful one, and to highlight its structural continuities with the era of European imperialism.⁸ Such writings can also have their weaknesses, in a tendency to over-determine causes and employ a reductionist perspective that blames all failings on the manipulation of imperial powers.⁹ Undoubtedly, continuing dependencies inherited from the colonial legacy and the subsequent division of former colonies into rival camps in the Cold War did constrain their paths of development. It is hard to argue, for example, that Vietnam or Angola did not simply experience one form of imperial domination after another.

⁶ A prominent – and sensationalist – example is Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark, *Deception: Pakistan, the United States and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Walker, 2007).

⁷ For the latter, see Anders Stephanson, “Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of the Cold War,” *H-Diplo*, May 1996.

⁸ Eqbal Ahmad questions Gaddis’ positive appraisal of the Cold War by drawing a parallel with the European ‘Long Peace,’ where ‘peace’ was defined only by the absence of great power war and accompanied by extensive colonization and violence towards indigenous populations in Asia and Africa. Eqbal Ahmad, “The Cold War from the Standpoint of its Victims,” in Bengelsdorf et al, 219-27. Mahmood Mamdani focuses on the role of US foreign policy in suppressing Third World nationalist movements in Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA and the Global War Against Terror* (New Delhi: Pauls Press, 2005).

⁹ Mamdani’s otherwise insightful book evinces this tendency, particularly in his undifferentiated appraisal of ‘rightwing terrorist movements.’

Yet such factors were not necessarily deterministic. New norms and forms of identification, such as that provided by the international state system or the diffusion of nationalist ideology, did create new political spaces. Some countries were able to carve relatively independent economic paths. Moreover countries on the periphery of Cold War rivalry often found greater scope to determine their policies than those at the centre; as I will argue in this thesis, such was the case for Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan before 1979. At their best scholars complement an awareness of the constraints imposed by superpower rivalry with research into such phenomena as Third World nationalism, the political structures of the post-colonial state and the nature of local and regional politics engaged in by former colonies.¹⁰ Ascribing local actors with agency, while recognizing its constraints, they offer a deeper understanding of the interplay between political developments in a particular region and the Cold War.

In this thesis I examine one instance of regional political developments in South Asia. My purpose is to assess Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan before and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. I argue that the nature of this relationship was transformed by the region becoming the centre of Cold War conflict, and show how Pakistan's role affected the development of the *mujahidin* insurgency against Soviet occupation.

My inquiry begins with an assessment of the historical determinants of the relationship, arising from the colonial legacy and local interpretations of the contested spheres of

¹⁰ Odd Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War* makes a creditable attempt to utilize all these frames of reference in one magisterial work. Inevitably, some are better represented than others and the study has been criticized as an elite history, but is nonetheless impressive in scope and depth. See Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

legitimacy proffered by state, tribe and Islam. I then map the trajectory of the relationship from Pakistan's independence in 1947, showing how the retreat of great power rivalry following British withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent allowed for the framing of the relationship in primarily bilateral terms. The ascendance of bilateral factors opened greater possibilities for accommodation than had previously existed, though the relationship struggled to free itself of inherited colonial disputes, represented in this case by the Pashtunistan issue. The most promising attempt to resolve the dispute came to an end with the communist coup and subsequent Soviet invasion, which subsumed bilateral concerns under the framework of Cold War confrontation. Viewing the invasion as a major threat, Pakistan pursued negotiations for Soviet withdrawal, aligned itself with the US and gave clandestine support to the *mujahidin* insurgency. External support enhanced *mujahidin* military viability while exacerbating weaknesses in political organization and ideology. The withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 left an unresolved conflict. Faced with state collapse and turmoil across the border, heightened security concerns following loss of US support, and intensified links among non-state actors on both sides of the frontier, the Pakistan government drew on its recently gained experience of working through non-state actors to attempt to maintain its influence in Afghanistan. There would be no return to the relatively stable state-state ties prevailing before 1979.

Literature on the Soviet Intervention

Existing literature on the Soviet intervention falls into several categories. Two of these have already been discussed: the first fall into the grand narrative of US Cold War strategy, the second into that of contemporary concerns of terrorism and counterinsurgency. A third

category focuses on Soviet policies in Afghanistan and the reasons for the Soviet invasion, utilizing documents recently made available in Russian and East European archives and private collections. Such is the thrust of the research facilitated by the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, D.C. Examples include Artemy Kalinovsky's "The Blind Leading the Blind," which offers the first substantial analysis of the role of Soviet advisors in the counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan.¹¹ Aleksandr Lyakhovskiy uses a variety of primary sources, including extensive oral interviews with key Soviet participants, to construct the most detailed account, from the Soviet perspective, of the events leading to the Soviet invasion and the Soviet assassination of the communist Afghan President Hafizullah Amin.¹² In another paper, former KGB archivist Vasiliy Mitrokhin details the historical involvement of the KGB in Afghanistan.¹³ Such research was highlighted in the conference "Towards an International History of the War in Afghanistan, 1979-1989," organized by the centre on 29-30 April, 2002, which brought academics together with key participants from both sides of the US-Soviet divide. These efforts by the Woodrow Wilson Center, as well as those by a number of other scholars, have shed further light on the 'other' superpower perspective.¹⁴

¹¹ Artemy Kalinovsky, "The Blind Leading the Blind: Soviet Advisors, Counter-Insurgency and Nation-Building in Afghanistan," *CWIHP Working Paper Series*, no. 60, January 2010. For Kalinovsky's assessment of Soviet politics relating to the issue of withdrawal, see Artemy Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹² For a translated, excerpted version, see Aleksandr Antonovich Lyakhovskiy, "Inside the Soviet Invasion and Seizure of Kabul, December 1979," *CWIHP Working Paper Series*, no. 51, January 2007.

¹³ Vasiliy Mitrokhin, "The KGB in Afghanistan," *ibid*, no. 40, July 2009.

¹⁴ Other works in this category include Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan 1979-1989* (Oxford: OUP, 2011) and, from a military history perspective, Lester W. Grau, ed., *The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996).

A fourth category of literature offers a much needed balance by focusing on political and historical developments in Afghanistan and assessing the Soviet intervention from within that perspective. Barnett Rubin's seminal study explains Afghanistan's fragmentation and external aid dependence with reference to the nature of its integration into the international state system; the state's reliance on a rentier strategy for extending its power is subsequently copied by communist and later *mujahidin* insurgents.¹⁵ The French Orientalist Olivier Roy brings a rich knowledge of Middle Eastern societies and Islamic history to his study of the Soviet intervention. Although often less than well-sourced, his account provides an important comparative perspective from which to view the conflict.¹⁶ Other notable scholars in this category include Louis Dupree, Gilles Dorronsoro, Hassan Kakar, William Maley and, from an anthropological perspective, David Edwards.¹⁷

Yet despite Pakistan's centrality to the strategy to bring about Soviet withdrawal, its role receives only limited treatment in the existing literature. Issues related to Pakistan's involvement usually appear as asides in studies focused on the US or Afghanistan, and are often poorly substantiated. Even quality works like Rubin's *Fragmentation of Afghanistan* are not immune to this failing. Rubin's brief appraisal of Pakistani attitudes towards *mujahidin* unity, for example, assumes a unitary Pakistani actor with a well-defined policy to prevent the

¹⁵ See Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). The Islam motif is also central in Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (Richmond: Curzon 1995).

¹⁷ For example, Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending: Afghanistan, 1979 to the Present* (London: Hurst, 2005) and M. Hassan Kakar, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-82* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

emergence of a unified *mujahidin* organization.¹⁸ In fact, as I will argue in chapter four, the picture was a more complex one, with impulses in the Pakistani government pulling in different directions against a backdrop of *mujahidin* disunity and concerns about Soviet retaliatory measures.

There do exist some memoirs and participant accounts which focus on certain aspects of Pakistan's role. For example, Riaz M. Khan provides an insightful account of the Geneva negotiations in *Untying the Afghan Knot*.¹⁹ Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf gives an insider's perspective on how Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) interacted with and abetted the *mujahidin* in their insurgency.²⁰ But holistic studies of the period, placing it in the context of the historical Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship, are rare. One of the few such works is Rizwan Hussain's recent *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan*. Broad in scope, covering the period from 1947-2001, the study situates Pakistan's policies in a realist paradigm of state insecurity in an anarchic environment, arguing that Pakistan's power elite perceived support for militant 'Islamic' movements in Afghanistan as a means by which to bolster the security of the Pakistani state.²¹ However, Hussain's study is handicapped by his lack of access to Pakistani archival sources, forcing him to rely on published material and US sources.²² As a consequence, he overstates the

¹⁸ Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 198-99.

¹⁹ See Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot: Negotiating Soviet Withdrawal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

²⁰ See Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin, *The Battle for Afghanistan: The Soviets Versus the Mujahideen During the 1980s* (London: Pen & Sword Books, 2007).

²¹ Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2010).

²² Hussain assumes – and this is a common assumption among researchers with whom I have spoken – that Pakistani archival documents are, in general, classified and inaccessible. However, while it is true that access to

importance of Cold War politics in determining relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the 1947-78 period. By contrast, my own research in the Pakistan national archives suggests that bilateral factors were dominant until at least the Saur Revolution, if not until the beginning of the Soviet invasion.

There is a similar dearth of literature relating to bilateral ties before 1979. Even among Pakistan specialists the relationship was understudied, regarded as secondary to the far more important relationships with India and the United States. It usually appears as a short section in books on Pakistan's foreign policy,²³ or in the memoirs of retired diplomats and ambassadors.²⁴ Given this lack, it is unsurprising that attempts to situate the Soviet intervention in the context of the relationship remain tentative.

My focus on Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan from 1947-89 thus fills an important gap in the scholarly literature on the Soviet intervention, as well as providing some insights into Pakistan's foreign policy. In doing so, my thesis contributes to the debate on a number of questions related, but not limited, to Pakistan's involvement, including:

- What were the parameters within which the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship developed between 1947-79? To what extent were Pakistan's policies informed by

some of the concerned archives requires special permission which is rarely granted, such is not the case with the files available at the National Documentation Centre (NDC) in Islamabad, many of which are declassified. For more on my use of these documents, see the Appendix.

²³ For example, in Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 1947-2009: A Concise History* (Oxford: OUP, 2010) or Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy* (Oxford: OUP, 2001).

²⁴ An insightful account from the Afghan diplomatic perspective is that of Abdul Samad Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan: An Insider's Account* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988). For some recollections from a Pakistani perspective, see Mohammad Aslam Khan Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 65-109.

their colonial heritage and to what extent by the country's new ethos as an anti-colonial independent nation-state? What does the Pashtunistan dispute reveal about contested notions of state sovereignty and legitimacy in the region?

- Did the Pakistan government view the Soviet invasion primarily as a security threat, or as a means to enhance its regional and international standing? How did it discuss and develop its policy options in response to the invasion? Did it push for confrontation or did it only reluctantly join the anti-Soviet alliance? Can its policies and their outcomes be explained with reference to historical trends in the bilateral relationship or are they an outcome of the region becoming the centre of a protracted Cold War conflict? What insights does this case have to offer us about the nature of Cold War interventions in the Third World in general?
- Did the Pakistan government try to control the politics of the *mujahidin* and, if so, what were its reasons for so doing? What was its contribution – and that of external supporters in general – to the development of *mujahidin* unity, political organization and ideology? What does their contribution reveal about the importance of political, as opposed to military, factors and the tension between indigenous legitimacy and external backing in insurgent and revolutionary warfare?
- Were local conceptions of Islam and the state and trends of political Islam in the region responsible for the casting of the conflict as an ideological, global *jihad* against communism? Or did the violence of the ensuing conflict in fact distort these trends from their historic emphases?

A relationship as complex as that between Pakistan and Afghanistan over the period 1947-89 cannot be adequately captured by any single historiographic approach. In this thesis, I use a mix of approaches, varying my methods according to their appropriateness to the topic area under focus and the nature of available source material. In studying the state-state relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan from 1947-79, I rely on previously untapped material from Pakistani government archives, including cabinet documents and reports by foreign ministry and frontier officials. This material is supplemented by oral interviews as well as the memoirs and speeches of Afghan diplomats. I adopt a modified diplomatic history approach, conditioned by recognition of the limitations of the nation-state model, especially when applied to understanding the politics of post-colonial states. For a fuller explanation of these politics, I delve into colonial and pre-colonial history and rely on the key concept of legitimacy to understand how contingent the state's claim to authority was. Here, texts on anthropology and intellectual history offer insight into the nature of contesting allegiances among state, tribe and community-based relations, and Islam.

Additionally, diplomatic history is effective in capturing the changes in Pakistan's relations with the US during the 1980s, and how these ties were affected by the Afghan conflict. I rely on US documents from the executive branch, Congress and the CIA, minutes of ambassador's meetings, and oral interviews with Pakistani diplomats and officials in constructing this history. Notions of Cold War geopolitics and Pakistani state insecurity, in a realist paradigm, emerge prominently from these discussions.

However, the diplomatic history approach founders entirely when considering how Pakistan's policies and Pakistani and international aid affected the Afghan resistance movement. Official records refer obliquely, if at all, to the *mujahidin* and many of the relevant documents remain classified. Sources I have been able to access include intelligence reports and accounts by the CIA and ISI, the periodicals of *mujahidin* organizations, publications produced by independent Afghan sources, interviews, and other material. To interpret this material, I use a comparative and theoretical approach. I rely on empirical and theoretical literature on revolutionary and guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency to provide a basis for assessing the resistance movement and the role of its external supporters in terms of key indicators of political organization.

Similarly, I use a comparative approach when assessing the role of ideology in the *jihad*. Here the point of comparison is with respect to other political Islamist movements and text-based intellectual history, albeit understood within the socio-political context of Afghanistan, where ideology remained only one – and by no means the most important – indicator of identity. Material I use includes the writings of *mujahidin* organizations and contemporary Islamist movements, interviews, and other sources. My approach borrows from political science in constructing a loose typology to identify different ideological strains in the resistance movement.

As my focus is on Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, I have mainly consulted English and Urdu language sources. This focus does not preclude engagement with *mujahidin* and Soviet perspectives, however, as I have accessed a considerable array of documents and material

produced by these actors which are either originally in English or have subsequently been translated from Pashto, Dari or Russian. These materials are listed in the bibliography and are sufficient for a holistic representation of these actors, within the context of this thesis.

A more detailed discussion of some of the key primary sources used in this thesis, how they were employed and what was not available, is contained in the Appendix.

Organization

The dissertation is organized as follows. In chapter one I set the stage by introducing the concept of legitimacy and investigating the historical ties between state, tribe and community-based relations, and Islam in the regions that would become Pakistan and Afghanistan. British policy towards the frontier Pashtun tribes, the efforts of Muslim revivalists to reassess the relations between Islam and the state, and the emergence of varied strands of nationalism in the late colonial era form an important part of the inheritance of the nascent Pakistani state.

In chapter two I trace the development of Pakistan's bilateral relations with Afghanistan from 1947-79. The Pashtunistan question, symbolic of cross-border Pashtun ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan's northwest frontier regions, bedevils relations between the states. However, the retreat of imperial rivalry opens up space for a working relationship with managed frictions. The most promising attempt to resolve the dispute founders when the Soviet intervention thrusts the region once more into the centre of superpower competition.

In chapter three I show how Pakistani policymakers perceive the Soviet invasion as a major security threat and gradually develop, in fits and starts, a three-pronged policy response. This policy includes negotiations for Soviet withdrawal, clandestine military support to the *mujahidin* insurgency and a security pact with the United States.

In the following three chapters I depart from a chronological narrative to trace the outcomes of different aspects of these policies. In chapter four I characterize the Afghan *jihad* in terms of key indicators of political organization, namely unity, linkages, parallel administration and negotiations. Pakistan's role in influencing the politics of the *mujahidin* and trying to maintain control over the *jihad* emerges as a mixed one, driven by security concerns and structural divergence of interests between insurgent movement and host state. Similarly, Pakistan and US aid, while instrumental in maintaining the military viability of the movement, has the effect of partially reorienting *mujahidin* interests from indigenous to foreign bases. Finally, Pakistan's role in international negotiations, while arguably unavoidable given Soviet-Kabul objections, discourages the *mujahidin* from developing their own negotiating strategy.

In chapter five I examine the ideology of the *jihad*, showing that while there is considerable exchange between Afghan and foreign – Pakistani, Arab and other – influences, they never develop into a coherent political vision. By the end of the war, there remains a mishmash of different ideological tendencies which, while able to agree on the goal of driving out Soviet forces, lack any consensus on what the future 'Islamic' order entails.

In chapter six I trace the development of the Pakistan-US relationship in the 1980s, showing that, despite protestations to the contrary, it is driven not by a broad strategic understanding but by the specific concerns and circumstances resulting from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Underlying apprehensions, regarding common strategic interests, US reliability and Pakistan's nuclear program, remain unresolved, foreshadowing the breakup of the relationship after the Soviet withdrawal.

Finally, in the conclusion I draw together the findings of earlier chapters to analyze the period of Soviet withdrawal and the resulting mixed legacy of the *jihad*. I show how the collapse of state authority, the devastating effects of the war, *mujahidin* organizational and ideological weaknesses, and the flawed nature of the final settlement all contribute to continuing conflict in Afghanistan. Turmoil across the border, intensified links between non-state actors on both sides, the Pakistani state's experience of pursuing its interests through non-state actors, and its heightened security concerns following the loss of US support, all compel continued Pakistani involvement in internal politics in Afghanistan. The Soviet withdrawal thus leaves a relationship very different from the relatively stable state-state ties prevailing before 1979.

1. The Colonial Legacy: State, Tribe and Islam

International relations literature in its realist and neorealist paradigms has historically taken the nation-state as the fundamental unit of the international system, with areas of contestation occurring between states, each state assumed to be representative of the interests and views of its varied populace.²⁵ Such assumptions are inherent also to the modern international system of laws and norms that has sought to regulate relations between states, from its Westphalian origins in Europe to its global application in the Charter of the United Nations.²⁶

Such models of nation-state legitimacy are simplifications and prove particularly problematic in areas of the postcolonial and developing world. The famous Weberian formulation of the state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory,”²⁷ applies only unevenly in such cases. Although the coercive power of the postcolonial state has increased substantially compared to pre-modern states, such states have often struggled to establish a monopoly on the use of force – and even more so to have this monopoly considered legitimate – when faced with resistance from tribes, regions, religious orders and other corporate groups that were historically independent of the

²⁵ See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

²⁶ It was only towards the end of the Cold War that the UN’s exclusive focus on inter-state relations and disputes was diluted by increasing involvement in peacekeeping in civil wars and arranging post-war transitional elections.

²⁷ Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: OUP, 1946), 78.

central government. The state's instruments of administration, monitoring and surveillance, although vastly expanded, have not always penetrated the lives of its citizens in places where the state has historically been absent: in rural areas and remote regions.²⁸ A similar problem underlies the other basic characteristic of the nation-state, namely the dissemination of nationalist ideology on the basis of shared values, language, history, religion and other factors.²⁹ Open to challenge even in the heart of Europe,³⁰ such nationalisms have been particularly questioned in the postcolonial world, where nascent nation-states, often formed with arbitrary boundaries through colonial encounters, have had to compete for the allegiance of their heterogeneous populace with more deep-rooted sources of legitimacy.

Afghan and especially Pakistani diplomats, trained in the European civil service ethos, typically conducted themselves as representatives of sovereign states with an unquestioned place in the modern international order. But the history of their relations did not begin with independence; the circumstances of formation of the two states during the British colonial period and the historic relations between peoples in the region shaped the parameters by which relations between the states would unfold. The nature of state interactions with the Pashtun tribes of the frontier and the changing conceptions of the role of Islam in the state formed an important part of Pakistan's inheritance in its relations with Afghanistan.

²⁸ In China and Vietnam, it was precisely this absence of the state in rural areas that permitted communist revolutionaries to create successful clandestine organizations and politically mobilize the peasants in support of revolution.

²⁹ For the cohesion of such factors in the creation of nationalisms in a diverse array of settings, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

³⁰ As an ideology that seeks to define the nation in terms of a set of common origins and attributes, nationalism is inherently exclusive, at least implicitly rejecting those who do not share the same origin or attributes. As such, the nation-state model has particularly struggled to accommodate the concerns of ethnic, regional and religious minorities: prominent European examples include the Northern Ireland conflict, the Basque separatist movement, and the growing concerns of European states with their Muslim minority populations.

In this chapter, I examine the main aspects of this historical legacy. I begin by discussing the concept of legitimacy and reviewing some of the problems inherent in the discussion of such constructs as ‘tribe’ and ‘Islam.’ I then examine each alternate source of legitimacy in turn, showing how both tribe and Islam variously challenged, coexisted with or supported the state. I conclude by returning to the question of nationalism, discussing how, in its anti-colonial form, nationalism interacted with existing sources of legitimacy to produce a variety of movements that challenged the colonial state while retaining different conceptions of the postcolonial order.

Legitimacy as a Frame of Reference

Max Weber defined legitimacy as the “inner justification” by which men submit to domination, and went on to identify three “pure types” of legitimacy: ‘traditional,’ ‘charismatic’ and ‘legal.’³¹ In sociology and political science the concept is generally associated with the justified – not necessarily just – possession of power, most commonly by the state; hence such terms as ‘legitimate elected government’ and ‘crisis of legitimacy.’³² In this respect, there is a broad distinction, both in degree and type, between what we can call

³¹ The traditional type of legitimacy is based on obedience to longstanding authority and custom; charismatic on personal devotion to a leader; and legal on belief in the validity of legal statute and rationally created rules. Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” 78-79.

³² For variations of this theme, see John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) and David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1991). Eqbal Ahmad, who has written extensively on the crisis of postcolonial governments and the central task of revolutionary movements in establishing their own legitimacy, defines legitimacy as “that crucial and ubiquitous factor in politics which invests power with authority. It comes to states and other institutions of power when their constituents recognize their claim to authority in some principles or sources beyond their mastery of the means of coercion or when citizens actively and meaningfully participate in the process of government.” Eqbal Ahmad, “From Potato Sack to Potato Mash: The Contemporary Crisis of the Third World,” in Bengelsdorf et al, 120.

‘passive’ and ‘active’ legitimacy. Passive legitimacy is inherently limited, based on acceptance of a ruling elite, dynasty or tradition, typically by virtue of established custom. It is usually dependent on very limited involvement of the state in the lives of its citizens or subjects, and does not imply any strong value commitment of citizens for the state or its ideology.³³ By contrast, active legitimacy implies that the citizens actively identify with the state and its ideology, consider state involvement in their lives to be normal and are typically willing to accept a degree of hardship and sacrifice for the state. The former type of legitimacy is characteristic of the pre-modern state; the latter is claimed by modern nation-states, though not always successfully.

In considering alternate sources of legitimacy to the state, it is necessary to broaden this discussion beyond the characteristic of possession of power to how legitimacy is related to questions of justification, belief and identity. We can characterize different sources of legitimacy as providing overlapping, but distinct, frames of reference for society. Thus, it is possible for communities, or even individuals, to draw on a source of legitimacy such as tribe or Islam in evaluating or ascribing meaning to actions (for example, ‘is the state’s policy towards us justified?’), situations (‘is he the rightful king?’) and claims (‘is the government Islamic?’), and to use it as a justification for their own conduct (‘we will obey – or not obey – the state *because...*’) Clearly, even when adhering to a single frame of reference, individuals may evaluate a situation differently; more commonly, they will have multiple sources of legitimacy and can choose (consciously or subconsciously) which to deploy. It follows that by

³³ This is similar to Weber’s ‘traditional’ type, but note that the latter makes no claim about the degree of legitimacy. While for the majority of the populace the pre-modern state commanded only passive legitimacy, that may not have been true of traditional elites enmeshed in dynastic power politics.

characterizing these sources of legitimacy as ‘alternate’ we are making no claim that they are inherent substitutes for or in opposition to each other. State and other forms of legitimacy may serve as complements or simply coexist with each other and only occasionally be in conflict; equally, the state may attempt to co-opt other forms into its official ideology. This point will be explored further when dealing with each source of legitimacy in turn.

Orientalism and Dissident Scholarship

In discussing such constructs as ‘Islam’ and ‘tribe’ there are important conceptual pitfalls to avoid. At one level, since the wide-ranging debates stirred by the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978, it is no longer possible to ignore the political context in which methods for studying non-Western societies, and value judgments about them, have been developed. Said’s basic argument was that the academic discipline of Orientalism, as it developed, was closely interlinked with the practice of European imperialism and often reinforced and provided the intellectual content and justification for imperialism.³⁴ In particular, Orientalism cast the ‘Oriental’ in essentialist terms, defining his unchanging nature in opposition, and generally in inferior terms, to the ‘normal’ standard of the Western man. While the Oriental could not be treated as an equal, he could nevertheless be observed and, to some extent, understood. The aim of much of Orientalist scholarship was to represent the Oriental, who was considered incapable of representing himself, to the European colonial

³⁴ Said traces the origins of modern Orientalism to Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt, for which the French Emperor relied heavily on the work of the Comte de Volney, a French traveller whose book *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie* aimed to record the state of everything he encountered in those countries. Napoleon founded the *Institut d’Egypte* to carry out studies on Egypt and Egyptians during his expedition, thus providing him with a source of enhancing that knowledge of the Orient that he felt so essential to exercise power. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), 80-83.

administrator, so that he could be better governed; indeed, the categories of administrator and Orientalist often overlapped.³⁵ When the United States embarked upon a sustained global foreign policy after the end of the Second World War, it inherited responsibility for many of the colonial domains from its European Cold War allies. At the same time, its foreign service and area studies programs, keen to gain knowledge of those parts of the world, acquired not a few European Orientalists, and not a few of the same prejudices and stereotypes that had buttressed European imperialism.³⁶

Said's critics have charged him both with making sweeping judgments on a varied field of Orientalist discourse, and with denying that some degree of essentialization may be necessary for the academic study of what are, admittedly, disparate phenomena.³⁷ Nonetheless, his critique was highly influential and became an important part of a broad trend of dissident scholarship in the 1980s. A younger generation of scholars gained influence in area studies and related disciplines in the United States, and sought to distance itself from the confines and priorities imposed by US foreign policy on the field. Meanwhile, in Europe, the collapse of the colonial empires loosened the bonds between imperialism and scholarly Orientalism and allowed new disciplinary and methodological approaches to flourish.³⁸

³⁵ For example in the person of the British 'agent-Orientalist,' "Lawrence, Bell, Philby, Storrs, Hogarth – during and after World War I took over both the role of expert-adventurer-eccentric...and the role of colonial authority, whose position is in a central place next to the indigenous ruler..." Ibid, 245-46. The ideological justification of governing the Oriental for his betterment is encapsulated in the British phrase 'the white man's burden,' and its French equivalent '*mission civilisatrice*.'

³⁶ For a discussion of these developments, see Zachary Lockman, *Contending Versions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 121-47.

³⁷ For an example from a non-Orientalist perspective, see Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992).

³⁸ Prominent scholars in this wave include the Egyptian communist Anwar Abdel Malek, the Moroccan Abdallah Laroui, French scholars like Maxime Rodinson who sought to develop approaches to the Middle East that moved

However, these developments must be qualified by the difficulty of extricating scholarship from the assumptions of modes of thought dominant for more than a century; by the emergence of right-wing institutes and think tanks that seek to fill the gap created by the distancing of many academic faculties from government agendas; and by a public media discourse that rehashes some of the worst tropes of Orientalist discourse without any of the nuance possessed by scholarly Orientalists. At their crudest, such portrayals equate tribalism with ancient, indissoluble ethnic hatreds and civil war,³⁹ while Islam is equated with fanaticism, holy war and terrorism.⁴⁰ Hence, it is necessary to proceed with caution, recognizing the biases induced in scholarship and public perception by political agendas of opposition and managerial goals of governance and maintaining power. That religion, culture and tradition exert an influence on both the past and present of ‘Oriental’ peoples is a truth that should not be denied; that this influence is always in a specific direction (with reference to an unspecified, ‘modern,’ ‘West’) and is constant, subject to neither change nor reinterpretation, is an assertion that must be challenged.

Tribe, Kinship and Community

The Pashtun Tribes

beyond traditional Orientalism, the Oxford historian Albert Hourani, and the Egyptian economist Samir Amin, who was developing a framework for understanding global development that challenged the assumptions of modernization theory. See Lockman, *Contending Versions of the Middle East*, 148-50.

³⁹ This portrayal is particularly common in US media coverage of conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, for example in the op-eds of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman.

⁴⁰ For example, during coverage of the Iranian revolution. See Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (London: Vintage Books, 1997), 81-133.

As with European scholarship in much of Africa and Asia, early accounts of the Pashtun tribes were written by British administrators and scholars whose activities were, consciously or unconsciously, informed by the British colonial project in the region. Meticulous in their attention to detail, these accounts extensively describe Pashtun tribal life, concepts of agnatic rivalry and honour, and the centrality of genealogy in shaping identity and social status.⁴¹ Such writers often found a great deal to admire in Pashtun culture, and in this appraisal we may find the romanticization of the modern urbanized man for the ‘simple’ life of an imaginary past. Lila Abu-Lughod, commenting on studies of tribal life in the Middle East region, observes that “A certain admiration tinges descriptions of the fierce independence attributed to those in segmentary societies... These are real men, free from the emasculating authority of the state and polite society... these tribesmen represent romantic political ideals of freedom from authority and loyalty to democracy.”⁴² Yet sympathetic or not, these writers evince a tendency to view the tribes from a state-centred perspective. In this view, the Pashtun tribes are seen as on the periphery of civilization, inhabiting an ancient world that is just waiting for – or standing in the way of – development and modernization. Thus Oliver, advocating the extension of imperial administration to the tribal areas, can state that “The Biloch, the Khattak, or the Yusafzai, has lost none of his manly characteristics because he has exchanged *anarchy* for *civilized government*.”⁴³

⁴¹ Good examples include Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans* (Karachi: OUP, 1983), William Kerr Frazer-Tytler, *Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia* (Oxford: OUP, 1950), and Edward E. Oliver, *Across the Border or Pathan and Biloch* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1890)

⁴² Lila Abu-Lughod, “Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 18, 1989, 286.

⁴³ Oliver, *Across the Border*, 10. My italics.

Looking out from the inside yields a different perspective. The anthropologist Jon Anderson argues, based on his study of Ghilzai Pashtuns, that in the tribal Pashtun worldview, tribal lineage and identification is at the centre of life and it is the state that is on the periphery.⁴⁴ Tribal society, far from being anarchic, is simply an alternative normative order, with its own customs and structures for regulating social behaviour. Anthropologists, relying both on earlier British efforts and on their own field experience, have identified the main features of this society as being consistent with segmentary lineage theory. Pashtun tribes (*qaum*) are subdivided into ever smaller segments organized by patrilineal descent, ranging from sub-lineages (*khel*) down to the individual household (*kor*). Rivalry among cousins (*tarburwali*) is a common feature between segments at the same level of descent, but more closely related segments are expected, by this organizing principle, to band together against more distant relatives.⁴⁵ These rivalries are regulated by a common code, *pashtunwali*, which acts both as a source of ethical values, such as honour (*nang*), hospitality (*melmastia*) and redress (*badal*), and supplies institutions for resolving conflict (the *jirga*, an assembly of tribal elders, often extended to all adult male members of the tribe). Conduct is essential to standing in society; the idiom is to ‘do Pashto’ rather than to ‘be Pashtun.’ Tribal structures are egalitarian and non-hierarchical; leadership is acquired rather than inherited. A *khan* remains respected as

⁴⁴ Jon W. Anderson, “Khan and Khel: Dialectics of Pakhtun Tribalism,” in Richard Tapper, ed., *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), 119-49. For a more extensive treatment, see Jon W. Anderson, *Doing Pakhtu: Social Organization of the Ghilzai Pakhtun* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1979).

⁴⁵ One of the early accounts of *pashtunwali* is in Fredrick Barth, *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans* (London: Athlone, 1959). Barth’s characterizations of the tribal code as immutable and of feuding as endemic to tribal culture have since come under criticism.

leader only so long as he is able to “feed the people” and “tie the knot of the tribe” (settle differences and disputes).⁴⁶

Rob Hager attempts to explain this normative order and its relations with the state in terms of different jurisdictional bases for authority.⁴⁷ While the state claims exclusive jurisdiction over a defined territory, the tribe claims exclusive jurisdiction over a defined people, or kinship group.⁴⁸ Interaction between tribe and state thus consists of a series of accommodations and negotiations, in which the state tries to move from the periphery to the centre, while the tribe attempts to limit the expansion of state administration, while obtaining desirable services, such as subsidies. By this argument, it is the dual attempt to preserve autonomy and obtain benefits, more than conviction in state legitimacy, which has characterized Pashtun tribal interactions with the Afghan and British – later Pakistani – states. Akbar Ahmed points out that, while these states have often managed to use the tribes towards their own ends, the reverse has just as often been true. He recalls how a Pashtun characterization of the imperial ‘Great Game,’ in which the Pashtun tribes were supposed to be the pawns, reverses the relationship by putting themselves in the centre: “We are like men with two jealous wives – both pulling us in different directions; sometimes we prefer one, sometimes the other.”⁴⁹

The state-centred perspective of earlier writers was not simply an abstract question of preference; a charge which would be applicable to most academics. In their predilection for

⁴⁶ Jon W. Anderson, “Khan and Khel,” 133-41.

⁴⁷ Rob Hager, “State, Tribe and Empire in Afghan Inter-Polity Relations,” in Richard Tapper, 83-118.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Akbar S. Ahmed, “Tribes and States in Waziristan,” *ibid*, 194.

classification – of a tribe’s genealogies, its component sub-tribes, the alleged characteristics of its tribesmen – we can identify a concern with governance. For the imperial administration, precise knowledge was deemed as critical both to maintaining power and to its ideological justification of improving the welfare of colonial subjects, and in the process British administrators and scholars were prone to essentialize characteristics that were in fact more flexible and prone to change with time.⁵⁰ Later scholars often incorporated some of these assumptions into their work. Recently, however, scholars have tended to emphasize the fluidity and constructed nature of many of these identities; for example, how supposedly rigid categories such as lineage could expand according to political necessity. Segmentary lineage theory too has been challenged, and the notion of tribe itself as a meaningful category has come into question.⁵¹ A sense that such characterizations as that of the tribal code and society mentioned earlier are more descriptive of ideal types than of lived experience has become increasingly common. The issue of how far anthropological observations regarding one tribal subset can be generalized also remains a concern.⁵² A full discussion of these debates is beyond the scope of this study. For our purposes going forward, the following observations should be borne in mind.

First, tribal ideals and tribal structures were malleable, open to individual interpretation and evolution. This process is evident among tribesmen who left the tribal social space for towns

⁵⁰ Elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent, we see a similar process with British codification of religious laws that had historically been understood and applied with considerable individual agency and had varied in different times and places.

⁵¹ See Abu-Lughod, “Zones of Study,” 280-87, and Richard Tapper, ed., *Conflict of Tribe and State*, 42-75.

⁵² Barth’s study was of Pashtuns in Swat, Jon Anderson’s of Ghilzai Pashtuns, Akbar Ahmed has written on Pashtuns in Waziristan; each of these regions has historically different relationships with the state.

and cities, but even within tribal zones it was common to deploy alternate frames of reference in viewing events and responding to situations. This could include choosing among different imperatives from within tribal models or from sources of legitimacy at least partially extrinsic to tribe, such as Islam. Second, tribe nonetheless exerted a strong ideational force that did substantially influence behaviour. Even among recently detribalized communities more receptive to modern ideologies like communism and nationalism, there remained a tendency, particularly in times of crisis, to fall back upon tribal referents and ties of kinship. Finally, although separation between tribe and state was grounded in everyday experience, the degree of this separation would vary across tribes and over time.⁵³ In the early decades of their relationship both the Pakistani and Afghan states increased penetration of the tribal areas. Greater interaction allowed the state to extend its own legitimacy, but conversely also allowed for representation of tribal interests in government.⁵⁴

Kinship and Community Networks

Although the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship revolved in part around the question of state relationships with the Pashtun tribes, those tribes were not the only grouping to hold ambiguous attitudes towards the state. As mentioned earlier, the passive legitimacy of the pre-modern state rested on its limited involvement in society; separation from and suspicion of the state are phenomena that are historically more widespread than the question of state and

⁵³ See the following section on the tribal legitimacy of the Afghan state.

⁵⁴ See the examples of the Mahsud tribes' use of official networks to gain the upper hand over the rival Wazir and separately to subvert state policy in Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics in Muslim Society: Order and Conflict in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 70-79 and 123-26.

tribe.⁵⁵ Kinship and social networks formed an alternate and more immediate frame of reference not only for peasants in far-flung villages, but often also for urban city dwellers closer to the centres of power. The term *qaum*, used to denote a Pashtun tribal grouping, can in Afghanistan describe a variety of communities ranging from “tribe, clan, professional group[,],...caste[,],...religious group[,],...ethnic group[,],...village community or simply an extended family.”⁵⁶

There is no clear-cut distinction, but tribal groups can be differentiated by greater emphasis on the importance of descent and by specifically evolved codes and institutions (in the Pashtun case, *pashtunwali* and the *jirga*).⁵⁷ The weaker or nonexistent role of these factors among non-tribal groups results in greater receptivity to modern ideology and organization. Absent such ideological influence, or sometimes even coexisting with it, the kinship or community network remains the most important referent and mode of organization.⁵⁸

However, even more so than tribe, such networks are open to constant evolution and interpretation. A number of ethnolinguistic groups are recognized in Afghanistan, with Pashtuns the most numerous, followed by Tajiks; other groups include Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kirghiz, Baluch, Aimaqs and Nuristanis.⁵⁹ However, neither language nor ethnicity is a reliable marker of identification. Dari, the Afghan dialect of Persian, is widely spoken

⁵⁵ Eqbal Ahmad, “From Potato Sack to Potato Mash,” 118-22.

⁵⁶ Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 12.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ These issues will be explored further in chapter four.

⁵⁹ For brief descriptions of these groups and their supposed origins, see Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2003).

throughout northern Afghanistan and in Kabul as a *lingua franca* by most ethnic groups, including native Turkic and Pashto speakers. Similarly, in the southern Kandahar region, Pashto is spoken by Shi'as, who elsewhere tend to be Dari-speaking.⁶⁰ As to ethnicity, Richard Tapper notes in his study of the Sar-i Pul region in northern Afghanistan that

For some groups – for example, Aimaqs, Tajiks, and Uzbaks, among whom descent is not ideologically important – locality and territorial ties appear to be critical; there is some evidence that a change of residence by a member of one of these groups into the territory of another leads quickly to a change of ethnic identity. However, Hazaras...are distinguished primarily by their Shi'ism. Any convert to Shi'ism becomes to outsiders a Hazara, while a Hazara genuinely converted to Sunnism...ceases to be a regular Hazara...Aimaqs or Uzbaks cannot become Arabs, Turkmen, or Pushtuns, [among whom descent is crucial,] although the opposite is possible.⁶¹

Furthermore, the use of ethnic markers differs from group to group. Thus, in Tapper's study, Durrani Pashtuns used the term Uzbek to denote all non-Pashtuns (including Persian-speaking Tajiks, Hazaras and Aimaqs, and the Turkic-speaking Uzbeks and Turkmen) and *parsiwan* (Persian-speaking) to denote non-Durrani Pashtuns.⁶² Other Pashtuns used the term *parsiwan* to denote all non-Pashto speakers, while Uzbeks would use it for Pashtuns, Aimaqs, Tajiks and others.⁶³ Nor were perceptions of ethnicity necessarily the most important factor in constructing social networks; for example, Pashtun pastoral nomads would have “a series of

⁶⁰ Thomas Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces* (Silver Spring, Md.: Orkand Corporation, 1989), 107-108.

⁶¹ Richard Tapper, “Ethnicity and Class: Dimensions of Intergroup Conflict in North-Central Afghanistan,” in M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield, eds., *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1984), 240-41.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

‘friends’ in Uzbek, Aimaq and Hazara villages” along their route of travel, with whom they would exchange goods and information.⁶⁴

In summary, many of the same observations relating to the conceptualization of tribe and its relations with the state can be made about kinship and community networks, although as a rule they displayed a higher degree of malleability and receptivity to alternate conceptions and modes of organization. We now turn to briefly review the relationship of different communities with the Afghan state.

The Tribal Legitimacy of the Afghan State

The Afghan state originated in 1747, after the death of the Persian king Nadir Shah. The Abdali Pashtun tribes, which had formed part of Nadir Shah’s army, held a grand *jirga* and nominated one of their own, Ahmad Khan Abdali, as king. Ahmad Khan thus gained the title of Shah and received the honorific *durr-i durran* (pearl of pearls); the Abdali tribal confederation was henceforth known as the Durrani. With the help of the tribes, Ahmad Shah established a kingdom ranging from the borders of Persia to the River Indus and this tribal origin has remained central to the legitimacy of the Afghan state.⁶⁵ Ahmad Shah’s successors until 1978 were all from one of two lineages (first Sadozai then Muhammadzai) within the Durrani tribes, leading positions in government were shared by Durrani Pashtuns and the

⁶⁴ Ibid, 239-40.

⁶⁵ For more on the emergence of the Afghan kingdom, see Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A New History* (London: Curzon Press, 2001), 20-26, and Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 92-105.

institution of the Loya Jirga remained an important repository of state legitimacy.⁶⁶ Even as the ruling class in Kabul became state-centred, detribalized and Persian-speaking, it continued to emphasize this link to its Durrani Pashtun tribal origins.

The Durrani tribes remained the main support of the state without being absorbed by it. Succession disputes within the ruling family were generally determined in favour of the contender who could garner the most tribal support. Strong ties to state power and the consequent distribution of resources likely contributed towards a greater prevalence of hierarchy and landed aristocracy in Durrani tribal structures as compared to those of other Pashtuns.⁶⁷ Thus, for the Durrani Pashtuns, state and tribal legitimacy were complementary and overlapping. They nonetheless remained distinct, and in the Durrani tribal zones, state institutions remained separate from those of the tribe.⁶⁸

Families from other Pashtun tribes were able to participate in the aristocracy of the state, generally through marriage alliances with the Durrani elite,⁶⁹ and the eastern border tribes came to play an important role in dynastic succession struggles. More broadly, however, the identification of non-Durrani Pashtuns with the state's claim to tribal legitimacy remained dependent on context. In the southern tribal zones among the Ghilzai, a rival confederation

⁶⁶ For a chronological history of Loya Jirgas in Afghanistan, see S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: Jirgahs and Loya Jirgahs – The Afghan Tradition, 977 A.D. to 1992 A.D.* (Peshawar: n.p., 1997).

⁶⁷ Richard Tapper, ed., *Conflict of Tribe and State*, 43-44.

⁶⁸ Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 14.

⁶⁹ For statistics on the composition of the elite in the mid-20th century, see Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 90-98.

whom the Durrani had defeated in founding the Afghan kingdom,⁷⁰ there was a tendency to view the Afghan state in that historical context, as a Durrani rather than Pashtun achievement.⁷¹ However, when the state settled a number of Ghilzai outside their tribal zones in the north, where they formed a minority among non-Pashtuns, they emphasized their Pashtun identity and became pro-state in orientation.⁷² The eastern border Pashtuns, when confronting the British state, would sometimes appeal to the Afghan state in terms of bonds of Pashtun tribal solidarity and religion.⁷³ More generally, they preferred to remain independent of both states, but were active participants in their rivalry and would often collaborate with one or the other to obtain benefits.

Relations between other communities and the state varied considerably and even a brief delineation is beyond the scope of this chapter.⁷⁴ Broadly, the basis of the state in Pashtun tribal legitimacy had little appeal for non-Pashtuns. It nonetheless commanded a degree of passive legitimacy as an established ruling dynasty entitled to certain rights, such as a degree of taxation and conscription.⁷⁵ The typical administrative model, applying to both Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns, was of the state treating the rural community as a unit, approached through

⁷⁰ Contestation for power continued beyond the founding of the kingdom; as recently as the late 19th century, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan's attempts to consolidate state power required campaigns against the Ghilzai.

⁷¹ Unlike the Durrani, the Ghilzai retained the egalitarian tribal structures common to other Pashtuns. See Jon W. Anderson, "Khan and Khel."

⁷² See Nancy Tapper, "Abd al-Rahman's North-West Frontier: The Pashtun Colonisation of Afghan Turkistan," in Richard Tapper, 233-58.

⁷³ For example, in the revolt of 1897. See Robert A. Johnson, "The 1897 Revolt and Tirah Valley Operations from the Pashtun Perspective," *Tribal Analysis Center*, November 2009.

⁷⁴ Scholarship on Afghanistan has focused more on Pashtuns than other groups. For a Hazara perspective that decries Pashtun nationalism, see Sayed Askar Mousavi, *The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic and Political Study* (Surrey: Curzon, 1998).

⁷⁵ The legitimacy of the Kabul government remained weaker in Hazarajat and Nuristan, which were only conquered in the late 19th century. Unlike the Hazaras, however, Nuristanis did become more integrated in the ruling power structure until the Saur Revolution in 1978.

the intermediary of the *malik* (chief).⁷⁶ Taxes were levied collectively; rebellions and unsolved crimes were dealt with by collective fines and punishments.⁷⁷ In his role as intermediary between the state and the community, the *malik*'s authority was often strengthened; in many cases, state patronage created *maliks*.

Beyond these concerns, the state remained on the periphery of community life.⁷⁸ Interference with the established social order outside of major urban centres was usually seen as suspect and provoked rebellion: a notable example is of the revolts against Amir Amanullah's centralizing and modernizing reforms in 1924 and 1929, which ultimately led to his ouster.⁷⁹ It is mainly in Kabul that we can speak of an incipient sense of positive Afghan nationalism, nurtured in state-sponsored educational institutions and publishing houses. Kabuli interpretations of nationalism were contested. They ranged from inclusive territorial justifications for nationalism, which were favoured by Tajiks, Hazaras and other non-Pashtuns, and which used a mix of cultural symbols from different communities; to Pashtun-specific justifications based on the tribal origins of the state and promotion of Pashto language.⁸⁰ The cultural products of this nationalism were radiated out from Kabul to the provinces through publications and radio, but remained most influential at their source. Nonetheless, with the British expansion into the eastern Pashtun tribal zones, the Afghan state sought to maintain its

⁷⁶ Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 19-23.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ See Barfield, *Afghanistan*, 181-95.

⁸⁰ For the latter, see James Caron, "Cultural Histories of Pashtun Nationalism, Public Participation, and Social Inequality in Monarchic Afghanistan, 1905-1960" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2009).

own influence among the tribes, and appeals to Pashtun solidarity and Islam formed part of that effort.

British Policy towards the Pashtun Tribes

British expansion into the northwest frontier occurred in the backdrop of imperial rivalry with Russia in the so-called Great Game. British policies veered from the expansionist 'Forward Policy,' which advocated direct or indirect control of Afghanistan at least up to the Hindu Kush range, to the *status quo* 'Masterly Inactivity.'⁸¹ It was during periods of the dominance of the Forward Policy school that military outposts were established in what become the tribal agencies. Outright annexation of the tribal areas, the disarmament of their population and its integration into British India was also contemplated at this time.⁸²

Setbacks to the policy, including the disastrous First Anglo-Afghan War and frequent episodes of resistance by the Pashtun tribes, resulted, after much oscillation, in a compromise. Afghanistan would remain as a buffer state separating the British and Russian empires and would receive a British subsidy, but the British would control its foreign policy to prevent any overtures towards Russia. The border between India and Afghanistan was demarcated accorded to an agreement signed on 12 November, 1893, between Amir Abdur Rahman Khan of Afghanistan and the British representative, Sir Mortimer Durand; it has since been known

⁸¹ Of note among the many accounts of the Great Game are Edward Ingram, *The Beginnings of the Great Game in Asia, 1828-34* (Oxford: OUP, 1979) and M.E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford: OUP, 1980).

⁸² For example, in the debates of the Committee of Imperial Defence in 1904-5. Christopher M. Wyatt, *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire: Diplomacy and Strategy during the Great Game* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 86-91.

as the Durand Line.⁸³ Drawn largely for strategic reasons, the border cut through the middle of territories inhabited by Pashtun and Baluch tribes, arbitrarily dividing – at least in theory – closely-related tribal sections from each other. In practice, movement across the border was largely unrestricted and ties between related tribal sections remained strong.

However, British administrative control did not extend to the frontier. Rather, the British adopted the policy of treating the tribes as corporate groups, concluding treaties with tribal elders and *maliks*.⁸⁴ The tribes were left to their own laws and customs and were paid regular subsidies by British authorities. In return they were expected to refrain from harming British interests. The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) enshrined the responsibility of a tribe for the actions of its members; the FCR allowed for collective sanctions in case of a breach of the peace, unless the tribe turned over or dealt with the individuals responsible. Such sanctions could involve withdrawal of subsidies, levying of fines, arrests of family members of the accused or destruction of tribal property. The highest British authority in a tribal agency was the Political Agent (PA), “half-ambassador and half-governor” in the words of one commentator,⁸⁵ who was chiefly responsible for protection of British outposts, roads and personnel. British Indian army regiments garrisoned in the frontier and two paramilitary forces – the *khassadars* (tribal levies) and Frontier Corps – assisted the PA in this task.

⁸³ For the text of the agreement and accompanying maps, see Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord: A Historical Perspective: Documents 1855-1979* (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1990), 55-57.

⁸⁴ Such treaties contrasted with the Instruments of Accession signed with Princely States, including detribalized Pashtun-populated ones like Swat and Dir, which gave the government of British India considerably more authority to intervene. Akbar S. Ahmed *Religion and Politics*, 31-32.

⁸⁵ James Spain, quoted in *ibid*, 32.

Besides collective subsidies to the tribes, the PA would provide allowances to individual *maliks* and other tribesmen deemed loyal to the government. The system proved relatively successful in the Baluch tribal areas. Baluch tribes had a relatively hierarchical structure, and the already high standing of tribal leaders (*sardars*) was enhanced by British patronage.⁸⁶ In the Pashtun areas, however, although British patronage created new *maliks*, enhanced the status of existing ones and created competition for the favour of the authorities, the egalitarian tribal structure acting as a limiting factor on the *malik's* influence. The *malik* who was sought after for his link to the authorities could as easily be decried as corrupt at times of tension with the state. Major revolts occurred in the Pashtun tribal areas in 1897-8, 1919-20 and 1936-39.⁸⁷ Minor raids, skirmishes and British punitive expeditions are too numerous to list.⁸⁸

The Afghan government also continued its involvement in the tribal areas. Many tribesmen were Afghan allowance-holders, in receipt of regular sums of money from the government for providing information, being sympathetic to Afghan interests, and from time to time acting against British interests in the area. Like the British, the Afghan government also provided general subsidies to the tribes, including arms and ammunition.

This system of governance, the border, and Afghan grievances about the border, were all inherited by Pakistan in 1947. The ways in which the Pakistani and Afghan states related to

⁸⁶ For a discussion of the tribal structure of the Yarahmadzai Baluch tribe, see Philip Carl Salzman, "Why Tribes Have Chiefs: A Case From Baluchistan," in Richard Tapper, 262-83.

⁸⁷ The 1897-98 uprising required the deployment of 63,000 troops; in the late 1930s there were over 40,000 troops deployed in Waziristan, more than in the rest of India combined.

⁸⁸ In 1907, 56 tribal raids were reported in the settled districts of the frontier; in 1908, 99 and in 1909, 159. Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 103.

each other in the context of this inheritance will be explored in the following chapter. For now, we turn to the other traditional source of legitimacy, namely that of Islam.

Islam

The oppositional discourse between the ‘West’ and ‘Islam,’ documented by Said in his study of US and European media coverage of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979,⁸⁹ has grown in the decades since, particularly after Al Qaeda’s terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11th September, 2001. The fact that many Muslims themselves, often in reaction, subscribe to such an ‘us vs. them’ dichotomy, underscores the enduring nature of Orientalist modes of thought.⁹⁰ In understanding the relations between Islam and the state then, it is important to remember how politically loaded terms and concepts employed in the study of Islam can be, and equally how the choice to ascribe certain patterns of behaviour and thought to ‘Islam,’ in isolation from other factors, can be far from objective.

A second concern arises from the issue of adapting the methodology of social sciences towards the study of religion. The emphasis of social science research on observable factors has often, critics argue, reduced the study of religions to a study of their external aspects. W.C. Smith, in his seminal study of *Islam in Modern History* in 1957, argued that

It has become fashionable in Western academic circles to insist that interpretations of phenomena, including social and human ones, *must be in exclusively “objective,” positive, non-transcendent terms...* however, that any explanation must be inadequate that leaves out of consideration one of the basic and most pertinent of the factors

⁸⁹ See Said, *Covering Islam*.

⁹⁰ Two particularly influential pieces in this respect are Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

involved...We hope that even those who disagree with us as to *the transcendence of what we call the divine*, may nonetheless be able to follow our argument by recognizing that *the factor is there*, however they may interpret it.⁹¹

Olivier Roy makes a similar point:

Islam provides a system of norms, a code regulating human relations, in a word a social morality. But by insisting too much on this aspect, one is apt to forget its spiritual dimension, which manifests itself in behaviour and which opens up a transcendental sphere, for inner meditation, and access to the universal beyond the everyday rules of community life. The approach of Western anthropologists, like the utilitarian understanding of Islam...in the writings of certain Muslim modernists, and the way in which some of the *'ulama* insist on a purely legalistic interpretation of the religion, go too far towards reducing Islam to a system of rules.⁹²

Discussing only observable social phenomena, while ignoring this transcendent element, produces a perspective of religion different from that of the believer; one which may easily miss the meanings behind religious acts and edicts, and fail to apprehend how believers understand their faith in changing contexts.⁹³ Yet a purely text-based intellectual history approach is also inadequate, since it tells us little about how texts were interpreted in practice.

Given these limitations, how can we develop a useful framework for dealing with Islam in the context of any history involving Muslims? First, we must begin by recognizing, as the eminent historian Albert Hourani argued, that “‘Islam’ and the terms derived from it are ‘ideal types,’ to be used subtly, with infinite reservations and adjustments of meaning, and in conjunction with other ideal types, if they are to serve as principles of historical

⁹¹ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (London: OUP, 1957), 7. My italics.

⁹² Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 33. For a brief overview of issues relating to the study of Islam in anthropology, see Abu-Lughod, “Zones of Theory,” 294-98.

⁹³ In his study of Islam in Afghanistan, Roy notes that while ritual creates a closed system for the peasant, the aspect of the universal embodied by belief gives him a language with which to converse with the alien. Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 33-34.

explanation.”⁹⁴ We can define *ideal Islam* as consisting of the most fundamental teachings of the religion, the basic identity of Islam: namely the Quran and *sunna* (the practice of the Prophet). But how this ideal is lived and interpreted, as Said argues, “immediately moves us away from it.”⁹⁵

Moving beyond the ideal, Islam in all its worldly manifestations consists of Muslims interpreting and living religion across an enormous variety of boundaries of space and time; of cultural practices; social, economic and political circumstances; ideologies; tastes; individual temperaments – everything that distinguishes the condition of one interpreter from another.⁹⁶ The interpretations themselves include the intellectual and esoteric, such as the religious sciences, the schools of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and the different philosophical and mystical positions. They also include how Islam was practiced and lived, in society and at an individual level of piety and devotion. And although institutionalized religious learning has existed in Islamic history, although certain beliefs are more commonly held than others, some are more directly traceable to the religious scriptures and some derive primarily from cultural practices, there has not been any *monopoly on representation* of the religion. This point is fundamental to any discussion of Islam as an alternate source of legitimacy to the state, and will be elaborated in the following sections.

⁹⁴ Albert Hourani, “History,” in Leonard Binder, ed., *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and the Social Sciences* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), 117.

⁹⁵ Said, *Covering Islam*, 57.

⁹⁶ Said’s following observations on knowledge and interpretation, although relating to study of human society, are relevant to interpretation in the sense I have used here: “interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is in interpreting, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place. In this sense, all interpretations are what might be called *situational*: they always occur in a situation whose bearing on the interpretation is affiliative.” Said, *Covering Islam*, 162.

Islam and the Pre-Colonial State

The Prophet Muhammad was the spiritual and temporal leader of the Muslim community (*umma*). His immediate successors, referred to as the *khulafa al-rashidun* (the rightly-guided successors) by Sunni Muslims, were considered to embody both religious and political authority. Idealized as exemplary rulers, for many later Muslim writers their period demonstrates the indivisibility of religious and political authority in Islam.⁹⁷ In their own time, however, while the historical tradition shows that they considered the welfare of Islam to be among their responsibilities,⁹⁸ their authority was not indisputable. They were considered religious authorities only insofar as they were pious, close companions of the prophet, and followed the *shari'a* (“path”), the religious law brought by him, in their lives and rule. The first *khalifa* famously emphasized the limits of his authority on accession;⁹⁹ the third and fourth faced major challenges from dissident groups of Muslims who felt they had deviated from these ideals.¹⁰⁰

This period of two to three decades, while retaining force as an ideal, is at odds with the lived historical experience of Muslims through most of the following centuries. The case of India and Afghanistan is in keeping with prevailing trends. The Mughal Empire and the Durrani

⁹⁷ For example, the Islamist writers discussed in chapter five.

⁹⁸ For example, Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 139.

⁹⁹ Martin Lings, *Muhammad: his life based on the earliest sources* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1983), 344.

¹⁰⁰ The above is a sketch of the beliefs only of the majority Sunni community. The minority Shi'as grant Ali, the fourth *khalifa*, and his descendants exclusive religious and political authority by virtue of their descent from the prophet. However, after the disappearance (Occultation) of the twelfth *imam* in this line, most Shi'as – with the exception of the minority Isma'ilis, who recognize a different and continuing line – faced similar questions in political theory as did Sunnis.

kingdom of Ahmad Shah, like the kingdoms they succeeded, were pre-modern states, dynasties whose borders fluctuated with their rise and fall. For most of the populace, the ruler commanded only passive legitimacy, through inherited tradition or conquest. Rulers were expected to be pious, just, protect their subjects and uphold the *shari'a* – ideals derived from the Quran and *sunna*, and the early examples of the Prophet's successors. Yet the ruler was seldom considered to embody any special religious authority and in practice he generally did not live up to the ideal. Although many rulers did make claims to religious authority, such efforts were often seen as suspect and opposed.¹⁰¹

At the same time we can speak of the gradual emergence of a class of religious scholars, the *'ulama* (singular *'alim*, 'one who has knowledge'), who developed the early teachings into several bodies of knowledge. Typically, they preached in mosques and imparted religious and classical education. Many also entered government service in the role of *qadi* ("judge") administering the law. In the latter function they acted as a check on the power of the ruler, akin to an informal judiciary, but seldom possessed any formal political power of their own.¹⁰² Others would stay aloof, in accordance with a tradition that viewed closeness to power as a source of corruption.

¹⁰¹ Commonly, religious legitimacy was claimed through kinship with the Prophet Muhammad. Quite a different attempt was the Mughal Emperor Akbar's promulgation of his syncretist *din-i ilahi* (religion of god), which was fiercely resisted by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, the leading religious scholar of the day. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2003), 81-83.

¹⁰² For the ways in which Muslim jurists and philosophers rationalized and compromised with the reality of non-ideal rulers and dynastic succession, see E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: An Introductory Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

The other main type of religious figure to emerge was the Sufi, representative of a mystical tradition in Islam more concerned with inner dimensions of spiritual worship than with external application of *shari'a*. A Sufi order (*silsila*) would involve disciples (*murids*) organized around a master (*pir*) who would be the source of both instruction and spiritual blessing (*baraka*). *Baraka* was passed on through descent and through initiation in the order, and the tombs of great Sufis became shrines and centres of worship and pilgrimage, maintained by the Sufi's descendants.¹⁰³ In popular folklore there are many traditions of the holy man's defiance of and disdain for rulers and the official Islam of state-sponsored *'ulama*. There were also cases of collaboration and cooptation; for example, in Afghanistan during the reign of Amir Habibullah many disciples of the previously hostile Mulla Najmuddin of Hadda were given land grants and stipends by the government.¹⁰⁴ At times there were tensions between Sufis and *'ulama* who regarded their beliefs and practices as heterodox, but the two categories often overlapped. In India and Afghanistan, many *'ulama* were Sufis, and Sufi *pirs* had played a great role in the spread of Islam in the region.

Rulers were expected to aspire to the ideal of the Quran and *sunna*; that very many did not do so in practice did not put them outside the fold of Islam, so long as they at least acknowledged the ideal. They could be criticized and their policies or even person condemned, but such condemnation seldom challenged their position as rulers, and even less the institution of rule. Rather, the same Islamic frame of reference that was employed to oppose the ruler could also

¹⁰³ For an introduction to Sufism with a significant section on the South Asian region, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁴ David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 186-87. Similarly, the leading family of the Qadiriyya *silsila* was linked through marriage to King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan.

be employed to appeal to him, and he as a Muslim – if a bad one – could engage and ideally be reformed by it. The typical form this took was of the *nasiha* (“advice”), frank counsel to the erring ruler, usually offered by an outspoken ‘*alim* or Sufi.¹⁰⁵ Criticism, accompanied by collaboration and compromise, was the norm; militant opposition by the religious figure a rarer, though not unheard of, phenomenon.

Thus, we can speak of a *de facto* separation of religious and political authority in the historical Muslim experience, but this should not be understood in terms so absolute as the ‘secular state’ opposed by ‘Islam.’ For the ruler was invariably a Muslim and was thus capable of interpreting his own actions in an Islamic framework. The ‘*ulama* were recognized as well-versed in the minutiae of the law and the religious tradition, but such acknowledgment did not grant them the exclusive right to interpret the religion for all facets of life.¹⁰⁶ Those who sought to leverage religious learning for temporal power were often condemned as ‘*ulama-i dunya* (“worldly ‘*ulama*”) or even ‘*ulama-i su* (“evil ‘*ulama*”). The popular record, of folktales that speak of the corruption of religious and political authorities, of peasant resistance to oppressive landowners, demonstrates that even the simple peasant could, without need for a spiritual mediator, draw upon Islam as a spiritual resource and a means of interpreting the world around him. As Olivier Roy observes:

He sees “true” Islam as enjoining upon its followers a number of very specific rules, obedience to which ensures economic and social justice...It is an ethical vision, for at the same time the arrogance of power (*zolm*) and corruption are seen as natural. It little

¹⁰⁵ For a prototypical example from Morocco, see Henry Munson, Jr., *Religion and Power in Morocco* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 50.

¹⁰⁶ The ruler would claim greater knowledge of statecraft; Sufis would challenge the ‘*ulama*’s obsession with the law; the commoner would listen but not necessarily obey. And different ‘*ulama* could vary widely in their interpretations.

matters that very few people who exercise power act justly. What is important is that the peasant should be able to judge, and, even when he is defeated, refuse to approve of injustice.¹⁰⁷

Islam and Pashtun Tribal Authority

In the Pashtun tribal areas straddling the Indo-Afghan frontier, the state was historically absent; thus here we may consider how religious authority interacted with the power wielded by tribal authority. As elsewhere, one of the main functions of the *'ulama* was to regulate society according to religious law. In Pashtun society, however, the *shari'a* coexisted with the tribal code of *pashtunwali*, which represented an alternate conception of the world at some variance from the *shari'a*.¹⁰⁸ *Pashtunwali* had its own methods of arbitration and institutions, the tribal *jirgas*, in which the *'ulama* typically played a limited role. The approach of the *'ulama* to this situation often varied by education. More scholarly *'ulama*, particularly those who had travelled to other parts of the Muslim world for study, tended to see greater scope for conflict between the *shari'a* and *pashtunwali*. By contrast, the *mulla* of the village, more imbedded in the tribal social space, tended to emphasize the compatibility of the two systems.¹⁰⁹

The tribal structure did not provide the *'ulama* with positions of political leadership, which were restricted to tribal *khans* and *maliks*. In practice, the *'ulama* served two political functions. The main function lay in acting as mediators, whether within tribes, between

¹⁰⁷ Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 29.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 35-36.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. It should be clear from the earlier discussion that while *'ulama* may have represented religious authority, ordinary tribesmen, by virtue of being Muslims, were constantly engaged in interpreting religious no less than tribal imperatives in their lives.

different tribes, or between tribes and states. In the last two roles they were particularly valuable, for while internal tribal disputes were more easily adjudicated by tribal norms, in disputes between different tribes and with states the *'ulama*, seen as apart from the demands of tribal lineage, were more easily accepted as neutral arbitrators. A secondary function, appearing in times of crisis, was to rally the Muslim community to defend itself against external aggression. Here the *'ulama*, by embodying an Islamic universalism that cut across tribal boundaries, played an important role in exhorting the tribes to unify against the threat, especially if it originated from a non-Muslim adversary.¹¹⁰

Changes in Relationship with the State

The traditional conceptions of Muslim government sketched above began to change with the advent of the age of European colonialism. In India, as the British East India Company consolidated its control, it first acted as the power behind the throne, maintaining a fiction of Mughal sovereignty. Acculturated colonial officers, the so-called 'white Mughals,' often ruled through a mixture of British and indigenous forms of governance.¹¹¹ After the 1857 revolt, the British responded with harsh reprisals against the populace. The Mughal Emperor was exiled, Britain assumed direct sovereignty over India and British law and administration increasingly displaced or distorted indigenous forms.¹¹² Still, the extent of control varied between areas directly under British rule and the Princely States, kingdoms that enjoyed varying degrees of

¹¹⁰ If persistent, as with the British presence, such threats could allow charismatic religious leaders to rise to political prominence. See SanaHaroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (London: Hurst, 2007), 125-44.

¹¹¹ For an intimate portrayal of these colonial officials, see William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003).

¹¹² A corollary was the gradual limitation of the *shari'a* to certain areas of family law.

autonomy so long as they recognized the primacy of the British crown. In the tribal areas, British control was largely absent.

In the regions that remained within the borders of Afghanistan the transition in identity and forms of governance of the rulers was not so dramatic. Afghanistan was never directly colonized; nevertheless, it could not remain unaffected by the expansion of colonial empires, Russian and British, to its northern and southern fringes.¹¹³ Russian expansion into parts of Central Asia just north of Afghanistan's present borders led to revolts among the various Turkic-speaking groups that lived there,¹¹⁴ while the southern Pashtun tribal zones witnessed frequent uprisings against the British on both sides of the Durand Line. The historical record suggests that state expansion into the tribal areas would have met with resistance in any case. The fact that the state was non-Muslim, and thus did not ascribe to the ideal of the Quran and *sunna* that had underpinned traditional Muslim notions of governance, heightened its alien nature and contributed towards the increasing importance of Pashtun *'ulama* in organizing the revolts, using a religious rationale of *jihad* to gain cross-tribal support.¹¹⁵

Yet it was not only non-Muslim rule that undermined Muslim conceptions of governance. As the disparity in power between European empires and Muslim polities became increasingly stark, many Muslim rulers attempted to emulate European notions of law, governance and

¹¹³ For the economic effects on Afghanistan's role as a corridor of trade, see B.D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 110-62.

¹¹⁴ Ahmed Rashid, *The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism?* (Karachi: OUP, 1994), 17-21. Many Turkmen, Tajik, Kirghiz and Uzbeks fled across the border to Afghanistan following subsequent Russian and Soviet attempts to consolidate control in the area.

¹¹⁵ The notion of *jihad* is discussed further in chapter five.

citizenship; modes of military organization; and even cultural practices such as dress, in the hope of arresting this decline.¹¹⁶ But while European conceptions of governance were not overtly anti-religion, they nonetheless originated in a secular worldview whose reference points were all non-religious; a worldview which seemed to spare little time for religion, indeed to be indifferent to its very existence. They thus heralded a shift from the traditional Muslim basis for the separation of religious and political authority, namely that rulers should aspire to the ideal of the Quran and *sunna*.

Such a challenge to the ideal was less obvious than that of non-Muslim rule and did not typically result in concerted and widespread opposition on religious grounds, unless changes were pushed through with great haste and in such a manner that they also challenged the basis of the organization of society and its customs. Such was the case with Amir Amanullah in Afghanistan: uprisings against the king's secularizing reforms were motivated by their challenge to tribal norms as well as their non-religious basis and eventually resulted in his overthrow; he nonetheless remained popular among *'ulama* in the tribal areas across the border owing to his role in opposing the British.¹¹⁷ After Amanullah, the growth of secular institutions and governance continued at a slower pace with relatively little opposition. Nevertheless, the changed circumstances of political rule, whether explicit or implicit, did engage the thought of Muslims in all parts of the world and became one of the factors spurring the growth of revivalist movements. In the following section, I will examine some of the

¹¹⁶ Notable examples include the Young Turk movement in the Ottoman Empire and the reforms of Muhammad Ali and his successors in Egypt. For more on the former, see Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

¹¹⁷ Haroon, *Frontier of Faith*, 118-23.

questions these movements grappled with regarding the political relationship of Islam with the state.

Muslim Revivalism

The great social and political upheavals of the 18th-20th centuries, originating in Europe with the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, and radiating into Asia and Africa with the spread of imperialism and the capitalist world order, have contributed to the emergence of revivalist movements in all the major religions. Christians, Hindus, Jews and Buddhists have sought to reinterpret their religious teachings in accordance with the new realities that they face, and Muslims have been no exception.

Muslim revivalists of all hues shared certain emphases within their thought, some of which are common to reformers of other religions. Against a backdrop of expanding European empires, they were motivated by concern about the external threats to Muslim polities as well as by what they perceived as the internal decay of Muslim thought, religious institutions and culture.¹¹⁸ They believed societal reform would help address the loss of political power, although there are differing emphases between those who prioritized political responses and those who prioritized education and reform.¹¹⁹ There is a common desire, more marked with later reformers, to directly interpret from the original sources of the religion, and a corresponding distancing or even disdain for the intermediate history of scholarship. Related

¹¹⁸ See Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, 3-86.

¹¹⁹ In the former category is the great traveller and reformer, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani; in the latter, his colleague and collaborator, the Egyptian Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh. See Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939* (Oxford: OUP, 1962).

is a concern for making Islam more accessible, by urging Muslims to focus on the simple, clear message of the religion and by translating the Quran into local languages. Many revivalists urged the use of reason in interpretation; earlier reformers made this argument within the specific context of greater use of *ijtihad* (deriving new legal rulings through interpretation) in the tradition of Muslim jurisprudence. Gradually, however, this expanded into a more free-form reading of the Quran and *hadith* (sayings of the prophet) by Muslims untrained in the religious sciences, vastly expanding the scope for individual interpretation in religion.¹²⁰ Finally, many reformers exhibited a concern for reducing divisions and improving the unity of the Muslim *umma* across national boundaries.

The man considered to be the fountainhead of modern Muslim revivalism in India, Shah Waliullah of Delhi, lived in the 18th century before the advent of colonial rule. His times were nonetheless chaotic, with the Mughal Empire crumbling and successor kingdoms, both Muslim and non-Muslim, emerging and warring across India. He was thus motivated in his efforts by both external threats and internal decay, and in his thought we find many of the emphases outlined above. A great *'alim* and Sufi, he sought a reformed Islamic jurisprudence with renewed emphasis on Quran and *hadith*, and use of *ijtihad*, and a reformed Sufism purged of many cultural accretions, and made a major effort to create a synthesis of the whole body of Islamic knowledge.¹²¹

¹²⁰ See Francis Robinson, "Other-Worldly and This-Worldly Islam and the Islamic Revival: A Memorial Lecture for Wilfred Cantwell Smith," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, third series, vol. 14, no. 1 (April 2004), 52-58.

¹²¹ See M. Ikram Chughtai, ed., *Shah Waliullah (1703-1762): His Religious and Political Thought* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2005).

Shah Waliyullah's work of learning and disseminating reformist teachings was carried on by his four sons. One group of their followers, known as the Tariqat-i Muhammadiyya (The Path of Muhammad) and led by Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareilly and Shah Waliyullah's grandson Shah Isma'il, was more activist in orientation. After years spent travelling and preaching across India, Sayyid Ahmad decided that armed struggle was necessary for Muslim revival.

Barbara Metcalf observes:

Sayyid Ahmad's proposed jihad had as its model the new states carved out from the empire in the post-Mughal period, but his underlying purpose and...strategy were influenced by classical notions...As jihad required, he launched warfare from a Muslim area, the tribal areas of the frontier, and took as his opponent the Sikhs of the Punjab, who were blamed for interfering with Muslim religious life. Sayyid Ahmad was explicit about this choice, once remarking...: "There were many who advised me to carry on jihad in India, promising to provide me with whatever was necessary...But I could not agree to this, for jihad must be in accordance with the *sunnah*. Mere rebellion was not intended."¹²²

Sayyid Ahmad's movement became an important symbol of Muslim resistance, yet it remained unusual in its conceptualization and methods of resistance. By the time Sayyid Ahmad launched his *jihad* ("struggle"), Sikh power was on the decline and the rise of the British East India Company was of more direct concern to Muslims in what remained of the Mughal Empire, especially in Delhi. However, as the above quotation suggests, Sayyid Ahmad was unwilling to sacrifice adherence to Islamic restrictions, as he saw them, for the sake of expediency. Sayyid Ahmad's *jihad* was thus an idealized endeavour, but after initial successes the movement could not remain above political considerations indefinitely; faced with opposition and betrayal from some of the Pashtun tribes, it was forced into the repugnant

¹²² Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 61.

position of fighting fellow Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad and the bulk of his followers were eventually defeated, although remnants remained on the frontier and harried the British in later years.¹²³

Different in form was the mass uprising that accompanied the mutiny of soldiers in the British Indian army some twenty years later. Engaged in by both Muslims and Hindus, the 1857 revolt drew on a variety of sources for inspiration to resist British rule. *Jihad* in the Muslim religious tradition was a relatively unimportant and contested source.¹²⁴ More central was the common symbol of legitimacy offered by the Mughal Empire; many of the insurgents, Hindu and Muslim both, fought for the restoration of the powerless Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar.¹²⁵

Yet while a number of Muslims drew on Islam and other sources of legitimacy to justify armed struggle, many others interpreted the situation differently. That Sayyid Ahmad considered fighting against the British from within India as “mere rebellion,” has already been mentioned. Similarly, in 1857, many *‘ulama* and other Muslims questioned whether revolt under the circumstances was justified in Islam and stayed quiescent or supported the British. With political confrontation receding as a realistic option after the failure of the revolt, the many revivalist movements of the late 19th century focused on societal reform. Their response to the state was either quietist separation or accommodation, as is suggested by the example of

¹²³ Ibid, 52-63. For more on the ethical motivations of Sayyid Ahmad’s *jihad* and the obstacles it faced see Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2008), 58-113.

¹²⁴ Metcalf, *Islamic Revival*, 80-84.

¹²⁵ Ibid. For a recent reconstruction, see William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857* (New York: Vintage, 2008).

two of the most important such movements, the Dar al-‘Ulum Deoband and the Aligarh movement.

The reformist *‘ulama* who founded the Dar al-‘Ulum (House of Knowledge) at Deoband in 1867 were motivated by a concern to preserve and disseminate the intellectual heritage of the religion. Following Shah Waliyullah’s earlier emphases, they sought to provide a comprehensive education in the religious sciences, but prioritized study of Quran and *hadith* over the achievements of medieval Islamic scholarship.¹²⁶ Many were also Sufis and offered initiation in all the Sufi orders current in India; instruction was generally of a reformed variety, with practices like seeking intercession from the *pir* discouraged.¹²⁷ A notable feature was the frequency with which *fatwas* were issued: unlike in the past, when *fatwas* were meant to guide the *qadi* in making legal judgments, these *fatwas* were divorced from the official legal system. Instead, they were intended as guidance to Muslims in living an Islamic life in a society where Islam had become separated from power.¹²⁸

From its founding the Dar al-‘Ulum had ties to Afghanistan, and students would come from Afghanistan and the tribal areas to receive education that was unavailable at home.¹²⁹ Like students from elsewhere, many went on to set up their own schools, organizationally patterned after Deoband’s example. A network of Deobandi *madrasas* (schools) was thus set up in the

¹²⁶ Metcalf, *Islamic Revival*, 100-102

¹²⁷ Ibid, 157-85.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 138-57

¹²⁹ Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 42-44.

frontier and elsewhere in India, but they did not necessarily follow the attitudes or impart the level of education of the Dar al-‘Ulum.¹³⁰

Deoband’s attitude towards the state was one of indifference and implicit distancing. While its ‘*ulama* and students sought to organize society around Islam, such organization was an internal matter, for Muslims to guide other Muslims, and did not entail any political challenge to the state. Even on such matters as, for example, whether graduates should seek government employment, Deoband did not develop a consistent stance for or against.¹³¹ This political quietism continued to characterize Deoband until the era of nationalist politics.

Like the ‘*ulama* of Deoband, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his supporters who founded the Muslim Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (later Aligarh University) saw education as the means to reform Muslim society. Unlike them, Ahmad Khan was not an ‘*alim* and his aim was to transmit a modern, European-style education in the English language. With the realities of suppression of the 1857 revolt ever present in his mind, Ahmad Khan believed the Muslim community needed to reconcile itself to the fact of British rule.¹³² Many Hindus had already begun to participate actively in the British system, and Ahmad Khan argued that for Muslims to have a chance to compete, they needed to overcome their disdain and learn the Western sciences and other subjects essential to qualify for participation.¹³³

¹³⁰ Metcalf, *Islamic Revival*, 125-37, and Haroon, *Frontier of Faith*, 91-103.

¹³¹ Metcalf, *Islamic Revival*, 94.

¹³² Jalal, *Partisans of Allah*, 132-34.

¹³³ Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 190-94.

On the question of Islam and the state, Ahmad Khan's response was that the situation under British rule should be treated no differently to the traditional separation of religious and political authority: "If through the will of God we are subdued by a nation which gives religious freedom, rules with justice, maintains peace in the country and respects our individuality and property as it is done by the British rule in India, we should be loyal to it."¹³⁴ Unlike Deoband, Ahmad Khan actively encouraged Muslims to profess loyalty to the British and join in government service.

Many other Muslim revivalist movements emerged in India in the late 19th and early 20th century, including the Ahl-i Hadith, Ahl-i Quran, Ahmadi, Faraizi, the *'ulama* of Nadwa and the Tablighi Jama'at. Broadly speaking, these groups emphasized similar trends of social reform, return to the original sources and broadening of the scope of interpretation. Many of them grappled with the question of how best to sustain a Muslim society without state power and came to conclusions in a similar spectrum to those of Deoband or Aligarh.

In sum, although the first Muslim community provided an ideal of unified religious and political authority, the historical Muslim experience has largely been of a *de facto* separation under common aspiration to an Islamic ideal. These conclusions must be qualified by the diversity of interpretations of Islam, which allowed it to serve variously as a source of legitimacy challenging, supporting or coexisting with the state. When Muslims came under the rule of states of that did not aspire to the Islamic ideal in the colonial era, they similarly

¹³⁴ Ibid, 191.

responded in a variety of ways. While the *'ulama* of the frontier drew on Islamic legitimacy to oppose the state, the late 19th century focus of revivalist movements in India was on reform of society without challenging the political order. In the final section of this chapter, we will see how the spread of nationalism from Europe to the colonies created new sources of identification and new challenges for the colonial state.

The Era of Nationalist Politics

The turn of the century saw the rise of nationalist politics across Asia and Africa. In India, as elsewhere, much of the initial impetus and leadership for these movements came from those segments of society that were most culturally attuned to the colonial power. These nationalists had studied in English-language schools, either at home or abroad, imbibed European conceptions of nationalism and popular representation, and seen the disconnect between European political theory and European practice towards indigenous peoples in the colonies.¹³⁵

However, nationalism did not remain confined to this relatively small segment of society. Rather, the recognition of emerging spheres of public discourse and participation, in which nationalists played an active role, broadened its appeal. Nationalism was disseminated to the reading public through the new medium of the printing press, in vernacular tongues as well as in English, and was disseminated further by new forms of populist political organization.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ For a broader discussion of how the process unfolded, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 113-40.

¹³⁶ For the politics of language in Indian and Pakistani nationalism, see Tariq Rahman, *Language, Ideology and Power: Language-learning among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India* (Oxford: OUP, 2002).

At the start of this chapter, I observed that many postcolonial states have struggled to establish a coherent national identity. Yet during the colonial period, nationalism did become a genuinely popular movement. In part, it was able to do so because it developed an anti-colonial ethos that successfully tapped into existing resentments against the colonial state. And in part, because it interacted with existing sources of legitimacy, such as Islam and tribe, to produce a great diversity of movements that offered alternate bases of identification from which to oppose the colonial state. I will here restrict myself to sampling only those movements most relevant to Pakistan's future relations with Afghanistan.

Pan-Islamism

The ideal of a united Muslim *umma* has always existed in Islamic society, although it is at odds with most of Muslim historical experience. As more and more of the Muslim world came under the control of colonial powers, Muslims in those regions increasingly looked to the few remaining independent polities for inspiration. For Indian Muslims, the Ottoman Empire and Afghanistan were particularly regarded with sentimental attachment. Many prided themselves on their Turkish or Afghan roots, and the claim of the Ottoman sultan, whose domains included the holy cities of Makka, Madina and Jerusalem, to be *khalifa* of the *umma* became widely accepted.¹³⁷ Pan-Islamism was given a further boost in the late 19th century by the scholar and political activist Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who travelled across the Muslim

¹³⁷ Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, 219-20, and Javid Iqbal, *Islam and Pakistan's Identity* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2003), 201-207. Many Indian dynasties had Afghan or Central Asian origins. Earlier, grappling with the political chaos of post-Mughal India, one of Shah Waliyullah's solutions had been to write to Ahmad Shah Abdali to establish a new order.

world urging Muslims to help one another in confronting colonial rule and recovering control of their political destiny. Supportive of local nationalist movements, he embodied, in the breadth of his writings and activities, the ideal of Muslim unity.¹³⁸

As increasing numbers of Indian Muslims became politically active in opposition to the state, they sometimes drew on Islamic sources for inspiration in ways more linked to transnational Muslim identification than to the requirements of anti-colonial struggle. Hence, there were widespread calls for Indian Muslims to boycott serving in the army against the Turks in the First World War. After the war, the prospects of dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate led Indian Muslims to start the *khilafat* movement, aimed at its preservation.¹³⁹ The *hijrat* movement is another example, originating in *fatwas* which defined India as *dar al-harb* (“abode of war,” a place where Muslims are unable to freely practice their religion) and called on Muslims to emigrate to Afghanistan; thousands did, but most were eventually turned back by the Afghan authorities.

However, pan-Islamism could also be directly related to nationalist goals, as is suggested by the so-called ‘silken letter conspiracy.’ During the First World War, several Deobandi ‘*ulama*, including Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan and Maulana ‘Ubaydullah Sindhi, tried to gain the support of neighbouring Muslim rulers for India’s independence struggle. Having failed to obtain meaningful Ottoman backing, Sindhi attempted to stoke an uprising against the British

¹³⁸ See M. Ikram Chughtai, ed., *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani: An Apostle of Islamic Resurgence* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2005).

¹³⁹ See Javid Iqbal, *Islam and Pakistan’s Identity*, 199-238.

by the frontier Pashtun tribes, aided by remnants of Sayyid Ahmad's *mujahidin* and supported by an invasion from Afghanistan.¹⁴⁰

Much as Afghanistan, while remaining independent, did not escape the effects of colonialism, so too was it affected by the anti-colonial modes of thought and public participation across the border. During the First World War, pan-Islamism was a strong political force in the Afghan court, uniting traditionalist and modernist factions, both of whom argued that Afghanistan should abandon its neutrality and support the Ottoman call for *jihād* against the British.¹⁴¹

Although Amir Habibullah resisted these pressures, he did not attempt to stop those Afghans, including *'ulama* and members of his court, who were involved in anti-British activity in the tribal areas.¹⁴² After Habibullah's death, his successor, Amir Amanullah, proclaimed *jihād* to popular acclaim and invaded the tribal areas in 1919. The resulting war was short and inconclusive, and did not become the spark for Indian independence that Sindhi had hoped for. Amanullah ceased hostilities after securing a renegotiated treaty by which the British gave up their claims to control Afghanistan's foreign policy.¹⁴³

The above examples suggest the limitations of pan-Islamism. While able to inspire movements, it was ineffective in producing lasting political change. It nonetheless remained

¹⁴⁰ Jalal, *Partisans of Allah*, 203-225.

¹⁴¹ Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 100-106.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 113-16. Amanullah's claim to pan-Islamism was also demonstrated in his support for the Basmachi revolts against Soviet control in Central Asia in the 1920s; this policy too was aborted after Afghanistan came under pressure. Ibid.

widespread as a sentiment, and would go on to play at least a minor role in the foreign policies of emerging Muslim states, including Pakistan.

The Pakistan Movement

Deobandi and most Indian *'ulama* came to support the independence struggle of the secular but Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress in the early 1900s, a powerful indicator of how they had become reconciled to their late 19th century focus on sustaining a Muslim society under a non-Muslim government. However, other Muslims, many of them associated with the Aligarh movement, feared further erosion of power and marginalization as a minority in a post-British India. Mass politicization of society, often along communal lines, had heightened tensions between Muslims and Hindus.¹⁴⁴ The All India Muslim League was established in 1906 to secure political representation for Muslims, initially through the demand of separate electorates. Early cooperation with Congress, as symbolized by the 1920 Lucknow Pact, gradually unravelled, and the League's inability to obtain what it considered necessary political safeguards led it to consider alternatives to a united democratic India.

The idea of a separate Muslim state in north-west India was powerfully articulated by the poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal in his 1930 presidential address to the Muslim League, in which he argued the necessity for Indian Muslims to freely develop their religion and

¹⁴⁴ Factors contributing to these Muslim concerns included the partition of Bengal, the emergence of Hindu revivalists and the resulting *shuddhi* movement and Hindi-Urdu controversy, and the increasing resort to Hindu symbology by Congress in its efforts to broaden its mass appeal.

culture.¹⁴⁵ A group of Indian students in Cambridge led by Chaudhry Rahmat Ali first coined the name ‘Pakistan’ for such a state. Meanwhile, the League rebounded from electoral defeats and near marginalization in the 1930s under the able leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, later known as the Quaid-i Azam (Great Leader), who rapidly transformed it from a vehicle for elite Muslim concerns into a party capable of appealing to mass opinion.¹⁴⁶ In his address to the Lahore session of the Muslim League in 1940, Jinnah argued that Muslims and Hindus constituted two separate nations and the League adopted a proposal for independent states in the northwest and east of India, in provinces where Muslims were in the majority. The League’s demand gained in popularity among Muslims and although efforts to retain a loose but united federal structure continued until the eve of independence, the subcontinent was eventually partitioned between Pakistan and India in August 1947.

Pakistan’s creation was far from painless. Mass migration and communal violence in the partitioned provinces of Punjab and Bengal created major challenges for the new state. Hostility with India, including disputes over the division of assets after partition and war over the Princely State of Kashmir, heightened Pakistan’s security dilemma.

¹⁴⁵ “Sir Muhammad Iqbal’s 1930 Presidential Address to the 25th Session of the All-India Muslim League, Allahabad, 29 December 1930,” in Latif Ahmed Sherwani, ed., *Speeches, Writings, and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1977), 3-26. In Iqbal’s address, however, this Muslim nation could remain within an Indian federation possessing limited powers at the centre.

¹⁴⁶ Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Karachi: OUP, 1993), 140-83. Jinnah’s personality continues to fascinate. Besides Wolpert, notable accounts include Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Jaswant Singh, *Jinnah: India, Partition, Independence* (Oxford: OUP, 2010).

Moreover, although appeals to nationalism based on Muslim identification had galvanized popular support and won independence, it remained to be seen whether they could forge a coherent national identity among Pakistan's disparate population. They also begged the question as to how Pakistan was to be governed. Were the structures of the state and parliamentary democracy developed in the late colonial period the appropriate institutional model for Pakistan to follow? Or did the supposed uniqueness of Muslims as a nation require that the teachings of Islam be creatively applied in the new state to develop a specifically 'Islamic' political order? Such questions remained unresolved and would continue to preoccupy Pakistan's leaders in the years to come.

Khudai Khidmatgaran and Pashtun Nationalism

The Khudai Khidmatgaran (Servants of God) originated as a movement for social reform among the Pashtuns of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Its aims included the eradication of social ills such as tribal blood feuds and use of intoxicants, reduction of poverty and inequality, provision of education, and promotion of Pashto literature and culture. With the introduction of party politics in British India, the movement took on a more political role. Its founding leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, emphasized the importance of disciplined, nonviolent activism in achieving genuine social and political reform. Members were asked to pledge that "they would abstain from the use of violence, intrigues, family feuds, and other vices," and were trained in military formation to develop discipline.¹⁴⁷ They wore reddish-

¹⁴⁷ Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North-West Frontier Province 1937-47* (Karachi: OUP, 1999), 28.

brown shirts as a uniform, which led British authorities to refer to the movement as ‘the Red Shirts,’ in an attempt to discredit it by suggesting ties to the Bolsheviks.

Ghaffar Khan’s commitment to nonviolence led to his being dubbed the ‘Frontier Gandhi.’¹⁴⁸

Wiqar Ali Shah argues, however, that this commitment originated as a considered social response, derived from Ghaffar Khan’s reading of the Quran, to the issue of tribal feuding.¹⁴⁹

Regardless, there were both political and organizational commonalities between the Khudai Khidmatgaran and Congress. The Khudai Khidmatgaran allied with Congress and participated in the civil disobedience movement of 1930, suffering many casualties and arrests. The movement’s anti-colonial activism, however, brought it gains in popularity with its membership rising from about one thousand to 25,000 in this period.¹⁵⁰

The Khudai Khidmatgaran thus differed from earlier movements in the frontier, which have been discussed in terms of tribe and Islam. Espousing social and nationalist aims, it remained rooted in a specifically pan-Pashtun cultural and religious identification, but one which sought to transcend the narrow boundaries of tribe. Although influenced by religious sources, it rejected the Muslim League’s communal appeals and cooperated with Congress. Over the course of the Second World War, however, the League, which had initially only represented

¹⁴⁸ See Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier* (Karachi: OUP, 2000), for how the movement’s Gandhian emphasis on nonviolence marks a major departure from anthropological depictions of the tribal Pashtun.

¹⁴⁹ Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, *North-West Frontier Province: History and Politics* (Islamabad: Quaid-i-Azam University, 2007), 67-69. The argument is plausible considering that blood feuds among the tribal Arabs were a major social ill addressed in the Quran, which responds by prohibiting Muslims from taking each other’s lives except by way of justice.

¹⁵⁰ Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 33.

the interests of wealthy, relatively pro-British landlords in the NWFP, diversified its appeal and siphoned support from the Khudai Khidmatgaran.¹⁵¹ As we shall see in the following chapter, when the NWFP eventually decided its fate in a referendum, it opted overwhelmingly for Pakistan over India.

The Khudai Khidmatgaran's pan-Pashtun identification complemented and influenced – and was in turn influenced by – the development of Pashtun nationalism in Afghanistan. Earlier, we observed the emergence of both territorial and Pashtun-specific notions of nationalism in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan. While promoted by the state, contested interpretations of these nationalisms were also advanced by the fledgling intelligentsia and professional class that emerged in the shadow of state institutions. James Caron documents an egalitarian strain of Pashtun nationalism that was critical of the monarchy and sought to open up the sphere of public participation, influenced by the development of parliamentary politics in NWFP and the Khudai Khidmatgaran's example of political mobilization. The state responded by increasing its patronage of Pashtun nationalism; in particular, a republican element in the monarchy championed and attempted to redirect these tendencies towards advancement of its ideals and position in government.¹⁵² In this perspective, the Afghan state's support for the Khudai Khidmatgaran and later espousal of Pashtunistan can arguably be seen as one way of redirecting subversive strains of Pashtun nationalism and maintaining its own legitimacy.¹⁵³

Jama'at-i Islami and the Afghan Islamists

¹⁵¹ Shah, *North-West Frontier Province*, 158-64.

¹⁵² Caron, "Cultural Histories of Pashtun Nationalism," 139-99.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 250-59.

The Jama'at-i Islami was founded in Lahore in August 1941 by a group of Muslims led by Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi. A journalist and political activist, Maududi received some traditional religious tutoring in his youth but had thereafter opted for a modern education. His call to found the Jama'at was motivated by concern for the diminished social and political status of Muslims in India, as had been the case with many Muslim revivalists,¹⁵⁴ as well as by his desire to provide an organizational solution to the problem.¹⁵⁵ Emphasizing the ideal of unified religious and political authority of the first Muslim *umma*, the Jama'at rejected the pro-Congress stance of most *'ulama*, as it was based on sustaining an Islamic society divorced from political power. However, it also rejected the Muslim League's claim to leadership of the Muslim community, arguing that the relatively secular Anglicized leadership of the League was incapable of directing an Islamic revival.¹⁵⁶

The Jama'at was partly an organization through which its members could enhance their knowledge of Islam and better adhere to its tenets, forming a virtuous community within the body of Muslims. Moral and educational reform in this sense remained the focus of the Jama'at in its first decade, seen as a precursor to societal reform.¹⁵⁷ Yet from the outset it was organized as a vanguard party that could contest for political leadership. Scholars have noted the similarities to the Leninist organizational model and the frequency of terms such as 'revolution,' 'ideology,' and 'vanguard' in Maududi's writings.¹⁵⁸ In the Jama'at's case,

¹⁵⁴ S. Abul A'la Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1967), 40-43.

¹⁵⁵ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 3-4.

¹⁵⁶ Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 41-43.

¹⁵⁷ Nasr, *Vanguard*, 21-28.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 7-9.

however, revolution was not sought through organization of the masses to violently overthrow the government. Rather, the Jama'at confined itself to working within the constitutional framework and aiming at conversion of the political leadership and the state as much as of the masses. Increasingly, it emphasized the notion of reforming society through transforming and 'Islamizing' the institutions of the state.¹⁵⁹ It is this focus on the state, in contrast both to the *de facto* separation of political and religious authority in Muslim history, and to the society-centred thinking of latter-day *'ulama* and revivalists, that has led scholars to label movements such as the Jama'at as 'political Islamists,' or simply 'Islamists,' to suggest an emphasis on Islam as political ideology.¹⁶⁰ Although a branch of Jama'at-i Islami remained in India after partition, most members moved to Pakistan, where they played a significant role in debates on the constitution and the nature of the state to be established.

The Jama'at-i Islami had its counterpart in an Islamist movement that emerged in Afghanistan in the 1960s. Before turning to that movement, it is worth noting that while the anti-colonial goals shared by several of the movements discussed thus far were achieved with the departure of the British from India 1947, in other ways these movements represented different conceptions of the desired postcolonial order. These narratives would continue to influence

¹⁵⁹ As Maududi observed after independence, "if instead of an Islamic, a secular and Godless Constitution was to be introduced, and if instead of the Islami *Shari'ah*, the British Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes had to be enforced, what was the sense in all this struggle for a separate Muslim homeland? We could have had them without that." Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 43.

¹⁶⁰ There is no agreed upon definition of the term, which encompasses a wide variety of movements; nor are Islamists the only Muslims to theorize about the state. The primacy they attach to the state in their thinking, however, serves as a reasonable approximation for our purposes. Prominent examples include the Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the Muslim Brothers) in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world, and many of the revolutionaries involved in the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Islamist ideology is discussed further in chapter five.

and provide alternate frames to the state-state relationship that developed between Pakistan and Afghanistan after 1947.

The Afghan Islamist movement took organizational shape as the *Sazman-i Jawanan-i Musalmanan* (“Muslim Youth Organization”) at Kabul University in the 1960s, drawing many of its members from the Faculties of Shariat and Engineering. Its place of origin is unsurprising, for it was in the secular world of Kabul University, at a time of radical leftist student politics, that Islam seemed most at threat in Afghanistan. Moreover, a high proportion of the state-sponsored university’s graduates began their education in government schools and were expected to go on to take government jobs. Hence, from the outset of their education the state played a bigger role in their thinking than it would for Afghans who stayed in the rural areas or received religious training in the traditional manner.

More exposed to secular political theories than other Afghans, these teachers and students also had exposure to other Islamist movements. As Muhammad Jan Ahmadzai, one of the founders of the *Sazman*, recalls,

At that time we used to study books written by members of the Muslim Brotherhood such as Hasanul Banna, Sayyed Qutb, Mohammad Qutb and Abdul Qader Auda. We also read books written by Abul Aala Maududi, the founder of *Jamaat Islami* of Pakistan, and books written by Iranian scholars such as Nasir Makarim Sherazi, Mehdi Bazargan, Abdul Karim Hashimi and Sayyed Sadruddin Balaghi. We also read *Gahiz*, an Islamic paper published in Kabul.¹⁶¹

Some went abroad for studies to Al-Azhar University in Cairo where, among other influences, they met with members of the *Ikhwan al-Muslimun*. Their evident sympathy for the Muslim

¹⁶¹ Muhammad Jan Ahmadzai, “Martyr Ahmad Zai speaks about: Early days of the Islamic Movement,” *Afghan News*, vol. 8, no. 12, 15 June 1992, 7.

Brothers led their opponents to label them as *ikhwanis*, but there is little evidence of direct organizational links between the movements.¹⁶²

For many of its members, the Sazman offered a way to adhere to Islamic teachings and practice in a highly secularized environment.¹⁶³ But much of the motivation for founding the movement stemmed from a desire to ‘defend Islam’ against the propaganda activities of the communist, and atheist, students and faculty. The Sazman and the communists were both active in student politics and elections and frequently clashed on campus. The presence of several communist deputies in parliament and the emergence of left-wing journals that often seemed to denigrate Islam and Muslim practice were further causes of concern. Evident in the Islamists’ writings is a sense that the traditional ‘*ulama* and the government were ill-equipped for the task of defending Islam. Dr. Musa Tawana, a founding member of the Sazman, writes of his time as a student:

After a few months, we sensed the appearance of a great danger...of apostasy from Islam among the university students. We felt the danger before the religious scholars because those who were in charge of corrupting the ideas and beliefs of the students would not expose themselves to the religious leaders...Moreover, they could not understand each others’ language. The religious scholars who had been educated in accordance with the old Al-Azhar University’s program were content to narrate what they had read in the Kalam, logic, philosophy, and Fiqah books. Whereas the other side knew nothing about those subjects but talk[ed] about dialectic materialism, Darwinism, evolution and the lack of necessity for the existence of the Creator. We students however knew the language of the corrupters and resembled them in age and appearance.¹⁶⁴

Similarly, another member, Mohammad Es’haq, writes that

¹⁶² See Muhammad Musa Tawana, “Glimpses into the historical background of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan: Memoirs of Dr Tawana, Part (2),” *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 8, 15 April 1989, 6.

¹⁶³ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 198-205.

¹⁶⁴ Muhammad Musa Tawana, “Glimpses into the historical background of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan: Memoirs of Dr Tawana, Part (1),” *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 7, 1 April 1989, 6.

The traditional clergy was not equipped with the right type of weapons to defend Islam, and the spiritual leadership was also facing similar problems... The government gave freedom of action to the communist groups to please the Soviets from whom it was getting economic and military aid... Islamists in schools and government offices saw the need for an organization to defend Islam against the onslaught of anti-Islamic forces. They saw the indifference of the government towards this dangerous development. That is why the Islamic movement took an anti-communist and an anti-establishment stand from the very beginning.¹⁶⁵

Islamist critiques of the government ranged from its toleration or encouragement of the communist groups, to its responsibility for economic backwardness, corruption and social injustice, to the illegitimacy of monarchical rule.¹⁶⁶ In the depth and breadth of opposition, sometimes developed in response to communist critiques of government, their stance was more hostile than that of the traditional *'ulama*, who were willing to challenge particular aspects of government policy but seldom the basis of legitimacy of the government.¹⁶⁷

During vacations, the Islamist students preached their message in their home regions and gained some supporters. In 1972 the movement was reorganized as Jami'at-i Islami ("Islamic Society"), some of the faculty became active members and transitions were made to a party-like structure, with secretaries in charge of different portfolios.¹⁶⁸ However, in July 1973, the king's cousin, Sardar Muhammad Daoud, assumed power in a *coup d'etat*, abolished the monarchy and tightened controls on political participation. Daoud came to power with the

¹⁶⁵ Mohammad Es'haq, "Evolution of Islamic Movement in Afghanistan Part (1): Islamists felt need for a party to defend Islam," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1 January 1989, 5.

¹⁶⁶ For example, Mohammad Zaman Muzammil, *Reasons of Russian Occupation and Dimensions of Resistance in Afghanistan* (n.p., 1981), 8-12.

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, David Edwards' account of the Pul-i Khishti demonstration. Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 208-11.

¹⁶⁸ Muhammad Musa Tawana, "Glimpses into the historical background of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan: Memoirs of Dr Tawana, Part (4)," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 10, 15 May 1989, 5.

help of the communists, and several communist ministers in his government saw an opportunity to begin a crackdown against the Islamists. In response, the Islamists shifted from criticism to active attempts to overthrow the government. Their failure led to the arrest of many and exile of others to Pakistan, where they remained through the 1970s. The Islamists' early opposition to the communists, in contrast to the more passive stance of the *'ulama* and others, was an outcome of their state-centred thinking. It would become an important factor in their claims to leadership of the subsequent *mujahidin* insurgency against the Saur Revolution and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

2. Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations, 1947-79

The Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship before 1979 was characterized by long periods of workable, though not cordial, relations, interspersed with periodic crises and attempts to set ties on a more sustainably friendly basis. The main source of friction in the relationship was over the status of the frontier regions of Pakistan, an issue indicative of the persistence of pre-colonial allegiances in the new international order of nation-states that both countries were entering. For the Afghan government, the Pashtunistan question, as they called it, symbolized cross-frontier Pashtun ties of tribe and ethnicity that had been unjustly severed by the colonial era demarcation of the border between Afghanistan and then British India. For the Pakistan government, in the process of integrating its constituent peoples in the framework of a modern nation-state, such claims amounted to intolerable interference in its internal affairs.

Afghanistan's support for, and indeed instigation of, what were seen as separatist sentiments by the Pakistan government, led to Pakistani protests and countermeasures, and ultimately, to a willingness to interfere in kind. Yet the worst of these tensions were regularly mitigated prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, owing to genuine interest on the part of both governments in improving ties, their disinclination to embark on a wider conflict, Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan for its transit trade, and Afghanistan's fears about its increasing dependence on the Soviet Union.

Besides these local and regional factors, the divergent Cold War alignments of the two countries also impacted upon their relationship, sometimes dampening differences and at

other times exacerbating them. The marked improvement in Pakistan-Afghanistan ties in the mid-1970s, which to interlocutors appeared an important, sustainable breakthrough, ultimately fell victim to this latter dynamic, as the communist takeover and Soviet invasion transformed the situation from a local relationship with limited frictions into a hot conflict in the Cold War.

In part I of this chapter, I discuss the basic stances and early negotiations between the Pakistan and Afghanistan governments, and explore the ways in which they engaged in politics in the frontier. I conclude this part by analyzing official Pakistani perceptions of the Pashtunistan issue in its local and regional context. In part II, I trace the subsequent history of alternating accommodation, crisis and negotiations until the overturning of this primarily bilateral dynamic by the Soviet invasion in December 1979.

I. Early Discussions and Parameters of Engagement

Afghan Views on the Frontier Question during the British Period

British frontier policy in the context of the Great Game with Russia has been recounted in the previous chapter. What remains to be observed is that the process of consolidation and transformation, albeit incomplete, of the kingdom of Kabul from a pre-modern state with boundaries that varied according to its power, to a nation of Afghanistan with defined international borders, occurred in the backdrop of this imperial rivalry. Afghanistan's borders in the north were determined primarily by the extent to which the Russians believed they could expand securely, keeping in mind local resistance as well as the British presence in India. Similarly, the demarcation of Afghanistan's southern border corresponded to how far the British eventually determined they could expand safely to protect their Indian possessions, while preserving Afghanistan as a friendly or at least neutral buffer state between the two empires.¹⁶⁹

Ahmad Shah Abdali's Afghan kingdom had included much of modern-day Afghanistan, NWFP, Baluchistan, parts of Sindh and other territories. That heyday had been brief, and in the manner of so many kingdoms of the time, its territories began to diminish after the death of its founder, as new challengers arose on all sides. The Afghan elite were conscious of the precarious state of the emerging nation, situated between powerful empires that had recently

¹⁶⁹ See the discussion in chapter one.

absorbed its neighbours.¹⁷⁰ Balancing competing British and Russian interests thus developed as a cornerstone of Afghanistan's foreign policy, seen as the best way to ensure continued independence as a neutral buffer state. In the view of Amir Abdur Rahman, the country had to remain insulated from both British and Russian influence: neither side could be given cause to believe that the other would be allowed into Afghanistan, for that would provoke it into intervening itself.¹⁷¹

The Afghan elite thus, in ceding the tribal areas and other Pashtun-dominated territories to the British in the Durand Line agreement, saw it – as in the case of the northern border with Russia – as appropriate to the balance of power at the time, as a means of deterring further expansionism, and perhaps even as necessary to allow them to focus on consolidating state power in those territories that remained under Afghan rule, and which in many cases were loosely held.¹⁷² Nonetheless, during negotiations Amir Abdur Rahman warned the British Viceroy:

As to these frontier tribes...of Yaghistan, if they were included in my dominions...I will gradually make them peaceful subjects and good friends of Great Britain. But if you will cut them out of my dominions, they will neither be of any use to you nor to me: you will always be engaged in fighting and troubles with them, and they will always go on plundering...In your cutting away from me these frontier tribes who are people of my nationality and my religion, you will injure my prestige in the eyes of my subjects, and will make me weak...¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Sultan Mahomed Khan, ed., *The Life of Amir Abdur Rahman: Amir of Afghanistan*, vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1900), 146-49.

¹⁷¹ For an excellent account of the development of Afghan foreign policy, see Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*. These early developments are discussed on pages 11-17. Ghaus, a long-serving Afghan diplomat, rose to deputy foreign minister in the Republican government of Sardar Daoud.

¹⁷² Sultan Mahomed Khan, *Life of Abdur Rahman*, vol. 2, 149-56.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 157-58. The descriptor 'Yaghistan,' which loosely translates to 'land of the rebellious,' is indicative of how Afghan rulers perceived the eastern tribal zones where they had trouble consolidating their authority.

Thus, while Amir Abdur Rahman and his successors repeatedly affirmed the border agreement with the British, these affirmations should not be seen as an indicator of satisfaction. As discussed in chapter one, Afghan rulers continued to maintain their own subsidies and influence across the border and sometimes aided the tribes in uprisings against the British.

As the Indian independence movement gained strength in the lead-up to the transfer of power, the Afghan government repeatedly approached the British regarding the status of the tribes. In 1944, it requested that the British government affirm it did not intend to “annex” the British-controlled tribal areas, vowed in return not to influence the tribes “so long as the British position in India is unchanged,” and offered close cooperation in developing the tribal areas on both sides of the border.¹⁷⁴ In informal discussions, Afghan officials indicated a desire to recover some of the territories ceded in the Durand Line agreement in the event of British withdrawal. Afghan Foreign Minister Ali Muhammad Khan argued that

This agreement had been and would continue to be respected by the Afghan government; but...the agreement was made specifically with the British who had conquered by force of arms certain territories, e.g. the N.W.F.P., which formerly belonged to the Afghans and whose inhabitants were of Afghan origin. In other words the Afghans had handed over these territories and peoples to a sort of British trusteeship. In the event of the British abandoning this trust the Afghan Government would regard the position of these ex-Afghan territories and peoples as open. On

¹⁷⁴ Letter, G.F. Squire to Olaf Caroe, 24 November 1944, accession no. (acc.) S.160, National Documentation Centre, Cabinet Wing, Islamabad (hereafter NDC). The last included British financial support to help Afghanistan maintain its authority in the tribal areas, joint economic development and gradual efforts towards the disarmament of the tribes. Afghanistan also suggested a possible non-aggression pact or military treaty with the British, and repeated earlier requests for an outlet to the sea, “a port on the Western seaboard of India, e.g. Western Baluchistan connected with Afghanistan by a corridor...leased to Afghanistan.” Ibid.

historical grounds they considered that they had as good a claim to them as either the Hindus or the Muslims of India.¹⁷⁵

In a later meeting, Afghan Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Hashim Khan advanced a line of argument emphasizing the Russian threat, perhaps intended to resonate more with British strategic concerns than Ali Muhammad's arguments of pan-Afghan solidarity:

Afghanistan had always been...the outer bastion of India's defence system...[but] if the grant of independence [to India] meant the removal of British power, Afghanistan...would fall an easy prey to Russia and then where would India be? She would have Russia on her doorstep...Afghanistan could not contemplate with equanimity any weakening of the position at her back when she was faced with a growing menace from the North. Therefore she would like an assurance that the Afghan territories taken over by the British...would be restored to Afghanistan. Afghanistan sought no aggrandizement; indeed, additional territories and people would be a heavy liability to her...[and] she was quite content with the present position; but if British control was to be removed then it was essential to the defence of Afghanistan that the frontier areas should be restored.¹⁷⁶

British officials considered the security argument unconvincing, emphasized that under international law the Durand Line would mark the Indo-Afghan border regardless of British withdrawal, and claimed that Pashtuns across the border had little interest in joining Afghanistan. However, they remained unsure as to how serious the Afghans were in pursuing their irredentist claim. Major G.C.L. Crichton, the British *Charge d'Affaires* in Kabul, noted:

Personally, I doubt whether they are really concerned about the fate of "people of Afghan origin" in the N.W.F.P. or that they seriously contemplate the possibility of taking them over...It is all too unreal...It may be that what they fear is that an Indian Government without the support of British military power would be incapable of controlling the tribes on the Indian side of the Durand Line, who would thereby become an even greater potential menace to Afghan stability than they are now. Their

¹⁷⁵ Letter, G.C.L. Crichton to R.R. Burnett, 4 October 1945, *ibid.* On further questioning, Ali Muhammad acknowledged that this claim was not limited to the tribal areas. *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Letter, Crichton to Burnett, 20 December 1945, *ibid.*

true objective may be some sort of assurance that...His Majesty's Government will not abandon their interest in the integrity of the present Indo-Afghan frontier...¹⁷⁷

Crichton may have been too quick to dismiss genuine Afghan sympathy with their co-ethnics across the border, and the seriousness of Afghan hopes to redress continuing resentments on the border issue after a new dispensation emerged in India. His doubts nonetheless highlight what would become a continuing feature of the Pakistan-Afghanistan dispute; namely, that of the ambiguity of Afghan claims regarding the border.

In 1947, with the impending partition of the subcontinent, Afghanistan again raised the frontier issue with the British government. At the time, the NWFP was being governed by a Congress-allied provincial government, led by the Khudai Khidmatgaran, but the frontier branch of the Muslim League had recently made considerable gains in political mobilization. As the NWFP was one of the Muslim-majority provinces in the League's proposal for Pakistan, the partition plan called for a referendum in the settled districts of the province to determine its future. In response, Ghaffar Khan objected that rather than limiting Pashtuns to deciding between Pakistan and India, the referendum should allow a third choice: that of their forming an independent state of 'Pashtunistan.' This proposal was embodied in a resolution adopted by the Frontier Congress on 21 June, 1947, calling for

[A] free Pathan State of all Pakhtoos...The constitution of the State will be framed on the basis of Islamic conception of democracy, equality and social justice. This meeting appeals to all the Pathans to unite for the attainment of this cherished goal and not to submit to any non-Pakhtoon domination.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Letter, Crichton to Burnett, 4 October 1945.

¹⁷⁸ "Ghaffar Khan's letter to Jinnah, 24 June 1947," in Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 87. For police reports of the Khudai Khidmatgaran's pro-Pashtunistan and anti-Pakistan campaigning at this time, see, "I.P.S.

As a movement defined by its concern for social reform and political mobilization specifically among Pashtuns, it is unsurprising that the option of a Pashtun nation should occur to the Khudai Khidmatgaran, especially as other proposals for ethnically defined states were in consideration during the transfer of power.¹⁷⁹ However, this proposal was something new to their thinking; to some extent, it reflected uncertainty on how to respond to Congress' belated acquiescence to the creation of Pakistan, which the movement had been unprepared for.¹⁸⁰ The Khudai Khidmatgaran's recent antagonism with the Frontier Muslim League and alliance with Congress threatened to leave them in an equivocal position in a League-dominated Pakistan.

Under the circumstances, the Afghan government raised its own objections to the referendum, arguing that

The decision that a referendum is being arranged for the North-West Frontier Province, so that it can express its wish to join either Pakistan or Hindustan, is in the opinion of the Royal Afghan Government incompatible with justice, as it debars them from choosing, either an obvious and natural way of forming a separate free state, or of rejoining Afghanistan their motherland.¹⁸¹

The government's proposal to add these two options to the referendum was rejected by the British government as amounting to interference in India's internal affairs, as the areas were

Daily Diary," 1 July 1947, acc. S.396, NDC; or any of the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) or IPS (Indian Police Service) daily briefs from that period in acc. S.396.

¹⁷⁹ For example, Chief Minister Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy's proposal in early 1947 for an independent united Bengal, which received the approval of Jinnah. Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, 320-23.

¹⁸⁰ This consideration is highlighted by Congress leader Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, quoted in S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History: The Afghans and the Rise and Fall of the Ruling Afghan Dynasties and Rulers*, vol. 2 (Peshawar: n.p., n.d.), 281-86.

¹⁸¹ "Note by the Afghan Minister of the Afghan Legation, London, to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs raising objections to the holding of referendum in the NWFP, 13 June 1947," in Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 91.

recognized as an integral part of India in the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921.¹⁸² The referendum went ahead amid calls for a boycott by the Khudai Khidmatgaran. Out of a turnout of 55.5% of the registered voters, 289,244 voted to join Pakistan and 2,074 to join India.¹⁸³ This percentage was down on the 68% turnout for the provincial elections the previous year, which had however been a record turnout.

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were not included in the referendum as their legal status was different from the settled districts. British officials emphasized that whereas the Durand Line border and other areas were legally inherited by Pakistan as a successor state to the British Indian government, the agreements made by the British with the tribes had to be renewed or renegotiated.¹⁸⁴ On 30 July, 1947, after the referendum in the settled districts had been carried out, Pakistan's founding leader Jinnah stated in a speech that

As regards the tribal areas... we would like to continue after August 15 all the treaties, agreements and allowances until such time as the representatives of the tribes and of the Pakistan Government have met and negotiated new arrangements. The Government of Pakistan have no desire whatsoever to interfere in any way the traditional independence of the tribal areas.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² "Note Verbale and Aide Memoire by the British Government to the Afghan Foreign Minister rejecting Afghanistan's objection against referendum in the NWFP, 4 July 1947," *ibid*, 97-98. Also see the exchanges on pages 97-112.

¹⁸³ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 67.

¹⁸⁴ This legal position is evocative of the British stance at partition that the Princely States could choose to either accede to India or Pakistan or become independent; this process of accession led to disputes over the status of Hyderabad, Junagadh and most importantly Kashmir.

¹⁸⁵ "Statement made by the Quaid-i-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah assuring the people of the Frontier Province self-government within Pakistan and expressing the desire to have friendly relations with Afghanistan, 30 July 1947," *ibid*, 114. Similar assurances were made to tribes in Baluchistan and Dera Ghazi Khan.

Pakistani officials successfully renewed treaties with tribal leaders beginning in November 1947, though in some cases the process was not completed until several years after independence.¹⁸⁶

Afghanistan's reservations about the frontier question led it to cast the sole dissenting vote against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations on 30 September, 1947. Although the vote was subsequently withdrawn on 20 October, as a highly symbolic act it signalled a troubled beginning to the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan: Early Stances and Negotiations

The public stances of Pakistan and Afghanistan on the frontier question were not only divergent, but rested on different bases of legitimacy. The central Afghan claim rested on the legitimacy of ethnic and cultural ties with Pashtuns across the border: as special envoy Sardar Najibullah Khan argued in a public speech, "Inseparable and firm ties of inter-relation bind each and every individual of this country with his (trans-border) brethren. Our interest in them and their interest in us date back from the time giving birth to the Afghan nation..."¹⁸⁷ Further, the territories that these Pashtuns inhabited had historically been part of Afghanistan, until British intrigues forced an artificial, colonial separation: "The events of this last century and

¹⁸⁶ For some examples of these treaties, see *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to Federally and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas, 1947 to 1996*, vol. 2 (Islamabad: Ministry of Kashmir Affairs & Northern Areas and States & Frontier Regions, 1998).

¹⁸⁷ "Full translation of a speech broadcast on the 3rd February, 1948, by His Excellency Sardar Najibullah Khan 'Tourwayana,'" 3 February 1948, file 116/CF/48, acc. 1888, NDC.

the imperialistic policy of the world are in fact responsible for...the dismemberment of a considerable part of land from the body and mainland of this country.”¹⁸⁸

Not only was the Afghan concession to the British made under duress but, as Ali Muhammad Khan had argued, it was only valid with respect to the British presence in India. Now that the British had withdrawn, the status of the territories was legally open. Further Afghan arguments are noted in a Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs summary of the stances of the two sides, namely that the tribal areas have historically always been independent, and hence deserve the right to self-determination; and that the NWFP referendum was invalid as it gave voters only a constrained choice between Pakistan and India.¹⁸⁹

In response to these arguments, the Pakistan government argued its case mainly on the basis of a different source of legitimacy: that of the sovereign jurisdiction possessed by nation-states over their territories under international law. The Durand Line demarcated in 1893, and reaffirmed by Afghan rulers in the Anglo-Afghan treaties of 1919 and 1921, remained in force as “it is a well settled rule of international law that succeeding states also succeed to the treaties in force between their predecessors and other countries, especially all treaties relating to territorial arrangements.”¹⁹⁰ Specific provisions to this effect relating to Pakistan were included in Article 3 (ii) of the Indian Independence (International Arrangements) Order of

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, “Summary for the Cabinet: President’s Visit to Afghanistan,” 31 July 1956, file 210/CF/56, acc. 2187, NDC. Also see Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 66-69.

¹⁹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, “Summary for the Cabinet: President’s Visit to Afghanistan,” 31 July 1956.

1947.¹⁹¹ Hence, under international law, Afghanistan was excluded from expressing in any interest in territories under Pakistan's sovereign jurisdiction.

Pakistan further argued that the right to self-determination of the settled districts of NWFP was adequately settled by the referendum, in which such an overwhelming majority voted in favour of Pakistan that even in the impossible scenario that every registered vote not cast were considered to have been prompted by the Khudai Khidmatgaran boycott and hence a vote for Pashtunistan, Pakistan would still have a majority. As regards the tribal areas, the continuation of the old treaties and successful negotiation of new treaties with tribal representatives gave sufficient consideration to their right of self-determination. Pakistan also argued that the Pashtuns in Pakistan greatly outnumber those in Afghanistan, hence the minority should join the majority, not vice versa. Moreover,

If...the Afghan argument that tribes are a racial group having their own culture and language and that they should constitute a separate entity is accepted, it will imply that only the people of the same race can form a separate state. This would...lead to complete break up and dismemberment of Afghanistan itself because it is a composite multi-national state consisting of Persians on the North West, the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkamans in the North East and Pathans in the South.¹⁹²

Finally, Pakistan complained about the vagueness of the Afghan claim relating to Pashtunistan:

In 1946 the Afghan government proffered a claim...for the integration of North West Frontier Province, the Tribal Areas and part of Baluchistan with Afghanistan...Soon after the inception of Pakistan the demand took the shape of an autonomous Pathan unit comprising of territory between the Indus and the Durand Line. Later it was suggested that the Afghan demand would be met by a mere change in the name of North West Frontier Province into Pashtoonistan. Sometime after, the Afghans revived their old demand by asking for an independent "Pashtoonistan" covering the Tribal

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

Areas, North West Frontier Province and the whole of Baluchistan upto the Arabian Sea. Finally, the “Pashtoonistan” claim came to be expressed as a desire to see the future of the people in these areas being decided in accordance with their own wishes.¹⁹³

In his book on Afghan foreign policy, former Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Samad Ghaus acknowledges the ambiguity, stating that Afghanistan’s demands were often calibrated to the attitude of the Pakistani government; toned down when it cooperated and ratcheted up when it was hostile.¹⁹⁴

However, this gulf in perceptions between the two countries did not rule out the possibility of compromise. On 15 November 1947, King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan sent a special representative, Sardar Najibullah Khan, to negotiate the frontier issue and open diplomatic relations with Pakistan.¹⁹⁵ After a two month stay the visit ended inconclusively, following which, on his recall to Kabul, Najibullah gave a comprehensive account of the details and progress of the secret negotiations in a public address on Radio Kabul. His version, in conjunction with less-detailed Pakistani and British accounts, together form a holistic picture of the positions of the two sides, the extent to which they were willing to compromise, and the contours of a possible settlement.

Sardar Najibullah Negotiations, November 1947 – January 1948

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 72. Ever the diplomat, Ghaus refrains from clarifying at any point in the book what exactly Afghanistan’s basic demand was; if indeed, there was a clear-cut demand. For more on Ghaus’ book, see the Appendix.

¹⁹⁵ Not to be confused with future Afghan president Najibullah.

According to Najibullah, soon after arriving in Pakistan he emphasized that “Afghanistan was not desirous of any territorial gains. Nor had she any yearning for extending the frontiers of her soil.”¹⁹⁶ He reiterated nonetheless that ‘Afghans’ (Pashtuns; the formulation would have irritated Pakistani officials) on both sides of the border were members of a single family and that Afghanistan could not consider the position of Afghans in Pakistan as an internal matter, for its ties with them long predated Pakistan’s existence.¹⁹⁷ On 5 December, in talks with Pakistan Governor General Jinnah, Najibullah presented a draft treaty for discussion. In Article III of the draft, Najibullah sought that

The Government of Pakistan...recognises those Afghans inhabited [*sic*] between the Durand Line and the River Indus, and their land which covers the tribal areas, the North West Frontier Province of old India, the areas of Quetta, Pishin, Kakaristan, Tortarin and Speentarin, as a single nation with distinct entity and identity, and a complete political and administrative autonomy is granted to them and their country inside the constituent frame of the Union of the Federation of Pakistan and under its own authority, and their land will be admitted into a single autonomous country called () and the city of Peshawar will be established as its capital.¹⁹⁸

In Articles VI and VII, the Pakistan government would undertake to allow direct relations between Afghanistan and the ‘autonomous country’ regarding the formation of cultural and literary societies, and would work in unison with Afghanistan in ensuring peace and

¹⁹⁶ “Full translation of a speech,” 3 February 1948. The public disclaimer is significant, given that Afghanistan had pressed territorial claims with British interlocutors in the recent past. It is consistent with concurrent stances taken by the Afghan Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in talks with British officials. On 28 November, Prime Minister Shah Mahmud stated that Afghanistan wanted “a rather more autonomous” status for Pashtuns in Pakistan; a vague formulation, which also did not clarify whether he was referring specifically to the tribal areas. Telegram, unknown author, acc. 1673, NDC.

According to G.F. Squire, on 17 December, Ali Muhammad stated that “all Afghanistan really wants is some form of acknowledgment of separate identity of frontier Afghans with preferably a change of name of the frontier province.” Telegram, Squire to UK High Commissioner, Karachi, 18 December 1947, acc. 1673, NDC.

¹⁹⁷ “Full translation of a speech,” 3 February 1948.

¹⁹⁸ “Draft Treaty prepared by Sardar Najibullah Khan,” file 210/CF/56, acc. 2187, NDC.

increasing the development and welfare of the tribes in the autonomous country.¹⁹⁹ Those parts of the Durand Line which remained in contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan would remain in their existing state, pending the appointment of boundary commissions on both sides for their final demarcation.²⁰⁰ Both countries would open diplomatic relations, establishing embassies in Kabul and Karachi, as well as consulates in other cities.²⁰¹

In addition to the frontier question, the draft treaty also sought to address long-standing Afghan concerns about an outlet to the sea. These concerns had been raised on multiple occasions with the British, and reflected Afghan apprehensions regarding their land-locked county's economic dependence on its southern neighbours for trade purposes. The draft treaty required that Afghanistan and Pakistan negotiate a new trade agreement to replace the old Anglo-Afghan treaties, and that Pakistan accept the appointments of Trade Agents of Afghanistan in several cities. Moreover, "The Government of Pakistan...undertakes to grant to Afghanistan the right of a free zone via Peshawar-Lahore-Karachi, and Chaman-Quetta-Karachi and at the Port of Karachi."²⁰²

Such concessions, particularly on the frontier question, went well beyond what the Pakistan government felt it could give. Pakistan had only recently come into existence and its leaders were cognizant of the need for reducing the regionalist tendencies of its multi-ethnic populace to develop as a modern nation-state. Jinnah's political genius had succeed in welding together

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

a disparate alliance including the Muslim peasantry of Bengal, who had socioeconomic grievances against their Hindu landlords; the Muslim elite of the United Provinces, concerned about the diminishment of their status in a Hindu-dominated India; and the Muslims of the northwest provinces, who, secure in their majority status, had until lately been lukewarm towards the idea of Pakistan. Unifying these disparate interests and identifications into a coherent national identity remained a major challenge. In an address in Dhaka on 21 March, 1948, Jinnah warned against the dangers of provincialism:

As long as you do not throw off this poison from your body politic, you will never be able to weld yourselves...into a real true nation...[H]ave you forgotten the lesson that was taught to us 1300 years ago?...whatever else you may be...you are Muslims. You belong to a nation now. You have now carved out a territory, vast territory, it is all yours. It does not belong to a Punjabi or a Sindhi, or a Pathan or a Bengali, it is yours. You have got your central government where the several units are represented. Therefore, if you want to build up yourselves into a nation, for God's sake give up this provincialism. Provincialism has been one of the curses, and so is sectionalism, Shia, Sunni, etc...you should think, live, and act in terms that your country is Pakistan and you are a Pakistani.²⁰³

Debates on the national identity, the role of Islam in the ideology of Pakistan, and official appeals to national and Muslim solidarity would continue in the years ahead. Against this backdrop, Najibullah's talk of a 'country' of 'Afghans' within Pakistan's borders was a step too far, especially when it seemed such a claim was not restricted to the tribal areas, which had historically enjoyed a semi-independent status, but to all of NWFP and parts of Baluchistan as well.

²⁰³ "Address by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Governor General of Pakistan, in Dacca, East Pakistan; March 21st, 1948," in Waheed Ahmad, ed., *The Nation's Voice Vol. VII: Launching the State and the End of the Journey, Aug. 1947 – Sept. 1948* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 2003), 252-53.

The Pakistan Foreign Ministry in response composed its own draft treaty, which required both countries to recognize the Durand Line as their mutual border and to initiate diplomatic relations.²⁰⁴ Both governments would promote exchange visits between members of literary and cultural societies. Both governments would grant to nationals of the other country the same rights regarding passports, trade and property as to their own nationals. Both governments would cooperate in maintaining peace along their border, would inform the other prior to undertaking any major military operation in their respective tribal areas, would refrain from subversive activities and propaganda, would commit to resolving disputes peacefully, and would refrain from cooperating with any power that adopted a hostile attitude to the other country.²⁰⁵

On trade matters, the draft treaty was much more detailed than the Afghan draft. While ignoring the idea of a free zone, it granted reciprocal rights of free transit on all public goods imported by either country through the territory of the other, and full rebates on customs duty for all trade goods so imported, subject to certain restrictions.²⁰⁶ Similarly, the treaty provided for Trade Agents, possessing no special privileges, to be established on a reciprocal basis.²⁰⁷

Najibullah argued that the trade concessions were no more satisfactory than those already granted by the British. He was however more concerned with the draft treaty's failure to

²⁰⁴ "Draft Treaty Prepared in Foreign Ministry (Pakistan)," file 210/CF/56, acc. 2187, NDC.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

address the frontier question.²⁰⁸ In his speech afterwards, Najibullah claimed that Pakistani officials, including Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, were sympathetic to his viewpoint and gave him verbal assurances that they supported granting a high degree of autonomy to Pashtuns and were agreeable to the consolidation of Pashtun-dominated territories into a single administrative unit with an appropriately Pashtun name.²⁰⁹ While these claims may be exaggerated, it is probable that Pakistani officials were more forthcoming in private, verbal discussions than they would have been in writing or in public.²¹⁰ In any event, Najibullah insisted on having Pakistani assurances put in writing. Pakistani officials objected that such assurances could not be included in a treaty without conceding an Afghan right of involvement which they were unwilling and legally unable to concede. However, they agreed to embody the assurances in the form of a letter.

On 1 January, 1948, Pakistani Foreign Minister Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrullah Khan presented Najibullah with a letter on behalf of Liaqat Ali Khan, ostensibly issued to clarify Afghan misunderstandings about Pakistan's policy. The letter cited Jinnah's public statements to the tribes of the frontier, Baluchistan and Dera Ghazi Khan, in which he recognized their independent status. The letter pointed out that fresh agreements, which respected tribal autonomy, had been recently agreed between the government and tribal representatives. With

²⁰⁸ "Full translation of a speech," 3 February 1948.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ In bringing his speech to the notice of the cabinet, the Pakistan Foreign Ministry observed that "It was... full of statements attributed to Ministers and high officials of the Government of Pakistan which though they would have been moderately accurate in their proper context, have been worked into the speech so as to constitute deliberate '*suggestio falsi, suppressio veri*' with the object of distorting the whole situation." Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, "Policy Regarding Sardar Najibullah Khan's Speech," file 116/CF/48, acc. 1888, NDC.

regard to the NWFP, Jinnah's post-referendum statement was cited, in which he stated "the Pathans of the Frontier Province... would enjoy full freedom, as regards the advancement of their social, cultural, educational and political institutions. They would have the same self-government as... [is] enjoyed by all other provinces of Pakistan."²¹¹ Finally, the letter observed that "a Constituent Assembly composed of representatives from all parts of Pakistan has been set up... Regarding its future constitution, each Province will accordingly be at liberty to place on the agenda of this Constituent Assembly, any subject matter which they think fit for this purpose."²¹²

Zafrullah clarified that this last point was meant to address the idea of consolidating Pashtun areas into a single unit with a Pashtun name; these issues qualified under the heading of "any subject matter" which provincial representatives could raise.²¹³ Najibullah's attempt to obtain an explicit written assurance on this point led to a crisis in the negotiations, an incident which his public speech glosses over. According to British officials, who were in touch with both sides, on 2 January, Najibullah wrote a reply to Liaquat's letter, asking for confirmation that

the Prime Minister's letter meant that it was the Government's intention to grant complete autonomous government for the Afghans and their country and to agree that all Afghans east of [the Durand Line] might join into a single government if they wished; also that Pakistan government would agree to give new name to land of the Afghans to identify their separate nationality.²¹⁴

²¹¹ "Full translation of a speech," 3 February 1948.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Telegram, Pakistan (UK High Commission) to Commonwealth Relations Office, 7 January 1948, acc. 1673, NDC.

In response, Liaqat wrote another letter on 3 January stating that the “Constitution of Pakistan... would be framed by a constituent assembly which is a sovereign body. The Assembly can alter the name of any of the component units of Pakistan.”²¹⁵ With regard to the tribal areas, they had “a special status. Should their people themselves express the wish to join settled districts constituent assembly would certainly give full weight to this desire.”²¹⁶ While this letter went some way towards addressing Najibullah’s specific concerns, it also pointedly hit back at his provocative language regarding ‘Afghans’ and their ‘separate nationality:’ “Pakistan is one single country. All who live in it are Pakistanis... with equal rights, privileges and responsibilities... All Pakistan provinces have the same rights and enjoy the same autonomy.”²¹⁷ In conclusion the letter observed that the above matters related “exclusively to Pakistan’s domestic affairs and [are] no concern of any other country,” and expressed surprise that “our brotherly neighbour’s representative should choose to voice questions likely to cause misunderstanding.”²¹⁸

Najibullah, who had likely been over-optimistic about Pakistani sympathy to his views and had underestimated Pakistani sensitivity over what they considered internal issues, took offense at the tone and substance of the response, considering it at variance with preceding discussions.²¹⁹ The arrival of Afghan Prime Minister Shah Mahmud in Karachi at this time

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

seems to have prevented negotiations from breaking off,²²⁰ with negotiators agreeing to withdraw both Najibullah's letter and Liaquat's letter of 3 January.²²¹ Discussions continued, with Pakistani negotiators pressing Najibullah to conclude a treaty on non-controversial issues, such as continuing existing trade agreements, and to agree to the unconditional exchange of diplomatic missions.²²² Najibullah was unwilling to agree without progress on the frontier issue and the Afghan side soon broke off negotiations, with Najibullah heading back to Kabul on 17 January.

According to British officials, Najibullah privately blamed a 14 January speech by Liaquat Ali Khan in Peshawar, in which he referred to the tribal areas as an "integral part" of Pakistan, for the break off.²²³ Nevertheless, in his public speech Najibullah put a positive spin on the affair, stating that he had returned to obtain the nation's approval for accepting Pakistani assurances as embodied in the 1 January letter and Jinnah and Liaquat's verbal assurances regarding the Constituent Assembly.²²⁴ While positive in tone, this speech put the Afghan government in an embarrassing position for publicly airing secret negotiations, and likely spurred its decision to

²²⁰ Jinnah later told Ambassador Shah Wali that Najibullah had "behaved badly and almost created a crisis which was only tided over by the arrival and intervention of Shah Mahmud." "Meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, the 29th April, 1948," file 116/CF/48, acc. 1888, NDC.

²²¹ Telegram, Pakistan (UK High Commission) to Commonwealth Relations Office, 17 January 1948, acc. 1673, NDC.

²²² Telegram, 21 January 1948, *ibid.* This approach was encouraged by British officials, who subsequently blamed the Afghan side for precipitately breaking off negotiations.

²²³ Telegram, Pakistan (UK High Commission) to Commonwealth Relations Office, 17 January 1948.

²²⁴ "Full translation of a speech," 3 February 1948. Najibullah mentions Liaquat's speech in Peshawar but says that the phrase 'integral part of Pakistan' had crept in as an error in the translation from Urdu to English.

establish diplomatic relations and appoint Zahir Shah's esteemed uncle, Sardar Shah Wali Khan, as Ambassador in Karachi.²²⁵

The Najibullah negotiations from November 1947 – January 1948 indicated the possible contours of a settlement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Contrary to Pakistan's public stance of not admitting Afghan involvement in its 'internal affairs,' for which it has been criticized by Afghan commentators,²²⁶ Pakistani officials demonstrated a willingness in private discussions to discuss the frontier issue and try to assuage Afghan concerns. The negotiations also indicated the limits of Pakistani accommodation: Jinnah soon thereafter informed Shah Wali that Pakistan would not entertain Afghan proposals that entailed Pakistan losing "a single inch" of its territory,²²⁷ and so long as Afghan territorial claims remained vague and fluctuating, this stance was unlikely to change. In any case, the discussions suggested that pressing irredentist claims was no longer an Afghan priority. Given its situation as government of a new nation-state, involved in consolidating state authority, developing a sense of Islam-inspired nationalism and working out the details of administering varied provinces and peoples, it was too much to expect the Pakistan government to officially admit an open-ended Afghan right to speak on behalf of its Pashtun citizens and to involve itself in determining the structures by which they would be governed. Where the Pakistan government could have been more flexible was in recognizing the Afghan interest in the tribal areas,

²²⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, "Policy Regarding Sardar Najibullah Khan's Speech."

²²⁶ For example, Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 119.

²²⁷ "Meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, the 29th April, 1948." Jinnah's reluctant acquiescence to the partition of Punjab and Bengal, provinces which the Muslim League had envisioned as being in Pakistan as a whole, would have created a particular aversion to any further loss of territory.

which it admitted had a special status and in which the Afghan government had historically retained its involvement regardless of the Durand Line. Cooperation with the Afghan government regarding the tribal areas of both countries – as Afghan officials had suggested to the British in 1944 – may have offered a positive way forward, but that would probably have required Afghanistan to restrict its claims to those areas specifically.

Barring that possibility, the outcome of the negotiations was as good as the Afghan government was likely to get, and not very dissimilar from the formula converged upon by Afghan President Sardar Muhammad Daoud and Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1976. Its inability to agree at this time may have reflected differences within the royal family as well as pressures from Pashtun nationalists in Kabul. The Pashtunistan issue was still too fresh, Afghan hopes of a better dispensation too recent, and the consequences of a continuing dispute with Pakistan still unfelt, to allow for an early settlement. Under the circumstances, although diplomatic and trade relations were soon established, continuing Afghan activities directed at Pakistan's tribal areas maintained the potential for future crises.

Manoeuvring in the Frontier

As we have seen in the previous chapter, despite the demarcation of the Durand Line in 1893, the tribal areas on the British side remained the focus of competing political interests. Tribal revolts were frequent, Afghanistan maintained its own subsidies and allowances to the tribes, and Indian nationalists used the tribal areas as a base for anti-colonial resistance.

Compared to the turbulent British record, the tribal areas under Pakistani administration from 1947-79 remained, with a few exceptions, relatively peaceable. Key to this change was the decision, at independence, to withdraw the army from the tribal areas. Roedad Khan, Interior Secretary of Pakistan from 1978-88, and a man with administrative experience in the frontier dating from 1949, recalled that at the time of independence, Jinnah held discussions with Sir George Cunningham, Governor of NWFP, on how to deal with the ‘tribal problem.’

Cunningham told him that

The pacification policy has been a total failure. We set up cantonments all over the frontier in a bid to pacify the tribesmen, and it failed utterly. Don’t follow this policy, don’t send troops. They’re your own people, they won’t cause these problems for you. Disestablish the cantonments, pull out the troops, and leave it to the *khassadars* [tribal levies] and political authorities to handle.²²⁸

Cunningham’s advice was tacit admission that British garrisons in the frontier, established to enhance British security, had in fact enhanced insecurity and fears of British domination among the tribesmen. Increasing the numbers of troops had simply provided a larger target to strike at. Pakistan’s withdrawal of its army eased those concerns and prevented any major flare-up of tensions on the frontier; only once or twice in the period up to 1979 did the government feel the need to recommit regular troops, and that too for fairly short engagements.

Cunningham’s reference to “your own people” suggests another important difference. The fact that the new state was governed by Muslims, indeed that its *raison d’être* was to enable Muslims to govern themselves, dealt a serious blow to the religious rationale for opposition. That is not to say the tribesmen necessarily identified with the state; differences along the tribe-state axis persisted and offered potential sources of legitimacy to oppose the state, but

²²⁸ Roedad Khan, interview with author, 25 April 2010.

the oppositional legitimacy provided by religious differences no longer commanded the same credibility. The cases of the *mulla* of Waziristan and the Faqir of Ipi are suggestive of the constraints now faced by religious appeals for mobilization.²²⁹

Aside from these two important changes, Pakistani administration of the tribal areas largely followed the parameters set out by the British. Continuity in policy was in part fostered by continuity in personnel: a number of British frontier officials chose in the first years after independence to remain at their posts and help out the new state. Their immediate successors were trained in the same civil service tradition and retained not a few of the same assumptions and biases.²³⁰ The tribes were included in Pakistan by means of treaties with tribal elders, in which they pledged loyalty to Pakistan, abjured dealings with foreign powers and guaranteed protection of government personnel, roads and installations.²³¹ They also pledged to help the government when requested, and assist in the construction of public works and development schemes intended for their social and economic benefit.²³² The government would pledge to resolve domestic and tribal matters with “full regard to our tribal custom and traditions...in consultation with and through our Maliks/Elders.”²³³ Subsidies to the tribe and individual allowances to *maliks* were also fixed in these treaties, collectable from the Political Agent

²²⁹ Akbar Ahmed shows how the Waziri *mulla*'s call for *jihad* in South Waziristan Agency, which was targeted against the rival Mahsud clan as much as the administration, was rooted in localized Wazir-specific concerns and failed to gain broader commitment, even among Wazirs in neighbouring North Waziristan. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics*, 49-99. The Faqir of Ipi is discussed later in this chapter.

²³⁰ Such continuity is of a piece with the retention, in many respects, of colonial era state structures by both Pakistan and India, and indeed by many other postcolonial states.

²³¹ For a prototypical example, see “Agreement of Loyalty Between Khyber Afridis and the Government of Pakistan – Dated 30th September, 1955,” in *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. 2, 43. The collection includes treaties with numerous tribes, all of which follow the above format with minor variations.

²³² *Ibid.* Sometimes the tribes would pledge to assist with the establishment of defence installations.

²³³ *Ibid.*

annually on guarantee of “good behaviour...and fulfilment of all the obligations.”²³⁴ Unlike former Princely States such as Chitral and Swat, which were gradually incorporated into the political and legal administration of the NWFP, the tribal areas continued to retain their separate form of administration.

The Frontier Crimes Regulation remained in place, and where the law was breached in the space shared by state and tribe – for example, relating to government property or non-tribal citizens – penalties were levied collectively if the tribe did not hand over those responsible.²³⁵ The Political Agent remained the most powerful official in the agency, with wide-ranging authority over political matters, arbitration, law enforcement and development projects.²³⁶ Some of the ways in which this system worked in practice will be illustrated in the following discussion.

In the years after independence, Pakistani frontier officials frequently responded to police and intelligence reports about pro-Pashtunistan activity, much of it seen to be inspired or encouraged by Afghanistan. The range of activities included the distribution of literature promoting pro-Pashtunistan and anti-Pakistan views, propaganda by Radio Kabul, and Afghan payment of subsidies and allowances. The parties monitored regarding these activities included the Afghan government, Pashtun nationalists outside of Pakistan, local ‘Pashtunistanis’ and the Khudai Khidmatgaran. The records of official reports and related

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ See, for example, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. 2, 28-29.

²³⁶ For an excellent summary, from personal experience, of the Political Agent’s responsibilities and powers in South Waziristan Agency, see Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics*, 35-39.

correspondence shed light on these areas of contestation, the range of responses of frontier and federal government officials, and the degree of seriousness with which they perceived them.

Newspapers and Pamphlets

Newspapers and pamphlets were among the most frequent manifestations of pro-Pashtunistan activity in the tribal areas. They were sometimes ignored by frontier officials and at other times confiscated and banned for promoting sedition. The language of such publications was typically colourful, and at times resorted to dubious religious imagery, as one proclamation from the Pashto weekly *Da Pakhtoon Awaz* (The Pashtun Voice) illustrates:

for every Pharoah there is a mosses [*sic*]. When the atrocities of the British on India...exceeded beyond limits...the late Haji (Mirza Ali Khan) Faqir Ippi...girded up his loins for Jihad...[for] Islam, liberation of the country and welfare of the Muslims...When India was divided into two parts and the reins of power were given in the hands of English type of Muslims in Pakistan to mislead and destroy Muslims and Islam...[he] continued his Jihad even against Pakistan...for the freedom of [our] State and the Pakhtoon nation...²³⁷

Haji Mirza Ali Khan, the Faqir of Ipi, was a key figure in the guerrilla insurgency against the British in Waziristan in the 1930s and 1940s, which kept some 40,000 British troops tied down in the agency during the Second World War. After independence he maintained his opposition to the state, trying to adapt by supporting Pashtunistan and adjusting his call for *Jihad* with such claims as above, that the Pakistan government was simply a surrogate for the British and not really Muslim. These claims failed to have the same impact, and his support

²³⁷ Letter, "Objectionable weekly paper in Pushto entitled *Da Pakhtoon Awaz*," Secretary, Home Department, to Commissioner, Peshawar Division, 25 January 1964, acc. 10, NDC.

diminished significantly, although the occasion of his death did result in one of the more prominent instances of military action in the post-independence period.²³⁸

Another example is offered by Pashto posters found in several places in Lakki Bannu district and Kohat in March 1959:

O Pathan: be firm in your faith. Pathan Tiger is brave and generous – He will not be a slave of others. Being subservient to Kafirs [nonbelievers] is heretic. O Pathan fulfil the obligations enjoined on you by your religion...O Pathans be united: The Qadiani Government of PAKISTAN has always deceived the Muslims...This Qadiani General MOHAMMAD AYUB is trying to enslave the country with the help of six hundred Englishmen and at the instance of the British Government. Now a days unislamic [*sic*] measures are being introduced in MIRANSHAH...O Pathan: Don't sell yourself for worldly gains...²³⁹

The Qadiani, or Ahmadi, a minority Muslim sect originally based in Punjab, were considered outside the pale of Islam by many Muslims. There had been one or two prominent Qadianis in the Pakistan government at the time of independence, at which point this theme, that the government was still non-Muslim, like the British, because it was a 'Qadiani government' was picked up by Afghan propaganda.²⁴⁰ As with the previous example, the posters suggest the struggle of anti-state propaganda, once defined by religious opposition, to adapt to the post-independence situation.

Many of these papers were published by the Afghan government or by organizations it sponsored. A Pakistan Ministry of States and Frontier Regions report from August 1950 highlights the role of the Pashto Tolana institute in Kabul:

²³⁸ For more on the Faqir of Ipi, see Alan Warren, *Waziristan, the Faqir of Ipi, and the Indian Army: The North West Frontier Revolt of 1936-37* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

²³⁹ Letter, "Anti-Government Pushto posters," Sarfraz Khan to Commissioner and Resident Frontier Regions, 16 March 1959, *ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 93-94.

It is the main organisation responsible for the development and propagation of the Pashtu language and literature for the dissemination of the Pathan culture in Afghanistan. Actually it serves the double purpose of a Pashtu Academy and a mighty machine that is zealously advocating the Pathanistan ideal...it has branches all over the Pashtu-speaking areas in Afghanistan and along the Tribal Belt.²⁴¹

The pro-Pashtunistan papers the report describes, in often colourful language, include: *Loi Pashtun*, *Itihad-i-Mashriqi*, *Waranga*, *Azad Pakhtunistan* (“It is the mouth-piece of [the Faqir of] Ipi and gives publicity to the activities of his notorious gang”), *Tolu-i-Afghan*, *Seistan*, *Haiwad* (“the most virulent...paper devoted to the cause of Pushtunistan”), *Kabul*, *Mujalla-i-Kabul*, *Islah* (“the chief organ of the Afghan government”), *Anis*, *Azad Pathanistan*, and *Pakhtunistan*. In addition, the report lists two booklets, “March of Pakhtoonistan” (“full of venomous propaganda against Pakistan for strangulating Pathans desirous of forming a separate State”), and “A Declaration of Pakhtoonistan National Assembly.”²⁴² Altogether, the distribution of these papers covered the entire Pashto-speaking areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan’s tribal areas and the settled districts of NWFP. Many were published in Kabul, others in tribal territory across the border, and a few in Delhi and among a small Pashtun community in Sacramento, California.²⁴³ The report observed that the entry of some of these papers into Pakistan was banned or under consideration for banning; yet many others were freely available. The Chief Secretary, NWFP’s response on this occasion was to recommend banning the remaining publications.²⁴⁴

Radio Kabul

²⁴¹ Letter, “Note on ‘Pathanistan’ Propaganda,” Maj. Ibne Hasan to M. Ahmad, 22 August 1950, acc. 10, NDC.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Letter, M. Ahmad to Maj. Ibne Hasan, 30 August 1950, *ibid.*

Broadcasts of the official Radio Kabul were another source for airing such views. Pakistan's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting would monitor these broadcasts and submit regular summaries to the Cabinet on the level of pro-Pashtunistan and anti-Pakistan content. Themes included Pakistan's suppression of Pashtun national aspirations, persecution of political leaders like Ghaffar Khan, economic underdevelopment of the Pashtun community, episodes of tribal 'resistance,' identification of Pakistani authorities with their British predecessors, Pakistani suppression of religious leaders, vilification of the 'Qadiani government' of Pakistan, and exhortations to Pashtuns to rise and fight for their independence.²⁴⁵ Often themes would be tailored to contemporary developments, such as condemnation of the One Unit plan as a means of eliminating Pashtun political and cultural identity, or condemnation of the military government of President Ayub Khan as undemocratic.²⁴⁶ The level of hostility displayed was variable, often toned down at times of closer relations, when programs might simply exhort Pakistan to address the issue of Pashtunistan as a prerequisite to long-lasting friendship between the countries.

The Pakistan government's responses to Radio Kabul varied. Often it would simply ignore it, or confine its counterpropaganda to giving corrective versions of particular incidents and positive accounts of the Pakistan government.²⁴⁷ Many times, propaganda truces were agreed, which Pakistani officials complained the Afghan side did not honour, as it expressed itself

²⁴⁵ Many such examples are contained in Letter, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations to Royal Afghan Embassy, Karachi, 9 November, 1955, acc. 2159, NDC.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Analysis of Kabul Radio and Radio Pakistan's broadcasts for the week ending the 11th October, 1959," 16 October 1959, acc. 10, NDC.

unwilling to restrict “genuine” discussion of Pashtunistan.²⁴⁸ At other times, Pakistani propaganda would be conducted along the themes of the positive economic, social and political conditions of Pashtuns in Pakistan, development projects in the frontier, the ‘backward’ economic conditions of the Afghan populace, the undemocratic nature of the Afghan government and – more rarely, at times of worst relations – direct attacks on the Afghan royal family.²⁴⁹ This propaganda was usually defensive in orientation, limited to the Pakistani side of the tribal belt, but sometimes when the relationship was particularly bad, it would be broadcast into Afghanistan as well.

Khudai Khidmatgaran and Foreign Connections

After partition, Ghaffar Khan and his brother, Dr. Khan Sahib, adjusted their position and expressed their readiness to work within the political framework of Pakistan.²⁵⁰ However, their stance, which was not entirely unambiguous, remained suspect in official eyes. Almost immediately after independence, Jinnah dismissed the elected ministry in the NWFP.

Although Ghaffar Khan and Jinnah later held positive discussions, the process of reconciliation was allegedly hampered by the former’s rivals in the Frontier Muslim League.²⁵¹ Ghaffar Khan stated on several occasions that his demand for Pashtunistan now referred only to the constitution of a single autonomous province uniting Pakistani Pashtuns; a demand similar to that pressed by Najibullah Khan in the 1947-48 negotiations. For example, during the debates of the Constituent Assembly in 1948, Ghaffar Khan argued:

²⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, “Summary for the Cabinet: President’s Visit to Afghanistan,” 31 July 1956.

²⁴⁹ Many more examples of radio propaganda on both sides are in acc. 10, NDC.

²⁵⁰ Shah, *North-West Frontier Province*, 81.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, and Humayun Khan, interview with author, 11 April 2010.

What does our Pathanistan mean?...You see, that the people inhabiting this Province are called Sindhis and the name of their country is Sind. Similarly, the Punjab or Bengal is the land of the Punjabees or Bengalees. In the same way there is the North-West Frontier... Within Pakistan we also want that the mere mentioning of the name of the country should convey to the people that it is the land of Pakhtoon...[We] want to see all the Pathans on this side of the Durand Line joined and united together in Pakhtoonistan... If you argue that Pakistan would be weakened by it, then I would say...Pakistan can never become weak by the creation of a separate political unit. On the other hand, it would become stronger.²⁵²

However, official suspicions persisted, although they were not shared uniformly among frontier and federal government officials.²⁵³ Besides its ties to Afghanistan and the cross-border nature of Pashtun nationalism, the Khudai Khidmatgaran's historical alliance with Congress contributed to the suspicion. Many Pakistanis were convinced India had never reconciled to partition, citing statements by Indian leaders that predicted Pakistan would gradually dissolve and be reabsorbed by India.²⁵⁴ Continuing antagonism with India, relating to the division of assets after partition, the Kashmir issue and later the canal waters dispute, played a central role in determining Pakistan's foreign and security policies.²⁵⁵ In this perspective, the Khudai Khidmatgaran seemed, wittingly or unwittingly, to be serving India's purpose, particularly as pro-Pashtunistan propaganda sometimes emanated from Delhi.²⁵⁶

²⁵² "Extracts from the Statement made by Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan explaining his concept of 'Pukhtoonistan' 5 March 1948," in Mehrunnisa Ali, ed. *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 121. The extent of autonomy this separate political unit would possess is unclear.

²⁵³ Telegram, Zuberi to Aslam Khattak, 17 August 1957, acc. 10, NDC. Pashtun officials were often more sympathetic, unless they were local rivals of Ghaffar Khan. Aslam Khattak is a prominent example of the former case, Abdul Qayyum Khan of the latter.

²⁵⁴ For example, Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, 17.

²⁵⁵ See *ibid*, 17-75, and Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846-1990* (Oxford: OUP, 1992).

²⁵⁶ "Military Adviser's Fortnightly Report No. 12, dated the 15th Jan. '51," Military Adviser, High Commission for Pakistan in India, to Director of Intelligence, ISI, 15 January 1951, acc. 10, NDC.

Thus, the activities of the Khudai Khidmatgaran and its successor political organization, the National Awami Party (NAP), formed in merger with other groups in 1957, continued to be monitored.²⁵⁷ Ghaffar Khan's political career included stints in jail on charges of sedition; periods in exile in Afghanistan on the invitation of the host government; and other times of talks and negotiations with the Pakistan government. As one indicator of this up and down relationship, at one point Dr. Khan Sahib was appointed Chief Minister of West Pakistan in the One Unit system, while his brother criticized that system as threatening to Pashtun autonomy.

Afghan Subsidies and Allowances

The Afghan government continued providing subsidies to tribes and allowances to individual tribesmen, sometimes including small arms and ammunition, and these resources were often employed to promote the cause of Pashtunistan. Pakistani documents are full of details on these arrangements, as well as policies for responding to them.²⁵⁸ Besides countering specific activities, such as tribal raids, these policies included the use of subsidies and allowances on the Pakistan government's part. Both governments in this respect were continuing the manoeuvring that characterized the Afghan-British relationship, and many *maliks* and individual tribesmen, ideologically uncommitted to either side, would play along for their own benefit. Local disputes could take on a Pashtunistan colouring, with one party trying to draw

²⁵⁷ Memo, "Pro-Pakhtunistan activities of Abdul Ghaffar Khan," Section Officer, States and Frontier Regions, to Home Secretary, Government of West Pakistan, 20 June 1968, acc. 10, NDC; and Letter, Ambassador Hakim M. Ahson to Foreign Secretary, 31 July 1968, *ibid*.

²⁵⁸ There are many such documents in the NDC microfilm holdings, particularly in acc. 10.

in one or other government on its side. A few accounts from Pakistani officials should suffice to illustrate this dynamic.

A letter from the South Waziristan PA's office in January 1950 raises the issue of Afghan allowance-holders, observing that one response would be for the Pakistan government to pay them instead. However, "this course is not considered feasible as there are other people who are always willing to sell their services...and the Afghan Government can chose [*sic*] out of them."²⁵⁹ If left alone, the allowance-holders would seemingly cause trouble, but "their prudence will not allow them to indulge in serious activities against Pakistan. At the same time they will make use of the present difficulties between the Governments as a money making devise [*sic*]."²⁶⁰ Thus, as one course of action the letter recommends simply ignoring these activities, arguing that "Kabul will judge the[ir] value...by the amount of re-action that they see on the Pak Government."²⁶¹

Similarly, an insightful PA letter from 1950 puts the issue of Pashtunistan flags in the context of local rivalries. These flags frequently appeared in the tribal agencies and often elicited strong responses from Pakistani officials concerned about separatist sentiments. The PA's letter dismisses these concerns, arguing that "The number of Pathanistan Flags multiply in direct ratio of the amount of anxiety that is expressed and then fall into oblivion when the

²⁵⁹ Letter, Office of the Political Agent, S. Waziristan, to Chief Secretary, NWFP, 19 January 1950, acc. 10, NDC.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

Political authorities choose to ignore them.”²⁶² For the rival Mahsuds and Wazirs in the agency, the fact that the government expressed interest, even if negative, in these flags made them an item of importance, and thus if they came into the possession of one tribal section it was imperative for the other to obtain them as well.²⁶³ The flags further offered a chance for younger tribesmen to gain standing within the tribe: “Some of the fresh flag hoisters have been quoted in recent reports to have remarked, ‘Strange! P.A. is not taking any notice of us. We thought the “Qaum” will be sent after us and we will earn name.’”²⁶⁴ Thus, the value attached to these demonstrations by tribesmen could be very different from that assumed by the state.²⁶⁵

Pashtun Nationalists in Afghanistan

Pakistani diplomats in Kabul spent some time monitoring Pashtun nationalist groups, who were generally more outspoken in their rhetoric than the government and espoused openly irredentist, ‘Greater Afghanistan’ claims. The following extracts from a youth committee meeting of Afghan Millat, are illustrative:

We all are the members of one nation...as in Peshawar the Gujars and other tribes are Pukhtoos, in Afghanistan also the Uzbegs, Hazaras and other tribes are Pukhtoos...Pukhtoonistan problem has not only economic and political importance for Pukhtoonistanis but is also a vital question for the people of Afghanistan...because the government of Pakistan has created an economic siege of Afghanistan in Pukhtoonistan, a territory taken away from Afghanistan...

²⁶² Letter, Office of the Political Agent, South Waziristan, to Chief Secretary, NWFP, 7 June 1950, *ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ On quoting this example to a former Political Agent who had served in multiple tribal agencies in NWFP and Baluchistan, I received categorical agreement with the PA’s assessment. Former Political Agent, interview with author, 6 October 2011.

There are people who say Pakistan is strong and it is very difficult to demand from her the right of the Pukhtoos, or else they say the question of bread is the most important for us. Similarly they say that Pukhtoonistanis, like Algerians, should themselves win their independence...[but in fact] The people who think on these lines have made Pakistan strong. According to such people America is a mighty state but the people of Vietnam do not consider themselves weaker...Pukhtoonistan has been cut off from our body by colonialism. We and Pukhtoonistani[s], therefore, have common responsibility to win Pukhtoonistan.²⁶⁶

These views were propagated through the Radio Kabul broadcasts and newspapers discussed earlier, with the permission and often active collaboration of the Afghan state, which itself sought to promote an official Pashtun nationalist ideology during this period.²⁶⁷ But while the government did encourage these groups, it did not control them, and their existence acted as a domestic constraint on efforts to seek a compromise with Pakistan, especially for those of the government's members, such as Sardar Daoud, who were closely identified with Pashtun nationalism.

Official Impressions of Pashtunistan Sentiment

How seriously did Pakistani officials take the threat of Pashtunistan, and how did they assess the motives of the different parties involved? The available evidence, from government documents, memoirs and interviews, suggests considerable variation of opinion. Nevertheless, some common trends emerge. As suggested by some of the examples above, Pakistani officials were generally sanguine about the lack of ideological impact of the Pashtunistan

²⁶⁶ Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Extract in English translation from the Kabul Weekly 'Afghan Millat' of June 4, 1968," acc. 10, NDC. The reference to 'the question of bread' and its rebuttal is suggestive of Caron's claim of redirection.

²⁶⁷ See the discussion in chapter one.

issue among tribal and frontier Pashtuns and confident that a large-scale separatist movement in favour of Afghanistan remained unlikely.

The accuracy of this appraisal is of course open to question. Revolutionary literature is replete with examples of how states, confronted by separatist or insurgent movements, tend to deny their indigenous legitimacy and consider the problem as externally inspired, often by other states, and aided only by a few local ‘troublemakers.’²⁶⁸ Pakistani officials’ optimism regarding the Pashtun population on their side of the frontier, compared with, as we shall see, a markedly more negative assessment of Afghan motives, fits into this paradigm.²⁶⁹

However, it was probably accurate nonetheless. As the evidence of the previous chapter suggests, there was little precedent for the notion of Pashtunistan in the tribal areas, whether conceived of as joining the Afghan state or forming an independent country. Historically, the Pashtun tribes of the frontier had guarded their autonomy from states in Afghanistan as well as India, participating in their rivalries, but not professing strong allegiance to either. At the same time, tribal structures had been non-hierarchical and inter-tribal rivalries frequent; a degree of fractiousness that was not conducive to the formation of a pan-Pashtun national movement.

²⁶⁸ Thus French reports would initially refer to the Algerian revolutionaries as “a few bandits and murderers operating in the Aurès mountains. They were also said to be communists.” Si Azzedine, “Story of a Guerrilla in Algeria,” in Gerard Chaliand, ed., *Guerrilla Strategies: An Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 134. See also Eqbal Ahmad, “Revolutionary Warfare: How to Tell when the Rebels Have Won,” in Bengelsdorf et al, 18-21. These issues are discussed further in chapter four.

²⁶⁹ The official characterization of the issue as the ‘Pathanistan stunt’ is a revealing indication of this mindset.

In the settled districts of NWFP, there was a sense of a broader Pashtun identity, due to such factors as the atrophying of kinship-based networks and the recent activism of the Khudai Khidmatgaran. Yet there was little consensus on how to express this identity politically; by 1947, the Muslim League had eroded much of the support of the Khudai Khidmatgaran, who themselves were late in coming to the idea of Pashtunistan. The absence of mass mobilization for Pashtunistan in the frontier, and the ambiguity of Pashtunistan demands, whether those issued by the Khudai Khidmatgaran or the Afghan government, further suggest the limited ideological impact of Pashtunistan.

On the other hand, there was some recognition among officials that ideological commitment to Pakistan too remained provisional, lubricated by generous allowances, and that more needed to be done to integrate Pashtuns, especially of the tribal areas, in the framework of the nation.²⁷⁰ Although opposed to major changes in the British-inherited basis of administration of the tribal areas, Pakistani officials frequently pointed to development projects and improvement of economic conditions in the frontier as the best means of giving Pashtuns a genuine stake in the country and thus of settling the Pashtunistan issue for good. Thus, in a list of talking points for official propaganda, eight of eleven points related to the government's development and education projects, including land reforms, agricultural and irrigation works, provision of electricity, and student scholarships.²⁷¹ Similarly, an ISI report of May 1958 recommended that "To counter 'Pakhtunistan', Pakistan should as a short term policy win

²⁷⁰ Letter, "Pakhtunistan Problems/Stunt," Deputy Commissioner, Kohat, to Commissioner, Peshawar Division, 5 June 1969, acc. 10, NDC, offers a good example.

²⁷¹ Telegram, "Talking Points," Director of Information, Peshawar, to Commissioner, Peshawar Division, 6 June 1959, *ibid.*

over various tribal Pakhtun leaders. Once Afghanistan finds no support from within the tribal belt, 'Pakhtunistan' will die a natural death. The development of this region economically and educationally will provide a long term solution of this problem."²⁷² In their responses to the report, Political Agents of several agencies emphasized the importance of swift development of the region.²⁷³ Similar views were frequently expressed in Cabinet meetings.

Some progress was gradually made in this respect. The tribal areas remained relatively under-developed. Amid concerns that rapid development would provoke fears of state control among the tribes, health, education and development projects were expanded at a very gradual pace, although with more success than during the British period.²⁷⁴ However, Pashtun migration to the settled districts of NWFP, urban centres such as Karachi and abroad to the Gulf States helped create important networks and economic opportunities.²⁷⁵ Pashtun representation in government positions, civilian and military, has been considerable and has included Pashtuns from the tribal areas.²⁷⁶ Over time, many frontier Pashtuns, largely owing to their own initiative, did gain a greater stake in the *status quo*.

Recourse to economic incentives is a typical, and often inadequate, response by an incumbent state faced with challenges to its political legitimacy. However, Pakistani officials did display

²⁷² Inter Services Intelligence Directorate, "Pakhtunistan," 13 May 1958, *ibid*.

²⁷³ The responses of the PAs of Kurram, Khyber, Mohmands, North Waziristan and South Waziristan are in acc. 10, NDC.

²⁷⁴ Development in the frontier was stepped up during the Ayub Khan era, partly as a response to concerns about Pashtunistan. Shahryar Khan, interview with author, 12 January 2010.

²⁷⁵ This migration was encouraged by the government. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics*, 34. For more, see Robert Nichols, *A History of Pashtun Migration, 1775-2006* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), especially chapters five and six.

²⁷⁶ For example, Akbar S. Ahmed, "Tribes and States in Waziristan," 207-209.

some recognition that Pashtun grievances were not merely economic, and could not be resolved only with development-oriented solutions. There were genuine concerns among Pashtun intelligentsia and leaders, especially in Peshawar, about whether they would be able to preserve their cultural traditions given their minority status in Pakistan. These concerns were heightened after the four provinces of West Pakistan were amalgamated in the One Unit plan. In discussions during 1956 and 1957, frontier officials noted that many young Pashtun poets and writers in the NWFP were gravitating to a pro-Pashtunistan viewpoint, because the Pashto language received scant importance and support in Pakistan. As the Deputy Secretary, Tribal Areas, wrote:

A young writer is everywhere a discontented figure. He is not recognised as a producer of socially valuable commodities and consequently he is not given the economic security and the social status which accrues to professional men of perhaps lesser intelligence and merit...He turns defiant...quick to join any political movement which gives him a chance to play an oppositional role in society...The same causes of personal and social frustration which make [young writers]...succumb to the lure of revolutionary creeds elsewhere, motivate them to join hands with disruptive and narrow parochial movements in this country.²⁷⁷

The Director of Information, Peshawar, concurred, arguing that many Pashtun artists were living in penury as a consequence of this lack of support.²⁷⁸

By contrast, the Afghan government in promoting Pashtun nationalism had gone out of its way to develop Pashto language and literature, and employed and encouraged many writers and artists, “rendering financial assistance to them and giving them responsible positions not

²⁷⁷ Letter, Deputy Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, to Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, 27 July 1956, acc. 10, NDC.

²⁷⁸ Letter, Director of Information, Peshawar, to Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, 31 July 1956, *ibid.*

only within the country but also diplomatic assignments abroad.”²⁷⁹ It was hardly surprising, given that context, that many Pashto writers were sympathetic to Kabul’s point of view. The solution was not to monitor or arrest writers who produced pro-Pashtunistan material, which would only radicalize them further.²⁸⁰ Rather, as the officials argued in a detailed report, the government should recognize the validity of these concerns and respond to them. For example, Pashto could be the medium of instruction at primary level in the NWFP and a compulsory subject at higher levels, while post-graduate degrees in Pashto language and literature could be offered at universities across the country.²⁸¹ The Pashto Academy in Peshawar had a mandate that included translation of important works to and from Pashto, collection of rare manuscripts, research work, production of literary journals, and award of prizes to talented writers. Yet it was severely understaffed and underfunded; were government funds made available, it could absorb a very large number of Pashtun writers and poets and make important contributions to the development of the language.²⁸² Other institutions that could engage Pashtun writers and artists included the Peshawar Station of Radio Pakistan, the Abasin Art Centre and the Tribal Publicity Organization. Such steps would go a long way towards integrating the NWFP with rest of Pakistan, defusing Pashtunistan sentiment and creating a conviction that the government was determined to preserve and develop what was important to Pashtuns.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Ibid. State patronage to co-opt poets is of course a venerable tradition. For the recent Afghan case, see Caron, “Cultural Histories of Pashtun Nationalism.”

²⁸⁰ Letter, Director of Information, Peshawar, to Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, 31 July 1956.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

Official Impressions of the Afghan Role

Pakistani officials were distinctly more negative in their appreciation of the Afghan role in the Pashtunistan dispute than they were in assessing Pakistani Pashtun sentiments. The impression that the Afghan government was determined to break off the frontier regions of Pakistan was widespread. An ISI report from May 1958, at a time of improving relations between the countries, argued that pressing territorial claims had been a long-term Afghan government strategy and variations in its stance were merely tactical.²⁸⁴ Further, the goals of keeping its populace distracted from internal problems by an external dispute, and Pashtunistan's value as leverage to extract economic concessions were important reasons to maintain its stand:

Today the Afghans are using this weapon to extract maximum aid from the USSR, to blackmail the USA, to get assistance from India and even to coerce Pakistan. In view of this it would be wrong to expect that they would give it up merely if a suitable face saving device could be provided.²⁸⁵

The report was circulated among Political Agents of various tribal agencies, most of whom concurred with its assessment of Afghan aims.²⁸⁶ The Secretary of the Tribal Affairs Department endorsed these concerns, stating that many frontier officials felt that the federal government was being too quick to concede to Afghan demands and accept their proclamations of friendship.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Inter Services Intelligence Directorate, "Pakhtunistan," 13 May 1958.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. Elsewhere, officials argued that as the Afghan government was dominated by Pashtuns but governing a country with large ethnic minority populations, adding a large Pashtun population held the attraction of boosting the government's stability.

²⁸⁶ The responses of the PAs of Kurram, Khyber, Mohmands, North Waziristan and South Waziristan can be found in acc. 10, NDC.

²⁸⁷ Memo, "Pakhtunistan," Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, to Joint Secretary, Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, 31 October 1958, acc. 10, NDC.

Although Afghanistan did not have the military capability to threaten Pakistan's control of the territories, Pakistani officials in the early years feared that an alliance between India and Afghanistan would force Pakistan to defend itself on two fronts, and in the worst case lead to the breakup of the country. An early military appreciation, in 1951, by Mohammad Ayub Khan, then Commander in Chief of the Pakistan army, highlighted this perceived threat in stark terms: "the Hindu – Yahya Khel [India – Afghan ruling family] axis has been created with a definite purpose, which can only be achieved if Pakistan is first of all encircled and contained with a view to eventual dissolution and destruction."²⁸⁸ While the Afghan government hoped to gain territory and economic benefits, Indian aims were to deprive Pakistan of tribal help in its disputes with India, force it to waste resources quelling problems in the tribal areas and in case of war, "make us fight on two fronts, so we remain weak everywhere, thus affording them an easy opportunity to over-run Pakistan."²⁸⁹

This appreciation reveals a great deal about Pakistani fears, common in the early years, that India was determined to reverse the partition of the subcontinent by force, but in its suspicions of the Indo-Afghan threat is probably more alarmist than most official assessments of the time. Nonetheless, Pakistani officials were sufficiently concerned by Afghan interference in the frontier that as early as 1950 they considered retaliation in kind in Afghanistan. This recommendation is contained in the Commander in Chief's appreciation.²⁹⁰ It was also discussed at a Cabinet meeting on 29 November, 1950, where several ministers recommended

²⁸⁸ Commander in Chief, "Outline Appreciation of Afghan Hostility Against Pakistan," 12 July 1951, acc. S.160, NDC.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

contacting tribes on the Afghan side, and other anti-government elements, with a view to deterring the Afghan government from its course or, if necessary, destabilizing it.²⁹¹ Summing up, Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan noted that the options suggested were either:

- (i) To plan large scale comprehensive activities in Afghanistan which would overthrow the present Afghan ruling family, and
- (ii) Create a situation in Afghanistan which would become a source of anxiety to Afghan Government and absorb them in their own affairs to such an extent as to give up their Pathanistan campaign.²⁹²

Liaqat Ali Khan did not favour the first objective “in present conditions” but supported the second, arguing that “we should create all sorts of difficulties for the Afghan Government just as they were doing for us by sustained propaganda and if necessary by payment of bribe to secure a change of attitude on the part of Afghan Government.”²⁹³

This readiness to intervene inside Afghanistan is suggestive of a degree of continuity in the outlook of Pakistani officials with their British predecessors; the British had frequently intervened in Afghanistan and sought to put more amenable rulers on the throne of Kabul. Several studies have extrapolated backwards from Pakistan’s later support for and control over the Afghan *mujahidin* to assert that Pakistan always had its own ‘Forward Policy.’²⁹⁴ Does the November 1950 Cabinet discussion support such an interpretation?

²⁹¹ “Final Minutes of the Meeting held at 10.30 A.M. in H.P.M’s House on the 29th of November, 1950, to determine Frontier Policy with special reference to Afghan intrigues and propaganda in our territory,” acc. S.160, NDC.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ For example, Caron, “Cultural Histories of Pashtun Nationalism ,” 252-53.

The historical record cautions against so glib an explanation. For a start, it is open to question how much of this discussion was bluster. There is little evidence that these recommendations were in fact implemented in any significant way, barring the occasional tribal retaliatory raid, prior to 1973; the NDC documents, dating through the 1950s and 1960s, suggest that Pakistan's countermeasures were for the most part restricted to its own frontier territories. A possible exception relates to the Kunar uprising of 1961, in which Afghan officials alleged Pakistani army involvement in support of the Safi tribesmen. Such involvement is conceivable, given that the uprising occurred in the midst of a sharp deterioration of bilateral relations, which included incursions by Afghan troops across the border into Pakistan.²⁹⁵ However, no definite evidence of such involvement exists, and the Safi tribes had their own reasons for resenting the central government.²⁹⁶ Scattered references in other sources allege Pakistani support for the occasional anti-government protest in Afghanistan, but the accuracy of these claims is difficult to establish.²⁹⁷

A more significant objection concerns the differences in the nature of these discussions. British imperial policy was often motivated by expansionist aims. The basis of Forward Policy had been to extend imperial influence as far north as strategically possible, and ultimately, faced by resistance the empire had settled for less. By contrast, Pakistani motives were defensive and tied to sovereign claims over their own territory. Reacting to Afghan activities across an inherited border, Pakistani officials considered retaliating in kind, but the

²⁹⁵ See the section 'Closing of the Border, 1961-63,' in Part II of this chapter.

²⁹⁶ In 1945-46, a Safi revolt over the issue of conscription resulted in the government forcibly exiling many of the leading families of the tribes to north Afghanistan. See Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 100-113.

²⁹⁷ For example in Ghaus' unverified claim of Pakistani support for protests in Kandahar. Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 90.

main purpose of this retaliation was to stop Afghan interference across the border, rather than to project their influence into Afghanistan.²⁹⁸ Like the inherited colonial dispute itself, vestiges of the colonial attitude did remain as a factor in relations. But they were mitigated by new influences and outlooks, such as those provided by state sovereignty, common Islamic identification and an anti-colonial ethos, as well as by a changed international order in which the principles of the UN charter provided powerful norms for conduct.²⁹⁹ As we shall see, the retreat of imperial rivalry from 1947-78 allowed for different forms of engagement, managed frictions and possibilities of real cooperation that did not recede altogether until the Soviet invasion in December 1979.

Official assessments of Afghan motivations were by no means uniformly negative. As we have seen, in the negotiations with Sardar Najibullah in 1948, the federal government was hopeful of reaching a compromise involving trade negotiations and assurances of provincial autonomy, and in the succeeding years it continued to have doubts over the seriousness of Afghan irredentist demands and often took a conciliatory stance.³⁰⁰ Similarly, many frontier officials, often Pashtuns themselves, argued that suspicions of Afghan motives were greatly exaggerated and that the Afghan government, while unable to disavow advocacy of Pakistani

²⁹⁸ “Final Minutes of the Meeting held at 10.30 A.M. in H.P.M’s House on the 29th of November, 1950, to determine Frontier Policy with special reference to Afghan intrigues and propaganda in our territory.”

²⁹⁹ For example, in December 1958, the Federal Cabinet approved a set of seven principles of foreign policy which had guided and would continue to guide Pakistan’s foreign relations. Four of the seven principles emphasized adherence to the principles of the UN charter, strong relations with states sharing religious and cultural ties (rendered “natural and cultural ties” in the final draft), a predisposition for non-interference in international disputes, and support for anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles. “Meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, the 24th December, 1958 at 10.00 am,” file 629/CF/58, acc. 2253, NDC. For Afghan foreign policy principles, which share many similar emphases, see Mohammad Khalid Maro’of, “Basic Postulates of Afghan Foreign Policy,” *The Front*, vol. 2, no. 1, April-May 1990, 28-40.

³⁰⁰ Such as the stance the Secretary Tribal Affairs objected to in 1958.

Pashtuns for reasons of ethnic solidarity, desired good relations and was not seriously attempting to overturn the *status quo*. In his memoirs, Aslam Khattak, First Secretary in the Kabul Embassy during the 1955 embassy crisis and Ambassador to Kabul from 1956, lucidly paints a picture of an Afghan royal family that wanted to reduce tensions with Pakistan and whose espousal of Pashtunistan was motivated by genuine concerns about the treatment of Pashtuns across the border, rather than territorial ambition.³⁰¹ Another diplomat, Amir Usman, who served in the Kabul Embassy in 1973 and again from 1977-79, prior to becoming Director General (DG) Afghanistan in the Foreign Ministry and Ambassador to Kabul in 1992, presents a similar perspective:

It was a political ploy...[but] they never followed it very seriously...when they wanted to put Pakistan under pressure [for example, to obtain concessions on transit trade] then they would start talking about [Pashtunistan] but after that there would be nothing...[the relationship] has been hot and cold...but then whenever there was an opportunity for Afghanistan really to make trouble for Pakistan, they didn't do it...They say well we are the same people, so whatever happens to the Pashtuns here, you should tolerate whatever we say about it, because we can't remain silent about that...one day in the year they have a Pashtunistan Day and speeches are made...that this [Durand Line] was under duress, we don't accept it...and that is a one day affair and after that we don't hear about it.³⁰²

Lt.-Gen. Asad Durrani, who would become DG ISI soon after the Soviet withdrawal, makes the further point that Pakistan's efforts to press Afghanistan for recognition of the Durand Line were misplaced, because it would not functionally affect the nature of the border:

Practically, the Afghans can live with [the Durand Line] very easily...they can't accept it because of that political reason, but they know that people will keep on going over...this border. Historically, even demographically there is nothing that you can do about it. They live on both sides, farms are here, families are there, marriages take place on both sides. So, by insisting on a different status, even if that were to happen,

³⁰¹ Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 89-95.

³⁰² Amir Usman, interview with author, 25 January 2010.

the nature of the border does not change, the ability of the two countries to control that border does not change, and no one has any interest, as far as the tribesmen on this side or the people on that side. . . . After the partition, when the Afghans laid claims on this, they dragged their feet for about a few months before recognizing the State of Pakistan. But then also, pragmatic people that they are, they did realize that nothing was going to come out of it. So politically it remains alive, but practically it has no effect on the relations between the state[s] except that sometimes it can be brought up as an irritant.³⁰³

In extensive interviews I conducted with former officials from Pakistan's foreign ministry, military, and frontier posts both viewpoints were well-represented: that the Afghans were inevitably hostile to Pakistan over the frontier issue and sought to overturn the *status quo*, and that they did not seriously desire change and for all the back and forth over the dispute it ultimately did not matter very much. The evidence suggests that the latter viewpoint is closer to the truth. Undoubtedly, just prior to the British withdrawal from the subcontinent, the Afghan government did entertain some hopes of gaining territories in the frontier, and were not pleased with how, without any negotiations on the matter, Pakistan inherited the Durand Line border.

Nevertheless, they soon after began to publicly disavow such aims, and the key feature of their subsequent presentations and arguments was not a straightforward territorial claim, but a more insubstantial sense of solidarity with the Pashtun, and occasionally Baluch, minority in Pakistan. The vagueness of Afghan claims points to a broader issue: the shortcomings of the sovereign nation-state model in representing ethnic and religious minorities, particularly transnational minorities supported by another nation-state. Diplomats on both sides were well-

³⁰³ Asad Durrani, interview with author, 26 April 2010.

versed with conducting international relations according to this model, and yet the alternative source of legitimacy provided by tribe and ethnic identification could not so easily be overridden by the state.

As Asad Durrani observed above, for the Pashtun inhabitants of the tribal areas, the international border had little meaning except as an occasional nuisance, when governments seeking to impose their writ would attempt to limit their free passage between their homes and farms and those of their relatives on either side. The Afghan government was perfectly cognizant of this reality and hence found it very difficult to concede an exclusive Pakistani right to represent the inhabitants of the territories all the way to the Durand Line. In the 1947-48 negotiations, the government had hoped its concerns could be met by consolidation of the Pashtun inhabitants of Pakistan into an autonomous province with a Pashtun name, but had not been satisfied with Pakistani assurances. Thereafter, it continued its involvement in the frontier, promoting Pashtunistan and provoking the ire of Pakistani officials, yet as we shall see in chronicling the subsequent development of the relationship, it also sought a way of improving relations, did not take advantage of opportunities to seriously harm Pakistan, and pulled back whenever it seemed the dispute would spiral out of control.

II. Alternating Crises and Accommodation

The 1955 Kabul Embassy Crisis and its Resolution

Although low level frictions continued along the border after establishment of diplomatic relations, the first serious crisis did not occur until 1955. The cause, from the Afghan perspective, was Pakistan's decision to combine the four provinces of West Pakistan into one. The One Unit plan, as it was called, was considered by the Pakistan government as a way of administratively and politically balancing the two halves of the country; East Pakistan, despite having a larger population than the four provinces of West Pakistan combined, had always been a single province. The plan nonetheless stoked Pashtun fears that combined in one unit as a small minority among Punjabis, Sindhis and Baluchis, they would lose much of their cultural and political autonomy. Although the Pakistan government attempted to allay these concerns by appointing Dr Khan Sahib of the Khudai Khidmatgaran as the Chief Minister of West Pakistan, criticisms from his brother, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and the Afghan government continued.

On 29 March, 1955, Sardar Daoud, then Afghan Prime Minister, broadcast a provocative speech on Radio Kabul, in which he labelled the One Unit plan as aggression against Pashtuns and warned that "responsibility for all the grave consequences which will follow this decision...will rest with the Government of Pakistan."³⁰⁴ On 30 March, a mob attacked Pakistan's Kabul Embassy and its ambassador's house, replacing the Pakistan flag with a

³⁰⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, "Annual Report for the Period from the 1st April, 1954, to the 31st March, 1955," file 115/CF/55(XI), acc. 2162, NDC.

Pashtunistan flag, damaging the buildings, and endangering the lives of embassy staff.³⁰⁵ The following day, Pakistani consulates at Jalalabad and Kandahar were also attacked.

The Pakistan government considered the attacks a serious offence, seeing in the delayed response of Afghan security services evidence of Afghan government complicity:

At the time of these incidents, the Afghan police which was present on the spot made no attempt to restrain the mob from violence... Afghan troops garrisoned in the Prime Ministry, which is about 100 yards from the Embassy... did nothing to prevent damage to the Embassy's personnel and property. The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is just across the road, was repeatedly contacted by the Pakistan Embassy staff, but took no action.³⁰⁶

Pakistan closed down its consulates, citing the inability of the Afghan government to protect its staff, who were facing continuing harassment in the country. Soon after the attacks, a mob attacked the Afghan consulate in Peshawar, leading to Afghan claims that any reparations be mutual. Amid fears of a wider conflict, Afghan consulates in Pakistan were closed down; Pakistan, without closing the border, unofficially reduced transit trade with Afghanistan to a trickle of non-essential goods; the Afghan government ordered a general mobilization of troops; and several Muslim countries – Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey – became involved in mediating the dispute.

In a meeting of the Pakistan Cabinet on 21 May, following the indefinite recall of Ambassador Col. A.S.B. Shah to Karachi, the finger of blame was pointed squarely at Daoud, whose speech of 29 March was seen as amounting to incitement at the least, and probably deliberate instigation. Ambassador Shah argued that there was a split in the royal family, with

³⁰⁵ For First Secretary Aslam Khattak's recollections of the attack, see Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 81-85.

³⁰⁶ "Material for Bandung Conference," file 61/CF/55(II), acc. 2159, NDC.

Daoud and Zahir Shah on one side, and the king's more conciliatory uncles Shah Mahmud and Shah Wali on the other. Daoud was "playing a game of bluff," seeking to consolidate his own power, and taking too conciliatory a stance in negotiations would only strengthen his position.³⁰⁷ The Cabinet, considering him the most anti-Pakistan Afghan leader, was determined not to let that happen, and decided to put pressure on the Afghan government as long as he remained Prime Minister, as noted in the following summary of its decisions:

Objective: Removal of Daoud

If mediation succeeds:

1. Continue to keep our Consulate in Jalalabad and Kandahar closed.
2. Refuse to allow Afghans to re-open their Consulates and Trade Agencies in Peshawar, Quetta, Parachinar and Chaman.

If mediation fails:

1. Remove Pakistan nationals from Afghanistan.
2. After (1) completed, break off diplomatic relations.
3. After (2) completed, take [defensive] Military precautions.

If Daoud goes:

Climb down.³⁰⁸

This decision marked the first time the Pakistan government explicitly set an objective of interfering in the makeup of the government in Kabul, seeking to press for the removal of a high official who was perceived as irredeemably anti-Pakistan. However, the government soon backed down from this position. After months of protracted mediation,³⁰⁹ the resolution of the dispute was eventually reached through direct negotiations between the Pakistani

³⁰⁷ "Meeting of the Cabinet held on Saturday, the 21st of May, 1955, at 11.00 am," *ibid*.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*.

³⁰⁹ Documents detailing these mediations, involving considerable back and forth over the nature of an official ceremony of amends, the cessation of Pashtunistan propaganda and the re-opening of the consulates, are contained in file 61/CF/55(II), acc. 2159, NDC.

Ambassador to Kabul and the Afghan Foreign Minister Muhammad Naim, Daoud's brother. This "Gentleman's Agreement," enacted on 6 September, 1955, involved re-hoisting of the Pakistan flag at Kabul and Jalalabad with due ceremony, and the re-hoisting of the Afghan flag at Peshawar.³¹⁰ Both sides also agreed to cease all propaganda calculated to breed hatred and violence against the other, a commitment that Pakistani officials complained the Afghan side did not long honour.³¹¹

Nevertheless, though low-level tensions about the One Unit plan and Pashtunistan propaganda persisted, the improved atmosphere following the resolution of the crisis allowed for active diplomacy aimed at bringing the countries closer together. Aslam Khattak, who had been left in charge of the Kabul Embassy after A.S.B. Shah's recall, held frank and positive discussions with Shah Mahmud, Shah Wali, Zahir Shah and Daoud. Unlike most Pakistani officials, Khattak did not consider Daoud to be an irreconcilable opponent:

Daud honestly believed that the Pathans were greatly oppressed in Pakistan. He considered it a duty to help his brethren. He may also have been suspicious about the 'A,' for Afghan (Afghanica) province in Pakistan. Did it mean we wanted to take over his country? At the same time we thought that Daud was in league with India and bent upon dividing our country up with Delhi...both sides were wrong.³¹²

Khattak's own idea was that Afghanistan and Pakistan should form a confederation as the best means of resolving their disputes and embarking on a new era of cooperation. He recounts his discussions with members of the royal family, in which they all expressed support, albeit

³¹⁰ The Pakistan government disavowed any equivalence between the two ceremonies. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, "A Brief Account of Pak-Afghan Relations," file 210/CF/56, acc. 2187, NDC.

³¹¹ Letter, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations to Royal Afghan Embassy, Karachi, 9 November, 1955, file 61/CF/55(II), acc. 2159, NDC.

³¹² Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 90. Amir Usman and Tanvir Ahmad Khan, who both served in the Kabul Embassy in the 1970s, presented a similar picture of Sardar Daoud in interviews with the author.

laced with doubts, for the idea. Similarly, on the Pakistani side, President Iskander Mirza and Prime Ministers Feroz Khan Noon and Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy are also cited as supporting his initiative.³¹³ Some form of loose union between the two countries may not have been outside the realm of possibility, although given the logistical challenges and fears of losing political autonomy on both sides, it would have required a sustained and difficult commitment. Shahryar Khan, who was a member of the delegation for the Geneva negotiations in the 1980s, and later Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, observes:

I think it's a bit of a pipe dream. You know, no country which inherits sovereignty, post-imperialist, post-colonialist sovereignty, is going to give it up. And we are the stronger party, they are the weaker party, if we have a confederation, which really means that the Afghans give up in our favour...they would never do that. They would in talks etcetera say, "Oh, what a good idea."³¹⁴

Nonetheless, Khattak's initiative was an imaginative response to the impasse. He recognized that Pakistan's standard response of invoking exclusive sovereign jurisdiction over its territories was not sufficient to satisfy the Afghan side, because the claim of the nation-state was in conflict with older claims, sources of legitimacy provided by tribe and kinship. His response was to counter these claims by invoking a shared history and a common Muslim identification which superseded the narrower bonds of tribe. Not only would Afghans share a closer bond with their Pashtun brethren, but all the peoples of the region would share in it as well. This recourse to a common Muslim history was not without its shortcomings, for Muslim experiences had been historically diverse, and a sense of Muslim identification often weaker than local allegiances. Yet it had been central to the idea of Pakistan itself, and had

³¹³ For Khattak's recollections of these and related discussions, see Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 91-109.

³¹⁴ Shahryar Khan, interview with author, 12 January, 2010.

been sufficient, for all its shortcomings, in bringing it to fruition. As Daoud observed in their talks, “Under the British it was simple. Afghanistan would give the tribes weapons, ammunition, and any other assistance they needed to fight the infidel. That cannot be done now that there are Muslims on both sides of the Frontier.”³¹⁵ Regardless of its practicality, it seems that Afghan leaders did spend some time considering the notion of confederation,³¹⁶ and though it did not lead anywhere, it did contribute for a time to an improved tenor of relations between the countries.

Another important factor contributing to improved relations was, perhaps unexpectedly, the divergent Cold War allegiances of the two countries. Motivated, for the most part, by security concerns about India, Pakistan during this period was tying itself to the Western bloc through defence alliances and economic aid.³¹⁷ Afghanistan, in keeping with its neutralist policy, had become a leading member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, its desires to obtain economic aid to fund ambitious modernization projects, and political support for its stand on Pashtunistan both drove it into a closer relationship with the Soviet Union, having initially failed to elicit any American commitment on these issues.³¹⁸ Paradoxically, this deepening relationship began to increase Western bloc interest in and aid to Afghanistan. A desire to prevent Afghanistan going too far into the Soviet orbit may have been a factor motivating some of the countries who offered to mediate the embassy crisis in 1955,³¹⁹ as well

³¹⁵ Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 93.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 101-103, and Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 2, 326-27.

³¹⁷ For further discussion, see chapter six of this thesis.

³¹⁸ See Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 74-88, and Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 64-69.

³¹⁹ The governments of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran were all closely allied with the Western bloc. Sentiments of pan-Islamic solidarity would have been another factor: as an expression of Muslim political assertion and as

as American interest in its resolution. In 1956, as Aslam Khattak was urging a presidential visit to Afghanistan to continue the trend of improving relations, this concern played a role in the Cabinet's acquiescence, as is suggested by the following presentation made by Prime Minister Suhrawardy:

The Prime Minister stated that the Turkish Prime Minister, who recently returned from Kabul, came back with the impression that Afghanistan was gradually passing under the control of Russia. Though the Afghan leaders, including King Zahir Shah and Daud, did not like this and regretted what had happened during the past, there was no likelihood of this movement being reversed.³²⁰

Suhrawardy observed that if the trend continued, Afghanistan might in future seek military intervention in the tribal areas with Russian assistance. Pakistan should prepare for the worst, but it should also strive to improve relations and show greater flexibility in negotiations: "Our policy in regard to Afghanistan should be aimed at winning her to our side, instead of forcing her to become a Russian satellite."³²¹ The president's visit, he argued, was a step in the right direction; a line of reasoning that the Cabinet endorsed.³²² It is worth noting, in view of the destructive impact of the Cold War in exacerbating the conflict in the future, that it could, as in this case, have the effect of dampening bilateral tensions as well.

The 1956 visit of President Iskander Mirza was a considerable success. Although neither side viewed it as a means of resolving the dispute, on a personal level the visit helped create a rapport between officials of the two countries. Afghan leaders assured Mirza that they did not

the largest Muslim country in the world, Pakistan had been welcomed into the international arena with considerable enthusiasm by these countries. Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, 19-21.

³²⁰ "Meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, the 1st of August, at 10 am," file 210/CF/56, acc. 2187, NDC.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

have designs on Pakistan's territorial integrity.³²³ Suhrawardy and Daoud held unusually frank discussions in which the former acknowledged Afghanistan's interest in its Pashtun brethren across the border.³²⁴ The return visits of Daoud and Zahir Shah to Pakistan raised hopes of a resolution of the dispute.³²⁵ Cultural exchanges increased and frictions remained at a low level, with an agreement on transit trade signed 29 May, 1958. Pakistan permitted Abdul Ghaffar Khan to visit Kabul, in the hope that he could play a role in patching up differences between the two countries, a hope that was ultimately unfulfilled. Gradually, old doubts and suspicions re-emerged amid lack of progress in resolving the issues of contention.³²⁶ The October 1958 military coup in Pakistan, which brought General Ayub Khan to power, worsened relations and soon led to a major crisis between the two countries.

Closing of the Border, 1961-1963

President Ayub Khan, a Pashtun himself, was less conciliatory than his predecessors on the issue of Pashtunistan. Ghaus writes that "Daoud sent Foreign Minister Mohammad Naim, his brother, to Pakistan to meet with Ayub Khan. Unfortunately, the new Pakistani leader, instead of listening to the Afghan views, lectured Naim about Pakistan's military might and its ability to take Kabul within a few hours."³²⁷ This impression of Ayub Khan's impatience for the

³²³ Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 97.

³²⁴ Ibid, 100.

³²⁵ Pakistani officials in Kabul noted a particularly lacklustre Pashtunistan Day in 1956, with many representatives failing to turn up for the first time. Several participants criticized Daoud for "letting down the cause of Pashtunistan," leading to a walkout of the few government officials who attended. Telegram, Pakistan Embassy Kabul to Deputy Director Intelligence, Peshawar, 4 September 1956, acc. 10, NDC.

³²⁶ Ghaus claims that the Afghan were led to believe during these talks that the One Unit system would be abolished. Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 89. For Khattak's version of the apprehensions and doubts that hampered Ghaffar Khan's visit, see Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 106-109.

³²⁷ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 90. For Ayub's less confrontational recollection of the talks, see Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: OUP, 1967), 175-76.

Afghan stance, and his belief that demonstrating Pakistan's strength would be enough to keep the Afghans quiet, emerges in other sources as well.³²⁸

Radio Kabul's initial reaction to the military takeover was cautious, but soon it began intensified propaganda against the new government and the suspension of democratic rights of the Pashtuns of Pakistan.³²⁹ Not all Pakistani frontier and military officials had been convinced of the wisdom of the government's recent conciliatory policy towards Afghanistan, as is suggested by the May 1958 ISI report and PA responses cited earlier.³³⁰ Amid more aggressive counterpropaganda, and the arrest of Ghaffar Khan and Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai, the NAP leader from Baluchistan, the situation deteriorated rapidly.

The occasion of the Faqir of Ipi's death in April 1960 led to heightened tribal unrest in Bajaur. Ayub's government had initiated road construction projects in the agency as part of a renewed effort to develop the tribal areas and these projects became a target of attack.³³¹ As so often happened, this dynamic was superimposed on a local conflict between the Khan of Jandol and the Khan of Khar, with the former calling on the Afghan government for support.³³² As the Pakistan military was sent in to bring the area under control, Afghan irregulars and army troops dressed as tribesmen crossed the border twice, in September 1960 and May 1961, to aid

³²⁸ Ayub Khan's military appreciation to the Cabinet while Commander in Chief in 1951 bears out this impression. Commander in Chief, "Outline Appreciation of Afghan Hostility Against Pakistan." Also see Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, 88-89, 116-17.

³²⁹ Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, "Appreciation of Pro-Pukhtunist/Anti-Pakistan Propaganda in Afghanistan, India and Other Countries during the Month of November, 1958," acc. 10, NDC.

³³⁰ Inter Services Intelligence Directorate, "Pakhtunistan," 13 May 1958, and responses by PAs in acc. 10, NDC.

³³¹ Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 2, 312-14.

³³² *Ibid.*, 312-15, and Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 539-41.

pro-Pashtunistan elements.³³³ The Daoud government's decision to escalate the conflict was likely driven by intelligence reports that exaggerated tribal sympathy to the Afghan cause, as well as by suspicions of Pakistani involvement in unrest among the Safi tribes in Kunar and in anti-government protests in Kandahar.³³⁴ The military engagement ended up being the most serious since the British period, with Pakistani fighter-bombers employed against the tribesmen and Afghan troops.³³⁵

In August 1961, the Pakistani government responded by closing its consulates in Afghanistan and ordering the closure of all Afghan consulates and trade agencies in Pakistan. It claimed nonetheless that it would still permit Afghan goods to pass through the country in accordance with its transit trade agreement. Suspecting, probably correctly, that the Pakistani authorities, as in 1955, sought to reduce the flow of goods to a minimum without taking on the responsibility, in international eyes, of officially suspending transit trade, the Afghan government promptly responded by severing diplomatic relations and closing the border.³³⁶

The border remained closed for almost two years and caused severe disruption to the Afghan economy. The bulk of trade to and from Afghanistan, which had passed through Pakistani ports, either withered or had to be sent through more expensive routes. US-funded development projects, which had recently increased under the Kennedy administration, were

³³³ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 90.

³³⁴ Ibid, and Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 539.

³³⁵ Humayun Khan, interview with author, 11 April 2010.

³³⁶ The Pakistan's government's legal reasoning at the time of the 1955 crisis is in acc. 2161, NDC. The discussion of the economic and logistical considerations arising from the border closure in 1961 is in "Minutes of the meeting held at the Ministry of External Affairs on September 15th, 1961," acc. 2345, NDC.

halted for a time as US aid and machinery could not be rerouted through the Soviet Union, as some European donors were beginning to do. In 1962, a new transit route to the sea through Iran was opened, via the port of Khurramshahr, but it was longer and more expensive than the traditional routes. The *pawindah* nomads, who seasonally migrated with their flocks from Afghanistan to Pakistan in the winter, were also affected as Pakistani authorities prevented them from crossing the border in the winter of 1961-62; an episode which increased their resentment towards both governments.³³⁷

Of as much concern to the Afghan government was the increased dependence on the Soviet Union that resulted from the closing of the southern trade routes. Trade and development projects with European countries and Japan had to be rerouted through the USSR; twice, the Afghans had to rely on a massive Soviet airlift to save part of their export stock of fresh fruit, originally destined for the Pakistani and Indian markets, from spoiling.³³⁸ Soviet aid to replace lost development funds was forthcoming, but Afghan rulers had not forgotten the foundational assumption of their foreign policy, that maintaining a balance between more powerful neighbours was key to retaining their independence. The United States and Iran, also concerned about Afghanistan's dependence on the Soviets, actively attempted to mediate between Pakistan and Afghanistan at this time.³³⁹

³³⁷ A fictionalized account of this episode is narrated in the story "The Death of Camels," in former Political Agent Jamil Ahmad's novel. Jamil Ahmad, *The Wandering Falcon* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2011), 36-65.

³³⁸ Syed Rifaat Hussain, "From Dependence to Intervention: Soviet-Afghan Relations During the Brezhnev Era (1964-1982)" (PhD diss., University of Denver, 1993), 96.

³³⁹ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 92-93.

Amid a sense within the royal family that prioritizing the Pashtunistan issue to such an extent had caused only harm to the country, without any progress on the issue itself, Zahir Shah asked Sardar Daoud, as the publicly committed advocate of Pashtunistan, to resign the post of Prime Minister. It was hoped that Daoud's resignation would pave the way for resuming normal relations with Pakistan; former Pakistan Foreign Secretary Tanvir Ahmad Khan suggests that "Pakistan had sort of convinced the family that he was a liability as far as Pakistan was concerned, and that played a certain part in the change."³⁴⁰ Differences between Zahir Shah and Daoud on the pace and nature of internal reform and political liberalization also seem to have played a part in the decision.³⁴¹ Daoud's resignation was announced on 9 March, 1963. A new government took over, headed for the first time by a Prime Minister from outside the royal family. On 28 May, after negotiations in Tehran, Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed to re-establish their diplomatic, consular and trade relations.³⁴²

The Quiet Decade, 1963-1973

The following decade witnessed the absence of any crisis in relations. Although no attempts were made to resolve the Pashtunistan dispute, both governments demonstrated that they could live with it, and that it need not be an impediment to better relations. Frictions were kept to a minimum, there were no breaks in relations, and trade steadily increased. Of great importance to Pakistani perceptions of Afghan hostility during this period was the neutral

³⁴⁰ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October, 2011.

³⁴¹ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 94-95.

³⁴² "Agreement concluded at Teheran between the Government of Pakistan represented by Foreign Minister Z.A. Bhutto and the Government of Afghanistan represented by Minister of Information G. Rashtia relating to the restoration of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, 28 May 1963," in Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 296-97.

stance Afghanistan took in the two wars between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971. Amir Usman recalls,

In [the] 1965 war, the king...called our ambassador and he told him – although this is not recorded anywhere, but we as diplomats know it – he said, look, you can withdraw the last soldier from this border and there will be no trouble at all from Afghanistan. India at that time thought that it is a good opportunity because it will be a two front situation: Afghanistan will help us from that side and we will come from this side. But they didn't do anything.³⁴³

This approach is confirmed by Fida Yunas, who as Second Secretary in the Kabul Embassy in 1967, questioned the ambassador about the assurances.³⁴⁴ These gestures, on two occasions when the Afghan government could realistically have done serious harm to Pakistan, were widely appreciated by Pakistani officials and went a long way towards discrediting the notion of the two-front war against India and Afghanistan.³⁴⁵

The decade from 1963-1973 was also an important time of internal political change in Afghanistan, as tentative steps were taken in the direction of converting the political system into a form of constitutional monarchy. A Loya Jirga convened by Zahir Shah in 1964 approved a new constitution under which, while the king remained the arbiter of political power, members of the royal family were ineligible to run in elections or be appointed ministers.³⁴⁶ Elections were held in 1965 and 1969 for a representative parliament, but political parties were banned. Parliamentary debates were often lively and highly critical of

³⁴³ Amir Usman, interview with author, 25 January, 2010.

³⁴⁴ Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 2, 330-32. Yunas also notes the assurances Pakistan received in 1971.

³⁴⁵ Very often, during the interviews that I conducted with Pakistani Foreign Ministry, military and frontier officials, the interviewee would, unprompted, mention these gestures with great approval. This occurred regardless of whether the interviewee's views of the Afghan government were otherwise positive or negative.

³⁴⁶ For the text of the constitution, see "The Constitution of Afghanistan – 1964," in S. Fida Yunas, ed., *The Constitutions of Afghanistan, 1923-1990* (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 2001). The restrictions on the royal family are in Article 24.

the government of the day, although critics of the new setup noted that parliamentary discipline was highly lacking and sessions veered on the chaotic.³⁴⁷

Among the deputies elected to the 216 member lower house (*wolesi jirga*) were a handful of communists. Soviet involvement in Afghanistan had increased in recent decades. The Soviet Union was a burgeoning trade partner; it provided funding and technical expertise for development projects; helped construct roads and other transport infrastructure; and equipped and trained the Afghan military.³⁴⁸ Familiarity with communist doctrines had increased among the small number of students and intelligentsia in Afghanistan, particularly in Kabul at the government-sponsored Kabul University. Those who went for study to the Soviet Union for education or military training were often also influenced by communist ideology. Leftist study circles were formed as early as 1956, and in 1965 several of these circles came together to form the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).³⁴⁹ An essentially middle-class party, the PDPA was prone to personalized disputes and broke up two years later into two rival factions: Khalq ("Masses") and Parcham ("Flag"); besides these two pro-Soviet groups, there were a number of small pro-China groups, such as Shola-i Javed ("Eternal Flame").³⁵⁰ The left in Afghanistan was fractious, unable to make much headway either in elected politics or in disseminating communist teachings to other sectors of society.³⁵¹ Among them, however,

³⁴⁷ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 119-24.

³⁴⁸ See Syed Rifaat Hussain, "From Dependence to Intervention," especially pages 99-152.

³⁴⁹ Raja Anwar, *The Tragedy of Afghanistan: A First-hand Account* (Verso: London, 1988), 39-44.

³⁵⁰ For an intimate analysis of the breakup, see *ibid*, 48-68.

³⁵¹ Memo, "Afghanistan: Factions in the Ruling Party," National Foreign Assessment Center, June 1980, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST), National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (henceforth NARA).

the urbane, upper-middle class Parcham faction began to cultivate ties to disgruntled elements in the ruling elite, chiefly Sardar Daoud.

Daoud's 1973 Coup d'État and Worsening of Relations

On 17 July, 1973, after ten years in political exile, Sardar Daoud staged a *coup d'état*, abolishing the monarchy and establishing himself as president of a new one-party led Afghan Republic. Daoud's coup, staged with support from the military and communist groups, led to concerns in Pakistan, given its troubled history with Daoud when he served as prime minister. Initial impressions, according to Pakistani officials of the Baluchistan provincial government, suggest a lukewarm reception to the coup in Afghanistan, especially in Kandahar, the stronghold of the pro-monarchy Durrani tribes.³⁵² Religious '*ulama* were said to be against the new government, fearing it was backed by the Soviet Union and likely to lead to greater communist, and thus atheist, influence in the country. Students and intelligentsia, by contrast, were considered to be in favour of the change. Worryingly from the Pakistan government's perspective, "The supporters of Pashtunistan...are happy over the new Govt., because they feel that Daud Khan is definitely going to create trouble in the Pak/Afghan border belt, on a large scale, if fully supported by the Russians in the event of his successfully holding power for some time."³⁵³ Perhaps presciently, the report concluded that if there were no attempt by the ex-king to make a comeback, Daoud "may remain in power for some time i.e. so long as

³⁵² Memo, "Coup D'etat in Afghanistan," Deputy Commissioner, Quetta-Pishin, to Secretary, Government of Baluchistan Home Department, 19 July 1973, acc. S.318, NDC. More impressions are contained in acc. S.318, especially the reports of the Home Secretary, Baluchistan, "Afghanistan vis-à-vis Baluchistan," acc. S.318, NDC and Consulate of Pakistan in Kandahar, "Coup d'etat in Afghanistan," 20 July 1973, acc. S.318, NDC.

³⁵³ Memo, "Coup D'etat in Afghanistan," Deputy Commissioner, Quetta-Pishin, to Secretary, Government of Baluchistan Home Department, 19 July 1973.

desired by the Russian Govt. and pro-Russian elements. In case he succeeds [*sic*] in eliminating the pro-King Royal Family, even then there is no guarantee for him to continue in power indefinitely, and sooner or latter [*sic*] he will have to face the same fate.”³⁵⁴

Pakistani officials’ suspicions of Daoud’s willingness to escalate the Pashtunistan dispute are open to question; after all, the Pakistan government was predisposed to be hostile to him, and Daoud’s initial pronouncements on Pashtunistan were nothing out of the ordinary.³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, Daoud did soon adopt a more hard-line stance, owing in large measure to the deteriorating internal situation in Pakistan. The national elections of 1970 had led to the East Pakistani Awami League winning an absolute majority of National Assembly seats. Amid suspicions of the Awami League’s separatist intentions and an unwillingness among West Pakistani leaders, chief among them Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), to give up power, Chief Martial Law Administrator Yahya Khan ordered a brutal army crackdown in East Pakistan, which led to outright rebellion, a war with India and the eventual secession of the province as the new country of Bangladesh. After the war, the lifting of martial law under the newly constituted PPP government had for the first time seen the National Awami Party come into power in coalition governments in NWFP and Baluchistan, amid the promulgation of a new constitution which dissolved the One Unit system and guaranteed greater provincial autonomy.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ “English Translation of the Address of President and Prime Minister Mohammad Daud Broadcast over Radio Afghanistan on August 23, 1973,” 27 August 1973, *ibid*.

However, not long thereafter, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto began to move against the NAP provincial governments, accusing them of secessionist designs, a highly sensitive charge with the trauma of East Pakistan so recent. Bhutto orchestrated the dismissal of the Baluchistan government, leading the NWFP ministry to resign in protest. Amid increasing unrest in both provinces, Bhutto initiated army intervention to quell the rebellion in Baluchistan and used his newly created Federal Security Force (FSF) to round up political dissidents. Lawlessness increased, with several bomb attacks in the NWFP and the assassination of Bhutto ally Hayat Khan Sherpao. Bhutto responded by banning the NAP in 1975, arresting its leadership and putting them on trial, in the so-called Hyderabad Tribunal, on charges of sedition and murder. Senior NAP leader Ajmal Khattak fled to Kabul to escape arrest.³⁵⁶

Afghanistan's response to the unstable situation in the NWFP and Baluchistan was sharp. Daoud's government formulated its demand for Pashtunistan to be the goal of 'securing the rights of the Pashtun and Baluch peoples,' and this demand was made repeatedly in hostile radio broadcasts that highlighted Pakistani abuses, as well as in a letter-writing campaign to the UN Secretary General that, with Pakistani rejoinders, persisted for a year and a half.³⁵⁷

The Afghan government permitted Baluch insurgents seeking sanctuary across the border to

³⁵⁶ See Eqbal Ahmad, "Pakistan: Signposts to a Police State," in Bengelsdorf et al, 431-45, and Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (Karachi: OUP, 1994), 214-69.

³⁵⁷ For examples, see Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 336-41, 343-50, 353-61.

pass unhindered, and may have provided arms and training.³⁵⁸ It was further accused by the Pakistan government of being involved in acts of sabotage in the frontier.³⁵⁹

Soon after Daoud's coup, in July-August 1973, Bhutto had established a high-level Afghan Cell in the Foreign Ministry to determine policy towards Afghanistan. Including the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Inspector General Frontier Corps (IGFC) and the DG ISI, among other officials, the cell met regularly for the following three years.³⁶⁰ In response to the perceived role of the Afghan government's in unrest in NWFP and Baluchistan, IGFC Naseerullah Khan Babar was authorized to make contact with Afghan Islamist dissidents who had sought refuge in Pakistan following an internal crackdown by the Daoud government.³⁶¹ The dissidents were supplied with arms and training by the Frontier Corps and encouraged to carry out uprisings in Afghanistan, the most significant of which was in the Panjsher valley in 1975.³⁶² This step marked a significant escalation in Pakistan's involvement in politics in Afghanistan, but although the dissidents had greater ambitions, Bhutto's own purpose was not to overthrow the government. Rather, as Tanvir Ahmad Khan argues,

It was a very limited [exercise]... The message was that Pakistan was capable of unsettling things in Afghanistan and since it was followed immediately by Mr. Bhutto's overtures to Daoud, that he was willing to come over and talk, Daoud...got

³⁵⁸ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 114, Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 78, and S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History: The Afghans and the Rise and Fall of the Ruling Afghan Dynasties and Rulers*, vol. 3 (Peshawar: n.p., 2006), 193-94.

³⁵⁹ It is difficult to assess the extent of Afghan involvement. Roedad Khan, in government at the time, states that he saw little evidence of Afghan involvement at the time. Roedad Khan, interview with author, 25 April 2010. Asad Durrani's appraisal is similar. Asad Durrani, interview with author, 26 April, 2010. Even if Afghan involvement was substantial, however, the main causes of the upheaval still seem to have been internal, with the federal government shouldering much of the responsibility.

³⁶⁰ Khalid Mahmud Arif, *Working with Zia: Pakistan's Power Politics, 1977-1988* (Karachi: OUP, 1995), 306.

³⁶¹ These dissidents were the students and faculty involved in the Islamist movement in Kabul University, discussed earlier in chapter one.

³⁶² For Babar's account, see Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 3, 196-98.

the message [and] agreed to talk... The intention was not regime change in Kabul, but to demonstrate to Daoud that his anti-Pakistan posture carried a price tag, that two could play the game... It was designed to force him to come to the conference table.³⁶³

Towards the beginning of 1976, both governments realized the danger of further escalation and stepped back. Pakistan unilaterally decided to halt hostile propaganda against Afghanistan, a gesture the Afghans felt constrained to reciprocate, particularly in view of the urgings of various Muslim countries to that effect.³⁶⁴ The slowly improving atmosphere allowed Daoud to invite Bhutto to visit Afghanistan in May 1976, initiating the first of a series of talks that would come close to resolving the Pashtunistan dispute for good.

The 'Spirit of Kabul' Negotiations

Bhutto visited Kabul from June 7 – June 11, 1976, and his visit was reciprocated by Daoud in August. Most of their talks were held in secret, away from their foreign ministry delegations, with only Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Samad Ghaus present as interpreter. His account, supplemented by those of Tanvir Ahmad Khan and Amir Usman, who were both at the time posted to the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul, gives a holistic picture of the solution envisaged by the two leaders.

The talks were characterized by a high degree of flexibility. Bhutto from the outset conceded that “the government of Pakistan recognizes as legitimate the interest of Afghanistan in the

³⁶³ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October, 2011.

³⁶⁴ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 126-27. Many of the Muslim-majority countries, with whom Afghanistan was trying to develop closer ties, had already close relations with Pakistan and would urge the Afghan side especially to take a more conciliatory stance in the Pashtunistan dispute. For an account of these dynamics at the second meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), held in Lahore, Pakistan, in February 1974, see Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 116-19.

welfare and the preservation of the rights of the Pashtuns living in Pakistan.”³⁶⁵ Daoud insisted that Afghanistan had no territorial ambitions beyond the Durand Line and, so far as the Pashtun and Baluch leaders were concerned, “While nobody can know what is in a man’s heart...to us, none of the ones with whom we have spoken, including Wali Khan, said that they wished to separate from Pakistan.”³⁶⁶ By accepting the constitution of Pakistan and contesting elections, they had shown that they were willing to press their demands within the framework of Pakistan.³⁶⁷ All the same, Daoud argued that for Pakistan’s own good, the government needed to reach an accommodation with the Pashtuns and Baluch and settle their grievances.

The understanding reached, according to Ghaus, was that Bhutto had to first wind up the Hyderabad Tribunal and release the imprisoned Pashtun and Baluch leaders. He would then negotiate with them to work out an agreement that addressed their concerns and guaranteed their political rights. Such an agreement would not necessarily involve changing any laws, since the 1973 constitution guaranteed provincial autonomy; but in any case the nature of the arrangement was Pakistan’s affair. Afghanistan would accept any agreement the Pashtun and Baluch leaders freely endorsed.

Once the Pashtuns “openly and freely” expressed their satisfaction with the autonomy arrangements, Afghanistan’s endeavors with regard to the restoration of their political rights would be deemed to have come to an end. It was envisaged that at that stage the matter would be placed by the Afghan government before a Loya Jirga that would take cognizance of the Pashtun decision and would ultimately determine the Afghan stand

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 128.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, 129.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. Later, in a separate conversation with Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Waheed Abdullah, Daoud emphasized, “let us not forget that Wali Khan has said that he is a Pakistani and that even his father Ghafar Khan considers himself a national of that country.” Ibid, 133.

with respect to the Pashtunistan claim and the status of the Durand Line. Meanwhile, Afghanistan would also continue to press for justice for the Baluchi people. It was assumed that relaxation of Pakistan's control in Baluchistan would...contribute to a more speedy solution of the Afghan-Pakistani difference.³⁶⁸

Ghaus states that members of the Pakistan Foreign Ministry delegation attempted to obtain speedier Afghan concessions on the Durand Line and Pashtunistan, but that approach was shrugged off by both leaders, who felt a more gradual, confidence-building approach was required. The positive atmosphere of the talks, and the dramatic easing of Afghan-Pakistan frictions that followed in the days ahead, came to be popularly called the "Spirit of Kabul," after the location of the first discussions.

Tanvir Ahmad Khan's account agrees with Ghaus on the essentials, but Tanvir argues that Ghaus holds back in his memoirs from explicitly putting forth Daoud's final position.

According to Tanvir,

The main... stumbling block had been the Durand Line. And they found a way in their secret talks, without the delegations...to subsume it in a larger framework. The agreement was...that there will be no explicit recognition of the Durand Line by Daoud...what he will do instead is that he will convene a Loya Jirga...At that time it was still a...very important event, I mean Loya Jirgas had been convened only for monumental decisions of war and peace. And get the Loya Jirga, he needed time he said...to make a declaration on relations with Pakistan. And the declaration would say that the relations between the two countries would henceforth be based on the Five Principles of Coexistence, the Bandung *panj shila*, and that includes the inviolability of existing frontiers...

The entire background to Bandung was that Asia had suffered from three centuries of colonial interventions, exploitation, and left frontiers which are not the ideal ones, but changing them means a great deal of conflict and war, and therefore the Asian countries would live by the existing frontiers, and that became one of the cardinal principles, that henceforth no interference across frontiers also.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 134. The last sentence refers to the military campaign in Baluchistan, which had begun to wind down.

So this was to be the mechanism...[Bhutto would] set free the leaders of the Pashtun and Baluch people, let them meet, and [Daoud] will come to Pakistan and meet them...[then] inform the Loya Jirga that he, Sardar Daoud, on behalf of Afghanistan, had consulted the leaders of the Pashtun and Baluch people and they were perfectly content to be a part of the Pakistani federation, including the tribal belt, on the basis of provincial autonomy, which the 1973 constitution, framed by Mr. Bhutto, guaranteed. And on that basis...[he] would ask for...the Loya Jirga declaration on Five Principles of Coexistence...regulating relations for future.³⁶⁹

This understanding is hinted at in the joint communiqué issued at the end of Bhutto's visit to Kabul, which makes passing reference to the aim of solving their dispute "on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence."³⁷⁰ Ghaus states that the Afghan Foreign Ministry delegation balked at including this reference in the communiqué, but were overridden by Daoud, who argued that observance of the principles would be binding on both sides, and would thus preclude Pakistan from interfering in Afghanistan as well. Technically, he observed that the five principles would not obstruct Afghan interference in support of the Pashtun cause "unless we recognize the Durand Line as the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan."³⁷¹ But that was not the point:

We who are committed to a peaceful solution of our problem with Pakistan have to be realistic in our perspective and pragmatic in our approach. For us, what other alternative is there but to refrain from any act that the Pakistanis, who consider Pashtunistan an integral part of their territory, may construe as interference in their internal affairs? To proceed otherwise, whether we accept Pashtunistan as part of Pakistan or not, will simply block the settlement, and we might as well not have embarked on the present negotiations...What is relevant under the circumstances is the securing of the rights of the Pashtuns, to the maximum extent possible.³⁷²

³⁶⁹ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October, 2011.

³⁷⁰ "Joint Communiqué issued at the end of the visit of Pakistan Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto to Afghanistan, 11 June 1976," in Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 372.

³⁷¹ Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 133.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

Tanvir's account also imparts the talks with a sense of urgency that is only hinted at by Ghaus. At the time, there were continuing concerns over the stability of the Daoud regime, and the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul was suggesting the likelihood of a coup against the government, either by rightist military officers backed by tribal chiefs and other pro-royalty elements, or by the communists.³⁷³ Although Daoud had initially come to power with communist support, he was a staunch nationalist and had become increasingly wary of Afghanistan's overdependence on the Soviet Union and the ultimate allegiance of his leftist supporters. Moving with some caution, he gradually removed the communist ministers from his cabinet, placed suspect army officers under surveillance and attempted to purge communists from the police and security services.³⁷⁴ Perceiving that, despite Afghanistan's professed neutralist foreign policy, it had become too open to Soviet influence, he attempted to rebalance relations with the two Cold War blocs. Resolving the Pashtunistan dispute with Pakistan was a critical component of this strategy, intended to establish close relations that would enable Afghanistan to look west and south as well as north to the USSR.³⁷⁵ The Shah of Iran, with the backing of the United States, had also been encouraging the Daoud government to reach a rapprochement with Pakistan and move closer to the Western bloc, and held out the promise of enormous amounts of aid – \$1.8

³⁷³ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October, 2011. Also see the assessment of Daoud's staying power earlier quoted from memo, "Coup D'etat in Afghanistan," Deputy Commissioner, Quetta-Pishin, to Secretary, Government of Baluchistan Home Department, 19 July 1973.

³⁷⁴ See for example, Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 190-92. According to Soviet documents, Daoud was sufficiently concerned about Afghan communist intentions of overthrowing his government to raise the topic with his Soviet hosts during his visit to the USSR in June 1974. Deputy Chief of the CC CPSU, International Department, "Information for the Leaders of the Progressive Afghan Political Organizations 'Parcham' and 'Khalq' Concerning the Results of the Visit of Mohammed Daud to the USSR," 21 June 1974, in *Document Reader Volume Two: Russian and East European Documents* (Washington, D.C.: CWIHP, 2002).

³⁷⁵ Daoud guardedly alludes to this motivation a number of times in Ghaus' account, for example in referring to 'countries' that "did not want to see the amelioration of Afghan-Pakistani relations," and observing that the "situation in the region and in the world is such that we cannot afford another stalemate in our relations. The vital interests of Afghanistan militate for an accommodation with Pakistan." Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 127, 133.

billion is the alleged figure – for Afghanistan’s development. Robert Oakley, who went on to serve as US Ambassador to Pakistan in the late 1980s, recalled these efforts in an interview:

Daoud had taken over Afghanistan, there was a great fear about his becoming too close to the Soviets. And [on the] diplomatic front, I remember travelling with Kissinger at that time and we stopped in Iran, talked to the Shah, and then in Pakistan talked to Bhutto the First, to see what one could do...[with both] carrots and sticks, to get Daoud to change his ways. And part of this was Pakistani support for Gulbuddin [Hikmatyar] and some of the other [Islamists] to put pressure on, because of the fear at that stage in Pakistan that you’re going to have another dismemberment [in the] west as you had earlier in East Pakistan. It turned out that one was too successful, because the result was that Daoud indeed turned back away from the Soviet Union and eventually this alarmed the Soviets, who built up the Afghan Communist Party to overthrow Daoud.³⁷⁶

The Soviet Union was indeed concerned about Daoud’s shift, and had been actively exerting its influence to reunite the fractious Afghan communist groups, a task which eventually achieved fruition with Khalq and Parcham’s reunification in the PDPA in July 1977.³⁷⁷ Soviet documents from 1974 suggest that efforts at uniting the factions were originally initiated with a view to ensuring the communists could better defend Daoud’s government from the danger of a rightist coup.³⁷⁸ As Daoud began to purge the communists from various government and military agencies and move closer to the Western bloc, these efforts would have taken on a

³⁷⁶ Robert Oakley, interview with author, 27 July, 2010.

³⁷⁷ Raja Anwar observes that the 1977 agreement was more of an alliance than actual unification. Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 85-87.

³⁷⁸ For example, “K. Babrak and N. Taraki...need to cease internecine fighting, unite both groups in a single party, and concentrate their combined efforts on comprehensive support for the republican regime in the country.” Deputy Chief of the CC CPSU, International Department, “Information for the Leaders of the Progressive Afghan Political Organizations ‘Parcham’ and ‘Khalq’ Concerning the Results of the Visit of Mohammed Daud to the USSR,” 21 June 1974. Similar messages are contained in other documents from 1974 in the CWIHP reader; however, the reader does not contain documents from later in the Daoud period.

different importance in Soviet eyes, although there is little evidence of Soviet direction in the communist coup that unseated Daoud.³⁷⁹

Aware of the dangers to his government, both internal and external, Daoud, Tanvir argues, was thus keen that his rapprochement with Pakistan should not stall. Bhutto, however, was unable to implement the first step of the understanding, namely the release of the Pashtun and Baluch leaders, before he was ousted in a military coup in July 1977 and later sentenced to death. Nevertheless, his successor, President General Zia ul-Haq, essentially continued his policy towards Afghanistan unchanged. Zia and Daoud exchanged visits and held constructive secret talks.³⁸⁰ Prior to Daoud's visit to Pakistan in March 1978, Zia released the Pashtun and Baluch leaders and ensured that Daoud was able to meet with them. Zia's Chief of Staff, Lt.-Gen. Khalid Mahmud Arif quotes Daoud as saying on his departure:

This is the hand of a Pathan promising to establish friendly relation[s] with Pakistan on a firm and durable basis. In the past thirty years, we had taken a stance on an issue. Give me a little time to mould public opinion in my country to effect a change. I intend to convene the Afghan Loya Jirga...to take a decision to normalize relations with Pakistan.³⁸¹

But before Daoud could take the understanding further, he was ousted and killed in the communist coup in April, which came to be known as the Saur Revolution.

The accounts of those involved in the Daoud-Bhutto and Daoud-Zia talks, whatever their variations, uniformly suggest a very positive and constructive dialogue, and a genuine

³⁷⁹ See the following section on the Saur Revolution.

³⁸⁰ Ghaus suggests that both he and Daoud were in fact more impressed with Zia's sincerity than with Bhutto's. Ghaus, *Fall of Afghanistan*, 140, 147.

³⁸¹ Arif, *Working with Zia*, 303.

commitment by leaders on both sides to seek a permanent solution of the Pashtunistan issue. Ghaus was convinced that, had the time been available, the dispute would have been resolved for good within three to four years.³⁸² We may certainly question this assessment, given the lack of progress in resolving the Pashtunistan dispute after promising starts in 1948 and 1956. The precondition of Pakistan satisfying the aspirations of its Pashtun and Baluch minorities may have proven elusive, given the complicated relationships between provinces and centre that were involved. Even if such an agreement were reached, Afghanistan may not have been assured that it would not be broken in future, or that other issues would not surface, relating to Pashtun autonomy, which would invite its comment.

Nevertheless, there were important factors in favour of a settlement. The NWFP had not remained as it was in the immediate post-independence days; over time, it had become more integrated with the rest of Pakistan in important ways.³⁸³ The choices of Pashtun leaders to participate in elections and government under the 1973 constitution and their reluctance to clearly espouse separatist aims, even when pressed by Bhutto's crackdown, were powerful indicators of their desire to seek provincial autonomy within the framework of Pakistan. The Afghan government had set forth its goals more clearly and accommodated Pakistani concerns by expressing its readiness to accept whatever settlement Pashtun and Baluch leaders reached, within Pakistan, with the Pakistan government. The Pakistan government similarly displayed a willingness to openly discuss and understand Afghan concerns. Unlike in 1948 and 1956,

³⁸² Ibid, 147.

³⁸³ See the discussion in part I of this chapter. Such was not the case with Baluchistan, but Baluchistan had never been central to the dispute and it is likely that the return of relative normalcy there would have been adequate to assuage Afghan concerns.

the negative political and economic effects of the continuing dispute, on Afghanistan in particular, were by now manifest; and the Afghan government was keen to lessen the isolation and dependency that it had contributed to. With flexibility there is a likelihood that the dispute could have been resolved, or if not that, then at least a *modus vivendi* reached, with Afghanistan confining its involvement to verbal criticism and the Pakistan government tolerating it, while relations in other spheres continued to improve.

The final section of this chapter marks a transition from the dynamics of the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship discussed so far. Although, as we have seen, the relationship was not unaffected by the Cold War, the reduced intensity of great power rivalry in the region since the departure of the British had created a space for bilateral factors to take precedence. Old conflicts were mediated by new forms of identification and engagement, which managed frictions in the relationship and even opened up possibilities for real cooperation.

With the Saur Revolution great power rivalry was once again intensified, though not immediately to an irreversible extent. The communist leaders of the April 1978 – December 1979 period were beholden to the USSR, whose penetration of Afghanistan increased significantly, yet they still remained nominally independent. Similarly, Pakistan's bilateral calculus began to be overshadowed by fears of Soviet encroachment, resulting in its permission for and gradual encouragement of activities to destabilize the Afghan government. Yet it continued to probe Afghan intentions, kept a door open for negotiations, and did not cut off ties until the Soviet invasion.

The Saur Revolution and Unravelling of Bilateral Ties

On 27 April, 1978, Daoud was killed and the government of the Republic overthrown in the communist-backed military coup which came to be known as the Saur Revolution, and which proclaimed a new Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).³⁸⁴ Most accounts suggest that the coup took place at the initiative of Afghan communists reacting to their increasing marginalization under Daoud, rather than as an outcome of Soviet instigation.³⁸⁵ Nonetheless, it was in keeping with the worsening trend of relations between the USSR and Daoud, and the USSR was quick to recognize the new government, whose members it had long nurtured.

In the rhetoric of its pronouncements, its policies, and in the increasing Soviet penetration of society, the new government betrayed its adherence to a textbook communism with little understanding of Afghan society. Sulaiman Laiq, one of the founding members of the PDPA and Minister of Tribes and Nationalities through the 1980s, recalls that the party had little practical experience of government and lacked a strong intellectual movement.³⁸⁶ Many of its leaders were young and too ideologically set in their views: “We got our opinions from books...kept crying for the workers when there were no workers in Afghanistan.”³⁸⁷

The PDPA government soon embarked on an ambitious and ill-considered plan of social and economic reforms that aroused strong resistance from wide segments of society, especially in

³⁸⁴ In the Afghan reckoning, the coup fell on the seventh day of the month of Saur, hence the name.

³⁸⁵ See also Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 84-103, and Mitrokhin, “KGB in Afghanistan,” 25-27. Mitrokhin states that the KGB, at least, had been informed of the coup plan, although the agency considered the plan to be premature.

³⁸⁶ Sulaiman Laiq, interview with author, 23 March 2013.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Laiq similarly notes the party’s failure to recognize the absence of an organized class of rural labourers.

the rural areas where absence of state intervention was the accepted norm.³⁸⁸ The alien nature of the government's ideology, all too evident in public proclamations and propaganda campaigns, a set of treaties with the Soviet Union and increasing reliance on Soviet advisors, served to emphasize its rupture with the ruling tradition in Afghanistan and its dependence on a foreign, atheist power.³⁸⁹ Thus, the traditional compact that had undergirded the passive legitimacy enjoyed by Afghanistan's rulers was shattered.³⁹⁰ The government's resort to repressive measures to quell opposition and enforce its policies only increased popular grievances.³⁹¹ Factional infighting within the PDPA, which as early as July 1978 resulted in a purge of Parcham ministers, further sapped its ability to govern. Revolts broke out in Kunar and Badakhshan in the summer of 1978, and were followed by uprisings in Hazarajat and, in March 1979, Herat. As unrest spread across the country, Afghan and Soviet officials increasingly began to blame "regional reactionary powers," namely Pakistan and Iran, abetted by "imperialism," for carrying out "armed aggression" against Afghanistan.³⁹²

³⁸⁸ Decrees Six and Eight related to land reform, Decree Seven on marriage and the government's literacy campaign in particular were seen as intrusive and, where enforced, often had unintended negative effects. Land reforms, for example, were carried out without any provisions to provide a source of capital to the new owners, who previously as peasants and sharecroppers been provided it by the landlords. For the texts of the decrees, see S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History: The Afghans and the Rise and Fall of the Ruling Afghan Dynasties and Rulers*, vol. 4 (Peshawar: n.p., 2006), 127-47, 157-58. For further analysis, see Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 84-97, and Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 112-21.

³⁸⁹ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 68-83, 134-35. For the text of the treaty which was ultimately used by the Soviet to justify intervention, see "Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan," in S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 4, 300-304.

³⁹⁰ This theme is developed further in chapter four.

³⁹¹ Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 95-97.

³⁹² Telegram, American Embassy Kabul to Cyrus Vance, 8 May 1979, in *Document Reader Volume One: US Documents*.

Pakistani officials had indeed been concerned by the fall of Daoud's government, with which their ties had dramatically improved, and even angered by Daoud's death.³⁹³ The initial rise in Pashtunistan propaganda by the new government and the destabilizing situation in Afghanistan merited serious attention. Yet just as worrisome as these bilateral concerns was the question of what the coup implied about Soviet intentions in the region. Had the USSR directed the coup and, if so, was it to prevent Afghanistan's rapprochement with Pakistan?³⁹⁴ Did the USSR desire a more active role than the Soviet-tilted neutralism of the old regime could no longer satisfy? If so, the communist government was likely to be more hostile and the security threat more serious than the bilateral dispute with Afghanistan ever had been.³⁹⁵ On 2 May 1978, Zia ul-Haq reactivated the Afghan Cell in the Foreign Ministry, which had lain dormant since the improvement in ties in the latter days of the Bhutto administration.³⁹⁶ Uncertain of the answers to these questions and unsure as to the outcome of the upheavals in Afghanistan, the government did not hinder the Afghan Islamist dissidents, now bolstered by a flow of refugees, from organizing on Pakistani soil. Gradually, it began to provide assistance to the insurgents.

These steps did not however indicate a committed policy to overthrow the PDPA government, but rather a tentative response to a volatile political situation, which bore the hallmark of Zia

³⁹³ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October 2011.

³⁹⁴ Some Pakistani officials wondered if there was a pattern of Soviet intrigue in Daoud and each of his communist successors being overthrown soon after they had sought closer relations with Pakistan. Asad Durrani, interview with author, 26 April 2010.

³⁹⁵ The CIA's assessment was that the coup revived Pakistani concerns about Soviet intentions and the possibility of a two-front war. Office of Political Analysis, "Afghanistan's Relations With Its Neighbors," 11 June 1979, CREST, NARA.

³⁹⁶ Arif, *Working with Zia*, 307.

ul-Haq's policy style of keeping options open.³⁹⁷ A CIA intelligence assessment from 23 March 1979 concluded that neither Pakistan nor Iran was providing aid to the insurgents, although Pakistan was reportedly doing little to limit their activities on its soil.³⁹⁸ As of 12 April, the agency's assessment was still that

Pakistan has permitted Afghan exiles, Pakistani religious organizations, and tribesmen to funnel some help to the Afghan tribes. There is little Islamabad could do to prevent Pakistani tribesmen from assisting their Afghan neighbours across the very porous border, and it is not inclined to try. The evidence, however, suggests no significant military support for the rebels.³⁹⁹

It is not until 25 May that the agency concludes that Pakistan had begun providing small arms to the insurgents.⁴⁰⁰ Still, Pakistani commitment remained limited. While precise details are not available, we know that as of February 1979, there were 98 Afghan Islamists on the payroll of the Frontier Corps; each received an allowance ranging from Pakistani Rs. 800 – Rs. 2,560.⁴⁰¹ Counting their families, the total number of beneficiaries came to 1,331.⁴⁰² The Islamists' own accounts from this period suggest severe shortage of arms and fighting capability among the exiles.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁷ This approach was characteristic of Zia. Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 18.

³⁹⁸ National Intelligence Daily, "Afghanistan: A Regime in Trouble," 23 March 1979, CREST, NARA.

³⁹⁹ National Intelligence Daily, "Afghanistan: Prospects for the Insurgents," 12 April 1979, *ibid*.

⁴⁰⁰ Memo, "Monthly Warning Assessment: Near East and South Asia," Robert C. Ames to Director of Central Intelligence, 25 May 1979, *ibid*.

⁴⁰¹ "Nominal Roll Number 1-1 Afghan Refugees – Army Officers (Hizb-e-Islami Group) For the Month of February 1979," in Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 3, 209-12. Note that many of the names in the list are aliases.

⁴⁰² *Ibid*, 191-92. Jami'at-i Islami member Mohammad Es'haq states there were roughly 100 single *mujahidin* and 300 families in exile during the 1975-78 period. Mohammad Es'haq, "Evolution of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan Part (4): Life in exile from 1975 to 1978," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 4, 15 February 1989, 6.

⁴⁰³ Muhammad Musa Tawana, "Glimpses into the historical background of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan: Memoirs of Dr Tawana, Part (9)," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 16 & 17, 1 September, 1989, 6.

At the same time, the Pakistani government tried to probe the new Afghan government, to draw out its position on bilateral relations and on the Soviet role in the region, while avoiding making political commitments itself until the outcome of the power struggles in Afghanistan was clear. Tanvir Ahmad Khan, then posted at the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul, recalls an early approach from Afghan Deputy Prime Minister Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parcham group, in which the latter emphasized that they were not “enemies of Pakistan...that they were Afghans like any other Afghans when it came to Pakistan...they had been active on...Pashtunistan...[but would] honour the understanding that Daoud had reached with Pakistan. But of course, when – they would not commit...provided Pakistan would not try to unsettle the revolution.”⁴⁰⁴ Government officials, however, were reluctant to make a quick response to the offer, and soon thereafter Karmal was removed and sent abroad as Ambassador to Czechoslovakia in the July 1978 factional purge.

While doubting the PDPA government’s ability to make binding commitments, Pakistan continued to maintain normal diplomatic relations. On 9 September 1978, Zia stopped in Kabul en route to Teheran and met with Afghan President Nur Muhammad Taraki; the talks were apparently positive in tone, though limited in substance.⁴⁰⁵ By May the following year, when Pakistan started providing limited aid to the rebels, another power struggle was in progress within the ruling Khalq faction of the PDPA, between Taraki and his deputy, Hafizullah Amin. Shortly after Zia’s second meeting with Taraki on the sidelines of the NAM

⁴⁰⁴ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October, 2011.

⁴⁰⁵ Amir Usman, interview with author, 25 January 2010.

summit in Havana in September 1979, the latter was arrested and later killed.⁴⁰⁶ Amin's ascendancy resulted in increased repression, particularly within the party, as well as a rise in Pashtunistan propaganda: in his address to the nation after removing Taraki on 16 September, Amin declared "History is a witness that whenever a Pashtun leader has tried to do a deal on 'Pashtunistan', he has had to take leave of his office under extremely humiliating circumstances."⁴⁰⁷

By December, Amin had reversed himself. As the country spiralled increasingly out of control, he sent insistent requests through the Pakistan Embassy to hold high-level secret meetings to discuss matters of vital importance. Pakistan Foreign Minister Agha Shahi and DG Afghanistan Tanvir Ahmad Khan were scheduled to travel to Kabul on 22 December but were prevented from flying by a snowstorm.⁴⁰⁸ Before another meeting could be scheduled, Soviet military forces entered Afghanistan, assassinated Amin and installed Babrak Karmal as president.⁴⁰⁹ Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan would no longer be the same.

⁴⁰⁶ For the most authoritative accounts of these intrigues in the PDPA and the contradictory role played by various Soviet agencies, see Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 165-76, and Mitrokhin, "KGB in Afghanistan," 46-80.

⁴⁰⁷ S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History: The Afghans and the Rise and Fall of the Ruling Afghan Dynasties and Rulers*, vol. 5 (Peshawar: n.p., 2006), 28.

⁴⁰⁸ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October, 2011, and Ashraf Jahangir Qazi, interview with author, 23 April, 2010.

⁴⁰⁹ For a detailed account of this operation, see Lyakhovskiy, "Inside the Soviet Invasion and Seizure of Kabul, December 1979."

3. Early Responses to the Soviet Invasion

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 marked a decisive change in the nature of the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, subsuming bilateral dynamics under the framework of Cold War confrontation. Although, in retrospect, Soviet aims were not deliberately expansionistic, many countries in the region and elsewhere feared the consequences of increased Soviet influence. The increasing influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan and continuing turmoil across the porous border added to Pakistani concerns about Soviet ambitions and pressed Islamabad to develop an appropriate policy response.

In the first two years after the invasion, Pakistani policymakers explored a variety of responses to the Soviet invasion. These included the possibility of accommodating to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, attempts to negotiate Soviet withdrawal, providing a limited flow of arms to Afghan *mujahidin* fighting the Soviet occupation, and sounding out the US and other allies for security guarantees and aid to guard against Soviet or Soviet-inspired aggression. With Pakistani perceptions of the Soviet threat ruling out accommodation and early efforts to secure withdrawal faltering, policymakers gradually gravitated towards a more confrontational approach. By 1982, the government had decided on a three-pronged policy: maintaining diplomatic pressure through indirect negotiations with the Afghan government to explore the unlikely possibility of Soviet withdrawal; providing clandestine military aid to the *mujahidin* with the aim of preventing the consolidation of the Soviet occupation; and

accepting a military and economic aid package from the United States to alleviate Pakistan's security dilemma.

Soviet Motivations

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to widespread international condemnation and unease at Soviet ambitions. The unprecedented use of direct armed intervention to maintain a communist revolution in a non-Eastern bloc country signalled a new era of Soviet aggressiveness in the eyes of many observers. Veteran Afghanistan watchers went so far as to suggest that Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev had taken up Peter the Great's supposed quest for a warm water port, an ambition which could only lead to further expansion into Iran or Pakistan.⁴¹⁰ Various players in the Afghan drama would continue to puzzle over Soviet motivations for several years following the invasion, often defaulting to worst-case scenarios that spurred them to strongly oppose the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Yet more recently, declassified documents from Soviet and East European archives suggest that Soviet leaders decided on military intervention with great reluctance, and that Soviet aims were more limited and defensive than was perceived at the time.

The question of military intervention in Afghanistan was discussed by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU) at least as early as 17 March, 1979. A major uprising against the PDPA government in Herat had caused

⁴¹⁰ See Louis Nicholas Buffardi, "Soviet Strategy in South Asia, 1953-1977, Focus: Baluchistan," PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1981. The 'warm waters' theory centred on the ambitions of Tsarist Russia to acquire a southern port abutting the Mediterranean or the Arabian Sea, which would allow it year round access to the sea when its northern Baltic sea routes froze over. The historical veracity of this ambition, as well as its contemporary relevance, are still in dispute.

President Taraki to request Soviet military assistance, including the possible deployment of troops. The CC CPSU Politburo discussions of 17 March present a picture of a Soviet leadership uncertain about the political situation in Afghanistan and questioning whether Soviet troops if sent in would be fighting against only externally inspired insurgents or against parts of the Afghan army and populace as well.⁴¹¹ Several members cautioned that other political solutions should first be examined, and that troops should be employed only as a last resort.⁴¹² Nonetheless, the Politburo concluded that “we must not surrender Afghanistan,” in view of its long history of close ties to the Soviet Union, and amid concerns that at least part of the insurgency was being organized by Western bloc or otherwise anti-Soviet states: the United States, China, Iran and Pakistan.⁴¹³ It permitted the deployment of two Soviet divisions on the border, with a view to potentially intervening in Afghanistan, pending further clarification of the situation.⁴¹⁴

The Politburo’s conclusions changed dramatically in its very next session, on 18 March, when it decided to rule out military intervention altogether. Key to this change of attitude was additional information received about the nature of the uprisings against the communist

⁴¹¹ “Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” 17 March 1979, in “The Soviet Union and Afghanistan: Documents from the Russian and East German Archives,” CWIHP, e-dossier 4, November 2001, 136-40.

⁴¹² Politburo member Andrei Kirilenko was particularly outspoken in this respect. Ibid, 138.

⁴¹³ In these and subsequent discussions, the CC CPSU does not take a clear stance on whether it considered the insurgency to be primarily externally instigated or primarily owing to internal opposition to the PDPA regime; at various points one or the other view is emphasized, even sometimes by the same member. After the Soviet invasion, in its public declarations at least, the Soviet government blamed external interference for its deployment of troops in Afghanistan. These discussions suggest a greater appreciation of the internal dimensions of the problem. However, their inconclusive nature suggests the possibility that Soviet leaders may have subsequently read into the uprising whichever explanation best accorded with their political needs and inclinations.

⁴¹⁴ “Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” 17 March 1979.

government, in particular a detailed conversation between Soviet Prime Minister Aleksey Kosygin and Afghan President Taraki. The Taraki-Kosygin conversation offers a damning indictment of just how isolated Afghanistan's communist rulers had become, in their own eyes, and in a time of crisis how psychologically and materially dependent they were on their Soviet patrons to ensure their survival. Repeatedly in the conversation, Taraki turns to the issue of Soviet military intervention, without which, he warns, the uprising in Herat will spread and eventually topple the communist government altogether.⁴¹⁵ Kosygin asks whether the 17th infantry division garrisoning Herat is still loyal, to which Taraki responds that it is entirely on the side of the insurgents; not more than 500 men remain loyal to the government out of 5,000.⁴¹⁶ Kosygin next asks, in true communist fashion, whether any of the so-called progressive groupings, "the workers, city petty bourgeoisie, and the white collar workers" in Herat are supporting the government; Taraki responds that there are not more than 1,000 to 2,000 workers in Herat out of a population of up to 250,000.⁴¹⁷ Moreover, "There is no active support on the part of the population. It is almost wholly under the influence of Shiite slogans."⁴¹⁸ Asked whether troops from Kabul or other garrisons can be sent to quell the uprising, Taraki fears that removing troops from any other city could result in an uprising there.⁴¹⁹ He asserts that the insurgents are all Iranian and Pakistani soldiers disguised in civilian dress and urges Kosygin to send Soviet Tajiks and Uzbeks disguised in Afghan army

⁴¹⁵ "Telephone Conversation between Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin and Afghan Premier Nur Mohammed Taraki, 18 March 1979 [Excerpt]," 18 March 1979, in "More East Bloc Sources on Afghanistan," CWIHP, bulletin 14/15, 236-38.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, 236.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Asked whether workers, students or peasants could be mobilized in Kabul and sent to Herat, Taraki responds that such groups are either too small, too unreliable or would require lengthy training. Ibid, 236-38.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 237.

uniforms and no one will be the wiser, an idea Kosygin dismisses.⁴²⁰ Kosygin promises nonetheless to send whatever military vehicles and equipment Taraki needs, providing that they can be manned by Afghan crews and officers. Taraki, however, is unable to commit even to that:

KOSYGIN: It means, to put it another way, that there are no well-trained military personnel or very few of them. Hundreds of Afghan officers were trained in the Soviet Union. Where are they all now?

TARAKI: Most of them are Muslim reactionaries... We are unable to rely on them, we have no confidence in them.⁴²¹

Again Taraki returns to the issue of Soviet military intervention, and is undeterred from this demand when Kosygin suggests propaganda activities and economic assistance as alternate ways of proceeding: "That is very good, but let us talk of Herat... Why can't the Soviet Union send Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkmens in civilian clothing? No one will recognize them. We want you to send them."⁴²²

The Politburo discussion on 18 March, consequently, took a very different course. Kosygin briefed the Politburo in detail on his conversation with Taraki, observing that "Almost without realizing it, Comrade Taraki responded that almost nobody does support the government."⁴²³

In the ensuing discussion, KGB head Yuri Andropov was the first to rule out the previously suggested military intervention, arguing,

We must consider very, very seriously, the question of whose cause we will be supporting if we deploy forces into Afghanistan... Afghanistan is not ready at this time

⁴²⁰ Ibid, 236-38.

⁴²¹ Ibid, 237.

⁴²² Ibid, 238.

⁴²³ "Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," 18 March 1979, in "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan," 141.

to resolve all of the issues it faces through socialism. The economy is backward, the Islamic religion predominates, and nearly all of the rural population is illiterate. We know Lenin's teaching about a revolutionary situation...in Afghanistan, it is not that type of situation. Therefore, I believe we can suppress a revolution in Afghanistan only with the aid of our bayonets, and that is for us entirely inadmissible. We cannot take such a risk.⁴²⁴

Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko concurred, noting the international consequences of intervention:

All that we have done in recent years with such effort in terms of détente, arms reduction, and much more – all that would be thrown back. China, of course, would be given a nice present. All the nonaligned countries will be against us... There will no longer be any question of a meeting of Leonid Ilych with Carter... and what would we gain? Afghanistan with its present government, with a backward economy, with inconsequential weight in international affairs... from a legal point of view too we would not be justified in sending troops. According to the UN Charter a country can appeal for assistance... in case it is subject to external aggression. *Afghanistan has not been subject to any aggression. This is its internal affair, a revolutionary internal conflict, a battle of one group of the population against another.*⁴²⁵

Other Politburo members, including Kosygin, Kirilenko and Defence Minister Dimitri Ustinov, agreed, noting the Afghan government's partial responsibility in creating the situation through its repressive behaviour.⁴²⁶ The meeting concluded with the Politburo deciding to continue providing military and economic aid to the Afghan government, but definitively ruling out military intervention. This decision was endorsed by Brezhnev and reaffirmed in subsequent meetings on 19 and 20 March.⁴²⁷

Thus, in its discussions in March, the Politburo expressed some understanding of the limited legitimacy of the DRA government, and the negative consequences – within Afghanistan and

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, 141-42. My italics.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ "Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," 19 March 1979, *ibid*, 142-45.

internationally – that would flow from committing Soviet troops in such a situation.

Declassified Soviet and East European documents show that the leadership maintained its opposition to military intervention through August 1979. Not enough such documents have yet become available to provide a comprehensive picture of the circumstances that resulted in the reversal of this decision in the last months leading up to December 1979. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Soviet attitude began to shift from mid-September with Hafizullah Amin's assumption of power in Afghanistan. The Soviet leadership had considered Amin a power-hungry and dictatorial leader responsible for many of the mistakes and excesses of the post-revolution period. Such views were also common in the PDPA; former members have since displayed a tendency to blame Amin for the failure of the revolution.⁴²⁸ As uprisings continued across the country and rifts within the ruling PDPA deepened over the summer, the Soviet leadership fixated upon Amin's removal as a prerequisite to achieving party unity and stabilizing the country.⁴²⁹ On his return from a NAM summit in Havana in August, Taraki was encouraged to make amends with the Parcham faction and remove Amin from his responsibilities, sending him abroad as ambassador.⁴³⁰

Amin's victory in the ensuing power struggle was an unwelcome development for the Politburo, but Soviet documents dated soon after his takeover suggest a reluctant willingness to continue dealing with the DRA government as usual, as well as confidence that the

⁴²⁸ For example, Sulaiman Laiq argues that the Afghan people, including *mullas* and landlords, were not initially hostile to the PDPA, only joining the opposition when Amin "started killing people for no reason." Sulaiman Laiq, interview with author, 23 March 2013.

⁴²⁹ Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 167-68.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

government would not abandon its Communist and pro-Soviet leanings under Amin.⁴³¹ This attitude gradually changed, however, as Soviet leaders became increasingly suspicious of Amin's political leanings. A memo from Andropov to Brezhnev in early December presented the situation in stark terms: "After the coup and the murder of Taraki in September of this year, the situation in Afghanistan began to undertake an undesirable turn for us...the party, the army and the government apparatus...were essentially destroyed by the mass repressions carried out by Amin."⁴³²

Moreover, Andropov argued, there were activities that suggested the danger of Amin's "political shift to the West," including,

Contacts with an American agent about issues which are kept secret from us. Promises to tribal leaders to shift away from USSR and adopt a "policy of neutrality." Closed meetings in which attacks were made against Soviet policy and the activities of our specialists...All this has created...the danger of losing the gains of the April revolution...[and created a] threat to our positions in Afghanistan.⁴³³

However, Andropov continued, there was a potential remedy: a group of Afghan Communist exiles, including Babrak Karmal and Asadullah Sarwari, had made plans for the overthrow of Amin. To succeed, these would require Soviet military intervention, which "would allow us to decide the question of defending the gains of the April revolution, establishing Leninist principals in the party and state leadership of Afghanistan, and securing our positions in this country."⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ See the documents in "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan," 154-56.

⁴³² "Personal memorandum, Andropov to Brezhnev, n.d. [early December 1979]," *ibid*, 159.

⁴³³ *Ibid*.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*.

Soviet suspicions of Amin abruptly shifting to the US camp, fuelled in part by never substantiated rumours of his having been recruited by the CIA when studying at Columbia University, appear to have been greatly exaggerated. Certainly, there were signs that Amin was trying to burnish his nationalist credentials to gain support during his last days in power, and he tried to reach out to Pakistan, the United States and elements of the opposition in the hope that a rapprochement would weaken the insurgency.⁴³⁵ Yet he was far too materially and psychologically dependent on the Soviets to abandon them in the manner of a Sadat.⁴³⁶ Moreover, given the Soviet leadership's earlier admission that Afghanistan was ill-suited to socialism, that the party had alienated and cut itself off from the masses, and that an intervening force would only end up fighting against the people, it is remarkable that they hoped all these difficulties could be resolved by a single change in leadership.

Ultimately, it seems that having committed themselves so deeply in Afghanistan over the preceding period, they were on the one hand too reluctant to give up 'the gains of the April revolution,' and on the other, too fearful that the collapse of the DRA would not lead to a return to the *status quo ante* – a friendly, non-communist government – but to Afghanistan becoming a bastion of anti-Soviet influence. The secretive decision-making process, the game of one-upmanship between the heads of different ministries, each with ambitions to succeed

⁴³⁵ For more on the KGB's concerns with Amin, see Mitrokhin, "KGB in Afghanistan," 45-80.

⁴³⁶ During his last days, with the insurgency continuing strong, Amin displayed extreme reliance on his Soviet allies, which extended to having Soviet, rather than Afghan, cooks to ensure his food was not poisoned – ironically, since the Soviet plan initially involved drugging Amin's food – and requesting a Soviet battalion to guard his residence. Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 182-93, and "Extract from CPSU CC Politburo Decision, 6 December 1979," in "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan," 159. At most, a limited rebalancing of foreign policy may have been contemplated, rather than change in allegiance.

Brezhnev, undoubtedly impacted the nature of the decision and prevented wider consultations that could have resulted in a more forceful case against intervention.⁴³⁷

Clearly, there is in none of these deliberations a trace of the ‘warm waters’ theory, of any grand strategic design of continual Soviet expansion. The Soviet leadership had no plans of going anywhere beyond Afghanistan, and the decision to intervene in Afghanistan itself was taken with great reluctance. The fears that move aroused in many countries, including in Pakistan, thus appear to have been exaggerated. Yet even had the nature of Soviet deliberations been known at the time, it would have been hard to dismiss altogether the concerns of such countries that the Soviet Union, once settled in a pacified Afghanistan, may not have eventually come to harbour ambitions elsewhere. Empires seldom expand deliberately; more often, it is in response to perceived threats to national security, and expansion in response to those threats just as often brings new perceived threats into focus. The history of British and Russian policy during the ‘Great Game’ offered many such examples for those concerned about the consequences of the Soviet invasion.⁴³⁸ For all the arguments the Soviet leadership made that it was simply responding to PDPA leaders’ repeated requests for military assistance, and intervening only to support a friendly government against a foreign-backed insurgency, it was unable to command much support for

⁴³⁷ See Odd Arne Westad, “Concerning the Situation in ‘A’: New Russian Evidence on the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan,” CWIHP, e-dossier 4, 128-32.

⁴³⁸ Famous in this respect, and well-known to Pakistan’s British-educated military, would have been Prince Gorchakov’s justification for imperial expansion in December 1864: “The position of Russia in Central Asia...is that of all civilised states which are brought into contact with half-savage nomad populations possessing no fixed social organisation. In such cases it always happens that the more civilised state is forced, in the interests of the security of its frontiers and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whose turbulent and unsettled character makes them undesirable neighbours.” Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 304.

the claim that its involvement was anything short of occupation. As Raja Anwar poignantly observes:

If the Soviet leadership had moved against Amin to exploit the hatred the Afghan people felt for his autocratic rule, then it had failed to realize that after the night of 27 December, this hatred would be transferred to the Soviet Union and its protégé, Babrak Karmal. The events of that night gave birth to a naked triangle – Amin’s murder, Soviet military action and Karmal’s arrival – which no fig leaf of political argument was ever able to cover.⁴³⁹

Sulaiman Laiq, who had been imprisoned by Amin for dissent and was released after the invasion, reflected that when he saw Soviet tanks on the streets, “I told a Soviet correspondent at the time that this was a big mistake, it will be a tragedy for you and a tragedy for us...Until then we were nationalists, Afghans. After that, international fears of the Soviets came into play.”⁴⁴⁰ It is to assess Pakistan’s fears that we now turn.

Pakistan’s Threat Assessment

The Soviet intervention provoked wide-ranging discussions in Pakistani military and foreign policy decision-making circles as to the nature of Soviet intentions, the heightened threat to Pakistan, and the appropriate response to make under the circumstances. These debates spanned a considerable period of time, and continued in some fashion until as late as September 1981, when the Pakistan government revived its alliance with the US and committed itself to a clear course of opposition to the Soviet presence. Interviews with many of the diplomats and military officials involved, directly and indirectly, in the discussions, as well as memoirs and secondary literature, allow us to trace out the main viewpoints that developed in the course of these debates.

⁴³⁹ Anwar, *Tragedy of Afghanistan*, 192.

⁴⁴⁰ Sulaiman Laiq, interview with author, 23 March, 2013.

The suspicion that the USSR planned to continue its march to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea was a common one. Roedad Khan, then Interior Secretary to the federal government, recalls attending the first meeting at the GHQ after the invasion, where the consensus was that

Jalalabad is not the objective, the objective is they will cross the border. And Zia ul-Haq...used to tell us: I know their objective is the warm waters, I have no doubt about that. He used to say that...it's going to take them about two years to crush resistance in Afghanistan...Keep the pot boiling in Afghanistan for two years, because after that our turn will come...Give them a tough time, use all the *mujahidin*...and give them full support, equipment and arms and everything.⁴⁴¹

Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Shaikh gives a similar account of the discussions:

I think there were veering views. But...the prevalent view, and the prevalent view meaning that in the military establishment, was that your worst fears are coming true. That the move into Afghanistan is the first step to move towards the Arabian Sea...I believed this, speaking of myself personally. Others did argue that we are having to deal with a superpower who's our neighbour...and one should handle this carefully, particularly given that country's relationship with India...but the overwhelming view was that this is something we have to resist.⁴⁴²

Those who argued for accommodation with the USSR did not necessarily take a benign view of Soviet intentions in invading Afghanistan, but did question that it entertained immediate ambitions against Pakistan, and cautioned that strong opposition would in fact increase Soviet hostility and hence the chances of intervention against Pakistan. Lt.-Gen. Khalid Mahmud Arif, Zia's Chief of Staff, recalls:

⁴⁴¹ Roedad Khan, interview with author, 25 April 2010.

⁴⁴² Najmuddin Shaikh, interview with author, 19 October 2010. Similarly, Amir Usman, who served in the Kabul Embassy from 1977-79 prior to becoming DG Afghanistan in the 1980s and Ambassador to Afghanistan in 1992, notes that "Pakistan was very perturbed and they thought that well, the Soviet Union has come to our borders now, and again [you heard that] they always wanted to go to the warm waters and things like that, and maybe if they have an opportunity they may do this venture through Baluchistan to the Arabian Sea...so Pakistan was very, very unhappy about it." Amir Usman, interview with author, 25 January 2010.

The soft-liners argued that it was dangerous for Pakistan to risk her own security for the sake of another country, even a Muslim neighbour. Their reasons included the inherent weakness of Pakistan, the ambivalent attitude of India on the Soviet invasion, the possibility of India and Afghanistan acting in concert against Pakistan, the grave risk of incurring the active hostility of a neighbouring superpower; and the unreliability of a distant United States of America. These were sound arguments, difficult to ignore.⁴⁴³

Similarly, then DG Afghanistan Tanvir Ahmad Khan is quoted in a cable by the US ambassador as stating his opposition “to the advocacy of unnamed others (within the GOP [Government of Pakistan]) who argue that now may be the time to play a Soviet card, i.e., to ease Soviet pressure by accepting the Soviet offer to guarantee the Durand Line in return for Pak acceptance of the situation in Afghanistan as irreversible [*sic*].”⁴⁴⁴ The decision not to explore this offer to guarantee the Durand Line is indicative of the extent to which Pakistani concerns and attitudes had been transformed by the Soviet invasion.⁴⁴⁵ Had such an offer been forthcoming from Daoud or Zahir Shah’s governments, Pakistani officials would have rushed to accept it, seeing in it an end to the Pashtunistan issue and Afghan hostility.⁴⁴⁶ Now, however, old bilateral concerns had been dwarfed by fears that accommodation would lead to at best, becoming a Soviet satellite; at worst, falling prey to further Soviet expansion.

⁴⁴³ Arif, *Working with Zia*, 314.

⁴⁴⁴ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 8 June 1981, folder “Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [2 of 7].” box 91351, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, Ronald Reagan Library (RRL).

⁴⁴⁵ Declassified Soviet documents provide further suggestive evidence of a Soviet-Kabul willingness to recognize the Durand Line in exchange for concessions, presumably to support the *status quo* in Afghanistan. “CPSU CC Politburo Decision on Soviet Policy on Afghanistan, 10 March 1980, with report on Proposal by Fidel Castro to Mediate between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and approved letter from L.I. Brezhnev to Fidel Castro,” in “The Soviet Union and Afghanistan,” 168.

⁴⁴⁶ The change of attitude is particularly obvious in Tanvir, who stated that he had enthusiastically supported accepting Babrak Karmal’s arguably less specific offer on the Durand Line after the Saur Revolution. Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October 2011.

The argument that eventually held sway in the discussions was that even if the Soviets entertained no ambitions against Pakistan at present, that attitude would not necessarily persist were they once allowed to consolidate their position in Afghanistan. According to Foreign Secretary Riaz M. Khan,

At the end of the day one argument which prevailed...was that the Soviets have a pattern. Whenever they are able to consolidate themselves, their military presence in particular, in a country, first, they don't leave, the history shows that, and secondly...the next door neighbour invariably comes under pressure...and since we have a border situation with Afghanistan...this argument went further that there is already potential for creating difficulties for Pakistan. So it was agreed that it is important that the Soviets should withdraw or at least...their presence should not get consolidated...So, in a way, the argument settled over a period of time in favour of supporting the resistance.⁴⁴⁷

The military high command's geostrategic concerns about the historic vulnerability of the subcontinent to invaders from the northwest, inherited from their British predecessors, further supplemented this argument about Soviet patterns.⁴⁴⁸ Maj.-Gen. Hamid Gul, then serving in Multan as Chief of Staff to Lt.-Gen. Rahimuddin Khan, the commander of II Corps and Zia's relative by marriage, recalls preparing an appreciation that the latter presented to Zia, arguing that "Afghanistan is not just a neighbour, it is like a right arm to us. The history bears witness that any invading power, if it is successful in Afghanistan, then it rolls out and ravages the whole of the subcontinent."⁴⁴⁹ Soviet support for India in the 1971 war, and its alleged

⁴⁴⁷ Riaz M. Khan, interview with author, 8 April 2010. Riaz M. Khan took part in all the negotiations relating to the Soviet withdrawal from 1980-88, including the Geneva negotiations from 1982-88. He also served as DG Afghanistan from 1986-88.

⁴⁴⁸ See, for example, Muhammad Yahya Effendi, "The North-Western Routes and the Invasions of the Indian Sub-Continent: A Historical Study in Modern Perspective," in Muhammad Yahya Effendi, *Into the Vortex of Asia: Collected Papers of Col. (Retd.) Muhammad Yahya Effendi* (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 2006), 14-31, and especially 29-31.

⁴⁴⁹ Hamid Gul, interview with author, 23 September 2010. Gul became DG ISI in 1987 and was later promoted to the rank of Lt.-Gen.

backing for Baluch insurgents, ensured that the presence of its forces in Afghanistan revived the old concerns of a two-front war that had so troubled Pakistani strategists before Zahir Shah's widely appreciated stance of neutrality in 1965 and 1971.⁴⁵⁰

There were also more opportunistic considerations in opposing the Soviet presence. Several of those apprised of the discussions, as well as critics both inside and outside the government, have noted the Pakistan military's longstanding institutional interest in reviving the alliance with the United States and obtaining much desired military equipment and training by taking on the mantle of a frontline state in the Cold War.⁴⁵¹ Similarly, one may note President Zia ul-Haq's personal interest in emerging from the diplomatic isolation created by his military coup and execution of Z.A. Bhutto to become champion of a popular Muslim cause and "darling of the West."⁴⁵² Zia's embrace of the Afghan *mujahidin* may be seen, with respect to both his moral perspective and his attempts to establish an 'Islamic' constituency, as a complement to his 'Islamization' reforms within Pakistan, an issue which will be discussed further in chapter five.⁴⁵³ Yet it may be too simplistic to conclude, as some of its critics have, that the government's attitude to the Soviet invasion was one of 'what are we going to get out of it?' The overall tenor of the discussions suggests an overwhelming perception that a serious security threat had been created.⁴⁵⁴ Moreover, the deliberation that the Soviet presence needed

⁴⁵⁰ For a negative reading of Soviet policy towards Baluchistan, which draws on the warm waters theory, see Buffardi, "Soviet Strategy in South Asia."

⁴⁵¹ Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, Foreign Secretary Humayun Khan, Ambassador Ashraf Jahangir Qazi and Riaz M. Khan were among those within the government who discussed this aspect in interviews with the author.

⁴⁵² Roedad Khan, interview with author, 25 April 2010.

⁴⁵³ Najmuddin Shaikh, interview with author, 19 October 2010.

⁴⁵⁴ It is generally overlooked that the government took almost two years to agree to accept military and economic from the US, unexpectedly rejecting initial offers by both the Carter and Reagan administrations out of a

to be opposed, if not the degree of that opposition, preceded any major US commitment to Pakistan and the *mujahidin*.⁴⁵⁵

Deciding to oppose the Soviet presence was one matter, but the manner and extent to which such opposition should be carried out continued to preoccupy the government. Some of Zia's ISI and military advisers, such as DG ISI Akhtar Abdur Rehman, had from the outset suggested covert military support to the Afghan resistance with a view to preventing or delaying the consolidation of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.⁴⁵⁶ Zia's own inclinations appear to have been similar, yet he was inclined to move cautiously, weighing up the strategic risks of different options before settling on a course.⁴⁵⁷ Accordingly, without cutting off ties with the Afghan resistance groups, and though entertaining little hope that the Soviets would agree to withdraw from Afghanistan, he was persuaded by Foreign Minister Agha Shahi's argument that "we should not get sucked into the Cold War and [should] try to bring the pressure of Non-Aligned countries and the Muslim world upon the Soviet Union to... withdraw from Afghanistan."⁴⁵⁸ The notion of exploring the possibility of Soviet withdrawal without letting the conflict take on the appearance of another East-West

concern that such aid would only worsen its security dilemma. Its cautious approach in this respect is explored later in this chapter, and in more depth in chapter six.

⁴⁵⁵ Humayun Khan, interview with author, 11 April 2010. Humayun Khan was involved in the Geneva negotiations as well as Foreign Ministry decision-making relating to Afghanistan prior to becoming High Commissioner to India in 1984. He served as Foreign Secretary from 1988-89, during the period of Soviet withdrawal.

⁴⁵⁶ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 25-26.

⁴⁵⁷ Telegram, Ronald Spiers to George Schultz, 3 April 1983, folder "Pakistan 1/1/82 – 8/31/84 Vol. II (1)," box 45, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

⁴⁵⁸ Abdul Sattar, interview with author, 28 September 2011. Although serving as High Commissioner to India at the time of the Soviet invasion, Abdul Sattar contributed to the policy discussions and was kept closely apprised by his mentor, Foreign Minister Agha Shahi. Sattar later served as Foreign Secretary from 1986-88.

confrontation in the Cold War underpinned Pakistan's diplomatic efforts in the first two years after the Soviet invasion, to which we now turn.

The Diplomatic Track, 1980-82

The government's adoption of an initially cautious approach was characterized in a delay of two days in issuing a response to the Soviet military intervention. Following intensive deliberations, the ensuing statement on 29 December, 1979, merely deplored the introduction of "foreign troops" in Afghanistan and called for their withdrawal, without issuing any harsh condemnation or naming the Soviet Union.⁴⁵⁹ The Pakistan delegation at the United Nations advocated for the world body to take a similarly restrained approach. The draft Security Council resolution, and subsequent to its Soviet veto, the resolution adopted at the Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held from 11-14 January, 1980, used similar language to that of the Pakistani statement.⁴⁶⁰ Pakistan also insisted that the sponsorship of these resolutions rest with nonaligned, Third World countries. The approach was aimed at attracting the broadest possible support for troop withdrawal, by focusing on the specific case of Soviet intervention against a weak, nonaligned country and rejecting Soviet attempts to impose an East-West construction on the issue – an aim which would have been aided by Western bloc sponsorship and harsh denunciations.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot: Negotiating Soviet Withdrawal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 14-15.

⁴⁶¹ The CC CPSU Politburo's aims at this time included weaving in, in the context of discussions for an Afghan settlement, broader questions about peace and security in the Middle East and South Asia, and the nature of the American presence there, "all this against the USA efforts to limit the discussion to Afghanistan itself. Raising those questions would allow us to put pressure on the Americans and to influence the negotiating process for our benefit. Besides, it would permit us to increase the number of countries that view our position on Afghanistan

Less than two weeks later, Pakistan hosted an extraordinary session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in response to the invasion. Under Saudi influence, the OIC resolution took a more hard-line stance than the UNGA, condemning the Soviet invasion and, significantly, suspending Afghanistan's membership and calling on all member states to sever diplomatic relations with and withhold recognition of the DRA government.⁴⁶² An important consequence of the OIC stand was that it became an important international forum where Afghan *mujahidin* representatives could speak; it would also influence Pakistan's decision to avoid direct talks with the DRA. Although Pakistan cosponsored the OIC resolution, there were differences within the government as to the desirability of the approach.⁴⁶³ Pakistan soon reverted to a more restrained stance, with an eye at keeping diplomatic channels open for possible negotiations with the Soviet Union.

The first efforts to seek a negotiated settlement were, however, initiated by West European nations concerned about the detrimental effects of the Soviet invasion on détente. In February 1980, the European Community (EC) put forward proposals for Soviet withdrawal in exchange for guarantees of a neutral Afghanistan; the nature of the guarantees and mechanisms for implementation could be worked out at an international conference involving major powers and regional actors.⁴⁶⁴ The EC proposals sought to address perceived Soviet pre-invasion fears of Afghanistan becoming a base of American or otherwise hostile influence,

favorably, or at least with understanding." "CPSU CC Politburo Decision on Afghanistan, 10 April 1980, with report by Gromyko-Andropov-Ustinov-Zagladin, 7 April 1980," in "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan," 172.

⁴⁶² Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 16-17.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 25-26.

proposing neutrality as a compromise. Yet with Soviet troops now committed in Afghanistan, the leadership was unwilling to accept such limitations on its political aims. A Politburo report in April notes with some satisfaction,

Gradually the understanding emerges [among West European countries] that there could not be any resolution of the Afghan question without accepting the fact that *Afghanistan, being the Soviet Union's immediate neighbor, is a part of the zone of Soviet special interests*. Our decisively negative reaction to the absolutely hopeless plan of "neutralization" of Afghanistan proposed by the British, and aimed at the change of the Afghan political regime by removing its current leadership, definitely encouraged this evolution in the positions of the Western European countries.⁴⁶⁵

Pakistan was not far behind in the push for negotiations and pursued several initiatives in this regard. A preferred forum for such engagement was the OIC, where Pakistan's influence was considerable; Pakistan also hoped that, as the OIC was not directly affiliated with a particular bloc or region, it may have greater success in engaging the Soviet Union. At the next meeting of the organization in May, the OIC's emphasis shifted from condemning the invasion to seeking engagement. A standing committee comprising the OIC Secretary General Habib Chatti, Pakistani Foreign Minister Agha Shahi and Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh was formed to seek ways to facilitate a solution of the crisis. In accordance with the committee's mandate, Chatti met with Soviet and DRA representatives, but ultimately the initiative did not receive much Soviet encouragement. The committee's willingness to meet Afghan *mujahidin* representatives as one of the parties to the conflict, which flowed from the OIC stand on non-recognition of the DRA government, was a nonstarter for both Moscow and Kabul.

⁴⁶⁵ "CPSU CC Politburo Decision on Afghanistan, 10 April 1980, with report by Gromyko-Andropov-Ustinov-Zagladin, 7 April 1980," 171. My italics.

The position of Kabul, and by extension that of Moscow, had become clearer by this time, with the issuance of the DRA's own proposals on 14 May.⁴⁶⁶ These sought direct bilateral negotiations between the DRA and Pakistan, and the DRA and Iran, which would have provided a much needed boost to the DRA's international legitimacy. The aim of such negotiations was for a political settlement with the two countries, and the DRA made clear its demand from the "start of the process [for]...practical measures [for]...the termination of armed and any other interference against Afghanistan."⁴⁶⁷ It also noted with concern "the buildup of the military presence of the US in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf," and proposed taking that into account in the process of seeking a settlement.⁴⁶⁸ The carrot offered was DRA willingness to issue a general amnesty for returning Afghan refugees and to consider "other questions of bilateral relations including those which for a long time have remained the subject of differences," an oblique reference to the Durand Line in the case of Pakistan and the Helmand waters dispute with Iran.⁴⁶⁹ The conclusion of bilateral accords with international guarantees, would allow the question of "withdrawal of the Soviet limited military contingent" to be resolved, because only after a settlement had been reached with "cessation and guaranteed non-recurrence of...interferences in internal affairs of

⁴⁶⁶ The proposals were, in fact, developed by Moscow and adopted practically verbatim by the DRA government. See "CPSU CC Politburo Decision, 8 May 1980, with Politburo Commission Report, 6 May 1980, and Approved Cable to Soviet Ambassador in Kabul," in "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan," 173-74.

⁴⁶⁷ "Statement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, 14 May 1980," in Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 333-35.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

Afghanistan,” would the reasons which led the DRA “to request” Soviet military intervention have been eliminated.⁴⁷⁰

Pakistan had little incentive to agree to direct negotiations, thus deviating from the OIC consensus and conferring a degree of international legitimacy to the Karmal government, on such terms. Not only did the Kabul proposals place the blame for the Afghan crisis on Pakistani interference, rather than the Soviet intervention, the allusions to Soviet withdrawal offered few specifics to assuage Pakistani doubts about long-term Soviet intentions. The vague references to the Durand Line hardly signalled any new commitment; Afghan governments had invariably indicated their willingness to discuss their dispute with Pakistan. As mentioned earlier, Soviet officials did in private indicate Soviet-Kabul willingness to recognize the Durand Line, but for Pakistan the issue had greatly receded in importance compared to the concerns raised by the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

Nonetheless, the proposals did help clue Pakistan in to Soviet-Kabul thinking at this time. In June, Agha Shahi conducted an extensive tour of West and East European capitals, holding consultations on the Afghan issue, at the end of which he evolved a seven-point framework for a comprehensive settlement, including withdrawal of Soviet troops, establishment “of a government of national reconciliation under a figure acceptable to the Afghans, including the PDPA factions,” recognition by Pakistan of any government in Kabul on the withdrawal of

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

troops, and reciprocal guarantees between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.⁴⁷¹ Later, at the 35th session of the UNGA from September-November 1980, Pakistan rallied the support of a large majority of 111 nations for a resolution that incorporated similar elements for a political settlement of the Afghan crisis. This resolution was reaffirmed, with slightly increasing majorities, over the next seven years. It included the following provisions:

1. “preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan”
2. “the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint”
3. “immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan”
4. “creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour.”⁴⁷²

The resolution asked the Secretary General to continue with efforts, “including the appointment of a special representative,” for promoting a political solution and “securing appropriate guarantees for non-use of force, or threat of use of force, against the political independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of all neighbouring States, on the basis of mutual guarantees and strict non-interference in each other’s internal affairs...”⁴⁷³

⁴⁷¹ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 34. See also Agha Shahi, *Pakistan’s Security and Foreign Policy* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1988).

⁴⁷² For the full text of the resolution, see “UN General Assembly Resolution 35/37 on the Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security, 20 November 1980,” in Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 336-37.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

Thus, both Agha Shahi's seven-point framework and the UNGA resolution sought, with varying emphases, to address Soviet-Kabul concerns regarding recognition of the Kabul government, non-interference and some form of international guarantees. They also reflected Pakistan's developing understanding that regardless of Soviet ambitions, the repressive and ill-considered rule of the PDPA government, and its inability to command broad legitimacy in Afghanistan, had been primarily responsible for the spiralling crisis that had forced (or in a negative reading, given the opportunity to) the Soviets to intervene. The Soviet invasion and installation of Karmal as Afghan president had in turn dealt a serious blow to whatever residual legitimacy the PDPA still possessed. Consequently, Soviet withdrawal without a legitimate process of Afghan self-determination would not be sufficient to remove the conditions that had led to the invasion in the first place. A more acceptable government with a broader national base needed to be in place in Kabul so as to stabilize the country.

Pakistan raised the issue of a broad-based government through various initiatives in 1980 and 1981, but the issue made no headway with the Soviets. Fully committed in Afghanistan, and confident of military success against the rebels at this stage, Moscow was unwilling to consider the possibility of, as it stated publicly, reversing the 'gains of the Saur Revolution.'

In private, the Politburo's position was just as emphatic, as a report from April 1980 notes:

During our meetings with representatives of Western European and other countries it is important, as always, to point out that the questions concerning the current regime in Afghanistan, the composition of the government and the like, could under no conditions be a subject of negotiations; and that any questions whatsoever concerning

Afghanistan could not be discussed or resolved without the DRA government, without its current leadership.⁴⁷⁴

On the issue of withdrawal, the Politburo was not opposed in principle, but clearly had no short-term plans for doing so: “*Only* when the situation in Afghanistan stabilizes, *and* the situation around the country improves, *and* only upon a request of the DRA leadership, *may we consider* the question of the eventual withdrawal of our troops from the DRA.”⁴⁷⁵

Improvement of the situation ‘around the country’ involved not only guaranteed cessation of interference from other countries in Afghanistan, but “such questions as the reduction of the USA military presence in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and the liquidation of military bases there.”⁴⁷⁶ Clearly, notwithstanding its initial reluctance to intervene in Afghanistan, the Soviet leadership viewed the intervention as an opportunity to advance its broader Cold War strategic interests in the region.

Nonetheless, by the end of 1980, the Soviets were interested in initiating some form of dialogue. The absence of negotiations did not serve the Karmal government’s need for international legitimacy and though the Soviets were still confident of defeating the Afghan rebels, continuing resistance may have encouraged the exploration of diplomatic options. In December 1980, the Soviets sent Pakistan indirect signals of an interest in some form of

⁴⁷⁴ “CPSU CC Politburo Decision on Afghanistan, 10 April 1980, with report by Gromyko-Andropov-Ustinov-Zagladin, 7 April 1980,” 171.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. My italics.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, 172.

negotiations involving a UN role.⁴⁷⁷ The Soviet interests were cessation of interference from Pakistan and Iran, international guarantees covering non-interference, including the US role in the region, and recognition of the DRA government. The negotiating format the Soviet desired involved direct dialogue between the DRA, Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan's interests were Soviet withdrawal, the formation of a broad-based government in Kabul, and the return of Afghan refugees. Pakistan was opposed to any negotiating format that would imply recognition of the DRA government, in view of the OIC stand. The Pakistan government also had apprehensions about taking on the sole burden of representing the Afghan resistance in international negotiations, particularly in view of the Iranian stand that any negotiations should involve the Afghan *mujahidin*, and was keen on involving Iran.

On 11 February, 1981, in response to a request from Agha Shahi, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim designated Javier Perez de Cuellar, a Peruvian diplomat, as his personal representative to promote peace talks between the parties to the Afghan conflict; after de Cuellar succeeded to the position of Secretary General at the end of the year, his role was taken over by the Ecuadorean UN official, Diego Cordovez. De Cuellar and Cordovez in turn undertook shuttles to the region to evolve, in discussion with the parties, an acceptable format and agenda for negotiations. After its acceptance, Cordovez oversaw what became known as the Geneva negotiations from its first round in June 1982 to its conclusion.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ According to Abdullah, Commissioner of Afghan Refugees in Peshawar, he was approached in this regard by a Pakistani UN official who had received messages from a colleague who happened to be the nephew of Soviet Defence Minister Dimitri Ustinov. Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

⁴⁷⁸ For the details of the process from the appointment of de Cuellar to the finalization of the Geneva agenda by Cordovez, see Diego Cordovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal* (New York: OUP, 1995), 76-88, and Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 42-51.

The negotiating format was an unusual one: indirect negotiations between Pakistan and the DRA. In deference to the Pakistani stand on non-recognition, the two delegations would convene in Geneva but not meet face to face, their positions and concessions being conveyed to each other by Cordovez. The Soviet-Kabul position on direct talks had eventually softened as, notwithstanding Pakistan's own position, the UN format had the advantage of treating the Kabul government as the sole Afghan representative, since it occupied Afghanistan's seat at the UN; Cordovez also held out the possibility that Pakistan might eventually accept a change in format to direct talks.

Iran had refused to become involved. Partly, its refusal owed to its stand that the Afghan *mujahidin* take part in negotiations, which, as with the earlier OIC initiative, Moscow and Kabul were unwilling to countenance. Moreover, its initially prominent role in championing the *mujahidin* on the diplomatic stage had diminished owing to continuing post-revolutionary upheavals.⁴⁷⁹ Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980 led to a long and devastating war which sapped most of Iran's resources and ensured that its subsequent involvement in the Afghan conflict remained low-key.⁴⁸⁰ However, Cordovez left open the possibility of Iran

⁴⁷⁹ Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh, who participated in the OIC initiative, had been dismissed and would be executed for treason in September 1982.

⁴⁸⁰ With the Soviet Union already providing military assistance to Iraq, and with Iran-US relations at a low, Iranian officials were aware of the need to maintain a working relationship with the USSR. See, for example, Zalmay Khalilzad, "Iranian Policy Toward Afghanistan Since the Revolution," in David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 235-37.

becoming involved in Geneva at a later stage. For its part, the Pakistani delegation took care to keep Iran informed at each stage of the progress of negotiations.⁴⁸¹

The four point agenda for negotiation was withdrawal, non-interference, return of refugees and international guarantees. Neither de Cuellar nor Cordovez had been willing to include the issue of self-determination or a broad-based government as, they argued, Moscow and Kabul could not be drawn into negotiations with that issue on the agenda. Pakistan reluctantly agreed to the omission of the issue. The experience of its diplomatic initiatives in the last two years had given the government no reason to believe that the Soviets could be swayed on the matter, and it was anxious that some sort of a dialogue begin to make progress on a settlement, deflect Soviet pressure and complement the other policies, of support for the *mujahidin* and a security alliance with the US, that it had by now embarked upon.⁴⁸² Those in favour of starting the dialogue also argued that Soviet withdrawal would itself create the conditions for self-determination, and hoped at some stage to involve the *mujahidin* leaders indirectly in the negotiations through the rubric of refugee consultation.⁴⁸³ The assessment that dialogue could not be initiated with such an agenda at that time was undoubtedly correct; nonetheless, the non-involvement of Afghan resistance representatives and the omission of the issue of self-determination from the Geneva negotiations would, as we shall discuss in chapter four, have profound implications for the political development of the *mujahidin* and the nature of the final settlement.

⁴⁸¹ Shahryar Khan, interview with author, 12 January 2010. Shahryar Khan was part of the delegation to Geneva from 1986-87, prior to becoming Foreign Secretary from 1990-94.

⁴⁸² Shahryar Khan, interview with author, 31 March 2010.

⁴⁸³ Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 87-88.

For its part, the Pakistan government had come to realize that there would be no quick fix to its Afghan crisis through negotiations. In a conversation with the US ambassador, Zia ul-Haq expressed a sceptical perspective, reportedly observing that “the Cordovez talks were a ‘façade’ that was necessary to keep political opinion focused on Afghanistan and clear that Pakistan was willing to seek a political solution. Nevertheless, he [Zia] did not exclude ‘that we might pull off a miracle,’ and achieve a settlement that would result in Soviet withdrawal.”⁴⁸⁴ The immovability of the Soviets on the issues of withdrawal and changing the PDPA government during the course of Pakistan’s various diplomatic initiatives undercut Agha Shahi’s emphasis on negotiations and encouraged the government to develop its policies of covert military support for the Afghan *mujahidin* and of seeking a major military and economic aid commitment from the US.

The Afghan Resistance in Exile

After the failed insurgency of 1975, the Afghan Islamists had split into different camps amid mutual recriminations. The two groups were the Hizb-i Islami (Islamic Party), led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, an engineering student, and Jami’at-i Islami (Islamic Society), led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a professor from the Faculty of Shari’at. With support from Pakistan drying up from 1976 as relations with Daoud improved, the Islamists got by with the help of donations from Saudi Arabia, distributed through the Jama’at-i Islami.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Telegram, Ronald Spiers to George Schultz, 3 April 1983.

⁴⁸⁵ Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

Jama'at-i Islami leaders had pre-existing ties with the Afghan Islamists. The Jama'at's founder and first *amir* (leader), Abul A'la Maududi, had instructed the Jama'at's NWFP provincial chapter to maintain ties with Afghans as well. Qazi Hussain Ahmad, then serving as the Jama'at's Peshawar *amir*, mentions several reasons for this decision, including the history of cross-border ties between the frontier and Afghanistan, Maududi's own Afghan family origins, and the desire to provide a counterbalance to cross-border Pashtun nationalism by developing cross-border Islamic ties.⁴⁸⁶ In 1966, some members of the Afghan Islamist movement approached Jama'at provincial leaders requesting help in printing copies of Farsi translations of some of the books written by Maududi as well as by Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brothers.⁴⁸⁷ At the time, the only printing press in Afghanistan was owned by the government, which often censored publications. The Jama'at printed copies in Pakistan and sent them across the border; in addition, Qazi Hussain independently undertook to translate other Islamic literature into Pashto for the use of the Afghans.⁴⁸⁸ Thereafter, contacts between the groups continued; Maududi met with Afghan Islamists in Lahore and Qazi Hussain and others visited Afghanistan.⁴⁸⁹ When the Islamists were forced to flee after Daoud's crackdown, the Jama'at-i Islami decided to help shelter them in Pakistan.⁴⁹⁰ It is unclear, but likely, that the Jama'at was involved in the contacts between the Afghans and Naseerullah Babar that led to the 1975 uprising. However, as relations between Daoud and the Pakistan government grew

⁴⁸⁶ Khurram Badr, *Inqilabi Qiyadat: Qazi Husain Ahmad* (Karachi: Saba Publications, 1988), 10-11, 63.

⁴⁸⁷ The books had been translated to *farsi* in Qum, Iran. A few copies were brought by Islamists to Afghanistan for wider distribution. Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, 63.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, 10-11, and "Who is who in the Mujahideen: Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani," *Afghan News*, vol. 8, no. 13, 1 July 1992, 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Badr, *Inqilabi Qiyadat*, 63, and Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

close thereafter, the Jama'at was not in a position to provide much more than shelter and Saudi donations, and may in any case have preferred a peaceful resolution of the problem.⁴⁹¹

This situation gradually changed after the Saur Revolution. As conflict spread across the country some of the first refugees to cross the border belonged to groups that the government specifically targeted for repression, such as the old elite and religious leaders. In July 1978, Hazrat Sibghatullah Mujaddidi, a member of the leading Mujaddidi family of the Naqshbandiyya *silsila* arrived in Pakistan from Denmark hoping to create a national front for resistance.⁴⁹² In November, Pir Sayyid Ahmad Gailani, a leader of the Qadiriyya *silsila* and relative by marriage of Zahir Shah, arrived from Kabul with his family.⁴⁹³ As a broader cross-section of Afghans went into exile after the PDPA takeover, they gained sympathy from a broader coalition of Pakistanis. Cross-border networks linked many Afghan '*ulama* with their Pakistani counterparts, such as the Jami'at-i 'Ulama-i Islam (JUI, "Society of 'Ulama of Islam"), an organization, and later political party, formed by Pakistani Deobandi '*ulama*.⁴⁹⁴ Many Pakistani '*ulama* endorsed the *fatwas* issued by Afghan leaders declaring the resistance in Afghanistan to be a legitimate *jihad* against the PDPA government.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹ Such was evidently the Saudi position. Rabbani apparently travelled to Saudi Arabia to meet with King Faisal, but the latter "refused to promote his cause because he considered Daud to be a nationalist, rather than a communist." "Who is who in the Mujahideen: Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani," 2.

⁴⁹² S. Fida Yunas, *Thanay say Sifarat tak* (n.p., 2009), 194-200. Most of the Mujaddidi family in Kabul was executed by the PDPA in January 1979. Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 275.

⁴⁹³ Yunas, *Thanay say Sifarat Tak*, 200.

⁴⁹⁴ Haroon, *Frontier of Faith*, 43-64.

⁴⁹⁵ For Gailani's *fatwa* of *jihad* see S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political Histor*, vol. 4, 287-92.

On arrival in Peshawar, many of the later refugees looked for leadership to the Afghan Islamists who had been the first to go into exile in Pakistan and warn about the communist danger. Finding, to their dismay, that the latter were divided into rival groups, they made attempts to get them to unite. On the urging of a number of Pakistani and Afghan *'ulama*, as well as Maududi, Hikmatyar and Rabbani joined in a new alliance, the Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement), under the leadership of Maulvi Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, a traditionalist Afghan *'alim* and former parliamentary deputy.⁴⁹⁶ The alliance proved short-lived and broke apart amid criticisms of Nabi's leadership style and mutual recriminations between Rabbani and Hikmatyar's supporters.⁴⁹⁷ Nabi retained control of Harakat-i Inqilab, which became an additional party in the resistance, largely drawing support from networks of Afghan *'ulama*. Around this time, there was another split in Hizb-i Islami as Maulvi Yunas Khalis, an *'alim* from Nangarhar who had been close to the Islamist movement, formed his own party, retaining the name of Hizb-i Islami.⁴⁹⁸

Another abortive attempt to create unity among the resistance groups was initiated by Pakistani officials towards the end of 1978. In response to repeated inquiries by Mujaddidi and others about Pakistani support, Foreign Ministry Secretary General Sardar Shah Nawaz authorized frontier officer Fida Yunas to initiate talks among the groups, stating that unity was a necessary precondition to any help.⁴⁹⁹ On 9 December, 1978, Yunas called Hikmatyar,

⁴⁹⁶ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 244-46.

⁴⁹⁷ For Jami'at's version, see Muhammad Musa Tawana, "Glimpses into the historical background of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan: Memoirs of Dr Tawana, Part (7)," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 13, 1 July 1989, 5-6.

⁴⁹⁸ Khalis' son had been a member of the Muslim Youth. For Khalis' reasons for the split, see Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 247-52.

⁴⁹⁹ Yunas, *Thanay say Sifarat tak*, 200-203.

Rabbani, Mujaddidi, Gailani and members of Afghan Millat to his house, but the talks did not lead anywhere, and the Foreign Ministry did not follow up on the idea.⁵⁰⁰ Mujaddidi and Gailani retained their own parties, the Jabha-i Nijat-i Milli (National Liberation Front) and the Mahaz-i Milli-yi Islami-yi Afghanistan (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan), respectively, as did the others.

After the Soviet invasion, another faculty member of the Islamist movement, Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf, who had been imprisoned in Pul-i Charkhi prison in Kabul, was released as part of an amnesty and also made his way to Peshawar. His arrival coincided with another attempt by the *mujahidin* factions to form a unitary organization and, as he carried no baggage from the previous failures, Sayyaf was chosen to head the organization, Ittihad-i Islami Bara-i Azadi-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan).⁵⁰¹ Once again, the organization proved short-lived, as Sayyaf was accused of using joint funds to increase his own support base.⁵⁰² The union broke up and Sayyaf remained as leader of Ittihad-i Islami, which became yet another group in the resistance. Many other Afghan exiles also formed organizations during this period, which often existed on paper only or were one-man or family affairs. In October 1981, the CIA estimated some 27 groups, committees and organizations of various kinds in Peshawar.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ According to Yunas this was the Foreign Ministry's "first and last" foray into Afghan politics of unity. Ibid. My translation. Thereafter, internal Afghan politics would be left to other Pakistani agencies, such as the refugee commissionerate, the president's office and the ISI.

⁵⁰¹ Muhammad Musa Tawana, "Glimpses into the historical background of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan: Memoirs of Dr Tawana, Part (10)," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 21, 1 November 1989, 7.

⁵⁰² Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 266-67.

⁵⁰³ Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, "Afghanistan: The Politics of the Resistance Movement," October 1981, CREST, NARA.

While a variety of *tanzimat* continued to emerge, the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan grew to 400,000 by December 1979.⁵⁰⁴ With the Soviet invasion, this number swelled by another million each in the following two years, bringing the total number of registered refugees to 2.4 million by the end of 1981.⁵⁰⁵ After that, the refugee flow slowed, with registered refugees eventually peaking at 3,272,000 by the beginning of 1990.⁵⁰⁶ These numbers only include those living in refugee camps administered by the Pakistan government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the Pakistani government estimated another 500,000 or more unregistered refugees settled in Pakistani cities.

Such huge numbers quickly overwhelmed local authorities. Besides aid from *'ulama* and groups like Jama'at-i Islami and JUI, the first help most refugees received was, as a UNHCR report notes: "the hospitality extended by local tribesmen who shared the same language and traditions."⁵⁰⁷ Pashtuns in the tribal areas and settled districts, who often shared ties of *qaum* with the refugees,⁵⁰⁸ drew on traditional values such as *melmastia* (hospitality) and *nanawatai* (refuge) as inspiration to be patient and supportive hosts.⁵⁰⁹ Local community groups formed

⁵⁰⁴ Report, *Searching for Solutions: 25 Years of UNHCR – Pakistan Cooperation on Afghan Refugees* (Islamabad: UNHCR, 2005), 6.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁰⁸ For a short summary of cross-border correspondence between *qaums*, see Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy*, 118.

⁵⁰⁹ Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 278-80.

to aid the refugees, many of which later went on to become established NGOs.⁵¹⁰ The long presence of so many refugees placed an enormous strain on infrastructure and resources in NWFP and, to a lesser extent, Baluchistan.⁵¹¹ Although tensions inevitably arose between local communities and refugees, most observers agree that, under the circumstances, they were remarkably limited.⁵¹² Widespread conviction in the legitimacy of resistance was a critical factor in maintaining this attitude. However, support was not entirely one-sided: many border tribesmen, for example, carried out a lucrative smuggling trade with the Afghan authorities.⁵¹³

Support among the refugees for armed struggle against the Soviet-backed government was widespread and enthusiastic, especially in the early years.⁵¹⁴ The Soviet intervention and escalating conflict had robbed the DRA government of much of its residual legitimacy. Many refugees brought stories of atrocities committed by the DRA or Soviet troops, or had taken part in localized uprisings before fleeing to Pakistan.⁵¹⁵ The rapidly proliferating resistance organizations found fertile ground for recruits. Rustom Shah Mohmand, who served as Commissioner of Afghan Refugees in Peshawar from 1983-87, observes that “Each family, of

⁵¹⁰ John Andrew, interview with author, 6 May 2010. John Andrew is a UNHCR officer who has worked with Afghan refugees in different postings in Pakistan (including as Senior Program Officer) and Afghanistan.

⁵¹¹ Rahimullah Yousufzai, interview with author, 14 April 2010, and Najmuddin Shaikh, interview with author,

⁵¹² This assessment is based on interviews with Interior Secretary Roedad Khan, officials of UNHCR and Pakistan refugee commissioners, as well as on documents from the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees in Peshawar.

⁵¹³ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 132-34.

⁵¹⁴ There is virtually unanimous agreement among observers on this point. See, for example, Gerard Chaliand, “The Bargain War in Afghanistan,” in Chaliand, 328-30, 336-37.

⁵¹⁵ For a later example, see “An Interview with Brigadier Mohammad Rahim, Director of the Communication Department of the 7th Division,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 4, 15 December 1983, 5-8. Many such accounts are to be found in bulletins of the Afghan Information and Documentation Centre (AIC) and in periodicals produced by the *mujahidin* organizations.

each clan, of each tribe, would be required to produce two...adult male members to fight for three months and then they would come back and others would go. And this the refugees did themselves...the Afghan *mujahidin* worked out the system themselves so that everybody would take his turn.⁵¹⁶ Unlike in some other cases of refugee-warrior communities, recruitment of members was not forced by *mujahidin* organizations, but there was a common expectation among refugee communities, still maintaining many of their traditional bonds, that each family would do its part in the common struggle.⁵¹⁷

The NAP, which had over time developed a heterogeneous leftist orientation, maintained ties with the Afghan communists after they came to power and some of its leaders publicly criticized the Pakistan government for destabilizing the DRA.⁵¹⁸ This stance became increasingly untenable after the Soviet invasion, with popular sentiment in NWFP strongly hostile to the Soviet-backed government. Although NAP leaders at times continued to portray the issue as a Cold War conflict in which the Pakistan government was one of the belligerents, doing America's bidding, rather than a victim, these criticisms became more muted.⁵¹⁹

Similarly, much as the border dispute had receded in importance for Pakistani officials after

⁵¹⁶ Rustam Shah Mohmand, interview with author, 16 April 2010.

⁵¹⁷ Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 68-69.

⁵¹⁸ This stance was similar to other Pakistani leftists, a number of whom were enthused by the emergence of a 'progressive' government in the region. See Mujahid Bareilvi, *Afghanistan: Kal aur Aj* (Quetta: Sale End Services, 1999).

⁵¹⁹ For example, Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 189. This portrayal of the conflict was repeatedly criticized by *mujahidin* groups, who argued that the issue was about nothing other than superpower aggression against a defenceless country. For example, an article entitled "Russian Aggression" in the *mujahidin* periodical *Ittihad-i Mujahidin* criticized "certain individuals who in the past lay claim to the brother-hood of Afghans and the Afghans also gave due respect to them but, today, these individuals portray the Islamic Jihad and the war of Freedom of Afghanistan as a war between USA and the USSR and the Afghans as agents of the USA." "The Mujahideen Press at a Glance," *Afghan Realities*, no. 32, 1 May 1985, 11.

the invasion, so too did the Pashtunistan issue lose relevance in local perceptions. To the extent that Pashtunistan, as an independent entity, had commanded any support in the frontier, the Soviet invasion ended any attraction for either joining with Afghanistan or forming an independent state which would be vulnerable to further Soviet advances. Many recalcitrant Pashtunistanis in the tribal areas made their peace with the Pakistan government after the invasion.⁵²⁰

The Pakistan government had responded to the refugee crisis by forming a Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) on 1 April 1979, under the aegis of the Ministry for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON). With the population of refugees increasing dramatically after the Soviet invasion, CAR very quickly developed into a large organization, with a staff of over 7,000, offices in Peshawar and Quetta, and a head office in Islamabad. The government adopted a generous policy which accorded *prima facie* recognition to all Afghans crossing the border as refugees. Over 280 refugee camps were established in NWFP, a few score in Baluchistan and several in Punjab, including a large camp at Mianwali. Using assistance provided by international donors through the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR, as well as funds from the Pakistan government, CAR provided shelter, health facilities and a list of basic necessities – rice, flour, sugar, tea, fuel oil and *ghee* – to refugee families.⁵²¹ As the refugee presence continued with no early end to the conflict in sight, many of the camps were gradually upgraded from tented villages to mud-brick houses and other services such as

⁵²⁰ Akbar Ahmed observes, “The cry for jihad against the invading force was in the air. To be seen as indifferent to the Islamic cause could mean identification with the invaders. Stories of death and rape in Afghanistan were rampant; tribal honor was at stake on various levels.” Akbar S. Ahmed, *Religion and Politics*, 128.

⁵²¹ UNHCR’s operating budget in Pakistan ranged between \$57-109 million annually during the period of the Soviet occupation. UNHCR Report, *Searching for Solutions*, 8.

education and community-based development were incorporated.⁵²² Refugee movement was largely unrestricted, and those who wished to give up the security of shelter and rations to seek economic opportunities elsewhere in Pakistan were free to do so.⁵²³ The government instructed local authorities to be indulgent in such matters as refugee applications for passports, licenses and other rights of Pakistani nationals.⁵²⁴

The influx of such a large refugee population enthusiastic for war added to the pressure on the government to remain involved in the activities of the Afghan resistance. With diplomatic initiatives stalling, the government maintained a limited supply of weapons to *mujahidin* factions. As discussed earlier in this chapter, besides his own moral convictions, Zia was motivated by his perception of the strategic benefit for doing so: *mujahidin* activity would delay consolidation of the Soviet position in Afghanistan and buy Pakistan valuable time before the Soviets were able to act against it. Yet paradoxically, aiding the *mujahidin* would increase Soviet hostility and the chance of reprisals against Pakistan. Zia's response to the dilemma was encapsulated in his much belaboured 'pot boiling' metaphor. As Zia told numerous interlocutors during the 1980s, providing military support to the *mujahidin* – 'keeping the pot boiling' in Afghanistan – was critical to Pakistan's security, but it had to boil "at the right temperature. Too much pressure would blow the lid off and too little would allow the situation to cool off."⁵²⁵ If Pakistan were to reduce the risks it faced, it would need to

⁵²² Rustam Shah Mohmand, interview with author, 16 April 2010.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Najmuddin Shaikh, interview with author, 19 October 2010. Documents of the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees in Peshawar were also consulted in preparing the above section.

⁵²⁵ Telegram, Ronald Spiers to George Schultz, 14 November 1982, folder "Pakistan 1/1/82 – 8/31/84 Vol. II (2)," box 45, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

maintain a degree of control over the situation. In this respect, the government made several decisions in this early period that would strongly impact the political organization of the Afghan resistance and the nature of ties between the resistance and the Pakistani state.

One ironclad rule was that the Pakistan government, in effect, its ISI directorate, would retain sole control of all distribution of arms, funds and other supplies, as well as of liaising and planning with the *mujahidin*. The government insisted on this condition when first receiving small amounts of aid for the *mujahidin* from the Carter administration, and continued to do so when external support via the Reagan administration, Saudi Arabia and other donors increased exponentially. One reason for the stand was that the government did not want intelligence agents of multiple countries freely moving in its territory, supporting different factions of *mujahidin*, and thus feeding rivalries and sowing confusion. Moreover, in its conduct of the war, the ISI could formulate strategy but could not directly compel the *mujahidin* factions to follow suit. Control of supplies would allow for some control over *mujahidin* activities.

Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf, who headed the Afghan Bureau of the ISI from 1983-87, argued

My job was to apply military pressure inside Afghanistan to get the Soviets out...I decided who got the means to win...on the basis of maximum combat effectiveness. I had to implement a campaign strategy to influence operations without the ability to issue orders to subordinates, without any military infrastructure to sustain or implement decisions...My giving assurances that a certain operation would be backed up with extra weapons or more missiles, and that success would lead to further supplies, was sometimes the only way I could obtain cooperation. I had a carrot to offer. My stick was to withhold the weapons. Had the ISI not retained this prerogative my task would have been hopeless.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁶ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 103. For an analysis of Yousaf's memoir, see the Appendix.

During the 1980s, the CIA secretly maintained contacts with some *mujahidin* commanders and provided them with supplies independent of the Pakistan government, as did the British and French intelligence agencies.⁵²⁷ Substantial private donations to *mujahidin* parties from wealthy Arab donors in the Gulf also circumvented the Pakistan government. Nevertheless, the government retained control over the vast bulk of supplies and funds, mostly provided by the US and Saudi governments, throughout the period of the Soviet occupation.

Unsurprisingly, given its sole control over such a large quantity of supplies and funds, the ISI's criteria for distribution increasingly came into question from multiple quarters in the US, Pakistan and among the *mujahidin*.⁵²⁸ And whether or not supplies were allocated on the basis of "maximum combat effectiveness," as Brigadier Yousaf argued, their allocation inescapably affected not only the military strength but also the political standing of the different *mujahidin* parties. These issues will be examined in depth in the following chapter.

The other major decision taken around this time was to limit official recognition in Peshawar to only seven *mujahidin* parties. Abdullah, the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees in Peshawar, argued that in part the decision was taken owing to fears of chaos and infighting among the numerous *mujahidin* organizations:

I took over in '80, '81, and the *tanzimat* [singular *tanzim*; "party" or "organization"] were proliferating at a rate which was so worrying. Every day a new party coming, everybody claiming thousands of support of *mujahidin*, because actually they wanted to have some relief [aid] on the basis of that strength. And I remember the number had reached more than seventy...*tanzimat* at that time...So I got really worried...I said if it continues like this, then the atmosphere in the camps would...be disturbed. People will

⁵²⁷ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (London: Penguin, 2005), 151-52.

⁵²⁸ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 102-103.

start fighting between themselves and it will be a...replay of Lebanon...the Palestinians, one camp against the other, the tension will build up.⁵²⁹

Besides the detrimental effects of *tanzimat* proliferation and infighting for the security of the refugees, and of Pakistan more broadly, there were also concerns about its negative impact on the fighting capability of the *mujahidin*. Abdullah, himself a committed supporter of the *jihad*, argued:

Most of those organizations, the new ones coming into existence, were useless, they had no strength whatsoever, they only wanted to have a share in the pie. So I watched this and I took a decision on my own...not consult[ing] the Federal Government because even the Federal Government at the bureaucratic level was very lukewarm towards *jihad* ...I did take the Governor [NWFP] into confidence, Fazl-e Haq...and I told him that we are going to merge all this, we are going to ban the organizations and we will leave only six or seven, who are actually contributing something towards the war effort...and not anybody else.⁵³⁰

On 5 January, 1981, Abdullah convened all the parties at the Peshawar District Council Hall and announced that henceforth the government of Pakistan would only recognize seven parties. Official orders were issued to this effect, which emphasized an administrative justification: namely, that as relief aid was now to be given to individual households, there was no longer any need for intermediary organizations:

The Afghan Refugees have been forming various groups ostensibly for the purpose of extending facilities etc, to the Refugees. The number had been ever on the increase, the latest figure, as per our record, having reached to about fifty. This has been causing great administrative problems and embarrassments.

With the re-organization of the Commissionarate, [*sic*] as the Refugees...[will be] made payments direct by the Commissionarate Staff...therefore need for their presence is no longer felt. They have been, accordingly, warned on 5th January 1981, to close

⁵²⁹ Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

their respective Offices...The above instructions, however, do not apply to the following old established groups...⁵³¹

The groups were Sayyaf's Ittihad, Khalis' Hizb, Mujaddidi's Jabha, Gailani's Mahaz, Nabi's Harakat-i Inqilab, Rabbani's Jami'at and Hikmatyar's Hizb.⁵³²

To ensure compliance with the ruling, refugees were eventually required to demonstrate membership in one of the recognized parties in order to obtain the registration document that made them eligible to receive relief aid.⁵³³ This politicization of relief assistance understandably alarmed UNHCR officials, who nonetheless reluctantly complied with the process.⁵³⁴ Consequently, the position of the seven recognized parties was strengthened whereas others, denied any government patronage, gradually faded away. In 1983, following a corruption scandal that involved three ISI officers accepting bribes from *mujahidin* commanders in exchange for extra allocation of weapons,⁵³⁵ the parties received a further boost as the ISI changed its system of distribution. From then on, some 80% of all arms and ammunition were routed through the seven parties; thus, commanders would need to line up with one or other party in order to receive those supplies.⁵³⁶

⁵³¹ Memo, "Afghan Refugees Political Groups," Office of the Addl. Commissioner (Security) Afghan Refugees NWFP to All Superintendents of Police, 13 January, 1981, in S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: Political Parties, Groups, Movements and Mujahideen Alliances and Governments, 1879-1997*, vol. 1 (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 1997), 533-34.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Rudiger Schoch, "Afghan refugees in Pakistan during the 1980s: Cold War politics and registration practice," *New Issues in Refugee Research*, no. 157, 8-9.

⁵³⁴ Ibid, 14-15.

⁵³⁵ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 21-22.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, 103-104.

Abdullah's concerns about the increasing divisions and proliferation of groups all clamouring for Pakistani aid are understandable. However, Abdullah's claim that he chose the seven organizations doing the most for the war effort may certainly be questioned; given his predilection for seeing the conflict as *jihad* he may have been more inclined to select those parties conceiving of it in the same way. But even if we take this claim at face value, the reason that these parties may have been the most effective may simply be because they – particularly the Islamists – were the first to go on Pakistani soil and receive assistance. That does not mean they were capable of mobilizing the broadest spectrum of support or running the best organizations now that the whole society was up in arms.

Hamid Gul, who was not involved in the decision at the time, but became DG ISI towards the end of the war, suggests that the parties were considered to represent different sections of the Afghan resistance: Hikmatyar and Rabbani the university-based Islamists, Khalis and Nabi the *'ulama*, Mujaddidi the Sufis and Gailani the traditional royalists.⁵³⁷ By such a reckoning, the Islamists, boasting Rabbani, Hikmatyar and Sayyaf, were overrepresented. Khalis too, while an *'alim*, had been associated with the movement. While ideological sympathies may have played some part in this decision,⁵³⁸ it is more likely that simple precedence – Pakistan's previous experience of working with these parties and the consequent advantage they enjoyed as established organizations – was the leading factor.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ Hamid Gul, interview with author, 23 September 2010.

⁵³⁸ Abdullah, for example, was evidently sympathetic to Hikmatyar. Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

⁵³⁹ Tanvir Ahmad Khan, interview with author, 8 October 2011.

Similarly, while Gailani did manage to gather many of the traditional ruling elite around him, he would hardly have been their first choice as leader. Various commentators have argued that the flawed nature of Pakistan's choices owed to its opposition to allowing Zahir Shah any role in the resistance. We may question this assessment, given that such accounts argue that Pakistan's prior relationship with the king was one of unremitting hostility,⁵⁴⁰ which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is an inaccurate portrayal. The picture in fact is a more mixed one, and several considerations seem to have been at play. While some Pakistani officials may have been hostile to the king and opposed his playing a role, others in important positions, including Foreign Ministry Secretary General Shah Nawaz and DG Afghanistan Amir Usman, had more positive recollections of the old government.⁵⁴¹

However, by the time of the Soviet invasion Zahir Shah had been absent from the political scene for almost seven years. Always a diffident personality, he had made no attempt to contest Daoud's assumption of power and, while extending support to the *jihad*, did not forcefully push to play a leading political role.⁵⁴² Pakistani officials were thus reluctant to expend efforts promoting him, especially as that would create confusion and opposition among the Islamists, who were already involved in resistance activities and opposed the return of the king. Afghan refugees from the tribes and the traditional elite made two attempts at

⁵⁴⁰ Rubin, for example, argues that Pakistan supported the Islamists because they "almost alone in Afghanistan...protested the government's pro-India policy" during the 1971 war. Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 100. In fact, as I argued in the previous chapter, Zahir Shah's assurances to Pakistan at this time were widely appreciated across the spectrum of Pakistani diplomatic and military opinion.

⁵⁴¹ Shah Nawaz, descended from Afghan Amir Sher Ali, was considered a valuable source of information on Afghanistan and supported the idea of a Loya Jirga. He served as Secretary General till February 1982, when he sought reassignment as permanent representative to the UN. Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 53.

⁵⁴² Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 262.

convening a Loya Jirga in Pakistan in 1980 and 1981 to select Zahir Shah as the leader of a united resistance front.⁵⁴³ While the Pakistan government permitted the jirgas to meet, it did not extend any support to the efforts; in addition to the reasons above, officials were apprehensive of the Soviet reaction.⁵⁴⁴ These issues, and other considerations and consequences of Pakistan's choice of the seven *tanzimat*, will be discussed further in the following chapter. For now we turn to the factor that allowed the Pakistan government to maintain its policy of support for the *mujahidin*, and gradually up the ante, namely the security pact with the United States.

The US Role

US involvement in the Third World, outside of Latin America and the Philippines, only began in earnest after the Second World War, when the weakened state of the European empires and the rise of anti-colonial nationalist movements brought questions related to the future status of the colonies into focus. As with the USSR, the long-term trend over the four decades of the Cold War was of increasing US economic, political and military intervention in the Third World. Within that trend, however, the regional focus and the acceptability of different policies varied considerably.

⁵⁴³ Ibid, 260-62.

⁵⁴⁴ According to Shah Nawaz, after the start of uprisings against the Saur Revolution, the Soviets made a demarche to the Pakistan government specifically warning it against permitting the royal family to take up residence in the country. Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to Cyrus Vance, 14 May 1979, in *Document Reader Volume One: U.S. Documents* (Washington, D.C.: CWIHP, 2002). The idea of Zahir Shah playing a political role did not go away. In 1984, Mahaz, Harakat and Jabha met with the former's king's representatives and tried to put together a proposal for a united front. These developments are discussed in issue nos. 17-23 of *Afghan Realities*. Towards the end of the 1980s, his name was again floated in various proposals for establishing an interim broad-based government, including by Zia ul-Haq in October 1987. Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 226-27.

Many of the early generation of Asian and African nationalist leaders of the 1930s and 1940s had considered both superpowers as progressive anti-colonialist forces, a perspective which at the time was mirrored, to an extent, in the superpowers' view of themselves. Both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations viewed the old European colonial empires with a measure of disdain and evinced some sympathy for Third World nationalism. But this sympathy was limited both by the importance ascribed to Western European allies in the global struggle against Soviet communism and by the fear that any communist or even left-leaning nationalist movement could be subverted by the USSR. The 1950s shift from a Truman Doctrine that at least allowed for the possibility of cooperation with left-nationalist forces, to the Eisenhower Doctrine's increasing tendency to frame Third World revolutions negatively in the context of Communist instigation, led to a dramatic rise in US interventions against nationalist forces in Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁵⁴⁵ These included deployment of US troops, as in the case of Guatemala and Lebanon, as well as covert attempts to destabilize governments, as in Congo, Iran and Indonesia.⁵⁴⁶

The height of direct military intervention was reached during the Vietnam War. Failure in Vietnam led to questioning of the interventionist consensus. Hampered by Congressional oversight, restrictions on funding and public opposition to military engagement,⁵⁴⁷ the foreign policy of the Nixon and Ford administrations, dominated in the latter years by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, turned increasingly to waging proxy wars. Such efforts included outsourcing intervention to regional powers, such as the Shah of Iran, the government of

⁵⁴⁵ Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 110-57.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁷ Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 81-84.

South Africa, and the so-called 'Safari Club.'⁵⁴⁸ It also included more emphasis on targeting leftist governments such as in Angola, through covert support for right-wing opposition movements, militias and mercenaries.

Unlike Kissinger, who considered enhancing US credibility to be a zero-sum game in competition with enemies and allies,⁵⁴⁹ the administration of President Jimmy Carter adopted a regionalist approach to foreign policy, which prioritized regional considerations in addressing Third World issues over focusing on how they would affect US standing *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union.⁵⁵⁰ Carter's invitation to the USSR to co-host Middle East peace talks in Geneva, although swiftly abandoned under domestic pressure, was emblematic of this approach. While continuing US support for regional allies, the administration also tried to improve relations with countries seen as closer to the Soviets, without requiring them to abandon the Soviet camp as a prerequisite.⁵⁵¹ Simultaneously, the administration reflected public and congressional concerns about the CIA's subversive activities abroad by seeking to limit its scope mainly to the gathering of information. Carter's CIA Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, oversaw a major curtailment of the authority and activities of the CIA's Directorate of Operations.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid, 84-87.

⁵⁴⁹ For example, in his efforts to exclude the USSR, West European allies and Japan from Middle East diplomacy after the 1973 war. See Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1982), 707-50.

⁵⁵⁰ See Cyrus R. Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

⁵⁵¹ For example, in overtures to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

⁵⁵² Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 43-44.

In accordance with this shift in emphasis, while concerned about the communist takeover and increased Soviet influence in Afghanistan, the administration tried to maintain working relations with the DRA. As Sulaiman Laiq later acknowledged, it was the regime's own rhetoric and ideological hostility to the US that prevented closer cooperation.⁵⁵³ Relations deteriorated, particularly after the kidnapping and murder of US Ambassador Adolph Dubs in Kabul, during which incident the DRA government was unresponsive to US concerns. The fall of the Shah of Iran, the US' main regional surrogate, in February 1979, and the swift deterioration of US-Iranian relations culminating in the embassy hostage crisis, brought Cold War strategic concerns to the fore. Amid concerns that the USSR could take advantage of a weakened Iran to further extend its influence in the region, Carter signed a presidential finding on 3 July, 1979 authorizing the spending of \$500,000 on propaganda and nonlethal supplies – chiefly radio equipment and medical kits – to Afghan insurgents.⁵⁵⁴ While limited in scope, this step marked the beginning of a campaign that, after the Soviet invasion, would completely reverse the administration's attempted reforms of the CIA.

Lately it has become common to claim that the US 'trapped' the USSR into invading Afghanistan, to bring about its disintegration. This assertion is particularly common in Pakistan, which has witnessed increased conflict and anti-US sentiment in recent years. It is based on the interview that Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Adviser, gave to *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1998, in which he claimed that in authorizing aid to the insurgents,

⁵⁵³ "The US wanted to help us, but we were too harshly opposed to them." Sulaiman Laiq, interview with author, 23 March 2013.

⁵⁵⁴ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 46.

I explained to [the president] that in my view this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention...That secret operation was an excellent idea...It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap...The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter, essentially: "We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War."⁵⁵⁵

In fact, this claim is largely a post-hoc construction. Declassified documents show that US officials continued to remain uncertain of Soviet intentions, with most intelligence analysts concluding that "if worst came to worst" the Soviets would probably not intervene.⁵⁵⁶ On 10 August, 1979, the Director, Strategic Warning Staff (SWS), assessed that Soviet efforts to build up the PDPA had failed and predicted that Soviet commitment had gone past the point of return, but these claims were toned down in a subsequent meeting.⁵⁵⁷ As of 13 December, the Director SWS noted that most analysts still felt that the Soviet were proceeding tentatively and would scale up their operations or leave according to the situation.⁵⁵⁸

Similarly, US reaction to the invasion was far from celebratory. On 26 December, Brzezinski wrote a memo to Carter stating that "while it could become a Soviet Vietnam, the initial effects...are likely to be adverse for us."⁵⁵⁹ He later continued, "we should not be too sanguine about Afghanistan becoming a Soviet Vietnam," because the insurgents were far too weak and poorly organized and the USSR was likely to act more decisively than the US had in

⁵⁵⁵ "The CIA's Intervention in Afghanistan: Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 15-21 January 1998. Rizwan Hussain cites this interview in presenting a significantly more aggressive picture of Pakistani and US intentions than emerges in this study. Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy*, 112-13.

⁵⁵⁶ Memo, "Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE," unknown author to Director of Central Intelligence, 1 June 1979, CREST, NARA.

⁵⁵⁷ Memo, "Soviet Options in Afghanistan," Doug MacEachin to National Intelligence Officer for Warning, 10 August 1979, *ibid*, and Memo, "Soviet Options in Afghanistan," 13 August 1979, *ibid*.

⁵⁵⁸ Memo, "Soviet Actions in Afghanistan," Director, SWS, to NIO/W, 13 December 1979, *ibid*.

⁵⁵⁹ Memo, "Reflections on Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan," Zbigniew Brzezinski to the President, 26 December, 1979, in *Document Reader Volume One: U.S. Documents*.

Vietnam.⁵⁶⁰ Other members of the administration were even less sanguine. In a National Security Council (NSC) meeting on 2 January, 1980, Carter stated that “he was convinced that we will not be able to get the Soviets to pull out of Afghanistan, but Soviet actions over the next ten to twenty years will be colored by our behavior in this crisis.”⁵⁶¹ Similarly, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence concluded that compelling withdrawal was “not a feasible objective” but raising the costs of occupation above those which the Soviets had expected could discourage future adventures.⁵⁶² In aid of this objective, the administration approached Pakistan regarding a security pact and continuing support for the *mujahidin*.

The Pakistan government had grave doubts, however, about the wisdom of cooperation. The administration’s shift in foreign policy emphasis had led it to seek a closer relationship with Soviet-leaning India, while in its human rights policy it had been increasingly critical of the Zia dictatorship. On 6 April, 1979, the administration cut off US aid to Pakistan owing to non-proliferation concerns. As Zia’s ‘pot boiling’ metaphor made clear, Pakistan was wary about needlessly provoking the Soviets. US support could deter Soviet aggression and help Pakistan increase the assistance it was giving to the *mujahidin*. However, a merely symbolic commitment could anger the Soviets, lead them to identify Pakistan as firmly in the ‘enemy camp,’ and prove useless for countering the increased threat Pakistan would then face. At the same time, the lack of progress in negotiations on withdrawal and the government’s continuing support to the *mujahidin* created pressures to keep seeking a reliable commitment. These concerns shaped the Pakistan government’s approach to US officials in the first two

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Minutes, “Iran, Christopher Mission to Afghanistan, SALT and Brown Trip to China,” 2 January 1980, *ibid*.

⁵⁶² “DDCI Notes,” 1 January 1980, CREST, NARA.

years following the Soviet invasion. Although the government turned down offers from the Carter administration in February 1980 and the succeeding Reagan administration in March 1981, it felt reassured enough to agree to a new relationship in September 1981. The details of how this process unfolded, the apprehensions underlying both sides, and the nature of the relationship that was established will be discussed further in chapter six.

Conclusion

The Soviet invasion thus marked a fundamental change in Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan. The previous approach, of bilateral negotiations with the Afghan government supplemented by occasional use of pressure tactics to compel engagement, had run its course. Although elements of its new policies, such as arming Afghan dissidents, drew from previous experiences, their underlying purposes and intensity were altogether different. Faced with the reality of Soviet domination of Afghanistan, the Pakistan government eschewed direct engagement with the Afghan government and aligned itself with the popular opposition. Although at first hesitant to be drawn into the rivalry of the Cold War, Pakistan concluded that seeking its own superpower patron was necessary to prevent the consolidation of Soviet control in the region. It was this Soviet concern that remained Pakistan's overriding interest in UN-sponsored talks with the Afghan government; until its resolution, normal relations could not be resumed.

The basic parameters of this three-pronged policy were set in the first two years after the Soviet invasion: indirect negotiations with the DRA to achieve Soviet withdrawal, supporting the *mujahidin* insurgency by channelling weapons and funds through the seven *tanzimat*, and

acceptance of military and economic aid from the US to address Pakistan's security concerns. In each dimension, Pakistani policymakers faced constraints on what was possible, and had strong reasons for deciding on the policies that they did. However, each policy also suffered from inherent weaknesses. The Geneva negotiations did not involve *mujahidin* representatives or address the crucial question of the nature of the post-Soviet government. The seven *tanzimat* were neither representative of all sections of Afghan society nor capable of overcoming internal rivalries. And, as we shall see, the relationship with the US neither broadened beyond the security dimension nor ultimately resolved Pakistan's security dilemma. In the following three chapters, I depart from a chronological narrative to trace out the development of different aspects of these policies and their effect on the political organization of the Afghan *jihad*, on its ideology and on the nature of the Pakistan-US relationship.

4. Political Organization in the *Jihad*

The basic parameters of Pakistan's engagement with the Afghan *jihad* were set by 1982. Pakistan's involvement with the *mujahidin* has since become a matter of controversy. Many accounts of the war emphasize the crucial role that the assistance rendered by Pakistan and the US, at considerable risk to Pakistan's own security, played in keeping the anti-Soviet resistance alive and gradually bringing it to victory.⁵⁶³ Other accounts blame Pakistan for political manipulation and playing favourites among the resistance groups, holding it responsible for consequent factional infighting.⁵⁶⁴ Neither account presents a complete picture because, firstly, they tend to lack Pakistani source material sufficient to give an informed analysis of Pakistan's motivations and actions. Second, and more importantly, because they seldom connect a holistic analysis of the nature of the Afghan *jihad*, its political configurations and possibilities, to their assessment of Pakistan's involvement.

In this chapter, I will characterize the Afghan *jihad* and examine it in terms of several key indicators of political organization: the degree to which the resistance movement was unified; the linkages between parties, commanders and the Afghan populace; the extent of parallel administration; and the role of negotiations. So as to place the political strengths and weaknesses of the *mujahidin* in a broader perspective, I will discuss them in the context of theoretical and empirical literature on revolutionary warfare and guerrilla insurgencies. As

⁵⁶³ For example, Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, and Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War*.

⁵⁶⁴ See Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy*, Coll, *Ghost Wars*, and Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*.

each aspect is analyzed, Pakistan's role and the effects of Pakistan and US assistance will be drawn out and discussed.

Characterizing the Afghan Jihad: Traditional Revolt or Revolution?

There is no single term that encompasses the many different types of armed opposition against a government. Each of the commonly used terms – guerrilla warfare, insurgency, revolt, revolution, among others – have different connotations for legitimacy, for the size and scope of the opposition and for their relative emphasis on its political, as opposed to military, aspects.⁵⁶⁵ In analyzing the political dimensions of the Afghan *jihad*, the most salient distinction to draw is that between the traditional revolt and the modern revolution.⁵⁶⁶ Eqbal Ahmad, the political scientist and theorist of revolutions, characterizes a traditional revolt as follows:

1. A traditional revolt was generally a response to an increase in injustice in the established order, rather than a questioning of that order. Its ideological intent was restorationist, in that it “sought to restore [the existing order] to its accepted, authoritative norm. One attacked the ruling king, not the institution of monarchy.

Rather, in protesting a tyrant, one...sought the good king.”⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ For example, the term ‘guerrilla warfare’ suggests the military tactics involved but does not take a position on the popular legitimacy or political organization of the movement; ‘insurgency’ implies armed opposition to a legitimate (or at least recognized) government; ‘resistance,’ by contrast, invests the opposition with some degree of legitimacy, as resisting something imposed; *jihad* originates from a specific Islamic jurisprudential tradition.

⁵⁶⁶ As with most historical concepts, the following definitions should be taken as representative of ideal types, useful for the purpose of drawing analytical contrasts and identifying major features, but not as representative of all aspects of given historical situations, which will invariably involve greater degrees of complexity.

⁵⁶⁷ The following three points are adapted from the five characteristics listed by Eqbal Ahmad in Eqbal Ahmad, “From Potato Sack to Potato Mash,” 118.

2. It most often originated in local concerns and was localized in nature: “Traditional insurgents were often effective in defending their immediate local interests; they were most deficient whenever faced with the need to...coordinate their struggle around a common purpose across villages and tribes.”⁵⁶⁸
3. It was hostile to state power, frequently originating as a response to state overreach and aimed at preserving the autonomy of the local community.⁵⁶⁹

As we discussed in chapter one, the passive legitimacy enjoyed by the pre-colonial state rested in large part on its limited involvement in society. Where such a balance was overturned, alternate sources of legitimacy – tribe, community, religion, or appeals to a more accepted norm of state behaviour – were employed to resist the state. However, as community networks were generally inward-looking and as such sources of legitimacy lent themselves to multiple interpretations, such revolts tended to be localized in nature. The long history of tribal uprisings and peasant or village-based insurrections tends to share the features listed above. So did many of the uprisings against colonial authority when it was first being established in Africa and Asia, although the relatively alien nature of the colonial governments often inspired opposition to the legitimacy of the new order as a whole, not just to the proclivities of individual rulers. Nonetheless, resistance to colonial authority was generally not inspired by a new political vision but by the ideal of restoring the old pre-colonial order or some variant thereof. Such was the case with the 1857 revolt, the Basmachi revolts against Soviet control to

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid, 119.

the north of modern-day Afghanistan, and the Pashtun uprisings against the British to the south.⁵⁷⁰

By contrast, many of the struggles that took place in the 20th century, particularly during the heyday of decolonization, fit the pattern of modern revolutionary war. Modern revolutionary movements did not seek to redress an increase in injustice in the existing order, but rejected that order as fundamentally unjust. Such movements possessed a committed ideological vision of a new dispensation. They sought to nationalize the struggle across regions, sometimes – but far from always – raising the class dimension of conflict.⁵⁷¹ Finally, and importantly, they were welcoming of the state in the new revolutionary order, embracing it as an agent of change.

The Chinese communists, the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Algerian *Front de Liberation Nationale* (FLN) waged different struggles, but all qualify as modern revolutionary movements. Communism, wedded to a strong nationalist appeal, provided the basis for a consistent functioning ideology for both the Chinese and Vietnamese movements; the Algerians, by contrast, waged a purely nationalist anti-colonial war.⁵⁷² Each movement was successful in generalizing its support across regions and disparate ethnic, religious and

⁵⁷⁰ That is not to say that such uprisings could not incorporate modern features or display considerable military sophistication. And there were arguably exceptions: Sayyid Ahmad's *jihad* looked for political inspiration to an idealized Islamic order, although the type of state he tried to form drew from contemporary post-Mughal models.

⁵⁷¹ Gerard Chaliand observes that many liberation movements relied on the Leninist organizational apparatus without subscribing to communist ideology. Chaliand, ed., *Guerrilla Strategies*, 10.

⁵⁷² For an excellent account of how the Vietnamese movement blended communist and nationalist ideology, see Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

social groupings. As one of the Vietnamese leaders noted, “The secret of the N.L.F. is simple: the Front has united the peasant problem, the workers’ problem, the problem of the religious sects, and the problem of the national minorities.”⁵⁷³ Crucial to these successes was the establishment of parallel administrative structures that offered a credible alternative to the government. Ideally highly participatory, these structures tangibly demonstrated the ability of revolutionaries to organize government on a more popular, equitable basis. They served as a means to propagate revolutionary ideology and delegitimize the government. Gerard Chaliand, the noted scholar of guerrilla warfare, observes that “The point is not merely to break the population’s passive respect for the established order: a new underground political infrastructure must be constructed and built up patiently by the middle-ranking cadres at a village and neighborhood level.”⁵⁷⁴ Eqbal Ahmad spells out the process in more detail:

[The] central objective is to confirm, perpetuate, and institutionalize the moral isolation of the enemy by providing an alternative to the discredited regime through the creation of “parallel hierarchies.” The major task of the movement is not to outfight but to outadminister the government. The main target in this bid is the village, where the majority of the population lives and where the government’s presence is often exploitative... The government is systematically eliminated from the countryside by the conversion or killing of village officials, who are then controlled or replaced by the political arm of the movement. The rebels must then build an administrative structure to collect taxes, to provide some education and social welfare, and to maintain a modicum of economic activity. A revolutionary guerrilla movement which does not have these administrative concerns and structures to fulfill its obligations to the populace would degenerate into banditry.⁵⁷⁵

Even well-organized revolutionary movements have of course had differing degrees of success in developing parallel hierarchies, and many movements that considered themselves

⁵⁷³ Nguyen Van Thieu, “Our Strategy for Guerrilla War,” in Chaliand, 314.

⁵⁷⁴ Chaliand, ed., *Guerrilla Strategies*, 15. For some revealing insights into the process, as applied by the revolutionary movement in Guinea-Bissau, see Gerard Chaliand, “With the Guerrillas in ‘Portuguese’ Guinea,” *ibid.*, 191-93, 202-207.

⁵⁷⁵ Eqbal Ahmad, “Revolutionary Warfare,” 17-18.

revolutionary emphasized armed struggle too much over political organization.⁵⁷⁶ Nonetheless, in predicting the longevity and success of such movements, the fulfilment of these political concerns has been far more salient than achievements on the battlefield. Having thus distinguished between the major features of the modern revolution and the traditional revolt, it remains to characterize the Afghan *jihad* in this framework.

The Afghan *jihad* against the Soviets does not fit neatly into either category. Many of its prevailing features were traditionalist. It originated in a series of localized uprisings against the Afghan communist authorities and spread more or less spontaneously across the country, gaining further impetus with the Soviet invasion. Many of the uprisings were motivated by an attempt to preserve local autonomy against state intrusion. David Edwards, in tracing the origins of the uprising by the Safi and Nuristani tribes in Kunar province, notes among the most common reasons for opposition the government's attempts to introduce reforms that would have overturned the social setup of the tribes and its use of repression in attempting to implement them.⁵⁷⁷ With differing emphases, such concerns were replicated across the country. The government's reforms, including its literacy campaign and decrees regarding land reform, debt and marriage, aroused opposition not only because they were ill-formulated and divorced

⁵⁷⁶ Such was the case with many Latin American revolutionaries. See, for example, Hector Bejar, *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

⁵⁷⁷ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 134-35. Another account of the uprising notes that Nuristani apprehensions about central government intrusion had been mediated before the Saur Revolution by the recruitment of Nuristanis into prominent positions in government. With the elimination of the old political elite after the PDPA takeover, those links were severed, and a corresponding increase in government demands, including conscription and a crackdown on traditional means to influence government officials through bribery, encouraged attempts to win local autonomy. See Thomas Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces* (Silver Spring, Md.: Orkand Corporation, 1988), 141-43.

from ground realities.⁵⁷⁸ They were profoundly political in content and often repressive in implementation. The literacy campaign, for example, was closely linked with “the process of political indoctrination...A whole page [of the schoolbook] was devoted to the tank as a symbol of the people’s liberation, and a third of the pages were taken up with slogans and catch-phrases invented by the government.”⁵⁷⁹ Repression often accompanied failing attempts to impose reforms, but was also used indiscriminately against social groups seen as likely to oppose the regime: religious leaders, the old political elite, the Maoists.⁵⁸⁰ Barnett Rubin provides a succinct assessment of the government’s reform effort in concluding that

These reforms have usually been depicted primarily as an attempt, perhaps cynical or misguided, to redistribute wealth and power from the rural rich to the rural poor. But given not only the nature of the reforms but also the proposed means of implementation, these measures would never have empowered the poor peasants. Instead, they would have substituted the Khalqi party-state for the khan, jirga, or elders as the main authority in the rural community. The method of implementation conveyed this message clearly: groups of armed Khalqi activists were dispatched to the villages, most of them schoolteachers and army officers with no connection to the community. The reforms were aimed at winning once and for all the battle for social control between the state and the rural strongmen.⁵⁸¹

Equally important as causes of opposition were the alien nature of the government’s ideology and its dependence on Soviet support. These were tangibly demonstrated by the style and content of the reforms, the language of its proclamations and the increasing presence of Soviet advisors in the country.⁵⁸² Thus, the passive legitimacy that the state had enjoyed as a ruling

⁵⁷⁸ See the earlier discussion in chapter two.

⁵⁷⁹ Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 93.

⁵⁸⁰ See, for example, Roy’s account in *ibid*, 95-97.

⁵⁸¹ Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 118.

⁵⁸² In Kunar, besides the reform measures, the government’s disrespect of Islam and dependence on Moscow were cited among the most common causes of the revolt. Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 134-35. Fear of Soviet encroachment was among the factors motivating the early revolt of Tajiks in the north, many of whose ancestors had fled to Afghanistan after the suppression of the Basmachi revolts in Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s.

dynasty that, outside the major urban centres, placed only limited demands on the populace was overturned, both by its policies and by its rupture from the ruling tradition and dependence on foreign support. While rejecting the government, however, most of the revolts did not advocate a new political order; they were simply opposing the nature of changes to the old order that the government stood for.

However, there were groups among the *mujahidin* that did not want a return to the old order. The core membership of organizations like Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami and Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jami'at-i Islami was composed of Islamists who had been involved in or affiliated with the Muslim Youth Organization at Kabul University.⁵⁸³ As seen in chapter one, the Kabul University Islamists were highly critical of the monarchy in the 1960s and early 1970s, even, unlike the traditional *'ulama*, going to the extent of questioning its legitimacy. In 1973, Daoud's takeover was seen in much of the country as a form of continuation of the monarchy and did not initially arouse major opposition. For the Islamists, however, it was a sign of the old regime's increasing connections with communism and led them into open revolt. As they argued in a night letter (*shabnama*) circulated in Kabul against the Daoud government:

Your father-land...is going to fall into the lap of Russian imperialism...The socialists do no desist from committing any crime...Respected scholars, faithful officers and young intellectuals are being stuffed in prisons on the charge of merely being Muslims...Mosques are being desecrated, pages of the Holy Quran are being burnt, drinking of wine is being promoted...sensitive government posts are being given to

Thomas Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Northern Provinces* (Silver Spring, Md.: Orkand Corporation, 1988), 128.

⁵⁸³ Sayyaf's Ittihad-i Islami and Khalis' Hizb-i Islami also included members who had been participated in or been sympathetic to the Kabul University Islamists. After the Saur Revolution, Jami'at activists were involved in such early uprisings as the revolt in Badakhshan and the mutiny of the Herat garrison.

incapable anti-Islamic communists, number of Russian advisers is on the increase...the usurper Sardar thinks that through such activities he could impose infidel socialist order on our Muslim nation...⁵⁸⁴

The Islamists' attempt to spark a popular uprising failed, however, in large part because the communities where they organized remained unconvinced of their political reading of the situation and of their political aims.⁵⁸⁵ The latter did not involve restoring the monarchy but creating a new 'Islamic' state with its own political institutions. Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami, for example, later published a detailed manifesto calling for abolition of dictatorial and monarchical forms of government, establishment of an Islamic government voted for by the people, implementation of the *shari'a* and measures to reform education, administration and the economy.⁵⁸⁶ Whether this blueprint offers the basis for a consistent and functioning revolutionary ideology is a discussion better deferred to the following chapter, but it is worth noting that while these groups expanded substantially during the war, they had only limited success in propagating their political vision among the communities and commanders that

⁵⁸⁴ "Gist of Persian Poster," in Yunas, *Afghanistan: Political Parties*, vol. 1, 489-90. The night letter, of course, employs the harsh language of propaganda. A more measured appraisal is provided by Jami'at member Mohammad Es'haq, who recollects that the alliance between Daoud and the communists was "a marriage of convenience," which, however, allowed the latter to gain significant influence in government. This influence they then employed to advance their agenda and to take repressive measures against the Islamists. Mohammad Es'haq, "Evolution of the Islamic Movement of Afghanistan Part (2): Daud's hostile attitude towards Islamists led to confrontation," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 2, 15 January 1989, 6.

⁵⁸⁵ See Es'haq's recollections of the Panjsher uprising in the later section on 'Linkages and Parallel Administration.'

⁵⁸⁶ "Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan," in Yunas, *Afghanistan: Political Parties*, vol. 1, 420-42. Similarly, Jami'at, Ittihad and the two Hizb parties opposed the involvement of Zahir Shah in any capacity in the resistance, fearing that it would create an opportunity for him to return as the head of a restored monarchy.

subsequently joined their ranks to oppose the PDPA government and then the Soviet invasion.⁵⁸⁷

Similar divergences of political vision existed in the Hazara Shi'a community. After the Hazarajat was liberated of government forces, the governance of the area was taken over by the Shura-i Inqilab-i Ittifaq-i Islami Afghanistan (Revolutionary Council of the Islamic Union of Afghanistan), led by Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Beheshti. The Shura was an alliance of traditional notables (*khans*); traditionalist '*ulama* and *sayyids*; younger secular intellectuals, including Maoists and Hazara nationalists; and Islamist intellectuals, including typically younger '*ulama*, inspired by the political vision of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.⁵⁸⁸ With the Hazarajat remaining free of government control, these internal divisions became more pronounced as different factions manoeuvred for control. Initially, the traditionalist '*ulama* succeeded in marginalizing the *khans* and secular intellectuals within the Shura, but were unable to establish political or military control in the region.⁵⁸⁹ With the defection of Islamist members like Sadiqi Nili and Muhammad Akbari to the Sipah-i Pasdaran organization, the weakened Shura soon found itself on the defensive. Parties like Sipah and Sazman-i Nasr, which enjoyed Iranian backing and adhered to the political vision espoused by Iranian

⁵⁸⁷ For the limited success of these efforts in Herat province, see Antonio Giustozzi, "The Missing Ingredient: Non-Ideological Insurgency and State Collapse in Western Afghanistan, 1979-1992," *Crisis States Working Paper Series 2*, no. 11, February 2007.

⁵⁸⁸ See Niamatullah Ibrahim, "The Failure of a Clerical Proto-State: Hazarajat, 1979-1984." *Crisis States Working Paper Series 2*, no. 6, September 2006, 3-10. The first meeting of the Shura in September 1979 at Waras apparently included thirteen members of which five were notables, five religious leaders and three young intellectuals. Yunas, *Afghanistan: Political Parties*, vol. 1, 498-500. For a statement of the Shura's political objectives, see S. Fida Yunas, *Political Parties, Groups, Movements and Mujahideen Alliances and Governments, 1879-1997*, vol. 2 (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 1997), 584-86.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibrahim, "Failure of a Clerical Proto-State," 10-16.

revolutionaries close to Ayatollah Khomeini (followers of ‘the line of the Imam,’ *khatt-i imam*), rose to prominence.⁵⁹⁰

Less obvious, but no less important, as a challenge to the old order was that as the war became protracted, the dynamics of resistance threw up new configurations of power. Communities like the Tajiks, the Hazara and the Nuristanis gained a new autonomy from the state.

Autonomy from Kabul had been a traditional aim of these communities,⁵⁹¹ but its attainment changed the political balance and sometimes led, as with Islamist Hazara parties like Nasr and Sipah, to new forms of political organization.⁵⁹² In the Tajik case, a number of commentators have noted the effect of the war in solidifying a sense of ethnic Tajik identity among what were fairly diverse groups of Sunni Farsi speakers.⁵⁹³ Tajik political demands, unlike those of the Hazara and Nuristanis, began to be articulated in favour of a greater share of political power at the centre *vis-à-vis* the Pashtuns, rather than only for more regional autonomy.

In another change, many of the old political elites, the *khans* and high-ranking government officials, went into exile relatively early and lost much of their influence inside Afghanistan, though not necessarily with the refugees.⁵⁹⁴ Their place was often taken by ‘*ulama* or by *mujahidin* commanders who carved out autonomous spheres of influence.⁵⁹⁵ The more

⁵⁹⁰ Niamatullah Ibrahim, “At the Sources of Factionalism and Civil War in Hazarajat. *Crisis States Working Paper Series* 2, no. 41, January 2009, 6-9. For more on political developments among the Afghan Shi’a, including Shi’i communities in Herat and the Qizilbashi Shi’a, see Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 139-48.

⁵⁹¹ In particular, Hazarajat and Nuristan had only been conquered by the Afghan state in the late 19th century.

⁵⁹² See Ibrahim, “At the Sources of Factionalism,” 12-13, 19-20.

⁵⁹³ For example, Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 160-63.

⁵⁹⁴ Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending*, 119-22, and Jami’at-i Islami, “An Analysis of the Present Situation in Afghanistan” (Jami’at-i Islami Afghanistan, January, 1985), 18.

⁵⁹⁵ Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending*, 111-23.

successful ones were able to exert influence at a regional level, and sometimes developed their own forms of political organization and administration.⁵⁹⁶ In the southern and, to an extent, eastern provinces, traditional formations, such as the tribe, retained salience, but the men who came to prominence as leaders owed much to battlefield prowess, rather than traditional qualities such as lineage and age.⁵⁹⁷ With no early end to the war in sight, the old order that had existed prior to the Soviet invasion was gradually but irrevocably being transformed.

Thus, the Afghan *jihad* cannot be easily characterized as either a modern revolution or a traditional revolt. Resistance, indeed, meant many different things to different people. Although characterized by a common set of causes, there was no shortage of models to look to for inspiration in resisting the state, whether representing traditional or modern forms of legitimacy: religious *jihad*, communal autonomy, restoration of the monarchy, tribal identity, ethnic awakening, nationalist resistance, Islamic revolution.⁵⁹⁸ This diversity of frames of reference presaged a difficult transition to an uncertain political order once the common thread that bound together the resistance unravelled with Soviet withdrawal.

Unity and Division in the Resistance

The fragmented nature of the terrain of Afghanistan, of isolated valley settlements partitioned by towering mountain ranges, of stretches of desert and barren land alternating with fertile

⁵⁹⁶ The most commonly cited example of the latter is that of Ahmad Shah Masud's military-political organization in the northeast, which will be discussed further in the section on 'Linkages and Parallel Administration.'

⁵⁹⁷ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces*, 273. The continuous and protracted nature of the war, with no separation between feuding and peace or combatant and non-combatant, distinguished it from the limited and demonstrative nature of traditional tribal warfare and contributed to these dynamics.

⁵⁹⁸ For Hizb-i Islami (Hikmatyar)'s anti-colonial reading of the struggle see Muzammil, *Reasons of Russian Occupation*, 1-5, 23-28, 70-74.

plains, historically contributed to and serves to emphasize the segmented nature of Afghan society.⁵⁹⁹ Tribe, kinship, community and occupational networks have historically formed the social frame of reference for nearly all Afghans, at least outside of major urban areas such as Kabul. We discussed in chapter one how such networks are malleable and open to interpretation. Nonetheless, except for the occupational network of the *'ulama*, these networks were localized in nature, often constructed and maintained through personalized relations. Communities have remained inward-looking, exhibiting strong group cohesion and having limited experience of working with other villages and tribes across community lines. Such historical isolation is reflected in the diversity of political aims and outlooks which, as I have outlined, underpinned the uprisings against the government and Soviet forces. It also posed formidable obstacles to the task of coordinating a nationwide insurgency, a challenge which the Afghan resistance never really managed to overcome.

Throughout the war, the *mujahidin* remained a collection of more than a hundred separate fronts, led by thousands of individual commanders. They tended to be most proficient when defending their own villages and locales and most deficient when faced with the need to coordinate offensives against strategic targets outside their immediate vicinity. In the Pashtun regions, these strengths and vulnerabilities were consonant with traditional patterns of tribal warfare, leading a CIA-commissioned study to observe:

the Pushtun style of warfare is episodic. Periods of persistent harassment and leisurely bombardments alternate with short, but intense periods of stubborn conventional defense. The Pushtun fighter...is a stoic defender of his own village or base...[but] if

⁵⁹⁹ See, for example, Eqbal Ahmad and Richard J. Barnet, "Bloody Games," in Bengelsdorf et al, 455-56.

his own “turf” is not directly threatened by an enemy intrusion he is often willing to confine his military activity to demonstrations and dilatory bombardments.⁶⁰⁰

Yet although such patterns may have been pronounced among Pashtuns, they were by no means limited to them. Jami’at commander Ahmad Shah Masud was able to achieve a relatively high degree of coordination in the Tajik-dominated Panjsher valley, but had to contend with similar obstacles. Mohammad Es’haq, who returned to Panjsher with Masud after the Saur Revolution, observed that “To tell a man who has lived in his village for decades ‘go out of your district and fight the enemy base in a remote area,’ seems not to be very appealing. To him defending the village is more important than...the district or province.”⁶⁰¹ An important consequence of this approach was that if Soviet and government forces decided not to contest a particular region, resistance forces would often become inactive and more prone to feuding among themselves. Such was the case with the Shi’i parties in Hazarajat; after the early liberation of the region, factional differences developed into a prolonged internal war that was not resolved until the Soviet withdrawal.⁶⁰²

Nonetheless, some gains were made in cooperation during the war. In interviews during the mid-1980s, *mujahidin* commanders would frequently state that they had better cooperation in their areas than the exile parties had achieved in Peshawar,⁶⁰³ and most observers support this

⁶⁰⁰ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces*, 270.

⁶⁰¹ Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 190.

⁶⁰² Ibrahim, “At the Sources of Factionalism,” 21-22.

⁶⁰³ See, for example, “An Interview with Captain Azizullah Afzali of Jamiat-e-Islami Regarding the Situation in Herat,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 30, 1 April 1985, 1-2. Such examples recur frequently in *Afghan Realities* bulletins from 1983-87.

claim.⁶⁰⁴ Dominant regional commanders, such as Zabiullah in Mazar-i Sharif, Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani in Paktia, Ismail Khan in Herat, and Masud in Panjsher, were often able to set up broad fronts. Zabiullah was credited with considerable success in bridging ethnic differences before he was killed in 1984; his successor proved less able.⁶⁰⁵ As the commander of the dominant Zadran tribe in Paktia, Haqqani led inter-tribal fronts to fight Soviet and government forces in Khost.⁶⁰⁶ Later in the war, commanders like Masud and Ismail Khan attempted to give such alliances a more organized political form. But in general the dominant commander, if one existed in the region, would not be the head of a coherent organization. Rather, he would be at the apex of a pyramid of local commanders that had pledged allegiance to him, and they would in turn have groups of followers that were loyal to them. When smaller commanders switched sides, they tended to take their constituent *mujahidin* with them.⁶⁰⁷ Gains in cooperation and coordination did not, for the most part, lead to integration.

The Role of Counterinsurgency Efforts

The Soviet and DRA counterinsurgency effort also played a role in encouraging divisions between resistance groups, though only with mixed success. The KHAD (acronym for Khadamat-i Attila'at-i Daulati, "State Information Services," the DRA's intelligence agency) would attempt to infiltrate *mujahidin* organizations and sow dissent between rival groups, an

⁶⁰⁴ See Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces*, 160, and Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces*, 19.

⁶⁰⁵ Johnson et al, *The Northern Provinces*, 7-9.

⁶⁰⁶ Haqqani's status as a religious leader as well as an effective commander undoubtedly helped in crossing tribal lines.

⁶⁰⁷ Even Masud's relatively centralized Shura-i Nazar required him to be in constant negotiations with commanders; direct appeals to their followers as individuals were rare.

activity that *mujahidin* commanders and party leaders often flagged as a concern.⁶⁰⁸ Typically for an unpopular incumbent facing a populist insurgency, however, government infiltration of *mujahidin* groups was less widespread than *mujahidin* infiltration of government institutions. One of the Orkand Corporation reports commissioned by the CIA assessed that “most of the Kabul bureaucracies are heavily infiltrated by Resistance sympathizers who supply the Resistance with excellent intelligence reports concerning Soviet and ROA [Republic of Afghanistan] activities.”⁶⁰⁹

Other efforts to cause divisions were made by the government’s Ministry of Tribes and Nationalities, which coordinated activities with KHAD and, in its tribal policy, sought to break up support for the *mujahidin* by playing upon traditional rivalries between tribal groups. Although not without its successes, the policy had inherent limitations: by encouraging this source of antagonism, the government could possibly get one of two rival groups on its side, but would conversely drive the other further into the arms of the *mujahidin*. Similarly, some of the border tribes would simply accept funds and weapons from both sides and remain largely passive, continuing their traditional response to the manoeuvring that had characterized Afghan-British, and later Afghan-Pakistani, frontier policies.⁶¹⁰ In the northern regions, the government attempted to emphasize the cultural and linguistic ties of Afghan

⁶⁰⁸ See, for example, “Interview with Mullah Masood, Commander of the National Liberation Front in the Kandahar Province,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 9, 29 February 1984, 9. For more on KHAD activities, see Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces*, 71-75.

⁶⁰⁹ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces*, 272. The report observes that Hikmatyar’s Hizb-i Islami and Shaykh Asif Mohseni’s Harakat-i Islami were the most successful in infiltrating government ministries.

⁶¹⁰ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 132-34, and Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces*, 259-60.

Tajiks, Uzbeks and Turkmen with their Soviet co-ethnics across the border. This strategy, the Orkand report on the northern provinces argued, involved

a simultaneous attempt to highlight the differences between ethnic and linguistic groups within Afghanistan. By giving individual groups greater autonomy, it was hoped that they would become less inclined to work together, thus thwarting the development of nationalist sentiment....A de-emphasis on Pashto and [for the Turkic-speaking groups] Dari was underlying many of these efforts, augmented by a portrayal of the Pushtun tribes as having dominated the nation since 1747.⁶¹¹

Such efforts were carried out through a heavily Sovietized and politicized education curriculum, the sending of thousands of students to the Soviet Union, and a propaganda campaign through new Turkic language publications and radio broadcasts.⁶¹² These measures were underpinned by a greater emphasis on development projects in the north, tying the economy of the region more closely to that of the Soviet Union.⁶¹³ But while these policies had some successes, for example with some detribalized Uzbeks,⁶¹⁴ emphasizing the distinctness of the northern groups did not significantly reduce the intensity of opposition to the Soviet presence. Perhaps the consequences of these policies in solidifying and politicizing ethnic identities were not truly felt until after the Soviet withdrawal, when various northern groups turned increasingly to ethnically defined militias and organizations for succour.

⁶¹¹ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Northern Provinces*, 135-36.

⁶¹² Sovietized education, placing great emphasis on the 'progressive nature' of communism and the 'historical friendship' of the Soviet Union in protecting Afghanistan from 'imperialist aggression' was not limited to the north. For some examples from Kabul, see "Interview with Mohammad Qasim 'Yusafi' of the Faculty of Agriculture, Kabul University, who has recently migrated to Pakistan," *Afghan Realities*, no. 6, 15 January 1984, 2-3, and "KHAD Supervises War Wounded in Kabul Hospitals (An interview with Dr. Abdul Qudoos Mansoor)," *Afghan Realities*, no. 70, 1 December 1986, 3-5. As the latter interview emphasizes, the subordination of education to the political purposes of the communist party and the exigencies of the war effort was commonplace.

⁶¹³ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Northern Provinces*, 134-37.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid*, 9.

Another tactic that enjoyed some success was to provide arms directly to local communities to form militias. Although the largest of these, such as the Jowzjani Uzbeks, were deployed in fighting in various operations alongside regime forces, more commonly militias would simply take control of a local area from which regime forces would then withdraw. With no government presence to cause resentment, such militias would often prove unsympathetic to any expansion of *mujahidin* presence in the area. Militias could block vital supply lines for the *mujahidin* and were generally considered to outperform regime forces in battle.⁶¹⁵ The regime's liberal distribution of arms and ammunition to essentially autonomous and ideologically uncommitted actors undoubtedly added to the chaos of the war, and many militias became involved in banditry and similar activities.⁶¹⁶

Disunity among Exiles

As in Afghanistan, divisions between *mujahidin* groups were prevalent also in exile. Many educated Afghans from the professional classes and the old political elite went into exile in the US and West European countries. Although they contributed to the struggle in their own way, not least by highlighting the Afghan plight in their host countries,⁶¹⁷ few were integrated into the *mujahidin* organizations, except for Gailani's Mahaz.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces*, 158.

⁶¹⁶ Giustozzi, "The Missing Ingredient," 5-8, and Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Northern Provinces*, 8.

⁶¹⁷ For example, in such publications as the *Free Afghanistan* quarterly, published by the Afghanistan Information Office in London.

⁶¹⁸ According to Gailani's son, much of the bureaucracy of the ill-fated *mujahidin* government formed in 1992 ended up being run by Mahaz members, as they were the only ones who had prior experience of government. Sayyid Hamid Gailani, interview with author, 25 March 2013. For *mujahidin* criticisms of the elite's ready flight to the comfort of the west, see Jami'at, "Analysis of the Present Situation," 18, and Z.M. Khalid, "Immigration to the West and its Repercussion," *Liberation Front*, vol. 2, no. 3, May-July 1987, 18-20.

The various Shi'i parties in Iran remained separate from each other and had little interaction with the Sunni parties in Pakistan for the duration of the war. Repeated efforts to reach an agreement among them to end factional fighting in Hazarajat met with little success. In the Iranian city of Qom in 1985, several organizations agreed to a ceasefire and formed a peace commission to visit the conflict-ridden areas. However, the agreement excluded the traditionalist Shura and the commission ultimately proved powerless to implement its recommendations.⁶¹⁹ Another attempt in Teheran in July 1987 resulted in a power-sharing arrangement between the pro-Khomeini organizations, but again failed at reaching a broader resolution of the conflict.⁶²⁰ It was only after the Soviet withdrawal that a more inclusive process resulted in the formation of Hizb-i Wahdat (Unity Party), which included all the Shi'i parties,⁶²¹ and attempts were made by the Pakistani and Iranian authorities to set up some joint formula between them and the Peshawar *tanzimat*.

The early attempts at uniting the Peshawar-based parties, which almost invariably ended by creating additional divisions, have been discussed in chapter three. In 1981, sometime after the Pakistan government's decision to recognize only the seven *tanzimat*, the latter formed two alliances, each calling itself Ittihad-i Islami Mujahidin Afghanistan (Islamic Union of Afghanistan Mujahidin, IUAM). The alliances were informally referred to as *sehghana* (alliance of three, comprising Nabi's Harakat, Gailani's Mahaz and Mujaddidi's Jabha) and *haftgana* (alliance of seven, comprising Hikmatyar's and Khalis' Hizbs, Rabbani's Jami'at, Sayyaf's Ittihad, and splinter factions from the *sehghana* parties). This formation proved

⁶¹⁹ Ibrahimi, "At the Sources of Factionalism," 21.

⁶²⁰ Ibid, 22-23.

⁶²¹ Ibid, 23.

relatively stable, lasting until mid-1985, although only the *sehgana* parties merged their budgets in some areas.⁶²²

On 16 May 1985, under pressure from various quarters to develop a recognized international persona, the seven *tanzimat* dissolved the two alliances and joined into a single IUAM.⁶²³ This alliance remained in place through the Soviet withdrawal, with party leaders rotating as spokesman of the alliance every three months. Speaking on the occasion of formation of the alliance, Hikmatyar called it a beginning towards the goal of military and eventually political unity.⁶²⁴ That it was a very modest beginning was made clear by the declaration that all component organizations would “retain their names and independence.”⁶²⁵ The IUAM formed joint committees in a number of areas, but never achieved more than modest gains in coordination between the parties.⁶²⁶

Party explanations of continuing divisions tend to be highly personalized, blaming so-and-so for being corrupt or power-hungry or not doing enough for the *jihad*.⁶²⁷ Differences on the

⁶²² Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 224. It is perhaps not coincidental that the alliance that was more pressed for funding was able to cooperate better in some respects. This point is elaborated further in the discussion on ‘Linkages and Parallel Administration.’

⁶²³ The US and Saudi Arabia had just approved a major increase in the quantity of aid to the *mujahidin* and the new US policy articulated in National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 166 set an aim of assisting with *mujahidin* political development. The alliance eventually came into being after direct pressure exerted by Zia ul-Haq on the *tanzimat* leaders. Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 39-40.

⁶²⁴ “Seven Major Mujahideen Organizations Form a New Alliance,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 34, 1 June 1985, 1-3.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

⁶²⁶ The alliance-like nature of the structure is evident in that committees invariably had a multiple of seven members, with each party choosing an equal number of its own members.

⁶²⁷ Hikmatyar, for example, constantly blamed Ahmad Shah Masud and accused him of colluding with the Soviets. Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, *Secret Plans Open Faces: From the Withdrawal of Russians to the Fall of the Coalition Government* (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 2004). Most other organizations accused Hikmatyar of ruthlessness and of being interested only in the post-Soviet struggle for Kabul. For example, Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 277.

ideological spectrum did exist, but these were rarely articulated and often the most intractable rivalries were between groups that were relatively close ideologically, such as Jami'at and Hikmatyar's Hizb.⁶²⁸ Segmentation along tribe and community lines undoubtedly played an important role: creating a nationally-based political movement, without any historical precedent, in a situation of war and insurgency was a formidable task.⁶²⁹ However, not all parties were regionally segmented. As a network of *'ulama*, Harakat-i Inqilab transcended traditional segmentation and had a major national presence in the early years. Owing to weak organization, however, it lost support, with many northern non-Pashtun *'ulama* shifting to Jami'at, while Pashtun *'ulama* either stayed or shifted to one of the better-armed Hizbs. Similarly, the original Islamist movement at Kabul University had not been segmented, including detribalized members from all groups, and the Islamist thinking of Rabbani and Hikmatyar was ethnically inclusive. Yet as Jami'at and Hizb expanded their base of support during the war and came into contact with broader Afghan society, they gradually took on a more ethnic colouring, with Jami'at increasingly seen to be representing non-Pashtuns, especially Tajiks, and Hizb representing Ghilzai and eastern Pashtuns.⁶³⁰ It is likely that as divisions between parties became exacerbated, members drifted into the relative 'safety' of community and social networks. Thus, trends in parties for representing particular groups could grow over time, further increasing the perceived risk of moving outside the network.

⁶²⁸ All parties claimed commitment to forming an 'Islamic government' after the Soviet withdrawal and their programs were not presented in opposition to each other, nor cited as justification for mutual hostility. See, for example, Jami'at, "Analysis of the Present Situation," 23. An important difference related to the role of Zahir Shah and the old elite in the post-war order. These issues will be discussed further in the following chapter.

⁶²⁹ Such challenges, though pronounced in the Afghan case, are hardly unique in the annals of anti-colonial movements. For the Vietnamese example, see Thieu, "Our Strategy for Guerrilla War," 313-15. But importantly, the NLF had worked for years to bridge these divides before the outbreak of armed struggle.

⁶³⁰ Both parties nonetheless continued to have some significant commanders from across these ethnic divisions.

Absence of Centralization and its Implications

In contrast to the Afghan case, most successful revolutionary guerrilla movements have displayed a much higher degree of political unity and coordinated military action.⁶³¹ Perhaps the closest comparison to the *mujahidin* organizations in this respect is the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and since the PLO formed part of the frame of reference by which Pakistani policy-makers shaped their attitudes to *mujahidin* political organization, I will analyze different aspects of the comparison in this chapter. Like the IUAM, the PLO was not a single coherent entity but was an umbrella organization made up of a number of distinct *fida'iyyin* organizations, which maintained separate political and military structures.⁶³²

Political fragmentation in the Palestinian case was not a historical phenomenon – Palestinian society had been relatively homogenous – but was rather an outcome of refugee dispersal, with *fida'iyyin* organizations coming into existence in very different Arab states, under different political conditions and under the influence of a variety of ideologies. Yet partly by accident and partly by a deliberate policy, of developing itself as a broad, non-ideological national front, the Fatah movement gradually gained the support of a majority of Palestinians.⁶³³ Thus, fragmentation was mediated by the presence of a strong political centre, and also by an emphasis on consensus-building for any major shift in policy.

⁶³¹ See, for example, Richard Morrock, "Revolution and Intervention in Vietnam," in David Horowitz, ed., *Containment and Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 218-24, or Agnes Smedley, "The Red Phalanx," in Chaliand, 52-62.

⁶³² See Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 6-18.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 22-27. The 'accident' was Fatah's prominent role at the victorious Battle of Karama, which, coming just after the defeat of Arab states against Israel in the 1967 war, resulted in a windfall of popular support for the organization. See S. Abdullah Schleifer, *The Fall of Jerusalem* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 226-33.

Among the *mujahidin* organizations, by contrast, no group was able to lay claim to the support of anywhere close to a majority of Afghans. Such division had obvious disadvantages. Many *mujahidin* leaders and commanders clearly felt that disunity was hampering the *jihad* and were vocal in their criticisms, while party leaders constantly felt compelled to affirm their commitment to ‘strengthening the unity.’⁶³⁴ Their foreign backers found the divisions just as frustrating. From the outset of the *jihad*, Saudi Arabia pressured the *mujahidin* to unify and at times made funding contingent upon achieving unity.⁶³⁵ Similar pressures began to be exerted by the US after April 1985, when National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 166 gave directions to facilitate *mujahidin* political development.⁶³⁶ From the Pakistani side, the ISI Afghan Bureau’s Brig. Yousaf discusses at length his frustrations at the limitations imposed on military strategy by the need to constantly cajole and negotiate with different factions to carry out operations.⁶³⁷

The military consequences of fragmentation were not one-sided, however. The decentralization of the insurgency imposed formidable obstacles to military coordination, but made it equally difficult for the Soviets and the DRA to eliminate the insurgents. Milt Bearden, who as CIA Station Chief in Pakistan from 1986 to 1989 played a major role in

⁶³⁴ For example see “Meetings in Peshawar to Mark Completion of 6 Years of Communist Coup d’Etat in Afghanistan,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 13, 30 April 1984, 1-3; “An Interview with a Mujahid Commander of Hizb-e-Islami of Laghman Province,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 35, 15 July 1985, 1-2; and Jami’at, “Analysis of the Present Situation,” 15, 25-26. Such examples constantly recur in *Afghan Realities* and *mujahidin* publications in the 1980s.

⁶³⁵ Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 223-25.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 42-43, 71-73, 130-31, 134-37.

coordinating the insurgency, recalls how on leaving for Islamabad he was told to provide better training and organization to the *mujahidin*. After observing them in the field, however, he concluded that it was in fact the *lack* of a centrally coordinated strategy that was causing the most problems for Soviet planning: “If we try to organize these guys into something that almost becomes predictable, then they’ll start managing it. So I will here and there do little things...[but] I’m going to let the chaos be the thing that keeps their torment levels [high]...so that they have no idea what’s going to happen today when they wake up.”⁶³⁸ Bearden elaborated further,

They also missed the point. Today we’re talking about all these drone strikes...and going out...on night operations to kill the leadership of the Taliban – they don’t have a leadership. The reality is...you have all these kids sitting around here in a circle and each one thinks ‘I’m as good a leader as they are.’ So they don’t have a leader. Except a guy comes in who’s a *mulla* or he’s an engineer. In that world of *jihad*, if you’re not a *mulla* you’d better be an engineer or you’re not a leader...So the leadership thing is an overlay and a synthetic...And if you kill him they’ll just get another *mulla* or another engineer. It doesn’t really matter because all these cousins and brothers are the same. So there’s a strange egalitarian nature of the Afghans or the Pashtuns that you can’t go after [the] leadership...I watched...commander after commander die. It never made any difference...they bury him, you know within 24 hours. It’s over. And the new guy’s there. And it never changed anything.⁶³⁹

In analyzing the Afghan *jihad*, Eqbal Ahmad makes a similar point: “The Mujahideen are too disunited to win the war, but they are too spread out to lose it. The Soviets face more than a thousand separate armies that depend not on a central command, which could be wiped out, but upon the initiative of thousands of individual leaders and the bravery of tens of thousands more.”⁶⁴⁰ Yet while military consequences may have been mixed, the political ramifications

⁶³⁸ Milton Bearden, interview with author, 15 April 2011.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ahmad and Barnett, “Bloody Games,” 468.

of the failure to establish some form of broad compact among the resistance forces, however loosely organized and non-hierarchical, were more serious. The breakdown of traditional political precedence and mechanisms for mediating disputes over the course of the war and the absence of any broadly accepted system to take their place would lead to a chaotic post-Soviet transition.

Unity and Division: Pakistan's Role

Having examined the nature of the cleavages in the Afghan resistance movement, we are now in a position to comment upon the role that the Pakistan government played in creating unity or division among the *mujahidin*. Various commentators argue that Pakistan deliberately wanted to keep the resistance divided, so as to control and manipulate it more easily.⁶⁴¹ The same commentators do acknowledge Pakistan's initial step to consolidate the *mujahidin* organizations, but only to the extent of criticizing the biased nature of the consolidation, rather than considering that such a step should serve as a qualification to the division narrative.⁶⁴² Meanwhile, Pakistani officials like Brig. Yousaf point to the choice to limit the organizations to seven as necessary for reducing divisions and deny any interest in keeping the *mujahidin* divided, pointing out how they were often frustrated by such divisions.

The reality is more complex and a comparison with the Iranian role should be instructive. Rhetorically, Iran consistently supported the *mujahidin* as a whole, in keeping with its ideological stance of supporting Islamic revolutionary and liberation movements across the

⁶⁴¹ For example, Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 198-99; Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 122.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

world.⁶⁴³ Yet from the outset, this policy was torn between emphasizing a universalist appeal to Islam and a Shi'i-specific appeal.⁶⁴⁴ In practice, Iranian revolutionaries focused more on Shi'i communities and found Shi'i communities more receptive to their revolutionary message than Sunnis. In Afghanistan, although at different points Iranian officials tried to improve their relationships with Jami'at-i Islami and Hizb-i Islami (Hikmatyar) – and *vice versa* – the bulk of Iranian support invariably went to Shi'i parties.

Yet which of the Shi'i parties to support remained an unsettled question, highly dependent on ongoing post-revolutionary factional rivalry within Iran. Support for Ayatollah Beheshti's Shura and Shaykh Asif Mohseni's Harakat-i Islami dried up as both leaders were followers of Ayatollah Kho'i in Iraq, who opposed Ayatollah Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-i faqih* ('rule of the jurist') that mandated the '*ulama*'s direct role in governance of the Islamic state; Iranian '*ulama* who opposed this doctrine were concurrently being sidelined in the post-revolutionary order.⁶⁴⁵ But even support for the pro-Khomeini organizations was not unified: Ayatollah Husayn Ali Montazeri's faction gave aid to Nahzat-i Islami Afghanistan (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), while Sipah-i Pasdaran was supported by the similarly named Iranian organization (the Revolutionary Guards). After Montazeri's political eclipse, Nahzat fell out of favour.⁶⁴⁶ At the same time, as mentioned previously, Iranian officials also made a number

⁶⁴³ For how this aim of 'exporting the revolution' played out in the Iranian-Saudi confrontation, see Jacob Goldberg, "Saudi Arabia and the Iranian Revolution: The Religious Dimension," in Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution*, 155-70.

⁶⁴⁴ David Menashri, *Iran: A Decade of War and Revolution* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1990), 96-97, 101-105.

⁶⁴⁵ For example, in the isolation of Ayatollah Kazem Shari'atmadari.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibrahimi, "At the Sources of Factionalism," 10-11.

of attempts to unify the Shi'i parties. Thus, despite the consistency of its rhetoric, Iran's policies towards the *mujahidin* were anything but unified.⁶⁴⁷

Unlike Iran, Pakistan had a stable government and its policies were not as dependent on internal political changes. Nonetheless, it is a mistake to assume a unitary government actor, as most accounts of Pakistan's involvement do.⁶⁴⁸ While not to the same extent as Iran, there were in fact varying impulses in the government which manifested in sets of policies being pursued that were often inconsistent with each other. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Abdullah, the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees in Peshawar who took the decision to limit official recognition to the seven *tanzimat*, argued that the decision was prompted by fears of chaos and infighting among the multitude of rival organizations, which would entail negative consequences for both the security of the refugee camps and surrounding areas, and for the prosecution of the *jihad*. Personally committed to the *jihad* himself, Abdullah claimed that "It was a big, big success...and some people say...that that was the turning point. That gave a new boost to the *jihad* inside. If we had not done this, then we would have been fighting here in the camps and *jihad* would have been left behind."⁶⁴⁹

Abdullah was not, however, satisfied with the decision:

⁶⁴⁷ For the comparable case of post-revolutionary Iran's involvement in the Lebanese civil war, see H.E. Chehabi, "Iran and Lebanon in the Revolutionary Decade," in H.E. Chehabi, ed., *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the last 500 years* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 201-11.

⁶⁴⁸ For example, Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending*, 144-45.

⁶⁴⁹ Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010. Abdullah's ideological sympathies in this respect were similar to those of the Saudi government and the Jama'at-i Islami, with whom he appears to have had cordial relations.

After these six [*sic*] we said... six is not a sacrosanct number, there should be more cohesion... more integration, there should be one party consisting of all these factors. Under our pressure and guidance... and our sympathy for these people... two alliances emerged... *haftgana* and *sehgana*... and we said no, even these two are too many and there should be more integration, more cohesion, but it was not coming through, we were not making any headway... we had a very long discussion together, myself and the Governor [NWFP, Fazl-e Haq], and I said ‘we’ve done our bit, but it shouldn’t stop here.’⁶⁵⁰

Besides Abdullah, there were numerous other frontier officials who were highly sympathetic to the Afghan *jihad*, whether for reasons of Islamic solidarity, Pashtun solidarity, or simply out of admiration for the tenacity of the *mujahidin* in defending their homeland against the Soviet invaders. Similarly, ISI officials who worked with the *mujahidin* often displayed strong commitment to the *jihad*, as well as frustration at the lack of cohesion among the *mujahidin*.⁶⁵¹ Like Abdullah, many of these officials believed unity among *mujahidin* organizations to be more in Pakistan’s interests than division. For example, Hamid Gul, who became DG ISI in 1987, claimed that “By the time I took over they had become very powerful bodies... but I wished always, and I mentioned it to them several times, in no lesser words, that if I had come earlier, I would have knocked your heads and gotten you together and made one *amir* only. Because that was one element missing; it’s [an] important lesson of *jihad*. *Jihad* must have one *amir*.”⁶⁵²

An interesting feature of Abdullah’s narrative is his claim that he took the decision on his own, in consultation with Governor Fazl-e Haq, and did not inform the government, “because even

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Examples include Yousaf and Col. Amir Sultan Tarrar, better known by the alias Colonel Imam.

⁶⁵² Hamid Gul, interview with author, 23 September 2010.

the Federal Government at the bureaucratic level was very lukewarm towards *jihad*.⁶⁵³ When informed of his *fait accompli*, Abdullah says, the government was displeased about the unilateral nature of the initiative, but did not reverse it.⁶⁵⁴ The veracity of this claim is suggested by the fact that in Quetta, the other major theatre of the war, other *mujahidin* organizations were never banned and continued to operate,⁶⁵⁵ although they greatly diminished in importance once the bulk of funding was transferred to the seven. Indeed, the government, as a whole, cannot be said to have evolved a clear policy line at this stage. Earlier, when the exile groups were briefly united in one party, first under Nabi and then Sayyaf, they had requested the Pakistan government to transfer funds and supplies to the central fund of the new party rather than individually to the old organizations; a move that the government appeared to have complied with readily enough.⁶⁵⁶

However, as emerges in Abdullah's narrative, there were voices in government who held a different view on unity to his:

Some people in Islamabad were of the opinion that we should not melt them into one...strong group. And they used to [say] it'll become kind of a Frankenstein of our own; a demon which...we could not be able to handle...it will become too strong and we would not be able to deal with it...And they used to say that we don't want to create another PLO. They will start dictating. This was the thinking at that time and it was very, very unfortunate thinking.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵³ Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ These included several Shi'i parties as well as some of the Durrani elite. Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 285.

⁶⁵⁶ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 246, 266-67.

⁶⁵⁷ Abdullah, interview with author, 12 April 2010.

Riaz M. Khan, who participated in some of these debates at the Foreign Ministry, acknowledges that such concerns played a role in discouraging attempts to unify the *mujahidin* organizations:

If you look at the experience of PLO in Jordan and in Lebanon that was not such an encouraging thing...[people argued] it is easier to handle these six, seven, eight. If you put them all together and force them to be one, then first of all there would be differences among them and Pakistan would be called upon to intercede and play some kind of a role...which even among them was very difficult but within the format of a government in exile would have been much more difficult. And that government would have developed some kind of an independent persona which would have had its implications...It was certainly not an easy decision, not one of the most desirable ones in a kind of environment where nobody could say when are the Soviets are going to leave. Perhaps...at that time one would have said that they are not going to leave, so you would have had a permanent entity sitting over here.⁶⁵⁸

Various commentators have suggested that Zia ul-Haq's experience as a brigadier in Jordan during the events of Black September, where the PLO had formed a state within a state and seemed to threaten the very stability of the government, may have made the idea of a unified *mujahidin* organization particularly unappealing.⁶⁵⁹

However, according to Riaz M. Khan, such concerns were secondary to the question about how the Soviets would respond to such a development:

If we had...an interim government, government in exile, [if] we had forced these people way back in 1980 things could have been different but at that time for the Pakistan government to take that decision was very difficult because it would have immediately meant a government of exile for Baluchistan and for Pashtunistan sitting in Kabul...there would have been a reaction, certainly there would have been governments in exile sitting over there which would have been...a headache for us.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁸ Riaz M. Khan, interview with author, 8 April 2010.

⁶⁵⁹ Ahmed Rashid, interview with author, 8 February 2011.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

In the Pakistan government's calculations about what temperature to 'keep the pot boiling' at, many in the government argued that such a step would constitute a significant provocation, sacrificing deniability and increasing the dangers of Soviet interference in the frontier regions. The US and Pakistan went to great lengths during the war to preserve a fiction of non-involvement, including incurring considerable expense and logistical complications to ensure that only Soviet and East bloc weapons were provided to the *mujahidin*.⁶⁶¹ Even so, Pakistan sources counted some 5,329 air and ground violations by Soviet and Afghan aircraft and soldiers over the course of the 1980s, resulting in over 2,362 casualties.⁶⁶² KGB and KHAD agents were responsible for many bomb blasts and acts of sabotage in the refugee camps and Pakistani cities, causing, by the government's estimation, 890 deaths and 3,201 injured in 1,617 incidents over the course of the decade.⁶⁶³ While Pashtun opinion was overwhelmingly hostile to the Soviet presence, Soviet overtures to Baluch separatists retained the potential to reignite an insurgency that had only recently died down.⁶⁶⁴ Thus, it is hardly surprising that these concerns were foremost in the government's mind.

⁶⁶¹ For that reason many weapons were obtained through China and Egypt, as well as from stores of arms captured by Israel in its wars with the Arab states. See Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War* and Coll, *Ghost Wars*. The delay in introducing the US' highly effective anti-aircraft Stinger missiles was also due to concerns of deniability. Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 180-82.

⁶⁶² For the year by year breakdown, see Arif, *Working with Zia*, 329.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid*, 330.

⁶⁶⁴ An early CIA assessment judged that the Soviets had not yet started supporting Baluch separatists, but that some of their leaders viewed the Soviet presence as a means of extracting concessions from the government. National Foreign Assessment Center, "Baluchistan: A Primer," n.d., CREST, NARA. According to Ahmed Rashid, the Pakistani journalist who participated in the Baluch insurgency in the 1970s, the Soviets did offer arms to Baluch separatists, many of whom were sheltering in Afghanistan, after the invasion and encouraged them to attack *mujahidin* camps. The insurgents did not take up the offer as it would have jeopardized hitherto cordial Pashtun-Baluch relations in Baluchistan and exposed their community to reprisals. Ahmed Rashid, interview with author, 8 February 2011.

These debates about maintaining control and avoiding retaliation speak to an inherent structural divergence of interests between the host state and the insurgent movement in exile, which uses the state's territory as sanctuary. The incumbent government that the insurgency is opposed to has a systematic cognitive bias in favour of underestimating popular support for the insurgency and overestimating the role of external support, because it is easier to maintain commitment to a counterinsurgency campaign if it is convinced that it is not too late to 'win hearts and minds.'⁶⁶⁵ Then also, the perceived external sponsor, if it is militarily weaker, presents a more tempting and tangible target than the elusive guerrilla movement does, to satisfy the incumbent military's desire for a decisive conventional engagement.⁶⁶⁶ These dynamics exert considerable pressure in favour of intervention against host states, and the recent history of guerrilla warfare is replete with examples of such intervention.⁶⁶⁷

It is vital to the interests of guerrilla movements to maintain a continual level of political and, as needed, military activities among their population to remain viable. The sanctuary, although not decisive to success, becomes a useful way in which to build international diplomatic support; to infiltrate funds, weapons and cadres across the border; and, less importantly, to engage in cross-border strikes. The host state, by contrast, even when sympathetic to or actively supporting the insurgent movement, is torn by competing imperatives of state security, particularly when threatened by retaliation. Thus all host states

⁶⁶⁵ The best, and most critical, analysis of how these compulsions play out is in Eqbal Ahmad, "Counterinsurgency." For this specific dynamic, see pages 45-52.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid, 37-38, 50-52.

⁶⁶⁷ For example, the French and Israeli invasion of Suez (with Cairo seen as the sponsor of the Algerian revolutionaries by the former and the Palestinian guerrillas by the latter); South Africa's military campaigns against neighbouring African states to root out the African National Congress (ANC); and the US bombing campaign of Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

have, to differing degrees, attempted to maintain a measure of control over the insurgent movement's activities and to become involved in its politics. For example, all of the Arab states that hosted Palestinian refugees and were at risk of Israeli retaliation – Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon – attempted to exercise control over the PLO's military activities and intervene in its internal politics. The Pakistani state, which viewed the Soviet presence as a direct threat to its security and was buttressed to an extent by US support, was far more accommodating to and supportive of *mujahidin* military activities. Therefore, having already committed to substantial risks in this regard, it was determined to exercise some control over *mujahidin* politics and strategy so that their activities would not develop in an unexpected way that could cause additional provocations and risks to security.⁶⁶⁸ By contrast, and akin to the role of the Arab states, Iran, which did not have a countervailing source of military support, was considerably more restrictive of *mujahidin* activities.⁶⁶⁹

Yet ultimately, regardless of the nature of its debates about unity and division, Pakistan was not dealing with an amorphous Afghan mass to be moulded at its discretion. We have examined, in the preceding sections and chapters, the historical isolation of communities in Afghan society and the autonomous nature of the many uprisings against the government and Soviet invasion. The fact of spontaneous proliferation of many resistance organizations in Afghanistan and in exile, the inability of even the Islamists to unite among themselves over the previous six years, all go to suggest that it was not simply a matter of Pakistan 'keeping

⁶⁶⁸ Undoubtedly, Pakistan like the Arab states also derived benefits from championship of the insurgents' cause; the desire to safeguard such benefits also encouraged intervention in insurgent politics.

⁶⁶⁹ For example, Iran remained an unreliable sanctuary for *mujahidin* operating in the western border areas. Thomas Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Western Hinterland Provinces* (Silver Spring, Md.: Orkand Corporation, 1989), 85-86.

the resistance divided,' but of a resistance that was in a natural state of division. Faced with that situation, the varied impulses in the Pakistan government crystallized into a set of policies whereby, having achieved a modicum of cooperation among *mujahidin* organizations, the government simply did not have a broadly held or strong enough incentive to embark upon the onerous task of trying to create a fully integrated organization. To ascribe such a role to the Pakistan government, in any case, is to subscribe to the 'puppeteer' view of insurgencies: even if it were possible, a fully integrated organization that was forced together *by* Pakistan could never have commanded credibility among a majority of Afghans. Such indeed was the fate of the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) that came into being after the Soviet withdrawal.⁶⁷⁰

However, if Pakistan's motivations and policies were more mixed than is usually acknowledged, its decision to channel aid through seven organizations did exacerbate the competition, and hence the divisions, between them. As the volume of external aid flows from the US and Saudi Arabia increased substantially in the mid-1980s, it enhanced the incentives for one-upmanship and increased the individual sustainability of parties as well as the perceived costs of agreeing to another's leadership.⁶⁷¹ The further role of external aid in affecting the types of political linkages between the parties and their constituents will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁶⁷⁰ See Eqbal Ahmad, "Stalemate at Jalalabad," in Bengelsdorf et al, 493-99.

⁶⁷¹ The alliances under Nabi and Sayyaf, for example, both broke up over the question of how joint funds were being used. Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 246, 266-67. This tendency was present among commanders as well as parties, such as in the widespread exaggeration of casualty figures to impress both donors and political constituencies.

Linkages and Parallel Administration

While characterizing the Afghan *jihad*, I discussed how the success of modern revolutionary movements has been contingent on their ability to out-administer, rather than outfight the incumbent government. The movement must spend time organizing politically among the populace, creating parallel administrative structures that demonstrate the ability of insurgents to govern on a more equitable and participatory basis than the government, and that serve as a foundation from which to propagate revolutionary ideology and further the moral isolation of the government. Such a process precedes the armed struggle, and can take years. As Nguyen Van Thieu observes, “The core of the peasant question is that it cannot be hurried. If the peasants do not understand the situation, it is dangerous and often useless for us to make a move by ourselves...[even if] the conditions are favorable [that] does not mean you can simply grab a rifle and go out to tell the peasants that everything is going to change.”⁶⁷²

Prior to their exile, the Kabul University Islamists had done some political work, but much of it had been limited to the military.⁶⁷³ The idea of carrying out a military coup had seemed to them, as it had to Daoud and the communists, a quick and easy route to power. However, after the government’s crackdown the Islamists were arrested, killed or driven into exile. The movement next decided to attempt a popular uprising in several provinces of Afghanistan in 1975. Mohammad Es’haq accompanied Masud and a small group of Islamists, mostly students, to Panjsher in accordance with the plan. His account of the failed uprising vividly

⁶⁷² Thieu, “Our Strategy for Guerrilla War,” 312-13.

⁶⁷³ There was also some public outreach in the provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Paktia.

illustrates the folly of armed action conducted with virtually no preparatory political work, and is worth quoting at length:

The district headquarters of the Daud regime was captured and more than 20 bolt-action guns and some boxes of ammunition were seized. The road to Kabul was blocked and the telephone line was cut...

The local people thought that a coup had taken place and the Daud regime was overthrown... To their dismay they heard [the] normal program on the radio and this was enough to realize that Kabul was still under Daud's control. This was worrying to them... the people were afraid of government reprisals against themselves...

The Mujahideen committed a mistake when they blew up the cash safe of the government's bank in broad daylight. This confused the people as to whether the group was fighting for a political cause or as a band of ordinary robbers.

Not everyone was confused... A group of students from Rukha high school who were affiliated with the movement... volunteered to join...

As time passed the tension mounted. Communist activists, playing on the fear of the people of Daud's reprisal, encouraged them to react... Thirty-six people scattered over a distance of 50 kilometers could not control a hostile population...

It was decided to retreat to the mountains. The group were followed by a huge crowd of local people... interested in seeing the Mujahideen leave... some... attacked the Mujahideen...

The group at the mouth of the valley also faced the local people's uprising... Some of them were killed... and others were captured and handed over to the defeated government forces... By nightfall the government was in control of the situation...

After the first day the people were divided about the fairness of the way they had treated the Mujahideen... and not help[ed] them. They were impressed by the Mujahideen's restrain[t] not to shoot at the people while they were treated badly...⁶⁷⁴

Clearly, the local people were not predisposed to be hostile to the guerrillas. But, excepting a few students, the guerrillas had made no effort to acquaint them with their aims and objectives, or to persuade them of the need for or desirability of armed struggle. When the people began

⁶⁷⁴ Mohammad Es'haq, "Evolution of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan Part (3): Panjshir Uprising of 1975," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1 February 1989, 6-7.

to fear that the government would punish them for harbouring guerrillas, they turned hostile. After that, it was easy enough for the government to capture or drive out the guerrillas.⁶⁷⁵

The guerrillas' failure is suggestive of the limitations of *foco* theory, the notion that an isolated guerrilla band can, simply by virtue of successful armed action, act as a 'focus' that sparks a popular uprising. Developed by Regis Debray and attempted in practice by Che Guevara in his ill-fated Bolivian insurgency, the theory presupposes that the population is held back from opposing the government essentially by fear of its coercive power, and that the primary goal therefore is to shatter this myth of invincibility.⁶⁷⁶ Critics note that the theory reverses the classic understanding of the relationship between political work and military action in the revolutionary process and has led revolutionary movements to embark on poorly organized insurgencies that commanded little popular support.⁶⁷⁷ In some cases, pre-existing guerrilla groups with tenuous popular roots have been able to benefit from a windfall of popular support caused by an external event, but the resulting popularity has tended to mask underlying organizational weaknesses.⁶⁷⁸

Es'haq mentions that in their subsequent years in exile, the Islamist activists recognized some of their mistakes and learned from the example of other contemporary movements. However, as is evident from the earlier discussion of the uprisings, and as Es'haq acknowledges, it was

⁶⁷⁵ For a comparable account from Peru, see Bejar, *Peru 1965*, 95-101, 114-16.

⁶⁷⁶ See Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (London: Penguin, 1968). Hizb (Hikmatyar)'s Muzammil expresses a similar emphasis: see Muzammil, *Reasons of Russian Occupation*, 23-28, 65-68.

⁶⁷⁷ Chaliand, ed., *Guerrilla Strategies*, 25-28, and Eqbal Ahmad, "Radical but Wrong," in Bengelsdorf et al, 24-35.

⁶⁷⁸ Such was the case for the Palestinian guerrillas after the Battle of Karama, discussed earlier.

not any redoubled effort at organization but rather the Saur Revolution which brought a windfall of popular support to the Islamists:

The coup of 1978 changed the situation. Within a few days, people started to flee the country. The two parties, Jami'at and Hezb, provided sanctuary for them... The same people who had raised [their voices] against the movement in 1975 became its supporters. Why such a big change had taken place in such a short span of time? The answer to that was the oppressive rule of the communists who forced the people to take sides with the movement.⁶⁷⁹

This essentially spontaneous support grew further after the Soviet invasion. The Islamists, having already established themselves in exile, gained many supporters among the refugees that now came flooding across the border. Later, the seven *tanzimat* continued to benefit, inside and outside Afghanistan, from their joint monopoly over funding and weapons through Pakistan. However, this monopoly did not result in the creation of more cohesive organizations. More typically, commanders would pledge only nominal loyalty to a particular party, to gain access to Pakistan-sourced supplies, or because a local rival had joined a different party.⁶⁸⁰ In general, political commitment was less important than the role of traditional networks – tribe, ethnicity, sect (Sunni or Shi'i), status as *'ulama*, membership of a Sufi brotherhood – in determining affiliation to a party. The way these dynamics developed differed from place to place, and a brief regional overview should help clarify some of the major trends. Invariably, this overview glosses over a great deal of variety; in most areas there were many exceptions to prevailing trends in organization and party linkages.

⁶⁷⁹ Mohammad Es'haq, "Evolution of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan Part (4): Life in exile from 1975 to 1978," *Afghan News*, vol. 5, no. 4, 15 February 1989, 5-6.

⁶⁸⁰ As a Jami'at analysis acknowledges, "When Afghanistan was invaded the people of each region rose up against the invaders haphazardly. Although some political parties had been active before the invasion, they had no influence on the society. Different parties intensified their activities and for differing reasons people joined them. The resistance started fragmented, pride in your party meant competition with another party." Jami'at, "Analysis of the Present Situation," 22.

Regional Trends

The southern provinces, especially around Kandahar, formed the ancient heartland of the Durrani tribal confederation, from which the rulers of Afghanistan had hailed since the founding of the state. In these regions, tribal structures remained strong and there had been little penetration of modern politics: the liberal parliament period of the 1960s, the coups in the 1970s, were largely seen as Kabul affairs.⁶⁸¹ Although there were reportedly concerns among the Durrani aristocracy at Daoud's takeover and proclamation of a republic,⁶⁸² and resistance to the central government grew steadily after the Saur Revolution, it only became widespread after the Soviet invasion.⁶⁸³

With the Kandahar area becoming the centre of resistance in the south, practically all *mujahidin* parties, major and minor, started to operate in the region, while maintaining political offices in exile in Quetta. Party affiliations, however, remained nominal and cross-party cooperation relatively common.⁶⁸⁴ Jami'at commander Mulla Naqib Akhund fought as a sub-commander for Harakat-i Inqilab's Mulla Lala Malang, the dominant regional commander. After the latter was seriously wounded, *mujahidin* from both Jami'at and Harakat

⁶⁸¹ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces*, 37-38.

⁶⁸² Memo, "Coup D'etat in Afghanistan," Deputy Commissioner, Quetta-Pishin, to Secretary, Government of Baluchistan Home Department, 19 July 1973.

⁶⁸³ Initial concerns after the Saur Revolution were also more tribal than political, as it had removed the last vestige of the Durrani monarchy and replaced it with a Ghilzai Pashtun ruler.

⁶⁸⁴ One such example is reported in Al-Nur, the journal of Hizb-i Islami Khalis, in March 1986. See "Mujahideen Press at a Glance," *Afghan Realities*, no.54, 1 April 1986. The Orkand report on the southern provinces observes: "Here, camps of different parties are pitched within a hundred yards of each other with little or no tensions between them. Political credentials will never be as important as religious credentials." Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces*, 160.

fought under Naqib Akhund's direction.⁶⁸⁵ Another important commander, Haji Abdul Latif, claimed allegiance to both Mahaz and Khalis' Hizb.⁶⁸⁶

The tribe remained a more important source of identification, and of rivalry. As one commander observed: "It doesn't matter what political party you belong to here in Quetta or Qandahar. You are first an Achakzai or a Noorzai. It is loyalty to the tribe that counts."⁶⁸⁷ Tribal rivalries were mitigated by the melting pot culture of the area, the relatively hierarchical structure of the Durrani tribes, and most importantly the role of *'ulama*. The southern *'ulama* proved capable of fulfilling their traditional role of bridging inter-tribal differences, often engaging in extensive negotiations for carrying out joint military operations. Moreover, as many *khans* went into exile early in the war, the *'ulama* took up a more direct political role, both in fighting (as the names of some of the prominent commanders suggest) and governing. By 1985, the resistance established a number of joint committees, of which the most important was the Committee of the *'Ulama*, which had the final say on most judicial, political and military matters.⁶⁸⁸ Thus, the prevailing trend of the resistance in the south was that of tribal coalitions with an enhanced role for the *'ulama*, but otherwise retaining relatively traditional modes of organization.⁶⁸⁹ Party organization and linkages remained very weak.

⁶⁸⁵ Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Southern Provinces*, 160-61.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 160.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

⁶⁸⁹ Some efforts were made at, for example, providing schooling, but only in the traditional religious curriculum. See "Interview with Mullah Masood, Commander of the National Liberation Front in the Kandahar Province," 7.

The south-eastern and eastern regions, like the southern provinces, formed part of the Pashtun tribal heartland. Nonetheless, there were important differences in the organization of the resistance compared to that in the south. As discussed in chapter one, the eastern Pashtun tribes were significantly more egalitarian and fractious than the Durranis.⁶⁹⁰ While in the south *'ulama* came to political prominence during the *jihad*, the eastern border *'ulama* had a long history of activist politics against the British Empire and retained this prominence during the *jihad*. Traditional *'ulama* in this region also had greater ideological sympathy for the Kabul University Islamists and the notion of 'Islamic revolution,' however vaguely defined.⁶⁹¹ Before Daoud's takeover, the Islamists had engaged in some outreach in the provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Paktia. Proximity to Kabul likely also contributed to a greater degree of political involvement for some Afghans in that region.

Thus, unlike in the south, in the east, particularly in these provinces and in Kabul city, there were a number of ideologically committed cadres of Islamist parties. Hizb-i Islami (Hikmatyar), Hizb-i Islami (Khalis) and Jami'at could all claim such supporters. However, these still numbered in the minority among their total followers in these provinces, particularly for Khalis, who had substantial tribal support. The Orkand report on the eastern provinces argues that:

The general pattern in the East is for one party to have paramountcy within a particular valley or otherwise defined region, but with small pockets of the other parties sprinkled throughout the area. In the East, this "checkerboarding" of influence is

⁶⁹⁰ As observed earlier, the Ghilzai, whose presence extended from south to southeast, had similarly egalitarian structures.

⁶⁹¹ A prominent example is Maulvi Yunas Khalis, whose background was discussed in the previous chapter.

driven by the fact that the rank and file Mujahideen are personally loyal to specific local field commanders, rather than one of the established Resistance parties.⁶⁹²

Moreover, a greater degree of party affiliation in some cases did not result in lessening of tribal rivalries. Rather, party affiliation became yet one more reason for rivalry and often reinforced existing rivalries. Several incidents of internecine fighting between Jami'at and Hikmatyar's Hizb – usually blamed on the latter – occurred in this region.

The overall organization of the resistance remained strongly informed by tribal forms, with Islamic adaptations such as that of sending family and other dependents into sanctuary in Pakistan.⁶⁹³ In the areas closest to the border, the *mujahidin* did not develop significant parallel administrative structures. Deliberate Soviet efforts to devastate and depopulate the border areas, so as to cut off *mujahidin* supply lines, severely diminished both the ability and the need for efforts in this regard.⁶⁹⁴ The border *mujahidin* remained dependent on Pakistan for some 80% of their weapons, ammunition and even food, following the collapse of the agricultural economy of the area.⁶⁹⁵ By contrast, in the interior parts of eastern provinces, there was more *mujahidin* administration. Commanders such as Amin Wardak of Mahaz are credited with building a “regional agricultural, educational, and political infrastructure that enables the Mujahideen to coexist with the local population without becoming a burden to

⁶⁹² Johnson et al, *Afghanistan: The Eastern Provinces*, 271.

⁶⁹³ Namely the Islamic concept of *hijra*, which had inspired the *hijrat* movement in opposition to British rule in India discussed in chapter one.

⁶⁹⁴ Johnson et al, *The Eastern Provinces*, 150-51.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 274.

them.⁶⁹⁶ These differences will be elaborated further when discussing the impact of US and Pakistan aid on linkages and administration.

In Kabul city, the *mujahidin* were not able to escape DRA and Soviet counterinsurgency efforts to the extent of being establish a viable urban insurgency. However, they maintained enough networks within the city to carry out sabotage and bomb attacks, and had excellent intelligence sources within the government. Hizb (Khalis) Commander Abdul Haq's dispatches from Kabul indicate intimate familiarity with the political and military activities of the DRA, as is evident in the following extracts:

On September 11, 1988 a meeting was convened by Abdul Rashid in the former house of Noor Mohammad Taraki. 162 members of the Khalqi Party attended. During this meeting six resolutions were read out by [Defence Minister] Shah Nawaz Tanay [as follow:]...That same night [Interior Minister] Gulabzoi went to the Presidential palace and had a confrontation with [President] Najib. The Army surrounded the palace...and an emergency situation was declared...On September 24th, a secret note from Gulabzoi was delivered to the Soviet Embassy...[stating] that they must remove Najib from power...The letter apparently upset the Soviets, because Najib was sent a copy of this letter from Gorbachev. He then quickly issued three orders...⁶⁹⁷

Similarly, later reports identify the exact composition of the palace guard, observing that is it made up of forces that, owing to their history, cannot defect to the *mujahidin*, and accurately detail the rising tensions between President Najibullah and Shah Nawaz Tanai, which eventually resulted in a coup attempt by the latter.⁶⁹⁸

The situation in the northern regions, ranging from the Panjsher valley in Kapisa in the north-east, across the northern provinces and down to Herat in the north-west, was very different.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ *Kabul Situation Report*, no. 2, 16 November 1988, 1-2.

⁶⁹⁸ *Kabul Situation Report*, no. 3, 28 November 1988, and *Kabul Situation Report*, no. 4, 13 December 1988.

These regions consisted for the most part of detribalized groups of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Pashtuns.⁶⁹⁹ Community networks were still important, and *'ulama* played an important role in society; a strong network of *'ulama* was the reason why Nabi's Harakat-i Inqilab was by far the largest party in the north at the start of the war.⁷⁰⁰ Attenuation of tribal bonds, however, made many of these groups more receptive to modern forms of organization. Organizational weakness and prominent incidents of infiltration of Harakat-i Inqilab fronts led to most of its support shifting to Jami'at-i Islami and, to a lesser extent, Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami. By the mid to late 1980s, Jami'at emerged as the paramount force across the north, enjoying a level of ascendancy comparable to that attained by Fatah in the PLO.⁷⁰¹ Jami'at commanders in the north were largely left free to develop their own organizational models and the highest degree of consolidation achieved was that by Commander Ahmad Shah Masud in the northeast. His example is thus indicative of the further limits of linkages and parallel administration among the *mujahidin*.

Masud had learned some lessons since his experience in 1975. When he returned to Panjsher after the Saur Revolution, his first move was to try to gain the support of leading *'ulama* and community elders for his movement.⁷⁰² Masud and his Islamist companions made it a point to take up local grievances in developing their agenda and gradually the Panjsheri community

⁶⁹⁹ There were also some tribal Uzbeks, Turkmen and Kirghiz; the last fled to Pakistan at the start of the Soviet occupation.

⁷⁰⁰ Johnson et al, *The Northern Provinces*, 235.

⁷⁰¹ Such widespread dominance was not attained by any group in other parts of the country, nor did Jami'at achieve similar importance elsewhere.

⁷⁰² Peter Bayon DeNeufville, "Ahmad Shah Massoud and the Genesis of the Nationalist Anti-Communist Movement in Northeastern Afghanistan, 1969-1979" (PhD diss., King's College, 2006), 162-79.

began to see him as an effective representative of their interests.⁷⁰³ Masud's increasingly effective guerrilla attacks close to Kabul provoked major Soviet operations in the Panjsher valley. Soviet inability to root out Masud and his followers greatly enhanced his military reputation in the region and helped turn him into something of a folk hero. After negotiating a ceasefire with Soviets in 1983, Masud devoted his efforts to strengthening his military and political infrastructure and extending his influence across the region.

Unlike in the south and southeast, Masud developed a fairly centralized large-scale organization. At the village level, community militias and garrisons were responsible for local defence, but above that were Masud's central forces (*motahraks*), professionally trained and highly motivated mobile guerrillas capable of fighting outside their native regions.⁷⁰⁴ The effectiveness of his military model enabled Masud to bring neighbouring commanders and regions under his sway. Later in the war he formed a Supervisory Council (Shura-i Nazar) for the North, intended to enhance regional coordination and open to commanders of all parties. The Shura-i Nazar included three sub-councils for the commanders, *'ulama* and elders, and seven committees for finance, education, law, military, medical, cultural and political affairs.⁷⁰⁵ Masud also formed a military police intended to discipline *mujahidin* and prevent abuses against the civilian population.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Johnson et al, *The Northern Provinces*, 231.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, 231-35.

⁷⁰⁶ Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 283-84.

While Masud consistently stressed the interrelatedness of political and military activity, owing to shortage of trained personnel the civil functions of his complex infrastructure remained dependent on NGO activities and humanitarian aid.⁷⁰⁷ Masud's attempts to disseminate Islamist ideology to his followers through education and employment of political commissars also had limited success.⁷⁰⁸ Despite successfully identifying himself and his companions as champions of local causes, Masud had not succeeded in adapting Islamist ideology in a way that most of his followers could identify with.

Other Jami'at commanders in the north and northwest attempted to emulate Masud's model, although none managed to equal it. In the north-western province of Herat, Jami'at's Ismail Khan emerged as the dominant regional commander. Towards the end of the war, Ismail Khan established a Supervisory Council of the West patterned after Masud's northern council. On the whole though his organization remained more military dominated and patronage based than that of Masud.⁷⁰⁹

In the centre, in Hazarajat, the Hazara Shi'a remained separate from the rest of the resistance and, after the liberation of the region early in the war, did not play a significant role in operations against the government. The Shura, initially the preeminent force, set its aim as the administration and defence of the region until the establishment of an Islamic republic in the country.⁷¹⁰ Its model of governance was to establish a bureaucracy resembling that of the old

⁷⁰⁷ Dorrnsoro, *Revolution Unending*, 133.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, 128-29, and Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud*, 288.

⁷⁰⁹ Johnson et al, *The Western Hinterland Provinces*, 88-89.

⁷¹⁰ Ibrahim, "Failure of a Clerical Proto-State," 2-3.

Kabul regime, with agencies to provide education, communication and health services and to carry out taxation.⁷¹¹ However, the traditionalist *'ulama* who came to dominate the Shura had little experience of governance or political organization and lacked both resources and professional cadres.⁷¹² Consequently, the Shura's demands on the population exceeded what it was able to provide them, both in ideological and practical terms. The Shura's military structure similarly remained poorly organized, highly dependent on uncommitted local strongmen.⁷¹³ Its organizational weaknesses were a major factor in its subsequent displacement by the Islamist organizations.

Among the Islamists, Nasr was arguably the best organized. The party published magazines to spread its ideology, established schools, mosques and libraries, preached for leftist socioeconomic reforms, and provided political indoctrination and military training to recruits.⁷¹⁴ By contrast, Sipah was less cohesive and more military-focused;⁷¹⁵ it nonetheless also carried out political activities, such as in its land reforms and development program in Shahrستان district.⁷¹⁶ Yet although these parties expanded their reach in the 1980s, their networks were still only limited to parts of Hazarajat. The region remained politically fragmented until the Soviet withdrawal.

Ties between Commanders, Parties and the Population

⁷¹¹ Ibid, 2, and Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, 142-43.

⁷¹² Ibrahim, "Failure of a Clerical Proto-State," 10-14.

⁷¹³ Ibid, 12-14.

⁷¹⁴ Ibrahim, "At the Sources of Factionalism," 12-13.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid, 13.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid, 19-20

Broadly speaking, while there were important differences in centralization and consolidation of institutions between northern and southern regions, the links between parties and commanders remained relatively weak. Some Islamist commanders certainly had strong commitment to the institution of the party, while others were committed to individual party leaders by strong ties of *qaum* – whether defined by tribe, community or occupation. However, the majority of commanders were largely independent of party policy and discipline; as mentioned earlier, many joined particular parties only to gain access to resources or in competition with local rivals.⁷¹⁷ Masud’s Shura-i Nazar offers a good example of commander independence: it was essentially a commander-initiated process to enhance cooperation among rival commanders, the great majority of whom were from the same party.⁷¹⁸ Had Jami’at had effective control over commander policies, such an effort should not have been necessary. Only Hikmatyar’s Hizb-i Islami, whose leadership was almost exclusively composed of Islamists, tried to subordinate commanders to party discipline and ideology, periodically purging recalcitrant members.⁷¹⁹ While Hizb enjoyed some success in this respect, these strict demands also limited its growth; over time, it lost many supporters to more inclusive parties.

Ties between commanders and the populace varied considerably. Many commanders essentially took the place of *khans*, keeping open guesthouses, settling disputes and maintaining personalized, family-based relationships. Unlike traditional *khans*, commanders

⁷¹⁷ Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, “Afghanistan: The Politics of the Resistance Movement,” October 1981.

⁷¹⁸ Johnson et al, *The Northern Provinces*, 232-33.

⁷¹⁹ Nonetheless, Hizb often recruited indiscriminately, making the subsequent attempts to enforce discipline that much harder. See, for example, Giustozzi, “The Missing Ingredient,” 14-16.

could place greater reliance on coercion to enforce compliance, except in those areas where *'ulama* councils acted as a restraining influence. While generally supportive of the establishment of schools and health facilities by private groups and NGOs, these commanders had no organization that could provide such services.

Other commanders and party leaders, particularly those with modern education like the Islamists, tried to create more institutionalized structures, both for the military effort and to provide such services directly. In the latter stages of the war, education became a major priority for Jami'at activists, with 15 high schools established in the north.⁷²⁰ Even the most organized parties, however, suffered from a shortage of trained personnel and were heavily dependent on NGO support. All in all, some 1,200 primary and secondary level schools were established in *mujahidin* liberated areas, most with the help of NGOs like the USAID funded Educational Centre of Afghanistan, the Swedish and Norwegian funded Afghanistan Educational Committee and the Arab funded Organization of the World Muslim League.⁷²¹

In exile in Pakistan, all of the parties tried to carry out political activities among the refugees. Most accounts suggest Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami was the best organized.⁷²² Hizb set up a number of schools for refugee youth where it sought to provide political indoctrination as well as education. Many students were eventually recruited into the Lashkar-i Isar (Army of Sacrifice), a conventional military arm Hizb formed in exile. Jami'at and Ittihad-i Islami were

⁷²⁰ Johnson et al, *The Northern Provinces*, 240

⁷²¹ M. Yaqub Roshan, "Afghan Educational Jihad," *The Front*, vol. 1, no. 9, October-December, 16-19, and "U.S. Program Helps Review Education in Afghanistan," *Liberation Front*, vol. 4, no 3, April-May 1990, 20-22.

⁷²² Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, "Afghanistan: The Politics of the Resistance Movement," October 1981, and Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 276-77.

also relatively well-organized. According to a Mahaz source, some 15 high schools were set up in Pakistan by the various *mujahidin* parties, graduating some 200 students annually.⁷²³ However, for the most part refugees received education in schools set up by the refugee administration, NGOs and in Pakistani schools.⁷²⁴ Similarly, the parties were bypassed regarding humanitarian assistance, which was provided direct by the Commissionerate to individual households. The refugees in Peshawar were obliged to take membership in one of the seven parties to be eligible for aid; unsurprisingly, although they were enthusiastic in support of the *jihad* in general, this mass party enrolment did not indicate any specific political commitment.

Linkages and Parallel Administration: The US, Pakistan and the Aid Effort

Criticisms of Pakistani and US political involvement in the *jihad* generally centre on the issue of the ISI and CIA favouring some parties over others.⁷²⁵ According to this narrative, Pakistan consistently favoured the ‘fundamentalists,’ especially Hikmatyar, over the ‘moderates’ and the US made the mistake of ignoring the issue when it should have intervened, both in its own interests and those of the Afghans.⁷²⁶ These criticisms may not be invalid, but they miss the broader and more important issue of how the nature of the aid effort itself affected the political development of the *mujahidin*.

⁷²³ M. Yaqub Roshan, “Afghan Educational Jihad,” 17.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ This criticism is in addition to that over the choice of seven parties, which I have already addressed.

⁷²⁶ For example, Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 166-86.

In the US, many staffers in the Reagan administration and their allies in Congress were enthusiastic supporters of the *mujahidin*, seeing in the embrace of guerrilla insurgencies against communist governments a poetic riposte to decades of Soviet support of left-wing revolutions. Yet US understanding of revolutionary war had originated from a negative posture, as the defender of established order and practitioner of counterinsurgency.⁷²⁷ In this perspective, revolutionary theorists have argued, US understanding of the nature of revolutionary movements became distorted. Such distortions included an overemphasis on military rather than political organization; the assumption that value commitment could be coerced, or at best, bought through utilitarian dispensation of services unallied to any ideological program; and the belief that external involvement originated and was vital to the continued survival of such movements.⁷²⁸

When the US, in adopting the ‘Reagan Doctrine’ in the 1980s, came to support its own insurgencies, these biases became evident in its policies.⁷²⁹ US priorities involved the provision of arms and training to improve the insurgent movement’s military effectiveness, provision of funds to improve its bureaucracy and media skills, and planning of the war effort to help it identify high value targets. The US-trained military officers of the ISI evinced a similar understanding: Brig. Yousaf considered outside support to be “possibly the most

⁷²⁷ The greatest influence in this respect of course was the US commitment in Vietnam.

⁷²⁸ For major influences on US conceptualization of revolutionary movements, see David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport: Praeger, 1964) and Robert Thompson, *Defeating Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966). For an excellent critique, see Nasser Hussain, “Counterinsurgency’s Comeback,” *Boston Review*, 1 January 2010.

⁷²⁹ Reagan staffer Peter Rodman discusses the somewhat haphazard development of the Reagan Doctrine, which originated in neoconservative appeals to support ‘democratic insurgencies’ against communist governments. Few of the texts that he cites suggest a more sophisticated understanding of these insurgencies beyond the idea that ‘they want freedom.’ Rodman, *More Precious than Peace*, 259-88.

important” criterion for success in guerrilla war and saw his own role as that of the master planner and strategist of the war.⁷³⁰ The ISI’s criteria for distribution were purely military: the proximity of commanders to strategic targets such as Kabul, frequency of successful attacks, party efficiency and logistics, and the extent of such activities as the sale of arms.⁷³¹

The importance of these contributions should not be underestimated. At the start of the war the *mujahidin* were poorly armed and had difficulty in effectively harassing Soviet camps and armoured columns.⁷³² In interviews and publications, *mujahidin* commanders and party leaders frequently emphasized the need to acquire better weapons.⁷³³ By contrast, after a major step up of aid in 1985 and 1986, the Afghan *jihad* had become arguably the best-equipped insurgency in the world, with access to numerous sophisticated weapons.⁷³⁴ In 1986-87, when the Soviet and DRA armies embarked on major military operations, weapons like the Stinger helped the *mujahidin* not only to weather a dangerous period but to extend their safe havens and go on the offensive. In general, the large volume of weapons and supplies allowed the *mujahidin* to sustain a much higher level of engagements than they would have been able to otherwise,⁷³⁵ and provided some compensation for the lack of coordinated military action. Similarly, humanitarian aid fulfilled a pressing need that the *mujahidin* were

⁷³⁰ Yousaf and Adkin, 64-65.

⁷³¹ Ibid, 104-105.

⁷³² Chaliand, “The Bargain War in Afghanistan,” 339-41.

⁷³³ For example, Jami’at-i Islami, “Afghan Resistance: Achievements and Problems” (Jami’at-i Islami Afghanistan, January 1986), 12-13.

⁷³⁴ Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War*, 294-323, 346-49, and Milton Bearden, interview with author, 15 April, 2011.

⁷³⁵ In the northern provinces, which largely owing to prohibitive logistics costs received fewer supplies, *mujahidin* units typically engaged in skirmishes once or twice a month, far less often than in the eastern border provinces. Johnson et al, *The Northern Provinces*, 246-51.

having difficulty in meeting, owing to lack of infrastructure and trained personnel, and provided succour to civilians and internal refugees in *mujahidin*-controlled areas.⁷³⁶

However, such assistance did little to further the process of revolutionary legitimation that I have discussed in this chapter, and in fact was counterproductive to it. External aid misaligned incentives and encouraged the instrumental nature of commander loyalty to political parties. Commitment often depended solely on who could provide the most arms, and there was frequent switching between parties on this basis. A glut of weapons and aid often led to looser, less disciplined organizations. These dynamics are evident in a micro-comparison of trends among eastern provinces commanders. Border commanders received 80% of their arms, ammunition and food from Pakistan, while those further in the interior received 50% externally and 50% locally.⁷³⁷ The latter tended to be more efficient in the use of heavy weapons and frugal in ammunition consumption; they showed greater awareness of the issues raised by the presence of a non-combatant population; and they made greater efforts to develop an agricultural, educational and political infrastructure that would allow them to coexist with the population without becoming a burden.⁷³⁸

The abundance of aid further incentivized parties to rely on it to secure commander allegiances, rather than expending time and effort in trying to forge deeper ties.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁶ See, for example, Jami'at-i Islami, "Analysis of the Present Situation," 13-16, and Jami'at-i Islami, "Afghan Resistance," 14.

⁷³⁷ Johnson et al, *The Eastern Provinces*, 274-75.

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Sayyaf's well-funded Ittihad, which lacked a significant social base in the country, was particularly notorious for this opportunistic style of recruitment.

Simultaneously, it reoriented the focus of their political activities outward, in competing for the approval of donors. With the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees providing for the basic needs and education of the refugees, USAID and other organizations helping with the above and also funding party bureaucracies,⁷⁴⁰ and the CIA and ISI providing for war needs, the parties in Peshawar were essentially independent of the refugees. They had no need to establish a degree of taxation and provide a degree of services, since these needs were met externally. Thus organic political ties, which could only be forged through a repeated process of interaction with the refugees, remained weak. While the latter respected the military role of *mujahidin* leaders, they remained unconvinced of their political agendas. Clearly, even if the US had prioritized *mujahidin* politics, no amount of tinkering with the aid program or funding of different *mujahidin* leaders could have produced such ties.⁷⁴¹

Similarly, the ISI undoubtedly provided valuable military training to the *mujahidin*.⁷⁴² ISI operational teams sometimes accompanied *mujahidin* on important missions,⁷⁴³ and the agency tried to cajole *mujahidin* leaders and commanders into following its campaign strategy so as to cause the maximum political damage to the Soviets. Undoubtedly, Brig. Yousaf's tactical insights were oftentimes sharper than those of the *mujahidin*.⁷⁴⁴ But reliance on ISI direction had the effect of hampering the development of the *mujahidin*'s own strategies and

⁷⁴⁰ For the effects of aid in instrumentalizing and depoliticizing an insurgent movement in a very different institutional context, see Anne Le More, *International Assistance to the Palestinians After Oslo: Political Guilt, Wasted Money* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁷⁴¹ After Soviet withdrawal, the US did play a greater role in policy, pushing Pakistan to bypass the parties and deal directly with the commanders. This shift in emphasis only reinforced commander autonomy from the populace and entrenched regionalist tendencies.

⁷⁴² Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 114-27.

⁷⁴³ Ibid, 113-15.

⁷⁴⁴ For example, in the *mujahidin*'s failure to sabotage the Salang tunnel, or in Jalaluddin Haqqani's ill-planned attack on Khost. Ibid, 74-75, 160-62.

of subordinating political considerations. Successful insurgency requires awareness not only of what causes the most harm to the enemy, but what makes the movement strongest, which includes winning and consolidating popular support. These criteria were not considered by the ISI in its allocations and, to the extent that they conflicted with military activity, were in fact disincentivized. And in the long run, the perception that the *mujahidin* were taking directions from the ISI would cost them crucial legitimacy as a national liberation movement.

A further effect was on the ISI itself. The agency had played only a peripheral role in the policy debates on Afghanistan in response to the Soviet invasion. The first contacts with Afghan dissidents had been through the Frontier Corps, which had a history of dealing with the tribes and frontier issues. Even after the post-Soviet policy to support the *mujahidin* had been settled on, Zia had originally thought to assign responsibility to the Interior Ministry.⁷⁴⁵ However, with the great quantity of aid flowing to the *mujahidin* from the mid-1980s, the ISI found itself disbursing hundreds of millions of dollars worth of funds and other supplies. Consequently, its importance, both within the military and relative to the foreign ministry steadily increased,⁷⁴⁶ as did its role in determining Afghan policy. As the ISI's main experience in dealing with Afghanistan was running a proxy war, aiding, negotiating between and trying to maintain control over the *mujahidin*, its ascendance would contribute to such factors remaining an important part of Pakistan's Afghan policy. The pre-1979 foreign policy balance, in which support for non-state actors had been a very minor factor, would not easily be restored.

⁷⁴⁵ Roedad Khan, interview with author, 25 April 2010.

⁷⁴⁶ Zia's expanded use of the ISI to monitor domestic opponents complemented these dynamics.

The Geneva Negotiations

Negotiations and National Reconciliation

In the previous chapter, I discussed Pakistan's early diplomatic efforts and the development of the agenda for the Geneva negotiations. The texts relating to refugees, non-interference and guarantees were essentially completed by August 1984, with withdrawal remaining the basic issue of contention. Yet as we shall see in the concluding chapter, when the Soviets eventually gave a realistic timeframe for withdrawal in December 1987, the offer prompted an ultimately unsuccessful scramble to reach some sort of agreement on a broad-based government before withdrawal commenced. This outcome reflected the failure of negotiating efforts over the previous five years to address the internal dimensions of the conflict.

This failure was imbedded in the nature of the Geneva negotiations. The United Nations was organized around member governments and the history of UN-brokered negotiations up to the mid-1980s had been essentially limited to disputes between states.⁷⁴⁷ This emphasis discouraged negotiations over the composition of the Afghan government. While Pakistan initially sought to place the issue on the negotiating agenda, that approach had been rejected by the Soviets and DRA.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁷ It was only towards the end of the 1980s, as the retreat of the Cold War left many countries in a situation of unresolved civil war, that the UN increasingly became involved in negotiations between disputing factions within a state.

⁷⁴⁸ See the discussion in chapter three.

After Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to the leadership of the Soviet Union in 1985, Soviet policy began pushing the DRA to initiate a national reconciliation program by which it could draw in elements of the opposition and broaden its base of support. Simultaneously, Babrak Karmal was replaced as leader of the PDPA by Muhammad Najibullah, former head of KHAD, and the DRA was renamed the Republic of Afghanistan in a renewed effort to distance the government from its original ideological underpinnings. Najibullah inaugurated the program in December 1986: elements included the appointment of non-party members to government posts, such as Prime Minister Hasan Sharq; development of local government organizations in the provinces; holding of national assembly elections; negotiations with and amnesties for some opposition groups; and reorganization of existing bodies like the National Fatherland Front, which included auxiliary organizations intended to represent different social groups including tribes and *'ulama*.⁷⁴⁹ Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze urged Afghanistan's neighbours not to refuse the "conciliatory hand" extended by Kabul.⁷⁵⁰

However, there was virtually unanimous agreement among the US, Pakistan and the various resistance groups that the national reconciliation policy did not amount to a serious attempt to share power.⁷⁵¹ The policy lost considerable credibility as it accompanied a stepped up Soviet-Kabul military campaign. Although, in theory, making political initiatives while simultaneously stepping up military pressure may have seemed like a good way of producing

⁷⁴⁹ See S. Fida Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History: The Afghans and the Rise and Fall of the Ruling Afghan Dynasties and Rulers*, vol. 7 (Peshawar: n.p., 2008), and Johnson et al, *The Southern Provinces*, 85-93.

⁷⁵⁰ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 189.

⁷⁵¹ Such statements are made in every *mujahidin* publication from the period that I have examined, in joint rallies by *mujahidin* leaders, in the publications of independent Afghan organizations and in discussions between Pakistani and US officials as documented in the Reagan Library archives.

results, in practice it only convinced the *mujahidin* that national reconciliation was little more than an attempt to distract international attention and divide opposition ranks in aid of the military offensive.⁷⁵² Najibullah's need to shore up his leadership by publicly assuring recalcitrant party members that the PDPA would remain in charge throughout the process undoubtedly reinforced these impressions.⁷⁵³

As envisioned by Kabul and the Soviet leadership, national reconciliation was undoubtedly aimed to achieve a more inclusive government with the PDPA remaining in control, rather than constituting a realistic exercise in power-sharing. As Najibullah explained in private discussions with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov in November 1986,

When the PDPA achieves national reconciliation...it [is] necessary to keep the posts of Chairman of the State Council, Chairman of the Council of Ministers; the Ministers of Defense, State Security, Internal Affairs, Communications, and Finance; the management of banks, the Supreme Court, the procuracy, and military justice bodies.⁷⁵⁴

Similarly, the program's early focus was to consolidate a 'leftist front' by reaching out to ideologically proximate groups like Afghan Millat and Shola-i Javed, rather than to those commanding credibility with the resistance, like Zahir Shah and the *mujahidin* factions. In practice, the successes of the program were modest, and in those cases where credible non-PDPA individuals did become involved, they had little influence in the central government.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² For example, "Gorbachev's New Strategy in Afghanistan," *The Front*, vol. 1, no. 5, January-February 1988, 38-49.

⁷⁵³ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 182-85.

⁷⁵⁴ "Memorandum from KGB Chief Viktor M. Chebrikov, USSR Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, USSR Defense Minister Marshal Sergei L. Sokolov, and CPSU Central Committee International Relations Secretary Anatoly Dobrynin to CPSU Politburo, 13 November 1986," in "More East Bloc Sources on Afghanistan," 251.

⁷⁵⁵ Yunas, *Afghanistan: A Political History*, vol. 7, and Johnson et al, *The Southern Provinces*, 85-93

Ultimately, national reconciliation suffered from being divorced from the negotiations process. In the absence of a neutral arbiter, and of a policy developed as a result of repeated interactions between pro-government and opposition factions rather than by one party in isolation, there was little reason for the *mujahidin* or their supporters to believe that the process would be credible.

The exclusion of the internal dimensions of the Afghan issue from the negotiating process helps explain the failure to reach consensus on a broad-based government. In other respects, however, Pakistan has itself to blame. Zia ul-Haq recognized as early as 1982 the problems that would arise in reaching a political settlement after Soviet withdrawal. According to the US ambassador, Zia admitted in conversation that

The shape of a future Afghan political structure...was a “blank area” to him. There was no unity among the Afghan insurgents and the exiles and he was at a loss as to how they could be brought together as long as the Soviets were in Afghanistan. He readily agreed with my observation about the catch 22 quality of the situation. How could the Soviets pull out without some sense of the kind of political structure that would succeed the present one? On the other hand the Soviet presence made it impossible to get agreement among the scattered and divergent opponents of the DRA or a consensus on what was sufficiently acceptable to permit all – or most of them – to cease insurgent activities. This required, Zia intimated, a Loya Jirga which could only take place “when peaceful conditions prevailed.”⁷⁵⁶

In another conversation, Zia warned that “Pakistan...must be concerned with what happens when the Soviets withdraw...Each of the resistance organization leaders has aspirations to take over at that time...The Afghans are a tribal society and split between fundamentalist and secular wings. None of the groups in his opinion deserves to take over.”⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁶ Telegram, Ronald Spiers to George Schultz, 3 April 1983.

⁷⁵⁷ Telegram, Ronald Spiers to George Schultz, 14 November 1982.

Despite Zia anticipating these problems in 1982, there is little evidence of any serious planning in the following years to see if a solution was even possible. Consequently, when prompted to respond to Soviet-Kabul national reconciliation policy, Pakistan had no well-developed conception of a settlement that it could invest its efforts in promoting. In discussions with the Soviets, Foreign Minister Yaqub did propose the idea of a neutral interim government headed by Zahir Shah, but this proposal was more an attempt by Yaqub and Zia to explore options.⁷⁵⁸ It did not command the support of the ISI, who argued it would divide the *mujahidin* and hamper the military effort, and who cautioned against trying to win *mujahidin* support unless the Soviets gave prior agreement.⁷⁵⁹ Unsurprisingly, the Soviets made no such commitment. Absent consensus within the government or progress in negotiations, Pakistani negotiators soon reverted to their original justification for entering Geneva; namely, that withdrawal itself would create the conditions necessary for self-determination. Ultimately, this assumption would be proven wrong and Zia's fear only too right.

The Absence of Mujahidin Involvement

Pakistan's monopoly over negotiations on Soviet withdrawal, as with other aspects of its policy discussed here, arose less from any determined policy to control *mujahidin* representation than from a mix of circumstances. As discussed in the previous chapter, Pakistan's early diplomatic efforts via the OIC involved the *mujahidin* as one party to the

⁷⁵⁸ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 195-201.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

conflict, and Pakistan was apprehensive about taking on the burden of representing the *mujahidin* in Geneva, desiring at least that Iran should be involved.

However, the Soviet-DRA stance, absolutely typical of incumbent governments facing insurgency, to refuse to accord any political recognition to the ‘bandits,’ ruled out negotiations with the *mujahidin*. Iran’s stance that it would not get involved in any negotiations without the *mujahidin*, and increasing preoccupation with its war with Iraq, ruled out its involvement. Feeling the need to initiate a diplomatic track, Pakistan had joined Geneva, initially hoping to involve the *mujahidin* through the rubric of refugee consultation.

Faced with resistance to *mujahidin* involvement by both Cordovez and DRA negotiators in Geneva, Pakistani negotiators fairly early conceded that Pakistan could live with a *pro forma* process of consultation.⁷⁶⁰ Thereafter, as negotiations progressed over time, the negotiators developed a natural vested interest in not having their positions reopened and concessions re-examined by groups that had not been involved in the process and whose objections would stall or jeopardize progress. These concerns are evident to some extent in negotiators’ attitudes towards their political superiors; all the more so, regarding the *mujahidin*.⁷⁶¹ Thus, while several diplomats insisted *mujahidin* leaders were regularly briefed about Geneva,⁷⁶² other officials have argued that such briefings revealed little that was not already publicly known.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶⁰ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 159-63.

⁷⁶¹ Such concerns are evident in Riaz M. Khan’s account of Pakistan’s involvement in Geneva.

⁷⁶² Amir Usman, interview with author, 25 January 2010.

⁷⁶³ Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 210-11.

As a consequence, the *mujahidin* had no vested interest in the negotiations process, no experience, shaped through long years of protracted negotiations, of what was possible, and little incentive to agree to concessions which directly affected them and had been made over their heads by others. In the latter days of the Soviet occupation, *mujahidin* leaders adopted negotiating positions that to them seemed eminently just and conciliatory: demanding direct negotiations between *mujahidin* leaders and the Soviets, refusing to include communists in government but making unilateral offers of amnesty, and declaring that Afghanistan would remain nonaligned and maintain relations with the Soviets as before the Saur Revolution.⁷⁶⁴ To the Pakistani negotiators, who had dealt with DRA and Soviet concerns over years, such positions often seemed hopelessly hard-line.

These constraints were beyond the control of the *mujahidin*, but they have themselves to blame for not doing more to influence the negotiating process. The PLO's example is instructive. The organization successfully play its Arab backers against each other to promote what it called 'the independent Palestinian decision' – that no state could negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians, whose sole representative was the PLO. This stance has been criticized for being too inflexible, but it contributed towards preserving the independence of the Palestinian national movement – in itself an enviable accomplishment, given its severe dependence on Arab host states – and underscores the importance the PLO ascribed to negotiations and representation in the national struggle.

⁷⁶⁴ "Hekmatyar Rejects Ceasefire, Coalition with Communists," *Afghan Realities*, no. 73, 15 January 1987, 1-2, and "Declaration of General Amnesty: Hekmatyar," *The Mujahideen Monthly*, vol. 1, January 1986, 8.

By contrast, *mujahidin* leaders have been accused, by Afghans and others, of having little interest in negotiations.⁷⁶⁵ Their public attitude was that while they opposed Geneva because it excluded the main parties to the conflict, the Soviets and the *mujahidin*, and made no provisions for self-determination, Pakistan could negotiate because of the pressures it was facing.⁷⁶⁶ Refusing to let Pakistan represent them would have accomplished little under the circumstances, but they could have done more to influence and constrain Pakistan's role in the process. *Mujahidin* dependence on Pakistan for the war effort was obviously a constraint, but given Pakistani vulnerability over the issue of representation *vis-à-vis* Iran, friendly *mujahidin* relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, who had significant economic influence in Pakistan, and later the possibility of influencing the pro-*mujahidin* lobby in the US Congress, the *mujahidin* had several levers through which they could exert pressure on Pakistan, stay closely involved with the details of negotiations, and shape the process more to their liking. By doing so they would have developed a better understanding of their constraints and of necessary concessions, and been better prepared when the opportunity of Soviet withdrawal arose.

Undoubtedly, their overemphasis on the military rather than the political struggle – the “*jihadi* orientation,”⁷⁶⁷ as one negotiator put it – was responsible for this failure, but it should be seen as a failure of attitude rather than ability. *Mujahidin* leaders could demonstrate considerable

⁷⁶⁵ For example, Sayed Shamsuddin Majrooh, “A Glance at Geneva Talks,” *Afghan Realities*, no. 66, 30 September 1986, 5.

⁷⁶⁶ “Mujahideen’s Position on Geneva Talks,” *ibid.*, no. 57, 16 May 1986, 1-3, and “Press Conference in Peshawar by the Leader of Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan,” *ibid.*, no. 17, 30 June 1984, 1-2.

⁷⁶⁷ Riaz M. Khan, interview with author, 8 April 2010.

political sophistication when required and moreover, they had the option of calling on exiled Afghan diplomats and officials to represent them if needed, such as Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, Shamsuddin Majrooh and Abdul Samad Ghaus. Some of these officials in fact analyzed Geneva closely and suggested diplomatic strategies to pursue.⁷⁶⁸ Their non-involvement is further evidence of *mujahidin* failure to reach out to this class in the national struggle.

Conclusion

The *mujahidin* insurgency was distinguished if anything by its diversity. Commanders ranged from traditional *'ulama* to local strongmen to modern political actors; fronts varied widely in size; hierarchy ranged from the relatively centralized model of Masud to the egalitarian one of the tribes. In a sense the *jihad* was composed of hundreds of separate insurgencies, each responding to its particular conditions and functioning according to its particular logic. Yet despite this diversity, the *mujahidin* displayed great courage and patience in the face of overwhelming odds, consistently managed to retain popular support for the cause and defied predictions to force the withdrawal of Soviet troops. While militarily successful, however, their political weaknesses: fragmentation, weak links between parties, commanders and populace, and insufficient interest in negotiations, would continue to hamper them in the post-Soviet transition.

The preceding analysis of the political configurations and possibilities of the Afghan *jihad*, with reference to contemporary revolutionary and insurgent movements, allows for a more

⁷⁶⁸ For Majrooh's analysis, see Majrooh, "A Glance at Geneva Talks," 1-7. Unsurprisingly, given the presence of such officials in Mahaz, its periodical, *The Front*, devotes considerable space to coverage of negotiations.

holistic understanding of the effects of Pakistan's involvement. Pakistan's role in the disunity of the *mujahidin* emerges as a mixed one, with different voices in government pushing in different directions, while the inherent structural divergence of interests between host state and exiled insurgent movement pressured the government to influence the politics of the *mujahidin*. With a highly fragmented Afghan resistance as the baseline to work with, the policy settled almost by default in a compromise whereby the seven-party system was considered the best way to manage the chaos. Similarly, Pakistan's continuing efforts to direct *mujahidin* strategy and incentivize particular operations, parties or commanders distorted *mujahidin* linkages and organizational emphases from indigenous to foreign bases. Yet changing of Pakistani priorities or greater US oversight, as some commentators have suggested, would hardly have addressed these concerns as they were an inherent outcome of the aid dependency of the *mujahidin*. Finally, Pakistan's decision to represent the *mujahidin* in international negotiations, although taken reluctantly, ultimately inhibited *mujahidin* investment in the negotiations process. Alongside the structural biases of the negotiating format, this lack of investment would contribute towards a failure to reach agreement on a transitional arrangement. But much blame also attaches to the *mujahidin* for failing to prioritize negotiations sufficiently in their political strategy, a failure that extends beyond negotiations to the inability to develop a broad political compact among themselves.

5. Ideology in the *Jihad*

The importance of ideology, and some ways in which various ideological trends did or did not spread in the Afghan resistance, has been hinted at in the preceding chapter. Here, I will elaborate upon this theme and assess the ideological influences of the *jihad*, particularly at their Pakistan-Afghanistan intersection. In one sense, these interactions were not a new development. Much as the history of free movement across the porous frontier, which influenced some of the organizational aspects of the *jihad*, long preceded the Saur Revolution, so too did the history of exchange of thought and ideas across that frontier. In chapter one, we saw how many reformist and nationalist currents existed on both sides of the border. Many Afghan students went to study at the Dar al-‘Ulum Deoband, or at *madrasas* in the frontier inspired by it. Pan-Islamism in the 1910s to 1920s affected Muslims on both sides of the border, while Pashtun nationalism as expressed by the Khudai Khidmatgaran had its complement in the contested nationalisms emanating from Kabul. The Kabul University Islamists were similarly influenced by the writings of and personal contacts with the Jama’at-i Islami of Pakistan.

However, after the Soviet invasion these interactions were intensified and *jihad* came to occupy a much more prominent place in the thinking of some of these movements. Pan-Islamism was revived and, in a more conducive political environment than during the First World War, a number of Arabs and Pakistanis actively fought in Afghanistan, while many more contributed to the *jihad*. The extensive involvement of the Pakistani government with

the *mujahidin* and support from Arab governments created new networks and brought a variety of ideological influences into play.

In this chapter, I will start by briefly recapping the doctrine of *jihad* in Muslim jurisprudence and practice and show how *jihad* became the most prominent discourse characterizing the war from its outset. I examine some of the meanings attributed to *jihad* by different sections of the Afghan resistance, the most salient difference being whether *jihad* required only driving out the invaders or also setting up a specific type of ‘Islamic’ government. The latter perspective leads to a discussion of Islamist ideology, its historical influences and blueprint for state and society. I then consider the variant ideological influences provided by Arab pan-Islamism and Deoband-influenced *‘ulama* in the frontier. Finally, I discuss the role played by the Pakistan government in the context of the unresolved debate over Pakistan’s ideology. I conclude by providing an ideological map of the resistance movement, showing how it remained a mix of variant conceptions that never cohered into a single ideology.

Before proceeding further, it is worth relating the concept of ideology to that of legitimacy discussed in chapter one. As I argued then, different sources of legitimacy may be considered to provide overlapping, but distinct, frames of reference for society. To the extent that an ideology comprises a comprehensive set of ideas, or worldview, by which society may be judged and, ideally, ordered, ideology functions as a potential source of legitimacy.

Ideological commitment may be identified with the ‘active’ rather than the passive (often

traditional) type of legitimacy mentioned earlier:⁷⁶⁹ ideology demands value commitment, and provides a cohesive force that helps bind groups together on the basis of a shared vision for political action.⁷⁷⁰

Jihad in Theory and Practice

The word *jihad* comes from the Arabic root verb *j-h-d* which means ‘to struggle.’ *Jihad* as struggle, in all its forms, is a core Islamic concept. Following a *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad, the ‘*ulama* have tended to divide *jihad* into two categories: the greater *jihad*, representing the inner struggle against the lower desires of the self, and the lesser *jihad*, representing physical struggle including, but not limited to, fighting against the enemies of Islam.⁷⁷¹ It is from this latter aspect that the popular notion of *jihad* as armed conflict derives. As a ‘just war’ it was subject to restrictions which, as in the Christian case, governed both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. The ‘*ulama* developed strict criteria for conduct in *jihad*, based on restrictions laid down by the Prophet Muhammad and his first successor, Abu Bakr, that aimed to minimize the harm done to non-combatants and society in general during the war.⁷⁷² Moreover, a *mujahid* was ideally expected to be driven by a high ethical vision and a desire to seek God’s pleasure, not by baser motivations such as acquiring plunder or temporal power for its own sake.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁹ Political actors who function on the basis of established tradition or patronage are often described as non-ideological.

⁷⁷⁰ See, for example, Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 193-233.

⁷⁷¹ S. Abdullah Schleifer, “Understanding JIHAD: Definition and Methodology,” *Islamic Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 3, January 1983, 125-26.

⁷⁷² For example, Abdullah Sager Alamri, “The doctrine of Jihad in Islam and its application in the context of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Afghanistan, 1979-1988” (PhD diss., University of Idaho, 1990), 131.

⁷⁷³ Schleifer, “Understanding JIHAD,” 124.

As to *jus ad bellum*, an opinion that became particularly common in the late 19th century limited declaration of *jihad* to two cases. First, *jihad* was required in self-defence if a Muslim territory was invaded by a non-Muslim power. Second, *jihad* could be waged by a Muslim state against a neighbouring power that restricted the religious liberties of its people, following an appeal by those so oppressed. In either case, the leader of the Muslim state had to declare *jihad* for the *jihad* to be considered valid.⁷⁷⁴ Particularly after the first generation of Muslim conquests, most wars in which Muslims were involved did not strictly meet these criteria; they were typically described by Muslim historians as temporal, political wars: *harb* (war) or *qital* (fighting) but not *jihad*.

Nonetheless, *jihad* retained a certain popular appeal as denoting a just struggle. As we have seen in chapter one, Muslims engaged in nationalist anti-colonial struggles often used Islamic terms to provide a legitimating frame of reference for their acts of resistance, and *jihad* was one of the terms so employed.⁷⁷⁵ Proclamations of *jihad* were common during tribal uprisings in the northwest Indian frontier, usually against the British, but also occasionally against Muslim adversaries.⁷⁷⁶ Similarly, Muslim rulers would sometimes proclaim *jihad* to lend religious legitimacy to their military campaigns; for example, in Amir Abdur Rahman's wars

⁷⁷⁴ For divergent opinions on this interpretation, see S. Abdullah Schleifer, "Jihad: Modernist Apologists, Modern Apologetics," *Islamic Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1, January 1984, and Jalal, *Partisans of Allah*.

⁷⁷⁵ Eqbal Ahmad observes that "When my brother was expelled from school after raising the nationalist flag, he was welcomed in our village as a *mujahid*. . . Algerian nationalist cadres who engaged France in an armed struggle for seven grueling years were called mujahideen, and their new organ was named *El-Moudjahid*. This newspaper was edited for a time by Frantz Fanon, a non-Muslim, and the struggle was led by a secular organization – Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN). In Tunisia, the national struggle was led by Habib Bourguiba, a die-hard and Cartesian secularist who enjoyed nevertheless enjoyed the title of Mujahidul-Akbar." Eqbal Ahmad, "Jihad International, Inc.," in Bengelsdorf et al, 516.

⁷⁷⁶ For example, in the cases of the *mulla* of Waziristan and Faqir of Ipi discussed in chapter two.

in Kafiristan and Hazarajat.⁷⁷⁷ Such appropriations of *jihad*, whether by insurgent or establishment groups, were typically localized to the group so involved and often rejected by other Muslims.⁷⁷⁸ They frequently coexisted with appeals to nationalism, tribe and other ideological and particularist sources of legitimacy which provided a rich variety of frames of reference by which resistance, or authority, could be viewed. Although there were exceptions, the use of references to *jihad* by a resistance movement did not usually affect its ideological content or organizational forms relative to that of similar, contemporary movements, and had limited pan-Islamic resonance.⁷⁷⁹

Jihad and Resistance in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan after the Saur Revolution, *jihad* was not the only frame of reference for the resistance; it coexisted with nationalist, tribal and community-based appeals throughout the war. As shown in the previous chapter, segmentation by *qaum*, broadly defined to include such categories as tribe, community, and occupational and social networks, remained perhaps the most important determinant of organizational forms within the resistance. But *jihad* became a popular slogan early on and remained the most visible discourse of the resistance, even among its supposedly more secular sections. The reasons for this prominence rest in part in the origins of opposition to the PDPA.

⁷⁷⁷ Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 77-81.

⁷⁷⁸ For example, in the 1857 revolt.

⁷⁷⁹ Exceptions to the former case include Sayyid Ahmad's Tariqat-i Muhammadiyya, which did attempt to determine its strategy and organization according to classical notions. The Ottoman Sultan's declaration of *jihad* during the First World War is an exception to the latter, as it contributed to the popularity of anti-colonial pan-Islamist sentiment among Muslims in Afghanistan and India. Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 104-105.

The Kabul University Islamists had gone into active opposition after a crackdown by Sardar Daoud's government. In their propaganda, they openly denounced the government as un-Islamic and intent on imposing an "infidel socialistic order" through its policies,⁷⁸⁰ but this criticism did not gain much traction. Although Daoud's coup had disrupted the tradition of monarchy, he had personally and in the policies of his government enough in common with the old order to lend such accusations little credibility.⁷⁸¹ Moreover, as Es'haq's account of the failed Panjsher uprising illustrates, the Islamists had little national standing or support for their political aims.⁷⁸²

This situation changed after the PDPA takeover, when the government's targeted repression of religious leaders, the provocatively anti-religious character of some of its proclamations, and its closeness to the avowedly atheist Soviet Union lent credence to the Islamists' claims of its un-Islamic character.⁷⁸³ Opposition to the PDPA coalesced on many other grounds as well, including its attempted social reforms and arbitrary use of repression, and resistance movements originated in localized, uncoordinated forms and generally with reference to local concerns. But precisely because the sources of opposition were localized and diverse, the slogan of *jihad* served to provide a common legitimating framework for the resistance as a whole, cutting across boundaries of ethnicity, sect and tribe.⁷⁸⁴ Thus, unlike the calls for *jihad* against Daoud, those against the PDPA were endorsed by many Afghan 'ulama. With the

⁷⁸⁰ "Gist of Persian Poster," 489-93.

⁷⁸¹ Even Rabbani acknowledged that "Among ourselves we decided that Daoud personally was not a communist, but a Muslim surrounded by communists, who should be eliminated." Kakar, *Afghanistan*, 89.

⁷⁸² Es'haq, "Evolution of the Islamic Movement in Afghanistan Part (3)," 6-7.

⁷⁸³ See the discussion in chapters two and four.

⁷⁸⁴ This effect of *jihad* in providing a unifying framework is analogous, on a larger scale, to the traditional role of religious leaders in bridging societal cleavages during times of crisis.

Soviet invasion, the basis for *jihad* was strengthened. *Jihad* fused with nationalist appeal had a longstanding popular resonance in Afghanistan, drawing on historic episodes of resistance to foreign invasion.⁷⁸⁵ A survey of the voluminous literature produced by the resistance movement, including party publications, reports by independent media centres and interviews with ordinary Afghans, suggests that the belief in the conflict as *jihad* was pervasive among those sympathetic to the resistance.⁷⁸⁶

We may ask why nationalism alone did not suffice in providing a unifying ideology to the resistance. Arguably, it could have, although nationalism in the sense of common Afghan identification, rather than merely resistance to foreign occupation, had been historically weak.⁷⁸⁷ The *mujahidin* did continue to use nationalist slogans in their speeches and publications, though not to the same extent as appeals to *jihad*.⁷⁸⁸ But the appeal to *jihad* had come earlier, as a common basis of opposition to the ‘anti-Islamic’ PDPA. While the subsequent Soviet invasion did provide a strong nationalist basis for opposition, it fit well into this pre-existing narrative of *jihad* and further handicapped the PDPA. Despite the party progressively distancing itself from its original ideology over the course of the 1980s,⁷⁸⁹ the presence of Soviet troops undercut its efforts. The subsequent dominance of parties that

⁷⁸⁵ For example, in resistance to the Sikh Empire’s expansion, or in the First Anglo-Afghan War.

⁷⁸⁶ Sources consulted include the periodicals of independent organizations, such as the Cultural Council of Afghanistan Resistance and the Afghan Information and Documentation Centre, as well as publications of Mahaz, Jabha, Jami’at, the two Hizbs and the Harakat-i Inqilab (Nasrullah Mansur) faction.

⁷⁸⁷ See the discussion in chapter one.

⁷⁸⁸ Traditional nationalist groups like Mahaz employed appeals to nationalism and anti-colonial struggle, but so did Islamist parties like Jami’at and Hikmatyar’s Hizb. For example, “It is understood that it would be foolhardy for small, weak and helpless nations to resist the policies of great powers...This absurd idea has dominated the world and the Afghans for many years. America’s withdrawal from Vietnam was a great event in the view of the man in the street...these wars of liberation have changed the scales upon which matters dealing with the superpowers are weighed.” Muzammil, *Reasons for Russian Occupation*, 71-72.

⁷⁸⁹ Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 256-72.

defined themselves in Islamic terms in the resistance, and the development of the conflict as an international one with pan-Islamic appeal, ensured that the narrative of *jihad* remained uppermost.

For the great majority of those engaged in or supportive of the resistance movement, *jihad* remained limited to the goals of driving out the invaders and ending the oppressively anti-Islamic character of the government. While the goal of establishing, or re-establishing, an Islamic order was mentioned, it was seldom elaborated on and many assumed it would naturally follow after the success of the *jihad*. Others, like Gailani's Mahaz, associated it with a return to Afghan political traditions, such as the Loya Jirga, and a modified parliamentary order similar to the 1963-73 period but without the monarchy.⁷⁹⁰ Still, there would be political space for the old elite, and Zahir Shah could return to power if chosen by 'the Afghan people,' or as head of an interim government.⁷⁹¹

To the Islamists in the resistance, however, *jihad* also required replacing the old regime, seen as corrupt and at least indirectly responsible for the rise of the communists and consequent Soviet takeover, with a revolutionary 'Islamic' government.⁷⁹² This fusing of *jihad* with the original Islamist goal of state transformation marked a new departure for the movement. Neither the Kabul University Islamists nor the groups from which they drew inspiration in Pakistan, Iran and Egypt, had originally conceived of armed *jihad* as a means of bringing

⁷⁹⁰ For example, see "Afghan Leader in Favour of Political Settlement," *The Front*, vol. 1, no. 5, January-February 1988, 11-12, and "Gailani Threatens to Resign if AIG Rejects Polls Plan," *The Front*, vol. 2, no. 1, April-May 1990, 14-15.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

⁷⁹² For example, Muzammil, *Reasons for Russian Occupation*, 8-12.

about the changes they desired, preferring the term *inqilab* ('revolution'). Their activism was an ill-fit for the traditional criteria of a military *jihad*: directed against Muslim rulers, as underground activists trying to reform the morals of society, rather than a Muslim state reacting to invasion or suppression of religious rights. Only after their repression and exile by the Daoud government did the Afghan Islamists start labelling their activism as *jihad*, with little impact within or outside Afghanistan. But the broad popularity of *jihad* following the Soviet invasion enhanced its role in Afghan Islamist thinking. Moreover, it allowed for the spread of the idea that *jihad* was for the purpose of establishing an Islamic state, though Islamist notions of how that state was to be defined were not absorbed so readily.

Islamist Ideology

What was the ideological contribution of the Afghan Islamists in the *jihad*? In considering this question, the detailed manifesto drawn up by Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami serves as a useful focal point of discussion, which I will supplement with additional texts produced by Hizb and Jami'at, and with comparisons to the movements the Islamists regarded as ideological influences, namely Pakistan's Jama'at-i Islami, the Iranian revolutionaries, and the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.

From the outset, the manifesto distinguishes the desired Islamic society from both the PDPA rule and the pre-1973 order, defined as "the perversions of the old and new ignorance."⁷⁹³ It goes on to argue that, "unless the governments and the rulers are not improved, no kind of

⁷⁹³ "Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan," in Yunas, *Afghanistan: Political Parties*, vol. 1, 422.

reforming programme could be realized...*neither individual improvement nor the full consolidation of justice and equity* could be feasible.”⁷⁹⁴ The notion that the transformation of society, and even the moral advancement of the individual, is contingent on state transformation is central to Islamist ideology. It originates from a perception of Islam as an all-encompassing way of life, of which no aspect can be isolated from the whole.⁷⁹⁵ The Jam’at-i Islami’s Maududi argues, “The *Shari’ah* shapes the Islamic society in a way conducive to the unfettered growth of good, virtue and truth in every sphere of human activity, and...removes all impediments in the path of virtue...[it] attempts to eradicate evil from its social scheme by prohibiting vice, [and] by obviating the causes of its appearance and growth.”⁷⁹⁶ The *shari’a* is thus more than a code of law, narrowly defined; its implementation sustains the conditions for a virtuous society. Hence the centrality of the state: “the reforms which Islam wants to bring about cannot be carried out merely by sermons. Political power is essential for their achievement.”⁷⁹⁷

Not all governments can be entrusted with such a task. The Hizb manifesto is unambiguous in its denunciation of monarchical, “dictator[ial] and despotic regime[s],”⁷⁹⁸ and Hizb and Jami’at’s opposition to allowing Zahir Shah any political role in the resistance was largely actuated by the fear that such participation would pave the way for a return to the monarchy.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid, 422-23. My italics.

⁷⁹⁵ To quote Hasan al-Banna of the Muslim Brothers, Islam “is a faith and a ritual, a nation and a nationality, a religion and a state, spirit and deed, holy text and sword...” Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (OUP: London, 1969), 233.

⁷⁹⁶ Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 50.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid, 165. For Ayatollah Khomeini’s argument, see Hamid Algar, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 40-54.

⁷⁹⁸ “Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan,” 425.

The Islamic government should be formed through elections: “Every Moslem individual of this society has the right to offer his vote to others...Any impermissible hindrance to this right...will inevitably make the nation to use other ways and means for obtaining power.”⁷⁹⁹

Similarly, Rabbani argues, “Islam argues enjoins that the leader of Muslim Umma...should be chosen from among the people. This was done in the case of the righteous Caliphs. And today election of the ruler is the most advanced form of government.”⁸⁰⁰

The Jama’at-i Islami, Iranian Islamists and Muslim Brothers similarly condemned dictatorial and monarchical forms of government and supported the concept of elections. In practice, the policies of each movement have varied depending on the political context in which they emerged. The Afghan Islamists vigorously contested student union elections and formed a party structure in 1972 with the idea of participating in the parliament. However, after Daoud’s coup and creation of a one-party system, they emphasized recruitment in the military, hoping to stage a counter-coup. The Jama’at-i Islami consistently engaged in electoral politics. It opposed Ayub Khan’s military role, but collaborated with Zia ul-Haq when he proposed to establish an Islamic system; the latter stance, however, caused considerable tensions within the party.⁸⁰¹ The Iranian Islamists responded to the Shah’s dictatorship by building a populist movement, and elections became a central component of the post-revolutionary political order. In the 1940s, the Muslim Brothers accepted the idea of a reformed Egyptian parliamentary system in principle, but were reluctant to compete in the existing system, seen as corrupt and

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid. ‘Muslim’ in this respect should be seen in opposition to unreformed PDPA communists.

⁸⁰⁰ “Interview with Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani,” *Mirror of Jihad*, vol. 1, no. 2, March-April 1982, 10. Rabbani specifies that the post-Soviet Islamic government would have an elected parliament.

⁸⁰¹ Nasr, *Vanguard*, 192-99.

manipulated by extra-democratic forces.⁸⁰² They recruited in the military and supported the officers' coup in 1952, but later fell out with Gamal Abdel Nasser's Revolutionary Government. Subsequently, the Muslim Brothers did participate in multiple military-controlled elections, for all their flaws.

Attitudes towards a system including political parties have varied considerably. The Hizb manifesto is silent on this issue, but more than any organization in the resistance, Hizb's thinking and organization was dominated by the ideological party model.⁸⁰³ The Iranian position on the issue changed back and forth in the post-revolutionary period,⁸⁰⁴ while the Muslim Brothers were initially opposed, seeing parties as responsible for creating unnecessary divisions in the *umma*.⁸⁰⁵

While embracing more or less unrestricted voting, Islamist movements have had more reservations over who can contest elections. The Hizb manifesto is vague on this point, mentioning only that "pious persons" will be able to stand for office.⁸⁰⁶ The compromise agreement the seven *tanzimat* reached in forming the Afghan Interim Government states that members of the Council of Revolution "should belong to the ahl-e-hal wa aqd."⁸⁰⁷ The phrase, which can be translated as 'those who loose and bind,' is broadly understood in Islamic tradition to refer to men of wisdom and social standing, whose counsel would carry weight.

⁸⁰² Mitchell *Society of the Muslim Brothers*, 235.

⁸⁰³ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 276-78.

⁸⁰⁴ For example, in the formation and later dissolution of the Islamic Republican Party.

⁸⁰⁵ Mitchell, *Society of the Muslim Brothers*, 3-58.

⁸⁰⁶ "Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan," 427.

⁸⁰⁷ "Draft Text of Directives for the Proposed Council of Islamic Alliance of Afghanistan," *Afghan Jihad*, vol. 1, no. 1, June-August 1987, 27.

The agreement mentions a few specific criteria for exclusion, such as non-participation in the *jihad*, financial corruption, commission of “major sins” and so on, but does not otherwise venture on a more precise definition.⁸⁰⁸

The Iranian revolutionaries responded to this issue by creating a complex of institutions. The twelve-member Council of Guardians supervises popular elections to the presidency and parliament, and has taken on the power of disqualifying candidates deemed insufficiently ‘Islamic,’ of bad character or otherwise unqualified. Six of the council’s members are non-‘*ulama*’ chosen by parliament from a list drawn up by the judiciary. The other six are ‘*ulama*’ chosen by the Supreme Leader, who is in turn chosen by the Assembly of Experts, an elected body whose criteria for membership were not specified in the constitution but have since been restricted to ‘*ulama*’. The Council of Guardians also vets candidates for elections to the Assembly of Experts.⁸⁰⁹

Other Islamists have been criticized for paying insufficient attention to political institutions in favour of a discourse on moral virtue, which at times reduces to little more than enumeration of attributes of the *amir*.⁸¹⁰ The constitution of Sayyaf’s Ittihad, for example, states:

The Amir should be fair and just...a scholar...in the book and sunnah...and the Arabic language. The Amir should be brave...chaste...generous...patient and perseverant...friendly and kind...honest and truthful...[he] should have complete

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ For more on the Iranian institutional structure, see Asghar Schirazi, *The Constitution of Iran: Politics and the State in the Islamic Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997) and Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran? The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic* (Washington D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000).

⁸¹⁰ For example, see Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 61-64.

decisiveness...prudence in the context of jihad...a clean heart and mind...empty of love for material things...[and] should enjoy Islamic moderation in all affairs...⁸¹¹

While this criticism is justified, it can be observed that it arises from a contemporary Western political philosophy arguably over-focused on theorizing about institutions at the expense of the moral education and character of leaders.⁸¹² For Islamists, as for other Muslim reformers, education has been a vital component of the strategy to bring societal change; for some thinkers, it was a prerequisite to political action.⁸¹³ Regardless, the Afghan Islamists clearly did devote some thought to questions of institution and organization, certainly more so than any other ideological strain in the *jihad*.

Since in the Islamist conception the *shar'ia*, as code of law and ideology, is essential to achieving a truly Islamic society,⁸¹⁴ the basic responsibility of the Islamic state lies in interpreting and enforcing it. The Hizb manifesto states: "The commands of the Holy Quran and Hadith in clear words will be the first reference of the law" and "in issues related to the qualification of religious leadership, action will be taken in accordance with religious jurisprudence."⁸¹⁵ There is a basic problem here, which is why Hizb does not explicitly mention any school of Islamic jurisprudence or speak of the role of *'ulama*.⁸¹⁶ The Islamists

⁸¹¹ Alamri, "The doctrine of Jihad," 255-56.

⁸¹² Contrast this with Plato's theories in *The Republic*, which have influenced Muslim thinkers including Ayatollah Khomeini. This influence is emphasized in Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

⁸¹³ For example, Muhammad 'Abduh in the modernist tradition, but see also S. Abdullah Schleifer, "Izz al-Din al-Qassam: Preacher and *Mujahid*," in Edmund Burke III, ed., *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East* (University of California Press 1993), 164-77.

⁸¹⁴ "Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan," 421.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid*, 426.

⁸¹⁶ Article II of the compromise agreement reached between the seven *tanzimat* states that the government will follow Hanafi jurisprudence. "Text of Charter for Mujaheddin Transitional Government," *Afghan Jihad*, vol. 1, no. 4, April-June 1988, 22.

did not consider the *'ulama* capable of setting up an Islamic government, but they were not themselves recognized as authorities of Islamic law. The problem was particularly acute for the student-dominated Hizb; Jama'at had some *'ulama* in its ranks, although it too had misgivings about the value of traditional religious education.⁸¹⁷ Such concerns are forcefully articulated by the Jama'at's Maududi:

Under this system of education those who choose the theological branch of learning, generally keep themselves utterly ignorant of such modern [*sic*] subjects as Political Science, Economics, Constitutional Law...Consequently, even though they spend most of their time in leading and teaching the texts and interpretations of the Qur'an and *Hadith* and the *Fiqh*...they remain incapable of giving any lead to the people by regarding the modern political and constitutional problems in the light of their knowledge of Islam.⁸¹⁸

However, as Maududi argued, "our modern secular institutions...produce people who are bereft of even a rudimentary knowledge of Islam and its laws...[and] affected by the poisonous content and the thoroughly materialistic bias of modern secular education."⁸¹⁹ For Maududi, as for the Afghan Islamists, the solution was a reformed education system which integrated religious and secular subjects in a way relevant to contemporary problems, and which imparted moral training.⁸²⁰ Although a plausible solution, there is arguably a tension here: an Islamic government is a prerequisite for genuinely Islamizing society, but for that government to successfully interpret and implement Islamic teachings, a prior Islamized education system needs to be in place. The dilemma was simpler for the Iranian Islamists to resolve, since the Shi'i *'ulama* had a pre-existing hierarchy for determining religious authority

⁸¹⁷ See Es'haq and Tawana's comments on the *'ulama* in chapter one.

⁸¹⁸ Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 209.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid*, 98.

⁸²⁰ "Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan," 429-31.

and many were more acquainted with contemporary political thought and played a leading role in the revolution. Nonetheless, problems emerged in deciding the division of authority between *'ulama* and secular-trained Islamists, as well as in the succession crisis, when the most qualified candidates to Khomeini's position as Supreme Leader were all either disqualified (Ayatollah Montazeri) or did not support his doctrine of *velayat-i faqih* (rule of the jurist), upon which the system was based.⁸²¹

Criticism of the interpreters of *shari'a* naturally leads to the question of whether the *shari'a* itself, as historically developed, is suitable to provide the legal basis for the modern Islamic state. Islamists unsurprisingly answer in the affirmative; Maududi argues that the *shari'a* has a timeless, unchangeable component that is central to the ideology of Islam, as well as a flexible component subject to change through the use of the in-built methods of *ta'wil*, *qiyas*, *ijtihad* and *istihsan* by those qualified to do so.⁸²² Whether such an interpretation allows for sufficient flexibility is open to question, and Islamists have differed over what components of the *shari'a* they consider immutable. A more flexible interpretation is suggested by Rabbani, of taking Islamic principles – such as justice, consultation, importance of education – as the starting point of discussion and considering how best to apply them in governing and legislating.⁸²³

⁸²¹ Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 260-63.

⁸²² Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 58-62.

⁸²³ "Interview with Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani," 9-11.

Regarding the economy, Hizb's manifesto suggests a mixed system with regulations to limit the excesses of capitalism. It contains ten articles on agriculture, including land reform "in accordance with the principles of Shariat," distribution of state lands to landless peasants, elimination of middlemen, state provision of capital and loans to poor farmers, and price controls.⁸²⁴ Proposals on industry include bans on usury, gambling and hoarding; price controls; regulations to ensure production for necessary domestic requirements and avoidance of luxury items; import prohibitions on locally produced surplus goods; and limited nationalization of strategic industries.⁸²⁵ Further proposals stress the rights of workers to a living wage, proposals for wage increases that take inflation into account, a labour law "in which the proportion between labour and capital will be maintained on the basis of assistance and cooperation," banning of child labour, compensation for work-related mishaps, provision of affordable health care and state support for the disabled.⁸²⁶ Some of these proposals have a distinctly leftist flavour to them, reminiscent of the PDPA. They suggest that, even while developing in opposition to the Afghan communists, Islamists engaged in dialectics with them and incorporated some of their social critiques.⁸²⁷

Other points in the Hizb manifesto include social prohibitions, such as bans on alcohol and prostitution, gender segregation in schooling and the workplace, and requirement of *hijab* for

⁸²⁴ "Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan," 435-36.

⁸²⁵ Ibid, 437-38.

⁸²⁶ Ibid, 438-40. A concern for workers' rights is particularly marked in the early activism of the Muslim Brothers. Many of its original members were industrial labourers in Suez working in conditions of extreme poverty. Mitchell, *Society of the Muslim Brothers*, 274-82.

⁸²⁷ For Jama'at-i Islami's economic ideas see S. Abul A'la Maududi, *Economic System of Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1984). Among the different movements, the Iranians were the most economically diverse, including *petit bourgeois* 'bazar' interests as well as radical leftists.

women.⁸²⁸ In foreign policy, the manifesto declares support for anti-colonial struggles, nonalignment in the Cold War, and strengthening of cultural, institutional and military ties with Muslim countries.⁸²⁹

Thus, while not free of inconsistencies and shortcomings, Islamist ideology offers a reasonably coherent model. The urban and state-centred bias of this model is evident, and reflective of Islamist social origins. As discussed in chapter one, the Kabul University Islamists were largely of *petit bourgeois* origin, their educational upbringing had mainly been in state-sponsored institutions, and they drew their members from technical and religious faculties. All of the Islamist movements discussed here have been urban-based and had difficulty appealing to rural constituencies. The Iranian Islamists were able to generate widespread popular support owing both to the involvement of *'ulama*, which provided an important link to the rural population, and to the fact that that the Iranian population was demographically the most urbanized of the four countries. By contrast, the Afghan Islamists consistently had trouble relating their political vision to the experiences of most Afghans.⁸³⁰ The common language of Islam ensured that they were not considered as alien as the PDPA and they were respected for their military contribution to *jihad*, but their political legitimacy – as represented by their ideological vision and claim to rule – was not so widely accepted.

Pan-Islamism and the Arab Connection

⁸²⁸ “Programme of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan,” 426, 430, 439.

⁸²⁹ Ibid, 440-42.

⁸³⁰ See the cases of Ahmad Shah Masud and of party organization among the refugees in chapter four.

After an initial period of fervour in India and Afghanistan in the 1910s and 1920s pan-Islamism had dissipated as a political movement. Emerging Muslim-majority states generally paid at least lip service to pan-Islamism, which was defined as increasing ties with other Muslim countries in their foreign policies, rather than support for any organized political program. In 1969 the OIC was formed on the basis of sentiments for a more coherent 'Islamic bloc,' but it remained little more than a forum for Muslim countries to express their views and make collective statements.⁸³¹

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, however, led to a wave of pan-Islamist sentiment. Critical in this respect was the role played by Saudi Arabia and several conservative Gulf Arab states. Conservative Arab aversion for the Soviet Union was deep-rooted, based both on the latter's avowed atheism and the subversive potential of communism. Throughout the heyday of Arab nationalism in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia had battled to contain Soviet influence, financing conservative governments and movements against leftist or Soviet-supported ones. The OIC's early resolutions condemning the Soviet invasion, expelling the DRA and accepting *mujahidin* representatives were an outcome of Saudi leadership.⁸³²

Dramatic increases in oil revenues to the Gulf States had already resulted in a drive by Saudi Arabia to expand its influence through financial contributions to Muslim governments and movements in many countries, including Pakistan. Iran's revolution and ideological challenge

⁸³¹ Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17-18.

⁸³² Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 15-17.

redoubled Saudi efforts to promote its own version of Islam through these policies.⁸³³ With the Soviet invasion seen as a direct threat, the narrative of *jihad* was assiduously promoted and official and private contributions flowed generously to the *mujahidin*. Some in the Saudi religious establishment initially questioned this narrative, arguing that the Afghan resistance did not meet the criteria for *jihad*.⁸³⁴ But for the most part, it was genuinely believed, with popular enthusiasm increasing markedly through the mid-1980s.⁸³⁵ Many volunteers travelled to Peshawar and established charities, schools and health care centres. Others went to participate directly in the *jihad*, including radicalized offshoots of the Muslim Brothers from Egypt and Islamists from Algeria.

Arab influences and volunteers came from a variety of political contexts and did not possess a single ideological perspective. However, the ideological influences some of them added to the *jihad* included a lower degree of tolerance for local cultural norms, which were framed as *bid'a* (religious innovation or deviation); this attitude sometimes caused tensions with local Afghans. Conservative doctrines promoted by Arab governments tended to be economically rightist and while highly encouraging of charitable works were hostile to any appearance of socialism. Finally, unlike the Islamists, there was little theorizing about the state. The notion of *jihad* establishing a virtuous Islamic order in which a particular interpretation of *shari'a* was enforced became popular among many Arab or Arab-influenced *mujahidin* during the late 1980s, but there was little interest in elections, which were seen as a Western system. Other volunteer *mujahidin* did not consider political questions at all, motivated only by the ideal of

⁸³³ See Goldberg, "Saudi Arabia and the Iranian Revolution," 155-70.

⁸³⁴ Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*, 28-29.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, and Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 83-84, 86.

helping Muslims in need. Afghanistan was outstanding pan-Islamic cause of the time, and when ultimately successful some sought to move on to the next worthy cause.⁸³⁶

Frontier Deobandis and 'Ulama Connections

As discussed in preceding chapters, relationships between Afghan and Pakistani *'ulama* had a long history. Many *madrastas* had been established by Deobandi graduates in the frontier, including the Dar al-'Ulum Haqqaniyya, where Maulvi Yunas Khalis and Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani had studied.⁸³⁷ After the Saur Revolution resulted in the flight of many Afghan *'ulama* to Pakistan, such networks provided support and in the process exerted their own ideological influence on the *jihad*.

Pakistani Deobandis had formed the Jami'at-i 'Ulama-i Islam initially as a religious organization, but in 1962 the movement decided to participate in party politics and thereafter became splintered into several factions. The Soviet invasion further politicized the movement and each faction worked among the refugees, whether in the NWFP, Baluchistan or Karachi.⁸³⁸ Benefiting from government patronage and private donations, they established many new *madrastas* to cater to the overwhelming demand for education among the Afghan refugees. Many of the students (*taliban*) who studied in these schools also participated in the *jihad*. Sometimes they formed fronts of *taliban* and *'ulama*, which tried to maintain a high

⁸³⁶ Hegghammer differentiates three strains: 'classical jihadists,' who sought to defend Muslims being attacked by non-Muslims, and later went on to fight in battlefields in Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere, 'socio-revolutionaries,' who sought to overthrow illegitimate Muslim governments, and 'global jihadists,' who later focused on attacking the US. See Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia*.

⁸³⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 89-90.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid*, 89-92.

degree of discipline, continue religious studies while fighting, and offer judicial functions in areas they controlled.⁸³⁹

The ideology of these *'ulama* and students was very different from that of the Islamists, although some sympathized with a vague notion of Islamic revolution. As we have seen, the original Dar al-'Ulum Deoband had responded to the challenges of colonialism not by engaging with modern concepts but by seeking to maintain the traditional intellectual heritage, albeit in a reformed way that emphasized the original sources of Islam over medieval scholarship. These tendencies increased among the Pakistani Deobandis; moreover, the many new schools could not impart the same quality of education to so many students as the original Dar al-'Ulum. Consequently, these *'ulama* and students did not engage with questions of political institutions and were less receptive to Western concepts than the Islamists.⁸⁴⁰ Their main institutional contribution to the resistance was in forming judicial councils which enforced *shari'a* and acted as a check on the power of commanders.

The Ideology of Pakistan and Zia's Islamization Project

Pakistan had been created on the basis of appeal to Muslim nationalism, but how that nationalism was to be realized in practice had been left undefined by the Pakistan movement. Maududi's Jama'at-i Islami was not the only group that called for reform of the legal and political structures inherited from the colonial era to better accord with the teachings of Islam. These debates were engaged in by many personalities from a variety of religious backgrounds

⁸³⁹ Abdul Salam Zaeef, *My Life with the Taliban* (London: Hurst, 2010), 19-29.

⁸⁴⁰ These differences in ideological orientation have been historically reflected in poor relations between Jama'at-i Islami and JUI.

including Justice Dr. Javid Iqbal, Maulana Zafar Ahmad Ansari and Dr. Fazlur Rahman.⁸⁴¹

For example, Fazlur Rahman, who later became director of the Islamic Research Institute, writes of the ‘double movement’ necessary to properly apply the Quranic message. The first part involves understanding the historic context of the society in which the Quran was revealed to deduce the social and moral message behind its specific tenets. The second involves understanding the present socio-historic context to deduce the specific forms in which that message of the Quran is to be applied today.⁸⁴²

On 12 March, 1949, the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan passed an Objectives Resolution stating that sovereignty belonged to Allah and was delegated, through the people, “irrespective of whatever faith they may follow,” to the state.⁸⁴³ The state’s objectives included enabling Muslims “to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with...the Holy Quran and the Sunnah.”⁸⁴⁴ During the constitution-making process various reports were commissioned which discussed ways of integrating Islam in the constitution; ‘*ulama* of different sects also participated in the process.⁸⁴⁵ Ultimately, the relevant provisions in the constitutions of 1956 and 1962 were mainly limited to two issues: first, the formation of an Islamic Research Institute to undertake research “for the purpose of assisting in the reconstruction of Muslim society on a truly Islamic basis.”⁸⁴⁶ Second, the

⁸⁴¹ See, for example, Javid Iqbal, *Ideology of Pakistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2011). Javid Iqbal was the son of the philosopher and poet Iqbal, who famously articulated the idea of a Muslim state in northwest India in 1930.

⁸⁴² Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 5-7.

⁸⁴³ Sharif al Mujahid, *Ideology of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 2001), 139-40.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 152.

⁸⁴⁵ “‘Ulama’s Amendments to the Basic Principles Committee’s Report,” in Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 339-63.

⁸⁴⁶ Mujahid, *Ideology of Pakistan*, 145-46.

formation of an advisory Council of Islamic Ideology, which would make recommendations for bringing the laws of Pakistan in accordance with “the teaching of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah,” and would advise on whether proposed laws were repugnant to Islam.⁸⁴⁷

However, Pakistani governments made no serious effort to integrate these institutions, which only had power to advise, in the process of national planning. Three decades after independence, Pakistan’s laws and institutions remained essentially unchanged from those it had inherited.⁸⁴⁸ Fazlur Rahman attributes this outcome to the liberal British orientation of many of Pakistan’s early leaders and bureaucrats:

Except for passing resolutions...nothing was done in terms of further action...The situation was undoubtedly...aggravated by the higher echelons of the bureaucracy, who had been trained in British days...To develop the country...on Islamic bases had been none of their concern...A number of them were intensely attached to Islam, but many were literally frightened that insistence upon Islamic education might mean that the old-fashioned madrasa products might try to take over education.⁸⁴⁹

At the same time, as we have seen, government officials and politicians continued to refer to the Islamic orientation of Pakistan in their domestic and foreign statements and policies. Thus, there remained an evident gap between rhetoric and reality: neither was the determination made that Islam could not serve as the basis for Pakistan’s laws, institutions and ideology, nor were there any serious efforts to interpret it in a way that it could.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid, 145.

⁸⁴⁸ Faced with widespread political opposition after rigged elections in 1977, Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto carried out a few symbolic ‘Islamic’ measures such as banning alcohol and gambling. Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, 288.

⁸⁴⁹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity*, 112. See also Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 62-70.

This was the gap that Zia ul-Haq sought to fill on assuming power. Personally a devout Muslim by all accounts,⁸⁵⁰ he believed that Pakistan's existing governance structure was ill-suited to the country's needs and alien to the beliefs of most of its citizens.⁸⁵¹ In his first speech after assuming power, Zia stated that "Pakistan, which was created in the name of Islam, will continue to survive only if it sticks to Islam. That is why I consider the introduction of Islamic system as an essential prerequisite for the country."⁸⁵² As was often the case with Zia, conviction and calculated self-interest went together: his 'Islamization' program could help him build a constituency of like-minded groups and individuals who had felt alienated from the largely secular practices of governance of his predecessors: Jama'at-i Islami, JUI, some members of the Tablighi Jama'at, and various 'ulama and Sufi leaders.

Initially, his favoured partners were the Jama'at-i Islami, who he felt were sufficiently engaged with modernity to provide the ideological thrust necessary to the Islamization program, and several of its leaders were inducted in his cabinet.⁸⁵³ Faced with an absence of consensus among religious groups on what an Islamic system entailed, bureaucratic resistance to sweeping changes, and sometimes lack of understanding of what underlying problems needed to be resolved, the program began with piecemeal implementation of specific penalties and taxes mentioned in the Quran. This beginning proved more controversial than expected.⁸⁵⁴ Years earlier, Maududi had warned against implementing specific parts of *shari'a* in isolation from the broader socio-economic context in which they were imbedded:

⁸⁵⁰ Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars Within* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 388.

⁸⁵¹ Arif, *Working with Zia*, 256-57.

⁸⁵² Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 359.

⁸⁵³ Nasr, *Vanguard*, 188-89, 193.

⁸⁵⁴ Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 379, 381.

Islam imposes the penalty of amputating the hand for the commitment of theft. But this injunction is meant to be promulgated in a full-fledged Islamic society wherein the wealthy pay *Zakat* to the state and the state provides for the basic necessities of the needy...wherein every township is enjoined to play host to visitors at its own expense...wherein all citizens are provided with equal opportunities to seek economic livelihood...wherein monopolistic tendencies are discouraged...wherein the virtues of generosity, helping the poor, treating the sick [are considered socially mandatory]...it is not meant for the present-day society where...in place of *Baitul Mal* [the public treasury] there are implicable [*sic*] money-lenders and banks which...treat [the poor] with callous disregard...where the economic system...leads to the enrichment of the few at the cost of crushing poverty...of the many, and where the political system serves only to prop up injustice, class-privileges and distressing economic disparities. Under such conditions it is doubtful if theft should be punished at all, not to speak of cutting off the thief's hands!⁸⁵⁵

Evidently, the government either gave insufficient consideration to these deeper questions or was unable to implement a more transformative agenda given its limited base of legitimacy. Similarly, General Arif recalls that Zia passionately wanted to replace the legal system, seen as corrupt, unresponsive and prone to manipulation, with an Islamic system of jurisprudence, but “He failed to appreciate that the prevalent social and administrative malpractices, which had corrupted the Anglo-Saxon legal system, could equally render the proposed Islamic order ineffective.”⁸⁵⁶ Similarly, while Zia introduced some secular subjects at religious schools and *vice versa*, his larger goal of promoting Muslim unity remained elusive. Efforts to promote common religious syllabi foundered, while indiscriminate government largesse to religious schools subsidized divergent, and sometimes exclusivist interpretations of Islam.⁸⁵⁷

If pressed, Zia's convictions often gave way to pragmatic considerations, as in the question of political institutions. Arif claims that the majority of Zia's advisers favoured a relatively swift

⁸⁵⁵ Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 53-54.

⁸⁵⁶ Arif, *Working with Zia*, 256.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 250-51.

return to party-based elections, arguing that such a system was consistent with Islam, but here Zia's interest in staying in power trumped his evident anxieties over his legitimacy.⁸⁵⁸ The continued delaying of elections increased tensions with Jam'at-i Islami, and after Qazi Hussain Ahmad was elected as *amir*, the party publicly distanced itself from the regime.⁸⁵⁹

This blend of conviction and practicality carried over to the government's support for the Afghan *jihad*. Undoubtedly, Zia and many Pakistani civilian and military officials felt a deep moral conviction to help the *mujahidin*. It is equally clear that Zia had few illusions about the shortcomings of *mujahidin* leaders,⁸⁶⁰ and that his carefully crafted policy towards the insurgency was strongly motivated by *raison d'état*.⁸⁶¹ Additionally, support for the *mujahidin* complemented domestic Islamization measures and enhanced the regime's Islamic legitimacy. Zia's involvement of Jama'at-i Islami in his Afghan policy both strengthened the party's networks with the *mujahidin* and delayed its decision to break ranks with the government over the issue of elections.⁸⁶² Government subsidies to religious groups and *madrasas* of all persuasions also helped expand the activities of those, like the JUI factions, that worked among the *mujahidin* and refugees.

ISI officers who worked with the *mujahidin* ranged from those who had little ideological sympathy for the *jihad*, to those who were convinced in the *jihad* but, like Zia, acted according to state interests, to the few considered to have 'gone native,' prioritizing the *jihad*

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid, 225-33.

⁸⁵⁹ Badr, *Inqilabi Qiyadat*, 69-76.

⁸⁶⁰ See the negotiations section in chapter four.

⁸⁶¹ See the discussions in chapters three and six.

⁸⁶² Nasr, *Vanguard*, 195.

over all else. Clearly, within these rough categories there is considerable latitude for interpretation. Different officers would be more or less close to different *mujahidin* groups or individuals. Some ISI ‘believers,’ for example, were socially conservative but with little sympathy for Islamist ideology,⁸⁶³ while others were close to Islamists like Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Moreover, personal ties would often be more important than ideology. And regardless of ideological sympathy, ISI involvement in running the insurgency and distributing funding and weapons created networks of vested interests with *mujahidin* groups. Allegations of ISI corruption in running the *jihad* are common and widely believed in Pakistan, but remain largely anecdotal. There is no reliable data to suggest, for example, whether corruption was greater than in any other branch of government. Facing congressional questioning, CIA officials stated that they kept tabs on weapons shipments and funding and were satisfied with how much reached its destination;⁸⁶⁴ how much that was is unclear. We may nonetheless make the observation that running a clandestine war encouraged institutional incentives for corruption. Large quantities of funds and material were regularly transported across the country and were immune to checks from police and customs authorities.⁸⁶⁵ According to Hamid Gul, before he became Director General in 1987 the ISI had few accounting checks in place.⁸⁶⁶

Such secrecy was also conducive to the drug trade. A number of international factors, including bans on opium production in Iran and Pakistan, combined to cause prices of Afghan

⁸⁶³ For example, DG ISI Javid Nasir, who belonged to the Tablighi Jama’at and frequently had theological arguments with Hikmatyar.

⁸⁶⁴ Milton Bearden, interview with author, 15 April 2011.

⁸⁶⁵ Roedad Khan, interview with author, 25 April 2010.

⁸⁶⁶ Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 373-76.

opium to soar in 1979.⁸⁶⁷ The accompanying absence of state authority and easy access to refining factories in the Pakistani tribal belt led to exponential growth in production. Drug smuggling networks thus developed between many Pakistanis and Afghans.⁸⁶⁸ Networks of vested interests such as these complemented and sometimes superseded ideological commitment among groups on both sides of the frontier.

The Ideological Map

Having examined the various ideological impulses in the Afghan *jihad*, it is instructive to group the different components of the resistance into ten types based on the prevailing nature and degree of ideological motivation. This typology makes up the ideological ‘map’ of the resistance movement and builds on the analysis in this chapter and from chapter four.⁸⁶⁹

Information on the matter is naturally limited; so, for example, the exact geographical breakdown or numerical strength of any tendency is difficult to quantify. We can speak only in terms of relative strength and rough spread in some regions or among political organizations. Moreover, the categories are not mutually exclusive; many individuals and groups will embody multiple tendencies. It is more useful to think of the categories as indicative of one’s prevailing ideological motivation and social origin, not as representing the only one.

⁸⁶⁷ Dorransoro, *Revolution Unending*, 134-36.

⁸⁶⁸ Drug smuggling networks are of course absolutely common to civil wars and insurgencies. See Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (New York: Harper & Row, 2003).

⁸⁶⁹ Most of the sources cited in these two chapters can be considered influences in this respect; particularly useful were the periodicals of *mujahidin* organizations, independent Afghan centres, the CIA-commissioned Orkand reports and writings by Islamists and writers representing other strains of Islamic thought. Various secondary sources have also influenced these ideas, but the resulting typology is my own.

The categories follow below. Titles are used to provide a convenient shorthand and while indicative, should not be taken as a comprehensive definition of the group.

1. Political Islamists: This category comprises the original Kabul University Islamists and those of their associates and adherents who came to subscribe to the essential features of their ideology, as well as the revolutionary Shi'i intellectuals that subscribed to the political model of the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran. The group is characterized by an ideological emphasis on capturing the state, transforming its institutions and using them to reshape society. The Kabul University Islamists were concentrated in Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami and the Jami'at-i Islami, which they had originally founded. Hikmatyar's Hizb emphasized precedence and ideological loyalty in promotion and repeatedly attempted to assert party authority over commanders. These factors limited the party's expansion but ensured that it remained ideologically homogenous at the leadership level. Hikmatyar and almost all of his associates in the party's higher echelons belong in this category, though they had only limited success in disseminating their ideology further down the hierarchy or among fighters and commanders. Jami'at-i Islami was more inclusive and welcomed different ideological strains among its leaders and important commanders; the party consequently became much larger than Hizb but was also ideologically heterogeneous. Party leader Burhanuddin Rabbani and Commander Ahmad Shah Masud belong to type one. Kabul University Islamists were also present, though not as numerous, in Khalis' Hizb and Sayyaf's Ittihad-i Islami. The Shi'i Islamists were represented in Nasr, Sipah, Nahzat-i Islami and the Hizbullah and other minor groups, which were all ideologically and

politically close to the Iranian revolutionaries. Some elements of Shaykh Asif Muhseni's Harakat-i Islami and of the Shura also belong in type one, although unlike the other groups they opposed Ayatollah Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-i faqih* and had considerable political differences with the Iranian government. Unlike Sunni Islamists, who were mostly educated in secular or government-sponsored religious institutions, Shi'i Islamists of type one include *'ulama* who, like their Iranian counterparts, were more engaged in questions of political theory than Sunni *'ulama*.

2. Politicized *'ulama*: This type includes those *'ulama* and Sufis who had a tradition of political activism and were sympathetic to the goals of Islamic revolution. They came from a different socioeconomic background than the more secular educated Islamists, were typically less aware of contemporary ideological debates on government and tended to focus on enforcement of *shari'a*. This type includes *'ulama* from the eastern border provinces, as well as many *'ulama* in the north, among Tajik, Uzbek and other detribalized communities. Maulvi Yunas Khalis and Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani belong to this type.
3. Traditional *'ulama*: Although most *'ulama* gained in political influence during the course of the war, this type includes those *'ulama* and Sufis who did not have any prior history of political activism or sympathy towards Islamist goals. While supportive of an 'Islamic government' in vague terms, they saw such a government as pertaining exclusively to the establishment of *shari'a* rather than to specific political institutions; they had little objection, for example, to the old monarchy. Many *'ulama* of this type are to be found in Harakat-i Inqilab-i Islami, including its leader, Maulvi Muhammad Nabi. The *'ulama* of the southern Pashtun tribes, the Durrani and Ghilzai,

generally belonged to this type. The Council of 'Ulama formed by the Kandahar resistance and the traditionalist *'ulama* in the Shura in Hazarajat are further examples of the type.

4. The old elite: This category includes the royal family, governors and high-ranking officials, army officers, traditional notables, tribal chieftains, the well-established Sufi families and some secular intellectuals. Afghan nationalism, as represented by the political traditions of the monarchical order, played an important role in the ideological makeup of this type. For example, they advanced the notion of a Loya Jirga, which had historically represented the democratic consensus of the elite, initially to provide the resistance with a legitimate leadership, and later as the means of choosing an interim government. Their notion of government was similar to Zahir Shah's parliamentary order, but without the monarchy – although the former king and traditional elite were still expected to play an important role. Traditional notables of this type that came from non-Pashtun communities and from the provinces were less committed to the idea of Afghan nationalism *per se* but supportive of either the traditional balance of power between Kabul and the provinces or of an increase in autonomy. Many of the old elite went into exile during the war and were concentrated among the émigrés in the United States and Western Europe and among the refugees in Quetta, more so than Peshawar. These latter included the Durrani tribal elite. Among political organizations, Gailani's Mahaz represented the largest concentration of the old elite, while others were to be found in Mujaddidi's Jabha. Many others remained unaffiliated with the established *mujahidin* organizations but formed advocacy groups in the US and Western Europe.

5. Arab influenced *mujahidin*: This type includes *mujahidin* sympathetic to the ideological influences originating from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Arab states, and radicalized offshoots of the Muslim Brothers. Although rarely having training as *'ulama*, they strongly supported the establishment of a form of *shari'a* that was generally simplified and unaccommodating of Afghan cultural traditions. There was also a strong pan-Islamic element in their ideological makeup, and some, especially the Arabs, among them simply saw the Afghan *jihad* as the outstanding Muslim cause of the time. Some of them would go on to fight non-Muslims in defence of Muslims in other countries. Others, influenced by a *jihad*-infused variant of Islamism, sought to fight corrupt Muslim governments, viewed as legitimate targets for *jihad* for their unwillingness to establish *shari'a*. Some Afghans and most of the Arab and other foreign volunteers belonged to type five. The independent front of Jamil al-Rahman in Kunar is an example. Among political organizations, many such *mujahidin* were to be found in Ittihad-i Islami, arguably including its leader, Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf. Others were accommodated in Hikmatyar's Hizb-i Islami.
6. Frontier Deobandi students: This type includes Afghan refugee students and Pakistani students, generally Pashtuns, who studied in the schools established by the various factions of the JUI in the NWFP, FATA and Karachi. Politically, they believed in the enforcement of *shari'a* over Afghan society but had little knowledge of the workings of government institutions. They are distinct from types two or three, some of whom had also studied in Deobandi frontier *madrasas*, in that they were of a younger generation and received their education against the backdrop of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Consequently, the *jihad* from the outset played a critical part in the

development of their political consciousness. They were also generally less educated than the *'ulama* and had less exposure to Afghan society and its political and cultural traditions. A number of these students were found in Nabi's Harakat-i Inqilab and Khalis' Hizb, and some went on to form the nucleus of the future Taliban movement.

7. Common *mujahidin*: In a sense, this type is the common denominator of the resistance. Those belonging to type seven joined or supported the resistance for a variety of reasons, including local conflicts, attempts to resist state intrusion, reaction to state oppression and opposition to foreign invasion. Ideologically, however, they were united by a conviction in the resistance as being a legitimate *jihad* for liberation from Soviet occupation and frequently displayed high levels of courage and idealism in confronting Soviet and DRA adversaries. Conviction in *jihad*, however, did not imply conviction to or interest in any particular model for the future government of Afghanistan. Numerically the largest ideological grouping, this type includes most of the *mujahidin* fighters and many commanders, many deserters from DRA government institutions and security forces, the bulk of refugees in Pakistan and Iran, the majority of supporters and sympathizers of the resistance within Afghanistan, and Pakistani Pashtuns who joined the *jihad* out of tribal solidarity. Common *mujahidin* were to be found in all parties and organizations, tribal formations, NGOS and institutes, and as unaffiliated individuals.
8. Maoists and other left-nationalists: This type comprised groups such as the Maoist Shola-i Javed and elements of Pashtun nationalist groups like Afghan Millat. Inspired by a range of leftism, socialism and communism, they were the most ideologically proximate to the PDPA among all resistance groups and tended to view the Afghan

conflict as a casualty of the Cold War struggle between the superpowers rather than as a *jihad* against the Soviets. Targeted for repression by the DRA, these groups soon went into opposition but their relations with the established resistance organizations remained tenuous. Besides their own minor fronts, Maoist cadres managed to infiltrate some fronts of the Harakat-i Inqilab, owing to its relatively loose organization, and were also present in the Shura.

9. Local actors: In a sense, almost all *mujahidin* were local actors. They were often driven to join the resistance by local concerns; generally limited their activity to the village, tribe or other communal solidarity space (with only a few commanders achieving regional pre-eminence); and their attitudes towards the resistance were often, though with many exceptions, shaped by the stances of traditional allies and rivals. However, type nine is meant to indicate those for whom such concerns were predominant, and who remained largely unaffected by the ideological fervour of *jihad*. Although such groups often supported or fought alongside the resistance, their reasons for doing so were typically shaped by local politics and they were prone to switching sides. Such groups were found all over Afghanistan, at times fighting as *mujahidin* and at times as Kabul-armed militias. Some of the border Pashtun tribes offer another example of this type, accepting arms and subsidies from both sides without fully committing to either.
10. Bandits: The last type comprises bandits, weapons traffickers, drug traffickers and other criminal elements. Although many *mujahidin* took part in such activities, type ten designates those groups for whom such activities were the primary motivation for involvement in the conflict. Often such groups would consolidate political control over

an area, in which case the distinction between them and type nine local actors would blur, but they were typically distinguished by a more predatory attitude towards the local population. Such groups exist in most insurgent and revolutionary conflicts: the anarchic space created between the institutions of the government and the parallel institutions of the insurgents providing fertile breeding ground for opportunistic predatory behaviour. Capable and legitimate governments and well-organized and ideologically committed revolutionaries can effectively limit their scope for activity, and have an incentive to do so to avoid losing popular support by association. However, there are short-term incentives to collaboration: such actors can provide resources and influence, give an edge to one side in contested zones and act as nuisance value in enemy strongholds. Type ten groups existed in many places across Afghanistan and fought on both sides. Ismatullah Muslim, leader of the Achakzai militia, whose drug-running embroiled the Quetta branch of the ISI in scandal in 1983, and who later switched sides to the DRA, could arguably be classified as type ten. Similarly, in Helmand, the centre of the opium growing region, many *mujahidin* took on the characteristics of this type.

The ideological map helps explain why the *mujahidin* were able to withstand and eventually defeat their Soviet opponents, while being unable to develop a workable political order thereafter. *Mujahidin* of types one to seven, for all their differences, all subscribed to the basic ideological proposition of the conflict as a just, nationalist-infused *jihad* against Soviet occupation. That these comprised the great majority of the resistance movement is evident. Most observers acknowledge that throughout the war the *mujahidin* were able to retain

widespread popular support for their struggle, and that *mujahidin* fighters displayed far greater commitment and *esprit de corps* than their Soviet and DRA opponents, excepting elite units like the SPETZNAZ and KHAD operatives.⁸⁷⁰ Passionate commitment to a cause with sustained popular support is the most basic political ingredient of a successful guerrilla struggle against a militarily superior adversary. But with the Soviet withdrawal and the DRA's ideological retreat the common cause which bound together the disparate resistance groups dissipated.

The two clearest ideological alternatives proposed for the future Afghan state were that of the revolutionary Islamic state (envisioned by the political Islamists) and some form of the old parliamentary order with a diminished or non-existent role for the monarchy (championed by the old elite). The above typology emphasizes the limited appeal of both. Potentially, the political Islamists could have gained the support of a majority of politicized *'ulama* and traditional *'ulama* for a variant of their revolutionary state, with an enhanced role for *'ulama* in interpreting and enforcing *shari'a* as the law of the state. Some of the common *mujahidin*, Arab-influenced *mujahidin* and frontier Deobandi students would potentially also have supported such a model. But perhaps the majority of these last three types would have had little sympathy for it, as would the old elite, the left-nationalists and most local actors, who would have opposed such a state as too intrusive.

⁸⁷⁰ For example, Chaliand, "The Bargain War in Afghanistan," Roy, *Islam and Resistance*, the four Orkand reports, etc.

Similarly, a variant of the old order could have gained the support of the old elite, most of the common *mujahidin*, especially of the older generation, most of the traditional *'ulama* and many local actors. But other local actors, who had displaced traditional leaders during the war, would have opposed it, as would the political Islamists, the politicized *'ulama*, Arab-influenced *mujahidin* and many frontier Deobandi students.

More importantly, actual support for any particular alternative would in no way have approached the ideological potential. As is evident from the typology, there were no political organizations or groups to unify individuals of a particular ideological tendency. Any single ideological type was divided by multiple political, regional, sectarian and personal differences. Ideology formed just one aspect of how individuals and groups defined themselves and often proved to be an unstable indicator, with many shifts among the types possible. Thus, to give just two examples, some political Islamists and politicized *'ulama* shifted to Arab-influenced *mujahidin* during the course of the war, while a number of left-nationalists shifted to common *mujahidin*. And in one of the most striking changes towards the end of the war, with the Soviet withdrawal and eclipse of the ideology of *jihad*, the ranks of local actors and bandits swelled considerably.

6. Pakistan-US Relations: The Search for Security

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had dramatically changed the context of Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan. Yet no less significant was the transformation the invasion brought about in Pakistan's relations with the United States. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter sent National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski to Islamabad to explore the idea of a US security assistance package for Pakistan, reversing a barely one year old aid cut-off owing to non-proliferation concerns. Although the Carter administration was unable to reach agreement with the Pakistan government, the new relationship was eventually established in September 1981, following considerable deliberations within both the Pakistan government and the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan.

Both governments pledged their commitment to a new and sustainable long-term partnership, qualitatively different from the narrow, security-driven alliances of the past. This encouraging rhetoric, however, masked deeper apprehensions that persisted through the 1980s in both governments. Pakistan's fears about US reliability in times of crisis and US staying power after its immediate strategic goals were met in Afghanistan were matched by US concerns about the viability of Pakistan as a strategic partner and about Pakistan's nuclear program. While these frictions were largely managed during the course of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the relationship proved unable to last when the common threat that had motivated it dissipated with Soviet withdrawal.

Standing Firm against Communism

The Reagan administration came to power with a conviction that America had lost its way in the 1970s, torn by recriminations over Vietnam and reluctant to confront what they saw as the increasingly aggressive designs of its Soviet adversary. Former State Department and National Security Council (NSC) staffer Peter Rodman's book on the Cold War aptly captures the mood:

America withdrew into itself, once again disillusioned with engagement, morally uncertain of its role in the world... The American retreat led the Soviets to conclude that what they called the historical "correlation of forces" had shifted decisively in their favor. The late 1970s became a period of new Soviet boldness in the Third World... A decade of global instability and deteriorating East-West relations was in considerable part triggered by these regional conflicts.⁸⁷¹

This theme recurs frequently in Rodman's book, as in the public and private discussions of the administration. The Carter administration, which tended to view regional conflicts as stemming primarily from local causes, and had considered, if inconsistently, the benefits of working with the Soviets to resolve them, is portrayed as naïve; incapable of understanding the inherently hostile nature of Communism to the peace and stability of the global system. Reagan administration officials, while not denying local causes, tended to fixate on the role of Soviet instigation and the opportunities that such conflicts offered the Soviets in advancing their agenda. National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 32, signed by President Reagan on 20 May 1982, following a wide-ranging review of US global strategy, reflected these concerns:

The key military threats to U.S. security during the 1980s will continue to be posed by the Soviet Union and its allies and clients... Unstable governments, weak political

⁸⁷¹ Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace*, 8-9.

institutions, inefficient economies, and the persistence of traditional conflicts create opportunities for Soviet expansion in many parts of the developing world. The growing scarcity of resources, such as oil, increasing terrorism, the dangers of nuclear proliferation...and the growing assertiveness of Soviet foreign policy all contribute to the unstable international environment. For these reasons, the decade of the eighties will likely pose the greatest challenge to our survival and well-being since World War II...⁸⁷²

For the Reagan administration, standing firm in the face of growing Soviet provocations, rather than compromise and negotiation, was the key to defeating this Soviet threat. There were three main components of its strategy to demonstrate ‘American resolve:’ military forces modernization, strengthening the existing NATO alliance in Europe, and relying on “regional states to deal militarily with non-Soviet threats, providing security assistance as appropriate.”⁸⁷³ It was under the last heading that the relationship with Pakistan developed in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Southwest Asia and Pakistan

The Reagan administration was determined to battle Soviet influence on multiple continents, often, its critics charged, in conflicts that were largely peripheral to US interests. Yet the administration argued that every advance of Soviet influence in a region would encourage the Soviets to spread their influence even further, while demoralizing pro-Western regional states and putting pressure on them to realign their policies. This argument was a less forceful restatement of domino theory – that the loss of one country to international communism would lead to the loss of the next, and so on – which had animated US foreign policy concerns

⁸⁷² NSDD-32, 20 May 1982, folder “NSDD 32 (1 of 4),” box OA 91311, Executive Secretariat, NSC: NSDDs, RRL.

⁸⁷³ Ibid.

since the 1950s and had led to the American involvement in Vietnam.⁸⁷⁴ Despite the US defeat in Vietnam, many of the Southeast Asian dominos had not in fact fallen, but many US policymakers were apt to ascribe this turn of events to fortunate circumstances.⁸⁷⁵ As a statement of loss of US influence, should it let any conflict be settled on Soviet terms, the theory retained fairly wide currency, although it was not without its critics.⁸⁷⁶

To the security-minded planners of the NSC, of the many regions where the loss of US influence had to be arrested, Southwest Asia was of direct strategic importance, owing to its concentration of oil resources. NSDD 32 would later classify the region as second only to the US mainland and Western Europe in importance, and early discussions in the administration reflected a similar assessment. An Interagency Group (IG) study memorandum on 10 March, 1981, argued that

Our overriding strategic concern is to check Soviet expansionism. Within this context, Southwest Asia has become our third overseas strategic zone, the security of which is inextricably linked to our own security and that of NATO and Northeast Asia, primarily because of Western dependence on Persian Gulf oil. The collapse of Iran as a stable buffer, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the upgrading of Soviet forces adjacent to the region...render the area particularly vulnerable...Our overall regional objective, then, is to ensure continued access to oil for the West and to prevent the expansion of Soviet and radical influence.⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷⁴ The analogy to countries collapsing like a row of dominos was first used by President Eisenhower on 7 April, 1954, in reference to the spread of communism in Indochina. US policymakers later applied the theory more widely.

⁸⁷⁵ See, for example, Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace*, 130-31.

⁸⁷⁶ For Kissinger's obsession with restoring credibility after the defeat in Vietnam, see *ibid*, 130-33; for a critique, Eqbal Ahmad, "A World Restored' Revisited: American Diplomacy in the Middle East," Bengelsdorf et al, 331-40.

⁸⁷⁷ "Study Memorandum: Pakistan," folder "SIG on Pakistan March 10, 1981," box 91134, Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC, RRL.

The NSC saw the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as posing grave risks to the region. Once firmly settled in Afghanistan, the USSR could pressure and even invade Iran, still weakened by the internal upheavals of the Islamic Revolution. It could stir secessionist movements in Iranian and Pakistani Baluchistan, creating a resource-rich proxy state that would allow it year-round access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. From there to exerting pressure on the oil-producing states of the Gulf would be but a small step. It was essential, therefore, to check the Soviets in Afghanistan, and ensure that they realized such adventures were not costless.

For Congress, unlike other conflicts, from Cambodia to Angola to Nicaragua, where the administration's involvement proved deeply divisive, involvement in Afghanistan was a popular cause. It was the one conflict which appeared utterly unambiguous: the direct use of Soviet armed forces against a weak, nonaligned neighbouring country. Early Congressional resolutions on Afghanistan exhorted the administration to take all measures to support the Afghan resistance.⁸⁷⁸ A vocal pro-*mujahidin* lobby, whose prominent members included the likes of Rep. Charlie Wilson (D-TX) and Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-NH), helped forge a strong bipartisan consensus on Afghanistan. By the mid-1980s, Congress was regularly appropriating much larger sums for the Afghan resistance than the administration requested. There was a widespread tendency to romanticize the *mujahidin*, as for example, in the following remarks by Sen. J. Bennett Johnston (D-LA) in a debate over adopting an amendment that threatened to cut off aid to Pakistan over non-proliferation concerns:

⁸⁷⁸ Ahmad and Barnett, "Bloody Games," 485.

Mr. President, there was once in this country a clear and definite sense of outrage on account of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan...We have today, Mr. President, in Afghanistan brave freedom fighters, and it is not too much to say that they are, indeed, freedom fighters. We may not have freedom fighters elsewhere in the world but it is clear they are freedom fighters in Afghanistan. Those freedom fighters survive through one pipeline, and that is through Pakistan. If we want to cut a lifeline to the freedom fighters, the Mujadeen in Afghanistan, all we have to do is adopt this amendment.⁸⁷⁹

Among the most diehard anti-communists, this tendency was reinforced by a desire to ‘get even’ with the Soviets for the defeat in Vietnam.⁸⁸⁰ For both the administration and Congress, Pakistan, as Afghanistan’s only neighbour friendly to the US, was crucial to any attempt at weakening the Soviet position in Afghanistan.

Establishing a new relationship with Pakistan was a priority from the first weeks of the Reagan administration, and Ambassador Arthur Hummel was recalled for consultations in February and instructed to open discussions with President Zia ul-Haq. IG meetings on Pakistan on 2 and 6 March, 1981, developed a series of papers on the prospects for a strategic relationship with Pakistan. In these papers, the IG argued that with the fall of the Shah of Iran, Pakistan was the critical partner in the region, and could combat Soviet advances in a number of ways. Pakistan was recognized to have one of the best trained and led armies in the region. Pakistan’s military arrangements with Saudi Arabia and other friendly oil-producing Gulf states were encouraging and suggested prospects for further coordination with the US security strategy for the region. Pakistan could also provide crucial military and logistical support in the contingency of a Soviet invasion of Iran. Moreover, as the final study memorandum sent

⁸⁷⁹ “Congressional Record – Senate, S12839,” 3 October 1984, folder “Pakistan [1 of 2],” box 91843, William Burns Files, RRL. See also Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War*.

⁸⁸⁰ See Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War*; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 91-93; and Yousaf and Adkin, *Battle for Afghanistan*, 62-63.

to the Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG) argued, Pakistan's "support for Afghan nationalists" played a crucial role in "tying down Soviet forces and preventing the consolidation of the Soviet position in Afghanistan."⁸⁸¹

At the same time, the IG recognized that Pakistan would come under major Soviet pressures as a consequence of this role. The papers produced by the IG went into considerable detail on the size of a security assistance package that could satisfy the requirements of Pakistani military modernization and economic development, the role that Saudi Arabia, European and other allies could play in funding such a package, a range of options for increasing military cooperation, and regional implications, particularly with respect to US relations with India.⁸⁸² Size was an important consideration; Zia had rejected the Carter administration's single-year offer of \$400 million, and so the IG envisaged a multi-year package, starting from \$500 million. While ruling out a formal security treaty, the IG also developed various proposals to assuage Pakistani doubts regarding the seriousness of the US commitment to its security.⁸⁸³ An immediate obstacle related to timing. In order to appropriate funds for a Pakistan aid package starting in fiscal year 1982 with minimal complications from Congress, the administration would need to submit a budget amendment by early April.⁸⁸⁴ Consequently, it gave the Pakistan government a deadline of 26 March for accepting the particulars of the package. To the administration's surprise, however, the Pakistan government did not accept

⁸⁸¹ "Study Memorandum: Pakistan."

⁸⁸² These papers are all contained in folder "IG on Pakistan March 2, 1981 (1 of 2)," folder "IG on Pakistan March 2, 1981 (2 of 2)," and folder "IG on Pakistan March 6, 1981," box 91134, Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC, RRL..

⁸⁸³ "U.S. Security Assurances to Pakistan," folder "IG on Pakistan March 2, 1981 (1 of 2)," *ibid.*

⁸⁸⁴ "Size and Timing of FY82 Security Assistance Amendment for Pakistan," *ibid.*

the package, requesting more time to consider the nature of the proposed relationship, even at the cost of delaying funding for another year.⁸⁸⁵

A Troubled Past

Behind this hesitation were concerns motivated by the nature of Pakistan's past relationships with the US. Not long after the country's independence, largely motivated by existential fears of an Indian military threat, Pakistan's governments had looked for ways to upgrade its military defence capabilities. In the binary logic of the Cold War, since India had started to develop good relations with the Soviet Union, Pakistan turned to the US, joining the Baghdad Pact (later renamed the Central Treaty Organization, CENTO) and the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), and entering into a bilateral security agreement with the US in 1959.⁸⁸⁶ Although these agreements were primarily targeted against communist aggression, Pakistan's planners hoped that US military equipment and security assurances would provide crucial assistance in the event of war with India.⁸⁸⁷

Disillusionment followed, caused by the wars with India in 1965 and 1971. In 1965, a US embargo on military aid to both countries essentially handicapped Pakistan, as India was

⁸⁸⁵ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 7 April 1981, folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [3 of 7]," box 91351, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

⁸⁸⁶ See Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, 37-58. Other factors for the preference included British-inherited prejudices about Soviet intentions and the weaker economic position of the USSR immediately after the Second World War.

⁸⁸⁷ The high priority assigned to external aid is evident in the Pakistan Cabinet's discussion on principles of foreign policy in December 1958. The foreign ministry's original draft emphasized not taking any actions that would result in curtailment of aid as part of principle I. "Meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, the 4th December, 1958 at 5.00 pm," file 629/CF/58, acc. 2253, NDC.

largely reliant on Soviet military aid, which continued unabated.⁸⁸⁸ In addition, since 1962, Pakistani officials had carefully documented a variety of assurances, written and verbal, of US commitment to Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which allegedly included claims that the US would come to Pakistan's assistance in the event of Indian aggression.⁸⁸⁹ With the Indian invasion and breakup of Pakistan in the war of 1971, Pakistani officials felt betrayed.

Already in the 1960s, Ayub Khan's government had taken some measures to reduce dependence on the US, including pursuing close ties with China and engaging with the USSR.⁸⁹⁰ After 1971, the governments of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and, in the early years, of Zia ul-Haq, oversaw a period of cooling ties. Pakistan's defence planners began to diversify their sources of military aid and equipment to hedge against US unreliability in times of crisis. Military equipment was purchased from China, Western Europe, Iran and Turkey, while efforts were made to increase indigenous production.⁸⁹¹ India's explosion of a nuclear device in May 1974 led to intensified Pakistani efforts to acquire a similar capability, further straining relations with the US. Pakistan's foreign policy, under the dynamic leadership of Foreign Secretary (later Foreign Minister) Agha Shahi, deemphasized the US link and worked to improve ties with Muslim and nonaligned countries. Pakistan became a founding member

⁸⁸⁸ Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, 109.

⁸⁸⁹ For a discussion of these assurances, see Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to George Schultz, 10 October 1965, folder "PAKIS: U.S. Security," box 91880, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL. The role of the US in the 1965 and 1971 wars is too lengthy a subject to examine in detail here; a good starting point is Roedad Khan, ed., *The American Papers: Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973* (Oxford: OUP, 1999). See also Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little Brown, 1979).

⁸⁹⁰ For Ayub's dismissive appraisal of the value of CENTO and SEATO, see Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, 154-58.

⁸⁹¹ From 1968-70, Pakistan also purchased military equipment from the USSR. See Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan's Defense Policy," in Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy*.

of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and was active in OIC diplomacy through the 1970s. In early 1979, following its withdrawal from CENTO, Pakistan was admitted as a full member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

These changes reflected not only a sense that Pakistan had gained little, in security terms, from the US-sponsored alliances of the past, but a conviction, held by Shahi and a number of other senior officials, that such alliances were inherently artificial. Pakistan's historical experience with colonialism, its founding role as a home for Muslim nationalism in South Asia, its present-day sympathies and aspirations – none of these aspects of its identity suggested that it associate itself with either superpower in the Cold War. In an insightful character analysis of Shahi, Ambassador Hummel noted,

Shahi is a complex and difficult man. A brilliant tactician in bilateral terms and world-class in multi-lateral diplomacy, he is clearly one of the key formulators of Pakistani foreign policy...He seems to have personally liked the United States during his long years at the UN, but he reflects as well the prejudices of a former colonial, racially sensitive, at home in the luxury of the West but put off by some of the aspects of its modernism as well. He is a strong proponent of Pakistan's movement away from the alliance structures of the 1950's and 1960's and into *the mainstream of the Third World where Pakistan "naturally" belongs*, "South" in a North-South context and nonaligned in an East-West context.⁸⁹²

However, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, coming less than a year after Pakistan's admission to the NAM, put the Cold War neutralists within the Pakistan government in a difficult position. To acquiesce in the Soviet occupation would be morally indefensible and potentially dangerous for Pakistan, but to oppose it would invite Soviet pressures which could well be allayed by US backing. As Hummel observed,

⁸⁹² Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 7 April 1981. Emphasis added.

[Shahi] has believed the US to be inconstant and wavering, too far away and too weak to come to Pakistan's help against a nearby, aggressive Soviet Union – with which accommodation may one day be necessary for Pakistan. Still, he is also one of the architects and principal spokesmen for Pakistan's tough stand on Afghanistan and on the need for Soviet withdrawal from that neighboring country. In this he knows (and Zia knows) US support is necessary.⁸⁹³

As discussed in previous chapters, Zia ul-Haq considered the Soviet invasion a major threat and was inclined to support the *mujahidin* for moral as well as practical reasons – *mujahidin* resistance would prevent the Soviets from settling in Afghanistan and discourage any potential ambitions farther south. Nevertheless, Pakistan's support for the resistance would also increase the risk of Soviet reprisals; consequently, the degree of such support would have to be carefully calibrated in accordance with these risks. In this primarily security-based calculation, US support could provide far more concrete guarantees for Pakistan's security than the existing nonaligned policy, but given the past history of US-Pakistan relations, Zia was wary about needlessly provoking the Soviets without ensuring that such support was indeed substantial. As an NSC briefing to President Reagan assessed, "We believe Zia shares the widespread concern in Pakistan that the US commitment to that country will evaporate at a critical moment."⁸⁹⁴

Consequently, in discussions during the course of 1981, Pakistani officials repeatedly probed their US counterparts to ascertain the specifics of military equipment and security guarantees the latter would be willing to provide. A key element in the discussions was US willingness to

⁸⁹³ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁴ Memo, "Pakistan: President Zia's Visit to Washington," 30 November 1982, folder "NSC Briefing Book State Visit of President Zia of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan December 6-14, 1982 (3)," box 45, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

provide F-16 Fighter aircraft at an early stage to upgrade Pakistan's air defence capabilities.⁸⁹⁵

The idea of providing advanced military technology to Pakistan evoked considerable opposition in Congress, with a number of senators questioning the seriousness of the Soviet threat to Pakistan, the appropriateness of F-16s to defend against it, and the risk of those aircraft being used against India.⁸⁹⁶ In addition, early delivery of F-16s, which Pakistan demanded as essential to close out any window of Soviet attack once it was known Pakistan was willing to renew its relationship with the US, posed considerable logistical and legislative complications. However, Pakistani officials were insistent that the issue was about more than the aircraft in question; the sale of F-16s had become a symbol, the test case of the seriousness of US commitment to Pakistan's security. The minutes of Zia's meeting with Reagan envoy Jeanne Kirkpatrick are illustrative of this approach:

Theme throughout conversations was growing threat to Pakistan from both Soviet Union and India...Zia presented situation in stark terms, emphasizing vital importance of early delivery of F-16s to reassure Pakistani people that risk taken by GOP to confront Soviet Union and India was compensated for by unwavering support from U.S. Zia and his colleagues...claim that F-16 issue has now become overriding psychological factor in U.S.-Pakistan relationship.⁸⁹⁷

Mindful too of the scepticism within the government regarding US sincerity, Zia moved cautiously, insisting in meetings with US officials that he did not desire a return to the previous relationship, which "behind the rhetoric, [was] based mostly on military

⁸⁹⁵ See, for example, the discussions in folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [2 of 7]," folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [5 of 7]," and folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [6 of 7]," box 91351, *ibid*.

⁸⁹⁶ See Memo, "Hearing Regarding US-Pakistan Security Relations," Ed Sanders and Jerry Christianson to Members, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 9 November 1981, folder "F-16's to Pakistan," box 109, Samuel I. Hayakawa Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, and Letter, Daniel Patrick Moynihan et al to Members, Senate Appropriations Committee, 19 November 1981, *ibid*. These letters also question the viability of Pakistan as a strategic partner for the US, given previous frictions and basic divergences in foreign policy outlook.

⁸⁹⁷ Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to Alexander Haig, 31 August 1981, folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [1 of 7]," box 91351, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

considerations...If the U.S. could contribute significantly to the economic development of Pakistan it would be building the best base for a militarily strong Pakistan...the principal focus of U.S. assistance should be in economic support.”⁸⁹⁸ Similarly, Zia frequently stated that a genuine understanding of common interests, along with the mutual trust that would lead to a durable relationship, was more important than the details of a financial assistance package.⁸⁹⁹ Considerations such as these caused the Pakistan government to delay acceptance of the package beyond the initial deadline.

Prior to the crucial visit of Undersecretary of States for Security Assistance James Buckley to Pakistan in June, Zia held wide-ranging consultations to develop consensus for a shift in policy. A two-day meeting with key Foreign Ministry stakeholders on 6 and 7 June was followed by meetings of provincial governors, corps commanders, service chiefs and of the cabinet.⁹⁰⁰ In off-the-record conversations with American interlocutors, Director General (DG) Americas Dr. Farouk Rana and DG Afghanistan Tanvir Ahmad Khan elaborated on the different trends in government thinking on the proposed relationship. According to Rana, as reported by Hummel,

There are voices within...whose doubts about US will and capability to assist Pakistan have not been stilled. There are others...who doubt that what the US will eventually provide...will be either adequate to defend Pakistan or worth the additional Soviet enmity it will incur. Soviet intimidation...feeds this unease...Rana said that it is

⁸⁹⁸ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 1 February 1981, folder “Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [2 of 7],” *ibid.* Not a direct quote.

⁸⁹⁹ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 21 March 1981, folder “Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [3 of 7],” *ibid.*

⁹⁰⁰ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 8 June 1981, folder “Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [2 of 7],” *ibid.*

important, therefore, for the Buckley visit to produce hard, tangible results...to justify continuation.⁹⁰¹

Similarly, Tanvir Ahmad Khan is reported in these documents as stating his opposition to the viewpoint that Pakistan should accommodate to the Soviet presence and accept the Soviet offer to guarantee the Durand Line:

Tanvir said he has argued that there is no Soviet option, that the Soviets hold all the cards when it comes to real power, and that Pakistan has only one real option – a closer relationship with the United States. Playing the Soviet card...is little short of capitulation...since it can be played only once with the sacrifice of Pakistan's independence...[he urged] faster movement on the US-Pakistan front, to head off the actions of those who seem prepared to argue endlessly “about the distinction between military sales and military credits, etc.”⁹⁰²

This last criticism was directed at Shahi, who strongly opposed concessional Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits as inimical to a credible nonaligned posture. In interviews conducted during this time, Shahi is reported as being adamant “that Pakistan will do nothing in working out its new relationship with the US which will put at jeopardy its fundamentally, anti-colonialist, Third World, Islamic outlook/policies, that what is being contemplated is not resurrection of the old but creation of the new, and that the purpose of the extensive dialogue is to ensure that everyone in the game understands the new rules.”⁹⁰³

Yet given the dominant negative perception of Soviet intentions and the consequent urgency of the threat to Pakistan, the views of those advocating a close relationship with the US

⁹⁰¹ Ibid.

⁹⁰² Ibid.

⁹⁰³ Ibid.

steadily gained traction. Buckley's visit, from 11 to 16 June, represented the turning point. Pakistani officials were pleased with the talks, and the Joint Statement on 15 June highlighted the progress made in discussing the "dimensions of an overall framework for American efforts to assist Pakistan over the next six years...[including] a program of cash military sales during this year...a five-year program of economic supporting funds, development assistance, and loans for foreign military sales..."⁹⁰⁴ Changes were still required to the package in accordance with the discussions, and the details of military purchases remained to be worked out. The issue of early delivery of F-16s caused several mini-crises before US officials took steps to accommodate Pakistani concerns. But the pace for reaching an agreement had been set, and after the visit of a Pakistani military delegation to the US and further meetings with Buckley on 9 September, 1981, Zia accepted the entire US aid package without reservation.⁹⁰⁵

A 'New' Relationship?

The Pakistan-US relationship had been re-established, but behind the rhetoric of creating a new relationship were striking similarities to what Zia and Agha Shahi had derided as the security-based relationship of the past. Pakistani officials had publicly and privately spoken of a broader US engagement with Pakistan's economic development, not just with military assistance as in the past, and in deference to this Pakistani demand, the US had changed the specifics of the assistance package so that the majority of aid was in economic development. Yet, as Table 1 and 2 below illustrate, the ratio of economic to military aid was in fact considerably lower than in the past:

⁹⁰⁴ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 15 June 1981, *ibid*.

⁹⁰⁵ Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to Alexander Haig, 10 September 1981, folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [1 of 7]," *ibid*.

Table 1: Annual US Aid to Pakistan, 1955-1964⁹⁰⁶

Year	Economic Aid, US\$(2006) M	Military Aid, US\$(2006) M	Per Capita Aid, US\$(2006)
1955	683.3	247.9	22.64
1956	992.9	1012.3	47.65
1957	1005.4	407.5	32.8
1958	901.5	496.4	31.7
1959	1272.7	341.3	35.74
1960	1572.9	214.4	38.64
1961	920.8	242.4	24.54
1962	2172.1	510.8	55.24
1963	1922.9	272	44.09
1964	2067.9	174.5	43.94
Total	13512.4	3919.5	376.98

Table 2: Annual US Aid to Pakistan, 1982-1990⁹⁰⁷

Year	Economic Aid, US\$(2006) M	Military Aid, US\$(2006) M	Per Capita Aid, US\$(2006)
1982	372.8	1.1	4.4
1983	497	465	10.91
1984	528.6	517.3	11.44
1985	565	543	11.7
1986	580.1	507.8	11.09
1987	557.6	497.6	10.38
1988	716.4	401.1	10.63
1989	521.3	341.9	7.96
1990	510.3	263.9	6.93
Total	4849.1	3538.7	85.44

The tables show the breakdown of annual US economic and military aid to Pakistan (adjusted for inflation to USD 2006) during the old and new relationships. From the period 1955, when

⁹⁰⁶ Data taken from Murad Ali, "US Aid to Pakistan and Democracy," *Policy Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 2.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact, to 1964, before the US arms embargo, the ratio of economic to military aid was roughly 3.5 to 1. By contrast, from the initiation of US aid in 1982, following agreement over the aid package, to the eventual cut-off of US aid in 1990, the ratio of economic to military aid was only 1.4 to 1.

The issue of delivery of F-16s is further illustrative of the extent to which the new relationship remained at core one that was dominated by security considerations. The F-16s issue was the single most prominent item to feature in the discussions leading to the agreement.⁹⁰⁸ But beyond a simple matter of frequency, which was partly attributable to the controversial nature of the demand in the US, the fact that the Pakistan government chose to make this particular issue the symbolic test of the relationship, in Zia's words "not only the material means of deterrence [*sic*] but to create the necessary psychological climate vis-à-vis the Pakistani people," is suggestive of the extent to which its mindset was security-driven.⁹⁰⁹ Yet despite this security focus, as I will argue when discussing the nuclear issue, the US security assistance and guarantees the government did gain from this relationship remained in many ways as unsatisfactory as they had been in the past.

⁹⁰⁸ This assessment is based on extensive perusal of executive branch and US embassy documents from the Reagan Library and congressional papers from the Samuel I. Hayakawa Collection at the Hoover Institute.

⁹⁰⁹ Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to Alexander Haig, 31 August 1981. The government's assertion that the supply of F-16s in particular was the most important factor in gaining the support of the Pakistani *people* for the relationship was certainly open to question, but several American interlocutors seemed to have accepted it readily enough. Kirkpatrick, for example, strongly endorsed Zia's argument in her recommendations to Haig. *Ibid.*

Pakistani and US officials frequently cited respect for Pakistan's nonaligned, Third World sympathies as another important way in which this relationship would be different. The June Statement offers a typical example:

The Pakistani side explained Pakistani policies, especially Pakistan's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Both sides agreed that U.S. assistance as proposed is consistent with these principles and with Pakistan's non-aligned status. Mr. Buckley specifically disclaimed any American interest in military bases or in establishing any new alliances.⁹¹⁰

Similarly, Zia is quoted in several of these meetings speaking in favour of nonalignment, usually when Agha Shahi was present, and Zia and Finance Minister Ghulam Ishaq Khan backed Shahi's argument on FMS credits in the June meetings with Buckley.⁹¹¹ However, in other meetings Zia strikes a different tone. At the meeting with Kirkpatrick in August, Zia is reported as saying that "It was the Communist bloc vs the free world, with the non-aligned nations being in fact mostly not non-aligned."⁹¹² Following a meeting between Zia and special emissary Robert McFarlane in May, Secretary of State Alexander Haig writes, "It was striking to note Zia's comment that *we should not pay attention to his foreign minister's rhetoric about non-alignment*. In his words, 'there are only two non-aligned countries in the world – the United States and the Soviet Union.' Zia is a good friend and deserves our support."⁹¹³

Of course, Zia's remarks were likely designed to evoke the sympathy of his American interlocutors, rather than necessarily being a genuine statement of his convictions; elsewhere,

⁹¹⁰ Telegram, Arthur Hummel to Alexander Haig, 15 June 1981.

⁹¹¹ Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to Alexander Haig, 18 June 1981, folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [2 of 7]," box 91351, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

⁹¹² Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to Alexander Haig, 31 August 1981.

⁹¹³ Memo, Alexander Haig to Ronald Reagan, 22 May 1981, folder "Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [6 of 7]," *ibid.* My italics.

Haig notes Zia's willingness to accept US military bases, which ultimately he never accepted.⁹¹⁴ Nevertheless, Zia's willingness to undercut his foreign minister in this manner is a strong indication of the gulf in conviction between Zia's primarily security-driven calculus and Agha Shahi's views of Pakistan's 'natural place' in world politics. Behind the rhetoric, it was clear from a range of actions, including the scale of military assistance and its provision of military supplies to the Afghan *mujahidin*, that Pakistan had cast its lot with the Western bloc in the Cold War. Agha Shahi's unhappiness with these trends and the marginalization of his views led to his resignation as foreign minister in February 1982 and replacement by Zia's former commanding officer, the general turned diplomat Sahabzada Yaqub Khan.⁹¹⁵ In subsequent years, references to 'Pakistan's non-aligned sensitivities' are largely absent from official documents.⁹¹⁶

Although Zia certainly played his part in building this consensus, it would be inaccurate to characterize him, as some leftist intellectuals have done, as 'America's man in Pakistan.'⁹¹⁷ In the first years of his government, Zia had been content to follow the foreign policy bequeathed by his predecessor, Z.A. Bhutto. It was only after the Soviet invasion of

⁹¹⁴ Ibid.

⁹¹⁵ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 52-53.

⁹¹⁶ Contributing also to this development was the political eclipse of the NAM. Although a formidable force in international diplomacy in the 1970s, the NAM had started to lose any semblance of a unified voice by the early 1980s. The two seminal events that contributed to this decline were Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's embrace of Camp David, which shattered the Arab consensus, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

⁹¹⁷ The characterization stems in part from Bhutto's claims, in the last stage of his political troubles, that America was out to get him, and the US' frequent practice during the Cold War of supporting military coups against socialist or left-leaning governments elsewhere in the world. Bhutto's policies do not, however, seem so inimical to US interests as to have inspired such intervention. Moreover, as discussed in chapter three, by 1977 the CIA was on the defensive, facing strong domestic criticism and calls for Congressional oversight. CIA Director Stansfield Turner's drastic curtailment of the activities of the Directorate of Operations was not reversed until shortly before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Under the circumstances, it is likely that Bhutto's claims were an attempt to deflect attention from his internal problems. No reliable evidence has ever surfaced that the coup was externally inspired.

Afghanistan, in the face of a perceived major security threat, that he chose to realign Pakistan's foreign policy, and in that he had the support of much of Pakistan's foreign ministry as well as the military high command.

Nor was Zia's commitment to the American alliance absolute. While he did not share Agha Shahi's nonaligned convictions, he continued to maintain an independent policy towards other Muslim countries. Good relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states were certainly welcomed by US policymakers, but less welcome were the Pakistan government's decision to maintain working relations with Iran, and to advocate publicly for the Palestinian cause, as Zia did in his visit to the White House in December 1982. Similarly, while US policymakers had initially developed a series of ideas for increased military cooperation, basing rights and involvement of Pakistan in the regional 'strategic consensus,' Pakistani planners continued to move cautiously on expanding relations. In this they were undoubtedly responding to internal, as well as Soviet and Indian, pressures, but the hesitation was also borne out of a determination to retain an independent hand in policy. This determination was evident in Zia's insistence that all assistance for the *mujahidin* in Pakistan be routed through Pakistani officials. And it is nowhere clearer than in the confrontation over Pakistan's nuclear policy, which, in the backdrop of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, eventually became the catalyst for the breakdown in relations in 1990.

Non-Proliferation and Pakistan's Nuclear Program

Pakistan had started nuclear research in the 1960s. Interest in the development of a nuclear deterrent had been stimulated by the conventional imbalance with India, which many in the

government and public perceived as presenting an existential threat to Pakistan's sovereignty. The continuing impasse over the Kashmir dispute ensured that relations remained fraught with mutual suspicion through the 1950s and 1960s. The worst of Pakistani fears were reinforced in 1971, when Indian forces invaded East Pakistan in support of the Bangladeshi separatist movement, severing the country in two over an issue that had not until recently been significant to the Indo-Pakistan rivalry.⁹¹⁸ In famous speech during the Ayub Khan era, Z.A. Bhutto had declared that "if India acquires nuclear status Pakistan will have to follow suit even if it entails eating grass."⁹¹⁹ After becoming prime minister, and in the knowledge that India had begun nuclear research, which would lead to its detonation of a nuclear device in 1974, Bhutto convened a meeting of Pakistani physicists at Multan on 20 January, 1972, and challenged them to carry out his pledge.⁹²⁰ After assuming power in 1977, Zia ul-Haq was determined to preserve the program in its entirety. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan further heightened the security concerns that motivated the policy.

Pakistan's solution for its security dilemma ran counter to US policy on nuclear non-proliferation. Concern in the US about the spread of nuclear weapons had been evident as early as in the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, which contained sweeping prohibitions against the sharing of nuclear technology. While many of these prohibitions were subsequently loosened to allow for the spread of technology for peaceful purposes, by the 1960s non-proliferation

⁹¹⁸ Convictions of enduring Indian hostility would no doubt have been reinforced by India's attempts, during the subsequent Simla negotiations, to use the over 90,000 Pakistani military and civilian prisoners of war as leverage to force a settlement on Kashmir. For an insider's account, see Sattar, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, 139-57, 355-64.

⁹¹⁹ Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 69.

⁹²⁰ Shahid-ur-Rehman, *Long Road to Chagai: Untold story of Pakistan's nuclear quest* (Islamabad: author, 1999), 16-18.

had become an important component of US foreign policy.⁹²¹ In addition to its own stated support for the policy, the Reagan administration had to keep in mind the views of a vocal lobby in Congress, whose influence was not initially countered, as in the case of Israel and India, by any pro-Pakistan lobby. In 1976, Senator Stuart Symington's (D-MO) amendment to the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act banned US aid to non-nuclear weapons states pursuing enrichment activities outside the ambit of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations. In early 1979, President Carter found Pakistan in violation of the Symington Amendment owing to its construction of a uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta. When the Reagan administration decided to resume aid to Pakistan, it moved to reconcile the Symington Amendment with the Glenn Amendment, named for US Senator John Glenn (D-OH), which prohibited aid to countries engaged in reprocessing activities or detonating nuclear devices, but which provided more liberal conditions for a presidential waiver.⁹²² The revised amendment read that

The President may furnish assistance which would otherwise be prohibited...if he determines and certifies in writing to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate that *the termination of such assistance would be seriously prejudicial to the achievement of United States nonproliferation objectives or otherwise jeopardize the common defense and security.* The President shall transmit with such certification a statement setting forth the specific reasons therefor.⁹²³

⁹²¹ For the historical development of non-proliferation policy up to the end of the Carter era, see Michael J. Brenner, *Nuclear Power and Non-Proliferation: The remaking of U.S. policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For the debate on the merits of non-proliferation among US political scientists, see Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

⁹²² "Tactics on Lifting Symington/Glenn," "IG on Pakistan March 2, 1981 (1 of 2)," box 91134, Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC, RRL.

⁹²³ My italics.

These two conditions, that terminating aid to Pakistan would “jeopardize the common defense and security,” and would hamper “United States nonproliferation objectives” formed the basis of the administration’s justification for aid to Pakistan through the 1980s. In this case, the former justification referred to the danger that, bereft of American support, Pakistan’s willingness to take risks to support the Afghan *mujahidin* against the Soviets would decline, and in the worst case the US would lose Pakistan to an accommodation with the Soviet Union, with all the attendant consequences of loss of US influence and Soviet ascendancy in Southwest Asia. The latter justification was based on the argument that cutting off security assistance would heighten Pakistan’s anxieties and accelerate its nuclear development; while conversely, providing assistance while making clear the threat of a cut-off would discourage Pakistan from pursuing these activities. Moreover, as the value of the US commitment gradually began to be appreciated in Pakistan, the US would gain leverage to convince Pakistan that its real security interests lay in a close association with the US, and to abandon the program.

Nuclear Politics and Afghanistan

General Arif has written that at the time of agreement of the aid package, Pakistan had conveyed that its nuclear program was non-negotiable, to which Secretary of State Haig responded that the nuclear issue “would not become the ‘centrepiece’ of Pakistan-US relations.”⁹²⁴ There is little evidence in US documents of any explicit understanding that the

⁹²⁴ Khalid Mahmud Arif, *Khaki Shadows: Pakistan 1947-1997* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 187. This statement is verified in the US account of the meeting, according to which Haig added that the program remained a “real issue.” Telegram, Secretary of State to American Embassy Islamabad, 29 April 1981, folder “Pakistan Vol. I 1/20/81 – 12/31/81 [5 of 7],” box 91351, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL.

administration would let Pakistan pursue its nuclear ambitions, and although documents related to the nuclear issue are often heavily redacted, it is likely that no categorical assurances were made, at least not in writing. However, from the lack of reference to the issue in bilateral negotiations over the aid package in 1981, it is probable that the administration wanted to defer any confrontation over the matter until Pakistan had been reconciled to accepting US support.

After the initiation of the relationship, US officials made frequent approaches to Pakistani authorities to satisfy US non-proliferation concerns. NSC planners saw Zia's visit to Washington, D.C., from 6-14 December, 1982, as a good opportunity for the president to personally press home some of these concerns. The administration had little doubt, despite frequent assertions of the peaceful nature of its program, of Pakistan's nuclear intentions; as the briefing book for President Reagan noted: "To be blunt about it, they are building the bomb."⁹²⁵ But, as Haig's replacement as Secretary of State, George Schultz, cautioned,

We must remember that without Zia's support, the Afghan resistance, key to making the Soviets pay a heavy price for their Afghan adventure, is effectively dead. We must also recognize that how we handle the nuclear issue can have a profound effect on our ability to continue to cooperate with Pakistan in supporting the Afghan freedom fighters.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁵ "Meeting with Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq," folder "NSC Briefing Book State Visit of President Zia of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan December 6-14, 1982 [1]," box 45, Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File, RRL. According to Milt Bearden, the US knew more about Pakistan's nuclear program than that of any other country, except the British, "which we helped build." Milton Bearden, interview with author, 16 April 2010. As CIA Station Chief in Islamabad, spying on Pakistan's nuclear program was Bearden's other major responsibility, besides funnelling aid to the *mujahidin*.

⁹²⁶ Memo, George Schultz to Ronald Reagan, 29 November 1982, *ibid*. The detailed State Department briefing paper in the briefing book contained a similar warning.

In a private twenty minute meeting on 7 December, Reagan presented Zia ul-Haq with four ‘red lines’ beyond which, he warned, the Pakistani nuclear program could not go without risking a cut-off of US aid. The nuclear red lines were “nontesting, nontransfer, nonmanufacture and no unsafeguarded reprocessing of spent fuel.”⁹²⁷ Zia took note of the warning and US documents in subsequent years indicate that the Pakistan government largely continued to respect these original four red lines.⁹²⁸

Nevertheless, doubts persisted, both in the administration and in Congress about whether these measures were enough.⁹²⁹ In March 1984, Senators Glenn and Alan Cranston (D-CA) passed a country-specific amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that aimed to significantly broaden the grounds for cutting off assistance to Pakistan. The proposed Cranston-Glenn Amendment proposed to cut off all aid unless the president could certify that Pakistan “does not possess a nuclear explosive device, is not developing a nuclear explosive device, and is not acquiring...technology, material, or equipment...[towards that end.]”⁹³⁰ After this initial amendment was defeated, the senators tried in October to pass a compromise version that, while largely maintaining the above criteria for terminating assistance, conditioned only military assistance and provided greater latitude to the president for a waiver.

⁹²⁷ Memo, Shirin Tahir-Kheli to Robert Oakley, 23 July 1987, folder “Pakistan: Nuclear Program,” box 91845, Robert Oakley Files, RRL.

⁹²⁸ Minutes, “NSPG Meeting Friday, August 31, 1984,” folder “NSPG 0094 31 Aug 1984 [India/Pakistan/Afghanistan] (3),” box 91306, Executive Secretariat: NSPGs, RRL. Reacting to these red lines, Pakistan focused on uranium enrichment during this period. Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass*, 191-93.

⁹²⁹ While Congressional leaders were aware of the administration’s ongoing non-proliferation dialogue with Pakistan and were regularly sent reports on Pakistani nuclear activities, it is unclear how thoroughly they were briefed about specific details, nor how widely this knowledge was shared.

⁹³⁰ “The Cranston-Glenn Amendment on Nuclear Nonproliferation Conditions on United States Assistance to Pakistan,” folder “Pakistan [1 of 2],” box 91843, William Burns Files, RRL.

Given the administration's conclusions about Pakistani nuclear intentions, either amendment would have placed it in a difficult position over the required presidential certifications. As it did in subsequent crises over this issue, the administration adopted a two-track approach: pressing the Pakistan government to accept more limitations on its nuclear activities while at the same time fighting to defeat the amendments on the floor.⁹³¹ Ambassador Deane Hinton was instructed to ask for assurances that Pakistan would not enrich uranium beyond the 5% level; in a personal letter to Zia on 14 September 1984, Reagan wrote that this limitation was "of the same significance...and would have the same implications for our security program and relationship" as the earlier four red lines.⁹³² The Pakistan government throughout the controversy questioned the factual basis of Cranston's case, argued that the emphasis on Pakistan was discriminatory, and declared that it would accept any limitations on its nuclear program, including signing the NPT, provided India did so as well.⁹³³ Nevertheless, Zia agreed to accept the 5% limitation.⁹³⁴

In fighting the amendments on the floor, the administration found considerable support. As noted earlier, Afghanistan was a popular cause in Congress, and over the four years that the

⁹³¹ Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Shaikh observes that congressional pressure was both unwelcome and useful to the administration, in that it allowed them to credibly claim that their hands were tied: "It was an overall US government [concern] but...primarily it was a few do-gooders in Congress and those do-gooders...the administration did not discourage, they wanted to be able to tell us that these are concerns being expressed in the Congress. When in fact they were concerns that they shared, but they used this conveniently." Najmuddin Shaikh, interview with author, 19 October 2010.

⁹³² Telegram, George Schultz to Deane Hinton, 14 September 1984, folder "Pakistan 1984 [4 of 4]," box 91695, Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, RRL.

⁹³³ Telegram, Deane Hinton to George Schultz, 22 July 1984, folder "PAKIS: Nuclear – Zia '86," box 91880, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL, and Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to George Schultz, 23 July 1984, *ibid.*

⁹³⁴ Telegram, American Embassy Islamabad to George Schultz, 23 July 1984.

Soviets had failed to defeat the *mujahidin* the strength of bipartisan support had grown. In 1984, Congress appropriated more than double the \$30 million the CIA requested for the resistance.⁹³⁵ There was a significant group of senators and congressmen who were ideologically committed to the *mujahidin*, and by extension highly appreciative of Pakistan's support for them. The remarks of Senators James McClure (R-ID), Bennett Johnston and John Tower (R-TX) during the October debate are indicative of these sentiments. Speaking on the senate floor, Senator McClure argued,

I firmly believe that a vote for the Cranston amendment is a vote against the Afghan freedom fighters and for their Soviet oppressors. The Cranston amendment would reinforce the perception among those facing Communist aggression that America is unreliable. Simply put, the Afghan anti-Soviet resistance is doing as well as it is only because of Pakistan's willingness to support it. Without America's strong and steady support, Pakistan cannot continue to confront these increasingly violent and brutal Soviet pressure tactics; without Pakistan, there can be no viable resistance to the Soviets in Afghanistan.⁹³⁶

Senator Johnston made similar arguments, even agreeing with Pakistan's threat assessment of India, "their implacable enemy, their historic enemy, who...is quite hostile to Pakistan," and stressing that an aid cut-off would be counterproductive to non-proliferation aims.⁹³⁷

Ultimately, both bills were defeated.

Nevertheless, there was sufficient concern about Pakistani nuclear activities that the administration accepted a compromise sponsored by Senator Larry Pressler (R-SD). While the conditions on providing US aid were not broadened to include the question of whether Pakistan was trying to develop nuclear explosives, the Pressler Amendment, enacted on 8

⁹³⁵ Ahmad and Barnett, "Bloody Games," 485.

⁹³⁶ "Congressional Record – Senate, S12839."

⁹³⁷ Ibid.

August 1985, proposed to cut off aid unless the president could certify that “Pakistan does not *possess* a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed United States assistance program will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device.”⁹³⁸ As a memo to the State Department’s Legal Adviser, Abraham Sofaer noted, the amendment added a new category of possession for which there was little legal precedent.

There are difficult grey areas between possession and non-possession. If a country has made a policy decision to halt development of its capabilities two days short of having everything in place to possess a nuclear explosive device [by assembly], it would seem inappropriate to determine that they did not possess such a device. If the country had decided to stop its development program one year short of completion, it would seem inappropriate to determine that they did...The longer the amount of time, the more significant the policy constraint is and the more uncertainties there are...⁹³⁹

This definition of possession would ultimately be the criterion by which aid to Pakistan was cut off. Pakistani officials, who halted their program just short of assembly, may not have been fully aware of the administration’s legal reasoning.⁹⁴⁰

Based on the Pakistan government’s argument that the US government was being discriminatory and that it would accept any limitations on its nuclear program on a reciprocal basis with India, the administration did tentatively explore the idea of a regional solution during the visit of Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Michael Armacost to India in

⁹³⁸ Memo, Ronald Bettauer to Abraham Sofaer, 3 October 1985, *ibid.* My italics.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁰ Najmuddin Shaikh claims that while serving as ambassador in Washington, D.C., “I told them that you created a sense of betrayal...your own people say that we don’t possess a nuclear device...And they said...our legal people did an interpretation that having all the components...even though they are unassembled is the equivalent of having a nuclear device... it transpired they hadn’t told us this, this was in congressional testimony that the State Department lawyers had laid out this position. But they laid it out and they kept quiet about it. Until 1990 [after Soviet withdrawal].” Najmuddin Shaikh, interview with author, 19 October 2010.

September 1985.⁹⁴¹ There is little evidence in the documents, however, to suggest that these efforts were followed up seriously or that the administration made any attempt to use the, admittedly limited, leverage at its disposal. Both administration and Congress, especially the House of Representatives, were disinclined to put pressure on India over its nuclear program, hoping instead that expanded military and economic cooperation could help coax it from the Soviet camp.⁹⁴² In any case, such attempts would have met with stiff Indian resistance. As Zia observed on more than one occasion, India had already passed the nuclear threshold and moreover, did not wish to be equated with Pakistan as its own program was motivated by concerns about China.⁹⁴³

The biggest crisis, prior to Soviet withdrawal, was caused by the Arshad Pervez case. In 1986, Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-NY) had passed an amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act prohibiting aid to non-nuclear states engaged in nuclear procurement activities in the United States. In July 1987, Pervez, a Canadian national of Pakistani descent, was arrested in Philadelphia for attempting to illegally export maraging steel. The Pervez arrest occurred at a particularly sensitive time, with the Pakistan and US governments seeking congressional approval for a six-year follow-on aid package to succeed the original five-year commitment. Reaction in Congress was particularly hostile, with Solarz and others warning that Pakistan

⁹⁴¹ Telegram, American Embassy New Delhi to Secretary of State, 20 September 1985, folder "SA Fortier/Armacost Trip Sept 85 (5)," box 91889, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL.

⁹⁴² Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger's subsequent trip in October 1986, for example, broached the idea of expanding military ties. "Military-to-Military Initiatives," folder "South Asia Weinberger Trip Oct 7-17 1986 China-India-Pakistan (2)," *ibid.* In this respect Pakistan's argument of double-standards was not entirely without merit.

⁹⁴³ Telegram, Deane Hinton to George Schultz, 18 February, 1987, folder "PAKIS: Nuclear – Zia '86," box 91880, *ibid.*

had gone too far.⁹⁴⁴ Several proposed bills imposed such strict conditionalities on aid to Pakistan as to make a presidential certification impossible.⁹⁴⁵ There was only one factor working in Pakistan's favour: that US and specifically congressional commitment to the *mujahidin* was at an all-time high. Congress appropriated \$500 million in aid for the *mujahidin* in 1986, highly sophisticated weapons, including the Stinger missile, had begun to be provided, and the *mujahidin* were holding their own against the stepped-up Soviet-DRA military campaign. Urged by personal appeals from Zia ul-Haq and Pakistani diplomats in Washington, congressional supporters of the *mujahidin* began an intensive campaign, which Charlie Wilson would later label his "greatest achievement in Congress."⁹⁴⁶

Pakistan's backers succeeded by forcing a regional frame onto the non-proliferation debate. Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Robert Kasten (R-WI) sponsored a resolution adopted by the Senate Appropriations Committee on 3 December, 1987, which argued that efforts to stop Pakistan's nuclear program were faltering because they failed to appreciate that "the root cause of the nuclear problem in South Asia is competition between India and Pakistan."⁹⁴⁷ Accordingly, the Inouye-Kasten resolution, while imposing stricter conditionalities, including tying criteria for certification to nonproduction of weapons-grade enriched uranium or separated plutonium, applied them to both India and Pakistan. In the case of India, noncompliance would result in sanctions on technology trade and a US veto on multilateral

⁹⁴⁴ Jamsheed Marker, *Quiet Diplomacy: Memoirs of an Ambassador of Pakistan* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 328-29.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 328-32.

⁹⁴⁶ Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War*.

⁹⁴⁷ Memo, Robert Oakley to John Negroponte, 4 December 1987, folder "PAKIS: Nuclear Program 1987," box 91880, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL.

development bank loans.⁹⁴⁸ However, the resolution allowed for a waiver on restrictions applying to “any country in South Asia,” provided that the president certify that

a second country in South Asia is producing weapons grade enriched uranium or separated plutonium in unsafeguarded facilities and that the failure of that country to agree to cease production...has resulted in the continued production of such materials by the first country.⁹⁴⁹

This endorsement of Pakistan’s argument that non-proliferation measures needed to be applied equally or not at all led to considerable uproar, especially as some congressional proponents of non-proliferation, including Solarz, were also pro-India.⁹⁵⁰ Eventually, in negotiations with the administration, Congress decided to drop references to India and approve a shorter waiver of two and a half years for Pakistan, with no additional restrictions of significance.⁹⁵¹ In response to the administration’s ongoing pressures to make some non-proliferation gesture Pakistan agreed to begin a process for ratifying the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT).⁹⁵² But otherwise, US officials remained pessimistic about making substantial progress on non-proliferation going ahead.⁹⁵³

The Elusive Quest for Security

Why did Pakistan persist in its development of a nuclear deterrent despite the consequent difficulties in its relationship with the US? The primary reason is that, in Pakistani eyes,

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁰ Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War*, 478; Marker, *Quiet Diplomacy*, 331-32.

⁹⁵¹ Memo, Robert Oakley to Colin Powell, 24 December 1987, folder “PAKIS: Nuclear Program 1987,” box 91880, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL.

⁹⁵² Telegram, George Schultz to American Embassy Islamabad, 30 April 1987, “PAKIS: Rapheal – Nuclear,” ibid.

⁹⁵³ Memo, Shirin Tahir-Kheli to Robert Oakley, 23 July 1987.

existing US security assistance and guarantees were an inadequate substitute for a nuclear deterrent. Although US military aid substantially improved Pakistan's defence capabilities during the 1980s, in the same period India was engaged in a major upgrade of its own military with Soviet backing. A CIA Directorate of Intelligence assessment in April 1986 noted that

US military aid to Pakistan...has *not fundamentally altered the military balance in the region* because of the growing strength of the Indian military and the Soviet commitment of forces to Afghanistan...Despite the US aid, Pakistan's arsenal is still small and obsolescent compared with India's inventory. India has almost twice as many combat aircraft, including modern Soviet MIG-23s, MIG-27s, French Mirage 2000s and British Jaguars. In addition to the 40 F-16s, the Pakistani Air Force includes 200 obsolescent F-6 and A-5 fixed-wing aircraft...and about 90 aging French Mirage IIIs and Mirage 5s produced in the 1960s. US deliveries have helped the Pakistani Army retain a rough equipment parity with the Indian Army along the border. Still, US-supplied tanks and artillery account for only 20 to 30 percent of the Army inventory...The Indian Navy has nearly three times as many vessels as Pakistan...the new US weapons systems have *raised significantly the potential costs to New Delhi of a war with Pakistan, although the Indians are confident of victory*...Pakistan's US arms have probably been a minor factor discouraging Moscow and Kabul from more and deeper air incursions...⁹⁵⁴

Consequently, despite the major upgrade of its defence capabilities, there was reason enough for Pakistani officials to think that real security lay only in a nuclear deterrent, rather than in an endless race to improve its conventional forces balance.

The Directorate of Intelligence report argued that "the USSR and the Afghan regime, like India, are concerned about the potential US reaction if they were to escalate their attacks inside Pakistan."⁹⁵⁵ However, from Pakistan's perspective the security guarantees the US was willing to provide did not give ironclad assurance of US support in times of crisis. Soon after

⁹⁵⁴ Directorate of Intelligence, "Pakistan: US Military Aid's Contribution to Deterrence," 18 April 1986, folder "U.S.-Pakistan Consultative Group Fourth Meeting 24-25 April, 1986, Washington DC [5 of 5]," box 91134, Near East and South Asia Affairs Directorate, NSC, RRL. My italics.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid.

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan had asked the US to replace the 1959 agreement with a formal security treaty that would oblige the US to come to Pakistan's defence if it was attacked. The Carter administration refused this request and this stance was maintained by the Reagan administration. In the IG meeting on 6 March, 1981, NSC staffers argued that such a treaty would have to be endorsed by Congress to have binding effect, and it was unlikely that Congress would agree without placing enough restrictions on the commitment as to undermine Pakistani confidence. Moreover, "the acceptance of a formal security commitment (of the type we have with NATO, Japan and others) implies a firm intention and capability of committing major U.S. forces to the defense of another country *which may not realistically describe our intentions and capabilities* concerning a hypothetical Soviet invasion of Pakistan."⁹⁵⁶

With regard to Indian aggression against Pakistan, the IG was even more reluctant to make any firm assurances. There was a wide divergence in perspective between Pakistan's threat assessment of Indian intentions and that of the US. Although Zia warned that Indo-Soviet ties were strong, the US government, as mentioned earlier, hoped to coax India from the pro-Soviet camp through engagement.

Consequently, rather than a formal security treaty, the IG had recommended three types of actions that, allied to Pakistani military purchases, could build confidence in US reliability. Joint contingency planning, building infrastructure for rapid US forces deployment in

⁹⁵⁶ "U.S. Security Assurances to Pakistan." My italics.

Pakistan and similar steps provided visible indication of US ability to come to Pakistan's assistance, although they did not clearly demonstrate US commitment to do so.⁹⁵⁷ Forceful statements in defence of Pakistan's security by the president, and similar statements or resolutions by Congress could also help reassure Pakistan, and the IG report suggests the different forms such statements could take, with illustrative examples of each type.⁹⁵⁸ For example, a presidential letter to Zia could include the following:

...in the event of Soviet aggression against Pakistan, the Government of the United States will consult immediately with your government on an appropriate response to that situation. If necessary, I would be prepared to consider the use of armed force, in accordance with our Constitution, as a possible means of dealing with such aggression...⁹⁵⁹

A Congressional resolution in support of Pakistan, if Congress were willing to make one, could be phrased as follows:

It is the sense of Congress: (a) that the United States fully supports the security and the territorial integrity of Pakistan; (b) that the President should take appropriate steps to deal effectively with any future Soviet aggression against Pakistan; and (c) that the Congress will take effective measures to support these objectives as circumstances may require.⁹⁶⁰

The above statements are typical of the language used and roughly continued to define the parameters of US assurances to Pakistan through the 1980s. It is evident that while such statements indicate the possibility of US intervention, stake a degree of US credibility in taking *some* action, and would give pause to would-be aggressors, especially the USSR, they do not unequivocally oblige the US to intervene. For Pakistani officials, who had

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid.

painstakingly compiled a series of similar US statements in the years leading to the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, and who had entered the new relationship with strong pre-existing doubts about US reliability, such statements would have fallen far short of the reassurances necessary.⁹⁶¹

It is unsurprising, given this context, that while US warnings of an aid cut-off over the nuclear issue constrained the ways in which the Pakistani nuclear program developed, they failed altogether in the stated aim of inducing Pakistan to abandon the program. Indeed, the main effect of such warnings was only to reinforce Pakistani doubts about US reliability. In a July 1987 memo, NSC staffer Shirin Tahir-Kheli noted that “it is remarkable that even after six years of steady support and assistance, support for the U.S.-Pakistani relationship remains very limited” in Pakistan.⁹⁶² Writing in retrospect, Rodman muses that “perversely, our pressures on Pakistan to halt its nuclear program may only have confirmed in Pakistani eyes the necessity of the nuclear option as the ultimate guarantee of Pakistan’s survival.”⁹⁶³

Ultimately, throughout all the crises over the nuclear issue, it had primarily been Pakistan’s value in confronting the Soviets in Afghanistan that had swung the outcome in its favour.

While some Congressional supporters did show appreciation for Pakistani concerns, for example vis-à-vis India, in their debates, the main justification for continuing support

⁹⁶¹ Reflecting on the State Department’s opposition to US intervention in the 1971 war on the basis that US assurances and treaty obligations did not legally oblige it do so, Kissinger observed: “The image of a great nation conducting itself like a shyster looking for legalistic loopholes was not likely to inspire other allies who had signed treaties with us or relied on our expressions in the belief that the words meant approximately what they said.” Kissinger, *White House Years*, 895.

⁹⁶² Memo, Shirin Tahir-Kheli to Robert Oakley, 23 July 1987.

⁹⁶³ Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace*, 353.

invariably centred on the Afghan cause. Thus, for all the rhetoric of a new and sustainable relationship, both US and Pakistani officials were well aware that, if the Soviets eventually withdrew from Afghanistan, Pakistan's strategic importance to the US would diminish substantially.⁹⁶⁴ In the upheaval surrounding Soviet withdrawal in 1988-90, the delicate balance of interests that had defined the new relationship did not take long to collapse.

⁹⁶⁴ Telegram, Deane Hinton to George Schultz, 31 March 1987, folder "PAKIS: Nuclear – Zia '86," box 91880, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL, and Memo, Shirin Tahir-Kheli to Robert Oakley, 23 July 1987.

7. Conclusion: The Soviet Withdrawal

The Last Stage

On 10 December 1987, at the Washington Summit between the leaders of the USA and USSR, Gorbachev formally abandoned the linkage between national reconciliation policy and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and announced a timeframe of under twelve months for withdrawal.⁹⁶⁵ The Soviet offer, which essentially resolved the last outstanding issue in the Geneva negotiations, prompted a frantic scramble to shape the post-war political settlement. Zia ul-Haq publicly accused the superpowers of having done a deal behind Pakistan's back: "By brokering in coal we have blackened our face."⁹⁶⁶ Zia's response reflected his understanding that in the absence of a political settlement in Afghanistan, withdrawal would lead to continuing war, to the Afghan refugees remaining in Pakistan, and to Pakistan being left to shoulder these responsibilities largely on its own. In each of these conclusions, Zia would be proved correct, but his stand amounted to a reversal of Pakistan's negotiating stance in Geneva. Untrusting of the unilateral Soviet-Kabul policy of national reconciliation and doubtful of Soviet willingness to withdraw, Pakistan had long argued that withdrawal was a prerequisite to a political settlement.

Zia and the foreign ministry initiated several proposals for a broad-based government in Afghanistan to be in place prior to implementation of the Geneva Accords. One proposal,

⁹⁶⁵ US-Soviet discussions at the Washington Summit perused from box 4, Kenneth Duberstein Files, RRL.

⁹⁶⁶ Ahmad and Barnett, "Bloody Games," 489.

based on suggestions by American businessman Armand Hammer, envisaged Zahir Shah returning as the head of an interim government that included neither the *mujahidin* nor the PDPA.⁹⁶⁷ Another, informally known as the 1/3rd formula, suggested that the interim government be composed of 1/3rd representatives of the *mujahidin*, 1/3rd of the refugees and 1/3rd of the PDPA;⁹⁶⁸ this proposal was dismissed by IUAM spokesman Yunas Khalis as Zia ul-Haq's "personal idea."⁹⁶⁹

Having weathered the brunt of Soviet offensives in 1986-87 and with the military situation more in their favour than at any point in the past, the majority of the seven Pakistan-based *mujahidin* organizations were ill-disposed to making major political concessions in aid of a negotiating process in which they had no investment. Unlike Zia, some of their ISI supporters were also optimistic of military victory and may have encouraged intransigence, although privately the ISI admitted they were unable to compel *mujahidin* concessions.⁹⁷⁰ Under domestic, Pakistani and international pressure to come up with a political initiative, the Pakistan-based *tanzimat* had agreed to a formula for an Afghan Interim Government (AIG) with each of the seven parties nominating an equal number of representatives. Hikmatyar and Gailani, aware of the need for the AIG to command legitimacy among Afghans, insisted that its representatives be elected through a mix of direct elections among the refugees and in some liberated areas in Afghanistan and commander-based nominations elsewhere.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁷ Telegram, Arnold Raphel to George Schultz, 11 June 1987, folder "PAKIS: Rapheal – Nuclear," box 91880, Shirin Tahir-Kheli Files, RRL.

⁹⁶⁸ Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 316.

⁹⁶⁹ Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 248.

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 192-93.

⁹⁷¹ "Press Statement," *The Afghan Mujahid*, October 1987, 1.

However, this stance was opposed by the other five parties, who argued that holding elections was impractical and would distract from military objectives. The resulting AIG was dismissed as unrepresentative by the Soviets, the Afghan government and many sections of the resistance.

In the absence of a credible political initiative and with Soviet patience for staying in Afghanistan at an end,⁹⁷² Zia climbed down from his insistence on a broad-based government before withdrawal, declaring himself satisfied if Cordovez continued private efforts for a settlement thereafter. Focus now shifted to efforts to maintain *mujahidin* military viability, relative to the Afghan government, after withdrawal. Congressional supporters of the *mujahidin*, alarmed at the prospect of an arms cut-off under Geneva's instrument on non-interference, played an important role in the pressures leading to a US-Soviet understanding on 'positive symmetry.' This understanding was embodied in letters in which the US reserved its right to continue to supply the *mujahidin* so long as the Soviets aided the PDPA government.⁹⁷³ Positive symmetry made a mockery of Pakistan's commitment to non-interference under Geneva, since arms to the *mujahidin* could only be supplied meaningfully via Pakistan, but with the situation on the ground having changed in favour of the *mujahidin*, the Soviets reluctantly accepted the understanding.

Efforts for a swift military victory, however, suffered an immediate setback with the Ojhri camp explosion, in which a large quantity of arms and ammunition for the *mujahidin*, rushed

⁹⁷² Riaz M. Khan, *Untying the Afghan Knot*, 254-57.

⁹⁷³ For the texts of the Geneva Accords and related statements on symmetry see *ibid*, Appendix I-VII.

in advance of Geneva, was destroyed. Subsequent delays in resupply were indicative of waning US interest in the *jihad*. The death of Zia ul-Haq and Akhtar Abdur Rahman in a plane crash on 17 August 1988 contributed to the disarray in decision-making, with multiple centres of power in Pakistan – ISI, foreign ministry, prime minister, president and army chief – and in the US, the State Department and CIA, often pursuing divergent or contradictory policies.⁹⁷⁴

It was against this backdrop that the *mujahidin*'s first major operation after the Soviet withdrawal took place, an attack on the town of Jalalabad, intended to hasten the collapse of regime forces and create an enclave inside Afghanistan from which the AIG could claim international recognition. Predicted to lead to victory in a week, the operation turned into a months-long inconclusive siege that heightened acrimony among the *mujahidin* and stiffened regime morale. Militarily questionable from the outset, the failure of Jalalabad pointed beyond the military limitations of the *mujahidin* to their political weaknesses: poor coordination with and among external sponsors, who set the agenda; lack of interest and deteriorating cooperation among *mujahidin* commanders; and loss of fighting spirit amid political posturing.⁹⁷⁵

The absence of a coherent plan for the endgame contributed to strains in the Pakistan-US relationship over such questions as the nature of the settlement, which parties to support and what tactics to employ. With US interest in Afghanistan receding, Pakistan's concerns about

⁹⁷⁴ See Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 189-239.

⁹⁷⁵ See Eqbal Ahmad, "Stalemate at Jalalabad."

its strategic position were heightened. Before his death, Zia had toyed with the idea of a regional ‘Islamic bloc’ including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey.⁹⁷⁶ Such concerns also drove continued efforts on Pakistan’s nuclear program, which in October 1990 would lead to cut-off of all US aid to Pakistan, further entrenching the narrative of American betrayal.

A Relationship Transformed

The retreat of great power rivalry with the Soviet withdrawal did not result in the return of the pre-1978 relationship, where a certain balance had existed between two independent governments. As I have shown, state interference across the border had formed only one aspect of engagement in that relationship. Crises had regularly been ameliorated by diplomacy and recourse to common interests, and several promising attempts were made to resolve the outstanding dispute over the border. But during the course of the war, the ways in which Pakistan engaged with Afghanistan, and the nature of Afghan politics and society, had changed irrevocably.

The collapse of central authority meant that most of the country remained outside even the nominal administration that Kabul had provided before the war, while at the same time the absence of a legitimate government resulted in more contenders than ever fighting to control Kabul. This civil war continued beyond the overthrow of the Najibullah government in 1992 among different *mujahidin* and ethnic factions, and reflected the failure of *mujahidin* leaders

⁹⁷⁶ Telegram, Robert Oakley to William Burns, 26 September 1988, folder “Pakistan [1 of 2],” OA 91843, William Burns Files, RRL.

to either unify or at least temper ambitions of central rule.⁹⁷⁷ Afghanistan was not unique in this respect: civil wars broke out or continued in a number of countries that were the focus of contestation in the late Cold War era, such as Cambodia and Angola. These wars remain an understudied aspect of the Reagan legacy and some of the factors discussed in the Afghan case may thus have broader applications for our understanding of Cold War rivalries in the Third World.

Continued political contestation among *mujahidin* leaders and the PDPA was accompanied by ebbing of support for the *mujahidin*. As I have shown in this thesis, the ideological basis of *jihād* had rested largely on opposition to the Soviet presence, with little consensus on the political order to follow. Although few would have supported the Najibullah government's claim to power, the government's efforts to distance itself from its ideological origins over the course of the 1980s made it seem less of a valid target for *jihād* after the Soviet withdrawal. The escalating political battles between *mujahidin* leaders and their apparent dependence on external support, meanwhile, made them seem more like self-interested actors than liberators. With none of the contenders commanding popular legitimacy, support for the *jihād* and the fighting spirit of the *mujahidin* gradually dissipated.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷⁷ At a regional level, this outcome was foreshadowed by the factional fighting in Hazarajat that broke out soon after that region was liberated from the PDPA government by the end of 1979. Ironically, it was precisely when these dynamics increased among the *mujahidin* in general after the Soviet withdrawal that the Hazara *mujahidin* finally managed to reach a satisfactory power-sharing agreement among themselves, in large part driven by the desire to establish a unified bloc that could more effectively advocate for their interests in a post-Soviet Afghanistan.

⁹⁷⁸ Asad Durrani, who was DG ISI at this time, reflects that the common sentiment among ordinary fighters was "Why kill more Afghans?" Asad Durrani, interview with author, 26 April 2010.

An accompanying phenomenon was the gradual degeneration of many, though not all, *mujahidin* groups into banditry. As I have argued, bandit-like groups are endemic to insurgencies and were present from the outset of the Afghan war. Their growth after the Soviet withdrawal can be explained in terms of the breakdown of traditional political precedence and mechanisms for dispute resolution over the course of the war and the absence, in many areas, of an accepted system to take their place. The political weaknesses of the *mujahidin* that we have discussed, namely, uneven development of parallel institutions to provide governance, the absence of a central command to enforce discipline, the often weak linkages between commanders and the populace, and the absence of ideological restraints, were all factors contributing to the growth of an anarchic space, especially after the fighting lost any higher purpose. The militias policy of the Kabul regime was also central to this development. While some *mujahidin* commanders did try to establish order in regions they dominated, towards the end of the 1980s Kabul liberally distributed arms to uncommitted actors to buy temporary loyalty. These militias soon dwarfed the regular army, which was in no position to enforce discipline. The relationship between type of political organization and degeneration to bandit-like behaviour offers promising avenues for future research, and some efforts in this respect have been made with regard to insurgencies in other countries and at a micro-level in the Afghan case.⁹⁷⁹

The external aid effort and direction to the war provided by the US and Pakistan provided material and tactical benefits to the resistance but also contributed to its political weaknesses

⁹⁷⁹ For the former, see Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); for the latter, Giustozzi, “The Missing Ingredient.”

by reinforcing the instrumental nature of political linkages, encouraging orientation towards donors rather than indigenous legitimacy and incentivizing military rather than political operations. The critique of some commentators that the US should have handled the political aspect instead of leaving the matter to Pakistan, regardless of its merits, was misplaced, since that would have done little to resolve these problems. Indeed, after 2001 when the US was able to implement its preferred political prescriptions, it still relied overwhelmingly on instrumental incentives and found, to its frustration, that its attempts to impose norms of ‘good governance’ and ‘democracy’ remained divorced from local meanings.⁹⁸⁰ The continuing resilience of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, despite far greater disadvantages in material resources and external support than those faced by the *mujahidin* against the Soviets, suggests the relative importance of such factors as ideology, organization and a degree of indigenous legitimacy to the success of insurgent or revolutionary movements.⁹⁸¹ Contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine, which grapples with the idea of insurgencies as political wars but then retreats from that understanding to assume that insurgent support is primarily coerced, and which seeks to provide services but is incapable of providing ideological meaning, has yet to truly apprehend these factors.⁹⁸²

Continuing turmoil in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal pressed Pakistan to keep intervening across the border. With the Najibullah government still in place and the *mujahidin*

⁹⁸⁰ See, for example, Peter Marsden, *Afghanistan: Aid, Armies & Empires* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

⁹⁸¹ For an analysis of Taliban successes and failures, see Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (London: Hurst, 2007).

⁹⁸² The former bias is evident in the counterinsurgency field manual produced by the US Army. See points 1-9, 1-12, 1-44, 3-76, 3-91 and 5-57 in Field Manual, 3-24, “Counterinsurgency” (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006). For the latter shortcoming see David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).

in opposition until 1992, Pakistan's approach continued to prioritize support for non-state actors over diplomacy. As I have shown, this approach was in marked contrast to the policy before 1979, but the subsequent growth of the ISI led to its dominance over Afghan policy by 1989. The ISI's experience of waging a clandestine war thus shaped the contours of that policy even after the fall of the Najibullah government. As Foreign Secretary Humayun Khan observed, Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan became intelligence-dominated, with the resulting weakness that "you can't proclaim your own policy."⁹⁸³ A policy of denial may originally have been necessary for Pakistan's nuclear program and to avoid Soviet reprisals over support for the *mujahidin*, but it gradually seeped into other areas of policy. The foreign ministry thus lost credibility with other actors, who would increasingly question if initiatives were genuine or simply a 'cover' for Pakistan's actual policy.⁹⁸⁴ Inability to take credible initiatives, increasing mistrust with *mujahidin* factions and regional actors, and the growth of a conspiratorial mindset were consequences: even when the government was not responsible for a particular development or had no ulterior motives, its 'hidden hand' would be suspected.⁹⁸⁵

With Pakistan's strategic value to the US having diminished after Soviet withdrawal, tolerance for its nuclear program steadily diminished in Congress and the US administration. The unravelling of the US-Pakistan relationship prompted the Pakistan government to consider regional solutions to compensate for loss of US support. Chief of Army Staff Mirza

⁹⁸³ Humayun Khan, interview with author, 11 April 2010.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁵ For example, in the common assumption that the Taliban were 'created' by Pakistan in 1996, whereas most informed accounts suggest Pakistani policy was largely reactive.

Aslam Beg coined the term ‘Strategic Depth’ for this policy, which, given the climate of suspicion, was immediately misinterpreted in a physical sense to mean a defensible territory where the Pakistan army could retreat if attacked by India.⁹⁸⁶ The implication was that establishing Pakistani control over Afghanistan was essential and comparisons were made to British Forward Policy. Beg rejected the idea as “stupid,” arguing that the policy referred to establishing strategic partnerships with Iran and Afghanistan so as to create a unified Islamic bloc with common defence pacts and a high degree of economic and military cooperation.⁹⁸⁷ But the collapse of state institutions in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s experience of playing different Afghan factions against each other suggest that, unlike in the case of Iran, such a relationship with Afghanistan was unlikely to take the form of an equal partnership, but instead of Pakistan having ‘earned the right’ to a friendly government in Afghanistan, as various policymakers would state in succeeding years. Yet as Pakistani planners would find to their cost, pursuing such policies only created temporary alliances and reinforced suspicions. Pakistan’s support for the Taliban after 1996 alienated Iran, Russia and many of the newly emerged Central Asian states.

I have shown in this study that Pakistan’s pursuit of its interests in Afghanistan was not so single-minded as is usually portrayed. In key questions related to the *mujahidin* up to 1989 there was often diversity of opinion within and between different agencies, with important policies sometimes settled on by default. It is likely that assessments of Pakistan’s support for Pashtun domination in Afghanistan after 1989 may similarly need to be qualified; certainly,

⁹⁸⁶ For this alarmist interpretation, see Eqbal Ahmad, “What After ‘Strategic Depth?’” in Bengelsdorf et al, 509-513.

⁹⁸⁷ Mirza Aslam Beg, interview with author, 28 September 2010.

there have been a few journalistic accounts which suggest considerable confusion in decision-making.⁹⁸⁸

The Durand Line remained unacknowledged by Afghanistan, but the nature of interactions across it had changed. In the first thirty years of their relationship, it was the Afghan state that interfered in the Pakistani tribal areas while Pakistan's involvement was generally defensively oriented. That situation had reversed over the course of the war, with Pakistan now having considerable influence and political stakes in the contending parties in Afghanistan, while the Afghan state was too busy trying to monopolize power in its immediate surroundings to have much capacity for cross-border involvement.

This role reversal did not fundamentally change the nature of the tribal areas as autonomous from both states. However, in other important ways they had transformed. The outcome of the war was neither state retreat from nor state consolidation over the tribal areas, but increased involvement of specific state agencies through lateral contacts with particular groups and individuals. While increasing state influence in the tribal areas, such ties also gave the groups concerned greater ability to defy state agencies – for example, those related to law enforcement, narcotics control, or civil administration – by using their influence with segments of the state with whom they had developed vested interests, such as the ISI or ministries controlled by supporters such as JUI or Jama'at-i Islami.

⁹⁸⁸ For example, Roy Gutman, *How We Missed the Story: Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan* (Washington, D.C.: USIP, 2008).

Cross-border ties between Pashtun tribes were reinforced, but the social transformation on the Afghan side, namely the dwindling influence of traditional tribal elite, the rise of younger commanders, and increased proliferation of weapons were echoed to some extent on the Pakistani side. The continuing presence of the bulk of Afghan refugees in Pakistan reinforced these dynamics. While the spirit of *jihad* had died down in general, some Pakistanis, Afghan refugees and foreign *mujahidin*, who had come to associate the idea of *jihad* with the establishment of an Islamic state, remained involved in the fighting in Afghanistan.

The preceding reflections do not perhaps do justice to the incredible courage and idealism with which so many Afghans resisted the overwhelming might of a superpower. They may not do justice to the risks – banal in comparison, but for a host state considerable – that Pakistan took to support them, nor to the streak of idealism that underlay its mainly pragmatic calculations. Yet history seldom rewards idealism with ideal movements or leaders, let alone ideal outcomes. Supporters of Pakistan’s policy contend that it freed Afghanistan of the Soviet occupation, saved Pakistan from becoming a Soviet satellite and accelerated the processes that led to the success of popular movements against Soviet control in Eastern Europe. Milt Bearden reflects,

I’d come back as the head of the Soviet-East European division in the CIA and I was running over and talking to these [popular leaders] and they were saying when the Soviets left, we knew they would never come here. They wouldn’t come to Berlin, they wouldn’t come to Prague, they wouldn’t come to Warsaw... They weren’t going to send troops anywhere. They were done. That’s sort of the sadness of the thing, is that the people of Afghanistan and to a huge degree [Pakistan]...made great sacrifices...and all the benefits flowed to about 300 million people in East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁸⁹ Milton Bearden, interview with author, 15 April 2011.

In the early 1980s Zia ul-Haq often stated that withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan would be “the miracle of the century.” Yet in many ways it proved a pyrrhic victory.

Appendix: On Sources and Methodology

The following discussion continues from the note on sources and methodology in the introduction. Here I will discuss in greater detail the challenges and limitations involved in employing some of the archival and other sources that were used extensively in this thesis.

Pakistani Archives and the Pre-1979 Relationship

The archives of the government of Pakistan can be difficult to access, a fact which has led a number of scholars whom I spoke to or whose works I read to conclude that they are uniformly closed to the public. My early experience with the archives of the Foreign Ministry in Islamabad followed this pattern. Although I was never explicitly told that the Foreign Ministry archives are closed to researchers, attempts through several channels to gain access, including through both currently serving and retired diplomats, met with little success.

However, my experience at the archives of the National Documentation Centre (NDC) in the Cabinet Wing in Islamabad was altogether different. The NDC is designed to be open to researchers and the public and there were no special permissions required to search through its vast photocopy and microfilm holdings. Many documents in the NDC's holdings are still classified, but those I accessed for my research ranged from the British period to the early 1970s, and included reports and correspondence from the Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry, Ministry of States and Frontier Regions and Ministry of Information. There were also minutes of cabinet meetings, reports and correspondence from officials in NWFP and FATA, police

reports, embassy cables and some military and ISI reports. Declassification of documents at the NDC is a work in progress; as of my visit, documents dating from the mid-1970s or later were still being declassified and material dating from the late 1960s to early 1970s was limited compared to earlier years. Nonetheless, the documents were a rich source of information and insight into the attitudes and policies of Pakistani officials across the spectrum of government. To my knowledge, this information has not previously been made use of in my area of research.

As with any archival source, the material has its biases. It is a common theme in the documents to present the Pakistan government as reasonable and conciliatory, the aggrieved party to the bilateral relationship, while the Afghan government stands out as intransigent aggressor. These assessments do vary depending on the state of the relationship at the time – hostile or cordial – and from official to official. Still, it was necessary to correct for the pro-Pakistan bias by consulting a variety of other sources. Abdul Samad Ghaus' *Fall of Afghanistan* was particularly useful in this respect, as it ably presents the official Afghan perspective in the dispute and touches on most of the incidents and points of controversy that arose during the course of the three decades before the Saur Revolution.

The state-centred perspective of the documents is also evident. I previously noted in Chapter Two that the proclivity of Pakistani officials to consider pro-Pashtunistan sentiment as superficial, incited only by foreign agents and a few local troublemakers, is typical of incumbent states faced with potential separatist sentiment. The NDC documents fit this pattern, barring a few insightful exceptions. Nonetheless, as I argued in that chapter, there

were a number of independent reasons – the history of state-tribe relationships in the region, the ambiguity of Pashtunistan demands, the testimony of a number of pro-Pashtunistan Pakistanis and Afghans – for my conclusion that the issue of Pashtunistan did indeed have limited ideological impact in the frontier.

The archives of the Afghan state have not fared well over three decades of war and the omission of official Afghan documents covering the 1947-1978 period is admittedly a shortcoming in my reconstruction, even though I had always intended my focus to be on the Pakistan side. I was nonetheless able to form something approaching a complete picture of the critical early negotiations between the states in 1947-1948, owing to the happy – from my perspective – chance of the lead Afghan negotiator deciding to unburden himself of all the details of the secret negotiations in a public address on Radio Kabul, the transcript of which was preserved in its entirety in the NDC documents. Although his version of events cannot be taken entirely at face value, it was easy enough to fill in the gaps through examining the Pakistani record as well as that of British officials who were in contact with both sides.

For the remainder of the period, I supplemented the Pakistani record by using secondary sources, public Afghan documents, and memoirs and interviews of both Afghan and Pakistani diplomats – some of the latter of whom had independent ties to the ruling Afghan elite and represented Kabul's viewpoint with great sympathy. Still, there is no denying that access to Afghan archival documents would have allowed for a more nuanced reading of the different viewpoints and factions in Kabul on the Pashtunistan issue and relations with Pakistan,

although I expect any resulting modifications to my narrative would not have substantially affected its broader conclusions.

The Mujahidin

The archives of the intelligence organizations that worked most closely with the *mujahidin*, namely the ISI and CIA, have long defied the attempts of researchers to gain access and my own experience was no different. In a research visit to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, I uncovered a wealth of new material on US relations with Pakistan during the 1980s, but documents on Afghanistan remained classified. Similarly, my visit to the CIA archives at the National Archives and Records Administration yielded valuable information on CIA intelligence assessments of the *mujahidin* and other actors, but records of the CIA's actual dealings were unavailable. The ISI's archives also remain inaccessible.

I was able to make use of a variety of sources, including such CIA reports and memoirs of ISI officers as are available, interviews with CIA, ISI, military and civilian officials, interviews of Jama'at-i Islami members, Soviet documents, *mujahidin* publications, and the periodicals of independent Afghan organizations, to go further than previous researchers in sketching out Pakistan's involvement with the *mujahidin*. My research suggests a more complex picture of Pakistan's involvement, driven by competing imperatives, than is usually portrayed; particularly in the early years and also with respect to the much vexed issue of *mujahidin* unity. Still, the picture remains incomplete and the specifics of ISI dealings with individual *mujahidin* organizations and the resulting web of interests that developed can only be delineated in broad contours. Access to the ISI archives must remain a cherished objective for

researchers examining Pakistan's involvement with the *mujahidin*, even if it is an objective highly unlikely to be fulfilled.

Of particular use among the sources that I employed to analyze the political development of the *mujahidin* and their relationship with Pakistan were the *mujahidin*'s own publications, which I obtained in research visits to the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University (ACKU) and the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Most of the main Pakistan-based organizations produced their own literature and periodicals, which varied widely in both frequency and quality. I found little material produced by Nabi's Harakat-i Inqilab, for example, whereas at the other end of the spectrum Jami'at-i Islami's publications stood out for their sophistication and for the space they set aside for cultural and other non-*jihad* related affairs. Gailani's Mahaz and Hikmatyar's Hizb also published widely.

Naturally, the material is intended as public outreach, aimed not only at promoting the *mujahidin* cause *vis-à-vis* Kabul, but the standing of individual *mujahidin* organizations relative to their competitors in the struggle to secure support from international backers and donors, as well as the Afghan public. As such, most claims in the publications need to be evaluated carefully. There is a common tendency, for example, to exaggerate figures of casualties achieved on the battlefield and of total numbers of *mujahidin* commanded. These tendencies have been commented on by Pakistani, US and independent sources, and are prevalent enough that I generally avoided using such figures from the material. The publications nonetheless offer an important window into the *mujahidin* organizations and how they perceived of and presented themselves. Two separate series of articles in Jami'at's

Afghan News also provided valuable information on the origins of the Islamist movement in Kabul University.

Equally valuable were the publications of independent Afghan organizations, including the Afghan Information and Documentation Centre (AIC) and the Cultural Council of Afghanistan Resistance, which I also obtained from SOAS and ACKU. Although just as committed to the *mujahidin* resistance against the Soviets and Kabul, these organizations were unaffiliated with any *mujahidin* faction and actively sought to present a balanced perspective with respect to them. Among the material included in these publications were interviews with regime defectors and refugees from a variety of social circumstances, interviews with Afghan exiles in the US and Western Europe, interviews with party officials and commanders, summaries of articles and news appearing in a wide range of *mujahidin* and independent Afghan press organs, summaries of the regime's Radio Kabul broadcasts, articles and analysis, and copies of primary documents produced by various organizations. This material offered a variety of angles from which to examine contesting claims among different *mujahidin* organizations and their critics and supporters, although sometimes the publications simply reported *mujahidin* claims – for example, on casualty figures – uncritically. Further, although the Shi'i organizations occasionally feature in these publications, the bulk of coverage is skewed towards the Pakistan-based organizations, and towards Pakistan-based refugees rather than resistance supporters inside Afghanistan.

A third important source were the four Orkand Corporation reports, one covering each of Afghanistan's northern, eastern, western and southern provinces. These reports were

commissioned by the CIA in the latter stages of the war and their authors were thus able to access databases that are still not in the public domain. The reports provide a comprehensive overview of *mujahidin* politics and patterns of organization across Afghanistan, although they are not without their shortcomings. In particular, the reports focus on the seven Pakistan-based *tanzimat*, to whom the bulk of CIA funds and supplies were transferred. Although they provide much more realistic estimates of the numerical strength of *mujahidin* organizations than the aforementioned sources, they tend to undercount part-time *mujahidin*, smaller organizations, independent groups and the Iran-backed Shi'i *mujahidin*. The figures they provide date from 1988-1989 and so should be considered a snapshot from that period, although they do discuss qualitatively how party strengths changed over time. In assessing popular support for parties, rather than just regional presence, their conclusions can only be considered indicative.

The reports provide highly detailed, if not always consistent, coverage of *mujahidin* organizational structures across Afghanistan and were an important source of information in assessing *mujahidin* political organization in Chapter Four. I noted in that chapter the limitations in official US understanding of the dynamics of insurgent and revolutionary warfare, and it is necessary to make the caveat that, in assessing the effectiveness and popularity of *mujahidin* organization, and how well it was integrated into local understandings, the reports can only tell so much. To help with assessing such factors, it was necessary to use comparative and theoretical literature on revolutionary war, as well as more in-depth studies of *mujahidin* activities in specific localities. Despite these limitations, the Orkand reports remain unique in the insight they provide into *mujahidin* political structures.

Memoirs

A variety of memoirs and personal accounts were utilized in the course of my research. In this section, I provide additional context on three particularly useful memoirs which were cited at multiple points in this thesis, namely, those of Abdul Samad Ghaus, Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf and Riaz M. Khan.

Abdul Samad Ghaus' *Fall of Afghanistan*, which aims to provide a history of Afghan foreign policy, was an important source for elaborating the official Afghan perspective on the pre-1979 relationship with Pakistan. Ghaus was well acquainted with his subject, having served for many years in the Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan, rising to Deputy Foreign Minister in the Republican government of Sardar Daoud. The book's central thesis is that, given its geopolitical location, sandwiched between more powerful states and empires, a foreign policy of neutrality was the key to Afghanistan's survival. However, the continuing dispute with Pakistan drove Afghanistan's foreign policy to become increasingly reliant on the USSR, ultimately giving the latter its opportunity to seize control of the country. It is important to note that Ghaus was writing from exile, having fled the country after the Saur Revolution; whether his appreciation of Soviet intentions would have been quite as negative prior to 1978 is open to question.

The main bias of Ghaus' study is that of any official history: his narrative essentially reflects the perspective of the nation-state (Afghan in this case). He is evidently loyal to the state, and to Daoud's government in particular; assumes that its legitimacy is self-evident; and is

convinced of its historic, modernizing mission. Thus his account can tell us very little of how the statist narrative of Pashtunistan and relations with Pakistan was received by the Afghan public, particularly outside Kabul and among different ethnic groups, nor of what internal pressures and constraints may have influenced that narrative.

Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf's *Battle for Afghanistan* offers the most comprehensive account available of ISI involvement with the *mujahidin*. Yousaf headed the ISI's Afghan Bureau from 1983-1987 and personally oversaw the strategy, tactics and logistics of the war. His account offers many fascinating insights into the ISI role, although certain factors need to be kept in mind while reading it. First, Yousaf's personal experience only covers the middle years of the *jihād*; although he comments on later events leading up to the Soviet withdrawal, these comments are made as an informed critic, rather than a participant. Pakistan's first contacts with the Islamist groups and the early development of its policies with respect to the Afghan *jihād* are missing from the narrative; for my study, I used a variety of other sources to reconstruct this period. Second, it must be remembered that although pivotal, Yousaf's perspective is not *the* ISI perspective. As was evident through interviews and other sources, ISI attitudes towards the legitimacy of the *jihād* could vary considerably between officers.

Third, Yousaf has an evident bias in favour of his own organization and his own role. While he freely criticizes other Pakistani government agencies and the US government, and criticizes (and admires) the *mujahidin*, a critique of the ISI is notably lacking from his narrative, except with regard to the period in which he had already left office. Yousaf's point-blank denial that ISI officers engaged in corrupt activities will raise eyebrows: allegations of ISI corruption are

widespread and widely believed in Pakistan. As I observed in Chapter Five, it is very difficult to assess the extent to which such claims are accurate, and they may well be exaggerated. Yet the claim that corruption only occurred at the other ends of the pipeline, with the CIA's procurement activities or among the *mujahidin*, scarcely commands credibility. Aside from these and other incidents where Yousaf holds back from telling all he can, the other prejudices of the text – for example, the ISI's emphasis on purely military criteria to assess *mujahidin* organizations – have been commented on in the thesis and offer revealing insights into ISI attitudes towards the *mujahidin* and the insurgency.

Riaz M. Khan's *Untying the Afghan Knot* offers a nuanced, critical assessment of Pakistan's involvement in the Geneva negotiations; it is as much a scholarly work as a memoir. The author, who eventually retired from the foreign service as Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, took part in all the negotiations relating to Soviet withdrawal from 1980-88 and also served as DG Afghanistan from 1986-88. His book must be considered one of the two best accounts of Geneva, alongside Geneva mediator Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison's *Out of Afghanistan*.

The two books nonetheless differ in some important emphases: Cordovez and Harrison at times present a more intransigent picture of the US, bent on 'punishing' the Soviets in Afghanistan, and of Pakistan, determined to continue enjoying the benefits of US aid, which, they argue, were factors in preventing an earlier resolution of the negotiations. Riaz M. Khan does not deny that such interests influenced actors in both countries, but argues that the security threat posed by the Soviet presence was a more important concern and that no real opportunity to resolve the crisis existed earlier. He and other Pakistani participants in the

Geneva negotiations whom I interviewed suggest that Cordovez was overly optimistic of the extent to which intractable state interests could be reconciled through brilliant diplomacy; an understandable bias given his profession. The books conflict in their assessment of Soviet willingness to withdraw on several occasions during the 1980s. Regarding two of these occasions, however, I was able to examine Soviet internal deliberations through declassified documents since made available through the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars. On at least those occasions, the documents largely bear out Riaz M. Khan's more prosaic assessment that the Soviets were no more flexible in private than they appeared to be in public.

Besides these controversies, and the wealth of information the two accounts otherwise provide, they offer useful insights into the vested interests negotiators tend to develop in the negotiating process; a dynamic which is discussed towards the end of Chapter Four of this thesis.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with individuals from a range of backgrounds in various locations in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States, and formed an integral oral history component of this thesis. The interview format was semi-structured, in-person interviews. I would generally bring a list of questions, or question areas, ideally related to topics in which the interviewee had direct experience or expertise. The list was not absolute; often some question areas would be dropped in favour of different avenues of inquiry that opened up from an interviewee's responses.

My general preference was to record interviews using a small digital recorder and transcribe them later, and perhaps 70-80% of interviews were recorded in this fashion. Often, however, the conversation would start informally, with my taking written notes and sometimes I considered it more useful to not interrupt the flow and to carry on in this vein. In a few cases, I judged written notes would be more comfortable for the interviewee than an audio recording. However, for the most part interviewees were very open to having their words recorded on tape and showed no signs of any resulting self-censorship. Only in a handful of cases did interviewees actually request that the recorder not be used.

Perhaps some 80% of respondents that I contacted were willing to be interviewed and in most cases interviews were easy enough to set up, although those still politically active could be more difficult to establish contact with. Many of the prominent *mujahidin* leaders I sought to interview in Kabul are currently involved in the Afghan parliament, and although they did not explicitly reject my request for interviews, dates were repeatedly put off until it was no longer possible to conduct the interview. By contrast, retired officials, regardless of nationality, tended to be very welcoming and open in their reflections. Most interviewees were willing to speak on the record, but some requested that they remain anonymous.

The passage of time – two decades since the end of the Soviet occupation, longer for earlier periods in this study – has undoubtedly affected memory and coloured recollections. That I was conducting my interviews in the backdrop of the subsequent US invasion of Afghanistan and that, for many Pakistanis, concerns related to the Afghanistan relationship had for the

time being overshadowed even those with India was an inescapable fact. Most interviewees drew comparisons with the existing scenario, although the lessons that were drawn varied considerably. Some US officials saw the US intervention as a legitimate response to 9/11 and an opportunity to 'get it right' in Afghanistan. Other US officials, who in some cases had worked directly with the *mujahidin*, cast the US in the role of the Soviets and drew pessimistic conclusions as to the outcome of the war. Pakistani interviewees varied widely in their sympathy to current US goals in Afghanistan; some had developed a considerably more negative attitude towards the US role in the 1980s than they were known to have expressed at the time. The theory that the Soviets had been 'trapped' into invading Afghanistan by US strategic design had gained in currency among some interviewees. Sometimes, recollection of specific dates and incidents was hazy, but it was often possible to use concurrent political developments to arrive at a more exact understanding. Some interviewees were very precise in their recollections.

Most interviewees, especially those retired from public life, were very open in their responses. A minority were more reticent, either in general or in response to specific issues. Tendencies towards self-justification were evident among some interviewees, but many others were highly critical of the policies of their 'side.' Most interviewees showed a willingness to engage with the questions being asked, but a few eschewed those questions in favour of pushing a particular narrative. These and other factors were taken into account when evaluating the responses received from the interviews.

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