The significance of a political movement in the context of today's international power politics is determined by the extent of its internal and external dimension and the amount of power politics involved. This very fact turns a political phenomenon into a controversial and complicated dispute, assuming complexities with new dimensions, inspite of its obvious established reality.

Pashtunistan issue is one such major problem which has continued to shape the course of political events in the region, resulting in the present explosive and complex Afghan situation affecting the entire gamut of international relations and politics in the region. It is a problem related to the very basic question of survival and continuity of Pashtun national and cultural identity in Pashtunkhwa, the land of the Pashtuns, encapsulated and manipulated by external imperial forces. The Pashtunistan issue, a legacy of imperialism, forms the foundation of Pashtun or Afghan nationalism and, in fact, the rise and fall of every Afghan regime from Amanullah to Amin have been linked to the nexus of problems stemming from the Pashtun issue. Daud, Taraki and Amin came into power and lost their lives as a direct result of the external and internal consequences of this problem.

After the end of the Second World War, when the British withdraw from India, in the process of relinquishing their imperial heritage they left unresolved the question of the
resuscitation of ties between the Pashtun populations divided by the Durand Line. A month before the date fixed for the transfer of power, Kabul demanded from Britain that the Pashtuns should be permitted to express their preference for union with Afghanistan or for independence. Britain's refusal to examine the Frontier Question turned out to be an overly simplistic way of coming to grips with the process of decolonisation in relation to the Pashtuns.

From the point of view of Afghanistan, imperialism was, and is, seen as having a continuity even after 1947 in the form of the Pashtunistan problem. Indeed after the transfer of power to Pakistan, the Pashtuns found themselves economically, culturally and politically much worse off. While many scholars commented on the foreign policy problems of Afghanistan largely in the context of the clash of Eastern and Western interests in this area, the two-way interaction between Afghan foreign policy and the Pashtunistan issue has not been studied systematically.

It is the primary aim of the present study to redress the imbalance and to focus attention on the objective factors which played a central role in defining Afghan priorities from 1947 to 1980. By the 1980s the East-West détente was undergoing a deep crisis and the complex situation created by the entry of Soviet troops at the end of 1979 resulted in Afghanistan being encapsulated in the heightened competition between the Super Powers. Contemporary studies see Afghanistan as an object of the Soviet-American strategic and diplomatic rela-
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