INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Second World War, when the British withdrew 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.

However, 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 detente 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 relationship.

The method of analysis chosen in this work is based on the conviction that Afghanistan's problems can be solved by analytical means if the fundamental parameters of the major institutional configurations within Pashtun society can be adequately comprehended. The central material for understanding Afghan foreign policy can only be discovered by the use of extensive archival sources and interviews with persons who have personal knowledge of the dimensions and difficulties of dealing with the historical and psychological factors involved in the Pashtunistan issue. There is nothing in European or American history analogous to the Pashtun problem, and this has resulted in superficial discussions concerning the interpretation of controversial periods and events in Afghan history. That is why this study starts with a re-examination of certain conceptual and theoretical issues. These are not generally given the importance in literature which they deserve on account of the pervasive rigidity of attitude which views Afghanistan merely as an "object" of the foreign policies of the Super Powers and of Pakistan and Iran.
The present study also attempts to assess the motivations of Afghan policy-makers in the context of the external and internal constraints. It seeks to shed light on the interlinkages between superficially related initiatives to meet the challenges of an uncertain environment, especially the manner in which the deficiencies of the political and administrative structures in Afghanistan have given rise to foreign actors becoming significant determinants of Afghan domestic affairs.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study on the Pashtunistan issue and Afghan Foreign Policy depends to a great extent on the historical use of the word "Pashtun" and certain objective criteria in the historical and political literature on which our criticism of some of the prevailing conceptions in the western approach to Afghan political history is based. The British preoccupation with Afghan foreign policy problems from an imperialist perspective resulted in the imposition of a historiographical tradition which has unfortunately placed the relationship of the National Question under the heavy veil of illusions.

Pashtunistan has been kept off the agenda of "high diplomacy" in contemporary international relations not so much by the imperatives of world order as by the close inter-relationship of historiographical and diplomatic positions
which is deeply imbeded in world politics. The example of German academic historiography may be relevant for our investigation into the different levels of the National Question in the field of Afghanistan's international relations. A constructive redefinition of the problem is even more necessary if certain objective factors which will increasingly play a significant role in shaping the priorities and options of Afghanistan in the future are to be identified. A more comprehensively developed and integral concept of the Pashtun identity must replace the narrow view of the word "Pashtun" which the dominant intellectual orthodoxy has enforced. In his two essays on the Great Powers, Leopold von Ranke recommended the intuitive perception of cultural dynamism in place of hidebound ways of thinking. He testified that:

"There are forces, indeed spiritual, life-giving, creative forces, nay life itself, and there are moral energies, whose development we see; they cannot be defined or put into abstract terms, but one can behold them and observe them. One can develop a sympathy for their existence".

The literature on Afghan foreign policy contains a mass of empirical work in which domestic considerations relating to the National Question are generally subsumed into the external requirements as the fundamental constitutive

elements of Afghanistan's international relations. By failing to develop a holistic perspective on the Pashtun identity and ignoring the role of historical and psychological forces the prevailing conceptions do little justice to the integrative and adaptive capacity of the Pashtuns and deliberately obscure the patterns which reflect the political sensitivities which have catalysed the dynamic growth of nationalism in Afghanistan.

The variables considered in order to discuss "the unresolved question of national unity" do not altogether characterise the whole of the Afghan environment, and fail to provide any serious theoretical impulse for understanding the political and socio-structural conditions of Afghanistan. It is therefore more realistic to adopt an approach which directly takes into account the structural limitations of the operational environment in which the Pashtuns within their traditional institutional framework of Pashtunwali have responded to overcome political fragmentation and to maintain the international status of Afghanistan.

The focus on the Pashtun identity in this study raises some important questions. For example:

What place does a Pashtun-oriented national identity occupy in the history of development of the Afghan political system?

Are there any specific links between the Afghan state and the Pashtun nation which determine the decisive structural characteristics of the state system?
What relationship can be observed between the failure of reciprocal compliance in Afghanistan's international relations and the prolonged political and cultural oppression of the Pushtuns?

What is the connection between the social history of Afghan politics and the domination over the Pashtuns by legitimising external political domination?

What part was played by the Pashtun identity in revitalising ideas of national interest and linking it to the egalitarian currents of the times in the face of entrenched social groups?

The goal which has been set in this study is to integrate contemporary institutional analysis of Afghan foreign policy with the relevant themes of geo-political and socio-cultural conditions which have played a significant part in shaping the destiny of Afghanistan. The Pashtunistan issue is broad and multifaceted and therefore an approach which is over-mechanistic cannot generate causative insights.

Six factors appear to have special importance for identification of methodological considerations:

1. The relation of the "National Question" to Afghan International Behaviour

The centrality of the Pashtun national question in the evolution of Afghanistan's foreign policy is not merely an interpretative hypothesis to help provide a historical description of foreign policy and behaviour. Our conceptua-
lisation and the use of survey research rests upon an explanatory frame of reference of the total structure of Afghan political culture, as it contributes to understanding the premises of Afghan foreign policy in the contemporary international system.

The Durand Agreement (1893) between the British Government and the Afghan King Amir Abdur Rahman Khan has led many scholars to maximise a sense of discontinuity in the development of both the domestic structure and international relations of Afghanistan. On the face of it, the hegemonistic British power in the post-Durand Line period produced a qualitative change in the political environment and milieu, and these scholars focus their arguments primarily on the theme that there is only one explanatory model of foreign policy which accepts the initial propositions on which traditional British imperial policies were based.

However, a more balanced appraisal seems to be that British hegemonistic power showed a certain intransigence on the territorial question but this was no more than one ingredient in a wide spectrum of political relations. The communicating and mobilising effects of the Pashtun national question continued to dominate events after the Durand Agreement. The competing goals and aspirations of Afghan foreign policy were often expressed in ambiguous vocabulary, but only those who have totally misunderstood the Afghan predicament could snap the links between the attributes of Afghan national power and the Pashtun weltanschauung.
(2) Conflict Management

The nature of conflicts in which Afghanistan has been involved have often been presented with the help of images of violence for its own sake. During most of the 19th century Afghanistan could not enter into a stable equilibrium with the neighbouring states and was particularly prone to develop both domestic and international feuds. The gradual upbuilding of the institutions of the Afghan state was often rendered incompatible with national aims by the tensions generated in the "Great Game" between the British and Russian Empires. Customary structures and procedures of the Pashtuns would have produced procedures of mediation, conciliation and other forms of problem-solving if their confidence had not been shaken by the annoyances and frustrations of national values created by the vicious circle of imperialist coercion, internal intrigue and preventive war.

The general allegiance to the prescriptions of Abdur Rahman was not the result of an internal system of values but the application of shibboleths of power politics in an imperialist era. Abdur Rahman's deterministic point of view was quite appropriate to the crisis situations and incipient wars which continuously threatened the structure of peace in Afghanistan: "The policy of Afghanistan towards her two strong neighbours should be friendly toward the one which at the time is least aggressive and hostile to the country wishing to pass through her country or to interfere with her independence"
This was the direct result of making the survival of the Afghan state as the single important core value perceived by him and his successors and imparted a certain parochial orientation to Afghan foreign policy.

However, in spite of external strain and violence, a more optimistic viewpoint can be adopted of Afghan motivations, purposes and options with minimal violence in place of the overly simplistic characterisation of Afghan strategies.

(3) Geo-Political Factors

The institutions, values and human and material resources suggest feasibility constraints for a foreign policy model. It could be argued that the geo-political dimension can provide useful building blocks only if these are viewed as part of an ecological approach. The tendency to regard Afghanistan as a peripheral nation flows directly from the British colonial interest which manipulated perceptions and values with a view to over-emphasising strategic considerations.

The Hindukush as the watershed of the Indus and the Amu Darya was utilised to advance the British imperial interests and to elaborate theories of the natural frontier of British India. The Russian occupation of the Panjdeh oasis (and the apportioning of Seistan) also created problems and dilemmas for those writers who did not wish to characterise this as a territorial loss for Afghanistan. Many difficulties are encountered in applying British and Russian geo-political
models since these have been developed against rigid and
dogmatic backgrounds of imperialist tensions. A point of
departure in the study of ecologically oriented geo­
political problems is to make full allowance for Pashtun
societal influences and to set up the appropriate framework
in which Afghanistan's "permanent" rather than "transitional"
position is reflected as a coherent whole.

A detailed historical investigation of the Pashtunistan
problem by the study of communications through diplomatic
channels cannot unravel deep policy dilemmas without some
basis for evaluating the interrelationship of geo-political
factors. The strength of relationships in tribal life have
to be balanced against fragile relationships at the elite
level, and patterns of Pakhtun political behaviour have to be
studied in terms of shared values and common cultural heritage
which are intimately derived from the unique topography and
peculiar ethnic distribution of Afghanistan.

(4) Comparative Colonialism

Afghanistan's national independence and national unity
cannot be viewed as durable political forms if internal
tensions are seen as criteria for lack of domestic consensus.
The verdict of the specialist writer on Afghanistan can be
misleading unless the historical misfortunes and disadvantages
of the Pashtuns are studied on a comparative basis with other
societies which faced the threats of colonialism and
imperialism.
The domestic and international politics of Afghanistan since the creation of the modern state of Afghanistan must take full account of the growth of a nationalist movement among the Pashtuns, with challenges from time to time in terms of separatism. It is hardly possible to relegate the basic Pashtun unity to a position of insignificance if we are more clearly aware of the wider range of colonial problems. The multiple and complex processes of evolution of nationalist movements cannot be dismissed as heterogeneous by the mechanical application of western models, but have to be studied for the convergence of ethnic, cultural and nationalistic sentiments which affect the societal conglomerates of extended families and tribes.

The Afghans had few illusions about the immense risks posed by the imperialist policies in Asia but an unyielding sense of responsibility for national freedom led them time and again to a bargaining stance in favour of anti-colonialism. It is easy to point to the handicaps of the Afghan political system, but in spite of domestic squabbles, the Afghans have been pugnacious in facing stronger nations. The magnitude and form of anti-colonial sentiment in Afghan foreign policy has been subject to a degree of oscillation but both the ideal and pragmatic variants of Afghan diplomacy have given forceful expression to the notion of national liberation against the imperialists.
(5) Military-Security Factors

Political and military pressures and interference have frequently disturbed the political and territorial status quo in Afghan history. An indication that the larger trend of world politics would influence Afghan military security has been evident since the signing of the 1931 Soviet-Afghan Treaty of Neutrality and Non-aggression. Afghanistan evolved a security concept which was related to internal stability and prevention of outside interference. The credibility of the Afghan resistance in the two Afghan wars in 1839-42 and in 1878-79 created as ingrained traditional belief in Afghanistan's capacity to render foreign occupation counterproductive. In more recent times the Afghans entered into a web of political and economic relations with both the Soviet Union and United States, and with the non-aligned countries to replace military confrontation with a distinct non-aligned Afghan identity.

One must not exaggerate the influence of isolationism in the security values of Afghanistan. The Afghans have developed a general recognition of the security values of their neighbours and their specifically national answer has been to invoke the fundamental loyalties of their own people for dealing with threats to national security. The maintenance of national prestige and authority was not primarily the result of a well-equipped standing army but the certain moral revulsion against aggression and the nation-wide opinion in favour of war aims against the national enemy.
It is, however, the intensity of this opinion and the desire of the Afghans to have the ultimate say in their own local and national affairs that has led to a widespread disposition to regard the Afghans as warlike and aggressive. Successive refinements of Afghan proposals on Pashtunistan reveal the Afghan desire for reduction of risks and for retaining discretionary latitude. It is difficult to find in this a predisposition towards violence or a shifting of values towards militarism.

(6) Regional Dimension

The maintenance of Afghan freedom of choice and political autonomy did not prevent the Pashtuns from retaining close economic and cultural links with their neighbours. It helps to explain Afghanistan's bilateral dealings and even self-righteous attitudes on the part of Kabul if we remember that the values and interests of the bureaucratic, military and tribal elites both traditionalist and modernists have related them to the socio-cultural mainstreams in both the Middle-Eastern and South-Asian neighbourhoods.

The selection of political tactics and strategies cannot be understood unless the specific elements of the communication process between Afghanistan and the other political communities in the region are comprehended in the linguistic, social and religious contexts. Judgements
concerning Afghanistan's allegedly fragmented administrative processes are wide of mark, since they under-estimate effective feedback both from the public to the Government in the domestic context and also in the regional context. The attempt to set out Afghan foreign policy making in terms of isolated events does not bring out adequately the confrontation of values which has been responsible for major impact on the course of political change in the region.

The choices taken by the Afghan political elite are, however, heavily influenced by domestic, political, economic and social factors, but to understand the political meaning of change in Afghanistan requires close scrutiny of recurring patterns of interaction in the region.

In terms of structure the study endeavours to formulate a foreign policy development paradigm for Afghanistan which combines institutional and functional analysis with the description of the physical and ecological environment. The study includes five chapters and a conclusion as follows:

Chapter One surveys the core areas and margins of Pashtunkhwa and examines the institutional order that has resulted from the man-nature relationship and other powerful forces that have shaped Pashtun life through so many vicissitudes and social, economic and political changes.
Chapter Two reviews the main themes of interaction between Afghan domestic politics and foreign policy and studies the nexus between internal and external conflict associated with the pursued goals of Pashtunistan.

Chapter Three deals with the coercive and cooperative transactions of Afghan foreign policy in the external environment especially the manner in which the regional constraints from Iran and Pakistan and the strategic-political direction of United States-Soviet rivalry influenced the substance of Afghan foreign policy.

Chapter Four considers the principles, values and assumptions underlying the conduct of Afghan diplomacy and subjects the structure of Afghan diplomacy on the Pashtunistan issue to a logical and objective scrutiny.

Chapter Five deals with the convergences and conflict in a hierarchically structured political system. This chapter emphasises the evolution of the role of the intelligentsia, attempts an analysis of the structural links between Islamic traditionalism and Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and nationalism and modernisation on the other. The Chapter also addresses the non-aligned dimension of Afghan foreign affairs. Although a major feature of Afghan foreign policy and a doctrine on which everybody could agree, non-alignment implied very different ideas to the various constituent
sections of Afghan political elite. The Chapter concludes by appraising the role of the Pashtunistan issue in the precarious balance of constraints and inducements that dominated policy making from 1947 to 1980.

The concluding Chapter addresses the search for more effective ways of harmonising policy and action. The question of indicators to define the appropriateness of an integrative solution to the Pashtunistan issue is considered at greater length in the Conclusion.