CHAPTER V

NATIONAL - INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES AND AFGHAN FOREIGN POLICY
STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND POLICY RESPONSES

I. Élite Values and Foreign Affairs

The year 1793 marks the beginning of European involvement in shaping the destiny of Afghanistan. It is important from this date to identify the "chronic need for self-reference" in the Afghan people as a whole in order to consider Afghan nationalism as a developing psycho-historical phenomenon. It is particularly relevant in this context to view the emergent nationalism of the Afghans with negative reference to the expanding European empires.

France and Tsarist Russia were pushing forward through intrigues in the Middle East and Central Asia with the ambition of conquering India. The British had already established themselves in the eastern part of India, and were in search of a security system for the subcontinent. After the Congress of Vienna (1815) Russia, replacing the French, advanced through Central Asia towards Afghanistan. It was regarded as the only rival power by the British as a threat to their power in India. The British determined to consolidate their position in India advanced further westwards occupying large portions of Afghan territory in the name of the defence of India. Similarly Russia continued to gradually swallow the Central Asian Khanates one after the other until it reached the northern frontiers of Afghanistan and occupied
the Afghan territory of Kunjdeh in the northwest of the country.(1)

Thus as a result of the Anglo-Russian rivalry Afghanistan was involved in three major wars with Britain and a serious skirmish with Tsarist Russia. The large territorial loss to Britain (as result of the Anglo-Afghan war of 1878-80) and the accompanying social and psychological crises created strong negative reference towards the colonial nations and an Afghan value-structure based on Pashtun ethnic consciousness. As Chalmers Johnson has pointed out, "a value structure symbolically legitimates - that is, makes morally acceptable - the particular pattern of interaction and stratification of the members of a social system".(2)

The Afghans, being placed between two aggressive imperialisms developed a regression to a primitive values of Pashtun force, power and vitality and chose to remain secluded from the outside world as much as possible. The seclusion meant depriving themselves of the European inventions and technology of the Industrial Age. It also meant avoiding moves to introduce modern means of transport like railways and metalled roads because as the Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman said: "By making the country easily accessible,


foreign powers will not find much difficulty in entering and spreading themselves over our country. The greatest safety of Afghanistan, lies in its natural impregnable position. With these experiences both the Afghan elites and the masses shared common values and the legitimacy of the elite leadership was established by following a neutral course of foreign policy. The values and policy of "jealous seclusion" were given normative expression in the posture adopted by Afghanistan during the First World War, although there was a strong pro-Turkish pressure on the Government at that time.

In studying Afghan foreign policy we are concerned with the external goals of the nation and the means adopted to pursue these goals. In identifying the elements of continuity and discontinuity in the history of Afghanistan with the development of modern Afghan nationalism, we are naturally concerned with the changes in the elite-mass relationships. As Robert D. Putnam comments, masses follow the lead of elites because elites have power, authority, the ability to mobilise and demobilise masses through a variety of techniques, or through a combination of these attitudes.


Afgnan élites have been responsive whenever they have acted spontaneously to maintain the main areas of cultural and social life free of foreign domination. In facing Russian and British imperialism the élite responsiveness has been high when the challenge has been to fundamental values. When specific attitudes and opinion have been confused the élite responsiveness to the masses has been low. In such cases the Afghans with their love for individual freedom and self-assertion have been guided by messianic impulses rather than authority based upon acquiescence by large strate.

A significant redefinition of the relationship between the Afghan regime and society took place under Amanullah. Elite responsiveness in this case was the consequences of the support which he required to carry out his programme of reforms, and he also tried to develop organisational structures designed to channelise public grievances and to transmit Kabul's influence downwards. In strengthening Afghan power Amanullah came up against British India and Communist Russia. (5) His reaction to the crisis of Afghan identity, both individual and collective, was to launch upon a series of progressive social and economic measures and to establish extensive contacts with

the outside world. The growing control of the Soviets checked his interest in the fate of Central Asia and persuaded him to follow a friendly course of relations with Moscow. This bolstered his diplomatic position, but the British saw an independent, strong and pro-Soviet Afghanistan as a threat to the security of India. His support to the Indian nationalists enraged the imperial mind of the British. They struggled hard to assist the anti-Amir subversion until they succeeded in instigating a successful revolt by the bandits which resulted in the overthrow of the energetic Amir of Afghanistan in 1929. (6)

The political developments in Amanullah's time involved significant changes in élite-mass relations in the direction of greater élite responsiveness. After him there has always been a section of the intelligentsia which has worked in a strongly nationalist direction, although there have been other sections which have been the product of social and cultural alienation.

(1) Intelligentsia: social and political rôle

It has been a source of confusion to look upon the political strategy in the first ten years of Prime Minister

Daoud's administration on the Pashtunistan question as parochial responses. The contributions of the British "specialists" on the "Pathans" have provided an explanatory model which provides little margin for choice in political strategies. By focussing on high politics and ignoring sociopolitical relationships Sir W.K. Fraser-Tytler arrives at extraordinary conclusion that the problem of the Pathan borderlands can be solved by "the fusion of the two states of Afghanistan and Pakistan in some way or the other".

However, it is only if we cut deeper into the social context of Afghanistan's political problems that we shall be able to understand the slow and intermittent changes in Afghan political institutions and social attitudes. Even the cursory investigation into the social and political role of the Afghan intelligentsia which we have carried out shows the far from negligible role of socialisation patterns, in both urban and rural areas of Afghanistan. The importance of the Afghan intelligentsia as a social group cannot be denied in spite of cross-cutting cleavages. Catch-phrases like "artificial country, created out of tribal kingdoms"(7) can not explain away the rise of Afghan nationalism and the aggregation of tribal preferences expressed by a growing Afghan intelligentsia. It is not surprising that the growth of social learning in Afghanistan should have been affected

by ethnic and geographical realities, but it is historical prejudice to juxtapose images of nomads and deny the Afghan intelligentsia a general ethos and "systemic" political role.

To determine the range of goals with regard to pressures and counterpressures on the Pashtunistan issue, we must first of all determine the behavioural and attitudinal indicators relating to the sovereign rights of the Pashtun people. The problem of locating sovereignty can preferably be thought in terms of processes rather than as a classification of political relations. Sovereignty as a dynamic factor could be thought of as a process reflecting the renaissance of Pashtun nationalism. An explanation of Lord Curzon's creation of the Pashtun province of N.W.F.P. as a social transaction is given by Sir Olaf Caroe who points out that it was the consequence of the doctrine of the "Pathan conception of oneness". (8)

A complex of attitudes on the part of imperial powers like Britain and Russia put Pashtun sovereignty into jeopardy but this was mainly in relation to questions of policy and strategy. The long term trend in favour of Pashtun sovereignty was not terminated. With the survival of the Pashtun polity the question of the augmentation of its power remained an open one. General principles and standards relating to the operation of sovereignty can hardly be used to defend the process of

(8) Quoted by Mohamed Sadi Khan, The Voice of the Pakhtoons (Ferozesons, Lahore, 1972) p.5.
divide and rule. The involvement of the Pashtuns in political and military struggles through history provided them with symbols of both war and peace. The national character and distinctiveness of Pashtunkhwa cannot be abandoned if the power equilibrium is adversely effected. The answer to any question about the locus of sovereignty must lie in distinctiveness of the Pashtuns, their institutionalised social patterns, and their effect on the environment in the interplay of political and material forces. The evidence relating to the group consciousness of the Pashtuns and their continuous efforts for the realisation of their national conceptions.

National integration is a multi-dimensional concept. It encompasses both actual and potential forces which determine the resilience of the character and institutions of a national community. The Pashtuns in the processes of conquest and empire building developed broader political organisations. Pashtun expansionism and Pashtun self-preservation have had influence on contemporary behaviour patterns.\(^{(9)}\) The factors responsible for political disintegration during the western expansion in Asia and Africa point to the lack of reciprocity in political relationships. The political dismemberment of Pashtunkhwa did not destroy

the sentiment of nationality in a compact geographical area. As a reaction to political insecurity the common culture and consciousness may come up against sectional or parochial interests, requiring the analyst to distinguish constant and variable factors which can be treated as parameters of national integration. In listing various circumstances under which Afghan tribal communities retained their autonomous existence we cannot ignore the symbols of common identity. The expansion or the reduction of the amount of territory under the control of Kabul do not provide patterns of differentia tion which can obliterate the "natural" boundaries of a nation.

To understand the strong commitment to national security and resistance to territorial encroachment, it is necessary to study the general acquiescence of the Pashtuns to the principle of loyalty to national symbols. We are concerned here not with some idealised history but with the postulates of political culture of Pashtunkhwa.

"Empirical beliefs", "expressive symbols" and "values" are the chief underlying components of political culture. (10) Our examination of the historical and geographical background of Pashtunkhwa points to the established traditions and

loyalties of the people and it is these in turn which provide coherent patterns of political behaviour which are "mutually reinforcing." The political awakening of the Pashtuns and the resurgence of the Afghan state under Ahmed Shah was not only the result of reconciling the needs of centralisation of government and the requirements of tribalism. It is difficult to understand the organisation of political power in Afghanistan if the processes of cultural creativity among the Pashtuns are ignored and attention is only focussed on the surface of political events. What is particularly significant about the process of political integration in Afghanistan is that despite oscillations and transitions, the cultural, linguistic and geographic circumstances contributed to institutional and ideological development towards the ideal of self-determination.

Most scholars tended to equate the perceived balances of the Persianised élite with something which was called a modernisation process but proved a blind-alley. The logic of these attitudes was a naive determination to see the national capacity of Afghanistan in a context of overall vulnerability to the rapid industrialisation of Pakistan and the economic expansion of Iran. Every expression of Pashtun identity was seen as a challenge to the legitimacy of the ruling élite. Instead of understanding the cumulative impact of such attitudes on the nature of the Afghan system, these scholars found comfort in the moral and intellectual redefinition of the power holders in Kabul as the interlocutors of peaceful change in the power-
structure. Much was made of Article 24 in the Constitution that forbade a Member of the Royal Family from holding office of Prime Minister or Member of Parliament or Judge of the Supreme Court or some other offices.\(^{(11)}\)

The current inability of the Kabul regime to find a balance between adventurism and opportunism on the Pashtunistan question, the failure to narrow the cultural gap between élite and masses, and the apocalyptic horror of the bureaucrats of the central government against utilising the moral sympathies of the tribal, and rural masses in favour of the Pashtunistan stance, all contributed to the continual failure of Afghanistan to realise its opportunities in the modern comity of nations. The values and goals of these studies were characterised by their commitment to the primacy of the power-struggle between United States and Soviet Union (and later on including China in this power struggle) and their refusal to use a structural-functional approach to study the national identity of Afghanistan. The point of departure of these analysts was to discount the cultural distinctiveness of the Pashtuns and then to build an \textit{a priori} case for denying internal and external legitimacy to the dominant orientation of Pashtunistan as a modernisation issue.

\(^{(11)}\) The said Article was merely meant to prevent Daud's returning to power through constitutional means, See Dupree, \textit{op. cit.}, pp 576-77 and Ralph Magnus, "The Constitution of 1964" in Dupree's \textit{Afghanistan in the 1970s}, chapter 4.
(ii) Nationalist Symbiosis

For foreign policy purposes, the historical experience of Afghanistan has often been seen simply as a succession of crises. Indeed it has been said that political disunity is the key to Afghanistan's history. Nevertheless this hypothesis though extremely attractive is superficial. The nationalist movement in Afghanistan is demonstrably historically progressive. Each change of course has shaped the outlook of key elites and the masses and has produced certain institutions which in modified form have survived the next succession of changes. There is plenty of evidence of the persistence of a unified outlook in certain fields. Pashtun nationalism has tried to cope with conflicting tendencies, ideas and institutions inherited by each generation. The significant historical and contemporary factors can be considered under the following headings, in order to give careful consideration to nature of the nationalist symbiosis and its effect on the international setting:

1. High survival value of the Afghan national state

Although much British opinion was in favour of establishing the "scientific" frontier with Russia along the ranges of the Hindu Kush, and thus extinguishing the Afghan state, the outside threat revived the primary loyalties

(12) Subhash Chakravarty, From Khyber to Oxus, (New Delhi, 1976) p.2.
of the people. This coupled with skilled diplomacy in maintaining the essential parameter of "buffer state" in the reactivity of each party towards the other assured the survival of the nation. Although the trend of political disunity has always been a marked feature of Afghan political life, yet war and diplomacy have comprised the supreme test for Afghan regimes from Ahmad Shah Durrani to the present day and it is quite clear that unless there is a sharp break with the past, Afghanistan with all its ambiguities has a high survival value.

2. Cross-pressures and the problem of coordination

A careful study of the many factors involved in political, economic, social and strategic relationships which generate cross-pressures in Afghanistan shows that firm interventions at crucial points have contributed towards a reduction of internal conflict. The result has been an increase in the ability of the Government to deal with diplomatic and military pressures from outside.

In his first term Daud demonstrated that the exigencies of national policy in the foreign and national security areas did not conflict with the values which are generated by the different motivational structures of different segments of Afghan society. Earlier regimes had tended to follow a policy of laissez-faire and did not have a comprehensive and systematic view of security. Daud showed the ability of the state to protect its core values: territorial integrity, political independence and the preservation of Pashtun values and
institutions in Pashtunistan. He also utilised the innate strength of Afghan nationalist ethos to discard values current in the past in favour of new ones. He also established new organisations to coordinate demands as key elements for a state strategy of crisis-management. Thus he showed that Afghan nationalism could respond constructively to demands for manifold changes provided the affinity in general outlook was maintained by a clear pattern of choice in favour of Pashtunistan.

3. **Pragmatism and political rationality**

Whenever the nationalist forces have been strong, ideological and political differences have apparently played no more than a subordinate role in confronting the supreme test for national survival.

Afghan leaders have had a powerful asset in pragmatism and political rationality which has helped them if they have come out clearly and uncompromisingly on the side of a significant measure of national importance. A careful analysis of the role of Daud in dealing with the conservative religious leaders will show his competence and effectiveness in overcoming opposition from them during the Constitutional Jirga. Similarly over a longer period Afghanistan's foreign policy reveals an overriding objective to remain independent by pursuing a sophisticated and coherent diplomacy towards the European powers and Soviet Union. Afghanistan handled the diversity and complexity of foreign
affairs with political skill. Although at times the social structure was mixed and transitional in character, the national ethos helped in a conscious and consistent realisation of pragmatic and political rationality. This is quite evident in the period initiated by Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) and continued by Amir Habibullah (1901-19) until his death in 1919. The change from strict isolationism to defensive neutralism in the subsequent period is also in keeping with pragmatic formulation of national policy.

4. Increase in social mobility

The preservation of the territorial independence of Afghanistan, unlike other Asian countries which totally succumbed to foreign rule, provided Afghan society with a measure of social mobility although the elite-mass relationship was basically authoritarian. It is true the impetus for change came generally from above. Yet it is important to remember that even an absolute ruler like Habibullah was helped in reform and modernisation by repatriated and immigrants. The divisive factors were of course present in the Afghan social framework on account of the ethnic, linguistic and geographical diversity, but the increase in social mobility created a rough equilibrium of forces. Fraternal relations of solidarity and cooperation can replace feuds and rivalries in a tide of rising nationalism.

5. Paradoxes of Egalitarianism

The egalitarianism which pervades the cultural and political constellation around tribal organisation has been a dominant influence on the conflicting political aspirations
as well as the national contradictions in Afghanistan. There is the historical legacy of unequal and asymmetrical relationships and the hierarchical order of a patriarchal society. Yet the consciousness and self-image of Afghan nationalism is very much affected by the possibilities for internal cohesion and stability through a temporary or permanent bridging of differences between the rival parties. The tensions engendered by egalitarianism within the political structure of Afghanistan are considerable. The Afghan leadership is often in a very difficult situation on account of strong internal compulsions. Thus often their reaction to domestic events is important in defining the limits of Afghan external policy.

6. Political Security of the Regime

The analysis of Afghan nationalist perceptions helps to clarify actions and reactions which have a direct bearing on the political security of the regime. Whenever Afghanistan has found itself in a security dilemma it has been overcome by a policy of external neutrality and internal reconciliation. Ever since Afghanistan came under the shadow of Great Power rivalries, the dynamic function of the nationalist symbiosis has been to create optimal objective conditions for political security of the regime so that progressive change and active engagement for reducing vulnerability to external pressures may be ensured.
(iii) Ebb and Flow of centralising and centrifugal tendencies

Afghanistan continues to be an enigma for many foreign observers. From the point of view of élite cohesion, domestic violence and instability notwithstanding, the centralising tendencies in national political development create the conditions for their own self-fulfillment. On the other hand the regional, ethnic, linguistic and other "primordial attachments" of the Afghan masses are important determinants of centrifugal processes. The long term survival or stability of the political order in Afghanistan depends on linking macro-changes to both the centralising and centrifugal tendencies. If societal breakdown is to be avoided these have to be combined in a fruitful way. Leadership and organisation can represent the collective will only through an "internal apportionment of political power between the tribes and the central government." According to Almond:

"When we speak of a stable political system, what we usually have in mind is a particular pattern of flow into and out of the political system, a particular kind of input-output flow. In the political system, properly speaking, the inputs of demands and supports are converted into extractive, regulative, distributive, and symbolic outputs. The demands can be handled by the political system; the strains which they impose are bearable without any basic change in structure or culture. The outputs are responsive to the demands in expected or legitimate ways. When these conditions obtain the political system may be said to be in a state of equilibrium both internally (in the performance of conversion functions by political structures) and in its relations with its environments."(13)

In the case of the Afghan political system, "the flow of inputs and outputs includes transactions between the political system and the components of its domestic and foreign environment. More specifically its interaction with the social and international environment has been affected by the historical experience with political conflict of the Pashtuns. The ability to extract tribute and political concessions from empires to which the Pashtuns controlled military and trade routes provided a particular orientation for domestic and international capabilities. Carlton Coon demonstrates the importance of these factors by calling the territorial expanse of the Pashtuns "the land of insolence"(14).

The stability of the Afghan political system is reinforced by the real continuities in its historical development of the national determination to prevent territorial loss through fierce and independent guerrilla fighters. The complexity of the issues involved in the Pashtunistan dispute is directly linked to the socialisation processes of the Afghan political system. It would be an error to proceed from local rivalries and irredentist aspirations to discover the material setting for the Pashtunistan question. The issue at stake is a profound one, for it is only through a socio-analytical insight into the Afghan political system that the competitive coexistence of modern political ideas, tribal codes and the revival of national

aspirations against hegemonistic external powers can be comprehended. The centrifugalism cannot alter the basic factors of commitments, values and beliefs which are all rooted in Afghan national culture.


Early History

The creation of the national army by Abdur Rahman was intimately connected with his pragmatic conception of Afghanistan's national security problem, since the national and international politics of this rugged land spill over into both spheres. The task of the army was not merely to break down the feudal and tribal systems in a negative context but to positively secure a significant shift in the whole structure of national defence and state security. For Abdur Rahman the army was simply another instrument for the advancement of his nationalist policies. But unfortunately he built the army only with the help of the British who gave him arms and subsidies in return for the Durand Line Agreement. Given this expediency, it was hardly surprising that the ethos of the army was not strong enough to command universal respect. The army was in fact structurally weak on account of the alienation from the national anti-imperialist ideology. It fulfilled a more limited purpose which was to deal with the domestic situation in times of crisis and to serve as a deterrent force. It was well armed and organised to extend and maintain the power base of the Amir, and prevent destabilisation of the
situation. (15)

The quest for a national security ideology suggests that the need for it is deeply ingrained in the nature of Afghan experience. Ever since its emergence as a national entity due to scarce economic resources and the strong decentralised tribal authority and the loose social structure, there was a consensus on the organisation of total national defence through the Pashtun tribal militias.

The non-Pashtun ethnic minorities would be more easily available to the central political authority to maintain itself in power. However, such an army would be found vulnerable at the time of external aggression or serious internal conflicts. In this sense it was an unstable institution and could only serve the main purpose of the ruling élites if they enjoyed general legitimacy among the masses. Over time as the royal élite became Persianised and lost connection with their original ethnic and tribal background, strong domestic pressures began to chafe against the norms of the system and engendered a feeling of insecurity among the rulers. The practice of forced conscription or the dependence of the regime on support of outside powers undermined the concept of national security. This was the situation during the period of the Sadozai and Mohamadzai, each of which carried out the power struggle with outside intervention. The weaker the state ideology, the more ambiguous became the concept of a national army.

For the national security ideology to prevail it was not enough that military power should be deployed to support a programme of reforms. There are serious qualifications on this score regarding Amanullah's understanding of the concrete steps taken by him which allowed "de-culturised urban zealots" to impose their oligarchic rule on the traditional sectors. (16) The structure and character of the political process of change is a major variable in the policy-making for national security. Amanullah was declared a national hero by the urban elites without an adequate sense of the national security paradigm. Nationalist and patriotic slogans could not be used in the absence of the people's will and participative consensus to create the basis for structural changes. Disregarding national choices about religion, culture, language and tribal behavioral norms and values created major risks in security policy. It is somewhat ironic that the modernising efforts of Amanullah had a very mixed record of success in the development of a rational policy-making process in the armed forces or in development a national security ideology.

The distorting effects of the Amanullah period had major consequences for the manner in which the pragmatic King Muhammad Nadir Shah, (the head of the Mosaniban family) introduced institutional changes. In order to narrow the gap between the rural and urban areas, he proceeded cautiously with Amanullah's reforms. His security policy had a strong international emphasis and he also commanded resources to build a strong army and a functionally

---

16. See, Constitutionalism, Chapter II.
effective bureaucracy. He also took care to attract the wholehearted support of the tribes and stabilised the country away from the civil war situation into orderly government with which he associated the hitherto alienated traditional elements. He comprehended fully the influence of Afghan societal norms and gave his national security strategy a Pashtun expression and flavour. Thereby he increased national strength and reduced the vulnerabilities which the external forces were exploiting.

**Daoud's first term: the acceptance of central control through the army**

The conceptual scheme of the armed forces was built by Daud on the basis of the general character of the innovations made by brilliant genius of Nadir Shah. Daud broadened the social base of his regime so as to encompass the traditional elites. He understood the sociology of military power and wanted the armed forces to be an asset rather than a liability. It was not the mere accumulation of military power in which he was interested. Accordingly, he developed a new framework for the army for preventing conflict and dispensed with some of the cumbersome procedures for maintaining national security which he had inherited.

Daud was, however, up against a form of "militarisation" which was not related to the legitimate security interests of Afghanistan. There is little doubt that with the Persianised Musahiban "oligarchs" being alienated from the people crucial relationships about military power of the nation were decided with reference to extraneous considerations. With the emergence

17. For detail see, Hasan Kakar, op. cit.
of Pakistan as an Islamic state, ruling circles in Kabul felt greatly threatened by Pakistan's bellicose use of both Islamic ideology and the "king-maker's" role of the Pashtun tribes. The opposite political systems in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it appeared likely, would compete with each other for the allegiance of the cause of Pashtunistan. The Persianised ruling elite in Kabul initially became an ardent advocate of Pashtunistan to prevent the diversion of the Pashtun nationalist aspirations. Similarly it made serious attempts to secure military aid from the United States and other western powers. Washington did not oblige and insisted on Afghanistan joining the western military pacts. At the same time Pakistan became the major recipient of American military assistance.

This however led Kabul to turn decisively to the Soviet Union which gave a warm response. In August 1956, a $25 million arms contract was signed with the Soviet Union for the supply of sophisticated arms: T34 Tanks, Mig 17 jets, Ilyushin 28s bombers, helicopters; and other types of arms were supplied by other Soviet bloc countries. Contrary to the hopes of Pakistan and the western powers, the Soviet assistance resulted in the Afghan army being modernised and it emerged as the strongest Pashtun-dominated institutional base of power in the political structure of the country. The military installations, the airfields near Mazar-i-Sharif, Shindand and Bagram and the effective military training

programme in which hundreds of officers and cadets were sent to the Soviet Union, all became highly visible symbols of the Pashtun political identity much to the discomfiture of the Persianised bureaucracy and other westernised elites. 19)

The Pashtun domination was not politically planned in any spirit of rivalry, but it has an institutional background. First, the Pashtuns being a majority community got a major representation in the army on the basis of compulsory conscription. Second, the military-educational institutions were established by Nadir Shah in Kabul with an emphatic directive to enlist students from countryside, which is predominantly Pashtun. Third, the well-to-do urban elite was not psychologically and culturally inclined to send their sons to serve in poorly paid military services. Fourth, the Moslahib family's natural propensity was to give a larger representation to the Pashtun tribes of the frontier because of a sense of indebtedness to those who had installed them into power. 20)

The Pashtun preponderance in the army, and the training of the military cadres in the ideologically conscious Soviet bloc countries gave the army a definite political profile which was in contrast to the conventional rhetoric of the politicians and diplomats belonging to the Kabul élite, even though largely quartered in the Persianised urban centres of Kabul, Mazar-i-sharif


and Herat.

The failure of King Zahir Shah's experiment in Constitutional Democracy attracted several political and military segments to Daud who still retained an attractive vision of Afghanistan's future. Officers of the armed forces close to Parcham and Khalq including Major Abdul Qader and Mohammad Aslam Watanjar helped to return Daud to power. The coup provided an illustration of the rather controversial interpretation of national security which the Persianised élite had adhered to. Public revolt in the form of tribal rebellion was no longer a threat to Kabul's ruling class, since they had widened their network of political control and in the process had undermined the only workable and extent social system of mobilisation and collaboration the country possessed at the grassroots level, that is, the tribal system. They frustrated the traditionalist cultural norms and achievement-motive epitomised in the vish (distribution of resources), the achar (joint collective community work), the Pashto (normative public conduct), and the Pashtunwali (the democratic laws governing the community affairs). (21)

The consequences of such discrepancies were all too evident now. The military and the frustrated and dis-oriented Pashtun intelligentsia in the capital became allies to create a nationally centred understanding of security against the dichotomised narrow outlook of the corrupt and exploitative minority rule in Kabul.

21. For, the Pashtunwali conventional laws, see chapter 1 and Q.Khacim, Pashtunwali, Kabul. 1973.
Having overthrown the rotten Monarchial "oligarchy" this combine installed an out-dated nationalist "prince" i.e. Daud; and then finding even him, an obstacle to their progressive aspirations removed Daud in a coup which was far from bloodless. The nation craving for a total and basic change made the country and Herat, or in the sensitive Pashtun frontier provinces of Nangrahar, Paktya and Kandahar bordering Pakistan, the army considered itself an independent element of stability and deterrence and discovered a new impetus for strengthening its role as a politically conscious and nationalist power base. The officer corps regarded themselves as the apex nationalist elite group. Their ideas and concepts were not favoured by the Persianised "oligarchy" which had exchanged "its vulnerability to the internal menance of tribal rebellion" for that of military one and a "possible external threat of a Russian intervention".

Daud's resignation and the question of "the army on who's side"

By 1963 when Daud resigned as Prime Minister at King Zahir Shah's request, the political crisis could have led to a reappraisal of the army's role in the political life of Afghanistan. But Daud's "self-denial" placed a firm restraint on the military coming out visibly in his favour. There is a difference of opinion among observers whether Daud had resigned or he had been dismissed. It is clear that the successor governments were ignoring the lessons of history, the political geography of Afghanistan and the necessity of a security ideology. Daud's
removal had been the result of a great number of motives, interests and calculations among the Persianised elite. In a situation of doubt and crisis his influence in the armed services would have enabled him to return to power through a coup, but he preferred to show patience and public goodwill to those who claimed to implement King Zahir Shah's New Democracy, although he was privately sceptical about the undertaking. (22)

Daud's bloodless coup 1973 and the events of April 1978

The political momentum which brought Daud back to power in 1973 had an important military dimension. Both the factions of the Communists, the Khaq and the Parcham had worked to change the balance of forces in the military and airforce. The Parchamites in particular developed a political and strategic consensus with Daud, and established a common aim and ambition to remove the monarchy and proclaim a republic.

At the core of the Parchamites assessment was the assessment of domestic pressures which had undermined the legitimacy of the 1964 Constitution especially among the younger personnel in the armed forces. The King's failure to ratify the rules and regulations for the development of the

Pashtu language, in particular antagonised the feelings of the Pashtun officers. (23) Although the Parchamites themselves did not favour the development of Pashto and were linked in every way to the Persian language and its related culturisation, they agreed to plan the coup with Daud as its king-pin in order to advance their activities and interests with tactical skill.

Daud and the Parchamites had different notions of national security. Daud's notion was embedded in the nationalist perception of the external world and was rooted in Afghanistan's geographical location and history. The Parchamites were internationalist in outlook and defined Afghanistan's security by tilting in favour of the Soviet Union. They were prepared to overlook the historical experience and security concepts which Afghanistan had inherited. After the overthrow of the Daud administration on 27th April 1978, there was a substantive change in the 'world view' of the regime. In the climate of fierce rivalry and mistrust accompanied by extremist rhetoric, Afghanistan was vulnerable to both internal disruption and external challenge. The shaping of the national security policy was now complicated by an alien Communist ideology and Afghanistan becoming an arena for super power interests and competition through the physical occupation by Russian troops.

Under the circumstances of a foreign occupation there was inevitably a collapse in the morale of the Afghan army. The troops formations with the Saudi government include mainly

Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmans from the insulated northern provinces. The Pashtuns in view of the concentration of fighting in their provinces have withdrawn from the army and have joined the resistance forces. (24) The army, however, still retains the radicalised Khalqis, who are pre-dominantly Pashtuns, as officers. These are highly nationalistic and are opposed to the cosmopolitan Parchamites who are identified with Pax Sovietica and are anathema to the Khalqis. If and when the Soviet troops withdraw and the situation is normalised, the Afghan army will undoubtedly again seek fulfilment of historical nationalist mission.

The coincidence and divergence of Soviet and Afghan strategic interests

The very notion of dominance or external hegemony contradicts the Afghan understanding of national security ideology. As early as 1925 the Afghan army openly demonstrated against the annexation of the island of Urta Tagai in the Amu Darya (Oxus River). This minor incident exemplifies the importance of nationalistic perceptions to those who bear arms in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan tended to view its strategic interests as the inevitably corollary of its desire to get out of British control and to assert its complete independence. In matters of defence and security the Soviets perceived a convergence of strategic interests with Afghanistan since they found themselves

in a state of rivalry and hostility to the British.

A more differentiated understanding of Soviet motives, anxieties and objectives suggests that they may wish to out-manouvre Kabul by utilising the "hidden dimension" of Soviet intervention in Pashtunistan and Baluchistan. (25) There would undoubtedly be Afghan resistance to any Soviet reappraisal which resulted in either of these two territories becoming client states of the U.S.S.R.

The present situation in Afghanistan has not come through a mono-causal factor. It is the result of a complex combination of forces. These have been mutually reinforcing although they come from different directions. The institutions, practices and habits of thinking of the armed forces have been, and will be in the future an important contribution to the rough equilibrium of political forces. The reemergence of strong nationalist trends over the Pashtunistan question will strengthen the role of the military in Afghanistan's political life with increased realism and reduced stress on both East-bloc and West-bloc ideological doctrines.

II. Group Dynamics in Foreign Policy Making.

In the classical concept of Afghanistan as a buffer state, social and behavioural phenomenon were relegated to the background in discussion of foreign policy making. We have pointed out that

the Pashtunistan issue stems from the Afghan society's search for national ethos, security and the fulfilment of change to an era of post-imperialism. In the clash of policies from opposing political and strategic interests, the denial of the right of self-determination of the Pashtuns has led to an explosive and dangerous situation. The extension of the Soviet-American rivalry is turning Afghanistan into a highly conflict-prone and destructive polity. The growing turbulence and fragmentation in the 1980s cannot, however, be explained unless both international and domestic factors are taken into account. Adequate light cannot be cast on the recent events in Afghanistan unless pressures of domestic situation and changes in its which influenced the character of foreign policy are taken into account.

A complex background of historical, ideological ethnic, and power relationship resulted in important determinants of the Afghan political system's legitimacy being influenced by Islamic, Marxist and Nationalist group dynamics. Individuals, factions and political parties with one or the other of these three orientations sought to exploit their roles within the political system. Sometimes the competition generated policies which strengthened the system to face external pressures; at other times the internal differentiation and confrontation encouraged policies disruptive of Afghanistan's national interests. The

Pashtunistan issue was a decisive factor in the political environment. The nationalists had a leading role in the mobilisation system whenever they could clarify the causal structure of the situation and expose forces which influence penetration of the Afghan polity from outside.

The Islamic opinion groups resented the role of the modernising intellectuals, but were not clear about the country's exposure to conflicting social orientations. Their response to the surrounding environment and milieu was often marked by shrewd tactical sense but was not adapted to the demands and identities of accelerated socioeconomic development. Unlike the nationalists they could be agents and channels of external influence transmission, and prevent new policy options from emerging.

The Marxists perceived themselves as being identified with the goals and strategies of modernisation and advancing higher values against relatively parochial entities in the political system. They advocated the Soviet model of development and were not opposed to influence penetration from outside provided the source was Russia and the other East bloc countries.

The parameters and dynamics of interaction of Nationalist, Islamic and Marxist groups on Pashtunistan extended from myth-making to conferring normative and cognitive legitimacy to the freedom loving aspirations of the trans-Durand Pashtuns. Each of the groups had to balance the often contradictory interests of the élites and the masses, and often lacked the
competence to work with unified direction. (27) Policy demands put forward by rival leaders in each of the groups were guided more by emotional considerations rather than by examining the validity of proposals on moral, social or psychological grounds.

(1) Nationalist Group Dynamics

Nationalists and National Interest:

The theoretical perspective outlined by writers like Hans Kohn is relevant to our discussion of the Nationalist group dynamics in Afghanistan's foreign policy making. In this view Nationalism is primarily "a state of mind" and "an act of consciousness". Apologists of Imperialism like Olaf Caroe and W.K. Fraser Tyler have adopted frameworks which impede our understanding of how nationalist forces have worked in the Afghan political system. Even a cursory review of their views shows that conclusions based on imperialist theories and models are neither productive nor enlightening. After making simplistic and static assumptions, Caroe concludes: "The Pathans have now learned to look unmistakably to the east .... the social, economic and political ideas of the Durranies have become to them anachronism. Kabul's irredentism is empty of meaning." (28)


Similarly Fraser Tyler fails to test or refine his concepts in the light of available data and information and concludes from his static parameters of change within the region that the "fusion of Afghanistan and Pakistan is inevitable" since the Hindu Kush is no longer the great frontier barrier. (29)

All the political questions raised by the nationalists in Afghanistan bear on the problem of the collective identity of the Afghans. They sought to relate this to the historical and contemporary dimension of Afghan national interest. At recurring intervals they believed that they had attained their goal but later they came up against destabilising side-effects of the "arrested development" of the Afghan political system.

The Nationalists judged the whole range of problems concerning National Integration by their own standards and experiences. It can be argued that they supported the Pashtunistan issue because they were egocentric. Their prescriptions can, however, be supported by the country's history, its geographic location and the requirements of both its internal cohesion and the perceptions of its bargaining power with its neighbours. The nationalists looked upon the realisation of national integration as a prerequisite for a successful quest for equilibrium in the nation state. They were against unilateral restraint and wanted changes in structures and values to be brought about in a balanced

manner and were opposed to measures which were dangerously lopsided. From their perspective the process of integration would strengthen Afghan identity, solidarity and self-esteem. (30)

The political culture of the nationalists was expressed in a common political language and orientation born out of the struggle against the colonial yoke in Asia. The intellectualism of the nationalists was expressed in themes like: social justice, economic performance, national unity. They wished to proceed with an inclusive strategy in which Pashtun ethnic consciousness would create new roots for society which unite particularist traditions in a common national interest.

In sum, therefore, the prime imperative for the nationalists was the initiation and maintenance of autocentric impulses for economic and social change, as against the Persianised and westernised elites who distanced themselves from the peripheral society and accepted a self-perpetuating pattern of underdevelopment and exploitation.

Nationalists and National Unity:

The most trenchant argument of the nationalists against the manipulative appraisals of the imperialist school of Afghan national unity is provided by the fact that "Ahmad Shah's realm covered, broadly speaking, the area of present day Afghanistan". Also the fact that Great Britain failed on three occasions to impose a government on Afghanistan

(30) For detail on nationalists' views, see Q. Khadim "De Roshanyano Mobaraze (The Roshani Struggles)" in Roshan Yad (Roshan Memorial) (Kabul 1976) pp. 55-92
makes it possible to speak of a continuity of nationalist power-consciousness. The nationalists have, therefore, been able to affect public policy whenever they could formulate norms for national unity and follow up concrete cases by prescriptive rules. Confronted with the continuation of informal-imperial attitudes and behaviour even after the British withdrawal from India, the Nationalists perceive the contemporary era as an interlude before the national reassertion of a more natural state of affairs in Pashtunistan. (31)

The vested interests which oppose the reunification of the Pashtuns are those which have profited from the continuity between informal and formal imperialism. The basic political problem of the nationalists on the question of national unity is to create pressures over and above a certain threshold which will overcome political constraint, immobilism and inertia. They have had no illusions about the importance of National unity of Afghanistan for the foreign policies of Iran and Pakistan and of course for the two Super Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. Although Afghan policy makers acknowledged the identity-guideline for Pashtun reunification, in practice indigenous political affiliations made possible

the continuation of informal imperialism over Pashtunistan.
The development of a western style democratic political system in the 1960s resulted in a series of crises because parasitic, repressive and inefficient regimes could not strengthen autocentric development and exercise a rationalising influence on the debate about national unity.

The Popularity of Nationalists:

The decade of Daoud's first period of rule showed the resilience of the nationalists inspite of the institutionalised forms of exploitation which continued to be practiced by politically dominant groups. During this period functionally autonomous organisations in the rural areas overcome some of the strong resistance to change in the urban institutional structures. It should be pointed out here that not all of these processes were initiated by Daoud although his official actions gave a decisive stimulus for the rebuilding of social and economic infra-structure. There was also now strong resistance to the exploitation of the vulnerable groups from the urban centres and disparaged groups were able to substitute the feeling of nationalism for the continuing feeling of dependency.

As the Afghan political society became more complex, the people were exposed to divergent influences with resultant changes in the compliance habits of the population. The popularity of the nationalists lay in the fact that groups linking towns and countryside coalesced around parties like
the Afghan Mellat and new institutions of interest articulation.\textsuperscript{32} As long as the nationalists avoided formalistic schemes and respected the various denominators of traditional social structure they received distinctive patterns of support from the body politic. Although certain marginal intellectual circles provided a fringe of social and political alternatives, as long as the nationalists respected the identity systems and value demands of the rural masses they could perform the goal-clarifying and integrative task without any serious challenge.

The Limitations of Nationalists:

When Jaoud's first tenure ended, initially the regime remained responsive to popular demands. But with the precariousness of their position, the nationalists could not help raise the standards of performance. The officials who had in the past showed sensitivity to popular issues now tended to coalesce with groups and individuals favouring the permeability of the country's borders and the inflow of external ideas and influences. Internal differentiation among the Nationalist intellectuals made them forgetful of ideological and political dangers. Political elements which were opposed to the political reunification of the Pashtuns but had concealed their intentions now took charge of fundamental foreign policy decisions.

\textsuperscript{32} For detail on Afghan Mellat as an initially strong political group, see Dupree, \textit{op.cit.} pp.611-15
These persons were motivated to leave the discussion on Pashtunistan inconclusive. (33)

Parochial considerations were introduced where the national interest should have prevailed. The younger generation tended to rebel against the policies which were disruptive of the relationship with the masses which Daoud had forged although he tended to be authoritarian in making decisions. The nationalist leaders responded to the younger elements by dismissing them as idealistic and immature. It would seem in retrospect that the limitations of the nationalists lay not in their loss of interest in nationalism but rather in their failure to give priority to tasks and problems relating to the frustrations and aspirations of educated youth and the rural masses.

The nationalists came to increasingly reiterate their faith in radical change so long as it was effected by others. Instead of generating political will to change the regime, the nationalists adopted a wait-and-see approach. Nationalist leaders increasingly seemed to loose the support they could command to those who claimed to be uncompromisingly tough and unrelenting by identifying either with Marxism or with Islamic militancy.

The Transformation of Nationalists:

The most important lesson to be drawn from the past seems to be that the Nationalists made a blunder when they did

not realise that the future course of Afghan political
development required radical changes if encroachment on the
political boundaries of the system was to be avoided. There
is scarcely any doubt that the stratification of the Afghan
society between the rural intelligentsis (Pashto speaking)
and the urbanised intelligencia (persian speaking) has been
aggravated.

Given the political conditions following Daud's over­
throw, the transformation of the nationalists is a reflection
of the new social, cultural and economic environment. Nationalist
political values and structures are expressed through a
partial overlap with elements inside the Soviet-style political
institutions that have been created.(34) Other nationalists
have seen the most promising opportunities presented to them
in the Resistance to Soviet occupation. It is a safe assump­
tion that if and when the Russians are enabled to withdraw
through an international settlement, the nationalists will
come together for establishing new identity references, and
in the new mobilisation phase Pashtunistan will be a function
of the of "the politics of system boundaries". The Nationalists
might in the future play a significant role by building up
pressure for fully utilising the autonomous possibilities of
social and political development of Afghanistan.

(34) See, Tyler MarSnall, "Feud in Afghan Ruling Party
(ii) **Islamic Group Dynamics**

Observers of Islam in Afghanistan can be divided into two categories of thinking. Those like J. Baljon, who look at Islam in Afghanistan in sociological terms as an in-group feeling with "no clash of opinions" and without any rival religion having "stimulated a reinterpretation of doctrines or institutions."(35) Others do not see Islam as defensive in nature or static in the historical and cultural context of Afghanistan. In the latter view, Islam has been undergoing a process of changing identity as it aims at excluding or adapting to Marxist and Nationalist influences.

In this study two questions will be looked at from an empirical perspective: how effective is Islam as a cultural, social and political force in determining normative behaviour; and how do the pashtuns view the potential of Islam for meeting the strategic needs of their society in relation to contemporary socio-economic and political conditions. Edward Said has commented upon the devaluation of a civilisation and the debasement of the cultural heritage and distortion of native realities through the deleterious effects of modern imperialism. He labels the phenomenon as "orientalism". (36)

---


The Islamic group dynamics in Afghanistan underlines strongly the ideological resurgence of Islam in defence of Pashtun civilisation and cultural heritage. Assessments by pro-Pakistan scholars of the Pashtunistan issue in terms of the inflow of non-Islamic ideas and influences are misleading. The Pashtuns as a non-state nation (NSN) can proceed to delink themselves from the Muslim Nation state of Pakistan while at the same time adhering tenaciously to the Muslim 'umma. A brief discussion of the Islamic milieu of Afghanistan will serve as a background to the subsequent analysis dealing with the Pashtunistan issue.

The Islamic Tradition and Pashtunkhwa

A panoramic view of the history of Islam in Afghanistan discloses a number of symptomatic events related to Pashtun resistance and the renaissance of Afghan nationalism. The conceptual legacy of Pashtunkhwa continued to influence political ideals in the specific historical situations which made Afghanistan's territory an integral part of the Islamic world. On a wider historical plane the initial resistance to Islam and the later acceptance of it as a universal religion both contributed to the growth of a national consciousness and a patriotic idea which transcended tribal boundaries.

Islamic history in Afghanistan reveals an internal cohesion lacking in the history of the same religion in Syria or Iraq. The demarcation from the Iranian experience is equally significant. The medieval Persian theory of Kingship came into collision with the specifically democratic religious tradition of

Islam, whereas once Islam came to prevail in the Afghan lands, the existence of the Pashtuns as a Millat (religious community) generated a political consciousness which gave a functional equivalence to (a) the attitudinal integration at the social and tribal level and (b) the common religious institutions which emerged after Islamic consolidation.

The nature and growth of an Islamic cultural tradition among the Pashtuns influenced by the Islamic categories of jihad, hijra and imama served as a focus to contain the elements of ambiguity which were engendered by the parochial realities of tribal elitism. It is not surprising that Iran became a Shi'ite country while the Afghans have been an integral part of Sunni history. The fusion of Islamic religion and Pashtun ethnicity which is reflected in the Pashto literary work Pata Khazana shows by no means a dislocated culture.

**Socio-political Traditions of Islam**

In the course of cultural evolution, the rituals, customs, and institutionalised relationships of Islamic organisation have influenced the outlook and attitudes of the Pashtuns in patterns of social communication which have helped them to deal with the instabilities of social stratification. Pashtun society defines Islamic behaviour as acceptable because intrinsic native values are "overlaid with meanings considered to be Islamic". (38) There is a characteristic concern for the

---

doctrinal beliefs, and the precedents of the Prophet Mohammad, the Caliphs, and the holy men of the Islamic world in order to secure social self-identity.

In general terms, "the Pakhtun social world, its mores and norms and the symbols of its society are embedded in and often identical to those of the wider world of Islam" and in the words of Akbar S. Ahmad, "Islam is another name for Pakhtun society". (39) To the extent that Pashtun social order depends on effective enforcement, the basic and non-negotiable features of Islam, based on the revelation of God as embodied in the Holy Quran and the interpretations and sayings of Mohammad, have profoundly influenced "Afghan understanding about life experience and social relationships". (40) Thus the Afghan social matrix is intimately related to the historical praxis of Islam and creates a natural flow of transactions with the wider Muslim world.

Operationally, Islam as a universalistic religion has provided a broader concept of unity and social coherence to the heterogeneous society of Pashtunkhwa, bridging the diverse ethnic backgrounds of its people. It has made the Pashtuns outward looking and tolerant and given them insights into problems of change and conflict-resolution, and in particular enhanced their capability of developing consensus with ethnic minorities.

40. Robert L. Canfield, op. cit., p. 58.
Raw Text:

Islamic Patterns:

Due to the vulnerability of the geo-political location of the Pashtun landscape with its urban centres and core areas being subject to external hostile presssures and encroachments, "Islam as a system of social relations" and a "related set" of common "moral understandings" has had two "cultural styles" or patterns in Pashtunkhwa. First that of the largely secluded rural Pashtun society, characterised by semi-sufficient peasant economy and egalitarian society with tribal organization and martialism. (41) The second is that of Pashtunkhwa's urban centres marked by advanced economy, class divisions, ethnic minorities and alien cultural influences. Beneath the collision of these divergent interests are the different perceptual frameworks shaped by the historical, geographical and social experience of the country.

Our attention is now focussed on two sets of behavioural norms. One related to a traditional Islam that is practised by the great majority of the population about 90 per cent of whom are rural agriculturalists or migratory pastoralists" and the other related to a progressive (concessional or politically convenient) Islam"(42) that prevails in the heterogeneous urban and core areas of the country, having been patronized by the various ruling Muslim minority dynasties whose very political power, legitimacy and survival depended on it.

Traditional Islam was thus more accommodative and

---

41. See, the Social Organization and Strategic Significance of Pashtunkhwa, Chapter 1.

42. Robert Canfield, "Islamic Sources of Resistance", ORBIS, vol. 29, no.1, Spring 1985 p.58.
adaptive in relation to native values and basic security needs of the Pashtun society in the face of continued alien pressures, while progressive Islam was more offensive and expansionist as a self-gratifying tool of political manipulation at the disposal of the minority rulers against the general masses and the external dominant forces. The concepts of authority, rights and responsibilities of the latter model provided legitimacy for the rulers, domineering attitude to the rural Islam and ensured their cultural domination and the survival and continuity of their minority rule over the majority in the countryside. (43)

Traditional Pattern of Islam

"Being the style of belief and practice" of the great majority of the Pashtuns inhabiting mainly the secluded and generally inaccessible mountainous rural areas of Pashtunkhwa, traditional Islam " has had a huge impact on Afghan (Pashtun) history and social affairs" and their cultural and national survival, as a great comenting and mobilizing force. It may be described on the one hand as "a related set of Islamic categories and concepts", intermingled with strong native traditions to suit and satisfy the local needs of the people and on the other as "a system of social alignments, deriving from these concepts" (44) to ensure the total collective well-being and security of the community by preserving its egalitarian thinking and integrative influence against encroachment by

(43) Ibid, p. 58.
external or domestic forces.

Islam in the traditional Pashtun society has a horizontal institutionalized super-structure overlaid on the infra-structural institutionalization of the Pashtun code of Pashtunwali which embodies Pashtun concepts and value system, historically evolved as a regulative social mechanism of harmonious social order and security against external threats. Thus, Islam has assumed more a symbolic role of providing additional protection and legitimacy to the intrinsic native cultural values of the Pashtuns, aiming to ensure and safeguard their cultural and national identity and survival with a geopolitical identity of their own. Thus, traditional Islam is an integral part of Pashtun cultural identity that gives it a wider identity, ensuring additional strength, unity, effectiveness and freedom of action in coping with problems, specially those created by external threats from its culturally alienated urban centers or from the rival neighbouring countries.

In fact the symbiosis of Traditional Islam and Pashtunwali determines the distinct characteristics of the social configurations and the belief and value system of Pashtuns and provides an explicit reference to the roles, functions and attitudes, characteristic of Pashtun social solidarity.

(45) Akbar, S. Ahmad, Pakhtun Economy and Society, p. 105.

(46) For detail see Akbar Ahmad, Islam in Pakistan, and the Pakhtun Society and Economy (London, 1980)
The components of such a stabilised and functional social system are structured as follows:

**RURAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION**

- Tribe or Village Organization
  - functional tool for community response
- Economic Organisation
  - for accumulation employment production
  - economic interests, transactions rewards and resource management at local level
- Pashtunwali or Pashto
  - social control and operational code approach for
  - Procedural management and problem solving
- Traditional Islam
  - formal cognitive process for
  - symbolic Defensive
  - legitimization of social choice

There is a further point which needs to be taken into account. The general social tendencies produce three distinct categories of leadership, who are principal actors, as shown in the following table, and interact in juxtaposition at the provincial, district and village levels of the loose social structure which comprises the Pashtun rural society. Each has its own stable system of authority separate ethnic origin, distinct power base with specific type (or style) of social ideology, loyalty and roles with conflicting social orientations.
### A Simple Matrix of the Rural Leadership Structure
(Actors' positions and social operations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of leaders (actors and their position)</th>
<th>Status system Traditional or social leaders</th>
<th>Common Value system Religious or opinion leaders</th>
<th>Dominance system Administrative or political leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincial level</td>
<td>Senior tribal or community chief (feudal)</td>
<td>Senior clergy peer (holyman) Imam, aulim (scholar) etc.</td>
<td>Governor, or chief govt. agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District level</td>
<td>Junior tribal or community chief, Khan, etc.)</td>
<td>Junior clergy peer (holyman) Imam, aulim mullah (priest)</td>
<td>Junior govt. agent (wuluswal) and pol. agent in Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village or local community level</td>
<td>Hereditary tribal or community chief, elder, Khan, etc.</td>
<td>Mosque's mullah (priest) etc.</td>
<td>Govt. agent called malik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>Hujra (common room) or chief's residence</td>
<td>Mosque or Shrine</td>
<td>Provincial and district headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Pashtun</td>
<td>Pashtun and Pashtunised non-Pashtun</td>
<td>Outsider, Pashtun, and non-Pashtun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology and loyalty</td>
<td>Community, tribe, Pashto and Pashtunwali</td>
<td>Islam and the top clergy</td>
<td>Persianized central government (and Pak-colonial govt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power base</td>
<td>People, tribe</td>
<td>Clergy and committed followers</td>
<td>Bureaucracy (Central government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>Populist</td>
<td>Dictatorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Resistive (defence of values)</td>
<td>Neutraliser (retention of common Islamic values)</td>
<td>Acquisitive (Aggressive exploitative).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus we have a description of rural society in which the three groups of leaders each based in a well-defined position in the social structure, compete for power, status and legitimacy in the Pashtun rural society. Of them, the traditional leader, a representative of the people is well-established in the structure, provided external disruptive forces through the administrative and religious leaders do not disturb the status-quo. He governs, conducts and supervises the entire affairs of the tribe and the community as a social unit in accordance with the principles of Pashtunwali and Islam through popular and democratic means, set forth by the Pashtun code as resolved through a jirga (assembly) deliberations.

The religious leader, the mullah (an acquired status assigned by the community) or the peer (the holyman with an ascribed status), is the second most important person in the structure who does not only conduct the prayers and rituals but also educates the children and renders advice to the members of the community and its leaders and elders and thus indirectly shapes and influences the views and general opinion of the tribe or the rural community. As a holyman he is venerated and people often seek his guidance, counsel, arbitration, blessings and charms and present him gifts and

(48) See, Pashtunwali, chapter 1.
(49) Confield, *op.cit.*, p.61.
secure his friendship and relationship by offering their
daughters in marriage to him or his relatives all of which
cumulatively adds up to his power and influence in the structure. (50)

However, to consolidate his rather tenuous position in
the structure, he identifies himself with an extended hierar-
chical network of clerical relationships based on the Islamic
concepts of authority, right and responsibility. Under extra-
ordinary circumstances, specially those affecting religion
or his position, he plays a central role in expressing dissent
and even rebellion, and assumes absolute command of social
affairs, ousting the two other leaders for a limited period
and thus forming the backbone of political and religious protest
movements. (51) The traditional leader is ousted for a limited
period during the crisis, he comes back as his base is establi-
shed in the structure, though the emergence of the mullah as
a "hero" poses limitations on his influence. He can himself
emerge as a "hero" and take initiatives to defuse the crisis.

The third actor, the government agent has no stabilised
role in the structure and hence in order to create and ensure
an imposed position for himself, he exploits the inherent
weaknesses of the traditional agrarian structure. The bureau-
cracy exacerbates contradictory positions of the religious leader
through a clever policy of "divide and rule", using the various
religious segments against one another. He also checks and
controls the potential power of the traditional leader and the

(50) Confied, Ibid., p. 60.
(51) For detail see, Ibid., pp. 60-61 (Islamic networks).
efficacy of the community structure. Furthermore if he happens to be a charismatic Pashtun personality who relying on Pashtunwali can effectively reduce the influence of the two other leaders with the help of his hierarchical political power and substantial economic resources and capabilities he can be an effective tool for positive change, though often he may foster prejudice and discrimination in place of social harmony.

In fact, as a result of the established equilibrium of relationships, the traditional and administrative (government agent) leaders, emerge as the two most important actors under normal situations, depending for their survival on alliance and mutual cooperation of one another. It "is the religious leader", the mullah "who must clash" with them in order "to expand his space in the society", (52) and as such he is often in search of an opportunity to disrupt the balance and oust the two other leaderships as a neutralizer. In order to check the possible mischief of the religious leader both the traditional leader and the government agent translate their respective policies in Islamic terms and ensure legitimate positions for themselves in the structure. The traditional leader and the government agent can also challenge and oust each other through an alliance with the neutralizer religious leader. Major events and movements in Pashtunkhwa have witnessed intensified efforts to achieve convergence between the traditional religious leadership.

52. Akbar Ahmad, Islam in Pakistan, op.cit., p.6.
In fact, Pashtun history shows that the Pashtuns have always been able to check foreign aggressions and imposition of alien values through a social alliance of this nature. Similarly, outside imperial and colonial powers and ethnic minority rulers, have also been able to crush and uproot Pashtun nationalist struggles and freedom movements through an alliance with the religious leadership. Pashtun history, since the very advent of Roshanya nationalist movement in the middle of 16th century till the present phase of the Pashtun struggle both in Afghanistan and Pakistan is nothing but a reflection of the alliances of the external antagonistic power and the internal reactionary religious forces against the Pashtun emergent nationalism, struggling for its survival and identity. (53)

The Pattern of Progressive or Political Islam

The pattern and structure of Islam in Pashtunkhwa's urban centres, specially the capital, Kabul, is more complex and restricted by narrow identities, as a result of the multiplicity of other institutions and domination of non-Pashtun ethnic groups. We can take as exception the Pashtun-dominated urban centres of Kandahar, Jalalabad, Peshwar and Quetta.

Islam in the urban centres has continued to serve more as a political weapon at the disposal of its Muslim rulers.

53. For detail See, H.Rafi, De Roshan Yad (Roshan Memorial) (Pashto Academy, Kabul, 1976).
We, therefore, call it political or progressive Islam. It is more infrastructurally rooted around goal-oriented exploitative relationship between dominant and subordinate groups among its ethnically mixed inhabitants. For being historically patronised by the various succeeding Muslim rulers as a State religion, it has consequently uprooted native egalitarian cultural values and has brought up a common Persianised culture as a medium of religious expression and identity on which the status hierarchy and the very legitimacy and survival of the rule of various ethnic minorities rested.

In the imposed system of social stratification the Islamic concept of authority, right and obligation has been misused by the rulers to have total disregard for native cultural distinctions and to advocate a Persianised Islamic culture that strengthened their power base and legitimised their expansionist designs and hegemony over larger territories in the countryside and the neighbouring regions. The resulting developments of the urban centres of Pashtunkhwa, such as Kabul, Zabol (Kandahar) Ghazna, Seistan, Herat, Bemyan and Balkh emerged as great centres of Islamic learning, and arts through the medium of Persian culture and language. This had the wantonly distinctive effect of the expressive exploitation of the Pashtuns as a submerged cultural group.

However, the sinister political use of Islam and clergy by imperial and colonial powers against nationalist movements and reformist programmes - such as the nationalist struggles of the Roshanyas, Khushal Khan, Hotakis, Khudad Khidematgars and Amanullah’s reforms, further undermined the
image of Islam in the economically prosperous urban centres marked by class divisions and parochialism. (54)

The prevalence of Persianised system of education, and the gradual spread of western technologies associated with imported techniques and revolutionary ideals, brought a rapid change in the Islamic attitudes of its inhabitants of the urban centres, alienating them from the general masses. (55) The internalized feelings of constraint in the urban centres suited the interests of the alienated Persianised oligarchy and their expanding bureaucracy. (56) Introduction of western type of education since the start of the present century, which dislocated the traditional system, brought a revolutionary change in the outlook and attitudes of both the Persianised oligarchs and the upper and lower classes of the urban population, rendering them more critical of the traditional values. (57)

As a result of all these developments, the Persianised Pashtun oligarchy and the non-Pashtun Persianised aristocracy

---

(54) Failures of such nationalist and reformist movements were attributed by intellectuals to religious reactions often instigated by imperial powers, property class and powerful business groups.


(56) The rulers being Persianised and alienated from the people were often imposed on the people by outside imperial forces and hence they could not depend on the support of the rural population, but the urban centres.

(57) Confield, Ibid., p. 63.
and the middle class developed peculiar type of Persianised and Westernised attitudes about life, society and culture that were in contrast and conflict with traditional ones, particularly with regard to their perceptions and understanding of Islam. (58) In fact, the Persianised Pashtun oligarchy and the Persianised urban aristocracy and middle class maintained a distorted view of their social importance. They sharpened the urban-rural dichotomy and strengthened the role of coercive strategies in order to maintain their role as a separate “socio-cultural entity” (59), which had the divine right to rule the country without equitable balancing of the interests of the general masses.

(58) Confield, Ibid., p.63.

(59) The reasons for the alienation of the Persianised Pashtun rulers were chiefly their education in the urban centres and their coming into power with the help of British influence and the network of actors and activities involved in external infiltration. Being alienated from the masses, the Pashtun rulers inevitably preferred to patronise the Persianised culture in order to get secure and maintain the support of the urban population and thus tried to keep the countryside backward, weak, and subservient to the whims and wishes of the Persianised urban population through the policy of divide and rule. This often caused general reactions from the masses which they often crushed and branded them as merely “black tribal reactions” which many scholars still regard as such, failing to ascertain the real causes and distinction between Westernisation and modernization. Pashtuns are culturally accommodative people and therefore welcome positive innovations, which bring benefits and material advantages, but what they have stubbornly resisted is the negative influence of Persianisation and Westernisation which the rulers have always tried to impose on them.
POLITICAL BALANCE AND ETHNIC FACTOR AT CENTRE

RULING Oligarchs (Persianised Pashtuns)

Non-Pashtun Category

Upper Class
Aristocrats
Clergy
Capitalists

Middle Class
Businessmen
Clergy
Govt. Officials

Lower Class
Artisans, Employees,
Servants & Labourers
(Majority)

Persianised Category

Intelligentia
Non-Pashtuns &
Persianised Pashtuns

Political Parties
Pressure Groups
(mixed)

Military & Police
Forces (Pashtun-
dominated)

Intelligentia
Middle Class
Govt. Servants

Lower Class
Employees
Workers
(Minority)

Derivation and interaction
Derivation and one-way interaction
Socio-Economic Level
Derivation and interdependence
This modernisation paradigm instead of realistically respecting the general cultural aspirations and religious sentiments of the general Pashtun masses, often confronted them by suppressing their desires and denying them a share in the affairs of their state. The ruling entity unrealistically followed secularist policies and advocated "secular heroic images and Persianised "nationalistic ideals" in place of "Islamic heroic images and Islamic ideals" and Pashtun identity. For many of them "Islam ceased to permeate all aspects of life". They considered Islamic rituals and social responsibility as a separate category, a religion which according to them had nothing to do with other elements of Afghan life and culture.

Afghan intelligentsia and ruling circles regarded traditional Islamic and cultural values as backward, meaningless and inconsistent with the needs of time and the Political ideals of their Persianised culture and polity. Persianised policies resulted in a severe rift and division in the intelligentsia which has been growing as a result of the growing spread of education in the countryside. Nationalist, liberal, socialist, marxist and fundamentalist groups emerged that challenged such policies and weakened the urban power base

60. Confield, Ibid., p.64
61. Ibid., p.64
62. One consequence of this divergence of the articulated religious positions of the State and the outlook of the masses was that Kabul's Pashtunistan policy became highly vulnerable to Pakistani pressures in the Islamic world.
of the Persianised oligarchy which must bear responsibility for the subsequent political crisis and repeated political changes that culminated in the unfortunate situation of the 1980s.

**Intellectuals within the Traditional System:**

It should be obvious that the social, economic and political class character of the Kabul intelligentsia which is regarded as "the unique outpost of modern ideas and influences, the beacon of civilisation in Afghanistan" developed along lines which moved it away from the intellectuals within the traditional system. This class which had pretensions of changing traditional society could not mitigate the disparity in Afghan urban society much less bridge the gap between rich and the poor. They indulged in a collective fantasy while continuing relentlessly with the lopsided urbanisation of Afghan society. (63) The long-spent up frustrations of the masses could not be expressed by the opportunistic outlook of this class. The psychological and practical adaptation of the intellectuals within the traditional system was relatively more successful in achieving the necessary interaction between the leadership and mass following.

The technical religious terminology used by them constituted a sociology of knowledge which provided impulse, subjectivity and social expression to the masses who belonged

---

to the lower strata in their opposition to repression. Members of the rural sub-stratum who made their way to the urban centres continued to function within the framework of the traditional social order and found the teachings of both the "liberal" and "socialist" intelligentsia repellent. Occasionally socialist or communistic ideas captured the mood of some Afghan lower strata but this was mostly ephemeral in nature. Those who lived in real poverty found barriers raised against them by the modernising intellectuals. The analysis indicates that the traditional intelligentsia holds more promise for the lower strata on account of its pragmatic adaptation to a changing society. In their capacity for coherent thought and action, even in the disturbed 1980s they have proved their superior communication skills than the more sophisticated modernising urban intellectuals.

Dynamics of the Traditional System:

One of the most important voices of the traditional system is that raised against the magnitude of external involvement in Afghanistan which has resulted from foreign machinations. The first person to realise the utility of Islam as a force to ward off the west was undoubtedly the 19th Century thinker Syed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani. The radical consequences from his theory have strengthened the ability of the traditional system to penetrate and change existing society. The lasting effectiveness of his notion of an anti-western political ideology based on Islam is visible in contemporary Afghanistan. It is possible
to identify the creative part of Afghanistan's anti-imperialist ethos in terms of the perceptual processes advocated by Jamal-ud-Din Afghani, (64) whereas in Pakistan there prevails a strong negative reference to everything that can serve as a rallying point for anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. The connection between Sir Syed Ahmed's loyalist approach to the British rulers of India and the situation of political consensus with the western powers is always present in the minds of the ruling circles in Islamabad. The true significance of the traditional system in Afghanistan can, it seems be appreciated only if viewed from the perspective of its persistence in opposing social imperialism, as well as the anachronistic distribution of power by manipulatory elements. The traditionalists may have been accused of intense social conservatism yet in the whole body politic they have most successfully mobilised the structures and mechanisms of self-help by explaining the context of interaction to the masses in popular idiom. They have continually interacted with the unfolding situation in a dynamic way, while the academic discussions of the "reformers" have often been sterile as far as practical policy is concerned.

(64) A good account of Afghani's views of Pashtun culture is given in Pashtunwali written by Q. Khadim in Pashto, Published by Pashto Academy Kabul in 1331 (1953).
Islamic Fundamentalism: The source of its appeal:

For several decades since Islamic Fundamentalism raised its head in West Asia and in the Indian Subcontinent, Afghanistan had deeply frustrated the efforts of fundamentalists to achieve status in the social groups and tribal formations. The social and personal identity of the Pashtun could not assimilate the ideology of the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimin (Muslim brethren) who had success in reaching a high position in Egyptian society in the late twenties. The messianism of Maulana Abu'l A'la Maudoodi initially did not appeal to the masses who held tenaciously to the beliefs and values of traditional Islamic society.65

It was only the crisis of identity of the elite group which created a fanatical re-identification of a miniscule section with the Jama'at-i-Islami. Most Afghans were opposed to this sort of cultural borrowing and adhered to nationally oriented ideology in the religious sphere. After the mid-sixties, however, aggressive political participation by dominant minority groups challenged the sense of identity, autonomy and self-esteem of the Pashtuns. Some of those resentful of the existing order among the younger generation were an easy prey for the manipulating leaders of the two main branches of the

(65) Our interviews with the cross sections of the Afghan people revealed that the people articulately protested against the fundamentalists campaign criticising the Muslim monarchy on the basis of Islamic law. Their slogans appealed to few religious-minded intellectuals and the graduates of the religious schools, but did not impress the widest strata of the population.
fundamentalists. The economic crisis and the political upheaval in Afghanistan disturbed the traditional norms and the established position of the groups in the Pashtun social structure. The fundamentalists did not advocate social change but they commanded a spontaneous following in their plea for reinforcing the patterns of the past.

Maulana Maudoodi's theory of the Islamic state which justifies authoritarianism does not produce an emotional attachment among the Pashtuns who have always focussed on the motivational dynamics of freedom and dissent. The fundamentalists' chief source of appeal in contemporary Afghanistan is in their ability to provide institutional channels for expressing protests after the crisis and breakdown of the formal democratic regime, and to combat the pathological effects of internal war.

Islamic Potentialities:

As pointed out earlier Islam has not been the source of Afghanistan's Pashtunistan policy. In the current scene which has been unfolding after the Russian occupation of Afghanistan there are aspects of the Afghan body-politic in relation to Islamic potentialities which merit intensive inquiry. The persistent problems and dilemmas for both the Government in Kabul and for the Afghan Resistance are rooted in more enduring structural sources of Islam as well as the rural-urban divide. Our empirical analysis of concrete behaviour helps us to discern the following dichotomous patterns, by way of examples from both the Kabul Government and the Afghan Resistance (See the following chart)
POLITICO-SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FRAGMENTATION OF AFGHAN POLITICAL PARTIES

**LEFTISTS:**
Marxist-Leninists

**CENTRISTS:**
Nationalists (with Socialist orientation)

**RIGHTISTS:**
Muslim Fundamentalists
Akhwan-ul-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood)

Rural-based Pashtun-dominated Pashto-speaking majority Lower Middle Class

Urban-based Minority-dominated Persian-speaking minority Upper Middle Class

Khalq (people) Nationalist-minded

Afghan Milat (Afghan Nation) Social Democrats

Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party)

Parcham (flag) Pro-Moscow

Setam Melli (National Oppression) Anti-Pashtun

Jamiati Islami (Islamic Group)

Socio-economic and cultural linkages and reciprocation.
Political and ideologic linkage and reciprocation
Opposition and Enmity Dimention.
Potentiality of Opposition Alliance against a group shown by vertex of triangle.
There is no need here to discuss a broad array of contrasting variables, except to point out that we can disaggregate and trace the domestic and foreign policy outputs of these groups by identifying their phases of decision-making:

1. Attainment of policy goals formulated by rural intellectuals/urban intellectuals;
2. Appraisal of prescriptions by ideologists/pragmatists;
3. Invocation of Pashto ethos/Persianised ethos;
4. Application of minority referents/mainstream Pashtun referents;
5. Promotion of Traditional Islam / Progressive Islam / Fundamentalist Islam;

To trace the impact of factors which shape the policy making process of the Jamiat-i-Islami, an important intervening variable is the fact that Burhanuddin Rabbani is a Tajik from Badakhshan, and the support base of the Jamiat are the Persian speaking Tajiks. The Hizb-i-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is shaped by the mainstream Pashtun ethos and has a radical vision of changing Afghan society. The founder of Setem-i-Meli was Tahír Badakshi, a Shia Tajik also from Badakhshan and emphasises ethnic-minority rights against the mainstream Pashtuns. The Afghan Millat, on the contrary, comprises ultra Pashtun nationalists and has the primary aim of achieving Pashtunistan.

---

Similarly the Khalq Parcham divide has been viewed too simplistically by many outside observers. Although the warp and woof of policy making in Marxist parties is a closed affair, radical politics in Afghanistan cannot escape behaviour consistent with the social, political religious and personal norms. The interregnum of a contrived cohesion between the Khalqis and the parachamites did not last long after the Saur "revolution" because the sociological and psychological variables created divergent motivational dynamics. The psychodynamics of radicalisation is very different in the rugged Pashto speaking Khalqis from the Persian speaking elitist parachamites. The historical pattern which has unfolded so far is likely to favour mobilisation in favour of the Khalqis. The Parchamites can only enforce their political claims with the help of external patrons.

The imperatives of an international settlement on Afghanistan leading to the withdrawal of Soviet troops would consistently favour the grass-roots oriented Khalqis. With pro-forma organisational changes the Khalqis could develop capacities for tactical and strategic policy responses towards Traditional Islam. It is outside the scope of our study to consider the diffusion of Islamic potentiality across a time dimension in Afghanistan's political

and social change. Our empirical study indicates a more immediate impact as a symbolic response in favour of remedial action in restoring Afghan political identity. We can contrast the attitudes of Afghans and Pakistanis; there is no serious pressure in Afghanistan for setting up a theocracy although the Resistance has taken certain rhetorical positions; in Pakistan the ruling classes' a theory and practice of Islamic ideology which supports the "feudal-comprador" regime. The interventing role of religion in Afghanistan is restrained by the voluntaristic and democratic elements in group mobilisation.

(iii) Marxist Group Dynamics

Looking back on the period since 1st January 1965 when a small group of Marxists founded the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), one could hardly blame leaders like Noor Mohammad Taraki, Hafizullah "min or Babrak Karmal for being tempted to seize political power even though Afghanistan was not ripe for revolution in accordance with the theory of Marxism. The political situation in Afghanistan after the mid-sixties was grotesque. The options of the ruling circles in the Wolesi Jirga were drastically limited. As the Marxists reasoned they could create situations in which the differentiated middle strata would become highly articulate and the regime would not be able to cope with the rising protest. (68)

(68) For a most reliable account of the Kha'ilq and Parcham relations, see, Beverly Male, Revolutionary Afghanistan (Saint Martin's Press, New York, 1982)
The tendency of students to resort to impulsive action was the major factor in the group dynamics of the PDPA. If it had been left to Taraki, the PDPA would have developed a minimum of collective consciousness in favour of the Pashtunistan issue. The Persianised élite among the Communists led by Babrak Karmal was afraid to assign a meaningful quality to Pashtun nationalism. The evidence suggests that Taraki gradually became convinced that the Persianised elements would extract greater concessions from the party and in the name of a common ideological stance they would undermine the Party's credit-worthy image among the Pashtuns. The split in July 1967 into two factions, the Khalq and the Parcham, came about because the ideas and style of life of upper class politicians like Karmal was antithetical to the political culture fostered by the rural Pashtuns who had provided the base to Taraki. The Pashtunistan problem has remained a festering source of discord between the two Marxist parties, and there is no guarantee that it will be avoided in their interaction in the future.

Attraction of Marxism:

The end of monolithism at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union made the "new course" propounded there very attractive for the Third World. First of all the CPSU confirmed the rapprochement with the Titoist government of Yugoslavia which was very popular in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. The acknowledgement of socialist pluralism made Marxism highly palatable to those
who were resisting imperialism and informal imperialism with ideas of national independence.

In Afghanistan with the rising pressure for democratisation, leftist intellectuals could mobilise a considerable section of the educated youth with promises of radical social change. The propagandist techniques of the Communists were also a powerful help since the other political groups were not sufficiently conditioned to the use of modern media, with a few exceptions. The rebellious youth of Afghan urban centres were alienated, disheartened and dissatisfied, while the bureaucracy was not prepared to make any tangible concessions to the national spirit and democratic principles. The Khalq in particular was able to adopt a fluid and ambiguous strategy to recruit new members in the teaching establishment and the civil and military elite. (69)

In July 1977, although the sudden change was surprising, the Khalq and Parcham again came together with a fresh insistence on ideological orthodoxy against the current strategy of Daoud who was distancing himself from the left-wing sympathisers of his regime. The Marxist leaders reacted to the event of the political assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber, the ideologue of the Parcham group, in an uncompromising manner. They forgot their internecine struggle for the time being and staged

(69) For a detailed account of developments, see, Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism, (Stanford, 1973).
massive demonstrations. With their army and airforce supporters led by Major Mohammad Aslan Watanjar and Colonel Abdul Qader the Maexists were able to pre-empt Daud and establish a new regime.

U.S.S.R. as a model:

The Parcham had always maintained a special relationship with Moscow which was a stark definition of political reality. The Khalqis were an awkward ally since they often articulated contradictory interests and aspirations when they talked about their internal development on a autocentric basis. (70) But after the purge of the Parcham elements, the Khalq expressed their commitments and allegiance to the U.S.S.R. In retrospect the programme to remove the unjust patriarchal and feudalistic relations of the Marxist regime led to the opposition not only of the rural elite but also of the Afghan peasants and landless labour.

The Soviet model of government and economic control was clearly not the best foundation on which to proceed with the dynamics of the Saur Revolution. In addition it is important to recognise that the impetus for change did not originate in the countryside; it was seen as the manipulation of the higher echelons of the government and party bureaucracy. The general effect of the revolution from "above was to throw the

people back on their traditional institutions and encouraged them to distance themselves from the new regime. By the summer of 1979, the recalcitrant leaders in the countryside were openly critical of the imposition of the Soviet model and even earlier enthusiasts tore themselves away from Marxism-Leninism.\(^{(71)}\)

The precariousness of the new regime became apparent from the growing armed resistance and the failure of the privileged bureaucracy to replace the crude caricature of the socialist design with an authentic Afghan model which could be the symbol of national revival. The extreme anti-Soviet position of the people could have been avoided if the worthy and realistic objectives for Afghan nationalism had been proclaimed and the profession of internationalist faith held in abeyance.

The High cost of Parcham - Khalq rivalry:

The close links of the Parcham with the Soviet Union have been the cause of manifold, divergent and contradictory pressures that impinge on the Khalq as it tries to internalise principles of loyalty to the Afghan national consciousness. The Soviet role expresses desire for reconciliation between Khalq and Parcham in anticipation of a restriction of the Pashtun consciousness to manageable proportions. The common

need to defend the Saur Revolution and to strengthen the international position of the "Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" comes up against the degree of attention and effort to be given to the internal struggle. The basic cleavage is over the national security, status and influence and economic interests of the Pashtuns.

Taraki and Amin's mistakes were compounded by the country's tremendous dependence on the Soviet Union. The socialist rhetoric did not compensate the Pashtuns for what they regarded as the loss of their national identity. The search for the roots of Afghan nationalism became an even more urgent question after the Soviet military intervention and the installation of Babrak Karmal and the Parcham faction in exile. Kamal included both Khalqis and Parchamites in his government, and made concessions to Islam and the traditional societal norms. The unabated Khalq-Parcham rivalry and assassinations of each other's cadres underlined the limits of the rapprochement at the apex level. (72)

The high cost of the Parcham - Khalq rivalry underlines in its own way the importance of cultural reunification in Afghan political life. Even those who blame the subversive action of western imperialists and Pakistanis realise that the forces of cohesion and community institutions cannot be strengthened unless there is rethinking of the concepts of revolution, socialism, democracy and Afghan nationalism to align it

with the Pashtun ethos.

The Marxist Potential:

The Soviet leadership has indicated that they wish to end their military occupation as soon as it is possible to work out an international arrangement against "outside interference" in Afghanistan. In the event of a Soviet withdrawal and negotiated settlement, the ideological perspective of the Marxists in power will have to be modified, and the antagonism with the sources of nationalism ended. What is likely to be the Marxist potential if it is no longer an instrument of domination. As has been pointed out before the Pashtuns have always mobilized against armed interventions from abroad. It is therefore, natural that they will under no circumstances accept the Marxist version of the "White Man's Burden".

The Pashtuns, however, are not against making structural adjustments and the logic of their anti-colonialist struggle is in no way contrary to the search for improvement of material conditions of life and developing participatory models for sharing political power. Pashtunwali and the slogan of classless society are both in principle aimed against a ruling elite enjoying a privileged position. (73) The Marxist

73. For detail on Pashtunwali, see chapter I.
potential in Afghanistan can, therefore, never be developed on the basis of coercive mechanisms, state capitalism and bureaucratic centrism. Theoretically of course Marxism can follow the path of Pashtunwali to strengthen national structures in Afghanistan. Similarly in theory there is nothing to prevent Marxists from working for the eradication of social forces and political structures on both sides of the Durand Line.

The ideas of Pashtun identity and Afghan nationalism cannot be destroyed either by tanks and helicopter gunships, or by American neo-colonialism or by Pakistan's Islamic fanaticism. The Afghans have internal strengths and resources to find a lasting solution to the problems of national security, sovereignty, modernisation, cultural development and religious harmony.

III Afghan Nonalignment and the Legacy of Imperialism

Lord Curzon's frontier policy was the logical consequence of the assumptions of imperialism. The environmental constraints that have restricted or shaped Afghan decision-making options on Pashtunistan follow from the forms and properties of the Curzonian scenario. The linkage between the legacy of Imperialism and the problematic outcomes for Afghanistan is crucial for understanding both Afghan nonalignment and the intervening variables affecting the outcomes for the Pashtunistan issue. The United States which claims to believe in a pluralistic political system
has not found it possible to give up the fallacious concept that the Pashtuns must accept their subservient relationship to the Pakistani sub-imperialism. (74)

The Soviet Union, although more willing to explore possibilities of accommodation with the Third World has also not found it feasible to give up the creation of an informal empire after World War II, although as Dietrich Geyer puts it, "the Soviet sphere of hegemony cannot in any sensible way be compared with the Tsarist Empire's protectorates and spheres of interest." Attempts to break out of the vicious circle of the legacy of imperialism have been numerous on the part of Afghanistan. Pashtunistan constitutes the hard core of both Afghanistan's identity problem and her national security problem. Afghanistan's nonalignment is an expression of her anti-imperialist ethos and of her determination not to line up with either the Communist or the anti-Communist camp, since she does not have a shared perception of common dangers with either of them.

However, in order to muster enough clout against U.S. backed Pakistan, Afghanistan had to seek Soviet support, but the crucial issue of foreign policy for Afghanistan was the expansion of the cold war in the region basically on account of the continued occupation of Pashtunistan by Pakistan after the British withdrawal from India. (75)


75. Ibid., p.180.
(1) **Ideological foundations of Afghan non-alignment**

The predisposing factor for Afghan nonalignment was undoubtedly the earlier policy of positive neutrality which had a mass appeal in the country. The Afghan experience also served to illuminate to other non-aligned countries how national policy had been strengthened on account of an independent foreign policy. The ideological foundations of Afghan nonalignment can be traced to the strict neutrality during World War II, and these were strengthened by her participation in the First Asian Relations Conference in March 1947 in New Delhi and subsequently at the Bandung Conference followed by the First Nonaligned Summit in Belgrade. (76)

A review of Afghanistan's role shows that according to the role played by her in seeking reconstruction of global relationships and advancing proposals for disarmament and world peace, nonalignment was not only a tactic or a strategy; it was an ideology. The events of December 1979 should not be allowed to conceal the fact that the nonaligned policies established a position of independence and specifically the Afghans enjoyed stable expectations of its continued realisation. Although the commitment to nonalignment varies from country to country, in the case of Afghanistan there was never any doubt that Afghanistan had no desire to depart from

the institutional structure it had created for its foreign policy.

The Afghan - Soviet Treaty of 5 December 1978, from the perspective of nonalignment cannot be interpreted as detracting from the rationality and goals of a non-aligned country. (77) There also exists a nonaligned movement (NAM) which provides an environment supportive of Afghanistan as a nonaligned unit. The nonaligned values and perspectives of NAM and its patterns of choice as expressed in its resolutions on Afghanistan have a reinforcing effect on Kabul's traditional nonaligned policy and status.

(ii) Afghan development strategies:
resource management and economic independence

Nonalignment also provided the focus for economic issues in Afghanistan since in terms of development policy an alternative to communism and capitalism was being articulated. The Pashtun ethos of autocentric development prevented Kabul from following the "white revolution" model of the Shah of Iran or the Pakistani development path. Inspite of the scramble for power among the elites which had links with metropolitan powers, the Pashtun ethos prevented the imposition of social costs for an export oriented and fragmented industrial structure.

77. The said treaty was not questionable as a similar treaty was signed with India as well and even the American reaction to the treaty was not critical as one could expect, but the way the treaty was used for the invasion of the country mattered alot., See Department of State Bulletin, December, 198C.
By balancing the Soviet and American patterns of rivalry, the Afghans did not allow the imposition of industrial hegemony or the direct exploitation of the country's natural resources. Although some of the élites were oriented towards freer flow of foreign investment and technology, the need-oriented and indigenous strategies were also regarded as realistic options. Leadership groups which represented collective self-reliance in Afghanistan were also those which urged the utilisation of local resources. The high income strata was not oriented towards the improvement of the lot of the impoverished masses and was quite willing to attach itself to capitalist metropoles.

The unswerving commitment to the nonaligned position was shared by those whose overall assessment was in favour of autocentric development. Those who wanted to orient the economy towards the metropolitan countries were generally also those who wanted to subordinate nonaligned policies to the alien economic interests which wanted to penetrate and dominate the Afghan economy. (78)

(iii) **The Rationale of Afghan Nonalignment:**

Pashtunistan, a basic question in both domestic and foreign policy.

In the light of the above discussion, the rationale of Afghan nonalignment is attributable to:

a) **Anticolonialism.** The transformations which Afghan foreign policy worked for traditionally included full support to efforts to eradicate colonialism and neocolonialism. This was not only a verbal commitment for Afghanistan had been a key factor in processes oriented towards the success of the freedom struggle in the Indian subcontinent.

b) **Nationalism.** Although there were some controversial models of political development which attracted some of the élites, the effective value goal which narrowed the élite-mass gap was Afghan nationalism. In the arena of world politics, Afghan nationalism backed by the Pashtun mainstream identity shaped the socialisation process and served as a potential counterweight against external threats.

c) **Peaceful coexistence and the East-West Conflict**

Believing the peaceful coexistence between states with different political and social systems, Afghan foreign policy underlined the contextual principle of independence and non-participation in military alliances in relation to the East-West conflict. (79)

---

Afghanistan respected the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states, but she was not prepared to give up her principled stand on anti-colonialism. She defended her stand on Pashtunistan on precisely this ground. Pakistan's anxieties flowed from its leadership's incapacity to maintain a democratic political order and real fears about an imminent overthrow of their colonial rule of the Pashtuns. The old strategy of imperialism was ill-suited to the shifting circumstances in the Third World. Having been opposed to Indian nationalism, the Pakistani ruling elite's predictable response was to divide and rule the Pashtuns. The Pashtun identity had to be reasserted in the face of the uncertainties created by a U.S. backed Pakistan. It was not only a matter of ideological conviction of the Pashtuns; it was the only way to cultivate deeper political and economic relations in the region. (80)

By bringing the East-West conflict into the region, Pakistan and the United States had introduced value deprivation for the Pashtuns in an era of decolonisation. Afghanistan's major motivation in advocating peaceful coexistence especially in the context of the East-West conflict was to provide an all-important contrast to pactomania, and to maintain appropriate standards of international behaviour. We can detect a final ambiguity in Kabul's implementation.

of the Pashtunistan policy on account of conflicting motivations. The prospects of international recognition of Pashtunistan would have brightened if instead of limited exchanges with its adversaries, Afghanistan had made it the central mode of institutional expression of nonalignment, as has happened in the case of Palestine and South African issues.

There are undoubtedly other fruitful approaches to the Pashtunistan issue. Evidently Kabul's future gains will be heavily contingent on making it a basic political concern in both domestic and foreign policy in a new era of openness after the Soviet troop withdrawal.