Chapter II

EVOLUTION OF AFGHANISTAN AS A NATION STATE
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The territorial evolution of Afghanistan has been perceived as a phenomenon developed in the context of historical process operating in a geographical environment. This has been influenced by locational factors which had imparted certain politico-economic characteristics to this region. The political, economic and social forces have, from time to time, emerged and tended to strengthen as well as weaken the power base of the state.

Very often, the fusion as well as fission between the continental and maritime systems along a major primary axis left the deeper impact on the geographical extent and content of the state.

It led to the emergence of series of secondary axis lines in the continental periphery. However, the perpetuation of the locational conflict rendered the position of the secondary axis lines nebulous. They stood separated when the disruptive forces of the continental interior undermined the stability and supremacy of the primary axis. Consequently, the secondary axis lines became the focal points of the geographical regions and political areas so separated from the primary axis. The subsequent development of secondary axis in the continental periphery of the state suggested the prevalence of unstable political conditions within the general framework of the territorial content of the state.
With the development of external trade, the trade routes and transit centres became the focal points for permeating the influences of old world order along an east-west axis. As a result, a series of interrelationships emerged and influenced the location as well as enhanced the importance of major axes and core areas. However, the location of Afghanistan in this wider continental perspective, reflected the importance of secondary axis line in its territorial evolution.

The Afghan history, then, suggests (a) north-south stratification of people and political development, and (b) an east-west axis of social and cultural influences. It may be noted, however, that these separate developments were made possible by the mutual separation of secondary continental lines from each other as well as the continental from the maritime axis. Further, as each of the secondary axis line recorded separate though similar, historical development, the unity of those lines figured prominently in the stability of the state.

In order to facilitate a proper geographical analysis, the Afghan history has been divided into: a) Pre-Islamic period; b) Islamic period and the rise of Afghans; c) Emergence of Afghanistan as a state; and d) Anglo-Russian involvement in Afghanistan. The basis of the classification is largely due to the emergence of primary and secondary (historical) structure lines which had influenced the formation of
the modern Afghan state.

The Pre-Islamic Period

The stability of the earlier empires, among other factors, depended upon the balance between the continental and maritime systems and their territorial extent. Whenever this balance tilted either way, the disruptive forces affected a physical separation of continental and maritime system. It was further intensified because of the development of external trade and trade routes. The axis lines became the basis for the emergence of new states. Such is an instance exemplified by the Achaemenian empire (559 BC-330 BC). The process of empire building began with the continental base provided by Media. It expanded to include the Mediterranean realm and affected the junction between continent and the sea along a major axis (see Map No. 6A).

This fusion enabled the maritime part of the axis to assert supremacy. A series of secondary axis lines, with functions both strategic and political, emerged in the continental part of the empire. They depended upon the primary axes for their unity and survival. The defeat of Darius at Marathon resulted in the loss of maritime axis of the empire and the continental axis lines separated and asserted their independence.

The dismemberment of the Achaemenian empire enabled Alexander to unite the Greek world and Egypt with Persia, India
and Central Asia. It became possible to establish the great trade routes and transit cities. These routes connected India and the Orient with the Mediterranean realm, connecting parts of Europe and Africa and in the process many economic centres emerged.

At this stage, the territories which are now included in Afghanistan can easily be identified. Known as Aryana in antiquities, it extended from the Sulaiman mountains in the east to the great saline deserts of North Persia in the west; from the coast of Makran in the south to the Hindukush and Karebel plateau in the north. It was a part of the Achaemenian empire, whose eastern frontiers vacillated along the Indus (or cis-Indus tracts of Punjab and Multan) or the escarpments of the Sulaiman mountains. Peshawar, Kabul valley, Balkh, Herat, Farah, Zaranj and Kandahar emerged as important agricultural and cultural centres in an otherwise unfavourable geographical environment of the frontier region. These nuclear regions were located along the great east-west trade routes connecting India and the Orient with eastern Mediterranean.

With the break-up of Macadonian empire, the Seleucids

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1 Achaemenian empire was divided into twenty Satrapies; six of these, encompassed what is now Afghanistan. They are, Zaranka, Areia, Bactria, Gandhara, Thata-agarh and Haranwati, corresponding to modern equivalents of Seistan, Herat, Afghan Turkestan, the Kabul valley, Hazarajat and Kandahar respectively. Percy Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, vol. I (London, 1940), pp. 46-47.
(302 BC) and Mauryas (232 BC) emerged as dominant powers in the region. The Seleucid attempt to regain the lost Macedonian provinces ended up in confrontation with the Mauryan empire. Herat and Hindukush became the northern and western frontiers of India.

Later, Parthia (250 BC) and Bactria (227 BC) asserted their autonomy and became independent of the Seleucid empire. While the Parthians steadily confined the Seleucids to the Mediterranean coast, the Greco-Bactrians penetrated the Hindukush to Kabul valley to establish an empire in the Indo-Gangetic plain (see Map 6.5). The Greco-Bactrians transferred their capital from the frontier in Bactria to Taxila in Punjab. This resulted in the alienation of the core area from the primary axis line of the empire. The political control of the frontier slackened and the core area became the target of invasion by the Central Asiatic tribes. The Hindukush, once again became the northern frontier of the Greco-Bactrian empire in India.

"The second century B.C. constituted a period of most important movements of the tribes bordering cultivated China, which had important reactions, not only in Central Asia but

After crossing the Indus river into Central Asia, the Mauryan empire forced the Seleucids to cede Herat, Kandahar, Baluchistan and Peshawar, see Olaf Caroe, The Pathans 500 B.C.-A.D. 1967 (London, 1964), p. 60. See also N.C. Chatterjee, Middle of Middle East, vol. I (New Delhi, 1973), p. 64.
far beyond its limits". For example, in Afghanistan, the successive waves of Central Asiatic migration had left "...its mark on the inhabitants...one way of life constantly overlying another...and due to its position...inhabitants bear marks of mingling civilization".

The Saka penetration (138 BC) of the frontier passed through the Balkh-Kabul-Peshawar axis. The westward thrust of the Saka was checked by the Parthians and was diverted to south towards Herat and Seistan. Expanding eastwards, they were united with the northern wave and established the Sacian empire in the Indo-Gangetic plain and the frontier (see Map), p. 30).

The nebulous condition of the frontier enabled the Kushans to conquer Bactria (140 BC). They later expanded to include the entire Greaco-Bactrian empire. The capital of the Kushan empire was transferred from the peripheral location in Bactria to a nodal point at Peshawar. This central location of the capital helped the Kushans to retain the western boundary of the Greaco-Bactrian empire with the Parthian and the Sassanian (226 AD) Persia (this western boundary coincided

3 Sykes, n. 1, pp. 97-98.

4 Caroe, n. 2, p. 25. Schurmann argues that these continual invasions of the tribes have superimposed the nomads over nomads and nomads over peasants in the region, H.F. Schurmann, The Mongols of Afghanistan: An Ethnography of the Moghals and Related People of Afghanistan (The Hague, 1962).
roughly with the present Afghan boundary)

The Epthalites (5th Century A.D.) overran the Kushan empire and established a short rule over the frontier region. They disrupted the Sassanian political and military control of the frontier. However, this invasion revived the Indian and Perso-Turkic alliance and ultimately led to the defeat of the Epthalites. Persia was able "to regain... after a lapse of 800 years the whole country of the Hindu-kush", but there remained pockets of Kushan principalities in the eastern frontier marches of the Sassanian empire.

These independent kingdoms in the western frontier of India not only restricted the early penetration of the Arabs but became the forerunners of the Afghan kingdoms. The kingdom of Kapisi encompassed the all mountainous area up to Bamian and Kandahar. It consisted of "...the states of Kabul, Jalalabad, Peshawar, Lamghan and Bannu...and practically the whole region of the Kabul valley from Bamiyan and Qandahar on the west to Bolan pass on the south...."

The second kingdom was that of Zabul which "...comprised the entire regions on and adjacent to the upper valley of the Helmand--(and Multan). It was bounded on the west by


Persia, on the east by Bannu, on the north by Kapisi and on the south by Sind". The territory of Sind comprised the entire lower Indus valley, Makran, Baluchistan and Helmand up to Zamindawar. So that on the eve of Arab expansion "...the river Helmand extending north-east right up to the Hindukush and southwest, along side the border of Baluchistan and Makran, to the sea-coast" formed the western boundary of India.

The locational factors in the development of political control had directly influenced the stability of the major empires. It further resulted in the isolation of continental areas from the main maritime axis. In time, they affected mutual separation, which led to political and economic dismemberment of the states.

With growing importance of transit centres as continental commercial areas in an unfavourable geographical environment, significance of location of axes was well understood. Yet, the presence of the centrifugal tendencies and dispersion

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., p. 8.
9 However, Alexander's conquest proved that a strong maritime base was an essential pre-requisite in building-up of the vast continental empires. His successors in Asia, the Seleucids failed to perceive this important fact. Their efforts in consolidating the continental region was based on strategic and military considerations which failed to take geographical and economic factors into considerations.
of major core areas on the periphery, enabled these transit centres to emerge as a dominant force in the continental politics. After the Arab invasion, these centres became the focal point of political and military struggle between various empires. The essential continental character of the major core areas, deprived of maritime influences, resulted in landlocked states, characterized by isolation and economic stagnation.

The Arab conquest of central and west Asia lasted for a short time. Though it was able to unite the continental and maritime axis, the disruptive forces emerged as a dominating factor in the politics of the region. The secondary axes of the earlier empires became the basis of new empires. (see Map 6B and 6C)

At this stage, the major lineaments of the Afghan history became apparent. The Hindukush was a barrier of movements as long as the power behind it had remained strong and stable. It was a strategic frontier which not only marked the division

10 The Arab penetration in Central Asia was confined to two essential axis of conquest: 1) through Nishapur to Herat, Merv and Balkh; and 2) through Zaranj to Bost on the confluence of Helmand and Arghandab rivers. The Arabs penetrated Kabul valley but could not occupy it effectively. Though Arab empire or the Caliphate lasted for some centuries, it was often engulfed with civil war. As distance remained primary factor for the political control of the peripheral areas of the empire, the physiographical attributes of the region (characterized by extreme aridity and with few oasis town regions) accentuated the separation of the continental areas from the core of the empire.
MAJOR STRUCTURE LINES OF AFGHAN HISTORY

PRIMARY AXES
A - HINDU KOSH
B - RIVER INDUS

SECONDARY AXES
1. BALKH-KABUL-PESHAWAR
2. HERAT-KANDAHAR
3. KABUL-MAZAR-IVAN-KANDAHAR

NUCLEAR REGIONS

ARABIAN SEA

Scale
0 100 200 300 400 500 KM
between the Central and South Asia but "...served as an ethnic breakwater by diverting the flood of the Central Asian migration...." This led to the superimposition of historical lines. These were roughly parallel to the Hindukush and influenced the nature and the degree of Afghan political control in the region. The important but secondary to the Hindukush was the Balkh-Kabul-Peshawar axis which connected the Indian subcontinent with Central Asia through Kabul valley.

Herat-Kandahar axis was a part of the continental axes established by the empires in West Asia. Its importance was enhanced by its location at the point of convergence of the major trade-routes from South Asia and the Orient. This enabled the rise of perennial regions. These became the important agricultural and commercial centres in the regions. Its stability, like other continental axes, was of primary concern for the existing states. Only after the emergence of the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis, that the stability of Herat-Kandahar line was reinforced. Nonetheless, the frontier politics and the evolution of the Afghan state began to revolve around this major axis (see Map No. 33).

The influence of natural environment has had direct bearing upon the political events during this period. The essential inference which could be adequately arrived at, was

that the extension of communication lines over the continental areas was responsible for encouraging the disruptive forces and helped the discontented elements of the empires to seize the isolated but rich areas of the continent. Each of the transit centres formed a part of the total complex, the physical separation from the main axis not only proved disastrous for these centres but also for the empires.

The Islamic Period and the Rise of Afghans

Frequently, the physical separation of the axes from one another, resulted in the loss of their strategic significance, and they succumbed to the pressures, which were exerted from continental heartland and maritime provinces on the axis. The lack of unity and coherence between the axes proved fatal for the various empires. The empires were broken up and divided among the major contestants of power in the region.

However, prior to the emergence of the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis, the inhabitants of the frontier became effectively powerful. They were said to have settled on "...Karamaj (the valley of Kurram), Peshawar (the valley of Peshawar), and Shinwaran (the Khyber pass)... in about 760 A.D. They confronted the Raja of Lahore and forced him to cede"...certain territories to Quikkers, and to the tribes of Khilji...

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(who were)... permitted by the Afghans to reside in the country of Lumgan...." Later, the Afghans subdued the provinces of Roh which extended from "Swat and Beejown, on the north, as far south as Seewy and Bhukkin in Sind; and from east to west, from Hussain Abdall to Kabul and Kandahar".

When the Ghaznavid empire (963 AD-1148 AD) was established (see Map No. 66), the Afghan tribes and their habitat became a formidable barriers as well as the threat to the empires in the east.... It was only under Mahmud that the various Afghan tribes were completely subjugated. They enrolled in the Ghaznavid army. This enabled the Afghans to emerge as a formidable military power - a power that could not establish itself in the frontier region.


14 Ibid., pp. 8-9. Raverty suggests that during entire course of history, Afghans were divided among themselves and were said to have inhabited the country of Roh, whose, "...eastern boundary extends to Kashmir, and its southern boundary to Baluchistan. It therefore, has been between Iran, Turan and Hind; and its people are termed Rohillas". H.G. Raverty, Notes on Afghanistan and Part of Baluchistan Geographic, Ethnographical and Historical Extracts from the Writings of Little Known Afghan and Tajik Historians, Geographers, etc. (London, 1880), p. 2. Hussain Khan, however, suggests that the Afghan tribes were in political alignment with the Raja of Lahore and in consequence their settlement enclosed..."wilayats of Lamghan, the vicinity of Ghaznah, and in the south incorporated the tracts of Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan..."; in addition to the area they had already occupied, Hussain Khan, n. 12, p. 193.
However, it was under the Ghorids (1173 AD-1206 AD) that the tribal military power of the Afghans was accentuated. The Afghan tribes became feudatories and directed their efforts in establishing an independent empire in India. This led to the consequent neglect of their homeland which coupled with inter and intra-tribal conflicts "...retarded the development of national consciousness and a sense of unity among the Afghans". Their homeland was invaded by Khwarezmians (who annexed Ghazni and Ghor in 1216) and later by the Mongols. The decay of the Mongol power in the frontier (1218 AD-1381 AD) resulted in the division of the country of the Hindu Kush "...in two along a line running roughly from the Aqchah to the Kalat-i-Ghilzai of today, with the western parts ruled by the Il-Khans, and the eastern parts by the Mongols..."

The rise of Timurids (1381-1507 A.D.) saw the reorientation of power balances in the region. It was during this period of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the continental power rivalry accentuated the large-scale migration of Afghan tribes to move northwards and eastwards towards the Trans-Indus region along the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis. It formed the political and geographical base for the present distribution of tribes (see Map No. 6D).

15 See Gregarian, n. 11, pp. 15-16.
16 Ibid., p. 16.
17 Fraser-Tytler, n. 5, p. 29 in the footnote.
The advent of sixteenth century saw the power struggle among the Persian, Moghul and Uzbek empires in the frontier region (see Map No. 7 and 6D). With the consolidation of the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis (Kandahar was conquered by Babur in 1522), the territory as far east as the Indus river was brought under the Afghan empire of Babur. This was a natural corollary derived from the position of the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis. It is significant to note that, though influenced by Herat-Kandahar axis and the Hindukush, this axis leaned more towards the Indus barrier. The perception of the importance of this axis had assured Babur of the trans-Indus territories. As it has been before, time and time again, this feature of the axis became more prominent.

By 1526, with the conquest of India "the country of the Hindu Kush... became... merely an outlying province of his empire..." In due course of time, the eastern Afghans revolted against the Mughal rule and, the frontier area became to be "...dominated by one or another Afghan chief, except for a brief period between 1552 and 1556 when... Humayun held Peshawar..." The period between 1539 and 1556 saw the

18 In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the loss of trans-Indus territories to Afghanistan was to have far-reaching politico-economic impact.

19 Fraser-Tytler, n. 5, p. 37.

revival of Afghan power under Sher Shah Suri. Due to mutual jealousy and local war, this short-lived empire of the Afghans gave way to the re-establishment of the Moghul rule under Humayun. However the eastern tribes, because of their location constituted a threat to the line of communication between the Moghul northwest frontier and the core-region at Delhi-Agra axis (see Map)\textsuperscript{20}.

The will and failure of efforts for Afghan independence in the east was also reflected in the west. Abdalis in the Kandahar region revolted against the Persian domination. Their defeat was largely responsible for their transfer from the sensitive frontier of Kandahar to Farah and Herat in the west by the Persians. These events indicate that the course of the frontier history began highlighting its inhabitants rather than those of the periphery. For, the moving away of Abdalis from Kandahar and its subsequent occupation by the Ghilzais, gave way (a century after) to the rise of the native power in the frontier region.

The Hindukush re-emerged as the north-western frontier of the Moghuls. The centralization of power and the slackening of control in the frontier region, enabled the tribes to emerge as the powerful claimants of the frontier and thereby weakening the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis.

\textsuperscript{21} Olaf Caroe, n. 2, pp. 138-9. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526. The Afghans who were a power in India for nearly three hundred years and rulers for a third of it, considered Moghuls as interlopers.
Emergence of Afghanistan as a State

The commencement of the eighteenth century was the signal for the downfall of the Saffavis in Persia and the decline of the Moghuls in India. The Moghul hold on Kabul region became ineffective. Its possession, like Persian hold on Kandahar region was held by sufferance and diplomacy which exploited the inter and intra-tribal rivalry which was largely influenced by the nature of the area they occupied and its politico-economic aspects.

The Ghilzais were successful in overthrowing the Persian yoke. Under Mir Waiz, they were able to establish an independent kingdom in 1709. This Afghan revolution was coterminous with the expansion of Russia and Turkey in this part of Asia, so that "...while Russia and Turkey were dismembering Persia in the north and west, Mahmud...successor of Mir Waiz, who embarked upon a conquest of Persia...was extending his conquest in the south..." and annexed all Persia to form the Ghilzai empire (see Map No. 28).

With the Ghilzai revolt in Kandahar, the Abdalis wrested Herat from the Persians. Soon they annexed Farah, Ghurian, Kuhsan, Bala-Murghab, Badghis and Obeh. They soon clashed with the Ghilzais. This clash was largely a confrontation of traditional values and means of livelihood. The

Ghilzais were nomadic and war-like, while the Abdalis were both nomadic and sedentary. With the limitations imposed by the geographical environment they inhabited, the tribes experienced a separate political development. Ghilzais were, therefore, alienated from the rest of the tribes. The persistence of this rivalry was significant in the later part of modern Afghan history. However, the dispute between the two, was settled upon the basis of the traditional boundary, on the Garmab stream: "...the country to the north and east of the stream was to be regarded as belonging to the Ghilzais and all that lay to the south and west fell to the Abdalis...."

The Ghilzai empire was short-lived. It gave evidence to the potential of the Afghan tribes to establish an empire and to remain as a constant threat in the frontier. These assumed importance with the re-emergence of Persian power and influence in the frontier.

With the consolidation of Persian empire, Abdalis were transferred en masse to Khorasan by Nadir Shah (later with the capture of Kandahar, the Ghilzais were forced to replace Abdalis in Khorasan). Nadir Shah envisaged conquering the eastern frontier of the Persian empire in 1735. By 1737, Farah Dilhak, Dilaram, Bost and Girishk were annexed and by 1738 Kandahar and the greater part of Baluchistan, the district

of Zamindawar and Kalat-i-Ghilzai had been added to the Persian empire.

The conquest of Kabul and its dependencies by Nadir Shah united the frontier region. The Moghul's hold on the frontier and trans-Indus tract was broken, establishing once again the Indus river as the eastern limit of the Persian empire (which was later taken by the Afghans as their eastern limit). This united frontier and the core regions were to form the basis of Afghanistan. It was also conterminous with the extent of the Afghan nation.

To Afghanistan the death of Nadir Shah, ushered the emergence of a national power. With their close association with Persia, there emerged a group of chiefs who were not only familiar with the process of nation-building and administration of the empire but also were aware of "weakness of Persia and India, which convinced them that the time had come to declare independence of their own country...."

But along with hatred for the foreign domination, inter-tribal and intra-tribal animosities along with the geographical isolationism gathered momentum as latent factors in the history of the new nation and were responsible for the territorial diminution of the Afghan empire. Henceforth, the frontier politics was dominated by the dynamics of tribal

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power. The characteristic features of the tribal politics and conflict situations were influenced both by the geographical environment and location. The conflict situations that emerged were: interpersonal conflict within tribes, intra-tribal group conflict (rivalries between sub-units of the same tribe), inter-tribal conflict between the tribes with similar historical and cultural developments, as well as tribes differing in culture, ethnic and linguistic background and, conflict between a tribe or tribes and the Central Government authority. As all the earlier empires in the frontier region had left their impression upon the inhabitants and the landscape, these became the undercurrents determining the development and stability of the Afghan political system.

Upon such a situation the need for founding a monarchical system became apparent in the frontier. Yet the selection of the monarch was much debated for "...never before had the Afghans to deal with a question so vital or so stirring...." However, Ahmad Khan of the Saddozai branch of the Abdalis, was elected as the king of the new nation by representatives of all the Afghan tribes including Baluchis, Hazaras and the Kazil Bash. The process of reconstruction and knitting together was the only alternative to consolidate


26 Ibid., p. 2.
power to maintain internal stability of the new nation.

Locating his capital in Durrani dominated Kandahar, Ahmad Shah consolidated the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar axis. The annexation of Baluchistan and Sind not only strengthened this axis but also enabled Ahmad Shah to conquer Khorassan and northern Afghanistan. In the process, the Afghan empire clashed with Bokhara. The settlement of the dispute between the two, led to the river Oxus being defined as the boundary. Although the Afghan empire was able to exert dominant political influence in the Indian subcontinent, the internal rebellions and their ruthless subjugation gradually began to undermine the stability of the Afghan confederation. The foreign conquests brought significant economic gains at first which kept the recalcitrant tribes under control. But frequent expedition to quell rebellion and in order to check the fissiparous tendencies within the confederation of tribes in different parts of the empire depleted the resources.

At the death of Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1773, the Afghan empire reached its zenith to extend "...over an area which

27 Mohammed Yunus, Frontier Speaks (Lahore, 1942), p. 48.

28 Annexation of Baluchistan was a strategical necessity. This was largely due to the fact that the (presence of) Bolam pass provides very easy access either way.

stretched from the Atrek river to Delhi and from the borders of Tibet to the Indian Ocean..." and lasted during the time of Timur Shah (1773-1793) transferred the capital of the empire from Kandahar to Kabul, for a better administrative control (see Map). The Afghan empire was short-lived (see Map). For within so short a time, the Afghans had not been able to acquire the stability of the purpose of the empire or were able to establish a lasting dynasty. The manifestations of the internal instability were evident from the wars of succession and the growth of powerful factions which culminated in the disintegration of the empire. However, by the end of eighteenth century, along with the advent of European involvement in Central Asia, these disruptive forces began to dominate the political climate of Afghanistan.

Anglo-Russian Involvement in Afghanistan

From the time of Timur Shah's death in 1793 to the downfall of the ruling house, Saddozais in 1818, the Afghan empire was shaken by the wars of succession. During Shah Zaman (1793-1800), Shah Mahmud (1800-1803 and 1809-1818) and Shah Shuja (1803-1809), the outlying regions became independent of Kabul. The Barakzais emerged as king-makers and were actively involved in the power struggle. The assassination of

30 Fraser-Tytler, n. 5, p. 64.
31 Ibid.
prominent Barakzai chiefs by Saddozais resulted in armed confrontation between the two tribes. The consequence of the continued state of anarchy was reflected in the emergence of powerful Sikh empire and the division of the Afghan empire among the major contestants of Barakzai and Saddozais tribes (see Map No. 8A).

As eastern and southern regions were dominated by the British, the Sikhs found it convenient to expand north and northwest into Afghan empire. They clashed with Afghans near Attock in 1813. The victory of the Sikhs "...was of utmost significance as the power of - √Afghans33 - collapsed altogether on the eastern side of the Indus". By 1823, the Sikhs were able to extend their empire up to Peshawar in west and Kashmir in the north and "...this action was to prove one of the most important events in the whole history of the frontier and shape events which have followed right up till today...." However Dost Mohammad Khan came to power in Kabul in 1826 and ushered the Mohammedzai (Barakzai) rule in Afghanistan. He was a ruler of an area which was less than a hundred miles


radius from Kabul. His policy was to resume control of Afghanistan proper up to river Indus. The frequent Afghan retaliation to the revolts in the eastern part of their empire in the late eighteenth century, indirectly helped the British to replace the Moghul authority and consolidate their possession in India in the nineteenth century. The continued state of anarchy in Afghanistan, and too many claimants for the Afghan throne and the powerful Sikh empire, were an added impetus to the British to extend their political and military influence in the northwest.

In their effort to regain the Afghan throne, the deposed Afghan rulers allied themselves with the peripheral states. In the process, they not only relinquished the trans-Indus territories but also introduced the European element in the Afghan political situation. This resulted in the tripartite agreement of 1838 between the British, the Sikhs and Shah Shuja. Shah Shuja confirmed the trans-Indus territories including Peshawar region as a part of Sikh empire (see Map-No.7D). The first Afghan war of 1839-42 ended in a catastrophe for the British. It partially united the Afghan tribes to oppose the foreign aggression.

Meanwhile, by a series of treaties, Russia was not only able to annex the Persian central Asian possessions but also exercised effective influence at the Persian capital. They encouraged the Persian designs on Herat.

Between 1843 and 1849, the British extended their
RUSSIAN EMPIRE

BUKHARA

TURKOMANS

PERSIAN EMPIRE

BALUCHISTAN

SIND

ARABIAN SEA

THE EASTERN DOMINIONS

THE BRITISH EXPANSION IN THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER 1880

EXTENT OF AMIR DOST MOHAMMAD KHANS KINGDOMS IN 1863

IN 1863-1860
frontiers from river Sutlej to the present border of Afghanistan including trans-Indus region and Sind. The return of Dost Mohammad Khan to Kabul in 1843 was a beginning of a period of consolidation for Afghanistan. With the suspension of the Russian advance in Central Asia (due to the Crimean War), Dost Mohammad not only entered into treaty agreement with the British but also established stability in the country. By the time of his death in 1863, Dost Mohammad conquered Kandahar, Herat, cis-Oxus territories and Badakhshan.

The war of succession which followed the death of Dost Mohammad Khan, again divided the country. It was not until 1869, that Sher Ali was able to re-establish central authority in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, there was a revival of Russian expansion in Central Asia, resulting in the absorption of various Central Asian khanates to their empire. The British, aware of the Russian threat to their Indian possession negotiated the limits of the northern frontiers of Afghanistan with Russia. Accordingly, the Anglo-Russian boundary agreement defined the southern limit of Russian expansion and the consequent definition of the Afghan northern frontier in 1873. Thus, the definition of the northern and north-western boundaries of Afghanistan was the first step in delimiting the exact extent of the inner Central Asian frontiers of Afghanistan. It began to give shape to Afghanistan as a political unit. However, the gradual worsening of relations between Afghanistan and Britain culminated in the Second Afghan War of 1879-80. It resulted in
treaty of Gandamak of 1879 which deprived Afghanistan of contiguous territories. With the rise of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, the frontier state of Afghanistan became stable and for the first time in its history, it emerged as an independent political state in the frontier.

The events of nineteenth century in Afghanistan suggest the ebb and flow of political fortunes of the inhabitants. This time, it was European states who began to dominate the region. Engulfed in civil war, the Afghan tribes failed to perceive the potential threat posed by the expansion of Britain and Russia in Central Asia. With the loss of fertile areas on the periphery of the Afghan empire, Afghanistan experienced political and economic stagnation. This coupled with internal dissension enabled Britain and Russia to dictate terms to Afghanistan. Though the geographical environment thwarted effective occupation of the area, it was strategic and political considerations which compelled Britain and Russia to define Afghanistan as a buffer state with definite territorial limits.

It can, then, be said that the historical processes and geographical environment have persistently obstructed the establishment of effective central authority in Afghanistan. As noted earlier in the chapter, each region experienced a separate historical and political development. The disruptive

35 The evolution of international and national boundaries of Afghanistan is discussed in detail in chapter III.
forces emanating from the tribal, regional and ethnic loyalties, had repeatedly undermined the stability of the state. In the process, various authoritarian regimes struggled to achieve the basic pre-requisite of the political development of Afghanistan - pacification of the recalcitrant tribes and minimization of disruptive elements aided by geographical environment as well as by deliberate and effective extension of central authority.

Politico-Geographical Framework for the Establishment of Central Government

The unitary character of the Afghan political structure was primarily the consequence of the interaction between the historical processes and political actions upon the tribal polity. This interaction created a unique cultural landscape, where they acted as a geographical agent of change. As each of the different regions of Afghanistan experienced a separate historical growth, the Afghan rulers were compelled to realize the geographical character of the political area and political action groups. In the process, it has resulted in the recognition of the inherent differences. Thus the unifying nation-oriented aspect of the Afghan political system can be viewed as paramount where matters of national interests are considered or concerned, yielding the heterogeneous state into a single whole.

The mingling of various races in the frontier state enabled the inhabitants, both to assimilate the different
cultures and to develop a distinct political and cultural characteristics. It was different, yet remained under the direct and constant influences of the neighbouring states. As a consequence, there emerged an important difference in the political geography of the frontier state - the physical and cultural division of the kindred inhabitants between the different political sovereignties. With such differences as created by this division, the frontier inhabitants were compelled to develop the political conception and ideologies upon the basis of the limits and moderation imposed by the natural environment they inhabited.

However, this latter aspect led to the individual political development of the inhabitants and showed a marked contrast between themselves. This resulted in the rise of republican and the monarchical sentiments among the inhabitants. It encouraged the tendencies towards equivocal loyalties as well as the tendency to shift allegiance to the winning side at the moment of crisis. The structure of this dual political institutions in the frontier was based on two levels of authority - tribal groups and the tribal leadership - where the regional and often personal interests influenced the political actions. Although the sense of kinship was strong, other forces such as military and political power, tribal interest or the opportunity for individual aggrandizement was perhaps stronger and consequential to the evolution and stability of the Afghan political system (which clearly
indicated the maintenance of internal order through coercive authority supported by physical forces).

Another important characteristics in the political development was, that the political frontiers of the tribal groups did not define their territories (see Ch. I). The similarities in race, language, social organization, economic activities and group loyalty suggested the existence of one single but divided whole. In a wider perspective, the implication of the infighting amongst the tribes for space was rather superficial in comparison to the confrontation of two major tribal confederations - the Abdalis and the Ghilzais. The political relation between the tribes, therefore, depended much upon the degree of their respective political maturity and military strength.

Under such circumstances, it was apparent that the Afghan geography recognized certain areal characteristics and differences in existence at the time of emergence of Afghanistan as an independent state. The areal differences indicated, that the consolidation of the frontier state was precarious. While it consisted of tribes whose political power and authority (though independent and autonomous), it became secondary to the centralized power structure. The policies of unification pursued by the Afghan monarchs can be considered important because it was for the first time that the Pushtun element was able to assert its supremacy in the frontier politics.
Political divisions of the state became the primary agents of geographical change and owe much of their character to their history. The separatist tendencies and the diverse political ideologies of the tribes, in themselves, indicated the significance of the external forces in deciding major issues within the state. These, along with the other centrifugal factors were at once apparent in the geography of the state.

It is clear (as will be seen later in the chapter) that the factors of language, race, religion and nationality had failed to produce a lasting unity among the Afghan tribes. Instead, it had strengthened the urge for the independent tribal existence. An obvious corollary, then is that there were few grounds on which the Afghan state could have been firmly established. It was the strategic and political significance of its location that enabled the external forces to delimit a frontier zone as a buffer between two contesting politico-territorial systems. Apart from this recognition of the independent frontier zone (though the threat of absorption always persisted), it was the character of the Afghan leadership which provided any semblance of assertion of power by the inhabitants in the frontier state.

As a consequence, the diverging economic interests of the different regions of the state coincided with the neighbouring spheres of political and historical influences. It imposed restraints upon the government of the state. The
implementation of the various political and economic policies in modern Afghanistan suggests an absence of the perception of this phenomenon. It had resulted in an acute regional imbalance and left the political dynamics of the state in a highly volatile state.

The core of the matter, however, rests on the fact that the tribal units were essentially political units. It was this consciousness that helped to mould the regional character of the inhabitants. The modern political divisions have replaced the tribal units. This development later assumed importance in the political relationships and equations within the state. Though, these divisions did not form coherent social and economic units, they marked the sphere of influence both of the state and that of the adjacent states. This had introduced or rather enabled the external factors to get well entrenched in the Afghan political system.

Impact of Tribalism on the Formation of Central Government

The relationship between the political phenomenon of the Afghan state and its ethnic composition had significant impact upon the frontier politics. Although these coincided in the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-1773), the consequent

The study of the political influence on the distribution of the geographical phenomena within the state regions of Afghanistan cannot be carried out without recourse to the historical explanation in the political context. See also Benjamin, Akzin, State and Nation (London, 1964).
political events not only suggested the dominant role of tribal power but also the role of external influences in defining the concept of the Afghan state. Even if assuming the fact that the emergence of independent Afghanistan in 1747 as a centralizing factor in regional politics, the duality of the power base and the consequent instability was reflected in the location of the capital at Kandahar. Kandahar was the spatial centre of Durrani power which in itself was more of an arrangement of space to achieve the political domination of the state (see Ch. I). 

The heterogeneous character of the state minimized the area of influence and compelled the Durrani rulers to locate a second capital at Peshawar. This procedure facilitated equal domination and asserted the Pushtun hegemony in the state. However, during the reign of Timor Shah (1773-1793), the transfer of capital to Kabul was an important step in the political evolution of the state. It indicated an effort to break away from the tribal influences.

The political conditions on which these were exercised reflected the overt centralization of political power and organization. The early Afghan rulers had often associated themselves, either by distributing the political power within the tribes as had Ahmad Shah and Timor Shah or disassociated them as had Shah Zaman (1793-1800). The difficulties of centralization were revealed by constricting limitations of the ruling dynasty in relation to space, despite the political
means of suppressing separatist movements within the state. In this set up, even the largest political entities such as Durrani and Ghilzai were affected by discontinuity and gradual slackening of unity.

With the introduction of external forces in the frontier politics, the Afghan state was divided into several political regions (see Map No. 8A) as in the time of Dost Mohammad (1826-1840 and 1841-1863), but these territorial segmentations and reduction of geographical area did not alter the nature of tribal power in the frontier politics. It was, then, evident that Afghan state was never politically homogeneous and the ruling elite compromised with the regional separatism and external threat (as was evident from the loss of trans-Indus region to Pakistan).

This suggests that regional variation clearly indicated the limitations imposed upon the central administrative system. The fragility of the tribal territorial base and their physical vulnerability, therefore, resulted in a dynamic political organization.

Establishment of Central Government

The presence of heterogeneous elements in the frontier region, provided Ahmad Shah the only alternative of setting up

37 Poullada, n. 25, see Chapters I, VIII and IX.
a 'Federative Republic' (confederation of tribes); thereby establishing the Pushtun hegemony and its related weaknesses in the frontier politics. To free the new nation from the consequences of internal political turmoil, Ahmad Shah, with the backing of strong Sadhozai-Barakzai alliance, followed a policy of reconciliation with the various tribes. In the process, the main elements of state power was divided and distributed within the ruling dynasty. Apart from military levies, the tribal administration was left relatively untouched.

As long as the Afghan empire remained under the leadership


39. The total population of Afghanistan estimated at 11 million is divided as follows in terms of tribal origin:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pushtuns</td>
<td>4-5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajiks</td>
<td>2-3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbeks</td>
<td>1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimaks</td>
<td>.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazaras</td>
<td>.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmen</td>
<td>.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11-13 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quoted in Poullada, n. 25, pp. 14-15 (no date for the above data has been given by the author). The region-wise distribution of the Pushtun tribes is as follows: 70 per cent in southern part, 72 per cent in Kandahar, 57 per cent in Kabul and between 11 per cent and 27 per cent in northern provinces where they are outnumbered by Tajiks and Uzbeks. M.G. Aslanov et al, "Ethnography of Afghanistan: A Russian Study", in G. Grassmuck et al, Afghanistan: Some New Approaches (Ann Arbor, 1969), p. 13. This distribution along with approximately six million trans-Indus Pushtuns formed an important element in the Afghan politics since 1747.

40. Sykes, no. 1, p. 351.
of Ahmad Shah, the economic and political factors remained the basis of relationship between the Central Government and the tribes. In order to maintain the internal political order, Ahmad Shah retained the absolute control of the civil, political and military affairs of the empire. He allocated the important offices of the state as hereditary privileges among the tribal chieftains. The resultant accretion of power and influence enabled the tribal leaders to emerge as powerful feudal chieftains whose territorial base became the rival for political power vis-a-vis centre. The Central Government could only extend weak political control over the distant provinces.

However, the regional administration of these provinces was largely left to the local tribal leaders who owed allegiance to the king. The unity of the heterogeneous empire with practically no transport and communication linkages was maintained only by the strong military organization. This was focussed around the strong tribal backing of the king as well as by the legal, religious and social reforms. These reforms, though, did not encroach upon the traditional tribal values of the inhabitants gave legality and moderation in the exercise of state administration.

This interregnum enabled the tribes to strengthen their pyramidal authority pattern. By which, they often challenged the Central Government whenever it was weak or engaged in conquest. This was, despite the political climate of the frontier, the independent characteristics of the tribes (due to distinct environmental conditions, see Ch. I) had established the necessary gradients for continued insurrections. It was possible by the territorially based groups, the tribes, that were armed militarily as well as politically. They were oriented towards the overthrow of any government that did not meet their viewpoint. Respect for reconciliation was often abrogated and the tribal intransigence came to the fore to settle the disputes.

With the decline of the empire and the consequent rise of peripheral powers in the frontier, deprived the empire with the valuable revenue from the fertile districts of the eastern frontier. It also undermined the foundation of the Central Government. With no institutionalized army organization, the process of realignment of major political forces of the empire resulted in the alienation of the tribes from the Central Government. This ultimately led to political divisions within the ruling elite. The attempted abolition of the hereditary posts by Shah Zaman was taken by the tribes as refutation and derecognition of the autonomous character of

the tribes and called for immediate tribal reprisal and retaliation. The steady disintegration of the Afghan confederacy was overtaken by clannish rivalry which culminated in the emergence of regional pressure groups (see Map No. 8A). The interplay of these pressure groups and the external forces began to highlight the internal political dynamics of the state.

The tribal intransigency was struggle for political domination between the rival political centres of the tribes and the Central Government. In addition, as the political and territorial impact of the external forces restricted the sphere of tribal activity within the traditional territorial limits, the fissiparous tendencies created a highly volatile political environment.

The manifestation of the political struggle between the central authority and the tribes acquired a spatial character. This tension-ridden confrontation politics was a challenge to the political leadership. It was aimed not at changing the system but at realignment of political power between the constituent elements of the state (as indicated by various civil wars, rebellions and seizure of power by Bacha-i-Sakao in 1929). For primarily, the underlying fact of the independent existence of tribal (political) systems was the recognition of the inherent competition for power and position which presupposed or was equivalent to tribal reaction to the policies of the Central Government. This dual character of the Afghan political system was, therefore, a diffusion of political power, where both the central authority and the tribes strove to retain their influence. Social cohesion and unity of heterogeneous regions of the state was transitory and remained a suspect. This added a new function - that of political power with unequal relation within and between the inhabitants of the state.
situation in the state. Though Dost Mohammad (1835-1839 and 1842-1863) united the country, he retained the traditional division of the structure of the government. Concentrating much of the state power in his hands, he had created no permanent administrative institution upon which the unity of the country could be maintained. The political stability of the country depended upon the integrity and cohesiveness of the ruling elite. The absence of it resulted in disunity and diminution of the territory.

It was under Abdur Rahman (1881-1901) that an attempt was made to break away from the traditional pyramidal authority pattern to the hierarchical political relationship. Realizing the role of disruptive forces in undermining the Central Government, Abdur Rahman institutionalized the bureaucracy and army and declared the monarchy to be hereditary. Developing the strategy for nation-building, he proceeded to weaken the traditional territorial pressure groups and supplanted them with elements strengthening the central control over the distant and isolated provinces. The external forces also played into his hands and enabled him to exercise the state jurisdiction on a definite territorial extent.

The hierarchical transformation, however, was challenged by the tribes, who revolted and attempted to establish their autonomy. The tribal and regional unrest was put down ruthlessly and it became possible to re-establish central authority
in the predominantly tribal areas. This deliberate extension of the civil power of the Central Government was backed by the policy which aimed at the integrity and cohesiveness of the monarchy and the royal army.

Abdur Rahman managed to balance the internal disruptive forces with the external political pressures to maintain the stability of the Afghan state. Habibullah (1901-1919) retained the same pattern of political relationship but could not retain the authoritarian grip over the state. The laxity in the central administration not only resulted in the development of factions within the Central Government but also saw the rise of three pressure groups within the orbit of the ruling elite. Unable to restrain the influences of the pressure groups, and Habibullah's inactivity and failure to take advantage of the World War I, paved way for his weakened position at home. He gradually delegated more of the monarchical


47 Ibid. The three pressure groups which emerged were: (1) The Nusahiban group; (2) The Tarzi group; and (3) The Charki group.

48 The revolt of the Khost tribes caught the Central Government unawares. The unprepared character of the army to
authority to the people around him. Though the tribal threat remained latent, these events induced the pressure groups within the ruling elite, army and other centres of local power to emerge. The interaction of these forces and the consequent effect upon the political stability compelled Nadir Shah to restore the totalitarian political order of Abdur Rahman.

Amanullah (1919-1929) emerged as a king with much of the fabric of the central authority weakened and divided between the various localized centres of power. The ascendency of these disruptive elements was halted by the War of Independence of 1919. The new independent nation succumbed to the sudden exposure to the western influences. It not only undermined the effectiveness of the central authority but also exposed the country to new dangers. Amanullah's political, military and religious reforms were designed to broaden take a decisive action was compensated by rising of a tribal lashkar comprising the Sulaiman Khel, Shinwari, etc., who suppressed the revolt. This suggested that within the Unitary government, there were factions whose role ultimately proved decisive. This is clearly illustrated by the military coups of 1973 and 1978 in Afghanistan.


50 The assassination of King Habibullah was followed by serious political differences between Kabul and Jalalabad. The resultant political instability was characterized by widespread civil disturbances spreading from the eastern provinces to Herat, Mazai-i-Sharif and other parts of the country.

the basis of loyalty from the royal family to nation. It was for secularization of the public life to rationalization of the authority pattern and structure. But, Amanullah had neither the required trained personal to balance the impact of the political modernization upon the administrative structure nor had adequate support and power base to enforce and implement the reforms. The factional confrontation not only exploited the inert weaknesses of the Central Government but also encouraged the traditional social forces to resist the modernizing influences of the innovative policies of the Central Government.

Amanullah's effort to establish the constitutional government was perceived by the dissident factions as a threat to their autonomy and traditional power. "...to counter the impact these...political reforms which strengthened the administrative grip of the Central Government on the tribal areas, by measures aimed at removal or control of corruption and special privilege...", the perception of threat on the part of the dissident groups transformed itself into an alliance with the religious leaders who together in 1929 executed a general tribal uprising and rebellion to oust Amanullah.

52 See for details of failure of Amanullah's reforms, Poullada, n. 25, pp. 147 and 143-58; and Fraser-Tytlter, n. 5, pp. 204-14.

53 The tribes that delivered coup d'état to the Amanullah's regime, apart from the Kohistanis, were also responsible (partially) in helping Nadir Shah in restoring the Central Government. The relative strength of clans is as
In tradition-oriented Afghanistan, the religious leaders (the Mullahs), held a position which was both political and sacred. It was through their mediation that the predominantly tribal society settled its disputes with one another. It was due to the important role of the mullahs follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Clans</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wardak</td>
<td>Mayars, Mirkhels, Nuris</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmand</td>
<td>Salarzais, Mandozai</td>
<td>65,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shinwari</td>
<td>Sangu Khel, Sipai Khel</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khugyani</td>
<td>Mullagori, Khurbun and Sherzad</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangal</td>
<td></td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khostwal</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waziri</td>
<td>Darwesh Khel</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaji</td>
<td></td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barachi</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakar</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurbaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tani, Zadran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakmani and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukhibil</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Each of the tribal group had distinct territorial limits which were defined and demarcated as follows: "Let us take a case where both sides have at last agreed to this expedient. Some leading of the one or another side is chosen and accepted by both of the sides for the ordeal. ...with the Koran firmly held on his bare head and with bare feet the oath taker steps forward, but not until every care has been taken to ensure that no loophole has been left for him for saving of the soul from the sin of perjury. The Koran must be a genuine Koran. It must be held on his bare head, with nothing intervening and the soles of his feet must be both bare and clean, with no particles of his own tribal soil adhering thereto. Thus prepared the oath taker steps out and the course he follows becomes the boundary line of the tribal territory". Quoted in Sykes, n. 5, vol. II, p. 226.
in the internal politics of the state, that the successive Afghan rulers made futile attempts to extend their control over the religious affairs of the state. The traditional separatism of the tribes and resistance of the mullahs to centralized political control was based upon the political and economic advantages and manoeuvrability. Amanullah, unlike Abdur Rahman made a futile attempt to break away from this traditional influence without considering the conservative religious institutions allied to religious justification for tribal opposition to the national unity.

The primary cause of the rebellion was not the innovative policies of Amanullah but general tribal revolt against the central political domination. It indicated the inability of the tribal society to assimilate the new social forces generated by the modernization. Geographically, the nature of the physical terrain had its share of responsibility to the unstable political conditions in the state. It not only hampered the effective central administration of the distant provinces but also obstructed the development of transportation and communication. The cost of construction often prohibited and surpassed the need and in Amanullah's case the plans for

55 See Poullada, n. 25, pp. 185-6 and 169-71.
56 Ibid., pp. 5-10.
57 Ibid., p. 263.
such development were badly managed and ill-conceived. This was the result of the succession of events, actions, or operations (having unhistorical antecedents) that Amanullah failed to employ while attempting to establish a change in the existing political system. These forces included political processes and the geographical space. A dissection of Amanullah's political decisions reveals that the political transactions in the Afghan landscape failed to perceive the influence of societal forces like customs, religion, fears and aspirations.

Yet, it can be argued that Amanullah's transaction of modernization was influenced by the societal forces, perception or locational perspective themselves. Initially, they affected a limited political action area to which they immediately related. It gradually spread to include the broad landscape of Afghanistan. This, then, suggests, that the geographical dimension of transactions had involved the territorial nature of tribal nationalism only in reference to their distinct spatial form and content.

On assumption of power, Nadir Shah (1929-1933) began reconstructing the infrastructure of the state. Centralizing the main springs of authority within the family, he took the best of the tribal, religious and dynastic traditions to fuse into a clear conception of state and the component parts of the government. Strengthening the integrity and cohesiveness

58 Ibid., pp. 131-42.

of the monarchy and the army, he began to revitalise the country. To extend the effective control over the remote areas, the Central Government began improving the transportation and communications system and thereby connecting the different but remote areas of the state with the capital, Kabul.

Nevertheless, Afghan political pattern soon began to indicate the nodal points of potential power, which the ruling elite clearly recognized and perceived in the form of a challenge. These localized centres of power and influence had penetrated the civil and military organizations of the state. They included: the Royal families, the military forces, the private economic interest groups, the landowning class, the Loe Jirgah, the tribal leaders, religious leaders, and western educated professional class in the government and private organizations.

The dynamic interaction of these pressure groups had resulted in the development of conflict situation "...over the formulation of policy and the control of the government...." With the growing opposition of the pressure groups for rapid economic development, the Central Government resorted harsh and repressive policies which ultimately resulted in the


resignation of Mohammad Hashem Khan, Prime Minister (1933-1946). Shah Mahmud, succeeding Hashem Khan as the Prime Minister formulated basic changes in the domestic policies, which balanced both the internal and external pressures on the state. These changes were "...liberalization of political activity, rapid economic development with the American aid and assistance and, the issue of the trans-Durand line Pushtuns...." The opposition liberal movement gained momentum and soon posed the threat to the survival of the Monarchy. The royal family reacted by imposing bans on various political organizations that had emerged and replaced or rather reasserted the leadership elements of the royal family. This singular weakness in the Afghan politics was reflected in the conflict of national interests between the elite and the tribes. The tribes perceived it as a threat to their independence.

Series of external events forced Afghanistan to reorient its domestic political structure. Its failure to obtain military assistance and recognition of the eastern border compelled Afghanistan to seek aid from the Soviet Union. Military and economic assistance not only strengthened the Central Government position in relation to the tribes but enhanced the ability of the Central Government to extend effective control over the remote areas. The construction of transportation and communication networks and the extension of innovative

62 Ibid., p. 152.
63 Donald N. Wilber, n. 59, pp. 147-8.
policies was backed by strong and modern military forces, leaving little scope for tribal resistance.

The Daud Government (1953-63) breaking away from the traditional pattern of political relationship was able to bring large-scale changes in the Afghan society. But, within the leadership and ruling elite, these developed deep fissures regarding the policies of the state; for it proved to be ineffective to cope with either the growing internal political unrest or adjust itself to the changing trends of the external influences. However, the reforms carried out by the Daud Government resulted in a rapid transformation of national life that lacked any definite ideological perspective. The power elites, therefore, presented a mixture of traditionalism and modernism which unlike the tribes, was in no way influenced by the geographical environment. This feature of the Afghan politics had indirect influence upon the power relationships both within and outside the state.

The resignation of the Daud Government ushered an era when Zahir Shah (for the first time since he ascended the throne in 1933) began to wield direct as well as indirect influences upon the structure and the function of the government.

These events suggest that the concentration of the

64 "...Daud's seizure of power was motivated by an increasing dissatisfaction with the country's foreign policy and its internal rate of economic development...." Reardon, n. 39, p. 156.
modernizing elite in the urban areas had significant impact upon the political development. The impact of the various reforms was first felt by the urban elites who in their mixture of foreign influences determined the nature of opposition to the regime. To these, the peripheral and distant local regional elites formed a formidable barrier to the effectiveness of the state's development programmes. One such instance was indicated by the relative position of eastern part in the national politics. Although, it formed the basic foundation of power relationships, the entire region was in political flux. As a result, it failed to share the political development with rest of the country.

These variations and regional inequality called for a change of policy that aimed at uniform political representation and economic development under the guidance of the monarchy. The innovative policies, however, tended to replace the vertical kinship and ethnic affiliations by the horizontal class divisions which was gradually beginning to establish itself in the Afghan society. This division tended to participate and figure more and more in the national politics and by their reactions have also influenced the regional as well as international aspects of the state.

These horizontal class divisions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horizontal group</th>
<th>No. of individuals*</th>
<th>Who are members</th>
<th>Vertical elements in horizontal group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Elite</td>
<td>2-3 thousands</td>
<td>King, royal family and top government officials, wealthy merchants, large landowners, tribal chiefs</td>
<td>Sunis, Pushtuns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intelligent­</td>
<td>8-10 thousands</td>
<td>Higher ranks of government employees, professional men, teachers, students, literati, religious leaders, army officers</td>
<td>Substantial Tajiks, predominantly Sunni but some Shia, e.g., Qizilbash, Pushtuns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Urban middle class</td>
<td>80,000 to 1 million</td>
<td>Lower civil servants, shopkeepers, scribes, accountants, artisans, literate religious leaders, etc.</td>
<td>Predominantly Tajik but many Uzbeg and Pushtuns, Some Turkmen and even Hazaras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lower class</td>
<td>8 million</td>
<td>Factory and semi-skilled workers</td>
<td>Tajiks, Hazaras and Pushtuns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Proletariat</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Enlisted men in armed forces, police and gendarmerie</td>
<td>Some Turks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Military and Police, etc.</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Cultivators</td>
<td>7 million</td>
<td>Small landowners, peasants, and semi-nomads</td>
<td>Pushtuns, Tajiks, Uzbegs, Hazaras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Nomads</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>Pure nomads, non-cultivators</td>
<td>Pushtuns, some Turkmen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All population figures are estimates—no Census ever taken.*
Yet, the development resulted in the perpetuation of conflict between the traditionalists and modernists. In the traditional society, this confrontation brought major changes in the value system and priorities. These new social forces, under the influence of the geographic environment not only altered the political landscape of the state but also indicated the dynamic nature of the transitional society - full of uncertainties, problems and change. The modernization programmes surfaced many of the latent forces which between the period 1963 and 1973 attempted to seek a balance.

The contrasting value-system of the Afghan society, then and now, is as follows:

**Comparison of Social and Cultural Values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afghan traditional society</th>
<th>Afghan &quot;Modern&quot; Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Primary loyalty to vertical group</td>
<td>1. Growing loyalty to horizontal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strict adherence to orthodox religion</td>
<td>2. Broader interpretive attitude towards religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Look inward for solution of problems to family, clan or tribe</td>
<td>3. Look outward to government authority for solution of problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Status depends upon ancestors, wisdom, piety, age, wealth, power</td>
<td>4. Status depends more on education (degrees), occupation, position in government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Class distinction not very sharp</td>
<td>5. Class distinctions become more pronounced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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66   Ibid., p. 36.
Afghan traditional society

6. Outlook is rural and self-sufficient
7. Cultural emphasis is on national, historic and heroic themes - mysticism, poetry, romanticism, informal education
8. Social order tends to be safe, static, orderly
9. Individual is centre of concentric kinship rings and feels secure
10. Emphasis on co-operation with family, clan, tribe, etc.

Afghan "Modern" Society

6. Outlook is urban and interdependent
7. Cultural emphasis is on knowledge of world - scientific, technical accomplishments, formal education
8. Society is in flux - uncertainty, movement, change
9. Individual on his own ... feels rootless, insecure
10. Emphasis on competition between and among economic groups

Contemporary Political Development

With the resignation of the Daud Government in 1963 the leadership element passed to the non-ruling elites. This was made possible by the opposition groups, of which more than 90 per cent were employed in the government sector (These opposition groups included highly skilled manpower). They represented an ideological orientation which envisioned the establishment of the republican form of government. But the collusion between the royalists and the modernists resulted in the formulation of a new constitution, replacing the 1931 constitution. This new constitution not only made provision for the political
parties to emerge but also excluded the royal family from participating in the state's politics.

As a result new pressure groups emerged which began to dominate the political scene. They were: the conservative go-slow group of the traditional religious leaders, the laissez-faire economy group headed by Bank-i-Milli, the national party, the royalists supporting the King's progressive policies, a small group favouring public sector development and finally the Marxists. The party movements arose around the monarchists the republican constitutionalists and the leftists. The resultant struggle for supremacy enabled the monarchy to assert its absolute control over the government. Military forces remained the bulwark of state's power and authority and it effectively demonstrated its capabilities and potentials to suppress the threats emanating from the political unrest to the regime's hegemony. With guaranteed internal security and stability of the regime the state was continuously pressurized to preserve and strengthen the officers' corps which had acquired the modernizing perspective and roles.

The revolution was, in fact, the expression of masses against the policies of the monarchy and for their rights to participate in the national economic and political activities. Slow rate of economic development, however, enabled a prominent

middle-class to emerge in the national political scene. This development was significant, for it began to erode the power-base of the essentially feudal and tribal society. Their rising aspiration was perceived by the monarchy as potential threat to their stability. The monarchy ruthlessly suppressed these movements. The period, 1963-1973, saw the see-saw tussle between the monarchy on the one side and the national political elites on the other. The period was characterized by political instability and consequent economic stagnation.

The causes of the revolution can clearly be discerned and can be summed as:

1) That the rivalry for power between the monarchy (feudal), the tribal and the urban elites reached a point of

These clearly demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the existing system of administration and the tendencies of the monarchical environment upon which the major political decisions of the state were formulated. It also indicated the role of traditional elite groups and their effort to retain power through the instrument of monarchy. They were both incompatible with the changing trend of the political groups and lacked the openness of a system which accepted structural changes. Therefore, the necessity of evolving a new form and shape of administration, giving due recognition to the existing local systems, was acutely felt - on which the monarchy was hesitant to take any definite stand. Further, to give a formal shape to the changes in administration of the state, the amendment of constitution, introduction of electoral laws and party system in the politics of the state received only lukewarm reception. See R.P. Pradhan, "First General Election in Afghanistan", Foreign Affairs Reports (New Delhi), no. 15, 1966; and "Growing and Working of Parliamentary Institutions in Afghanistan", Afro-Asian and World Affairs (New Delhi), Spring 1966.
no return: where none was ready to compromise (in other words, it became a conflict between the traditional rural base of power and the newly emergent urban centres. This was evident from the nature of 1973 revolution, which instead of having tribal background, was based on urban concentration of political power.

2) That the slow pace of modernization was neither compatible with the growing needs of the state for it was traditional in character nor was it adequate to prepare a proper infrastructure for economic and social development of the state.

3) That the perpetuation of the internal political struggle and the active involvement of the monarchy created an atmosphere which not only undermined the stability of the state but also enabled the peripheral political pressures to exert dominant influence over the state.

However, on the face of it, the 1973 coup had a familiar trend - that of state power remaining within the ruling Mohammadzai dynasty. It is clear that politically, the monarchy was compelled to yield to democratize the state (transit difficulties with Pakistan and consequent economic stagnation were also equally responsible) and introduced a constitution (October 1974) which recognized the universal suffrage. It meant the sharing of power between the King, the executive and

69 See President Daoud's Speech on First Anniversary of Republic in Afghanistan in Afghanistan Republic Annual (Kabul, 1975), pp. 79-89.
the legislature. As the King had retained the power to appoint the prime minister, there emerged a frequent confrontation between the executive and legislature. The resultant political instability was evident from the fact that in a decade (1963-1973) there were six prime ministers (apart from the interim cabinet in 1963-64), all of them were unable to stabilize the political climate of the state.

The intervention of the army in 1973, probably restricted the decay of the political system. It can also be taken as a justification for the revolution. For, it is suggestive that the army (as in 1973) had consistently remained as the bulwark for political stability of the state. Their rebellion (unlike that during Amanullah's reign) under the committed leadership of Sardar Daud Khan illustrated adequately the dynamic character of the polity of the state. Although there were initial oppositions from the forces loyal to the monarchy viz., the members of the legislature, civil and army officials and religious leaders, the revolution succeeded in establishing itself and in expressing the basic republican characteristic of the inhabitants (the majority inhabitants, the Pushtuns).

Nevertheless, acceding to the fact that, there existed a distinct absence of educated class, the new regime emphasized on large-scale economic and social change with supporting administrative structure in the country. Although it is early to suggest the achievements of the regime, it is evident that
the land reforms and economic policies have been a definite attempt to diversify the areas of potential influence and involvement of the people in national economic and political activities.

In effect the 1973 revolution proved that the allegiance and control of the military establishment would be decisive to control the power and authority of the state as well as to define the policies and goals of modernization of the country. The innovative programmes had effected a redistribution of political power and radicalized the character of the domestic political activities. However, recent changes in the Afghan political set-up (especially in the cabinet) clearly indicated the assertion of the Mohammadzais in the political life of Afghanistan. In the context of landlocked location, these events have great significance, as they elucidate the pattern of power and of pressure groups which had traditionally constituted the bulwark of state power.

However, the recent political upheaval (27 April 1978) betrayed the role of extra-national forces in the state's politics. The emergence of the left-wing group as a dominant political power had betrayed the inherent weakness of the entrenched Pushtun hegemony in the state's activities. This, then, suggests that:

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70 Ibid.
1. Geographically, the political process of the state continues to remain under the constant influence of the heartland.

2. The northern region had reasserted itself in national politics; its politico-economic implication has now assumed cross-regional importance.

It can also be argued that the recent coup can be interpreted as the return of pre-1930 political order. It will perhaps endeavour to equate various divisive forces to form a cohesive political unit.