Chapter V

PATTERNS AND PROBLEMS OF EXTERNAL BEHAVIOUR
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Afghanistan's external behaviour is the geographical expression of the interaction between the internal political dynamism and the external compulsions. Keeping in view "...the fact that the geographical location of the state bequeathes it certain sets of spatial relationships vis-a-vis other states", the thrust of Afghan foreign policy can be explained as one directed to channelize the varied international currents to consolidate and strengthen the centripetal forces within the state. The paucity of natural resources has inadvertently compelled the Afghan foreign policy to have orientation for an economic development. The failure to understand the implication of this interaction had, consistently resulted in political crisis within Afghanistan.

Basis of Foreign Policy

The geographical perspective has remained as one of the constant variables influencing the power and ability of Afghanistan to survive as an independent state in the Soviet dominated heartland. (see Map No.1). Though the relative


importance of these factors has declined recently, it was fallacious to assume that the changing pattern of political interrelationships (both within and outside the state) and various technological developments have altogether eliminated the divisive influences of the geographical contents of the state. Albeit, they have provided a basis for the orientation of the Afghan foreign policy and reasons for its apparent dual character, irrespective of its bearings and differences upon political actions and decision within the state.

It was obvious that Afghanistan, because of its landlocked location between powerful and avaricious neighbours, had suffered significant territorial and consequent politico-economic losses. This resulted in the inclusion of extensive unintegrated and economically negative areas in the territorial content of the state. The development of these areas, against the overwhelming geographical odds, had been a continuous drain on the state's resources particularly from the point of view of


4 For relationship between size of the state and general level of foreign policy, see R.J. Rummell, "Some (footnote contd.)
administration and construction of communication network. In addition, the location of developed areas along the periphery of the state, have clearly indicated the latent geographical implication and foreign political influences upon the integration of the state. Though the state is administered by a centralized system of decision-making, the various elements of the state's administration maintain their individual decision-making apparatus against the overall objective of the state.

This tends to suggest that regionalism was considered by Afghanistan as an important variable; and to counteract its potentially disruptive character, the contacts between the various ministries as well as the regional decision-makers were knowingly kept at minimum. As awareness of local conditions supersede all others with distance from the capital, the activities of the remote regions were brought directly under the control of the Central Government. Transfer of population and spur of economic activities in geographically favourable areas, as in the north and Kabul valley, all indicated the pattern of policies adopted by the state and the nature of peripheral political influences upon the behaviour of the state. Furthermore, reviewing the transit terminal points of Chaman, Torkham, Torghoundi and Islam Qala (see Map No. 13) as serving the hinterlands of Kandahar, Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz and Herat regions, it was evident that even the temporary suspension

of access through any of these points was detrimental to the politico-economic stability of the land-locked state. The frequent closure of the southern transit route through Pakistan clearly illustrated the geographical implication of the dependence for an access to the sea. Though there was an alternative transit route in the north through the Soviet Union (which was later utilized to maintain contact with West Europe and America), its efficacy was confined to the northern Afghanistan. This was largely due to the physical obstacles imposed by the Hindukush and by the lack of adequate transportational network connecting the various developed and undeveloped regions of the state with one another.

The qualitative and quantitative aspects of population contributed directly to the growing complexity of the character of Afghan foreign policy. Though the international boundaries have cut through the ethnically homogeneous areas, it had failed to elicit desired response from the heterogeneous population on political problems arising from such definition of boundaries. Instead, it has encouraged secessionist tendencies among the inhabitants. As a result traditional differences between the major ethnic and linguistic groups, viz., the Persian, Turkic and Pushtun elements, have accentuated. The Pushtunistan problem with Pakistan can be viewed from such a perspective. It was a geographical expression of a land-locked state to find a release from external compulsions by establishing internal political stability backed up by majority
Pushtun tribes; at the same time gaining access to the sea. Similar variants of dispute are found in other frontiers of the state. But, they are stifled by both by distance and dispersion of tribes along the common borderland. Population losses, if any, along such areas were compensated either by changes in attitudes towards each other, as with Iran or by closer economic co-operation, as with the Soviet Union.

Afghan borderlands with certain degree of cultural homogeneity was influenced by the higher level of nationalist sentiments of the majority Pushtun population. This made it untenable for the Afghan decision-makers to separate the major internal political actions and decision from its adopted position in the political dispute with Pakistan over Pushtunistan.

Afghan irredentism, therefore, was an expression of the intensity of the inhabitants (perhaps of the government) rather than one of homogeneity of population along the common border.

5. The Durand line had reduced the potential Afghan manpower considerably. The loss of 5 to 7 million Pushtuns illustrates the enormous loss in terms of size of the population along with Afghanistan suffered in losing trans-Indus region. Moreover, the Afghan stand can be taken as to signify their desire of close ties with trans-Indus Pushtuns to offset the minority position of the Afghan Pushtuns vis-a-vis other ethnic groups in their internal politics. See also A.A. Michel, The Kabul, Kunduz, Helmand Valleys and the National Economy of Afghanistan (Washington, D.C., 1959), pp. 12-13.

The intensity of the Afghans to preserve the territorial integrity of their homeland and of right to retain the freedom of political action, was borne out from the fact that the protracted struggle had been ultimately a source of triumph for the incipient Afghan nationalism. Whatever the Afghans think about themselves or about their country, the fact remains that Afghanistan as a political entity has remained essential.

7 The result of three Afghan wars of 1839-41, 1879-81, and 1919 clearly indicate the Afghan resolutions against the foreign domination and interference in the affairs of their state.

8 This form of reaction in a plural society was in itself a disruptive element rather than one that consolidated the diverse tribal groups. Emphasizing the inner cleavages of the tribal society, the definition of the international boundaries enable the Pashtuns to re-assert their political hegemony in the frontier state. However, with the awakening of consciousness of a separate identity among the trans-Indus Pashtuns (separated from those in Afghanistan by the Durand line) not only allowed them to assert their role in internal politics of Pakistan but also enabled Afghanistan to support their demand for regional autonomy within the framework of Pakistan. See Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nations the Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples, Indian edn. (Calcutta, 1970), pp. 298, 306 and 329-35; see Mohammed Said Khan, n. 6, pp. 36-42. Along the same lines influence of historical factors and evolution of Afghan national interest have had significant impact upon the formulation of Afghan foreign policy; see Joseph E. Black and Kenneth W. Thomson, eds., n. 3, pp. 14-16; Normal J. Padelford and George A. Lincoln, eds., International Politics (New York, 1954), p. 23; W.K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan: A Study of Political Development in Central and South Asia (London, 1967); and Varton Gregarian, Emergence of Modern Afghanistan Politics of Reforms and Modernization (Stanford, 1969).
for maintenance of regional political stability. It should be noted, however, that as a zone of convergence of diverse political systems, Afghanistan imbibed the impact of changing political trends and power equations. It was in the form of the dynamic pattern of internal political structure and foreign policy. This was strengthened by the desire of the trans-Indus Pushtuns for the right of self-determination and political autonomy within the framework of Pakistan. The pattern of emergent relationships, therefore, identified the need for balancing the political forces by settling the status of trans-Indus Pushtuns. At the same time enabling them to maintain a stable economy by assuring uninterrupted access to the high-seas.

Nevertheless, the perspective of decision-makers retained its constant focus on the conflict between internal and external forces. With active forward policy in eighteenth century and that of isolation in the nineteenth century, the Afghan political life revolved around the King on one side and the Sirdars (aristocracy), Maliks and Mullahs on the other.

As a buffer between England and Russia in Central Asia, Afghanistan continues to retain its functional character even today - not as a territorial buffer but as a zone of political and economic rivalry. This shift has had significant impact upon the land-locked state.

Suffice it to say that this situation enabled the various Afghan rulers to channellize the external influence to develop a parallel territorial and political base to counteract the tribal domination. Although Amanullah's efforts (1919-1929) to breakaway from the tribal and regional hold on state's political activities ended in a fiasco, it provided the successive rulers with adequate base for reconstruction and reorientation of the pattern of political relations. Parenthetically, therefore, the reasons for such political decisions affecting the state could be attributed to the complex interaction between the geographical environment and social organization of the land-locked state.

However, with the relaxation of political power within the state, the emergence of pressure group (having political overtones rather than tribal or dynastic links) made significant inroads in the country's foreign policy formulation and behaviour. This ultimately resulted in the confrontation between the economic groups and the Central Government. The reassertion of central control over state's affairs (as in 1930s and early 1950s) brought significant changes in the pattern of foreign relations.

In their effort to follow a balanced and independent foreign policy, the Afghan decision-makers were confronted with several internal political currents which were struggling to find a balance and competed in the formulation of the Afghan foreign policy. "They represented among the Afghan elite by pro-German, pro-British, pro-Soviet and isolationist parties. All

(footnote contd.)
The cold war phenomenon and its consequences in the international milieu called for significant reorientation of the Afghan decision-makers perception. On the one hand, they reactivated the Pushtunistan issue, while on the other, they approached the western bloc for economic aid. Disappointments over American refusal and hesitation (along with persistent transit difficulties) compelled Afghanistan to look towards the heartland for economic and military assistance. This change in the Afghan attitude toward the northern neighbour aggravated its relations with Pakistan. As the crisis developed, the Afghan ruling elite hardened their attitude towards the disputed area, while they affected drastic changes in their programme of sustained economic development of the state.

The growing variations of domestic political evaluation between the various groups (both within the ruling elite and outside it) and the political competition affected (but completely Afghan in character) the foreign policy. Though at one time, there was a close rapport between the domestic milieu and the level of foreign policy activity, the state continued

to remain unstable. These developed a negative pattern of relationship by which the internal dissident groups ascribed (the national and international) instability of the state to the Central Government's incongruent stand on crisis situations. This was fully illustrated by persistent internal opposition to the state's policies which ultimately resulted in the resignation of Daoud's Government (1953-1963). This change in the political set up was able to ease the crisis with Pakistan and led to the reopening of transit facilities through Pakistan. The closure of the transit facilities suggested an unfavourable military-strategic balance with Afghanistan found itself in the region. Consequently broadening of the economic and political relations with the Soviet Union enabled Afghanistan to have better international standing and access while keeping the political issue with Pakistan active (though in subdued form).

It had been a recurrent theme that whenever the Central Government was either militarily weak or was unable to extend its authority over distant remote regions, the disruptive forces of a plural society gradually eroded the political stability of the state. The efforts of the Afghan Amirs in the nineteenth century were neither successful in maintaining internal political order, nor they were able to prevent foreign interference.

12 For the influence of external disputes over internal political situation, see E.B. Haas, The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-57 (Stanford, 1969), pp. xxxiii-iv.
in the internal affairs of the state. This was largely due to the absence of regular standing army. That which existed was essentially tribal in character whose loyalty between tribes and the Central Government fluctuated.

Modest attempt to modernize the army was made in the inter-war years with the help of Turkey, Britain, Germany, Italy and Russia. But the geographical diversity, lack of adequate communication network and natural resources posed primary obstacles for such developments. Tribal backing continued to retain its political significance. It was a source of strength as well as of weakness for the ruling regime.

The post-Second World War brought significant reorientation of political interrelationships in the region. The Soviet Union and the USA emerged as super powers who filled the power vacuum left by the British withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent. These international changes had profound impact upon the internal political equation in Afghanistan. Breaking away from the isolationist policy of 1930s and early 1940s, Afghanistan in early 1950s followed an active pro-western foreign policy. But the failure of attracting political support to reactivate Pushtunistan issue and of military assistance for

13 Leon B. Poullada, Reforms and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929: King Amanullah's Failure to Modernize a Tribal Society (Ithaca, 1973), pp. 1-3; see also Ch. III.

modernization of its armed forces, resulted in aggravation of internal political crisis. This led to political changes in Afghanistan.

The decade of Sardar Mohamad Daoud Khan's premiership (1953-1963) was an important landmark in both internal and external political relationship of Afghanistan. While introducing new political reforms and laying foundation for the accelerated economic growth, Afghanistan became an advocate of independence of Pushtunistan. This dispute accentuated (as noted earlier) with the increasing American aid to Pakistan and the growing influence of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet military and economic assistance to Afghanistan resulted in a strong Afghan position vis-a-vis Pakistan. Internally, it enabled the Afghan regime to establish an independent army and extend its influence over the recalcitrant tribes. It gradually replaced the tribal opposition to the Central Government by emerging urban educated class to become the nerve centre of organized opposition to the government.

The level of economic development has exerted considerably influence over patterns of external relationships of Afghanistan. The essentially agrarian economy reflected itself in the complex interaction of economic and geographic factors. These combined influences succeeded in dominating and dividing

the Afghan polity.

Consequently, the conflict between Central Government and vested groups (particularly the business group) became apparent. In their opposition to the changing trends in the state's external behaviour, these vested groups were supported by landlords who continued to wield traditional political power. These disruptive moves were largely due to the unfavourable geographical distribution of natural resources. This, then, indicated the operation of forces (both indigenous as well as exogenous) in determining the alignment of the Afghan foreign policy.

To offset the growing importance of regional power focii, the attempts of diversification of the sources of economic aid and decentralization of development structures did not bring the desired results. All it achieved was the establishment of definite zones of foreign participation in the economic development. The emergence of these areas had profound impact upon the internal political dynamics as well as the nature of foreign policy of Afghanistan. To counteract these extramural forces, the Afghan decision-makers imbibed the traditional Pashtun ideology as an important element in

16 Peter G. Franck, n. 15, p. 13.
the formulation of the foreign policy.

It, then, becomes possible to give a schematic representation to the factors affecting the formulation of Afghan foreign policy.

Afghanistan's international relations under these circumstances, were decisively influenced by its geographical location. Though in the earlier stages of the evolution of Afghanistan, geographical contiguity and proximity tended to increase the Afghan apprehension of involvement in conflict, the British withdrawal from the subcontinent in 1947, paved way for better international standing for Afghanistan. Even after expressing in definite terms - the essential elements of neutrality and non-alignment, Afghanistan was unable to prevent the influences of foreign participation in its economic development upon its policy. The cold war phenomenon significantly influenced the linkage pattern, particularly in reference to its neighbours and super powers.

Afghanistan's Political Association

Afghanistan has been following active foreign policy on the international scene. With only minimal association with the League of Nations in 1930s, Afghanistan diversified its patterns of international relations to offset any major

dependence upon the Soviet Union or Great Britain. It developed close relations with France, Germany, Italy, Middle East states, e.g., Turkey, Iran and Japan; thereby breaking away from the policy of isolationism followed by Amir Abdur Rahman (1881-1901) and his successor, Amir Habibullah (1901-1919).

Though Afghanistan was a charter member of the United Nations (U.N.), its active neutralism and disappointments over the U.N.'s failure to solve the Pushtunistan dispute thwarted her effective participation. However, increasing foreign assistance, growing external contacts and expanding trade in the 1960s enabled Afghanistan to participate more actively in the world body and its affiliated agencies. Apart from its representatives serving in the world body and affiliated agencies, Afghanistan was represented in the Economic Commission.

19 Such a policy on a strategic location posed difficulties in times of war (as in Second World War). The pre-eminence of German, Italian and Japanese participation in the Afghan economic development of 1930s and 1940s was accepted by the Soviet Union and Great Britain as an attempt of axis powers to weaken their flanks by inciting the tribes against them. The consequent Anglo-Soviet reaction of curtailing the transit facilities, compelled Afghanistan either to intern or expel the axis personal, see Newell, n. 11, p. 64.

20 Ibid., pp. 53-54.

21 Afghan representatives gradually began to figure prominently in the activities of the various organizations of the United Nations, for example, Dr Abdul Hakim Tabibi (was responsible for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Convention in 1965),

(footnote contd.)
for Asia and the Pacific (ECAP), previously ECAFE, Colombo Plan and was a Charter member of Asian Development Bank (ADB). It participated in United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and in Inter-Governmental Conferences. These international associations suggested growing sphere of Afghan political activity while its commitments were left largely undefined.

Afghanistan's Relations with Super Powers

Geographical proximity and the close territorial contact provided favourable conditions for the Soviet Union to have special relationships with Afghanistan. Occupying a wedge like position between Pakistan and Iran, Afghanistan had an 1280 km. common border with the Soviet Union. As a result of which, the Soviet Union "...had an unusual opportunity for determining its socio-economic relationships with the northern part of Afghanistan".

Abdur Rahman Pazwak (served as President of the General Assembly in 1966-67) and Dr Nevin (in the Inter-Governmental Conference on cultural policies in Asia held at Jogjakarta, Indonesia), see Martin Ira Glassner, Access to the Sea for Developing Land-Locked States (The Hague, 1970), p. 216; and Afghanistan Republic Annual 1974 (Kabul, 1974), pp. 56-65 and 135.

22 See Newell, n. 11, p. 194.

23 For the nature and importance of this region in Afghanistan, see William B. Ballis, "Recent Soviet Relations with Afghanistan", Institute for the Study of the USSR Bulletin (Munich, F.R.G.), Vol. XIII, p. 4.
Significant changes occurred in Afghanistan's external relationship after the War of Independence in 1919. Freeing its conduct of foreign relations from the domination of Britain, Amanullah (1919-1929) was able to establish diplomatic relations with Russia and other countries. The Soviet Union gave prompt recognition to the new state. This led to conclusion of a transit treaty between the two in 1921 (see Appendix VIII). The treaty provided for an annual subsidy (which Afghanistan received from Britain before the war) and free transit facilities for the Afghan goods through the Soviet Union (for handling of goods through transit, see Appendix IX).

However, Amanullah's aspirations to become the leader of Pan-Islamic movement, one of the political gains from the Third Anglo-Afghan War and his support to Bokhara (Basmachi revolt against the Soviets), resulted in worsening of the Afghan-Soviet relations. These developments had profound impact upon internal political situation in Afghanistan which hastened the conclusion of treaty with Britain in November 1921 (see Appendix X). The gradual normalization of relation between Afghanistan and Soviet Union led to the signing up of a new

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26 Poullada, n. 13, pp. 184-5.
pact of neutrality and non-aggression in 1926 (which followed the same pattern as that of 1921). The failure of Amanullah's modernization programmes and general political unrest resulted in civil war in Afghanistan in 1929. The policy of the successive rulers was obvious from the fact that while ratifying the treaty agreements made by Amanullah, Afghanistan stayed clear of Anglo-Soviet power rivalry.

As a result, the Soviet economic system exercised strong influence over economic planning of Afghanistan. This consequently restricted the Afghan freedom of action on international questions sensitive to the Soviet Union.

Trade between Afghanistan and the USSR remained minimal till 1951 and earlier treaties for economic co-operation and transit facilities remained largely dormant. As trade began to grow, they extended most favoured countries treatment to each


28 However, the reactivization of Soviet influence on Afghanistan not only resulted in wavering of the Afghan foreign policy under Amanullah but also in diminution of his domestic political support. This was largely due to the geopolitical significance of the suppression of the Muslims in Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan as factor in the East-West relations. See Poullada, n. 13, pp. 214-32.

29 Ballis, n. 23, p. 64.

30 For the analysis of the impact and nature of Soviet-Afghan trade relations as compared to other developing states, see Joseph S. Berliner, Soviet Economic Aid (New York, 1958).

31 Newell, n. 17, p. 189.
other, waived duties and provided for the expedient transit of goods. There are several problems connected with the transit of goods through the USSR. The Amu Darya is not yet bridged adequately and the use of ferries involves three transhipments between Afghan trucks and Soviet trains. The communication network, within the Soviet Central Asia, is as things stand, overburdened; partly because the terrain offers few feasible exits and the system handles 80-85 per cent of the long distance traffic inside the USSR. The second reason for the inadequacy of the transport was the tremendous and rapid economic development of Soviet Central Asia.

Increasing trade and transit through the Soviet Union resulted in changes on the Afghan border. Mazar-i-Sharif, has been the principal link between Kabul and the Soviet Union, and transit trade was very important to the city's economy.

Reviewing Afghanistan's source of all imports, it is evident that the overall dependence on Soviet Union for petroleum imports and heavy capital equipments had consolidated the Soviet influence and position in Afghanistan. It also indicated that "...the only region in Afghanistan which now relies

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32 The policy of specialization of Soviet Central Asian Republics on cotton has put considerable strain on the existing railway links with the rest of Russia, which traverse long stretches of commercially unresponsive country and occasioned problems of excessive coal use and water efficiency. David J.M. Hoosan, *The Soviet Union* (London, 1966), pp. 284-5.
on petroleum from Pakistan is that around Kandahar in the south. However, this relation not only helped Afghanistan to rely on an alternative transit route but also a trading partner capable of consuming most of the Afghan exports. The economic assistance, the trade agreements and the cultural exchanges suggest the advantages of geographical location which enabled Afghanistan to draw economic aid and involve the Soviet Union in its economic development.

On the other hand, the United States and other western countries actively participated to counter the growing Soviet influence in Afghanistan. While the Soviet Union concentrated on developing northern Afghanistan, the west began developing the regions south of Herat-Kabul-Kandahar region; thereby each power continued to have its impact felt and strive to maintain Afghanistan's neutral role in the regional politics.

**Afghanistan and Linkages Through Sea**

Afghanistan's principal outlet to sea has been and shall remain for a long time the port of Karachi in Pakistan. Though it is the most natural route, it is very vulnerable to physical and political restrictions. The hazardous nature of Afghanistan land-locked status became evident as its transit facilities were frequently obstructed. The geographical environment of the region in the west had very little to offer by way of

economic incentive to Afghanistan. Most of Afghanistan's trade, therefore, had to be routed through Karachi in the south; though its trade with and through the north had picked up but it did not diminish the importance of this outlet.

Afghanistan's relations with its northeastern neighbour, People's Republic of China, has remained cordial but somewhat distant. Though having an 80 km. common border, they have had relatively few exchanges between them. They established diplomatic relation in 1955 and concluded a treaty of peace and boundary agreement in 1957 and 1961. The Chinese economic aid and trade have continued to be minimal; thereby having comparatively little political leverage in Kabul. The Chinese participation, like other western countries, was confined to south of the Hindukush. As an alternative access to the sea, China can be discounted completely.

Afghanistan has managed to remain in friendly terms with India, despite its support for Pakistan in the Kashmir dispute. Earlier, the relations between the two were governed by the treaty of 1921 and the Anglo-Afghan Trade Convention of 1923. Both the treaties had emphasized the right of freedom of transit. Routes and administrative procedures were also specified. After the partition in 1947, however, it was found that these treaty agreements were inadequate and ran contrary to the Afghan economic development (see Appendix X).

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As a result, India and Afghanistan concluded a treaty of friendship and commerce in 1952. This provided Afghanistan with rights of transit facilities through India. The subsequent Indo-Afghan trade agreements not only provided for transit by air but also of increasing Indian participation in Afghan economic development. It can be said that the relation between the two states has assumed economic dimensions rather than political. For in the political plane, apart from the support to Afghanistan over its dispute with Pakistan, there are very limited areas of Indian support (though the Indian dispute with Pakistan can soften, in all probability, the Pakistan's attitude towards Afghanistan).

This latter dispute has often disrupted the trade between India and Afghanistan. It resulted in the airlift of Afghan dry fruits for India's tea, textiles, spices and machinery. The increased transport cost and the need proved only temporarily expedient. In fact, Indian trade with Afghanistan depends much on Pakistan's attitude.

Even after having common historical and cultural bonds the political relations between Afghanistan and Iran began to normalize only in early 1960s. Beginning with the barter agreement in 1960, the major step towards normalization of relation was achieved by the conclusion of agreement in 1962. The significance of this agreement is clear from the fact that

35 Glassner, n. 21, pp. 65-66.
during this period (1959-1963) Afghanistan suffered longest closure of the transit facilities through Pakistan. Though the treaty provided for alternative access to the sea through the port of Bander Abbas, much of the Afghan foreign trade was routed through the Soviet Union. It was evident that much pressure was brought on Iran and Afghanistan to conclude the treaty, the transit route (in order to reach Bander Abbas) had to go through either Meshad or Tehran, which were, cost-wise, inexpedient. However, this alternative source of access was not frequently used by Afghanistan.

The most urgent problem faced by the Afghan development has been the free access to the sea. Recurrent political strife in the subcontinent has led to collapse of Afghanistan's cherished dream of a free zone in the port of Karachi. This led to increased Afghan dependence on the USSR for transit facilities. Later it enhanced Afghanistan's bargaining position with Pakistan as alternative routes were now available through Iran and Russia. On the other hand, this disruption had also corresponding adverse local economic impact on Pakistan.

In 1965 the two countries signed a new 5-year agreement providing for additional transit facilities and the extension

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36 Ibid., pp. 67-68; and Donald N. Wilbur, Contemporary Iran (New York, 1963), pp. 489-92.


38 See Glassner, n. 21, pp. 73-76.
of the Pakistan rail head from Landi Khana, through the Khyber pass to Torkham, and to submit disputes over its interpretation to arbitration (see Appendix).

Pakistan found that Afghan transit trade was to its benefit. It provided much needed capital for the development of road and railway networks. A persistent problem was the smuggling of goods meant for Afghanistan into Pakistan, particularly in the tribal area but the governments could not enforce anti-smuggling laws in the tribal region. While Afghan trade was moving through Pakistan without serious interruption, it all rested on short-term bilateral agreements which were under constant review. The transit depended upon relations between the two countries and it was not certain that they would continue indefinitely, for the Pushtoonistan question bears its head from time to time, especially after the political developments in Afghanistan after 1973.

**Afghanistan, Pakistan and Pushtunistan**

The Pushtun homeland was divided by the Durand line but the tribes paid little attention to these lines drawn on paper. They roamed freely across the line and carried on visiting, raiding, or more commonly practising transhumance. They policed the area in a very general manner and allowed the tribals a large measure of autonomy. They realized that the Durand line was unquestionably an arbitrary one, making no sense geographically or ethnically. It was an administrative line and no
Ever since its creation in 1947, Pakistan was faced with the problem of "Pukhtoonistan". The demand constantly raised by Afghan rulers, was for a hypothetical state to be created on the Pakistani side of the border. This state will supposedly grant the nine million Pushto-speaking Pathans along Pakistan's northwest frontier the realization of their national aspirations, without considering a similar status to those in their side of the boundary. Radio Kabul, over the years, has repeatedly charged that Pakistani Pukhtoons were oppressed and denied the right of self-determination. Convenient to overlook was the economic absurdity of creating a land-locked, rocky, barren "Pukhtoonistan", an area where nature is at its harshest.

Kabul had made no mention of including any Pushtoon-speaking areas of Afghanistan in a future "Pukhtoonistan". This silence indicated that the Afghan demand was probably "...prompted by a veiled irredentism". It would appear that the Pukhtoonistan theme is a move by Afghan rulers to revive an ancient claim and "to exploit changing political conditions to win back an ancient love". Kabul rulers apparently looked


40 See for details, Mohammad Said Khan, n. 6.


42 Ibid., p. 325.
back to the time when the Peshawar valley and other parts of the Northwest Frontier plains briefly had been the fairest of their provinces, and Peshawar, the winter capital of the Durrani rulers. The fact that the Afghan Durrani Empire extends to the Indus river almost two hundred years ago does not logically supply strong justification for "Pukhtoonistan" today.

A referendum was held and voters chose to accede to Pakistan. Afghan and Pushtu nationalists held that the referendum offered no more than a Hobson's choice and held in a state of unseemly hurried and public coercion. Pushtun nationalists agitated and Afghanistan joined the issue officially backing the demand for a Pushtunistan which would only be carved out of Pakistani territory. Worsening of relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan led to armed clashes between the two and continued in varying degree of intensity through the 1950s. It led in 1961-63 to border closure and the resignation of Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Daoud in Kabul. Antagonism over this issue which became intertwined with Afghanistan's access to the sea, grew bitter that both President Kennedy and the Shah of Iran tried to mediate. The borders opened in 1963 and the Afghan separated the two questions - Pushtunistan and access to the sea.

45 Glassner, n. 21, p. 77.
This pleased Pakistan who while ready to discuss one, totally rejected the other. The Afghan campaign subsided but did not expire.

Some extremists on both sides of the Durand line continued to agitate for independence. However, by 1966, even the veteran agitator, Ghaffar Khan toned down his demands to one of autonomy within Pakistan. The underlying reason perhaps was that a friendly Pushtunistan would enable Afghanistan to use the Indus river freely but access to sea would still be controlled by Pakistan, which by virtue of its sway over Peshawar in the north and Karachi in south could still control Afghan foreign trade.

The Afghan interests in the frontier region flows from two factors. From the standpoint of the ruling elite in Kabul both were pertinent and legitimate. First the frontier was in a sense "Afghan irredenta". Second the Pakhtun tribes which can and have made and unmade Afghan Governments. The two elements are closely interrelated in the minds of many Afghans and have in recent years been combined and elaborated in the Pakhtunistan movement.

Whatever the Afghan reasons for a Pushtunistan, it has so far been checked by the resistance from Pakistan. Even after the revolution in Afghanistan in 1973 and consequent

46 In fact at one time a claim for Pushtunistan covering Peshawar, Karachi and entire Baluchistan was put forward, but it was ethnically so weak and transparent a claim to secure free access to the sea that it did not survive many political battles.
reactivation of the Pushtoonistan issue have made no sizable impression on the relations between the two. The reasons for this resistance was clear. The area has considerable strategic importance and though the economic development of this region was yet to gain momentum.

More important than economics, however, was that Pushtuns played an important role in Pakistan. They have long been a dynamic people and have differed from the people of Pakistan and northern India. Pathan ambition and a deliberate Pakistan's state policy led to considerable improvement of the Pushtuns. Efforts were made to improve the economy of the region (NWFP), thus enabling them to settle down and improve their living standards without resorting to brigandage. Pushtuns were encouraged to join the Pakistan Army, and slowly brought the frontier areas closer to Pakistan. The transfer of the capital to Islamabad, brought them closer to the heights of Pakistan and helped their sense of identification. Today Pushtuns hold and control many walks of life in Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan was trying to hold on as a viable state.

After the separation of East Pakistan where separatist feelings were always very strong, centrifugal force came loose in frontier region. The little awe in which the army and police were held responsible for holding the frontier regions together, was temporarily lost due to their defeat in East Pakistan and their hold over the region became tenuous. Extremists once again intensified their demand for a separate
autonomous status. For all these reasons, then, Pakistan was not likely to concede any kind of Pushtunistan, regardless of continued Afghan support for it. Growth of Afghan economy is unquestionably dependent on free transit through Pakistan. And the growth of Afghan economy was also very important for Pakistan. Future mineral exploration and development of Afghanistan will provide much needed raw materials for the light and heavy industries of Pakistan. In turn Pakistani manufacturers of all types can find a ready and permanent market in Afghanistan. Transit to and from Afghanistan will earn hauling revenues for Pakistan railways and handling charges at Karachi port (see Appendices XI and XII).

There is thus a case for the growing interdependence of Pakistani and Afghan economies. Another factor is now coming into play. With the growing development of Soviet Central Asia, Afghanistan has itself become a transit state. Russia has demanded an access to the Arabian Sea, though the idea of a railroad has been rejected, negotiations are on to open the old silk route through Afghanistan. Thus Afghanistan will be able to exercise some leverage on its own in transit matters. If this does develop, spurred as it was by the long closure of the Suez Canal, Pakistan's dependence on Afghanistan would increase, and on its part, Afghanistan would have to worry less about her access to the sea.

In addition to the mutual reaction of the super powers whose interest go far beyond their territorial limits; in which
case, it is apparent that the Afghan interests are largely re-
gional and cross-regional while its capabilities and interests 
extend hardly beyond their national geographical confines.

It can also be argued that, at first sight, the impul-
ses that conditioned the policy in Amanullah's and Musahiban's 
period, had domestic roots. On the other hand, the period, 
1930-46 (which can be extended upto 1953), saw the Afghan 
foreign policy confines itself to its internal problems. This 
lasted till the British withdrawal from the subcontinent, when 
the latent problems between the two surfaced in the form of 
Pushtoon issue. Meanwhile, regionalism and feudalism became 
deeply entrenched in the Afghan polity. The institutionalized 
feudalism in Afghan politics adopted a defensive posture within 
the framework of the nation not of its making or without its 
control. The rapidity with which the forces of modernization 
undermined the traditional Pushtun and other social structure 
soon paved way for violence in the national politics.

Much as this violence (military coup d'etat in 1973 and 
the Communist takeover in April 1978) may perhaps appear as 
domestic phenomenon, but they have undoubtedly an external 
historical dimension; for the policy of post-independence 
Afghanistan was largely a reaction to antecedent, externally 
imposed stimuli. The evolutionary process of the growth of 
the middle class was encouraged to a small measure only after 
1953. As a Cold War phenomenon, it coincided with wider and 
crucial foreign policy dimension.
With the relaxation in the major aspects of the domestic policy, the emergence of numerous political parties confirmed the beginning of an active role by the middle class in the nation's political life. Though, it began to get a gradual favour from the Central Government, the period 1963-73, saw the formation of several ministries whose instability was largely due to the conflict between the traditional base of feudal power and the newly emerging middle class. In spite of coup d'etat in 1973 (which did not change the feudal character of the state), Daoud found it difficult to bring about major internal political and economic changes. This gradually led to the concentration of power in the hands of select few.

The promulgation of the new constitution in 1977 did not bring desired changes both in the political and economic life of the state. Instead, it brought political resentment and economic grievances. The Army which had in 1973 played an important role, once again with the backing of the Communists staged coup. This new dimension in the Afghan politics clearly suggests that there are factors both within and without that have drastically affected the directions of major internal and external policies of Afghanistan. The geographical forces, then, have constantly figured in major policy decision of the Afghan state. Political and economic aspects continued to be focussed around the geographical perspective while the people (under varied external influences and experience) were unable to understand the basic issues of the land-locked state.
These, then, suggest that the landlocked location has contributed significantly to the orientation of Afghanistan's external behaviour. The dominant but persistent influence of the heartland on the state coupled with peripheral location of major resource regions made it imperative for Afghanistan to adjust itself to heartland rather than to the peripheral ones. Yet the operation of international forces in the state had enabled Afghanistan to maintain its position vis-à-vis other states.