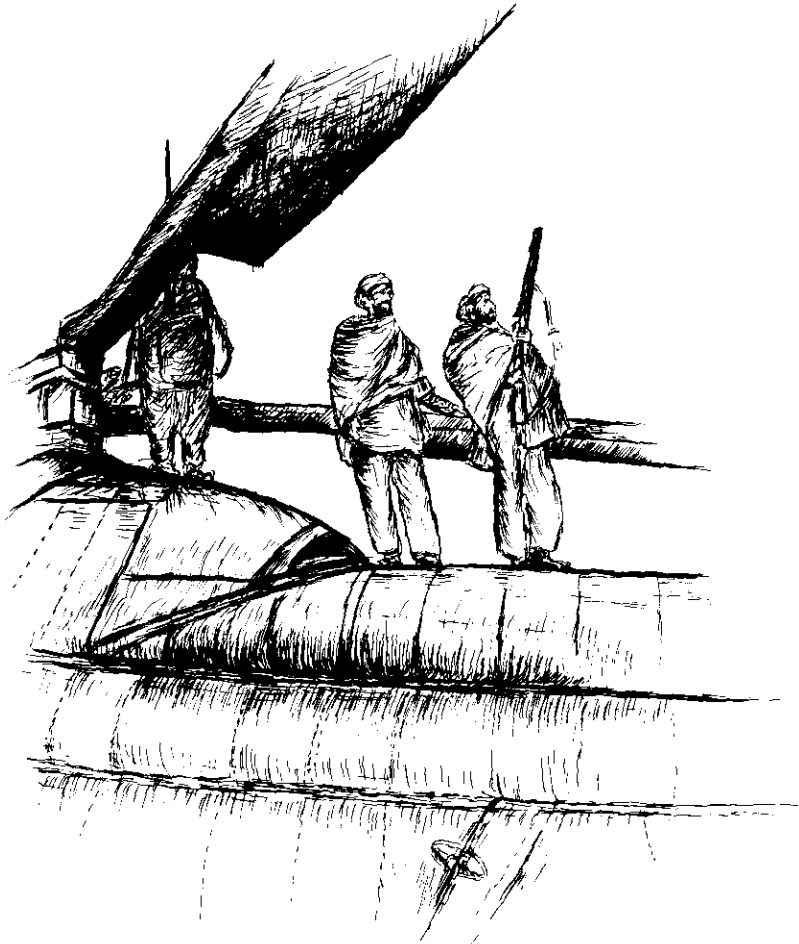


Chapter 4. Government and Politics



Mujahidiin on top of a downed Soviet helicopter

AFGHANISTAN'S GOVERNMENT in the mid-1980s was dominated and controlled by the Soviet Union. A facade of independence was maintained, but the regime of President Babrak Karmal was subject to the dictates of Soviet advisers who directed his government's ministries and Afghanistan's pervasive secret police. The population was fully aware of Afghanistan's loss of independence following the Soviet invasion of December 27, 1979.

As much as 80 percent of the countryside was outside government control. Although this reflected in part the traditional autonomy of local political leaders, antiregime guerrillas—the *mujahidiin*—made it virtually impossible for the regime to maintain a system of local government outside major urban centers. The *mujahidiin* also made their presence known in Kabul, the capital, by launching rocket attacks and assassinating high government officials.

Even Afghans not actively involved in the resistance tended to regard the Karmal regime with contempt. To devout Muslims, the regime's collaboration with an atheist power, the Soviet Union, was unforgivable. Regime attempts to enlist the support of ethnic minorities, women, youth, tribal chiefs, and the ulama (Islamic scholars) met with very limited success. Observers estimated that only about 3 to 5 percent of the total population actively supported the regime.

Karmal's difficulties in presiding over a government with virtually no popular support were compounded by the bitter and longstanding rivalry between the Khalq (Masses) and Parcham (Banner) factions of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). In 1967 the PDPA split into these two groups, headed by Nur Muhammad Taraki and Karmal, respectively. The split reflected deep ethnic, class, and ideological differences. The Soviets coaxed a reunification of the party in 1977; but when the party came to power in April 1978, the animosity deepened as Khalq leaders purged, imprisoned, and even tortured their Parcham rivals. In late 1985 Soviet advisers were still unable to prevent violent confrontations between Khalqis and Parchamis, which often ended in fatalities.

The Soviet Union has had a substantial interest in Afghanistan since the reign of King Amanullah (1919-29). After World War II, Moscow was the most generous donor of economic and

military aid. United States involvement in Afghanistan was substantially less, owing in part to Washington's support of Pakistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan were at odds over the issue of Pashtunistan, an Afghan-supported campaign for the creation of an independent or autonomous state for the Pashtu-speaking nationals of Pakistan. After military supporters of the PDPA seized power and then ceded it to the civilian Revolutionary Council headed by Taraki in April 1978, the Soviets became increasingly tied up in Afghan internal politics. Because the PDPA had close ideological affinities with Moscow, it could not remain a neutral observer. Radical measures enacted by Taraki in the summer and autumn of 1978—particularly decrees relating to the abolition of usury, changes in marriage customs, and land reform—created great resentment and misunderstanding among highly conservative villagers. Insurrection began in the Nuristan region of eastern Afghanistan and then spread to most other parts of the country. *Mujahidiin*, operating from bases outside the country, launched attacks against the government, while their ranks were swelled by desertions from the Afghan armed forces.

Although the Soviets increased drastically the volume of military aid, they were dissatisfied with the PDPA's radicalism. Top Soviet advisers attempted to pressure leaders to adopt a more moderate, united-front strategy, but with limited success. The chief obstacle was the brutal and ambitious Hafizullah Amin, Taraki's foreign minister and prime minister after March 1979. Taraki, with Soviet assistance, attempted to remove Amin on September 14, 1979; but Amin, turning the tables, arrested Taraki after a shootout at the House of the People (formerly the Presidential Palace), imprisoned him, and ordered his murder in early October. Relations between the Soviets and Amin grew distant. As the security situation deteriorated, Moscow ordered troops into the country. The plan, carried out on December 27, 1979, had been formulated over a period of several months. High-ranking Soviet military officers who had been involved in the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 played prominent roles.

The Soviets installed Karmal, exiled leader of the Parcham faction, as the country's new president and PDPA secretary general. Amin had apparently died fighting Soviet troops outside Kabul. Most observers believed that the principal factors in Moscow's decision to invade included the need to rescue a friendly socialist regime from certain destruction and to thwart potential security threats to the Soviet Union itself. If a mili-

tantly Islamic regime, like Iran's, had been established in Afghanistan, it might have had destabilizing consequences for Soviet control of the Muslim populations of its Central Asian republics. Other observers interpreted the invasion as part of a comprehensive strategy to gain access to the Indian Ocean and a dominant position in South Asia and the Middle East. In the mid-1980s negotiations for the peaceful withdrawal of Soviet troops, sponsored by the United Nations, were under way. Few believed, however, that Soviet occupation of the country would be a short-lived phenomenon.

A Revolution Backfires

The regime of President Mohammad Daoud Khan came to a violent end in the early morning hours of April 28, 1978, when military units stormed the Presidential Palace in the heart of Kabul. Overcoming the stubborn resistance of the Presidential Guard, the insurgent troops killed Daoud and most members of his family. True to Afghanistan's militant traditions, Daoud refused to surrender and died fighting. The coup had begun a day earlier, the date commemorated by Afghanistan's new rulers as the beginning of the *Sawr* (April) Revolution. According to Louis Dupree, a seasoned observer of Afghan affairs, the coup was an "accidental" one in which the poor organization of the rebels was exceeded only by the ineptitude of the government ("Foul-up followed foul-up, and the side with the fewer foul-ups won"). There was a comical element as rebel tanks, rolling toward the Presidential Palace, were caught in a noonday traffic jam (a half-holiday had just begun a day before Friday, the Muslim Sabbath), and speeding taxis wove in and out of the armored column. Passersby stood around casually, watching the action. The fighting, however, was bitter. Dupree estimates that the siege of the Presidential Palace and engagements at other points around the city cost 1,000 lives (other estimates are as high as 10,000, though this is unlikely).

The coup d'état was touched off by leaders of the leftist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA—*Jamiyat-e-demokratiki-khalq-e-Afghanistan*, in Dari) and was carried out by the party's cadres and sympathizers in the armed forces. Daoud's determination to establish an autocratic, one-party state had alienated numerous people, particularly in the capital, and leftists were alarmed at the rightward shift in his poli-

cies: the president had reneged on promises to implement progressive reforms, had purged his government of leftists, and in the last years of his rule had sought financial support from Iran, ruled by the shah, and Saudi Arabia in order to make Afghanistan less dependent on Soviet economic aid. The immediate cause of the coup, however, was the murder on April 17 of Mir Akbar Khyber, a Marxist ideologue associated with the Parcham faction of the PDPA (see Daoud's Republic, 1973-78, ch. 1). The identity of the murderer was never established. The PDPA claimed after its seizure of power that the perpetrator was an agent of Daoud, while other accounts suggest with varying degrees of credibility that the assassin was an Islamic militant, a member of SAVAK (Iran's secret police under the shah), or a member of a rival PDPA faction. Although the government issued a statement deploring the assassination, PDPA leaders apparently feared that Daoud was planning to exterminate them all. On April 19 the party organized a mass rally and march on the occasion of Khyber's funeral. As many as 30,000 demonstrators (although the most reliable estimates are between 10,000 and 15,000) marched through the streets of Kabul and shouted anti-American slogans in front of the United States embassy. This show of opposition strength unnerved Daoud, who, after an inexplicable delay of a week, ordered the arrest of seven top PDPA leaders.

Daoud committed a fatal error in not ordering the immediate imprisonment of PDPA Central Committee member Hafizullah Amin. Placed under house arrest shortly after midnight on April 26, Amin hurriedly stitched together a plan for a coup d'état and enlisted his children as couriers to communicate with PDPA cadres in the military. Because of police negligence, Amin's children were able to carry their father's messages through the streets of Kabul unimpeded; their task was made easier by the fact that most Afghan military officers lived with their families in the city rather than in separate military encampments. By the time Amin was taken off to jail late in the morning of April 26, the plan for the uprising had been disseminated.

The coup d'état's execution the following day, however, revealed the haste with which the plan had been composed. The insurgents, including infantry, armored, and air force contingents, were poorly coordinated. The population remained ignorant of developments because the rebels did not secure the Radio Afghanistan broadcasting station in Kabul until the late afternoon on April 27. PDPA leaders were clearly not in

command. It was not until 5:30 P.M. that they were liberated from a government prison. Some months after the April coup, Amin admitted at a press conference that it had occurred two years ahead of the PDPA's schedule for revolution. Daoud's determination to exterminate the left, Amin alleged, had forced the PDPA to act.

The contours of the new regime were at first very unclear. To outside observers, what had occurred was a conventional military coup. Two key figures were Abdul Qader, an air force colonel who had ordered air strikes against the Presidential Palace during the fighting, and Muhammad Aslam Watanjar, commander of a tank brigade who had led a column of tanks and armored cars into the capital from armored division headquarters on the city's outskirts. Both men had participated in the 1973 coup that had brought Daoud to power. At 7:00 P.M. on April 27, Qader made an announcement over Radio Afghanistan, in the Dari language, that a "revolutionary council of the armed forces" had been established, with himself at its head. Watanjar read a similar statement in the Pashtu language. The council's initial statement of principles, issued late in the evening of April 27, was a noncommittal affirmation of Islamic, democratic, and nonaligned ideals. The language of Marxist revolution was not conspicuous. The Soviet embassy in Kabul was ostensibly caught by surprise. The ambassador, Alexandr M. Puzanov, was enjoying a trout fishing holiday in the Hindu Kush at the time, although the Committee for State Security (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti—KGB) and Soviet advisers posted in Afghanistan may have had a more active role than it appeared. As the month of April drew to a close, the Soviet news agency TASS referred to the coup simply as a military seizure of power.

Within two days of Daoud's fall, however, the armed forces' revolutionary council ceded power to a 35-member, PDPA-controlled civilian body, the Revolutionary Council (RC) of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. This chain of events bore some similarity to Daoud's coup d'état five years earlier. Although the military had lifted Daoud into power, they had a minimal political role once he formed a government. But the military's willingness to step aside also was testimony to the PDPA's success in transforming important sectors of the armed forces into an effective power base. Amin was principally responsible for this. As early as 1965, and certainly by 1973, he had devoted himself to building a cadre in the officer corps, "educating them on the basis of principles of the

working class ideology" (in the words of an official account of the coup) and convincing them of the need to eliminate the old regime.

A major factor contributing to PDPA support in the military was disaffection over Daoud's predilection for awarding top commissions to cronies and fellow Muhammadzai clansmen. Able and conscientious officers who were not well-connected were frustrated by an entrenched system of nepotism that blocked their careers. Despite promises made in 1973, this was essentially the same system that had existed under King Zahir Shah. It is unclear how many officers understood Marxist concepts or considered themselves leftist, although a large number had received training in the Soviet Union, but by 1978 Daoud had forfeited the loyalty of many—though not all—military officers posted in the capital region.

On April 30 the RC issued the first of a series of fateful decrees. The decree formally abolished the military's revolutionary council. This body disappeared down an Orwellian "memory hole"; the official history of the Saur Revolution makes no mention of it and describes PDPA leaders as having established the RC on April 27. The RC named PDPA secretary general Taraki as its president and prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The decree also designated the RC as the highest government body, whose pronouncements would have the force of law. A second decree, issued on May 1, named Karmal vice president of the RC and senior deputy prime minister. The other members of the first cabinet were also named; they included Amin, Qader, and Watanjar. A third decree, issued two weeks later, nullified Daoud's 1977 constitution and replaced it with a document entitled "Thirty-two Basic Lines of Revolutionary Duties." It also established "revolutionary military courts" to dispense swift justice to enemies of the people. Two other decrees drawn up in the months following the coup declared the regime's commitment to the equality of Afghanistan's different ethnic groups and deprived the surviving members of the royal family of their Afghan citizenship.

In an official statement broadcast over Radio Afghanistan on May 10, President Taraki announced his regime's programs. These included land reform, development of both state and private sectors of the economy, universal free education, free health care facilities for all citizens, and promotion of the equality of the sexes. In foreign policy, Taraki affirmed the principles of nonalignment, peaceful coexistence, and support

for national liberation movements worldwide. Nothing in this rhetoric was a dramatic departure from pronouncements of the early Daoud era. The Marxist-Leninist component of PDPA ideology was a decidedly minor theme because leaders feared alienating groups within the country and Afghanistan's conservative neighbors outside the country. But through the summer and autumn of 1978, as more decrees were issued, Taraki and his associates put Afghanistan on the road to revolution. Amin expressed this most clearly on November 7, 1978, the anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, when he asserted that the Saur Revolution was a continuation of the October Revolution. This revolutionary commitment was violently at odds with traditional Afghan values and interests, especially in the rural areas. As spring gave way to summer and autumn, however, the PDPA, wracked by internal rivalries, proved to be its own worst enemy.

Evolution of the PDPA as a Political Force

The history of leftist political movements in Afghanistan is a short one. The society is highly conservative and without bourgeois or working classes in the Western sense. The number of persons who can participate in Western-style politics is small; literacy in the years following World War II was around 5 percent, and the tiny handful of intellectuals receptive to Marxist ideas was concentrated in the urban areas. Because Afghanistan escaped exploitation by Western colonialists (one of the few Asian countries to do so), there was little or no stimulus for nationalist, anti-imperialist movements to develop.

Another factor in the slowness with which a leftist movement developed was the attitude of the Soviet Union. Soviet interests in the turbulent years following the October Revolution did not dictate the encouragement of a communist movement that would challenge the monarchy. King Amanullah established excellent relations with the Soviets as a means of asserting his independence from the British, and the Soviets found him a useful ally against both the British and Muslim conservatives, who challenged their control of what is now Soviet Central Asia. Marxist scholar Fred Halliday notes that, as far as can be determined, no Afghan communist party was formed under the auspices of the Communist International (Comintern). This contrasts sharply with Moscow's strategy in other Asian countries. As early as 1919, Lenin had encouraged

the formation of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in one of the most backward places on earth, and during the early 1920s communist parties were being organized under the guidance of Comintern agents in Turkey, Iran, British India, China, Japan, and Korea.

Neither the conservatism nor the isolation of Afghanistan, however, was absolute. Amanullah's bold but disastrous attempt to transform the country along Kemalist lines in the 1920s was a vivid memory. Schools and colleges were being established with European curricula. Many Afghans were also aware of nationalist and leftist movements in British India. The Communist Party of India (CPI) had been founded in 1925, and some Afghans who had spent time in the subcontinent were introduced to Marxist concepts by Indians. Halliday suggests that the influence of the CPI on Afghan leftism was more formative than that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); nevertheless, the Soviet Union gained considerable prestige among educated Afghans for its postwar aid programs, and the CPI always faithfully followed the CPSU's initiatives on matters of policy.

The winds of political change blew faintly through the Hindu Kush, and after 1945 the government vacillated between tolerating and repressing liberals who were trying to make the system more open. The 1947-52 period witnessed the emergence of the *Wikh-i-Zalmayan* (Awakened Youth) movement, which engaged in harsh criticism of the royal family. A highly politicized student union was organized at Kabul University, and a handful of opposition newspapers—*Angar* (Burning Embers), *Nida-i-Khalq* (Voice of the Masses), and *Watan* (Homeland)—were published (see Zahir Shah and His Uncles, 1933-53, ch. 1). As criticism of the status quo grew sharper, the government reacted by banning dissident organizations and jailing their leaders. Many leftists received their first schooling in politics during this period.

Three PDPA Leaders

Three men—Taraki, Amin, and Karmal—played a central role in the evolution of the Afghan left and the fortunes of the PDPA. Taraki, the oldest, was born in 1917, the son of a livestock dealer and small-time smuggler. His family is described by Dupree and other observers as "seminomadic," traveling frequently between Ghazni Province and British India (see fig. 1). Despite his family's poverty, Taraki was able to attend a

provincial elementary school and a middle school in Qandahar and was the first member of his family to be literate. He was in Qandahar during the fall of the reformist King Amanullah in 1929. Leaving school at age 15, he went to the Indian port city of Bombay to work in the office of an Afghan company that exported dried fruit to the subcontinent.

He learned English at a night school and became acquainted with Indian Communists, although he apparently never became a CPI member. Returning to Kabul in 1937, Taraki attended a college of public administration and then assumed a series of posts in the civil service.

While serving in the remote province of Badakhshan in the northeast, Taraki began a writing career. He gained a reputation as a writer of short stories during the 1940s, describing the living conditions of Afghan peasants. Soviet critics approvingly described his work as expressing "scientific socialist" themes. One essay composed in the late 1940s or early 1950s about Maxim Gorky, the idol of literary orthodoxy during the Stalinist period, reveals his close affinities to the Soviet point of view.

Taraki's career, however, was a checkered one. He seems to have played a peripheral role in the Wikh-i-Zalmayan movement (contributing articles to *Angar* but avoiding imprisonment and even retaining his government job), lived briefly in Washington as a member of the Afghan embassy staff, and was recalled to Kabul because of his outspoken criticism of Prime Minister Daoud. He ran his own translation agency between 1958 and 1962 and in the latter year was hired by the United States embassy in Kabul as a translator. Journalist Henry S. Bradsher relates that by 1964 Taraki had close ties with persons in the Soviet embassy and facilitated contacts between its staff (presumably KGB agents) and young Afghans. The Soviets apparently subsidized his literary career and translated some of his works into Russian.

Amin was born in 1921 in Paghman, a town near Kabul. His father was a minor civil servant. Amin studied mathematics and physics at Kabul University and became a high school teacher and principal. In 1957 he won a scholarship to study at Teachers' College at Columbia University in New York, and on completion of his course he returned home to administer teacher-training courses. Returning to Columbia to complete his doctorate in 1962, Amin became involved in the politics of the Associated Students of Afghanistan, an overseas student group in the United States. It was apparently during his so-

journal in the student world of Morningside Heights on Manhattan's upper west side near Columbia's campus that he became interested in Marxism, although Columbia had not yet encountered the radical tumult of the late 1960s. In 1965 he returned to Afghanistan without his doctorate and accepted a teaching post at a girls' high school. His sympathetic biographer, Beverley Male, notes the enthusiasm with which the students responded to his advocacy of social and political revolution. According to Male, "educated Kabuli women were later to be among the PDPA's most enthusiastic supporters."

Unlike Taraki and Amin, Karmal, born in 1929, was a member of the social and political elite. His father, General Muhammad Hussain Khan, had served as governor of Paktia Province and enjoyed close ties with the royal family. Karmal, an indifferent student in high school and in the law school of Kabul University, quickly gained a reputation as an orator and activist in the university's student union in 1951. For his part in the Wikh-i-Zalmayan movement, he was imprisoned for a time, and while in prison he met Mir Akbar Khyber, whose Marxist views had a formative influence on him. After release from jail in 1956, he held posts in the civil service. Anthony Arnold, a former United States intelligence officer, notes that Karmal was able to secure government employment despite his jail sentence because of his family connections: "Babrak was Establishment, representing the modishly far left wing of the wealthiest and most powerful Afghan families."

Formation of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan

Taraki, Karmal, and other leftists (Amin was still in the United States) had been planning to organize a party and took preliminary steps in this direction in 1963, though study groups on Marxist topics had been held since the 1950s. They postponed formally establishing one, however, in anticipation that King Zahir Shah would sign a law legalizing political associations, as guaranteed in the 1964 constitution. Although the king never ratified the party law passed by parliament and thus parties remained technically illegal despite the constitutional guarantee, the PDPA held its First Congress on January 1, 1965. Twenty-seven men gathered at Taraki's house in Kabul, elected Taraki PDPA secretary general and Karmal deputy secretary general, and chose a five-member Central Committee. They also approved a party program. This document, published in the newspaper *Khalq* (Masses) the follow-

ing year, advocated a national front of democratic and patriotic forces and progressive reforms. According to Arnold, the program's avoidance of Marxist-Leninist terminology reflected fears that its use would invite official repression. He claims that the PDPA First Congress adopted a "secret" constitution, replete with communist phraseology, that reveals its true character as "the party of the Working Class of Afghanistan." This document was allegedly unearthed by personnel of a Western embassy in 1978.

Relatively open elections were held for the Wolesi Jirgah (lower house of parliament) in September 1965. Four PDPA members were elected: Karmal, Anahita Ratebzad, Nur Ahmad Nur, and Fezanul Haq Fezan. Taraki and Amin also ran but were defeated; the latter lost by only 50 votes in his hometown of Paghman. From their seats in the lower house, the eloquent Karmal and his associates mobilized students to demonstrate against the government of Prime Minister Muhammed Yousuf. At least three demonstrators were killed and many more wounded when troops fired into a student rally near the prime minister's residence on October 25, 1965 (see *The King Rules: The Last Decade of Monarchy, 1963-73*, ch. 1). As an increasingly static and inflexible government reacted violently to growing opposition, the foundations of parliamentary rule were cloven.

The preoccupation with maintaining a low profile that dictated the PDPA's need for a secret constitution was in striking contrast to the outspokenness of *Khalq*, published by Taraki in April and May 1966. *Khalq* defined its mission in terms of relieving "the boundless agonies of the oppressed peoples of Afghanistan" and asserted that "the main issue of contemporary times and the center of class struggle on a worldwide basis, which began with the Great October Socialist Revolution, is the struggle between international socialism and international capitalism." The newspaper was highly successful, especially among students. Its first edition sold 20,000 copies, and later editions numbered around 10,000 (there were only six editions altogether). On May 23, 1966, the authorities closed it down on the grounds that it was anti-Islamic, anticonstitutional, and antimonarchical.

The Party Divided, 1967

In the spring of 1967 the PDPA formally divided into two factions, whose rivalry would be a decisive, and often deadly,

factor in the party's political fortunes and misfortunes. The banning of *Khalq* in 1966 prompted Karmal to criticize Taraki for being foolhardy because of the newspaper's open expression of class struggle themes. Arnold suggests that Karmal—and the Soviets—may have pondered the bloody fate of the Indonesian Communist Party, whose radicalism led to its annihilation by Muslim militants in October 1965. On the ideological level, Karmal and Taraki differed in their perceptions of Afghanistan's revolutionary potential. Taraki believed that revolution could be achieved in the classical Leninist fashion by building a tightly disciplined working-class party. Karmal felt that Afghanistan was too undeveloped for a Leninist strategy and that a national democratic front of patriotic and anti-imperialist forces had to be fostered in order to bring the country a step closer to socialist revolution. (This issue is a frequent theme in the history of Asian communism; the most famous instance is the disagreement between Stalin and Trotsky over the advisability of a united front or a revolutionary strategy for the Chinese Communist Party during the 1920s.)

Karmal sought, unsuccessfully, to persuade the PDPA Central Committee to censure Taraki's excessive radicalism. The vote, however, was close, and Taraki in turn tried to neutralize Karmal by appointing new members to the committee who were his own supporters. Karmal offered his resignation. This was accepted, apparently an outcome he did not expect. Although the split of the PDPA in 1967 into two groups was never publicly announced, Karmal brought with him about half the members of the Central Committee. Subsequently, the two groups operated as separate political parties, each with its own secretary general, central committee, and membership. Taraki's faction was known as *Khalq*, after his defunct newspaper, and Karmal's as *Parcham* (Banner), after a weekly he published between March 1968 and July 1969.

Ideology was only one factor—and probably not the most important—in the *Khalq-Parcham* split. Taraki and Karmal were men from two very different backgrounds. This was equally true of their followers, who formed self-consciously separate groups even before the 1967 breakup. Taraki appealed to a rural, lower-middle class constituency of Pashtuns, people like himself who had personal experience of poverty and the oppressiveness of the old order; they tended, however, to be conservative in matters such as the separation of the sexes. Their first language was Pashtu, rather than Dari, the dialect of Farsi spoken by Afghan city dwellers and govern-

ment officials. The Parcham constituency was urban-based, middle class or upper-middle class, and tended to speak Dari rather than Pashtu. They were graduates of the best and most expensive high schools and colleges and were generally more Westernized in their habits and styles of life than the Khalqis. Although both PDPA groups were concerned with changing gender roles and giving women a more active role in politics, women such as Ratebzad, one of the four PDPA members elected to the Wolesi Jirgah in 1965, were more prominent in Parcham. Anthropologist Nancy Hatch Dupree notes that during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Karmal and Ratebzad held party meetings that ended with disco music and dancing. Apparently many university students, chafing under the restrictions of their conservative parents, joined Parcham for recreation rather than to raise their political consciousness.

The Khalq-Parcham rivalry also reflected tensions that have characterized Afghan politics since the forceful unification of the country in the eighteenth century by Ahmad Shah Durrani (see Ahmad Shah and the Durrani Empire, ch. 1). The two leaders were both Pashtuns, but Taraki was a member of the Ghilzai tribal confederation that had been excluded from power by their old rivals, the Durrani. Afghan rulers had experienced limited success in promoting national integration. The result was that tribal sentiments, particularly in the Pashtun rural areas, remained intense. A majority of the Khalqis seem to have been Ghilzai Pashtuns, and their Marxism was often a vehicle for tribal resentments. Relatively few Ghilzai were members of the political, social, or economic elite. Durrani Pashtuns regarded them as a crude, rustic, and violent people who were nomads ("carrying their houses on their backs like snails") rather than settled farmers or townspeople. Since the political elite traditionally lived in towns, Ghilzai Pashtuns both envied and resented urban ways of life. In their eyes, the Durrani were effete and lacking in traditional Pashtun values. Amin, like Taraki, was a Ghilzai. After the fall of Daoud in April 1978, many Afghans recalled that a Muslim saint in the eighteenth century had cursed the Ghilzai, ordaining that they would endure seven generations of servitude. Taraki and Amin's rise to power seemed to mark the end of that period.

Parcham's ethnic composition was more diverse than Khalq's. Although the majority were apparently Dari-speaking Pashtuns from the Kabul region, Hazaras, Tajiks, and other minority groups were also represented. Karmal was neither a

Durrani nor a Ghilzai, but a member of another Pashtun tribe, the Kakars. Coming from an urban and elite background, he lacked a strong sense of tribal identity or allegiance.

The issue of tribal and ethnic identity played a role in the emergence of other leftist movements during the 1960s. In 1964 the surviving relatives of Abdur Rahman Mahmudi, a popular opposition politician who had languished in jail between 1953 and 1963 and subsequently died from the effects of his mistreatment in prison, founded Shula-i-Jawid (Eternal Flame); this was a "Maoist" group that drew support from an odd combination of alienated intellectuals and professionals and Shia Muslims, especially Hazaras, who suffered harsh discrimination at the hands of the majority Sunni Muslims (see *Tenets of Islam*, ch. 2). The Shula-i-Jawid looked to China as a model for revolution. Its anti-Soviet bias reflected the intense Sino-Soviet antagonisms of the late 1960s and early 1970s and appealed to Afghans who feared the power of their northern neighbor.

Another radical group was Settem-i-Melli (Against National Oppression). This was formed in the late 1960s by Taher Badakhshi, a Tajik who had been a member of the PDPA Central Committee. In its "Maoist" emphasis on militant class struggle and mass mobilization of peasants, Settem-i-Melli resembled Shula-i-Jawid. But it was also strongly anti-Pashtun, and it accused the Soviet Union of supporting "Pashtun colonialism." The group was well-organized, not only within minority communities in Kabul but also in the northeastern provinces where minorities were numerous.

Competition and Reconciliation, 1967-77

Although adept at rousing student passions, Karmal published in March 1968 a journal, *Parcham*, that was noticeably more moderate in its tone than Taraki's *Khalq*. His group earned the somewhat opprobrious nickname the "royal communist party" because of its willingness to cooperate with the authorities and its connections with the royal family. (Khalqis were irked by a speech Karmal had given in parliament in 1966 describing the king as "progressive.") *Parcham* was shut down in June 1969 on the eve of parliamentary elections, but the group had succeeded in getting some very powerful friends. The most important was Daoud. According to Arnold, Daoud, riding in his private car, was present at *Parcham*-sponsored student demonstrations, thus ensuring that the demon-

strators would not be handled violently by the police. In the August 1969 election PDPA members won only two seats; the successful candidates were Karmal and Amin.

Parcham profited, but also ultimately suffered, because of its association with Daoud. Despite their "royalist" reputation, Parcham leaders supported Daoud's plan to seize power, and Parcham sympathizers in the military played a key role in the relatively bloodless coup d'état that toppled the monarchy on June 17, 1973. Half of Daoud's first cabinet consisted of figures associated with Parcham. Khalq was excluded from the government because of its lack of good political connections and its go-it-alone policy on noncooperation. Taraki did sing a song of united fronts briefly after Daoud's takeover in an attempt to gain places in the government for his followers, but this effort was unsuccessful. Impressed by Karmal's success in infiltrating the armed forces, the Khalq leader abandoned his party's traditional emphasis on working-class recruitment and sought to build his own power base within the officer corps. He was aided in this endeavor by Amin, a brilliant organizer, whose work in the armed forces yielded fruit in April 1978. It is estimated that by the late 1970s Khalq had two or three times the membership of Parcham (the PDPA total was 4,000 to 5,000 persons). It recruited aggressively, whereas Karmal's hands were tied because of his government connections.

Daoud had little love for the left. He sent zealous young Parchamis off to the villages to promote social reforms, a kind of Afghan "Peace Corps," in order to get them out of the capital. After enduring the hostility of villagers for a while, most returned to Kabul disillusioned, only to be jailed by the regime for dereliction of duty. Qader, the air force officer who played such a central role in both the 1973 and the 1978 coups, was demoted and sent to manage the public slaughterhouses after he criticized the president for not implementing socialist reforms. When Daoud turned against leftists, purged them from his government, and instituted an authoritarian political system with his 1977 constitution, Parcham was most seriously exposed.

Both parties were consistently pro-Soviet. They accepted financial and other forms of aid from the Soviet embassy and intelligence organs. Taraki and Karmal maintained close contact with embassy personnel, and it appears that Soviet Military Intelligence (*Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye*—GRU) assisted Khalq's recruitment of military officers. It is also apparent that Moscow played a major role in the reconciliation

of Taraki's and Karmal's factions in 1977. During the previous year, the publications of the pro-Moscow communist parties of India, Iraq, and Australia called for Khalq and Parcham to resolve their differences. Most instrumental in the negotiations that led to a reunified PDPA were members of the CPI and Ajmal Khattak, a Pakistani leftist (and a Pashtun), who lived in exile in Kabul. It is unlikely that they would have taken the initiative, however, without the encouragement of the Soviet Union. In March 1977 a formal agreement on unity was achieved, and in July the two factions held their first joint conclave in a decade. In light of Daoud's growing repression of the left at that time, one of the questions discussed was the removal of his "dictatorial regime." But the merger was a patchwork affair (perhaps a shotgun marriage at the Soviets' insistence) that did not resolve the deep social, ethnic, ideological, and personal differences that separated Khalq and Parcham. These became evident once the PDPA came to power in the spring of 1978.

The Soviet Role in the 1978 Coup d'État

The issue of Soviet involvement in the overthrow of Daoud is one that has divided Western observers of Afghan affairs. Some believe that the Soviet Union lost its patience with Daoud and used the PDPA and its cadres in the military to eliminate him. Arnold writes in *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism* that "Moscow's decision . . . to try to heal the irreconcilable differences between Parcham and Khalq implies that it was actively promoting the Great Saur (April) Revolution"; it insisted on unity rather than simply backing one faction because the "coup would need the full strength and complementary capabilities of Parcham and Khalq." Ralph H. Magnus in a 1983 article quotes Karmal (in an interview with an Indian journalist) as saying that Daoud was planning to become the "Anwar Sadat of Afghanistan" and that the PDPA factions were united because "Russia wanted that there should be a revolution here."

Other commentators are less sure how formidable the Soviet role was. Bradsher suggests in *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* that Moscow did not engineer the coup but knew beforehand that the PDPA was planning one and took no steps to thwart it. Soviet military advisers, always under tight political control, were in a position to know about crucial developments in the days leading up to April 27 and may have assisted the

insurgents in launching air and armored attacks. Rumors that Soviet pilots flew air strikes against the Presidential Palace began circulating because Westerners assumed, somewhat condescendingly, that Afghan pilots were incapable of firing rockets against their targets with the kind of accuracy displayed. Bradsher concludes that "Moscow authorized a Soviet role in helping the coup succeed while not becoming publicly committed in case it failed."

A third view, distinct from theses of Soviet maximal or minimal involvement, is that the coup d'état caught Moscow almost entirely by surprise. Soviet influence in Afghanistan was pervasive, and Moscow regarded the PDPA as a friendly, if not fraternal, party deserving support and encouragement. But, according to this view, they had no desire to eliminate Daoud. Probably the most convincing evidence in support of this view is the hurried and haphazard manner in which the coup was planned and executed. If Amin had not taken the initiative in the first crucial hours, Daoud might have succeeded in eliminating the party. Moscow's role in bringing Parcham and Khalq together in 1977, however, and alleged assistance given the insurgents by Soviet advisers on April 27 suggests that Bradsher's interpretation is the most plausible: Moscow knew what was going on and wished to leave all options open.

A crucial element is the relationship between Daoud and the Soviet Union in the months before the coup. Daoud clearly resented the Soviets, and he sought to reduce their influence by developing ties with the conservative Arab states of the Persian Gulf and, especially, with the shah of Iran. In the mid-1970s the shah, enriched by the quadrupling of oil revenues in 1973 and 1974, may have dreamed of drawing Afghanistan out of the Soviet and into a new Iranian sphere of influence. He promised Daoud as much as US\$10 billion in aid. But by 1977 it was apparent that the shah's ambitious schemes would not materialize. Thus, it is unlikely that the Soviets regarded the shah as a threat at that time. During the 1973-78 period Afghanistan remained the second largest noncommunist recipient of Soviet aid, surpassed only by India.

In 1974 the Soviets pressured Daoud into agreeing to a Moscow-sponsored Asian collective security plan that affirmed the legitimacy of contemporary boundaries between Asian countries; Moscow's intention was to invalidate Chinese claims to territories taken from them by tsarist Russia. The president was reluctant to endorse the plan because it meant that his regime had to take a less assertive stance on the issue of Pash-

tunistan (see Daoud's Republic, 1973-78, ch. 1). He had, however, little choice, since the Soviets were determined to improve their relations with Pakistan in order to counterbalance Chinese influence in that country. By 1977 strains between Daoud and the Soviets were becoming apparent. In April of that year, he visited Moscow. CPSU secretary general Leonid Brezhnev apparently gave him a tongue-lashing over his exclusion of leftists from his government and his eagerness to find non-Soviet sources of economic and military aid. According to Afghan witnesses, Daoud exploded, retorting that Afghanistan was an independent country and he could govern it any way he wished. The meeting between the two heads of state either broke up or continued on a sour note. On his way back to Kabul, Daoud stopped over at Tashkent, but he walked out of an official reception with Soviet Uzbek dignitaries when they began extolling the common destiny of Afghanistan and the Soviet Central Asian republics.

Although the Soviets were doubtless displeased with Daoud's testy show of independence, they were also well aware of the weaknesses and divisions in the left in Afghanistan. It is unlikely that they intended to eliminate the president, a man they knew, in order to replace him with leaders such as Taraki and Karmal who had little popular support and might plunge the country into civil war. Daoud was, moreover, an old man (69 in 1978). The Moscow-sponsored union of Parcham and Khalq may have been in preparation for his peaceful passage from the scene in the near future. Insofar as one can make generalizations, Soviet behavior on the international scene has been cautious; they will not act unless they perceive a direct threat to their interests. It is unlikely that Daoud was regarded as such a threat in 1977 or 1978.

An actor of some importance in the Afghan drama was Ambassador Puzanov. He had been at his post since 1970, and, according to some observers, he had far more freedom of action in the field than most Soviet diplomats, in part because of his status as a member of the CPSU Central Committee. Magnus notes that he was "extremely active and ambitious," but Bradsher offers another perspective, describing Puzanov as an "alcoholic seventy-two-year-old castoff from Kremlin political struggles two decades earlier."

"The Revolution Devours Its Own," May-November 1978

Like the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution, the

PDPA and its supporters constituted only a tiny percentage of the total population when the PDPA's cadres in the military seized power. Unlike the Bolsheviks, the party lacked leaders of the caliber of Lenin and Trotsky to steer it through myriad crises. The merger of Parcham and Khalq rapidly became unglued, and before the year was over, populations in large areas of the country had revolted against the regime's hasty and ill-considered reforms.

The first cabinet was a careful balancing act of Parcham, Khalq, and military personalities. Taraki, as prime minister, and Karmal, as senior deputy prime minister, occupied the highest and second highest places in a well-defined hierarchy. The third-ranked position, minister of foreign affairs, was awarded to Amin, a Khalqi; Colonel Watanjar, an officer with Khalqi inclinations, was appointed to the fourth-ranked post, minister of communications, while Qader, a Parcham sympathizer, occupied the fifth-ranked position, minister of defense. Nur Ahmad Nur, a Parchami, was awarded the sixth-ranked position, minister of the interior.

To paraphrase Mao Zedong, in Afghanistan not only revolution but politics comes out the barrel of a gun. Parcham's control of the ministries of defense and interior (the latter having responsibility for the police), ostensibly placed Khalq in a distinctly disadvantageous position. But Qader seems to have been a bumbling incompetent, and Amin's pervasive connections within the officer corps enabled Khalq to turn the tables. Although there was no open violence of the kind that characterized Afghan politics in the months before the Soviet invasion, Parcham's fortunes began to ebb. During May and June 1978, press references to Parchami figures in the government became noticeably scarce. In late June and early July, however, Kabul newspapers announced the appointment of prominent Parcham figures as ambassadors abroad. Karmal was posted to Prague, Ahmad Nur to Washington, and Ratebzdad to Belgrade. The conscription of Parcham leaders (10 altogether) into Afghanistan's foreign service followed a venerable precedent. Early oppositionist figures in Bolshevik Russia were not liquidated but were exiled to diplomatic posts. Because Amin was foreign minister, he was in a position to keep the exiles under surveillance while abroad.

Hard on the heels of the ambassadorial appointments was a reorganization of the PDPA and state leadership. The primary beneficiary of the changes was Amin, who became a party secretary and Taraki's sole deputy prime minister. He

had also assumed control of the newly organized political police, the Organization for Protection of the Interests of Afghanistan (Da Afghanistan da Gato da Satalo Adara, in Pashtu—AGSA; sometimes translated Afghan Interests Protection Service). Watanjar replaced the exiled Ahmad Nur as minister of interior. Parchamis in the schools, civil service, and military were fired and in some cases arrested. The newly built prison at Pol-i Charki outside of Kabul was soon filled beyond capacity with both old regime figures and Parchamis. Amin's police chief, Asadullah Sarwari, soon gained a reputation for brutality and sadism that earned him the unaffectionate nickname, "King Kong." On July 19 Taraki boasted that "there was no such thing as a Parcham party in Afghanistan, and there is no such thing now."

Every revolution seems to need a counterrevolutionary plot in order to focus its energies, and Afghanistan's was unearthed in August 1978. On August 17, Qader, still defense minister, was arrested for his part in a conspiracy that allegedly had been organized by the Parcham exiles abroad. Arrests of other cabinet ministers and high-ranking military officers followed. Karmal and the other Parcham ambassadors were expelled from the PDPA and ordered to return to Kabul. Naturally disinclined to commit suicide, they went into hiding in Eastern Europe and, according to Louis Dupree, ended up in Moscow. It is unclear whether they were really involved in an antiregime plot. According to the official account, they had concocted plans for a second military coup that was to be executed in early September during a major Muslim holiday. Karmal allegedly planned to return from exile, assume the reins of power, and force the Khalqis (disarmed in the coup) to accept a moderate, united-front strategy; this was supposed to include moderates and non-PDPA leftists in a new coalition government. The real motivation for this "anti-revolutionary network," however, seems to have been the disaffection of Muslim and nationalist military officers who feared that Taraki was making Afghanistan a Soviet satellite. A wave of political arrests continued August to November. The brutality—reminiscent of the bloodiest episodes of the European Middle Ages and the Holy Inquisition—intensified. Sarwari personally tortured many victims, including the former minister of planning, Soltan Ali Keshmand.

On November 27, 1978, the PDPA Central Committee convened a meeting that published the details of the alleged plot. It also announced Amin's appointment as a member of the

Political Bureau (Politburo), the highest organ of the party. Amin was becoming a kind of Frankenstein's monster for Taraki. Officially described as the "loyal student" of the "great leader" Taraki, he was probably the most powerful man in Afghanistan by the close of 1978. The president, who according to some accounts lived in an alcoholic haze much of the time, had become little more than a figurehead.

Revolution and Popular Resistance

Revolution accelerated on both the symbolic and the substantial levels between June and November 1978. The ousting of Parchamis that occurred during the spring and early summer meant that there was no one within the regime who could act as a brake on Taraki's radicalism. In mid-June Afghanistan's new flag, a red banner with a gold emblem that bore suspicious resemblance to the flags of the Soviet Central Asian republics, was unveiled; the old flag had been black, red, and green, and the omission of green was regarded by Afghans as especially portentous since it is the color of Islam. Taraki was, of course, in no position to carry out a campaign of antireligious propaganda; but he wanted a reformed (tamed) Islam, and he asserted that "we want to clean Islam in Afghanistan of the ballast and dirt of bad traditions, superstition and erroneous belief. Thereafter, we will have progressive, modern and pure Islam." It is significant that while the first three decrees issued by the RC in April and May 1978 began with the conventional Islamic invocation "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate", the fourth decree (issued on May 15 and declaring the regime's commitment to the equality of all ethnolinguistic groups) and the remaining four that followed it omitted this formula.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth decrees (proclaimed on July 12, October 17, and November 28, 1978) outlined comprehensive reforms designed to transform the countryside. The sixth decree aimed at eliminating usury. It abolished mortgages on land made before 1973; forgave the debts of tenants, landless laborers, and small landholders; and established fixed rates for the repayment of mortgages agreed to after 1973. The 1973 date was chosen as a watershed because the regime assumed that interest payments on earlier obligations were more than sufficient to pay the principal. An amendment to the decree established a system of provincial and district committees to arbitrate peasant disputes. But these measures had seri-

ous and unintended consequences. Moneylenders became extremely reluctant to extend loans at the new, low rates, and some debtors managed to have their obligations forgiven even though they were not covered by the decree, which dealt only with debts on land and crops. There were new opportunities for corruption, as provincial and district officials serving on the arbitration committees had the power to determine which mortgages could be forgiven (records were easily altered). According to Louis Dupree, the decree "struck at the heart of the reciprocal rights and obligations around which rural life in Afghanistan is organized." Because peasants depended on loans from year to year, the drying up of traditional sources of capital created many hardships.

The seventh decree attempted to promote equality between the sexes in married life. It fixed a maximum amount for the bride-price (*mahr*), established a minimum age for marriage at 18 years for men and 16 years for women, abolished forced marriages, and established legal penalties of imprisonment for violating the decree's provisions. It also gave officials the power to confiscate all properties exchanged between the bride and groom's families in excess of the legal maximum. Like the decree on usury, this represented an unexpected and unwanted intrusion on the system of reciprocal exchanges that were basic to rural society (see Family, ch. 2). Excessive bride-prices, often bankrupting families, were an ancient evil, but they cemented alliances between families that were often vital for survival. Limiting them, moreover, deprived women of often their sole source of economic security if they were divorced or separated from their husbands. Although the PDPA leadership designed the measure to improve the lives of rural women, anthropologist Nancy Tapper suggests that they may in fact have suffered a loss in status, in places where the decree was effectively implemented, because they were now being given away "free" (thus, without honor) in marriage transactions by their families. Any government initiative redefining gender roles, moreover, was doomed to encounter the hostility of rural Afghan males whose sexism, in the words of one writer, is as massive as the Hindu Kush. The Khalqi policy of encouraging the education of girls, for example, aroused deep resentment in the villages. Local sensibilities were also offended by the secular character of new curricula and the practice of putting girls and boys in the same classroom.

The eighth decree dealt with land reform. It sought to redistribute arable land to "deserving persons," including agri-

cultural laborers, tenants, the smallest and poorest landholders, certain classes of nomads, and members of other categories who were perceived to be the least well-off in a society where suitable land is in short supply and its distribution unequal (see Land Tenure and Land Reform, ch. 3). Louis Dupree suggests that the object of the decree was to foster the development of a new class of small landholders who could be organized into cooperatives. On November 14, 1978, a "charter to form cooperatives" was promulgated that outlined the organization and membership of these bodies. Land reform was begun in January 1979. Haste and lack of planning, however, frustrated the attainment of its stated goals.

Although the sixth decree, abolishing usury, was an innovation, the measures relating to marriage and land reform had ample precedent in modern Afghan history. As early as 1884, Amir Abdur Rahman had sought to curb excessive bride-prices and improve the status of rural women. There had been limited experiments with land reform, and Daoud had announced a land reform program in 1975 (see Abdur Rahman Khan, 1880-1901; Daoud's Republic, 1973-78, ch. 1). Little in the experience of the PDPA and its leaders, however, had prepared them to deal effectively with rural problems. They were either impractical tea shop radicals, like Taraki, or urbanites with little understanding or sympathy for village life, like Karmal. The result was that their policies, while attacking the systems of rural inequality and poverty, ignored basic causes and provoked widespread resistance. Like Amanullah, the party intemperately challenged traditional patterns and ways of life. Its symbolic politics were perceived by many as attacks on Islam. Its growing reliance on the Soviet Union, moreover, earned it the contempt of the majority of Afghans, who had long felt hostility toward the intrusive, atheistic colossus to the north.

In May, a month after the coup, Burhannudin Rabbani, a professor at Kabul University, established the National Rescue Front composed of nine Islamic and anticommunist groups opposing the regime. There were occasional bombings in Kabul and a flood of antiregime *shabnamah* (night letters). But the country was relatively quiet in the period between the coup and the autumn of 1978. The first insurrection in the countryside flared up in the Nuristan region of eastern Afghanistan in September 1978 (see fig. 2). It was followed by uprisings in areas as widespread and ethnically diverse as Badakhshan Province in the northeast, Paktia and Ghazni provinces in the

east, Balkh Province in the north, Herat and Farah provinces in the west, and Parvan and Kapisa provinces near the capital. Louis Dupree notes that the insurrections did not conform to the traditional mode of intergroup and antigovernment resistance. Usually, the fighting season began in the fall after the gathering of the harvest; at that time there was sufficient leisure time to pick up guns and settle old scores. With the coming of spring, hostilities generally ceased as men occupied themselves with planting crops. This did not happen in the spring of 1979. The regime, aided by Soviet military advisers, met popular resistance with brutal tactics, such as the bombing and extermination of whole villages. The fighting continued through spring and summer as a large portion of the rural population and thousands of deserters from the Afghan army joined the rebellion (see *Political Bases of the Resistance*, this ch.).

Guerrillas began operating from neighboring Pakistan and, to a lesser extent, Iran. In March 1979 the city of Herat was convulsed by a popular uprising, supported by local garrisons, whose targets included Khalqis and Soviet advisers. As many as 100 Soviets were killed, sometimes tortured to death in horrible ways, by enraged Afghan mobs. Government forces recaptured the city, killing between 3,000 and 5,000 Afghans.

Growing Soviet Involvement

The Soviet presence in Afghanistan had always been substantial, but Moscow increased the volume of aid and the number of military and other advisers in the wake of the April 1978 coup. The Soviets also granted all-important recognition of the socialist nature of the regime, although they must have been aware of the weaknesses and idiosyncrasies of the PDPA. On May 18, 1978, Amin, in his capacity as foreign minister, visited Moscow on his way to the Nonaligned Movement conference in Havana. He was received warmly by Soviet foreign minister Andrey Gromyko. The language of their joining communiqué, identifying their party as well as state offices, signaled the CPSU's willingness to accept the PDPA as a fellow Marxist party. (In meetings with noncommunist dignitaries, the Soviets customarily mention only their state, but not party, titles.)

Taraki visited Moscow December 4-7, 1978. On December 5 he and Leonid Brezhnev signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness, and Cooperation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Democratic

Republic of Afghanistan. This brief, 15-article document, similar in general outline to friendship treaties made by Moscow with such states as India, the Mongolian People's Republic (Mongolia), Vietnam, and South Yemen, includes promises to "strengthen and broaden mutually beneficial economic, scientific, and technical cooperation" and promote cultural exchanges (Articles 2 and 3); expressions of mutual respect for Afghanistan's "policy of nonalignment" and Moscow's "policy of peace" (Article 5); and a provision that the two countries "shall consult each other on all major international issues affecting the interests of the two countries" (Article 10). There is also a commitment to carry out a "consistent struggle against machinations by the forces of aggression" in order to achieve "the final elimination of colonialism and racism in all their forms and manifestations" (Article 9). In terms of future developments, however, Article 4 was the most portentous. It promises that the two states "shall consult each other and take by agreement appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence, and territorial integrity of the two countries" and will "develop cooperation in the military field on the basis of appropriate agreements concluded between them." This security clause, one of the most explicit agreed to by the Soviet Union and a non-Warsaw Pact state, provided the formal justification for the Soviet invasion in December 1979.

While Taraki was in Moscow, he also signed agreements providing expanded interparty relations between the CPSU and the PDPA and the establishment of a permanent Soviet-Afghan intergovernmental commission to promote economic cooperation. On the occasion of the signing of the friendship treaty, Brezhnev commented expansively that Soviet-Afghan ties "have assumed, I would say, a qualitatively new character—permeated by a spirit of friendship and revolutionary solidarity."

By early 1979 Soviet leaders had agreed on a proper characterization of the PDPA regime that placed it firmly in the socialist camp. In a speech on February 29, 1979, Mikhail A. Suslov, the CPSU's chief theoretician, included Afghanistan as one of the "states of socialist orientation" that had appeared in the Third World during the previous five years. Given Suslov's immense prestige and authority in matters of ideological importance, his imprimatur carried tremendous significance. There followed, from the official Soviet media, further affirmations of Afghanistan's having "chosen socialism."

Suslov's inclusion of Afghanistan in the category of social-

ist-oriented states may have been not only an assertion of Moscow's ideological stake in the country but also a signal to the PDPA to adopt more moderate and gradualist policies. According to a lengthy treatise on the subject by two Soviet writers, V. Chirkin and Y. Yudin (*A Socialist Oriented State*, published in 1983), such a state emerges in an underdeveloped society; other examples of socialist-oriented states are South Yemen, Angola, and Ethiopia. Tribal or feudal institutions may be widespread, and there is little mass participation in politics. Because the working class is not strong enough to have a viable political movement of its own, power is wielded by a bloc of "democratic patriotic forces" ("the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the people"), encompassing diverse class interests. Gradually, this may evolve into a Marxist-Leninist party or parties. This can occur, however, only after a process of social transformation. The socialist-oriented state is the instrument used by progressive leaders to promote the development of a modern working class and a working-class party. Part of Moscow's disenchantment with the Khalqis seems to have been its conviction that their radical zeal disregarded objective criteria that made the socialist-oriented state concept appropriate.

The Deepening Crisis

Like Brer Rabbit in Uncle Remus' tale of the Tar Baby, the Soviets found themselves getting more deeply—and inescapably—involved in a very sticky situation. The bloody Herat uprising elicited a commitment of hundreds and perhaps thousands of new military advisers. Women and children dependents of Soviet personnel were evacuated. In April 1979 Vasily S. Safronchuk, a diplomat who had served for a time as deputy permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) in New York, was posted to Kabul to serve as a kind of senior adviser to the PDPA leadership. Formally a subordinate of Ambassador Puzanov, he apparently acted independently of the embassy and maintained offices in the House of the People (formerly the Presidential Palace) and the foreign ministry. One of his tasks seems to have been to dampen the Khalqis' radical zeal. He persuaded Taraki and Amin to make highly visible trips to mosques in order to placate popular religious feeling, and he advised them to include Parchamis and noncommunists in the government to gain wider popular support. This latter suggestion, so much like Parcham's united-front strategy, was re-

jected. The unpopular land reform program, however, was halted in July 1979.

According to Male, whose account of events in her book *Revolutionary Afghanistan* is perhaps overly sympathetic to Amin but still highly informative, Amin was highly suspicious of the Soviets and struggled to preserve Afghanistan's independence and nonaligned status. As foreign minister he repeatedly emphasized the nonaligned theme and strove to preserve the United States presence in his country, modest though it was, as a counterweight to the Soviets. On several occasions he requested an increase in United States aid. Male notes that Amin enjoyed a "good working relationship" with the United States ambassador, Adolph Dubs. During the seven months that Dubs served in Kabul, he called on Amin 14 times (apparently most diplomats found Amin insufferable and avoided him).

On February 14, 1979, however, Dubs was kidnapped by three (some accounts say four) gunmen. Most observers agree that they were members of the Maoist extremist group Settem-i-Melli. They apparently announced that they were holding Dubs hostage for the release of several of their imprisoned comrades. Despite United States insistence that the crisis be settled through negotiation, Afghan security forces charged the hotel room where Dubs was held captive. The ambassador and two (or three) of his captors were killed. Rumors, largely unsubstantiated, that Soviet advisers had ordered the security force attack circulated in Kabul. Washington held the regime responsible for the ambassador's death.

Male suggests that the order to attack may have been given by Taraki. Dubs' murder remains shrouded in mystery, but in any event the incident resulted in the sharp reduction of United States operations in the country. The regime offered condolences but no formal apology, and an indignant President Jimmy Carter suspended all aid programs; conditions for their resumption were an apology and improving internal conditions. Diplomatic representation in Kabul was downgraded to the *chargé d'affaires* level. United States attention, moreover, was focused on Iran, where the shah, a major ally, had been forced out of power in January 1979. In Washington's eyes, dealing with chaos in Iran was a higher priority than dealing with chaos in Afghanistan. Even if Iran had been stable and Dubs' tragic death had not occurred, it is unclear that the United States presence would have deterred Soviet activities. Male argues, however, that "the assassination provided the

coup de grace to Amin's efforts to maintain relations with the US." The Soviets were left with a clear field.

Clear, that is, except for Amin himself. On March 27, 1979, he took over the office of prime minister from Taraki, although Taraki remained president of the RC and PDPA secretary general. The popular insurrection intensified, and more soldiers joined or attempted to join the rebels during the spring and summer months; there were major mutinies at Jalalabad in June and at the Bala Hissar, the old fortress overlooking Kabul, in August. Soviet advisers and civilians continued to be the targets of violence. Safronchuk and his superiors grew increasingly impatient with Amin, whom they blamed for the chaotic situation in the country. By midsummer the Soviets were virtually running the government, but Amin stubbornly refused to go along with their policy recommendations. In July he took over the post of minister of defense and reshuffled the cabinet. Three ministers were demoted to minor portfolios.

According to Indian communist sources, Parchamis still at large attempted unsuccessfully to seize power in the spring of 1979. There was a wave of arrests, and special courts sentenced many Parchami "counterrevolutionaries" to death; it was estimated that around 300 political prisoners had been executed in the year since the April 1978 coup. There was evidence that Moscow had been behind the Parchamis' plot. By summer United States intelligence sources in Kabul indicated that the Soviets were determined to get rid of Amin. Rumors circulated that the Soviets were holding talks with Yousuf and Nur Ahmed Etemadi, men who had each served as prime minister under King Zahir Shah. Etemadi, confined in the Poli Charki prison, allegedly was picked up at the prison several times by a Soviet embassy car.

Ultimately, the Soviets enlisted Taraki in their attempt to liquidate Amin. On his way back from the Nonaligned Movement conference in Havana in September, Taraki stopped over for a couple of days in Moscow. There Taraki and Brezhnev apparently agreed on broadening the regime's popular appeal by including noncommunist figures like Etemadi. Some sources say that the Soviets concocted a second reconciliation between Taraki and the emigré Karmal, although other observers deny this, saying that Karmal was living in Prague rather than Moscow at the time. The first step in the plan was Amin's assassination. Sarwari, head of the police and loyal to Taraki, arranged to have his men assassinate the prime minister as he made his way to Kabul airport to welcome Taraki back from

Havana and Moscow on September 11. But Amin was informed by his own man, Syed Daoud Taroon, a police commandant in Taraki's entourage, and replaced Sarwari's men with loyal army units as his escort to the airport. As Arnold notes, "Taraki's surprise at being greeted by a live and healthy Amin was obvious." Both men indulged in a comradely bear hug.

A second attempt was made on September 14. Taraki summoned Amin to his office in the House of the People. Puzanov assured the suspicious Amin over the telephone that Taraki meant him no harm and that the two men should seek a way to overcome their differences. Still suspicious, Amin brought along an armed escort. There was a shootout. Amin's associate Taroon was killed, but Amin left and returned with a contingent of soldiers and arrested Taraki.

On September 16 it was announced that Taraki had resigned his posts for "health reasons." Amin became both PDPA secretary general and RC president. On September 23 he claimed at a news conference that Taraki was "definitely sick." On October 10 the *Kabul Times* published a small back page announcement that Taraki "died yesterday morning of [a] serious illness, which he had been suffering for some time." The real illness, according to Arnold, "was lack of oxygen, brought on by the application of fingers to the neck and pillows over the nose and mouth by three members of the presidential guards service . . ."; to borrow the title of Akira Kurosawa's film version of *Macbeth*, Amin set atop a "throne of blood."

Soviet Preparations for Invasion

In April 1979, General Aleksey Yepishev, head of the Soviet Army's Political Directorate, visited Afghanistan with an entourage of generals and "political workers" to assess the training, morale, and political consciousness of the Afghan armed forces. His report back to Moscow was reputedly negative. The significance of his visit was suggested by the fact that he had performed a similar mission in Czechoslovakia in 1968 during the short-lived "Prague Spring" and had recommended Warsaw Pact intervention. In August another military delegation, led by General Ivan G. Pavlovskiy, arrived in the country. Whereas Yepishev's visit had lasted only a week, Pavlovskiy's lasted two months and was shrouded in secrecy. His delegation traveled around the country, assessing the security situation. Western observers noted with considerable consternation that

Pavlovskiy had planned and commanded the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

In the spring and summer of 1979, there was an unusual amount of military activity in the Soviet republics bordering Afghanistan. As early as March, the United States issued a warning to Moscow against intervention. But Afghanistan's inclusion in the socialist camp, a theme emphasized by Suslov and reiterated in the official press in early 1979, justified (from Moscow's perspective) armed intervention. The Brezhnev Doctrine, first unveiled after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, asserted the Soviet Union's right to intervene in friendly, socialist countries if reactionary forces threatened socialist construction.

The PDPA was apparently apprehensive about the possibility of a Soviet invasion. The media through 1979 appealed to traditional Afghan xenophobia by using the Dari word *farangi* to describe foreign enemies of the revolution. This word, literally meaning "Frenchman," generally refers to Westerners, although historically it was used to describe the British. Arnold suggests that in the context of 1979 it may have referred to Russians as well as British and Americans. In the face of social collapse and repeated military disasters, both Taraki and Amin repeatedly asserted the regime's ability to handle its own problems. There was also a pathetic insistence of Afghanistan's "nonaligned" status.

Although Soviet leaders Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin sent their congratulations to Amin on the occasion of his election as PDPA secretary general on September 16, he had no illusions about Moscow's intention to eliminate him. Relations between Amin and Puzanov were naturally hostile, given the latter's attempt to lure him into a death trap on September 14. He demanded Puzanov's departure. The Afghan leader's absence was conspicuous at the Soviet embassy's November 7 celebration of the anniversary of the October Revolution. Puzanov left Kabul on November 19; his replacement was Fikryat A. Tabeyev, who was still ambassador in late 1985.

Amin sought to leave his own mark on Afghan policy by establishing a 57-member constitutional committee to revise or rewrite the constitution. The inclusion of several Muslim clergymen on this body suggests that Amin was seeking a wider base of popular support. He established a special revolutionary court to review the cases of political prisoners confined since April 1978, with the result that several hundred were (he claimed) released. A critic of Taraki's "personality cult," Amin

stressed the importance of legality. He renamed the secret police, AGSA, the Workers' Intelligence Institute (Kargari As-tekhbarati Muassessa, in Pashtu—KAM) and promised that its excesses would be curbed. KAM was placed under the command of his nephew, Asadullah Amin. In early December 1979 Amin established the National Organization for the Defense of the Revolution. This body was designed to mobilize popular support for the regime throughout the country.

On September 9, 1979, Amnesty International published a report claiming that since the April 1978 coup 12,000 political prisoners were being held without trial in the Pol-i Charki prison alone. There were also charges of widespread use of torture. Amin heatedly denied the charges.

Tensions with Pakistan were increasing because anti-regime guerrillas, the *mujahidiin* (literally, holy warriors—see Glossary), used camps in Pakistan as bases from which to launch attacks into Afghanistan. In autumn of 1979 there were around 228,000 refugees and guerrillas on Pakistani soil, mostly in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) but also in Baluchistan Province (see fig. 1). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees calculated that an additional 9,000 crossed the border each week. On September 29 Amin's foreign minister, Shah Wali, extended an invitation to President Mohammad Zia ul Haq to visit Kabul to resolve differences. Amin wanted to persuade Zia to stop offering sanctuary to the *mujahidiin*, and he perhaps also hoped, unrealistically, that improved relations with Pakistan might deter Soviet intervention. Friendly overtures to Islamabad continued through December, with increasingly desperate insistence on a summit or foreign minister-level meeting.

In late November General Viktor S. Paputin, Soviet first deputy minister of internal affairs, arrived in Kabul. Paputin may have been involved in arranging a second attempt on Amin's life. Although he returned to the Soviet Union on December 13, it appears that there was a shooting at the House of the People four days later. Amin was reportedly wounded in the leg (Pakistani sources indicate two assassination attempts, on December 3 and December 19). On December 19 the president, with a contingent of loyal Afghan troops and a few armored vehicles, moved to the Darulaman Palace complex that Amanullah had built a few miles outside Kabul.

The Soviets drew their noose tighter. Troops from the elite 105th Guards Airborne Division were ferried from Fergana in the Tadzhik Soviet Socialist Republic to Bagrami air

base near Kabul. By early December they numbered 2,500 men. On December 20 a Soviet armored unit secured the vital Salang Tunnel on the major overland route from the Soviet border to Kabul. A week later, on December 27, 1979, the invasion plan switched into high gear. Although the center of Kabul was secured by Soviet troops by the evening, resistance continued at the Darulaman Palace, probably until the early hours of December 28. According to an official announcement, Amin was sentenced to death by a "revolutionary tribunal". Most sources agree, however, that Amin, remaining true to Afghan traditions, had died fighting the foreign invader.

The Soviets and Babrak Karmal

At 8:45 P.M. on December 27, 1979, a Soviet radio transmitter located in Termez, just across the Amu Darya from Afghanistan, broadcast a statement by Karmal castigating the "intolerable violence and torture by the bloody apparatus of Hafizullah Amin" and announcing a "national *jihad* . . . a holy war of the Afghan people for true democratic justice, for respect for the holy Islamic religion . . . for implementation of the aims of the glorious April revolution." The transmitter was broadcasting on the same frequency as Radio Afghanistan in Kabul but was more powerful. Further broadcasts, transmitted from Kabul once Soviet troops controlled Radio Afghanistan, named Karmal president of a new 57-member Revolutionary Council, prime minister of the government, and secretary general of the PDPA. Early in the morning of December 28, an announcement was disseminated claiming that the government had requested "political, moral, and economic assistance, including military aid" from the Soviet Union because of the provocation of Afghanistan's "foreign enemies." Specifically, it recalled the December 5, 1978, friendship treaty as the basis for such a request.

Like many of the communist leaders who came to power in Eastern Europe after World War II, Karmal did not march into his capital in triumph but was trucked—or flown—in by the Soviets. Kept "on ice" in Moscow or Czechoslovakia after the purge of the Parcham ambassadors in August 1978, he apparently did not return to Afghanistan until after Amin was killed and Kabul secured by Soviet troops; his first public appearance was on January 1, 1980. This was, for both Karmal and the Soviets, a sensitive issue because the fiction of Karmal's dynamic leadership and a genuinely Afghan request for Soviet

military intervention had to be maintained. According to one story, Karmal had slipped into Kabul in the autumn of 1979 and gained the support of a majority of the members of the PDPA Central Committee; he claimed on several occasions after the invasion that he had arrived in Kabul by way of Pakistan and mountainous Paktia Province, a miniature "Long March" that deemphasized his Soviet connections. The Central Committee allegedly forced the reluctant Amin to agree to a request for Soviet military assistance in December. A Soviet publication claims that he made such a request four times during the month because of the insistence of other PDPA leaders (Karmal claimed with crafted ingenuousness in March 1980 that he had been ignorant of the call for Soviet help). On December 27, with the clatter of Soviet Army boots in the background, the Central Committee majority (according to official accounts) convened the revolutionary tribunal that sentenced Amin to death. It supposedly elected Karmal to the post left vacant by Amin's execution.

According to regime sources, Amin had planned an anticommunist bloodbath to commence on December 29 with the cooperation of Islamic militants. Supposedly, Amin had made contact with Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, leader of the Hezb-i-Islami (Islamic Party) in early October and promised him the post of prime minister in a new government.

On January 9, 1980, the regime announced a general amnesty for political prisoners. About 3,000 to 4,000 prisoners were released from the Pol-i Charki prison. Karmal allegedly invited some of the more prominent imprisoned figures to his office to ask their cooperation in forming a new government. Most politely asked for time to think the proposal over and then took themselves and their families off to Pakistan. On January 10 the membership of a new PDPA Central Committee and Politburo was formally announced. Five of the Politburo's seven members were Parchamis and included Karmal, his fellow exiled ambassadors, Anahita Ratebzad and Nur Ahmad Nur, and Soltan Ali Keshtmand. Keshtmand's Khalqi torturer, Sarwari, was also a member.

The Soviet Occupation

Just as analysts have disagreed on the Soviet role in the 1978 coup d'état, they have drawn different conclusions about the motivations behind the invasion and occupation of Afghan-

istan. Although there is general agreement over the immediate causes of the invasion, the assessment of Moscow's long-term goals and strategies is more controversial. One school of thought explains the invasion primarily (sometimes solely) in terms of a short-term preoccupation with rescuing a friendly and dependent socialist regime from external attack and internal disintegration. Troops were deployed to manage an emergency and then depart, similar perhaps to United States military intervention in Lebanon in 1958 or in the Dominican Republic in 1965. The quick fix did not work. In December 1985 Soviet troops had been in the country six years; Moscow was caught in the Afghan "quagmire."

A "strategic" school of thought, often drawing on the determinism of early twentieth-century geopolitics, depicts the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as the inevitable march of a "heartland" power to the sea. In 1904 the British geographer Halford Mackinder published a highly influential article, "The Geographical Pivot of History," arguing that Central Asia (the "pivot" later known as the "heartland"), being immune to naval power, was an impregnable base from which a state (Russia) could assert world domination. Other theorists (particularly A. T. Mahan, a proponent of naval power) argued that Russia needed access to warm water ports because its vast land area precluded easy communication between European Russia and Siberia. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 seemed to vindicate this view. The Trans-Siberian Railway could not ferry supplies in sufficient volume to support the tsar's land armies in Manchuria. The Russian Baltic Fleet sailed eight months, after being denied access to the Suez Canal by the British, to reach East Asian waters. Low on supplies and with mutinous crews, it sailed into the Strait of Tsushima in May 1905 and was decimated by a Japanese fleet. A supply and refueling base was needed in the Indian Ocean. Observers predicted that Russia would seek to carve a corridor, through western Afghanistan or Iran, to the Arabian Sea. In an age of strategic bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles, the dynamic of geopolitics seems obsolete. For many analysts, however, the occupation of Afghanistan was a decisive step in Soviet Russia's march to the Indian Ocean. Moscow's strategy of cultivating friendly relations with Indian Ocean states, such as India, Madagascar, and South Yemen, and the buildup of a Soviet naval presence in the area during the 1960s and 1970s seemed to justify such a conclusion. Once in firm possession of Afghanistan—the reasoning goes—the Soviets could extend their influence and con-

trol southward to Pakistan, an unstable and ethnically divided state on the Indian Ocean's rim. One respected analyst has suggested that by the early twenty-first century the Soviets either will have retreated back across the Amu Darya or will be the dominant military and political force in South Asia and the Middle East.

It is impossible to know for certain whether the occupation was forced by circumstances or was part of a long-range plan. The weight of the evidence suggests the former. The strategic advantages to maintaining a military presence several hundred kilometers closer to the Persian Gulf are dubious. Enhanced Soviet military capabilities (long-range aircraft and a fleet in the Indian Ocean) make installations south of the Amu Darya less essential. Nevertheless, the invasion brings certain dividends. A generation of Soviet officers is gaining experience in guerrilla warfare and "ticket punches" for rapid promotion. New weapon systems are being tested in actual combat. The country is rich in minerals, especially natural gas, and these can be exploited more easily than they could when Afghanistan was an independent country. But these advantages do not outweigh the costs, especially the enmity of Western and Third World nations.

One perspective draws on both the emergency and the strategic schools of thought. It suggests that although the Soviets, for both ideological and strategic reasons, are determined to expand their sphere of influence and control, they are acutely aware of their limitations. Thus, the decision to intervene was taken reluctantly and only after careful consideration. A useful analogy can be made with the history of the British Empire in the mid- and late nineteenth century. British expansionism on the fringes of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere was defensive in the sense that policymakers were less concerned with building new empires than with protecting existing interests. Expeditions into Afghanistan in 1837-42 and 1878-79, for example, were undertaken not for conquest but to protect British territory in India. A closer analogy to the Soviet case is possibly the British annexation of Upper Burma in 1885. The weakness of the Burmese state under King Thibaw promoted anarchy that threatened British commercial interests. There was, moreover, a perceived threat of French intervention in Upper Burma, an area the British regarded as exclusively in their sphere of influence. When King Thibaw and his ministers proved unable or unwilling to



Mujahideen passing through a village



Mujahideen gather for an operation



Hashish and opium poppy



*Soviet antipersonnel mine
Photos courtesy Kurt Lohbeck*

restore order, protect privileges given the British by treaty, and expel the French, troops were ordered in.

By such "defensive" moves, the British Empire expanded. A similar dynamic evidently operated in Afghanistan. Taraki and Amin were violent, unpopular, and ultimately ineffectual rulers, like Thibaw. Their misrule created a power vacuum that could be exploited, Moscow feared, by foreign powers. This posed a threat to Soviet territory. Foreign interference in Afghan affairs was the principal justification given by official spokesmen for the invasion. Naturally, the enemy was depicted as acting out of desperation rather than from a position of strength. According to an article published in *Pravda* on December 31, 1979, the shah's fall had caused cracks to appear "in the notorious, 'strategic arc'" that the United States had constructed along the Soviet Union's southern border. A January 3, 1980, *Pravda* article asserted that "having lost their bases in Iran, the Pentagon and the United States Central Intelligence Agency were counting on stealthily approaching our territory more closely through Afghanistan." According to Brezhnev in a speech to the CPSU Central Committee in mid-1980, "we had no choice but to send troops" in order to forestall the creation of an imperialist base in Afghanistan.

Like British imperial possessions in India and Southeast Asia, the Soviet Central Asian republics contain a population that has neither ethnic nor cultural ties—nor a deep sense of loyalty—to the colonizing power. The ethnic factor accentuated Soviet defensiveness. Soviet leaders may have envisioned a "worst case" scenario in which the PDPA regime would be replaced by a militantly Islamic one like the Islamic Republic of Iran. The spread of Islamic militance north across the Amu Darya would challenge Soviet rule over its own Tajik, Uzbek, and other Muslim peoples. Historically, the populations on both sides of the river have close ethnic and even kinship ties. Many *basmachi*, resisters to Soviet rule in Central Asia during the 1920s and 1930s, had settled in Afghanistan.

The Ideological Dimension

Ideology provides the Soviets with both a perspective from which to understand and interpret the world and a rationale for the use of military power. The Kremlin's acknowledgement, apparently by early 1979, of the "socialist oriented" nature of the PDPA regime entailed a significant commitment. Because the party's leadership, with the possible

exception of Amin, remained steadfastly loyal to the Soviet model of revolution both before and after April 1978, their incompetence and heavy-handedness could not be dismissed as deviationist. Resistance (Islamic militance and Afghan nationalism) could only be explained—and dealt with—as a contrivance of foreign imperialism and domestic reaction. Moscow could neither admit that it was an expression of genuine popular sentiment, i.e., the result of PDPA misrule, nor tolerate the sacrifice of fellow socialists on its doorstep.

Observers such as Bradsher interpret the Afghan invasion as the culmination of developments that broadened the scope of the Brezhnev Doctrine beyond its original Warsaw Pact context. The doctrine emerged as an important theme in Soviet foreign policy after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. It represented both a response to Western criticism and a warning to other Warsaw Pact states not to initiate their own "Prague Spring." Brezhnev in 1968 asserted the right of the Soviet Union and other socialist states to intervene in the internal affairs of a country in Eastern Europe where counterrevolutionary forces endangered socialism. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was carefully orchestrated to appear as if it were an undertaking of the Warsaw Pact as a whole and not Moscow alone.

With the growth of Soviet military power, the Kremlin could extend assistance to "progressive" forces in geographically remote places. In 1975, with Cuban surrogates playing an indispensable role, the Soviets began aiding the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola on a large scale. Two years later, Moscow and Havana began pumping men and material into Ethiopia to prop up the revolutionary regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam. Developments in South Yemen in 1978 are suggestive of events in Afghanistan a year later. South Yemeni president Salim Rubay Ali was both critical of the Soviet model of socialist construction (he was often described as a "Maoist") and eager to develop ties with neighboring Saudi Arabia to obtain economic aid. When he attempted to purge his rivals in the leftist National Front, Cuban military personnel, flown in by Soviet aircraft, assisted local militia in overthrowing him in June 1978. Rubay Ali was executed and replaced by a reliable pro-Moscow figure, Abd al Fattah Ismail. Ismail's own career subsequently resembled Karmal's. Forced out of power in 1980, he went into a Soviet-arranged exile in Eastern Europe, returning to South Yemen in March 1985 and in October securing a seat in that country's Politburo.

The Soviet Union was the only socialist state to participate in the invasion of Afghanistan. In late 1982, however, high-ranking defectors from KHAD reported that there were military personnel from Cuba, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Vietnam in training or advisory capacities inside the country. This reflected the Brezhnev Doctrine's emphasis on intervention by the worldwide socialist community.

Long-Term Soviet Aims

Few Western observers in the mid-1980s believed that there would be an early end to the Soviet occupation. It appeared that the Soviets planned to stay in Afghanistan—for at least 10 to 15 years—for the same reason they invaded: to preserve a friendly regime that could not survive without substantial armed assistance. The military costs to Moscow were relatively modest. The number of Soviet troops in the country—estimated by different sources as between 105,000 and 150,000 but most often given as about 118,000—was sufficient to maintain the status quo but not enough to decisively crush the resistance. (It was substantially less, for example, than the 500,000 United States troops stationed in South Vietnam in the late 1960s and early 1970s.) This limited commitment would give the Soviets time to achieve several important goals: creation of strong party and state organizations, education of a new generation of Afghans loyal to the Soviet Union; and the development of close cultural, social, and economic ties between Afghanistan and the Soviet socialist republics north of the Amu Darya. The long-range perspective was most evident in Moscow's policy of sending Afghan children, particularly war orphans, to the Soviet Union for education. In 1984 a new program was initiated that involved the sending of thousands of children between the ages of seven and 10 to Soviet schools for a 10-year period. A contingent of 870 children was sent in November 1984.

Moscow's experience with the *basmachi* uprisings north of the Amu Darya in the early 1920s set a precedent. Bradsher notes that the Soviets combined military force with a policy of co-optation and gradual transformation of the society: "Local people who had fled from any involvement with the Bolsheviks were brought into the government . . . A new generation was trained to appreciate the benefits of adherence to the large new Soviet state and had vested interests in the material prog-

ress offered by it . . .” There occurred “stages of gradual encroachment into traditional ways,” such as collectivization and the abolition of Muslim trading rights.

As in Soviet Central Asia, programs to promote literacy, health, and a higher standard of living were an important component of Moscow’s strategy. Living standards in independent Afghanistan were among the world’s poorest. Prosperity, coupled with military force and a Soviet-style education system, would ensure the allegiance of new generations of Afghans.

There was speculation in the mid-1980s that the Soviets were planning to annex the northern region of Afghanistan, whose residents are ethnically similar to those of Soviet Central Asia. Some observers envisioned the creation of a new “Afghan” Soviet Socialist Republic. But if Moscow’s dual policy of coercion and cooptation were successful, such a drastic step would be unnecessary. Afghanistan would become a compliant satellite state similar to Mongolia.

There are problems, however, with applying the *basmachi* and Mongolian precedents to Afghanistan. Although pockets of *basmachi* resistance persisted through the 1920s, the Red Army had broken the movement’s back by 1923. The Afghan resistance (sanctified, unlike the *basmachi*, with the status of jihad or holy struggle) was still formidable after six years of Soviet occupation. The drawing of Mongolia into the Soviet sphere of influence was a relatively simple matter because Mongol leaders cooperated in order to avoid domination and absorption by China. The Mongols lacked, moreover, the fighting traditions of the Afghans. Though they were the descendants of Genghis Khan, their conversion to Lamaistic Buddhism in more recent centuries made them a nation of monks rather than warriors.

Although the Soviet leadership changed three times in the period between the invasion and early 1985—from Brezhnev to Yuri Andropov in November 1982, from Andropov to Konstantin Chernenko in February 1984, and from Chernenko to Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985—Soviet policy toward Afghanistan displayed singular continuity. Rumors that Andropov, while director of the KGB, had opposed the invasion and was prepared to negotiate a political solution to the crisis became academic after his death in February 1984. In December of that year, Marshal Sergey Sokolov succeeded the powerful Dmitry Ustinov as the Soviet Union’s minister of defense. Sokolov had been in charge of operations during the 1979 invasion, and his promotion suggested that the leadership had

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no second thoughts about their decision to intervene. Although Gorbachev appeared to Western observers to be politically more astute and image-conscious than his grayer predecessors, there was little evidence in late 1985 that he was a "dove" on Afghanistan. Hints of Soviet flexibility during the November 1985 summit meeting between Gorbachev and United States president Reagan were not supported by any alteration of the basic Soviet position: that troop withdrawal could occur only when the survival of the Kabul regime could be guaranteed.

The Regional Crisis

Afghanistan straddles South Asia and the Middle East, two regions that are among the world's most unstable. The 1979 invasion heightened tensions between Afghanistan and its neighbors—Pakistan, Iran, and China—and also between these countries and the Soviet Union. It added a new factor of uncertainty to traditionally hostile relations between Pakistan and India. On the global level, Moscow's policy of championing Third World causes was seriously compromised, and it earned the enmity of practically the entire Islamic world. The invasion precipitated a crisis in United States-Soviet relations. The administration of President Jimmy Carter, already preoccupied with the Iran hostage crisis, was left in the unenviable position of verbally chastising an unheeding Moscow as it tightened its grip south of the Amu Darya. Sanctions were imposed, but they were ineffective in dissuading Moscow from continuing the military occupation (see table 12, Appendix).

Although world interest in the Afghanistan crisis had dwindled appreciably by late 1985, six years after the invasion most nations still voiced their opposition to the occupation. On November 13, 1985, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops without specifically mentioning the Soviet Union, as it had each year since an emergency session was convened in January 1980. The vote was 112 nations in favor of the resolution, 19 opposed, and 12 abstaining. This was the largest majority supporting a troop pullout since the January 1980 resolution (the 1984 figures were 119 nations in favor, 20 opposed, and 14 abstaining). The Soviet Union, its Warsaw Pact allies (except Romania), Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, Laos, Libya, Madagascar, Mongolia, South Yemen, Syria, and Viet-

nam voted against the measure. Significant abstentions included Romania and India.

Pakistan and "Proximity Talks"

The Soviet occupation had the most immediate impact on neighboring Pakistan. By late 1985 an estimated 3 million Afghan refugees had crossed over into Pakistan. Most lived in refugee camps in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). This area, like the Afghan provinces to the west of the Durand Line separating the two countries, was inhabited primarily by Pashtuns.

Between Quetta in Pakistan's Baluchistan Province and its border with China, there were more than 200 passes leading into Afghanistan. Ninety of these were motorable. The *mujahidiin* passed back and forth across the sieve-like border to launch attacks against the regime and then return to their bases in Pakistan.

From the Afghan (and Soviet) perspective, Pakistan was a base for counterrevolution. Kabul routinely accused its eastern neighbor of interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs by offering sanctuary to the *mujahidiin*. Pakistan viewed the crisis as posing three distinct but interrelated threats. First, *mujahidiin* operations brought Afghan government and Soviet forces to the border. Islamabad discovered, to its dismay, that it now had the Soviet army as a neighbor. Hot pursuit of *mujahidiin* by Afghan and Soviet forces resulted in frequent border violations. Second, KHAD agents slipped across the border to assassinate resistance leaders or stir up trouble between the various *mujahidiin* factions in Peshawar. They allegedly also maintained contact with Pakistanis opposed to the regime of President Zia. Until 1983 two sons of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the prime minister of Pakistan whom Zia had executed in April 1979, resided in Kabul. They headed Al Zulfikar, a terrorist organization whose most notorious operation was the hijacking of a Pakistan International Airlines airliner to Kabul. Their group was also linked to the assassination of several prominent politicians in 1981 and 1982.

Finally, the refugees posed a threat to internal stability. Tension between the newcomers, most of whom were armed, and Pakistani citizens increased as the passage of years and competition for scarce jobs frayed the edges of Muslim and Pashtun hospitality. Islamabad feared that unless a way to repatriate the refugees was discovered, they might become, like

the Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon, a perpetual source of trouble. There were apprehensions that the Afghans could act as a wedge to disturb the already fragile consensus that existed among the nation's different ethnic groups.

Pakistan pursued two options in response to the crisis. One was dependence on its allies—the United States, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, and China—for military and other forms of assistance. Washington committed US\$3.2 billion in economic and military aid for the 1981-86 period, substantially more than its postinvasion offer of US\$400 million, which Zia hastily dismissed in January 1980 as “peanuts.” Both the Carter and the Reagan administrations regarded Pakistan as a “front-line state,” vital to United States interests in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Arab and Chinese aid was also important as Soviet border incursions became more frequent and the burden of supporting millions of Afghan refugees increased.

Another option was pursuit of a negotiated settlement of the crisis. Islamabad initially had insisted that a withdrawal of Soviet troops must precede talks with Kabul. But a more flexible attitude was apparent in early 1981, when Zia and Pakistani foreign minister Agha Shahi urged UN secretary general Kurt Waldheim to arrange trilateral talks between the governments of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. It was not until June 16, 1982, however, that the UN under secretary for special political affairs, Diego Cordovez, convened the first of a series of indirect talks between the Afghan and Pakistani foreign ministers in Geneva. These were later called “proximity talks” because, at Pakistan's insistence, the two parties did not meet face to face but employed Cordovez as an intermediary. Iran declined to participate because representatives of the *mujahidiin* were not included. The winds between Kabul and Islamabad, by way of Geneva, blew warm and cool. Observers sensed Kabul's anxiousness to reach an understanding with Islamabad in its early 1983 decision to expel the Bhutto brothers from Afghanistan.

Between June 1982 and August 1985, five UN-sponsored sessions were held in Geneva, and more were expected in the future. During this time, four principles emerged as preconditions for a mutually satisfactory resolution of the crisis: withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; mutual pledges of noninterference and nonintervention; international guarantees of a peaceful settlement; and voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees. There were, however, formidable obstacles to imple-

mentation of these points. The Afghans, even if they were free to do so, would not request a withdrawal of Soviet troops as long as a strong *mujahidiin* movement threatened the regime's existence, and voluntary repatriation of refugees was impossible as long as the Soviets continued their occupation.

Iran and Afghanistan

Iran shares an 800-kilometer border with Afghanistan, running north-to-south from its border with the Soviet Union to the northwestern tip of Pakistan. (see fig. 1). The regions that it passes through are desert but not as rugged as those along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Thus, it was more difficult for *mujahidiin* and refugees to cross undetected. In late 1985, however, an estimated 1.9 million Afghans resided on Iranian soil (whether most came after 1979 or were earlier arrivals was unclear). Guerrilla movements operated along the border, though not on the scale of Pakistan. Because of the immense costs of the war with Iraq, Tehran could not devote its full energies to helping its eastern Muslim neighbors. Its influence was most strongly felt in the predominantly Shia Hazarajat region in central Afghanistan; there, groups whose members were followers of Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini formed an important component of the resistance.

The day after the invasion, the foreign minister of Iran, Sadeq Qotbzadeh, delivered a protest to the Soviet embassy in Tehran calling the invasion a "hostile action against Iran and all Muslims of the world." The occupation confirmed Khomeini's perception of the two superpowers as equally perfidious. An important factor was historical fear and distrust of the Soviet Union. In November 1979 Tehran repudiated a 1921 "friendship treaty" that gave Moscow the right to intervene militarily in Iran if its territory was used as a base of military operations against the Soviet Union. During and after World War II, Soviet troops had occupied portions of Iran and had sought to promote separatist movements among ethnic minorities. Iranian leaders feared the growth of Soviet influence in the region even as they denounced the United States as the "Great Satan."

Relations between Tehran and Kabul were acrimonious. In November 1981 Tehran proposed a "peace plan" involving the replacement of Soviet troops with an "Islamic peace unit." This was, needless to say, rejected by the Karmal regime. In late 1985 Iran continued to refuse to participate in the Geneva

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"proximity talks," insisting on inclusion of the *mujahidiin* as a condition for its participation.

China and Afghanistan

China's view of the invasion, like Pakistan's and Iran's, was strongly critical. On December 29, 1979, the Chinese government labeled it "another grave international incident following the Soviet armed occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968." It also condemned the Soviet action as a "threat to peace and security in Asia and the whole world." Relations between Beijing and Moscow had been laden with suspicion and hostility since the early 1960s. Afghanistan, however, was peripheral to China's major security concerns (Soviet troops stationed along its borders and in Mongolia and a hostile, Soviet-backed Vietnam to the south after 1975), but the two countries shared an 80-kilometer border where the Wakhan Corridor touches China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. The inhabitants of the corridor, mostly Kirghiz, have close ties to the people of Xinjiang. In ancient and medieval times, what is now Afghanistan skirted the fabled Silk Road between China and the West.

Although relations between China and the Soviet Union improved noticeably during the 1980-85 period, Afghanistan remained an issue of serious contention. Afghan and Soviet spokesmen regularly accused the Chinese of aiding the resistance. In June and July 1981, Soviet troops occupied the Wakhan Corridor, expelling the original inhabitants and sealing it off from Chinese infiltration. The Chinese offered Pakistan moral support and aid as a "front-line state." During talks between Chinese and Soviet leaders in the mid-1980s, the Chinese insisted that the Soviets end the occupation. This issue, along with reduction of Soviet border troops and an end to encouragement of Vietnamese expansionism, was defined by Beijing as a precondition for normalized relations with Moscow.

India's Position on the Occupation

India was the one major noncommunist state that maintained amicable relations with Afghanistan in the mid-1980s. Although the Indian government called for a withdrawal of Soviet troops on December 31, 1979, it also expressed its apprehensions about United States military commitments to Pakistan. New Delhi feared that newly acquired United States

arms could be used against India, rather than to secure the Afghan border. Its close ties with the Soviet Union, highlighted by a treaty of friendship in 1971, were another factor in its relative reluctance to issue public condemnations of the occupation. Leaders voiced support for a political resolution of the crisis and deplored the use of "cold war rhetoric" to describe the situation.

An Indian observer notes that on two occasions Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in meetings with Soviet leaders in 1980 and 1982, privately urged a pullout of Soviet troops. But before her assassination in October 1984, member nations of the Nonaligned Movement repeatedly criticized Gandhi's reluctance to publicly condemn Soviet actions. Her son, Rajiv Gandhi, elected prime minister in December 1984, was equally circumspect. He avoided criticism of the Soviet Union in his address before the UN in October 1985. As on five previous occasions, India's representative to the UN abstained in the November 13, 1985, vote on the General Assembly resolution on withdrawal.

Political Institutions Under Soviet Domination

With the death of Amin, the Afghan state lost its last shred of independence. Soviet advisers wielded great influence while Taraki and Amin were in power. After the invasion, the advisers ran the government's ministries and departments as surely as British colonial officials ran those of nineteenth-century India. Afghan administrators were carefully watched and allowed to make, at best, only routine decisions. Karmal enjoyed considerably less freedom than his counterparts in the Warsaw Pact. A puppet in every sense of the word, he presided over a government that had virtually no power, no popular support, and no room to challenge decisions handed down by the Soviets.

Testimony to the extent of Soviet control was provided by Abdul Majid Mangal, a diplomat whose last post was the Afghan embassy in Moscow and who defected to Pakistan in 1983. He noted that after the invasion, the Soviets sent noncommunist Afghan diplomats to Warsaw Pact countries to keep them under surveillance. They also trained a new generation of Afghan diplomats at universities in the Soviet Union. Safronchuk remained, in the mid-1980s, a very important figure. Though resident in Moscow, Safronchuk, described by

Mangal as "the real foreign minister of the Kabul regime," cabled instructions to the foreign ministry by way of the Soviet embassy in Kabul. Before traveling to international meetings, such as those of the UN or the Nonaligned Movement, the nominal foreign minister, Shah Mohammad Dost, customarily stopped over in Moscow to receive instructions. According to Mangal, "each communique, each statement issued by the Foreign Ministry in Kubul is prepared, drafted, and finalized in Moscow."

Observers in the mid-1980s described the network of Soviet advisers as an efficient, well-oiled machine that got things done but preserved the facade of Afghan independence. Limits to Soviet power, however, were apparent. Eighty percent of the country remained outside effective government control. Soviet advisers were also unable to stop the costly blood-feud that continued to rage between Parcham and Khalq.

The Political Role of KHAD

Because the regime depended so much on coercion to stay in power, the most important political institution, from the standpoint of ordinary Afghans in the mid-1980s, was probably the internal security organ, the State Information Service (Khadamate Ettelaate Dowlati, in Dari—KHAD). Successor to AGSA and KAM, KHAD was nominally part of the Afghan state, but it was firmly under the control of the Soviet KGB (see *Internal Security*, ch. 5). Little is known of its internal organization, but KHAD's system of informers and operatives extended into virtually every aspect of Afghan life, especially in the government-controlled urban areas. Aside from its secret police work, KHAD supervised ideological education at schools and colleges, ran a special school for war orphans, and recruited young men for the militia. Its importance to Moscow was reflected in the fact that it was chiefly responsible for the training of a new generation of Afghans who could be loyal to the Soviet Union. One observer, John Fullerton, calls it "the primary instrument used in the Sovietisation of the country." KHAD was also responsible for co-opting religious leaders. It funded an official body known as the Religious Affairs Directorate and recruited proregime ulama and mosque attendants to spy on worshippers. Another important area was work with tribes and ethnic minorities. KHAD collaborated with the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs to foster support for the regime in the countryside.

KHAD also had a political role that was clearly unintended by the Soviets. Its director, Najibullah, and other high officials were Parchamis. Thus, KHAD was zealous in suppressing Khalqis in the government and in the armed forces. There was a bitter rivalry between Najibullah and Sayed Muhammad Gulabzoi. Gulabzoi, a Khalq sympathizer, was minister of interior and commander of Sarandoy (Defenders of the Revolution), the National Gendarmerie. In late 1985, Najibullah was promoted to be a secretary on the PDPA Central Committee; in this capacity he may be able to exercise party authority over all security organs, including those attached to the Khalq-dominated defense and interior ministries.

The PDPA after the Invasion

In *A Socialist Oriented State*, Chirkin and Yudin classify the PDPA as a "revolutionary vanguard party of the working people." They suggest that it can be considered to be in the process of evolving into a genuine Marxist-Leninist party. They note that "the 1982 Rules of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan define the PDPA as a new type of party, the highest form of political organization, the leading and guiding force of society that unites advanced and most class-conscious workers, peasants, servicemen, intellectuals, nomads, craftsmen and other patriots."

Like other parties with Marxist-Leninist affinities, the PDPA was organized according to the principle of democratic centralism. This was a concept developed by Lenin before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. It meant, simply, that although party members could discuss issues freely when policies were being formulated, once a decision had been made by the party as a whole, they had to adhere to it strictly. In the PDPA constitution, allegedly adopted at its First Congress in 1965, democratic centralism was defined according to several criteria: election of party leadership on all levels; adherence of a minority to the decisions made by the majority; adherence of lower-ranking party officials to the decisions made by higher-ranking ones; and "enforcement of collective basic leadership and individual responsibility." Lenin's determination to build a tightly organized and highly disciplined party meant that, in practice, the centralist component of the theory was always more apparent than the democratic one. In the PDPA, however, factionalism impeded the smooth operation of democratic centralism, and party discipline was notoriously lax.

A second Marxist-Leninist organizational principle is the parallelism of party and state bodies. Party units in theory supervised and directed the operations of their state counterparts on the national, provincial, district, and subdistrict levels (see fig. 7). This conformed with the concept that the revolutionary party uses the state as an instrument for the transformation of society. Most Western observers agreed, however, that the *mujahidiin* prevented the PDPA from extending its organization down below the provincial level in most parts of the country. Local party figures were easy targets for assassination.

According to the party constitution, the highest authority in the PDPA is vested in the Party Congress, consisting of delegates elected by provincial party conferences. It convenes every four years, although the Central Committee, or two-thirds of the party membership, may call an extraordinary Party Congress at other times. The congress selects the members and alternate members of the Central Committee. This body, responsible to the congress, has an executive function. It administers the party and its constituent organizations and is responsible for its finances. In 1984 Western observers identified 46 full and 27 alternate members. The Central Committee chooses the membership of its Politburo Secretariat, and the party secretary general. The Politburo, in practice the most powerful party organ, consisted of nine full members and four alternate members in 1984.

Factionalism

In the mid-1980s repeated Soviet attempts to foster party discipline and unity had come to naught, and the PDPA remained bitterly divided along the Parcham-Khalq faultline (see table 13, Appendix). Each faction had bitter memories of torture and abuse at the hands of the other. Within the two groups, smaller factions, organized around individual leaders, could be identified. Within Parcham, Karmal, Keshtmand, and Solayman Laeq allegedly had the strongest personal followings. Najibullah, as head of the KHAD apparatus, was also extremely powerful. Important faction leaders among Khalqis included Gulabzoi, the minister of interior, and Muhammad Zahir Ofagh, a founder and member of the PDPA with close Soviet ties. Gulabzoi apparently led the former followers of the notorious Sarwari, an anti-Amin Khalqi who after the 1979 invasion was elected to the Politburo but then was sent off to

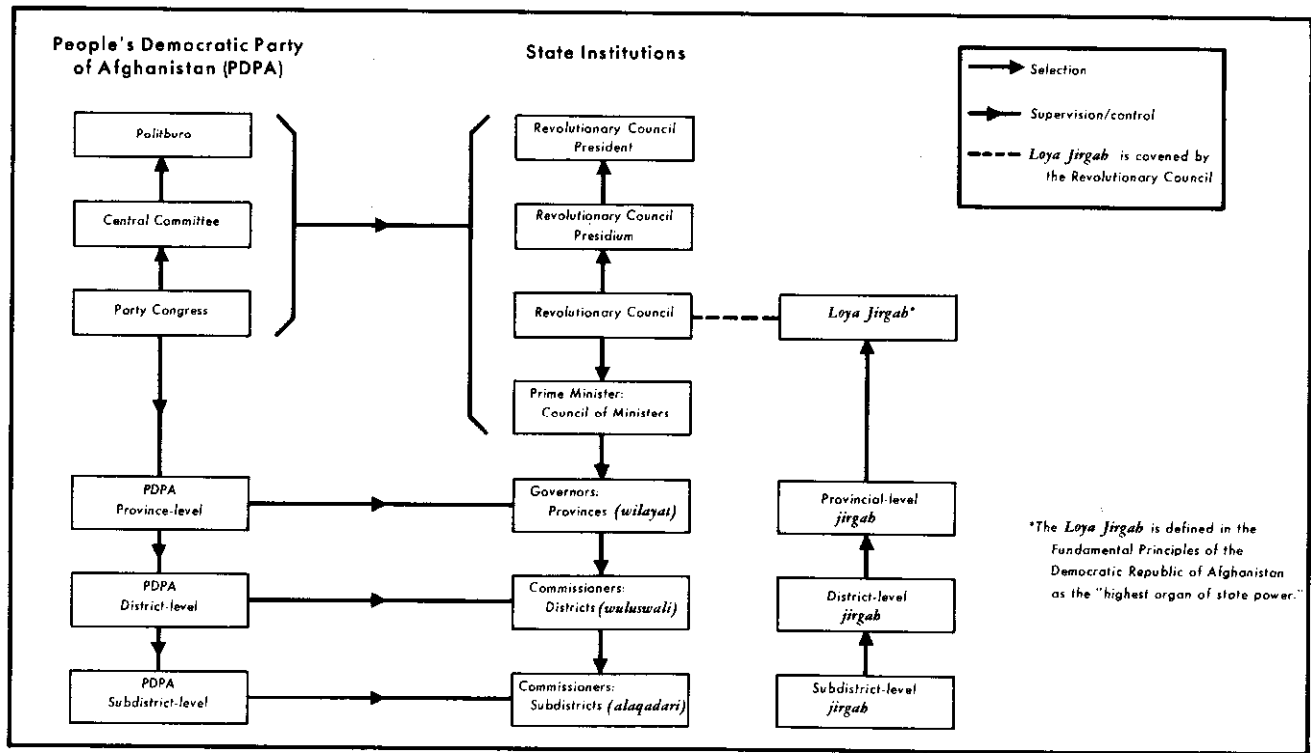


Figure 7. Party and State Structure, 1985

become ambassador to Mongolia. Some observers believed that Ghulam Dastagir Panjsheri, usually identified as a Khalqi, was forming his own faction, Kar (Labor), distinct from Parcham and Khalq. He was reportedly encouraged in this effort by the Soviets. There was evidence that Moscow was recruiting other individuals, such as Ofagh, to build an "independent" power base outside the old factional structure. Rather than exhibiting the discipline of a democratic centralist party, the internal dynamics of the PDPA continued to resemble the loosely structured personalism of traditional tribal politics.

In late 1985 the depth of factionalism was indicated by the fact that in the 20 years since its founding, the PDPA had convened only one full-fledged Party Congress—on January 1, 1965, the date of its formal establishment. A second congress was scheduled for March 1982. Around 1,700 delegates elected from lower-level party units were expected to attend. Parchamis attempted to pack the congress with their own people by appointing delegates rather than by allowing them to be elected. In this way they obtained a 60-percent majority, but they roused the ire of Khalqis, who still composed the majority of party members. Only 841 delegates attended the meeting on March 14. Gulabzoi, described by a commentator as the "standard-bearer of the Khalq faction," noisily interrupted a speech by Karmal and demanded to know why some people in the PDPA were calling his interior ministry the "ministry of bandits." KHAD director Najibullah attempted to silence him. The atmosphere became so heated that the meeting ended a day earlier than planned.

Although the conclave produced the "Rules of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan" mentioned by Chirkin and Yudin, the questionable way delegates were chosen and the lack of consensus thereafter resulted in its being downgraded in status from a congress to an ordinary party conference. There were several violent incidents. At least five party members were killed in shoot-outs.

There was a significant change in the 1982 party rules compared with the 1965 constitution, most notably the omission of references to socialism and Marxism-Leninism. This shed light on a rather ironic development. Western observers tended to describe the 1979 invasion in terms of Moscow's determination to spread communism; but Moscow seemed to want gradualism, rather than revolution, in Afghanistan. The rules reflected the orthodox view that such an underdeveloped country—a socialist-oriented rather than socialist state—was

in the national democratic stage of development. This viewpoint was bitterly opposed by Khalqis.

The party was severely crippled organizationally because the majority of rank-and-file members, Khalqis, were continually at odds with the Parcham-dominated upper ranks. Eight of the 13 members and alternate members of the Politburo in 1984 were Parchamis: Karmal, Keshtmand, Najibullah, Nur Ahmad Nur, Muhammad Rafi, Ratebzad, Qader (though he was not in the Politburo in 1985), and Mahmud Baryalai. Muhammad Aslam Watanjar, Salih Muhammad Zeary, Muhammad Ismail Danesh and, possibly, Ghulam Dastagir Panjsheri, were Khalqis (the affiliation of an alternate member, Abdul Zahoor Razmjo, was not clear). Watanjar, commander of rebel tanks during the April 1978 coup, had been involved in the plot to remove Amin, while Zeary, nicknamed "Quicksilver," was known for his skill in evading ideological commitments. Danesh was another hardy survivor, having served as minister of mines and industries under Taraki, Amin, and Karmal. Panjsheri's ambition to form his own faction and his close ties to the Soviets made him a doubtful exponent of Khalq interests. None of the men in the Politburo shared the perspective of the Khalqi rank-and-file.

Frequent shootings gave party life a Dodge City atmosphere. In late September 1985, for example, it was reported that 14 people had been killed in Parcham-Khalq confrontations. Disaffected Khalqis often assisted the *mujahidiin*. Khalqis in the armed forces often accused their Parchami officers of using them as cannon fodder and complained that young Parchami men were exempted from compulsory military service. Even Afghan students at Soviet universities kept alive the old animosity. One source reported that two Khalqi students fell out of a window of the Afghan embassy in Moscow under highly suspicious circumstances. When PDPA meetings were held by Afghan students at Moscow State University, the two factions reportedly met in different rooms.

By the mid-1980s the party's problems were too severe to hide. Karmal, in an address before the Central Committee plenum in March 1984, warned against excessive leftism (presumably a reference to Khalq), castigated the party's lack of zeal, factional selfishness, obstructionism, and "narcissism," and asserted that "a solid unity can only be ensured through an iron discipline." There was little prospect, however, that the PDPA had the will or the resources to cure its factional ills.

Membership

Figures on PDPA membership were highly unreliable. In late 1984 the party claimed a figure of 120,000 persons. This was considered by many Western observers to be as many as 10 times the actual figure. The 1984 edition of the *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, published by the Hoover Institution, suggests a figure as low as 11,000, composed of 3,000 Parchamis and 8,000 Khalqis. In a 1985 article Arnold offers a much more generous estimate of between 50,000 and 90,000. Even the higher figure is significantly less than 1 percent of the total Afghan population (around 14.7 million; for purposes of comparison, the CPSU composed in the mid-1980s about 7 percent of the Soviet population, and the Chinese Communist Party, 4 percent of China's). The statistics suggest that the party has had only limited success in recruitment, despite the rewards of membership. According to the Peshawar-based *Afghanistan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin*, the salaries of civil servants who joined the party were quadrupled, and those of armed forces personnel were doubled or tripled. Balanced against this, of course, was the risk of being assassinated by the *mujahidiin*.

During Amin's months in power—September-December 1979—party membership plunged because of his brutal purges of both Parchamis and pro-Taraki Khalqis. After the invasion the party grew slowly but steadily. It was prepared to accept practically anyone who applied. One noticeable trend in the 1980s was the decline in members' educational qualifications. The party had been founded by intellectuals, but Arnold notes that only 40 of the 841 delegates attending the March 1982 conference were intellectuals or professionals. About half the party members were from worker, craftsman, or peasant backgrounds. Other sources give 60 percent of the party membership as belonging to the armed forces, Sarandoy, or KHAD.

The Succession

Although the Soviets could not curb factional violence or transform the PDPA into a disciplined party, their involvement in its internal affairs meant that they had a decisive role in choosing who would succeed Karmal. In 1985 Karmal was a relatively young 56 years of age, but the life expectancy of Afghan leaders has tended to be short. Soviet support of Karmal, moreover, was far from unequivocal. He was an inef-

fectual leader. Rumors circulated in Kabul and emigré circles that he was deeply disillusioned about the revolution and drowned his sorrows in alcohol. Politburo member Ratebzad, his mistress, was reportedly the power behind a very powerless throne, but given the sexual prejudices of a still strongly Muslim country, it was unlikely that the Soviets would back her as a new leader.

The Soviets apparently cultivated Ofagh and Panjsheri in an attempt to find an alternative to Karmal. Other possible candidates included the prime minister, Keshtmand, and the chairman of the National Fatherland Front (NFF), Abdul Rahim Atef. But Keshtmand, a Hazara, would not be acceptable to Pashtuns and other nationalities, and Atef, an old parliamentarian, was not well-known. In April 1985, however, he came into the spotlight as chairman of the Loya Jirgah, and he assumed his position as head of the front a month later. Another candidate at that time was the old Parcham stalwart, Nur Ahmad Nur. Though he was a member of the Politburo, he reportedly resided in Moscow, kept "on ice" by the Soviets like Karmal himself. After his appointment as PDPA party secretary, Najibullah emerged as another candidate. Coverage in the local press indicated in late 1985 that he was ranked third in the party hierarchy.

Government Structure

In late 1985 the basic document of the Afghan state, serving as a provisional constitution, was the Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Replacing the Thirty-two Basic Lines of Revolutionary Duties promulgated by Taraki, it was adopted by Karmal's Revolutionary Council (RC) on April 14, 1980, and put into effect a week later. It is divided into 10 chapters containing 68 articles that explain the regime's basic principles and define government structure. There is little mention of socialist or Marxist-Leninist themes. Afghanistan is described as an "independent, democratic State belonging to all Moslem working people of Afghanistan ranging from workers, peasants, nomads and the intelligentsia to other toilers and the entire democratic and patriotic forces from all nationalities, tribes and clans of this country" (Article One). Article Five guarantees "respect, observance and preservation of Islam as a sacred religion" and religious freedom for members of other religions. Article Eleven, however, declares the government's determination to "expand and strengthen its

friendship and traditional all-out co-operation with the Soviet Union" and other members of the "socialist alliance."

The Loya Jirgah, or national assembly, is defined as the "highest organ of state power." When it is convened, as the Fundamental Principles declare it will be, a permanent constitution will be ratified. Until that time, the RC stands at the apex of the government system. This body holds plenary sessions twice a year. At other times, its responsibilities are performed by the RC's Presidium. These include the ratification of laws and decrees, approval of economic plans, appointment of members of the Council of Ministers, convening (when appropriate) of the Loya Jirgah, and ratification of treaties and other agreements with foreign states. Laws are passed by a majority of the members of the RC. They choose the Presidium and its chairman, who is president of the RC.

The RC president, Karmal in late 1985, fills the role of head of state. He is commander of the armed forces, accepts the credentials of foreign diplomatic representatives, and signs laws and decrees into force. Karmal, like Taraki and Amin, simultaneously held the post of PDPA secretary general.

The Council of Ministers, with 28 members in the summer of 1985, is the highest executive body. It implements policy and submits draft laws to the RC. The president of the Council of Ministers, the prime minister, is head of the council and is assisted by several deputy prime ministers. In late 1985 the prime minister was Keshtmand.

Provincial and District-Level Government

Afghanistan was divided in the mid-1980s into 29 provinces (*wilayat*). These, in turn, were divided into districts (*wuluswali*), and subdistricts (*alagadari*). Provincial governors were appointed by the RC, and district and subdistrict commissioners were also central government officials. Because of the widespread nature of the resistance, however, the local government administration was inoperative in most of the country. After the 1979 invasion, Soviet advisers established a new system of administration. Afghanistan was divided into seven military districts, each jointly administered by a Soviet military commander and a PDPA political officer.

The Loya Jirgah on the national level and the provincial, district, and subdistrict *jirgahs* (assemblies) are elective bodies. In July 1985 the RC passed the Law on Elections and Local Organs of the State Power and Administration. The following

month, local elections were held with great fanfare in Kabul. How widely they were held in other parts of the country at this time was unclear. A Soviet observer, commenting that the elections were being held in several places, noted that "it must be said that the elections in Afghanistan are of a rather peculiar character . . . because of the military-political situation which remains difficult and because of the many national traditions and practices."

The Judicial System and Human Rights

The Fundamental Principles declare that all citizens are equal before the law. The highest court is the Supreme Court. It administers the lower courts (on the provincial, municipal, and district levels) and "ensures a uniform application of laws by all courts." Court judges on all levels are appointed by the RC Presidium. Article Fifty-four provides for "special courts" to judge "specific cases according to law." According to the United States Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1984*, "revolutionary" courts, controlled by the PDPA and similar to those established during the Taraki era, still functioned.

Although Islamic law is not designated as the foundation of the legal system by the Fundamental Principles, courts may settle cases according to sharia when there are ambiguities in the law (Article Fifty-six). Cases can be tried in Pashtu, Dari, or the languages of minority nationalities. In areas controlled by the *mujahidiin*, qazis (religious judges) continued to dispense justice.

Although the Fundamental Principles pledge "due respect" to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both the United States Department of State and Amnesty International identified significant human rights abuses in the mid-1980s. These included the use of torture, particularly by KHAD; the use of predetermined "show trials" to dispose of political prisoners; and widespread arbitrary arrest and detention. Secret trials and the execution of prisoners without trial were also common.

The Search for Popular Support

In the mid-1980s only a tiny minority of the total population—perhaps 3 to 5 percent—actively supported the regime. The largest group were PDPA and state cadres and their fami-

lies in the urban areas, who depended on Soviet armed protection and subsidies for physical survival. The PDPA's postinvasion united-front strategy—aimed at groups as diverse as women, youth, national minorities, tribal leaders, Islamic clergy, peasants, workers, and intellectuals—was regarded by observers as largely ineffectual. In people's eyes, the regime combined the worst features of the reigns of Shah Shuja, the nineteenth-century king installed as a puppet by the British in 1839, and the radically unorthodox King Amanullah (see *The First Anglo-Afghan War; Reign of King Amanullah, 1919-29*, ch. 1).

Certain rural communities were proregime because they had relatives in important government positions or received special treatment because of their strategic location near the country's borders. One, Lakan in Paktia Province, was nicknamed "little Moscow." The authorities were typically reduced to buying people's loyalty. A Swedish journalist, writing in 1984, notes that the regime discovered it was cheaper to bribe guerrillas to lay down their arms than to repair sabotaged facilities. A guerrilla source claimed that the authorities paid the equivalent of US\$500,000, a princely sum in Afghanistan, to keep the peace in one district. Government sinecures, in Kabul or provincial centers, were another inducement.

On January 2, 1980, Karmal announced that he intended to establish a united-front organization, but it was not until June 15, 1981, that the NFF held its founding congress. Zeary, the "quicksilver" Khalqi, was named its first chairman.

Designed to serve as a bridge between the PDPA and the people, the NFF contained around 15 mass, elite, and professional organizations. The most important were similar to those found in the Soviet Union: the Central Council of Trade Unions (200,000 members), the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan (25,000 members), and the Pioneers (like the Soviet Pioneers, similar to boy and girl scouts; 85,000 members). Other constituent groups in mid-1985 included the Council of Religious Scholars and Clergy, the Council of Tribal Elders, local *jirgah* (assemblies—see Glossary), peasants' cooperatives, paramilitary units, the Afghan Red Crescent Society, and the Kabul University Center for Social Activities (apparently the equivalent of a student union). Recruitment for some of these groups was reportedly coerced. The NFF published its own newspaper, *Anis*, in Kabul. PDPA leaders in late 1984 heaped criticism on the NFF for its lack of discipline and

initiative. This may explain the replacement of Zeary as chairman by Atef in May 1985.

The Loya Jirgah

The convening of a Loya Jirgah, or grand assembly of tribal chiefs, local notables, and religious leaders, has traditionally been an event of tremendous significance in Afghan politics. Since 1747, when a grand assembly in Qandahar elected Ahmad Shah Durrani king of Afghanistan, the institution has functioned as an elite referendum on major national issues. It draws on the tradition of the tribal *jirgah*, a vital feature of Pashtun political life. Given the weakness of the central government, rulers have needed the consensus of members of the powerful local elite to initiate new policies. In 1924 King Amanullah convened a Loya Jirgah to approve the country's first constitution. Four years later, he called together around 1,000 of the country's most prominent men to approve his radical political and social reforms. When they rejected his proposals, which included enforcement of monogamy and the unveiling of women, he convened a "rump" *jirgah* of 100 reformist notables to gain their approval. Outraged conservatives then sought to overthrow him. Loya Jirgahs were convened to approve Afghanistan's neutrality in World War II, lend moral support to the Pashtunistan movement in 1955, and ratify new constitutions in 1964 and 1977.

It is not surprising that the Fundamental Principles designate this vital symbol of legitimacy—in many ways the foundation of the modern Afghan state's identity—as the "highest organ of state power." The first postinvasion Loya Jirgah was assembled in Kabul on April 23, 1985. With much fanfare, elections of representatives from the different provinces were hastily conducted in early spring of that year. According to the April 17 *Kabul New Times*, "the election of representatives of the people for the Loya Jirgah is taking place through traditional tribal and popular jirgahs in each province in a democratic and free atmosphere." Many local notables, however, had to be bribed to attend. In late 1985, moreover, it was unclear what exactly the meeting had accomplished. The Fundamental Principles state that one of the first tasks a Loya Jirgah would undertake is ratification of a permanent constitution, but this did not occur. One observer of Afghan affairs has suggested that Karmal's sponsorship of the assembly was an act

of desperation meant to show that the regime was a genuinely Afghan government and not a Soviet implantation.

Resistance groups have also attempted to use the Loya Jirgah as a vehicle of legitimacy. A grand assembly was convened in Peshawar, Pakistan, in May 1980. Although representatives from all the major *mujahidin* groups attended, the meeting failed to produce a consensus or establish the basis for a truly unified movement.

The Promotion of "Official" Islam

After the invasion, Karmal attempted to put the Soviet wolf in Islamic sheep's clothing, claiming that "the date of 27 December represents the intervention of God Almighty. That the USSR is helping us is also an act of God." The more credulous Afghans must have reflected that God was indeed acting in mysterious ways, since the Soviets were universally known as *kafirs*, or unbelievers. The regime sought to assuage, if not win over, the country's deeply religious population. The old Afghan tricolor, with the Islamic color of green, was restored. Beginning in April 1980, the traditional invocation, "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate", was again used to preface official documents.

The regime attempted to co-opt Islamic clergy and scholars, the mullahs and ulama. Numerous clergy conferences, with top leaders in attendance, were sponsored. The Council of Religious Scholars and Clergy was given a prominent place in the NFF, and the state's ministry of religious affairs and endowments was responsible for subsidies to the Islamic establishment. The theology faculty at Kabul University trained a new generation of ulama in the mid-1980s. Karmal claimed, in an August 1985 address commemorating the Islamic holiday at the end of Ramadan, that there were 20 *madrassa* and schools for memorizing the Quran in the country and that religious subjects were taught in all the schools. He also claimed that the regime had distributed thousands of copies of the Quran.

In the mid-1980s mullahs were given ration coupons and special allowances. According to the *Kabul New Times* in February 1985, the equivalent of US\$3.4 million had been donated by the state for the construction or repair of mosques in the 1982-85 period. The paper also noted that US\$9.4 million had been donated to subsidize the haj (pilgrimage) to Mecca. Special supplies of firewood were made available to mosques to keep them warm during the winter months.

The regime's goal of creating an "official," and subservient, Islam was frustrated by the nature of the religious community in Afghanistan (see *Meaning and Practice*, ch. 2). Like temporal authority, spiritual authority tended to be diffuse. Clerical hierarchies were poorly developed, and individual mullahs had very limited prestige outside their local communities. According to Alexandre Bennigsen, an expert on Soviet and Central Asian Islam, the most powerful religious figures were members of spiritual families that claimed descent from the Prophet. Many of these had been persecuted while Taraki and Amin were in power and, after the Soviet invasion, played a prominent role in the resistance. The few mullahs or ulama foolish enough to express support for the regime risked a grisly death at the hands of the *mujahidiin*.

The PDPA's Soviet advisers discovered that Moscow's experience with Muslims in the Central Asian republics bordering Afghanistan was of limited relevance. There, clerical hierarchies were well-established and had tremendous prestige. Thus, it was relatively easy for the Soviets to foster the growth of a co-opted elite of "red mullahs" commanding the allegiance of local Muslims.

The PDPA regime, with Soviet guidance, apparently planned over the long terms to combine support of official Islam with an educational and cultural program designed to loosen its hold on the population. As a Soviet scholar living in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic north of the Amu Darya has commented, "there can be no harmless religious beliefs." Observers have noticed preliminary moves in this direction, such as the gradual abandonment of the study of Arabic, the language of the Islamic scriptures, in schools; the introduction of materialist philosophy into curricula; and the promotion of secular festivals, such as the "orange blossom festival" held in Jalalabad in April 1983, to compete with traditional religious observances. Although the PDPA was in no position in the mid-1980s to initiate a campaign of antireligious propaganda, the promotion of "scientific atheism"—a prominent theme in the cultural life of the Central Asian republics—was likely to be one of the later fruits of the Soviet occupation.

National Minorities

Given centuries-old animosity between minorities and the Pashtun majority, exploitation of the nationality issue seemed to Western observers in the mid-1980s to be an excellent way

for the regime to gain popular support. The Soviets were able to use a tribal and ethnic divide-and-conquer policy to undermine resistance in the ethnically heterogeneous areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Available evidence suggests that although the PDPA, urged by the Soviets, had initiated such a policy, by the mid-1980s it had limited effectiveness. One reason was that the party was still a predominantly Pashtun organization, and its policies reflected a Pashtun point of view. Parcham was more ethnically diverse in its following than Khalq, but only a handful of its top adherents, such as Prime Minister Keshtmand, were non-Pashtuns. The radical policies of Taraki and Amin, moreover, had alienated most national minorities. Minority areas remained centers of rebellion that were as much anti-Pashtun as they were anticommunist. The largest *mujahidin*-controlled region was the Hazarajat, inhabited by the Shia Hazaras and covering parts of the three central provinces of Bamian, Ghowr, and Oruzgan.

Two features of nationality policy were apparently heavily influenced by the Soviets. One was the deep involvement of the KGB-directed KHAD in work in minority areas. KHAD collaborated closely with the state ministry of nationalities and tribal affairs, headed by Solayman Laeq. The second feature was an emphasis on cultivating cultural and other ties between Afghan minorities and their ethnic counterparts in Soviet Central Asia. There are large populations of Turkic-speaking Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkmen on both sides of the Amu Darya. Official histories written since 1979 stressed Afghanistan's traditional ties with Central Asia, not with India or Iran. Cultural exchanges between the Afghan minority areas (or at least those areas under government control) and the Soviet Central Asian republics were frequent. The regime also encouraged the development of minority, particularly Turkic, languages and literature. Thus, it established a number of Uzbek and Turkmen journals, schools, and cultural centers. Non-Turkic minority languages, such as Nuristani and Baluchi, were also encouraged. In this manner, the regime and its Soviet advisers sought to fragment the country linguistically and culturally in a manner very similar to Soviet policy in Central Asia.

One social division the regime apparently did not exploit was between the majority Sunni Muslims and the Shia Muslims. Bennigsen suggests that the PDPA was too fearful of "Khomeinism" to encourage a sense of Shia identity, particularly among the rebellious Hazaras.

Political Bases of The Resistance

Like the elephant in the Indian fable of the blind men, the Afghan resistance has been characterized in different ways by different observers. If the analogy of the blind men holds, each grasps a part of the truth but lacks a comprehensive perspective.

For example, Gérard Chaliand, an expert on guerrilla movements worldwide, describes the resistance as a traditionalist uprising, a violent repudiation of the PDPA's ambitious modernization schemes. He notes that "unlike virtually all guerrilla movements of Asia, Africa, or Latin America, the Afghan resistance has nothing new to show the visiting observer: no new elected village committee, for example; no program for the integration of women into the struggle; no new clinics or schools; no newly created stores that sell or exchange essential goods; no small workshops contributing to economic self-sufficiency of the sort one finds in guerrilla camps elsewhere throughout the world. The Afghan rebels have undertaken no political experiments or social improvements."

Leftist writers such as Fred Halliday also see the resistance in essentially negative terms. In his 1980 essay, "War and Revolution in Afghanistan," Halliday explains the revolt in terms of the underdeveloped state of the Afghan countryside. Because of the strength of tribal loyalties, the lack of class-consciousness, Afghanistan's violent political ethos, and the reactionary nature of militant Islam, the PDPA's reforms in 1978-79 roused widespread popular opposition. Afghan peasants were not ready for revolution because they still had strong economic and emotional ties to members of the local elite.

On the other end of the political spectrum, sympathetic commentators describe the resistance in terms of either Afghan nationalism or a struggle between the forces of "freedom" and "totalitarianism." Like the leftists, their perspectives and judgments are often compromised by adherence to Western concepts. Those close to the scene realize that Western ideas such as nationalism or freedom are meaningless to all but a rather small minority of resistance fighters.

Finally, there is the Islamic perspective. In a 1984 article, "Islam in the Afghan Resistance," French scholar Olivier Roy argues that "the Afghan resistance sees its struggle more in terms of a 'holy war' (*jihad*) than as a war of national liberation. In a country in which reference to the 'nation' is a very recent phenomenon, where the State is perceived as exterior to socie-

ty, and where allegiance belongs to the local community, Islam remains the sole point of reference for all Afghans." Edward Girardet, a journalist who spent time with the resistance in Afghanistan, notes that "Russia's most formidable foe is not a military one, but Islam . . . Difficult for the Western (and Russian) mind to understand, faith is the greatest strength of the Afghan, whose whole approach to life is closely bound to his constant struggle for survival."

Although the Islamic concept of jihad is a theme common to all the major resistance groups, it would be simplistic to assume that they share a single Islamic ideology. Rather, there are several Islamic constituencies with widely diverse perspectives on religion, society, and the state. In a country where 99 percent of the population is Muslim, Islam ostensibly provides a basis for unity and legitimacy. Yet the variations within the Muslim community are so pronounced that different groups, professing Islamic goals, have little in common except the vocabulary of the Quran, hostility to the foreign invader and, sometimes, appreciation of the material benefits of united action (see Religion, ch. 2).

Perhaps more basic to the resistance than even Islam is Afghanistan's cultural, ethnic, and social diversity (see Ethnicity and Tribe, ch. 2). The Afghan state has existed since the rise of Ahmad Shah Durrani in the mid-eighteenth century. It has had, however, minimal impact on the daily life or self-conceptions of most Afghans. As Roy indicates, the state has been largely unsuccessful in fostering a coherent sense of Afghan nationhood (although some sense of this was found among Pashtun close to the royal family). Old social divisions, then, remain extremely important: those between the various ethnic groups, between Durrani and Ghilzai, between speakers of Pashtu and speakers of Dari, between Sunni and Shia, between Sufi communities and other Muslims, and between farmers, nomads, and urbanites, to mention some of the most important. The local elites that emerged from this social complexity enjoyed, with a few exceptions, unchallenged authority. The downfall of Amanullah in 1929 shows that they could sabotage the state's efforts to exercise power on the local level or promote radical social change. The *mujahidiin* resistance beginning in 1978 was probably as much an expression of local political interests as it was a religious struggle. Revolt, moreover, was nothing new. In Afghan politics, violence is not extremism but part of a centuries-old status quo.

Thus, the resistance in the mid-1980s reflected the diver-

sity and complexity of Afghan society. Western analysts counted as many as 90 localities where armed groups operated. With the exception of a few famous commanders, such as the intrepid Ahmad Shah Mahsud in the Panjsher Valley, these groups and their leaders were less well-known to outsiders than the seven emigré parties based in Peshawar, Pakistan, which are identified in the Western press as leading the *mujahidiin*. The Peshawar groups played a vital role in publicizing the Afghan struggle worldwide and in funneling arms and funds from outside donors (such as the Arab states of the Gulf) to the fighting groups inside the country. They also represented the broad currents of Islamic ideology and politics. But they did not directly control or command the unquestioning loyalty of the *mujahidiin*. Observers such as Louis Dupree have commented that the guerrillas were growing increasingly dissatisfied with the emigré parties' inefficiency, corruption, and quarrelsomeness.

The complexity of the resistance was accentuated by Afghanistan's rugged topography and the economic effects of the war. Soviet attacks and *mujahidiin* sabotage of highways and bridges isolated communities, making them economically more self-reliant than they had been before 1979. At the same time, the smuggling of foodstuffs and other goods from Pakistan and Iran flourished. Because the majority of the population, including the guerrillas, consisted of subsistence farmers and nomads, their survival did not depend on an integrated economic system of the kind found in developed countries. Thus, the Soviets found it relatively difficult to impose an economic stranglehold on the country and starve the scores of self-sufficient liberated areas into submission.

Both the *mujahidiin* and Western observers generally classified the different resistance groups—the guerrilla units within the country and the emigré parties based in Pakistan—into “Islamic fundamentalist” and “traditionalist” categories. These are sometimes misleading labels, but they reflect significant social and political cleavages. A third category consisted of Shia groups. Some, but not all, had close ties with revolutionary Iran in the mid-1980s. There were also small groups of Maoist leftists involved in the resistance, although their role in the mid-1980s appeared to have been minimal.

Islamic Fundamentalists

Islamic fundamentalists were ideologically and organiza-

tionally the most coherent groups in the resistance, and they most resembled modern revolutionary parties in other parts of the world. Influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood (Al Ikhwan al Muslimun) in Egypt and to a lesser extent by modern Muslim thinkers on the Indian subcontinent, the movement originated on the campus of Kabul University in the late 1950s. Principal figures were professors of the Faculty of Theology, such as Burhannudin Rabbani (in late 1985 the leader of a major emigré fundamentalist party, the Jamiat-i-Islami). Many of these scholars had studied at the venerable Al Azhar University in Cairo, a center of Islamic political thought. In the early years, the Jamiat-i-Islami, the predecessor of the resistance group established by these professors, was concerned primarily with encouraging cultural activities among students. Because of their critical views of the monarchy, however, many Jamiat-i-Islami members were arrested, and their activities were conducted in a semiclandestine manner.

During the 1965-72 period, when Kabul University was wracked with political turmoil, students formed the Sazman-e Jawanan-e Musalman (Organization of Muslim Youth). More militant than their teachers, they held demonstrations against Zionism, United States involvement in Vietnam, and—most controversially—against the creation of Pashtunistan. Given the importance of this issue to the government, they suffered severe repression. Muslim students also had violent confrontations with leftist students. The organization gained recruits not only at the university but also at teachers' training colleges and the polytechnic and engineering schools in Kabul. Among the most important were engineering student Gulbuddin Hikmatyar (leader in late 1985 of the Hezb-e Islami, or Islamic Party, the largest fundamentalist emigré party) and polytechnic student Mahsud, the Panjsher Valley commander. Islamic fundamentalist students came from diverse regions of Afghanistan; but significantly, the movement gained only a few adherents from Pashtun tribal areas.

In his 1984 article Roy argues that the fundamentalists were distinct both from Afghanistan's traditional religious authorities (the ulama, or scholars, and the *pirs*, or Sufi holy men) and from conservative Muslims (sometimes also known as "fundamentalists"), who advocated restoration of sharia (Islamic law) as the basis of the state but opposed the creation of a modern state. Unlike these groups, they were not inimical to Western ideas. Roy notes that "Islamism [his term for fundamentalism] attempts to think of Islam in terms of a political

ideology which is fit to compete with the great ideologies of the West (liberalism, Marxism, nationalism). It borrows the conceptual framework of western political philosophy (the sense of history, the State, the search for a definition of politics) and endeavours to fill it with the traditional concepts of Muslim thought." Their political activism and self-awareness as modern intellectuals rather than traditional scholars gave them a perspective that was deeply at odds with Afghan tradition. In many ways, they were as remote from the society in which they lived as the more radical members of the PDPA. This was particularly true of Hikmatyar, who sought to build a highly disciplined, Leninist-style "vanguard" party.

As revolutionaries, the fundamentalists were committed to establishing a just society based on Islamic principles. On this issue they were at odds with the often corrupt religious authorities who were concerned with tradition and hairsplitting interpretations of sharia. These divergent viewpoints engendered much suspicion and hostility.

Fundamentalists were opposed to Daoud's regime after he came to power in July 1973 because of his collaboration with Parcham, his initially friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and his Pashtun nationalism. Their opposition to the Pashtunistan issue gained them the active support of Pakistan. The Pakistani armed forces trained Afghan units in the early 1970s, and around 5,000 guerrillas were based at camps near the border at Peshawar. In July 1975 they launched an insurrection. Although the Jamiat-i-Islami, like the PDPA, had established cells in the armed forces, army sympathizers did nothing to aid the revolt. Insurgents attacked government installations in the Panjsher Valley, Badakhshan, and other parts of the country. The uprising was brutally crushed, and the survivors fled back across the border to Peshawar. There, the foundations were laid for the later *mujahidiin* movement.

The history of the Jamiat-i-Islami parallels, in a striking fashion, that of the PDPA. As in the leftist party, there were radical and moderate wings. Hikmatyar, the youthful "Leninist," bitterly opposed the more moderate and accomodating united-front strategy of Rabbani. In 1976 or 1977 the two leaders went separate ways. Hikmatyar formed the Hezb-e Islami, while Rabbani retained control over the original Jamiat-i-Islami. In 1979 a second split occurred. Yunis Khales, one of the few traditional ulama to become involved in the fundamentalist movement, broke with Hikmatyar and formed his own Hezb-e Islami. This group was more moderate than Hikmat-

yar's and in the mid-1980s enjoyed good relations with Rabbani's party.

Four major Islamic fundamentalist emigré parties were prominent in the mid-1980s: Hikmatyar's Hezb-e Islami; Rabbani's Jamiat-i-Islami; Khales' Hezb-e Islami; and Abdul Rasool Sayyaf's Ittehad-e-Islami (Islamic Alliance) (see Resistance Forces, ch. 5). Hikmatyar's party had widespread support in the Pashtun areas of the north and east, especially Konduz, Baghlan, Konarha, and Nangarhar provinces. Though Hikmatyar led the best organized, best led, and numerically strongest party (it had between 20,000 and 30,000 adherents in the mid-1980s), he was often accused of greater zealotry in attacking resistance rivals than the Soviet or Afghan armed forces. The 1979 rumors of a plot between him and Hafizullah Amin also tainted him with the stigma of a collaborator. Chaliand calls him "the most intelligent, ambitious and ruthless resistance leader in Peshawar."

Rabbani's Jamiat-i-Islami derived most of its popular support from the Dari- and Turkic-speaking national minorities in the northern part of the country. One of his most supportive guerrilla commanders was Mahsud, who, like Rabbani himself, was a Tajik. Khales' Hezb-e Islami maintained its power base in the southeastern part of the country, particularly Paktia Province. Sayyaf's group was well-armed and well-equipped, but it was regarded as having little support outside his native area, Paghman, near Kabul.

The Traditionalists

Traditionalist resistance groups differed from the Islamic fundamentalists chiefly in their reliance on personal networks, defined in terms of religion or tribe, rather than Western-style ideology or political organization, as a basis for allegiance. Thus, they reflected more faithfully Afghan values and social institutions, particularly in the Pashtun tribal areas. Politically and militarily, their factional jealousy and loose structure hampered their effectiveness. Yet local networks of *mujahidiin*, affiliated with tribal notables or local religious figures, were an indispensable component of the resistance. Groups that before the PDPA coup d'état had served religious and social functions were readily adapted afterward to become fighting units.

The fundamentalist-traditionalist distinction was not clear-cut. Rather, there was a continuity between the traditionalists and the more moderate fundamentalists, represented in Pe-

shawar by Rabbani and Khales. Three major traditionalist emigré parties were recognized in the mid-1980s: the Harakat-e Inqelab Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) of Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi; the Jebh-e Nejat-e Milli (National Liberation Front) of Sibaghatullah Mojadeddi; and the Mahaz-e Milli Islami (National Islamic Front) of Pir Sayyid Gilani. In "*Afghanistan: Islam and Political Modernity*", Roy defines three traditional networks that play a formative role in the resistance: ulama, or Islamic scholars (known as *mawlawi* in Afghanistan), and their followers; Sufi communities, organized around a *pir* or holy man; and tribal networks whose leaders often had blood or other ties to the old royal family. Such networks were not feudal or authoritarian. Leadership was generally defined in terms of consensus. "The khan must always show, by his generosity and availability, that he alone is worthy to fulfill the post."

Ulama or Mawlawi Networks

Ulama were scholars and teachers resident at *madrasa* (theological schools) located throughout the country. During their careers, individual scholars moved from less to more prestigious *madrasa* as they acquired greater knowledge of the Quran and Islamic law. Networks were built up as scholars, in their passage from one school to another, acquired teachers, colleagues, and students. These associations tended to be life-long. Ulama were generally affiliated with the more conservative, private *madrasa* rather than the state-supported institutions established in the 1950s. These schools emphasized the legalistic interpretation of texts rather than the kinds of political issues—the redefinition of Islam in society—that were important to fundamentalists. Politically, they supported the restoration of sharia as the legal basis of the state. This was natural, since interpretation of sharia was the scholars' principal role in society.

Roy notes that the ulama networks "massively" joined Muhammadi's Harakat-e Inqelab Islami, making this group the largest in the resistance after the Soviet invasion. Yet its fortunes had declined drastically by the mid-1980s. A loosely organized "clerical association" rather than a genuine political party (Roy calls it "an 'invertebrate' party, a mere juxtaposition of local fronts revolving around *mawlawi* without any political experience"), the Harakat-e Inqelab Islami lost members to Rabbani's Jamiat-i-Islami. The change in affiliation reflected

ethnic and linguistic cleavages. Dari-speaking and non-Pashtun networks switched over to the Jamiat-i-Islami, while Pashtuns remained generally more faithful to Muhammadi's group. It remained influential in the southern and eastern provinces of Qandahar, Ghazni, Kabul, Lowgar, and Baghlan. Its membership was estimated in late-1985 at between 10,000 and 25,000.

Sufi Networks

Sufi networks consisted of a holy man and his followers, organized into a brotherhood (see Sufis, ch. 2). Central to these groups' identity was the lifelong association of brotherhood members and their master, who often assumed the venerable Arabic title of shaykh. Roy describes the brotherhoods as "closed but not secret societies." Members are expected to show the utmost loyalty and devotion to the master, who ideally occupies himself almost incessantly with prayer and meditation. The history of Sufi brotherhoods throughout the Muslim world is a complex and multifaceted one. One central concept was that charisma could be passed from generation to generation within a single family. Thus, holy families emerged as the core of Sufi orders that persisted for centuries. Generally described as "mystics," Sufis were also in the forefront of struggles against foreign invasion in many countries, including Afghanistan. They, rather than the established Islamic clergy, backed the *basmachi* insurrection against the Soviets in Central Asia during the 1920s. Two leaders of traditionalist emigré parties—Mojadeddi and Gilani—were members of holy families with high status in Sufi communities.

The membership of Mojadeddi's Jebh-e Nejat-e Milli and Gilani's Mahaz-e Milli Islami was drawn largely from communities that over the generations maintained close ties with their holy families. This was particularly true in Pashtun tribal areas. The brutal treatment of the brotherhoods by the Khalqis in 1978-79 ensured that leaders of the holy families would be firmly on the side of the resistance. On the local level, highly disciplined brotherhoods were ideal fighting units. Unlike the ulama networks, they were almost impossible for informers to penetrate. Roy notes that the region around the town of Chesht-e Sharif in Herat Province became a "veritable little Sufi republic" after the brotherhoods seized the town from the government in 1983-84.

Tribal Networks

Because Sufi holy families were often intimately associated with tribal groups, these two kinds of networks were often difficult to distinguish. The most important tribal network consisted of lineages belonging to or related to the old Mohammadzai royal family. These were elitist, highly conservative groups with strong monarchist sympathies. They provided both Mojadeddi's and Gilani's groups with the majority of their adherents. Because of their nonclerical and monarchical associations, the Jebh-e Nejat-e Milli and the Mahaz-e Milli Islami were the most secular of the emigré parties. They drew as much on Pashtunwali (the Pashtun code) as on Islam to provide the basis of their legitimacy. Both suffered in competition with Islamic fundamentalist groups and in the mid-1980s had limited influence.

Both emigré parties were loosely organized. Roy describes Gilani's group as a coalition of tribal notables (khans) and noble families. More like a royal court than a genuine political party, it distributed arms solely on the basis of the recipients' personal relationship with Gilani. Mojadeddi's group was less blue-blooded, including some non-Durrani tribes and even Nuristanis.

Shia Groups

Little was known of Shia groups in the mid-1980s. This was because they were based either in Iran, a country still largely closed to Westerners, or in the remote central part of Afghanistan known as the Hazarajat. Home of the minority Hazaras, Shia Muslims who have suffered the worst discrimination at the hands of other groups, this region covers parts of Bamian, Ghowr, and Oruzgan provinces. It remained independent of Soviet and Afghan control in the mid-1980s. Roy describes the Hazarajat as a poor area with a social system that was more hierarchical and oppressive than that of the Pashtuns. Sayyids, members of families claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad, formed what was virtually an elite and inbred caste. Beginning in the 1960s, educated Hazara youth, resentful of sayyid privileges, joined Maoist, nativist, or Islamic fundamentalist organizations. The latter had close affinities with movements in Iran. One of the earliest youth groups, the Hezb-e Moghol (Mongol Party), reflected their self-conception as an oppressed "Mongol" people, unlike other inhabitants of

Afghanistan. This viewpoint may have encouraged ties with fellow "Mongols" in China in the 1960s and 1970s.

In late 1979 Hazara religious, temporal, and intellectual leaders established the Shura-i Inqelabi-e ettefaqe Islami-e Afghanistan (Revolutionary Council of the Islamic Union of Afghanistan) and elected Sayyid Ali Beheshti as their president. By 1981 the insurgents were successful in expelling Soviet and Afghan forces from most of the Hazarajat. The Shura took over the local government, dividing the territory into nine provinces (*wilayat*). Governors and mayors were appointed, and the majority of the population was disarmed. This was, for Afghanistan, a relatively strong—but also corrupt and oppressive—state.

The Shura was soon divided by factional infighting. Roy identifies three major factions: a sayyid-dominated traditionalist group, a leftist (Maoist) group, and a pro-Khomeini, Islamic fundamentalist group. Outside the Shura, there was a pro-Iranian party, the Sazman-e Nasr, which had been founded in Iran in 1978. In 1983 another pro-Iranian group, the Pasdaran (guardians of the revolution) emerged. In 1984 the Sazman-e Nasr and the Pasdaran were successful in driving Beheshti out of his capital at Varas in Ghowr Province and gaining at least temporary control over most of the Hazarajat.

Another Shia group was the Harakat-e Islami (Islamic Movement), led by Shaykh Mohsini. This originally had been pro-Iranian. Although it retained its identity as an Islamic fundamentalist group, it had become disillusioned with Iran's revolution by the mid-1980s. Based on the borders of the Hazarajat, its membership included not only Hazaras but other Shia minorities and even Pashtuns.

Leftist Groups

Leftist movements were minimally important in the resistance in the mid-1980s. Settem-i-Melli, the group that allegedly held United States ambassador Dubs hostage in February 1979, had been exterminated, largely by Islamic groups. Remnants of the Shula-i-Jawid formed the Sazman-i Azadibakhshi-i Mardum-i Afghanistan (SAMA—Organization for the Liberation of the Peoples of Afghanistan) in 1978. Its leader, Abdul Majid Kalakani, was arrested and executed by the regime in 1980. A third party, the Itihad-i Inqelab-i-Islamwa Afghan Milli (the National Islamic Revolution of the Afghan People, often referred to as Afghan Milli or Afghan Millat) was a socialist

group with a largely urban following. Afghan Milli cadres attempted to establish a base in Nangarhar Province on the Pakistan border, but they were wiped out by guerrillas belonging to Khales' Hezb-i Islami.

Building Resistance Unity

Resistance unity remained an elusive goal as the Soviet occupation entered its seventh year in December 1985. The history of guerrilla movements in other parts of the world suggests that if ideological and organizational unity cannot be achieved, a strong leader, like Josip Broz Tito in wartime Yugoslavia, is needed to coordinate disparate fighting groups. Such a leader can also foster an emerging sense of national identity. Given the disparity in worldviews between Islamic fundamentalists, traditionalists, Shia *mujahidiin*, and leftists, it appeared unlikely that Afghanistan would have its own Tito. Observers believed that the best that could be hoped for was an effective united-front strategy that would improve *mujahidiin* fighting abilities and prevent the different groups from attacking each other.

In May 1980 the different *mujahidiin* groups convened a Loya Jirgah in Peshawar, but this failed to create consensus or promote genuine unity. One reason may have been that the Loya Jirgah remained primarily a Pashtun tribal institution with limited relevance for minorities or detribalized Pashtuns. With the withdrawal of traditionalists from a single, Peshawar-based alliance, coalitions formed around the fundamentalist and traditionalist polarities, while Shia groups remained isolated or closely associated with Iran. Two coalitions with the same name, the Ittehad-i-Islami Mujahidiin-i-Afghanistan (Islamic Alliance of Afghan Mujahidiin) emerged: one contained the four major and three smaller fundamentalist parties and was commonly known as the Group of Seven; the other included the three traditionalist parties, known as the Group of Three.

The Group of Seven was deeply divided between moderates and radicals. Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, one of the original founders of the Islamic fundamentalist movement at Kabul University in the 1950s, had been designated its head in 1981. Moderates resented him, however, for his closeness to Hikmatyar and his determination to use funds donated by foreign countries to build his own power base.

Traditionalists in the Group of Three flirted with the idea

of employing exiled King Zahir Shah as a focus for resistance unity. The king issued statements that although he did not wish a restoration of the monarchy, he still had an important role to play in promoting unity. Fundamentalists regarded him as corrupt and reactionary and blamed him for allowing Afghanistan to drift into the Soviet sphere of influence during his years on the throne.

Attempts at building unity continued, however, through the mid-1980s. An alliance was forged between the seven major fundamentalist and traditionalist parties in Peshawar in May 1985. Although concrete accomplishments were not evident by the end of the year, the alliance was viewed by Western observers as a significant development. Also, observers such as Louis Dupree noted that a new generation of resistance leaders inside the country was growing impatient with émigré factionalism and was developing an increasingly effective working arrangement among themselves.

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Probably the most comprehensive account of the Soviet invasion and its background in English is Henry S. Bradsher's *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, published in 1983. Anthony Arnold's book, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq*, also published in 1983, is a thoroughgoing, though hardly sympathetic, description of the career of the PDPA. A more creditable leftist perspective is given in Fred Halliday's articles on Afghanistan, which appeared in the *New Left Review* in 1979 and 1980.

Louis Dupree's partly eyewitness account of the April 1978 coup d'état and its aftermath appears as a six-part series, *Red Flag over the Hindu Kush*, in American University Field Staff Reports. The anthology edited by M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield, *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan*, provides excellent insights into the cultural bases of the resistance. Probably the most comprehensive account of the *mujahidiin*, especially the Islamic fundamentalists, is Olivier Roy's *L'Afghanistan: Islam modernité politique*, published in 1985; a passable, though not elegant, English translation of Roy's book appears in the Joint Publications Research Service *Near East/South Asia Report* series. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)