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AFGHANISTAN:

THE PROBLEM OF PASHTUN ALIENATION

5 August 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prospects for an enduring peace in Afghanistan are still fragile despite progress since the ouster of the Taliban in December 2001. A key obstacle is the perception of many ethnic Pashtuns that they lack meaningful representation in the central government, particularly in its security institutions. Other factors contributing to growing alienation from the Bonn political process include continued violence against Pashtuns in parts of the north and west, heavy-handed search operations and collaboration with abusive commanders by the U.S.-led Coalition, and impediments to trade in the southern and eastern provinces. Unless measures are taken to address these grievances and ensure that a more representative government emerges from the forthcoming election, there will be a greater likelihood of the political process ending in failure.

Although headed by a Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, the Interim Administration created in Bonn in December 2001 was dominated by a mainly Panjshiri Tajik armed faction, the *Shura-yi Nazar-i Shamali* (Supervisory Council of the North). The "power ministries" of defence, interior and foreign affairs were held respectively by Mohammad Qasim Fahim, Younus Qanuni, and Abdullah Abdullah, all members of *Shura-yi Nazar*. The Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002, which was expected to install a more broadly representative and hence more legitimate government, ended up reinforcing the Panjshiri monopoly over the central government's security institutions, though it included Pashtuns in key positions in financial institutions.

President Karzai is widely seen as having been unable to limit either the power of the *Shura-yi Nazar* at the centre or of commanders, irrespective of ethnicity, who wield power in other parts of the country. Unless the national security institutions are perceived as representing the population as a whole, their efforts at disarmament and demobilisation are unlikely to find popular support. At the same time, the authority of local commanders will be legitimated as a vehicle for resisting ethnic domination.

Alienation from the centre is compounded by the displacement of large numbers of Pashtuns in the north, amid a wave of ethnically targeted violence following the collapse of Taliban rule by factions of the United Front that helped the U.S.-led Coalition. UNHCR, the Karzai administration, and some regional authorities have taken steps to facilitate the return of displaced northern Pashtuns. The critical issue will be ensuring security and access to land for those communities that were displaced. The international community should also support continued monitoring of violence against Pashtuns in the north and west by non-Pashtun militias, which remains acute in the provinces of Herat and Badghis, and call on regional authorities to remove and hold accountable commanders responsible for these abuses.

To date, the south and east have had only a modest stake in the political and economic reconstruction processes outlined in the Bonn agreement. International assistance has been slow to materialise in areas outside of Kandahar and other major towns, while poppy cultivation has boomed. Commanders with little or no popular legitimacy remain the principle military partners of the Coalition, and have used their power to consolidate control over regional administrations and economies. In Pashtun areas, this has led to the growth of patronage systems along sub-ethnic lines and fuelled tensions within communities; those Pashtun tribes that lack kinship ties to local authorities are marginalised politically and economically.

The Coalition, whose entry into the Pashtun provinces was welcomed by a population that had grown disenchanted with the Taliban's increasingly arbitrary and autocratic rule, has failed to capitalise on this reservoir of goodwill. Collaboration with local commanders has drawn the Coalition into their factional and personal rivalries, compromising its non-partisanship in disputes unrelated to the war on terrorism. Heavy-handed tactics in search operations and inadequate responses to reports of civilian deaths from air strikes have also fuelled discontent with the Coalition presence.

The risks posed by the growing disaffection among Pashtuns in Afghanistan should be self-evident. The Taliban came to power not only because of the military assistance provided by Pakistan, but also because local commanders had become notorious for their abusive conduct toward civilians and extortion of traders. The Taliban's initial success in disarming the south and restoring a modicum of security was welcomed as a respite by large segments of the local population. Today, insecurity in the south and east, impediments to trade, and continued competition for influence by the neighbouring states present a set of conditions dangerously close to those prevailing at the time of the Taliban's emergence. The risk of destabilisation has been given added weight by the re-emergence of senior Taliban commanders who are ready to capitalise on popular discontent and whose long-time allies now govern the Pakistani provinces bordering Afghanistan.

The elections scheduled for June 2004 will be a critical barometer of the credibility of the Bonn process among Afghanistan's Pashtuns. Reform of the central government's security institutions should be prioritised in advance of the elections. The removal of abusive regional authorities, and their replacement by educated professionals who are perceived as neutral actors will go a long way toward reclaiming support for the central government. Suitable individuals are not hard to find: there are a large number of Pashtun professionals with management and technical expertise gained through work with international agencies and NGOs in Afghanistan and among refugee communities in the neighbouring states. The international community should also work to ensure that non-militarised political parties have the necessary security space and legal authorisation to campaign freely in advance of the election.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Transitional Administration:

1. Ensure that cabinet level appointments and military command assignments are made with a view to reflecting Afghanistan's ethnic diversity and are linked to the development of professional criteria.
2. Revise the draft political parties law now before the cabinet so that it does not provide pretexts for the dissolution of parties or limits on political expression, in particular by removing Articles 3 and 9 and minimum membership thresholds for registration.
3. Continue to monitor the treatment of ethnic Pashtuns in northern and western Afghanistan, and especially:
   (a) broaden the mandate of the Return Commission for the North to include the provinces of Herat, Badghis, Baghlan, Takhar, and Badakhshan; and
   (b) direct regional authorities to ensure that commanders whose forces are identified as having been responsible for violence against Pashtun communities, including illegal seizure and occupation of land, are removed from their posts and held accountable under international standards of due process and fair trials.
4. Appoint a non-partisan panel with powers to receive complaints and investigate allegations to carry out, in cooperation with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, a comprehensive and time-bound review of the performance of provincial administrations, with a view to identifying cases of gross abuse of power including, inter alia, illegal taxation and mistreatment of ethnic, tribal, or sectarian minorities, and then remove from office governors whose administrations are found to have systematically abused their authority.

To the International Community:

5. Extend ISAF or an equivalent mission to additional areas of the country, beyond Kabul, including the major regional centres.
6. Ensure that regional minorities, including Pashtuns in the north and west, receive

humanitarian assistance and that reconstruction aid is promptly directed to areas where Coalition military operations continue.

7. Provide increased support for the reconstruction of judicial institutions in the provinces, with particular attention to developing their capacity to impartially review and resolve competing claims to land.

8. Initiate a dialogue with civil society and legitimate community leaders in Pashtun areas as part of the broader consultative processes on the constitution, preparations for the election, and other elements of the Bonn process and develop parallel mechanisms, where necessary, to ensure that women are included in all of these consultative processes.

9. Ensure the early dissemination of information in the provinces, and in refugee communities in Iran and Pakistan, about the 2004 elections through support for voter education, registration, and mobilisation, and support efforts in these areas by Afghan NGOs, independent media and women's associations.

10. Support the development of civil society institutions initiated by local actors in southern and eastern Afghanistan and take steps in so doing to ensure the independence of these institutions from influence by military and governmental institutions.

To the United States and its Coalition partners:

11. Progressively direct military and financial support away from regional and local commanders, as part of the broader national framework for disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration.

12. Consult with provincial authorities and legitimate community leaders prior to carrying out military operations and ensure that intelligence reports have been independently verified to the fullest extent possible before conducting searches of private homes or other military operations.

13. Promptly investigate, in consultation with provincial authorities and local community leaders, all reports of civilian deaths in the course of military operations.

14. Sensitise Coalition forces to respect, as far as possible, local norms of conduct while carrying out search operations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan's population is composed of some 55 distinct ethnic groups,[1] of whom four account for a large majority: the Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks.[2] Precise population ratios are difficult to determine, in part due to the absence of a census but also because refugee flows during 23 years of warfare impacted disproportionately on different ethnic groups. While the last census, in 1976, was never completed, estimates used by the United Nations put Pashtuns at 38 per cent of the population, making them the largest single ethnic group.[3] Pashtuns controlled political power for most of Afghanistan's history as a state, with the result that their traditions and cultural norms were projected as being synonymous with the national identity of Afghanistan.

Pashtuns in Afghanistan are divided into some 30 tribes, each of which is subdivided into clans and, in turn, lineages. About half of these tribes belong to one of two major confederations: the Durrani and the Ghilzai (also transliterated as Ghalji). The Durrani are predominant in the southwest, in the plains extending from Farah to Kandahar. The Ghilzai are concentrated in the southeast, between Kandahar and Kabul, but also have large communities in the centre and north as a result of both forcible and encouraged resettlement under Durrani rule. An estimated ten million Pashtuns live across the border in Pakistan, where they form a majority of the population in the North-West Frontier Province and the northern part of Baluchistan Province. Despite these divisions, Pashtuns have a strong sense of ethnic identity, shaped by a tradition of common descent; a distinctive Indo-Iranian language, Pashto; and a social code known as Pashtunwali ("the way of the Pashtuns").

The Dari (Persian)-speaking, Sunni Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group, accounting for roughly 25 per cent of the population. They are concentrated in Kabul, the northeast and Herat Province, but also account for a large share of the urban population elsewhere in the country. Literacy in Dari (the language of administration) and proximity to administrative centres allowed urban Tajiks to serve as junior partners of the Pashtuns in governance, under Durrani rulers as well as later communist administrations.

The central highlands are home to the Dari-speaking, predominantly Shia Hazaras, who make up roughly 19 per cent of the population and have traditionally been the most politically and economically disadvantaged group. The Turkic-speaking Uzbeks live in the northern plains and foothills, and constitute some 6 per cent of the population; their presence in government between the late nineteenth and middle of the twentieth centuries was also negligible.[4] In contrast to the Pashtuns, the three other major ethnic groups in Afghanistan were either non-tribal or largely detribalised by the late twentieth century. A variety of social processes, including labour migration to Kabul in the case of the Hazaras and the Tajiks of

[1] Nigel J. R. Allan, "Defining Place and People in Afghanistan", *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, 2001, Vol. 42, No. 8, p. 545.

[2] Within each of the four major groups, sub-ethnic categories – such as Panjshiris and Badakhshis among Tajiks – are often more politically significant forms of self-identification.

[3] Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS), "Country Profile", http://www.aims.org.pk/. The AIMS project is part of the UN's Afghanistan Mission (UNAMA), and is administered by UNDP.

[4] "...[U]ntil the early 1950s, all military and political officials (plus their entourage) in the northern provinces were exclusively from among Pashtun or Tajik from the south of the Hindu Kush", Nazif Shahrani, "Ethnic Relations under Closed Frontier Conditions: Northeast Badakhshan", in William O. McCagg, Jr. and Brian D. Silvers (eds.), *Soviet Asian Ethnic Frontiers* (New York, 1979), p. 181.

the Panjshir Valley, had the effect of breaking down local identities and creating larger solidarity groups.[5]

The emergence of the Afghan state in the mid-eighteenth century coincided with the rise of Durrani tribal power at the national level. From then, Pashtuns belonging to Durrani tribes consolidated their hold over state and society, often at the expense of other tribal and ethnic groups. The resistance that followed the Soviet invasion of 1979 as well as the subsequent civil war allowed non-Pashtun ethnic groups to assert political and economic autonomy both from the state and from Pashtun dominance. From 1992 to 1996, the mainly Tajik *Jamiat-i Islami* party under President Burhanuddin Rabbani controlled the central government. Pashtun opposition to a Tajik-dominated political order, and support from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, paved the way for the Taliban, a largely Pashtun fundamentalist movement that ruled most of the country from 1996 to 2001.

In December 2001, U.S.-led forces ousted the Taliban, and an Interim Administration was installed by the UN-brokered Bonn Agreement. Though headed by an ethnic Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, leaders of the *Shura-yi Nazar-i Shamali* (Supervisory Council of the North),[6] mainly Tajiks from the Panjshir Valley, dominated the cabinet.[7] The Emergency Loya Jirga (11-19 June 2002), which was expected to install a more balanced and hence more legitimate government, reinforced the monopoly of the *Shura-yi Nazar* over the central government's security organs (army, intelligence and police).[8]

Though some effort was made to counterbalance this control of the security organs by establishing Pashtun dominance of financial institutions, the concentration of political power in Panjshiri hands has led to resentment among Pashtuns. According to Ahmed Rashid, a noted analyst:

> The central political issue is Pashtun representation at the centre. There has to be room for them in the political process or Afghanistan is likely to remain precariously unstable.[9]

Although Pashtuns lack national leaders – apart from the former king, Zahir Shah, who retains the allegiance of most Pashtuns – their numbers and strategic location within the country represent important political facts. To convert peace into lasting political stability requires addressing legitimate ethnic grievances and promoting representative governance both in the centre and in the provinces. Loss of power at the centre following the collapse of Taliban rule, and the fragmentation of the Pashtun south and east among commanders with very narrow support bases, have left most Pashtuns without a stake in the political process set forth in Bonn.

Analysing the ethnic fissures permeating state and society in Afghanistan remains crucial to an assessment of the prospects for reconstruction and political stabilisation, though sectarian, linguistic and religious identities are also important. Many Afghans feel that regional countries, the Western media and international human rights organisations emphasise ethnicity too much in their political calculus. Influential Pashtuns in Pakistan also warn against a concentration on ethnic ties that ignores the complex and overlapping territorial, economic, and factional relationships among Afghanistan's ethnic groups.[10] Indeed, Afghans tend to deny that ethnicity plays a major role in their political efforts, though they are quick to point to their grievances against other ethnic groups.

Political leaders typically use group identity in their competition for power and resources by reconstructing history around symbols of ethnic or religious differences, especially during civil wars. As one close observer of Afghanistan, Barnett

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[5] Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 72-73, 93-95.

[6] The *Shura-yi Nazar-i Shamali* was a regional military and political structure founded by Ahmad Shah Massoud. Its core leaders were Panjshiris associated with the *Jamiat-i Islami* party of former President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Many key figures in the *Shura-yi Nazar* now support a political party known as *Nizhat-i Milli* that is distinct from, but maintains links with, *Jamiat-i Islami*.

[7] The so-called "power ministries" of interior, defence and foreign affairs were held by Younus Qanuni, Mohammad Qasim Fahim and Abdullah Abdullah.

[8] For more details on the Loya Jirga, see ICG Afghanistan Briefings: *The Loya Jirga: One Small Step Forward?*, 16 May 2002 and *The Afghan Transitional Administration: Prospects and Perils*, 30 July 2002.

[9] ICG interview with Ahmed Rashid, July 2002.

[10] ICG interviews, Peshawar and Quetta, May 2002.

Rubin, notes, "the sub-ethnic homogeneity of the Taliban and Massoud's forces helped them coordinate and prolong civil wars".[11] Northern Alliance commanders often exploited the historically rooted anti-Pashtun sentiments among Hazaras, Uzbeks and Tajiks to forge unity among their forces, a tactic that backfired as it alienated Pashtuns.[12] Similarly, Pashtun reluctance to accept a Tajik-dominated central government was put to good use by the Taliban.

Many Afghanistan experts believe that this use of ethnic and sub-ethnic solidarity to mobilise military and political action has increased the ethnic polarisation of Afghan society.[13] Ethnic and tribal loyalties are not fixed, however, and remain subject to political negotiations. Fundamentalist leaders like Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, for example, have played both pan-Islamic and ethnic cards, as and when needed. In sum, ethnicity is one of the primary fault lines around which politicians wage their battles for power in Afghanistan but it is not the only one.

BACKGROUND

STATE FORMATION AND PASHTUN DOMINANCE (1747-1973)

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Afghanistan was at the centre of imperial competition between the Safavid Persian and Moghul empires.[14] The critical feature of this period of competition was the transformation of southern Pashtun tribalism into a vehicle for Safavid political domination. To consolidate their control over western Afghanistan, the Safavids appointed specific Pashtun tribes or clans to head tribal confederations and conferred special privileges upon them. As a result, the Durrani tribes of Popalzai and Barakzai and the Ghilzai tribes of Hotaki and Tokhi rose to prominence.[15]

After the death of the Persian emperor Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah Durrani, a Saddozai commander in his army,[16] established an independent government in Kandahar in 1747. In the absence of alternative social bases, Ahmed Shah relied on Durrani tribal support. The Saddozai emperor was forced to recognise the political and economic autonomy of the Durrani tribes, thus retarding the growth of centralised economic and political power.[17] State patronage (land grants, tax concessions) helped the Durrani tribal chiefs (khans) consolidate their political and economic influence, largely at the expense of non-Pashtun ethnic groups such as the Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks, as well as their rivals, the Ghilzai Pashtuns. Durrani tribes were also exempted from providing levies, a task that was entrusted to the Ghizai tribes.

In the later part of the nineteenth century, incursions from Russia and Britain resulted in the creation of Afghanistan as a buffer state between the imperial rivals.[18] Amir Abdur Rahman Khan

[11] ICG interview with Barnett Rubin, New York, April 2002.
[12] See Bernt Glatzer, "Is Afghanistan on the Brink of Ethnic and Tribal Disintegration", in William Maley, ed., *Fundamentalism Reborn: Afghanistan and the Taliban* (Lahore, 2002), pp.167-181.
[13] ICG interviews, June and July 2002.

[14] The Safavids controlled the western regions of present-day Afghanistan, while the Moghuls ruled over Kabul and the East. Control of Kandahar alternated between the two imperial powers.
[15] See Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernisation, 1880-1946* (Stanford, 1969).
[16] The Saddazoi are a clan within the Popalzai tribe.
[17] Gregorian, op cit., pp. 39-40.
[18] The Russians pushed toward Afghanistan from Central Asia, the British from India.

(1880-1901)[19] agreed to the demarcation of the Durand Line between Afghanistan and the British Empire in 1893 – a border that divided the Pashtuns roughly in half. While Britain controlled Afghanistan's foreign relations, internal autonomy, aided by British subsidies, gave the Amir the opportunity to create the institutional vestiges of a central state (army, civil administration, schools and universities) less reliant on tribal support. Rebellious tribes were crushed, many Ghilzai were forcibly resettled in the north, and supportive Pashtun khans were generously rewarded with land.

In 1919, Amir Amanullah Khan declared independence from Britain and embarked on a radical project of modern statehood. He gave the country its first constitution, which established formal equality among his subjects and abolished the special privileges previously enjoyed by the Pashtuns. Not unexpectedly, his attempts at modernisation were seen by the Pashtun and non-Pashtun tribal and religious elites alike as infringements on their traditional authority. By 1928, appeals presenting Islam as being under threat galvanised revolts in both Pashtun and Tajik areas. In 1929, Baccha-e Saqqao, a Tajik from Kohistan, captured power with a narrow support base in the religious establishment. Nadir Khan, a general in Amanullah's army, rallied Pashtun tribes to oust Saqqao.[20] After Nadir's assassination in 1933, his son, Zahir Shah, ruled until 1973.

In 1947, when the British ceded independence to India and Pakistan, the shifting regional balance of power gave Afghanistan the opportunity to exploit Pashtun nationalist sentiments on both sides of the Durand Line. It argued that the Pashtun-populated areas of the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan should have had the option of merging with Afghanistan at the time of India's partition. Afghanistan's refusal to recognise the Durand Line as the international border created lasting tensions with Pakistan and was to have a deep impact on the course of politics in both countries.

To compensate for state weakness, both Nadir Khan and Zahir Shah continued to rely on Pashtun tribal and landed power. The state's failure to forge organic links with civil society groups and its inability to create a reliable economic base left the country heavily dependent on external aid. In the 1960s for example, foreign aid accounted for 40 per cent or more of the budget, including virtually all development projects.[21]

Various sections of both the urban and rural intelligentsia began to organise politically along nationalist, communist, and Islamic lines. For the left-leaning urban intellectuals and Soviet-trained military officers, socialism emerged as a powerful rallying cry. Responding to growing demands for political participation, the King enacted a constitution in 1964 with an elected parliament. But political parties were disallowed, and the elections returned tribal and landed elites to the parliament. Dissatisfied with this façade of representation, leftist parties like the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and Islamic movements[22] began to challenge the authority of the Durrani monarchy.

DECLINE OF DURRANI HEGEMONY (1973-1979)

By 1973, tenuous state-society links maintained by an ethnically stratified state structure were unravelling. Rising unemployment, reduced aid, regional disparities and growing non-Pashtun resentment provided Mohammad Daud, the King's cousin, grounds to abolish the monarchy and declare Afghanistan a republic. Daud's coup was ostensibly aimed at democratising the state and therefore had the backing of the left-leaning urban elite as well as the Soviet-trained army. However, he brutally suppressed leftist dissent, purged leftist army officers and repressed the Islamic opposition. While he relied on a fragmented Pashtun tribal structure to preserve the economic, social and political order, Daud adopted a pro-active policy of exploiting the Pashtunistan issue.

[19] The Musahiban are a lineage within the Muhammadzai clan of the Barakzai tribe.
[20] Nadir Khan crowned himself King.
[21] Rubin, *Fragmentation*, op cit., p. 65.
[22] By the late 1960s, an Islamic movement had begun to emerge in the *Sharia* faculty of Kabul University. It later took the shape of the *Jamiat-i Islami*, headed by Burhanuddin Rabbani, *the Ittihad-i Islami*, headed by Abd al-Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf and the *Hizb-i Islami*, headed by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar. Daud's repression of the Islamic extremists forced them to flee to Pakistan, which was at loggerheads with Afghanistan over the Pashtunistan issue and provided them with sanctuary from which to launch an insurgency against the Daud regime.

The threat of dissent from restive leftist elements as well as the Islamic opposition weakened Daud, and the left-leaning military, wary of his repression of its PDPA comrades, deposed him in a bloody coup in April 1978. The Saur (April) Revolution effectively ended Durrani dynastic rule and marked the ascendance of non-Durrani Pashtun political power. The ruling Khalq (masses) faction of the PDPA was mainly Ghilzai and eastern Pashtun.[23]

Under Nur Mohammad Taraki, a Ghilzai Pashtun, the Khalqis implemented a radical Marxist reform agenda. The consequences were disastrous. Policies aimed at destroying the power of the tribal, landed and religious elite fragmented Afghanistan further by alienating most political and social groups. Despite its pluralist rhetoric, the northern ethnic groups perceived the regime's policies, especially the purges of the non-Pashtun Parcham members of the PDPA, as yet another form of Pashtun domination. The non-Pashtun resistance took the character of a territorial and ethnic conflict with the centre. Pashtuns, too, were averse to the purported pluralism of the Khalqis. The resistance also forged links with Pakistan-based Islamic parties, such as Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's *Hizb-i Islami* and Burhanuddin Rabbani's *Jamiat-i Islami*.

Marred by intra-party factionalism, the leftist elite of the PDPA had little support from within society with which to challenge the traditional power holders. The feudal and tribal elites, as well as the clergy, were able to mobilise their ethnic, linguistic, religious and territorial constituencies in opposition to a weak state. The regime's violent counter response aggravated divisions within the PDPA,[24] alienated its urban support base, and sowed seeds of dissension in the army and bureaucracy along ethnic and ideological lines.

PDPA RULE AND RESISTANCE (1979-1992)

The virtual disintegration of the Khalqi state led the Soviet Union to intervene militarily, replacing the Khalqis with the Parcham faction led by Babrak Karmal, a Dari-speaker from Kabul. The state's depleted authority outside cities sustained by the Soviet military and the divided nature of anti-Soviet resistance led to further social fragmentation. The Karmal regime moved away from Khalqi policies aimed at radically altering the power of the religious, tribal and landed elite. The regime created a Ministry of Nationalities, giving official status to previously unrecognised languages and enlisting Uzbeks, Turkmen, and members of other historically marginalised groups to teach those languages in schools.

By the time the Soviet Union intervened militarily, the country was already engulfed in civil war. Resistance to the Soviet invasion was largely local (organised around ethnic, tribal, sub-tribal, clan or sectarian identities), and loosely affiliated with the Islamic parties supported by regional patrons to leverage foreign aid for the anti-Soviet Jihad. The Sunni Islamic parties backed by the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan became the bulwark of opposition to the Soviet-backed Parcham regime.[25] Though these parties were Islamic, their support was more or less along ethnic lines.

By the mid-1980s, changes in the Kremlin as well as détente with the U.S. led to a reappraisal of Soviet policy in Afghanistan. Moscow replaced Karmal with Dr. Mohammad Najibullah, an Ahmadzai Ghilzai Pashtun, in 1986.[26] With Soviet economic and military aid, Najibullah resorted to the time tested tools of manipulation to exploit tribal rivalries. In addition, the state supported the creation and expansion of semi-autonomous non-Pashtun militias to balance the Khalqi-dominated mainly Pashtun army. These militias, which included the Jowzjan militia of Uzbek commander Abdul Rashid Dostum, evolved into powerful regional and ethnic forces. Due to the flow of aid from Moscow, the Najibullah government was able to endure the factional and ethnic conflict that permeated state institutions.[27]

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[23] The PDPA was divided into the Khalq (masses) faction and the Parcham (flag) faction, whose membership base was among urban Pashtuns and Tajiks.

[24] Taraki was replaced by his deputy, Hafizullah Amin, in September 1979.

[25] The seven recognised Sunni Mujahidin parties were Burhannudin Rabbani's *Jamiat-i Islami*, *Hizb-i Islami* (the faction led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar), *Hizb-i Islami* (the faction led by Younis Khalis), Pir Sayyid Ahmad Gailani's National Islamic Front for Afghanistan (NIFA), Abd al-Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf's *Ittihad-i Islami*, Sibghatullah Mujaddidi's Afghan National Liberation Front (ANLF), and Maulvi Nabi Mohammadi's *Harkat-i Inqilab-i Islami*.

[26] Najibullah had been chief of KhaD, the KGB-organised intelligence agency, Rubin, op.cit., pp.122-124.

[27] Ibid., p. 150.

During the war, politics was sharply polarised along ethnic lines but this was more the effect of the crisis than its cause. Non-Pashtuns, benefiting from the Soviet-backed state's more balanced ethnic policies as well as external support, were able to assert political and economic autonomy both from the state and from Pashtun dominance. The Hazarajat gained autonomy for the first time in a century, as the Afghan government concentrated its forces on more strategic fronts. Tajiks won military ascendancy in the northeastern Panjshir Valley, with mainly Western assistance. Uzbeks, long resentful of Pashtun landlords in provinces such as Faryab and Balkh, reaped economic dividends from the Soviets for their support of the Kabul government. After the Soviet withdrawal, Tajiks and Uzbeks also increased their share in the state's administrative and military apparatus, gradually eroding traditional Pashtun dominance.

CIVIL WAR AND TALIBAN RULE (1992-2001)

President Najibullah, grappling with factionalism within the PDPA, weakened by the withdrawal of Soviet aid, and hoping for a peaceful transition, resigned in 1992 in favour of a neutral administration. With the Peshawar-based and mainly Pashtun opposition parties failing to agree on a transitional administration, the Tajik troops of Ahmed Shah Massoud took over the capital with Dostum's assistance, after the pro-Najibullah Uzbek commander joined the Mujahidin in 1992. The Northern Alliance, formed by the largely Tajik *Jamiat-i Islami*, the Uzbek *Junbish-i Milli* and the Hazara *Hizb-i Wahdat*, represented non-Pashtun elements brought together by opposition to the Peshawar-based Sunni Pashtun parties.

But internal rivalries and divergent regional interests continued to hamper creation of a viable central authority. President Rabbani had little influence outside of Kabul, the northeast, and Herat, which were largely controlled by *Jamiat-i Islami* commanders. Anarchy reigned in much of the country, with local commanders ruling over a patchwork of fiefdoms independent of the nominal central government.[28]

The anti-Soviet jihad and the spread of radical political Islam during that time deeply transformed Pashtun societies otherwise insulated from the intrusions of a weak and distant state. The dynamic that had kept the clergy politically subordinate to the tribal leadership collapsed during the jihad. In the absence of tribal authority, madrassa-based *ulema* (clergy), aided by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the U.S., had gradually filled the social and political vacuum during the anti-Soviet jihad.[29]

After the mujahidin takeover of Kabul, the absence of central government authority and the control of strategic trade routes by rival warlords imposed enormous costs on commerce for Afghan and Pakistani traders involved in the multi-million dollar transit and drug trade. They also blocked Pakistan's access to Central Asia. Hence, a coalition of traders, Pakistani authorities and religious parties facilitated the rise of the Taliban.[30] The continued domination of non-Pashtuns in Kabul and the widespread anarchy in the country had galvanised ethnic Pashtun resentment against the Tajik-dominated political order at the centre, a sentiment the Taliban used to their advantage.

Against this background of civil strife, the Taliban, initially mostly Durrani (and later also Ghilzai) Pashtuns, emerged in 1994 in Kandahar.[31] Exploiting their ethnic ties with other Pashtuns, they moved quickly to establish control over the Pashtun southern and eastern provinces by co-opting local warlords and disarming militias. They captured Herat in 1995 and dislodged Massoud's forces from Kabul in 1996, restricting them to the northeast. With extensive Pakistani tactical and financial support, the Taliban had gained control of roughly 90 per cent of Afghanistan by the end of 2000.

The Taliban were able to build their military force by using their links with Islamic parties in Pakistan, financial support from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and technical assistance from the Pakistani military. Meanwhile, the ties forged between Arab and Afghan mujahidin during the anti-Soviet resistance

[28] The eastern Pashtun provinces, for instance, were controlled by the Eastern (Nangarhar) *Shura*, comprising a coalition of former anti-Soviet mujahidin commanders.

[29] These included members of the seven Peshawar-based mujahidin parties.

[30] Taliban is the plural for *talib* or student. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords* (London, 2001), pp. 26-30.

[31] Ibid, pp. 17-30, for an account of the immediate circumstances surrounding the emergence of the Taliban.

facilitated the return to Afghanistan of Islamic extremists such as Osama bin Laden. The Taliban leadership developed close links with bin Laden, who furnished both money and his largely Arab al-Qaeda cadres to fight alongside them. Afghanistan became a terrorist safe haven as militants from Kashmir, Central Asia, the Philippines and several Arab countries moved in.

The Taliban gradually began to lose support in Pashtun areas once their consensual decision-making processes gave way to a much narrower power structure, in which their non-Afghan allies played a critical role. By 2001, moderating influences within the Taliban had been sidelined, and the Taliban *shuras* (councils) in Kandahar and Kabul had ceased to function. Forcible conscription and mounting casualties, including the loss of an estimated 2,000 fighters who were summarily executed after the Taliban's first defeat in Mazar in 1997,[32] also contributed to disaffection in the south and east.

Renewed Western, Russian and Indian assistance to the United Front during 2001 and the Taliban's own dwindling support base allowed Massoud to close in on his former capital of Taloqan and allied anti-Taliban forces to reclaim much of the large western province of Ghor. Yet the United Front's prospects of ousting the Taliban remained slight until the U.S.-led Coalition intervened militarily in Afghanistan on 6 October 2001, in response to the 11 September terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.[33] As a result of that intervention, the Taliban were swiftly removed from Kabul and the provincial capitals, with their last stronghold, Kandahar, falling on 6 December. At the same time, taking advantage of their collaboration with the U.S.-led Coalition, United Front troops took over Kabul, and former resistance commanders and local *shuras* quickly reasserted control over areas they ruled between 1992 and 1996.

In the wake of the U.S. intervention, Pashtun leaders failed to exhibit cohesiveness either in the field against the Taliban or in negotiations with the Northern Alliance. The Eastern *Shura*, representing the key eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar, initially launched a campaign to enlist former mujahidin commanders and other anti-Taliban groups behind the return of former king Zahir Shah. Its members also hoped to open a military front against the Taliban in the east but their efforts to forge a southern Pashtun coalition bogged down quickly due to internal differences. The Taliban's capture and execution in late October 2001 of Abdul Haq, a celebrated resistance commander during the Soviet occupation, eliminated the Pashtun leader with perhaps the best prospects for creating an effective military front in the east while maintaining a bridge to the northern mujahidin.[34] Amid the entry into Kabul of the mainly Tajik United Front forces, the Pashtun coalition in the making fell by the wayside as commanders raced to establish their own authority over parts of the south and east.

[32] See Human Rights Watch, "The Massacre in Mazar-i Sharif", November 1998, Chapter Two, at http://www.hrw.org/reports98/afghan/.

[33] Massoud was assassinated by suspected Al-Qaeda militants on 9 September 2001, just two days before the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre.

[34] Similar efforts by Pashtun leaders (Karzai and Sherzai) were coordinated from the southern Pakistani city of Quetta.

THE BONN PROCESS

The jihad against the Soviets and the civil war that followed disrupted traditional state-society linkages and sharpened religious, ethnic and sectarian fault lines. While the U.S. intervention has abruptly ended the civil war, the forced redistribution of political power at the centre has created new tensions and pressures, threatening a return to the chaos of the 1990s. Hence the central task for the international community overseeing Afghanistan's post-conflict transition is to ensure that a legitimate state authority with a monopoly of force is reconstituted, thereby preventing Afghanistan from falling back into yet another cycle of factional violence.

Equally important for a durable political transition, however, is achieving an approximate balance between the competing ethno-regional interests. Restoration of the traditional Pashtun dominance is likely to be resisted by other ethnic groups. Yet, the current dispensation favouring Panjshiri Tajiks remains equally illegitimate in the eyes of most Pashtuns and other Afghan ethnic groups.

THE BONN AGREEMENT

A UN-brokered conference in Bonn in early December 2001 resulted in an Interim Administration that was to govern for six months. Installed on 22 December 2001, it was headed by Hamid Karzai, a Popalzai Pashtun tribal leader and former deputy foreign minister from Kandahar. However, the new political dispensation was dominated by Tajiks from the Panjshir Valley, the late Massoud's native region and power base.

The Bonn Accords provided for the holding of an Emergency Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) before the end of the Interim Authority's six-month tenure. It was to elect the head and key personnel of a two-year transitional government to prepare the country for a new constitution and general elections. The Emergency Loya Jirga, inaugurated by the former King Zahir Shah in June 2002, paved the way for the creation of Hamid Karzai's transitional government that will rule Afghanistan until 2004, when general elections are scheduled.

THE EMERGENCY LOYA JIRGA

The Transitional Administration formed after the Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002 largely maintained the dominance of ministers associated with the *Shura-yi Nazar*. In addition to retaining the defence ministry, Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim gained the portfolio of vice president. Abdullah Abdullah remained the country's foreign minister. After threatening to refuse the new post, Younus Qanuni was compensated for his reassignment from the interior to the education ministry with his appointment as the President's internal security advisor.[35] Haji Abdul Qadir, the brother of Abdul Haq and leader of the Eastern Shura, gained the post of vice president, but was gunned down in Kabul on 6 July 2002. While the circumstances surrounding his assassination remain subject to speculation (both political and economic motives have been cited), his death left the cabinet without an influential Pashtun leader.

According to Pir Ishaq Gailani, leader of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan and a member of an earlier peace process known as the "Cyprus process":[36]

> Bonn had created the false hope that some form of political power will be transferred to the majority Pashtuns. That didn't happen, guns still rule Afghanistan. Those hopes and trust were trampled in the Loya Jirga.[37]

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[35] For an analysis of the Bonn process and the Afghan Interim Authority, see ICG Briefing, *Loya Jirga*, op. cit.

[36] Before the fall of the Taliban, there were two rival efforts among Afghans to find a solution to the conflict. The *Rome Process*, started in the early 1990s and led by the former king, Zahir Shah, brought together technocrats, academics, tribal elders, former civil servants and politicians who supported the re-establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Afghanistan. The Rome group long advocated the convening of a Loya Jirga to elect a broadly based government. One of four groups participating in the UN-sponsored talks on Afghanistan in Bonn, members of the group were given several cabinet posts in the Afghan Interim Authority. The *Cyprus Process*, created in 1999, was Iran-backed and intended to counter the Rome process. Influenced by fundamentalist groups like the *Hizb-i-Islami* (Hikmatyar), it included mostly Afghan expatriates. It also called for a Loya Jirga to elect a broadly representative national government. A three-member delegation represented the group in the UN talks held in Bonn in December 2001.

[37] ICG interview, Peshawar, July 2002.

Even before the Loya Jirga, there were widespread grievances among Pashtuns about the conduct of the Bonn political process, fuelled by the expanding influence of non-Pashtun armed factions during the Interim Administration. But given the opportunities created by the fall of the Taliban and general war weariness, Pashtuns continued to express at least verbal support for the Interim Authority, the Loya Jirga and the peace process.[38]

Pashtun delegates had pinned their hopes for reclaiming lost ground in Kabul on the former King's candidacy to head the Transitional Administration.[39] As one delegate noted, "the unceremonious manner in which he (Zahir Shah) was shown the exit under the auspices of the U.S. special envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, and the UN created the impression that the Loya Jirga was a rubber-stamp for the Panjshiri-dominated Interim Authority".[40] The intimidating presence inside the tent of the *Shura-yi Nazar*-controlled National Security Directorate, the country's internal security agency, undermined the confidence of delegates of all ethnic backgrounds in the neutrality of the process.

Many Pashtun delegates interviewed by ICG claim they voted for Karzai in the hope that he would consult them over his cabinet. Under pressure from the *Shura-yi Nazar*, however, Karzai used the legitimacy accorded him by the landslide vote to impose his cabinet. "The composition of the cabinet has widened the ethnic rift between the Panjshiri Tajiks and Pashtuns", says Rasul Amin, an ethnic Pashtun and education minister in the Interim Administration, "and the perception that Karzai had betrayed his ethnic Pashtuns is now firmly embedded in the minds of the Pashtuns".[41]

Most observers, including Amin, agree that Pashtuns left the Loya Jirga disappointed and frustrated. Resentful yet still optimistic, however, several Pashtun delegates claimed that their conduct during the protracted proceedings had proved that Pashtuns were not mere terrorists, Taliban or al-Qaeda supporters. According to a Pashtun delegate from Kandahar, "we know how to use our guns but we can also engage in a democratic dialogue".[42] These delegates believe the Loya Jirga gave Pashtuns from all over the country their first chance in 24 years to form networks and assert a political voice, albeit with little success and only for a short period.

While resistance may not be in the cards for now, the growing sense of Pashtun alienation should not be dismissed as mere angst. Pashtun clerics and tribal elites have, in the past, exploited popular discontent to foment revolt. A UN official concludes that "there is a sense of alienation amongst the Pashtuns but not a complete loss of hope as yet".[43] According to Ahmed Rashid, "the threat of instability is most likely to arise when Pashtuns feel utterly helpless in the face of unfavourable political developments, though the reaction is likely to be localised, as the Pashtuns are fragmented and leaderless".[44]

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[38] These conclusions are based on ICG interviews with Pashtun commanders as well as UN officials involved in the Loya Jirga process.

[39] Support for Zahir Shah seemed to cut across ethnic lines. Many Uzbeks and non-Panjshiri Tajiks, resentful of the disproportionate influence of the *Shura-yi Nazar*, also backed the King.

[40] ICG interview, Kabul, June 2002.

[41] ICG interview, Kabul, July 2002.

[42] ICG interview, Kabul, June 2002.

[43] ICG interview, Kabul, June 2002.

[44] ICG interview, Islamabad, July 2002.

REPRESENTATION AT THE CENTRE

PRESIDENCY AND CABINET

Although President Karzai assumed office with reasonably strong support across the south and east, many Pashtuns harbour deepening worries about his ability to lead the country. Karzai's inability to limit the *Shura-yi Nazar*'s power at the centre, or to successfully challenge local warlords elsewhere in the country, has produced increasingly profound disillusionment. "The gunmen came and stole their positions within the government after the fall of the Taliban", a tribal leader from the southeast told ICG. "The government never appointed them, but the government also cannot get rid of them. The government is not the government until it can do this".[45]

Southern Pashtuns say the President's popularity soared when in October 2002 he announced the dismissal of 30 middle-level commanders throughout the country, who were often the worst of the warlords. Compliance with the order was inconsistent, however, and largely dependent on U.S. pressure. It was disregarded in the southwestern province of Nimruz,[46] while in Jalalabad, Governor Haji Din Mohammad promptly removed the four named officials, and in Kandahar Intelligence Chief Gulalai yielded his post after reportedly being threatened with arrest by U.S. Special Forces.[47] Karzai's announcement, moreover, conspicuously avoided *Shura-yi Nazar* allies who were responsible for some of the same abuses that had been cited as reasons for the dismissal of other officials. For example, Hazrat Ali, the Eastern Corps Commander, retained his post even though his officers were illegally levying tolls at a check-post on the Peshawar–Kabul road.[48]

The U.S. and other members of the international community sought, at Bonn and during the Emergency Loya Jirga, to balance Panjshiri control of the central government's security organs with Pashtun control of the key financial institutions. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, a distinguished World Bank anthropologist, was appointed as finance minister, while Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi was named governor of the Afghan Central Bank. There was one major flaw in this strategy: the independent resource base and military force of most regional authorities and some central government ministers gives the financial institutions only limited leverage over them, and in turn, leaves the latter reliant on international assistance. (Ghani has managed to cajole some regional authorities, such as Herat governor Ismail Khan, into transferring a portion of their revenue to the centre, symbolically an important step, but of limited value unless such transfers become regular and systematic.)

Under international pressure, Defence Minister Fahim has responded, but only half-heartedly, to criticisms that Panjshiris are disproportionately represented in the central government's security organs. On 20 February 2003, he announced a reshuffling within the defence ministry, with Uzbeks, Pashtuns, and Hazaras assuming posts that were, in most cases, previously held by Panjshiris. The changes involved eleven department heads and included the appointment of a Pashtun general, Gul Zarak Zadran, as an additional deputy minister of defence. Zadran's appointment, however, does little to alter the balance of power in the ministry and arguably even reinforces it. A supporter of *Ittihad-i Islami* leader Abd al-Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf (who is in turn a key Pashtun ally of former President Rabbani), Zadran has expressed a firm belief that mujahidin should form the basis of the new Afghan National Army.[49]

Earlier, on 28 January, Karzai named Ali Ahmad Jalali as interior minister, replacing Taj Mohammad Wardak. Wardak had been appointed by the Emergency Loya Jirga in June in an attempt to dispel impressions of a Panjshiri monopoly of state security, but proved entirely ineffectual in restructuring and professionalising his ministry. Jalali, a Pashtun like Wardak, assumed office with an ambitious and publicly stated goal of carrying out a "complete overhaul" of the police forces.[50] But like other

[45] ICG interview with an Ahmadzai tribal leader, Kabul, 25 March 2003.
[46] ICG interview, Kandahar, December 2002.
[47] ICG correspondence with Western diplomats, Kabul, October-November 2002.
[48] Ibid.
[49] ICG interview with an Afghanistan scholar, Kabul, March 2003.
[50] A former lecturer at Afghanistan's Military College, secretary to the defence minister, and military planner for Afghan resistance factions after the Soviet invasion, Jalali returned to Afghanistan in January 2003 after 21 years of exile in the U.S., where he served as the head of the Voice

members of the Afghan diaspora who occupy high office in the central government, his lack of a powerful domestic support base has made it hard for him to break up the combination of military and economic power enjoyed by individual commanders and the factions with which they are linked.

LEADERSHIP ALTERNATIVES

When questioned about the 2004 elections, Pashtuns in the south almost universally seemed to feel that if they were fair and democratic, they would break the perceived domination of Panjshiris in the central government. Few appeared willing to accept an election victory by an ethnically Tajik party, though there was strong support for Karzai maintaining a close working relationship with Tajik leaders.

Opportunities for Pashtuns to mobilise around non-militarised parties – whether or not ethnically based – are constrained by a lack of security conditions that would allow those parties to campaign openly as well as by an ambiguous legal status. Unless those needs are addressed, political space in the elections is likely to be monopolised by the militarised parties that are now represented in the central government.

Led by Central Bank Governor Ahadi, the Pashtun nationalist Afghan Millat party enjoys substantial support among educated Pashtuns in eastern Afghanistan. Afghan Millat activists report that in Jalalabad, the main city in the east, fear of local gunmen prevents them from operating openly.[51] Since the assassination of Haji Qadir, power in Jalalabad has shifted toward Eastern Corps Commander Hazrat Ali. A member of the Pashai minority from the north of Nangarhar Province, he has used the backing of Defence Minister Fahim to concentrate military and police powers in his largely Pashai forces.

In Kabul, three non-ethnic, pro-democracy parties with Pashtun leadership or substantial Pashtun membership – the Council for Peace and Democracy in Afghanistan, the National Progressives Council, and the Movement for Democracy in Afghanistan – formed the Democratic Coalition at the beginning of 2003. According to Fazal ur-Rahman Orya, a Pashtun who heads the coalition, its objectives are "democracy, political pluralism, free market economics, a resolution to the nationality crisis in Afghanistan, and [maintaining] the integrity of the country".[52] The coalition has opened a provincial office in Jalalabad, and says it has representatives in Mazar, Kunduz, Baghlan, and other provinces. The main vehicle for disseminating its views is its newspaper, *Mashal-e Democracy* ("Torch of Democracy"), which is edited by Orya and published every fifteen days.

The Democratic Coalition's experience of addressing the issue of war crimes in Afghanistan graphically illustrates the informal limits on political speech. After publishing an article in *Mashal-e Democracy* calling for accountability for faction leaders who were implicated in war crimes and naming several key figures associated with the United Front, Orya says he received a succession of threatening calls and visits from officials of the National Security Directorate (*Amaniyat*). During one visit, he said, an *Amaniyat* representative warned him:

> Look, in Afghanistan, all your efforts are fruitless. Democracy is not implementable. The U.S. and the Coalition forces will eventually be defeated in Afghanistan, and therefore we and the fundamentalist parties will remain in power for a long time. I advise you to cease your activities.[53]

Sebghatullah Sanjar, a Tajik former member of the Loya Jirga commission and leader of the Republican Party of Afghanistan, said that his party members cannot operate freely outside of Kabul. "Even here, we can't display our board", he

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of America's Dari, Pashto and Persian services. Abdul Waly, "New Interior minister prepares overhaul of police services", *Kabul Weekly*, 30 January 2003, p. 1. Behroz Khan, "Major Shuffle in Karzai Government Likely", *The News*, 20 January 2003.

[51] ICG interview, Kabul, May 2003.

[52] ICG interview with Fazal ur-Rahman Orya, Kabul, February 2003.

[53] Ibid. Orya says he also received a phone call from *Ittihad-i Islami* leader Sayyaf, about ten days before the Islamic holiday of *Eid-i Qurbani* (11-13 February 2003). Allegedly, Sayyaf requested a meeting at his residence, claiming Orya had insulted him and questioned his dignity. Orya told ICG that he said to Sayyaf, "There are thousands of witnesses who can say that your men have done these things". Sayyaf replied, "We will see each other".

asserted. Sanjar cited an article in the Ministry of Defence publication *Dafa* that captured the atmosphere in which pro-democracy parties operate. The article, he said, stated that elements espousing democracy were a threat to the achievements of the jihad and to the morality of Afghan youth.[54]

Apart from shared security concerns, past rivalries and ideological differences impede effective coordination among parties that share similar views. Leaders of pro-democracy parties include former members of *Hizb-i Islami* (Hikmatyar faction) as well as bureaucrats in the Najibullah government. Although they now espouse similar objectives, fundamental trust between their leaders has yet to be achieved.

The absence of a regulatory framework within which parties can operate has also impeded political mobilisation. A draft Political Parties Law now before the Cabinet would create significant barriers to registration and the formation of parties in provincial centres. The draft states that a party must have at least 10,000 members, and that its central office must be located in the capital.[55] It also includes several requirements that militate against party leadership by Afghans who have lived abroad for long periods.[56] The draft vests powers of registration in its author, the Ministry of Justice, and gives the Ministry broad grounds upon which to seek the dissolution of a party.[57] It would require that the constitution of each party not be in conflict with "the fundamentals of Islam" or the "national interests of the country",[58] and obligate parties "to follow and respect Islam and the historical and national customs of Afghanistan".[59]

One potential source of leadership, as yet unorganised politically and with limited representation in the cabinet, consists of the many Pashtun professionals with experience of working in NGOs and development agencies in Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries.[60] Most retain close ties to their communities of origin and could help give those communities an effective voice in the central government.

INSECURITY AND RESPONSE

For Pashtuns in northern and western Afghanistan, loss of political power since the Taliban collapse has translated into pervasive insecurity and targeted violence. Between November 2001 and January 2002, a wave of attacks on Pashtun communities across northern Afghanistan, involving all three of the major United Front factions, resulted in mass displacement and communal impoverishment. Abuses documented by human rights monitors included summary executions, rape, denial of access to agricultural land, and widespread looting of livestock and movable property. Much of the displacement took place internally within the north, with rural Pashtuns fleeing to towns where they had the protection of local commanders, such as Balkh and Baghlan. Others fled to Kandahar city, or to camps located along the southeastern border.[61]

Violence against Pashtuns in the north abated considerably by February 2002, partly because the support of Pashtun commanders had begun to emerge as an asset in the competition between the rival United Front factions *Jamiat-i Islami* and *Junbish-i Milli*, but also because the pillaging of Pashtun villages had been so thorough. Appropriation of farmland by Dostum's *Junbish-i Milli* commanders in Faryab Province continued well into 2002, however,[62] and Human Rights Watch researchers in November 2002 reported an

[54] Interview with Sebghatullah Sanjar, Kabul, February 2003.
[55] Law on Political Parties (draft), Articles 11 and 12.
[56] The draft requires that the parents of both the leader of the party and his spouse must have been Afghans, that the leader "should have lived at least ten years continuously in Afghanistan, except for the times in exile", and "should not have two nationalities". Ibid., Article 6.
[57] The Ministry of Justice, headed by Abdul Rahim Karimi, a former professor of *Sharia*, has also drafted laws on social organisations and the press that may adversely affect democratic development. See ICG Asia Report No. 45, *Afghanistan: Judicial Reform and Transitional Justice*, 28 January 2003, pp.10-11.
[58] Law on Political Parties (draft), Article 3.
[59] Ibid., Article 9.

[60] Almost half the UN Drug Control Program's 4,000-strong local field staff during the Taliban period, for example, were Pashtuns. ICG correspondence with Ahmed Rashid, 22 April 2003.
[61] See Human Rights Watch, "Paying for the Taliban's Crimes: Abuses against Ethnic Pashtuns in Afghanistan", April 2002. The report directly implicates the United Front factions *Junbish-i Milli*, *Jamiat-i Islami*, and *Hizb-i Wahdat* in the violence against ethnic Pashtuns.
[62] Human Rights Watch, "On the Precipice: Insecurity in Northern Afghanistan", a Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, New York, June 2002, Chapter IV.

ongoing pattern of arbitrary arrests and beatings of Pashtuns in Herat, often on the pretext of suspected collaboration with the Taliban.[63]

In Bala Murghab, in the northwestern province of Badghis, fighting on 24 March 2003 between a commander allied with Ismail Khan and Juma Khan, a local Pashtun commander, resulted in the routing of the latter's forces and grave human rights violations against the Pashtun population in the village of Akazi. An investigation by UNAMA and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission found that 38 civilians died (including three women and twelve children who drowned in a river), 761 homes and 21 shops were looted, and the bodies of 26 of Juma Khan's fighters were found executed, with their hands tied behind their backs. Although the investigators declined to characterise the attack on Akazi as ethnically-motivated, their description of conditions in Bala Murghab prior to the attacks was consistent with the pattern of abuses against Pashtuns elsewhere in the north:

> According to interlocutors there was an already established pattern of human rights violations in Bala Murghab prior to the recent fighting which may have even triggered the conflict. Reportedly these included: forced taxation of the local population by soldiers and armed individuals not wearing any recognisable uniform; extortion of money and food; and confiscation of cattle and harvest. Failure to comply with the demands of the soldiers resulted in ill treatment and torture and even extra-judiciary executions. Interlocutors also pointed out that persons refusing to comply with requests by the soldiers were labelled as Taliban.[64]

Although the attacks on northern Pashtuns have been on one level simply crimes of opportunity, with armed groups targeting the most vulnerable population in their area, they have also been driven by the dispossession of many Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek farmers under Taliban rule. In many cases, inter-ethnic land disputes date back even further, to the Durrani state's settlement of Pashtuns in the north from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

The fact that the latest cycle of dispossession took place not under a pariah regime such as the Taliban, but an administration created and supported by the international community, demanded a response from the central government and the United Nations. Two ad hoc delegations appointed by President Karzai gathered extensive testimony about violence against northern Pashtuns in early 2002, but their recommendations were never publicly disclosed or implemented. On 17 October 2002, the Transitional Administration and the UN reached an agreement on the formation of a Return Commission to help facilitate the return of northern Pashtuns.[65] It was to be chaired by Enayatullah Nazari, the Minister for Refugees and Repatriation, and include representatives of UNAMA, UNHCR, and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

By April 2003, there had been indications of progress, as well as some outstanding obstacles, in the Commission's work. Its working group had produced four field mission reports, whose recommendations, including an end to forcible recruitment and occupation of land by commanders, were endorsed during the first meeting of the full Commission in Mazar (attended by UNHCR head Ruud Lubbers as well as the leaders of all three major parties in the north). The Working Group had also begun informing Pashtun internally-displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees about security conditions in their districts of origin, based on its own field assessments.

Returns, which are being monitored by UNHCR protection officers, have mixed results on the critical issue of access to land. In some areas, displaced Pashtuns have successfully recovered their land, but there were also significant cases in which they were unsuccessful. In the absence of an impartial and competent judicial mechanism to adjudicate land disputes, as well as authoritative land deeds, disputes between communities often remain unresolved. As one observer noted, there have been cases in which members of different

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[63] Ibid., p. 44.
[64] UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, press briefing by David Singh, UNAMA Public Information Officer, 27 April 2003.
[65] UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, press briefing by Manoel de Almeida e Silva, UNAMA Spokesman, 20 October 2002.

ethnic communities have documents attesting their title to the same tract of land.[66]

The *Shura-yi Nazar*-controlled northeastern provinces of Baghlan and Takhar, from which large numbers of Pashtuns were also displaced, remain for now outside the Return Commission's ambit. An inter-agency commission for the return of Gujjar pastoralists – a northeastern minority also subjected to reprisal attacks after the collapse of the Taliban – was established in late 2002 with the cooperation of the Northeastern Corps Commander, Daud Khan. There has, however, been little substantive progress in its work.[67]

Pashtuns in Kabul have not faced systematic violence but they recount harassment and discrimination by local police and intelligence officials. "After the fall of the Taliban, keeping a beard and speaking Pashto can often turn out to be a nightmare in the capital", says one local Pashtun. "There is an instant assumption on the part of the Tajik security services that you are a fundamentalist Talib. You are guilty without proof".[68] Afghans investigating the mass arrests and shooting deaths of students during the 11 November 2002 demonstration at Kabul University noted that while both Tajik and Pashtun students were taken into custody, the Pashtun students were generally detained longer.[69]

WARLORDISM, TRADE AND GOVERNANCE

In southern Afghanistan, as in other parts of the country, Coalition intervention has been accompanied by a fragmentation of authority along much the same lines as those that prevailed prior to the Taliban's emergence. Most Afghan provinces are dominated by several powerful local figures who control militias, some of them in conflict with one another. While in some places there is a pretence to rule of law, with official police forces and a judiciary, in practice there are few exceptions to the power of local potentates.

In southern Afghanistan, arbitrary arrest, torture, and extortion are all common. Businesses are frequently seized by commanders and their owners thrown in one of many private prisons if they protest.[70] Shopkeepers and wealthy citizens who are not linked to commanders are often the targets of extortion, sometimes being imprisoned and tortured until their families pay the required sum. Land is held as somewhat more sacrosanct, but there are examples of this kind of theft as well.[71]

This fragmentation and insecurity has had profound implications for commerce in the Pashtun-majority southern and eastern provinces, which include trade routes vital to Pashtun business interests.[72] Many traders are now finding, as they did during the 1992-1994 period, that the cost of doing business under such conditions is untenably high. The social consequences of warlordism in the Pashtun areas as elsewhere in Afghanistan are equally great: patronage along sub-ethnic lines by local authorities has exacerbated internal divisions and distorted traditional governance arrangements.

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[66] ICG interview with UN official, April 2003.

[67] ICG interviews with UN officials, Afghanistan, November 2002 and April 2003.

[68] ICG interview, Kabul, June 2002.

[69] ICG interview with an Afghan human rights investigator, Kabul, November 2002. Such selective discrimination had also been visited on Hazaras and Panjshiris in Kabul under the Taliban; arbitrary arrests of young men from these communities on the basis of suspected opposition activity were frequent occurrences, particularly during periods of intensified armed conflict in Hazarajat and the northeast.

[70] The information for this section of the report was garnered principally from interviews conducted in Dubai, Peshawar, and Quetta from June to July 2002, and in Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand provinces from October to December 2002. Residents of Farah, Gardez, Ghazni, Oruzgan, and Zabul were also interviewed, mainly in Kandahar and Kabul. ICG notes the great diversity of views among the Pashtun residents of those provinces on some of the topics discussed here, and the impossibility of fully capturing that diversity.

[71] ICG interviewed several victims of torture and extortion in Kandahar, in December 2002.

[72] Prior to the U.S. military intervention, there were two primary Afghan trading routes: Kandahar-Chaman-Quetta and Jalalabad-Torkham-Peshawar.

THE WAR ECONOMY

The principal source of political power for commanders has always been economic. In the desolation of the drought- and war-stricken south, few industries survive. "There are only three industries in the south", said one local NGO director, "smuggling, opium, and the gun".[73] Foreign sponsorship is another source of funds, and one that is also monopolised by commanders.

Commanders in Herat, Helmand and Kandahar have exclusive control over the road tolls that are set up on the massive smuggling routes to Iran and Pakistan. One commentator, Ahmed Rashid, estimated that the smuggling trade accounts for 30 per cent of the imported goods in the Pakistani economy.[74] Some of the tolls are unofficial, others are semi-official 'customs' charges, but few locals believe the funds raised find their way back into government coffers. The opium trade remains more decentralised, however, with many growers and traders, and significant differences between provinces. While some commanders are actively developing control over the trade, others are keeping more of a distance. Even those commanders who do not profit directly from the trade, however, profit indirectly by extorting money to allow wealthy opium traders to continue their business.[75]

In addition to these big money earners, smaller local industries are also monopolised by the commanders. In anticipation of a U.S.-led road building project, Governor Sherzai and his family have amassed control of the local rock quarrying and cement businesses in Kandahar, a combination that gives him an effective personal monopoly over any local reconstruction.[76]

Southern Pashtuns watch this economic consolidation with increasing unease. They know that patronage is a key source of any commander's power, and the wealthier the commanders are, the more they will be able to challenge the central government. The longer these figures have to build up their wealth, the more entrenched their political power will become. "A clock is ticking", said one man from Farah province, "the local commanders are racing the central government to consolidate their power".[77]

Commanders from the time of the anti-Soviet struggle have deeply entrenched interests in a war economy. As Barnett Rubin puts it, "warlordism in Afghanistan is not the result of some ancient traditions but rather the results of the country's forced integration into the contemporary state system".[78] The continuation of semi-conflict helps warlords deter the stability that could undercut their power. Transition to real peace could disrupt the predatory economy that provides them with the resources to maintain their authority and finance their militias. In other words, chronic war in Afghanistan can be understood as the continuation of power politics by economic means.

IMPACT ON TRADE

The war with the Soviets destroyed the rural subsistence economy.[79] After the Soviet withdrawal and the decline in U.S. and Saudi aid for the resistance groups, the mujahidin elites, who had to generate their own resources to retain and expand their power, grew ever more dependent on opium production, trans-border trade and smuggling.[80] Throughout the civil war, local commanders extorted money for allowing the passage of goods through their fiefdoms. Pashtun trading and trucking groups are believed to have supported the Taliban to ensure the security of their business interests. "The initial public acceptance of Taliban rule was based on their ability to end the lawlessness and restore a measure of stability in the war-plagued country", said a Pashtun businessmen based in Dubai.[81]

Afghan Pashtun traders form part of a transnational economic network supported by ethnic and sub-ethnic ties that extends to the United Arab Emirates

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[73] ICG interview with NGO director, Kandahar, October 2002.
[74] Rashid, *Taliban*, op. cit., p. 192.
[75] ICG interview with opium trader, Kandahar, December 2002.
[76] ICG interviews with local civil society members and businesspersons, Kandahar, November 2002.
[77] ICG interview, Kandahar, December 2002.
[78] ICG interview with Barnett Rubin, New York, April 2002.
[79] According to the World Food Programme, 85 per cent of the Afghan population is dependent on agriculture. See "WFP Launches Emergency Appeal For Afghanistan", News Release, 6 September 2000.
[80] See Barnett Rubin, "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan", *World Development*, Vol. 28, No. 9, 2000, pp. 1789-1803.
[81] ICG interview, Dubai, July 2002.

(which has the largest Afghan Pashtun diaspora after Karachi). Traders typically purchase duty free consumer electronics and reconditioned cars in Dubai for smuggling into Iran and Pakistan. This diaspora sits atop a regional transit trade business worth billions of U.S. dollars. A 1999 World Bank study estimated that illicit trade alone between Afghanistan and Pakistan was worth U.S.$2.5 billion a year.[82]

The Afghan Pashtun traders based in the Pakistani border towns of Peshawar and Chaman, as well as in Dubai, believe they are the biggest losers from the fall of the Taliban.[83] Businessmen involved in transporting consumer goods from Chaman in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan to Kandahar, for instance, claim trade volume has fallen because of the uncertainty created by the re-emergence of warlords. They recall that the Taliban imposed a single tax on goods passing through their territories. "We don't know who is who. Everyone has their own law now, their own taxes", says one trader in Dubai.[84]

Pashtun traders say their participation in the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan is contingent on the restoration of peace and security. A series of incidents of extortion and harassment has emphasised their deep sense of insecurity. In early May 2002, two Afghan businessmen were deprived of U.S.$100,000 near the southern Afghan border town of Spin Boldak.[85] In early August 2002, hundreds of transport workers went on strike in the same area to protest the prohibitively high taxes imposed on their goods by different local warlords, as well as provincial authorities in Kandahar and Herat.

Afghan Pashtun traders interviewed by ICG in Dubai and Quetta say their problems are especially acute in Herat. "Herat is a no-go area for Pashtun traders, as Ismail Khan's forces do not tolerate us", complains the owner of a large general cargo business in Dubai.[86] Many businessmen have had to hire Tajiks to run their business in Herat. "We remain at their mercy as Heratis know Pashtuns are vulnerable and often simply refuse to honour their obligations", says a trader in Chaman.[87]

The strong economic and social linkages of Pashtun traders across regional borders make them a unique group with a lot of cash. Western diplomats in Kabul say the potential role the traders can play in the reconstruction and economic modernisation of Afghanistan is a largely untapped resource the government in Kabul has yet to recognise. Although their expressions of political partisanship remain muted by feared association with the Taliban, they say they are traders first, and Pashtuns later. "We are generally interested in peace and stability for our business interests and for the good of Afghanistan", says a major car dealer in Dubai. "Traders are unlikely to support a particular group or ethnic faction as long as there is peace and security across Afghanistan".[88]

These resourceful traders are not likely to stand by as their livelihoods are threatened. "We are finding ways and means to deal with the kind of economic predation that led many of us to lend our support to the Taliban in the first place",, says an Afghan Pashtun electronics trader in Peshawar.[89] Nevertheless, traders are unlikely to challenge the provincial authorities or local commanders in the foreseeable future, since Pashtun economic power, much like political power, is fragmented and regionalised.

Cross border trade and smuggling exerts a strong centrifugal force on the Afghan economy. While each trader taps into the central government through his own kinship ties to individuals in Kabul, an east-south division is perceptible among the traders. Influential commanders in the Transitional Administration try to promote the trading community from their own regional strongholds. This regionalisation means that business interests are served best in the short run by courting individual commanders and ministers, rather than waiting for central authority to consolidate. In that sense, the traders could reinforce the fragmented distribution of political and economic power in Afghanistan.

The central government budget is almost entirely financed by foreign aid since regional warlords

[82] "Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Relations", World Bank, Islamabad, 1999.
[83] ICG interviews, June and July 2002.
[84] ICG interview, Dubai, July 2002.
[85] ICG interview, Quetta, June 2002.
[86] ICG interview, Dubai, July 2002.
[87] ICG interview, July 2002.
[88] ICG interview, Dubai, July 2002.
[89] ICG interview, Peshawar, July 2002.

refuse to transfer customs revenues regularly to Kabul. For instance, Ismail Khan has become a major political and financial power earning an estimated U.S.$60 million to U.S.$80 million a year by controlling trade to Iran and Central Asia that passes through Herat.[90] Such commanders have little incentive to abdicate their authority to the centre, which is seen as weak and dependent on U.S. military strength for its survival. Not surprisingly, Karzai's efforts to lure them to the centre have met little success. In late December 2002, for example, President Karzai reportedly asked Sherzai to come to Kabul as interior minister, which effectively would have removed him from his powerful post as Governor of Kandahar, but Sherzai refused.[91]

While the perception that the political process in Kabul has largely bypassed Pashtuns is widespread, the belief that development and reconstruction of Pashtun areas is a distant priority of the central government is also becoming commonplace. (The planned rehabilitation of the road between Kandahar and Kabul is a major exception but progress on the ground is as yet limited.) The Pashtun tribal belt, on both sides of the Durand Line, has a high incidence of poverty that feeds criminal activities as well as religious extremism. The early promises of aid from the U.S. and its allies created high expectations among Pashtuns on the Afghan side of the border. But little of that aid has materialised in the border provinces, and anticipation is slowly turning into frustration.

TRIBALISATION OF GOVERNANCE

The Taliban represented an unprecedented rise to power of the mullahs, at the expense of both tribal leaders and mujahidin commanders (though many of the latter were also absorbed by the Taliban). In the eastern mountains, where tribal institutions were by far the strongest, the Taliban were seen by local tribal leaders as undermining Pashtunwali, and in turn, the basis of their authority. "The authority of the tribal elders was really damaged by the jihadi parties during the war, and then by the Taliban who tried to impose a strict *Sharia* regime", said a Pashtun elder from Gardez.[92]

With the departure of the Taliban, not only have the commanders returned but tribal leaders are attempting to reassert their pre-eminence in Pashtun life.[93] Today, warlordism is intertwined in the complex distribution of regional and subregional power, and local conditions vary significantly with the individual commander. Their greatest legitimating factor lies in their ethnic and tribal affiliations. Commanders enjoy varying degrees of good relations with the community and can thereby claim some grass roots support. Some commanders have even been elected by *shuras* of elders as tribal leaders.[94]

However, as ICG found in discussions with tribal leaders from Kandahar, Farah, and Helmand provinces, the support that commanders receive from tribal elders is often reluctant, or more pragmatic than genuine. Tribal elders are often appealed to for help by desperately poor villages and individuals, and commanders are usually relatively wealthy, due to their monopolies on particular local trades, involvement in the opium and smuggling businesses, and monopoly on foreign funding. Commanders, therefore, are supported often for the critical funds they provide to their tribes. Commanders with local government positions also frequently channel foreign aid to areas where their tribe predominates. "All the poor belong to the gun", commented one elder from Farah province.[95]

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[90] See "Afghan Power Brokers: Toll-taker Kingpin", *The Christian Science Monitor* online edition, at http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0610/p01s03b-wosc.html.

[91] ICG interview with a senior UN Official, Kabul, December 2002.

[92] ICG interview with tribal elder from Gardez, Kabul, March 2003.

[93] Tribal governance in the south consists of many layers of interlocking *shuras*. The smallest level *shura* is usually one dealing with about ten families, or a small village. The next level of *shura* covers a few villages, or if the community is large, around 100 families within that community. This structure continues up to the district level, where a *shura* of tribal elders advises the district head, or *uluswal*, appointed by the central government. *Shuras* may have some financial power to pool and distribute resources, but are mostly regulatory bodies, resolving disputes among members and taking decisions that must be collective. For the poorest members, a welfare safety net can sometimes be provided by wealthy members of the tribe, including commanders.

[94] ICG interviews with tribal elders of Kandahar and Farah provinces, December 2002.

[95] Ibid.

Tribal elders lamented their lack of control over the young men that are the *andiwal* or gunmen of the warlords. These men are often the most dispossessed in Pashtun society, men who have lost or lost touch with their families and spend much of their time together, playing cards and surviving on what their commander pays them.

In the governance and security vacuum left by the fall of the Taliban, the efforts of Pashtun warlords to cultivate a tribal support base has exacerbated sub-ethnic divisions and even marginalised non-dominant groups. Ghilzai who live in predominantly Durrani areas, for example, sometimes complain of harassment, seizure of property, and discrimination from Durrani warlords. Ghilzai farmers in Kandahar province say they are only allowed to hire Durrani workers.[96] Often the excesses of warlordism are directed at those least able to protect themselves, namely minority groups.

More powerful than the Durrani/Ghilzai divide, however, are the identities of individual tribes. Animosities between particular Durrani tribes far exceed any ill feeling between Durrani and Ghilzai, for example. In some cases, bitter longstanding feuds exist within tribes.

Of the six principal Durrani tribes, three now enjoy special political influence in the south. The Barakzai, present in significant numbers in Kandahar, Helmand, and Farah provinces, retain their traditionally dominant role, with the Kandahar governor, Gul Agha Sherzai, belonging to a Barakzai lineage. The Popalzai, a large tribe in both Kandahar and Oruzgan provinces, are led by the family of President Hamid Karzai. The Alikozai of Kandahar include the veteran mujahidin leader Mullah Naqibullah, who was President Rabbani's main regional ally during the pre-Taliban period and retains links to the Tajiks at the centre.

The other main tribes among the Durrani are the Nurzai, spread out across the southwest; the Alizai, located in Helmand, Nimruz and Farah provinces; and the Achakzai, concentrated at both extremes of the Durrani territory: in Farah province, and near the border crossing with Pakistan at Chaman.

The security and governance structure of each southern town and province largely breaks down along tribal lines, with each tribe affiliated with a commander who usually occupies some official position such as governor, police chief, intelligence chief, or army chief that legitimates his retention of a militia. Towns and provinces are divided, with varying degrees of clarity, among spheres of control by each figure. In Kandahar, for example, the Governor is Barakzai, the Police and Army Chiefs Alikozai, and the Intelligence Chief Achakzai. President Karzai's brother is the local leader of the Popalzai, and the Nurzai are led by a commander responsible for security in the border areas of the province.

Other provinces have a similar structure. In Helmand, there is a tense standoff between Governor Sher Mahmad, an Alizai, and the Security Chief, Abdur Rahman Jan, who is Nurzai.[97] Sher Mahmad is close to President Karzai, while Abdur Rahman Jan is said to have longstanding relations with the Panjshiris in the cabinet.[98] In Zabul, the governor is a Tokhi, the tribe that forms the majority in the province, but one of his main opponents, Mawlana Fazl Rahman, comes from a small minority tribe. In Farah, the governor is Achakzai and close to the Barakzai Gul Agha, but he is bitterly resented by the more numerous Nurzai in the province, and relations are tense with the Dari-speaking intelligence chief.[99] The Nimruz intelligence chief is also a Dari-speaker, while the governor is Brahui, the ethnic group that – together with the closely affiliated Baluch – forms the majority of the population in the province.

As noted previously, the efforts of southern warlords to cultivate a tribal support base has led to sub-ethnic power struggles between commanders. Thus when Governor Sherzai clashed in late 2002 with Police Chief Mohammed Akram, it was seen in part as a conflict between the Barakzai and Alikozai tribes.

While almost all Pashtuns have strong tribal affinities, they are also generally firmly against bringing tribal politics and loyalties into central and provincial governance, as has happened since the fall of the Taliban. For a century, a tradition of accommodation between the tribes and the central

[96] ICG interview with Ghilzai elders, Kandahar province, December 2002.

[97] ICG interview with NGO official, Kandahar, December 2002.
[98] ICG interview with Nurzai elder, Kandahar, December 2002.
[99] Interview with elders from Farah province, Kandahar, December 2002.

government has resulted in an expectation that central government appointments, such as the governors of each province, should not be made from among the tribes living in that province. As many prominent local leaders told ICG, an impartial governor from another part of the country is essential to keeping peace among the tribes.

In addition, the common practice in the Durrani state was to continually shift the provincial governors and army chiefs around the country, ensuring that they did not build up a power base or bias in the places they served in. Most southern Pashtuns expected President Karzai to shift governors around in this manner but he has not done so.

One major reason why educated individuals are largely excluded from governance in the south and east is their association with former communist regimes. A substantial proportion of educated, professional Pashtuns in those regions were members of the Khalq faction of the PDPA. Often perceived as dismissive of Islamic traditions and Pashtun cultural norms, the Khalqis along with the Parchamis have been discredited in the jihadi narratives that enjoy currency in most of Afghanistan.

EXTERNAL ACTORS

UN

Immediately after the fall of the Taliban, the then UN Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, Francesc Vendrell, initiated a process of broad based consultation with tribal elders and other influential figures in southeastern Afghanistan. The initial sounding, according to well-informed UN officials, could have paved the way for the integration of legitimate Pashtun leaders in the broader political process.

Instead, the political course taken by diplomats at Bonn – the creation of a cabinet in which United Front faction leaders claimed all key ministries, and more critically, an Emergency Loya Jirga that ratified the consolidation of power by these leaders – has failed to create an opening for representative political leadership. "The world body was largely seen after the fall of the Taliban as a guarantor of peace, stability and democratisation", says an Afghan journalist. "We were sadly mistaken".[100]

The Loya Jirga seriously damaged the credibility of the UN in the eyes of many Pashtuns. Voicing a sentiment shared by other Afghans, one local observer commented, "The way in which the warlords were inducted into the Jirga, and given front seats, in clear violations of the Bonn Accords, was indication that the UN was a partisan actor in the process".[101]

UN officials admit the Loya Jirga was not a perfect process but they are quick to state that it was the best outcome feasible under the enormous odds imposed by 24 years of conflict. Other UN observers close to the Loya Jirga process say that the UN buckled under U.S. and *Shura-yi Nazar* pressure. One UN official acknowledges: "There could have been a more skilful management of the warlord issue. They should have been made to feel the UN was doing them a favour by allowing them to participate".[102]

The reluctance to confront the dominant political factions was dramatically illustrated by the visible

[100] ICG interview with an Afghan journalist, Kabul, June 2002.
[101] ICG interview, Kabul, June 2002.
[102] ICG interview with a UNAMA official, Kabul, July 2002.

presence during the Emergency Loya Jirga of government intelligence agents. "That the government's intelligence personnel were openly intimidating Pashtun and other delegates, recording conversations and taking pictures under the very nose of the United Nations was deeply embarrassing to all of us", says one international monitor.[103]

The UN has, to an extent, had its hands tied by the international community's failure to establish security arrangements for the main population centres outside of Kabul. Repeated requests by the Secretary General and his Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi, for a limited expansion of ISAF have thus far been rejected.[104] The U.S. instead has adopted a strategy of trying to replicate "the ISAF effect" through the positioning of small Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in the main provincial centres; their remit, however, is limited to engineering projects and other development-related activities aimed at building popular support for the Coalition presence. The PRTs, as presently constituted, are incapable of providing security. On the contrary, the teams, as in the case of regular American forces, are isolated from the communities in which they are located.[105] However, the PRT model has provided other members of the international community, including the United Kingdom and Germany, a means of bypassing U.N. and Afghan demands for ISAF expansion.

U.S.

U.S. policymakers recognised early on that Pashtun support was needed to create a broader-based movement to replace the Taliban and provide a degree of stability.[106] At first, this strategy appeared feasible, particularly after the former king, Zahir Shah, and the United Front agreed to a political process beginning with the convening of a council of national unity to assemble an interim government. But heavy U.S. bombing of Taliban positions began before a political agreement could be reached. At the same time, the U.S. was reluctant to prevent its United Front allies from entering Kabul, placing immediate military benefits ahead of the long term goal of stabilising a post-conflict Afghanistan.

In fact, Afghan officials frequently complain that the urgent need to create political and economic incentives for the demilitarisation of Afghan society has taken a back seat to the Pentagon's pursuit of short-term military objectives. A well-known expert asserts:

> Unless the U.S. can reconcile the pursuit of its military objectives with the political goals of rebuilding Afghanistan, the process of reconstruction and political development in Afghanistan will remain a distant reality.[107]

According to Western diplomats, the U.S. continues to finance Afghan proxies in the hunt for Al-Qaeda and Taliban holdouts. Afghan officials complain that U.S. military operations are undertaken without any coordination with either the central government or provincial authorities. The same diplomatic sources say better pay in the U.S.-funded militia units reduces prospects for demobilising the factional fighters to pave the way for reconstitution of a national army. A senior UN official told ICG that U.S. military priorities "undercut the political and economic steps needed to stabilise Afghanistan and help consolidate the development of central state institutions".[108]

Naim Kuchi's arrest, on 1 January 2003, vividly illustrates how the Coalition's handling of its military operations can detract from the goal of political stabilisation. A leader of one of the largest Pashtun tribes, the Ahmadzai, Kuchi was also a minister in the government of Sibghatullah Mojaddidi and later a governor of Bamiyan under

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[103] ICG interview with an international Loya Jirga monitor, Islamabad, August 2002.

[104] On 18 September 2002, a day after the U.S. State Department issued a strategy report warning that extending ISAF's reach outside Kabul would "pose significant logistical and command burdens", Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah acknowledged: "While there is need for the expansion of ISAF for stability and security in the country, and that need is better understood (in the U.S.) now, we are far from getting it". Agence France-Presse, "Abdullah admits ISAF expansion unlikely", *The News* (Karachi), 20 September 2002.

[105] First-hand observation by a Western correspondent, May 2003.

[106] Zalmay Khalilzad and Daniel Byman, "Afghanistan: the Consolidation of a Rogue State", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter 2000), p. 74.

[107] ICG interview with Ahmed Rashid, June 2002.

[108] ICG interview, Kabul, July 2002.

the Taliban. He was seized by U.S. forces while on his way to a meeting with senior government officials in Kabul. Subsequent efforts by the Ahmadzai tribe to secure his release – including a meeting with Karzai in January by representatives of some 400 Ahmadzai leaders – have been unsuccessful. Hashmat Ghani, head of the Ahmadzai *shura* and brother of Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani, told reporters in mid-January 2003 that the U.S. military had failed to communicate with Kuchi's family, including informing it about the reasons for his arrest.[109] "Such acts [as Kuchi's arrest] sabotage the authority of the transitional government; they create a real split between the population and the American army, and feed anti-U.S. sentiment", Ghani said.[110]

Besides conveying the impression of partisanship in local disputes, the heavy-handed tactics used by Coalition forces in some of their operations risk alienating sources of support. In February 2003, Coalition forces, accompanied by troops belonging to a commander in Khijran district (Oruzgan Province), carried out a raid on the home of a rival commander in the neighbouring district of Baghran (Helmand Province). According to the commander targeted in the raid, the Coalition troops forced his teenage son and nephew face down on the ground, and pressed the heels of their boots into their backs in an effort to compel him to disclose the location of weapons and ammunition that they alleged he was concealing. A search of the house yielded only two AK-47s, both of which were registered, but the targeted commander was nevertheless detained overnight in the compound of the local *uluswal* (district administrator) and his communications equipment confiscated. Ironically, both commanders are members of an ethnic and religious minority in the area that had been repressed under the Taliban and had strongly supported the Coalition intervention.[111]

Pashtuns interviewed by ICG in southern Afghanistan were overwhelmingly in favour of the Coalition intervention to remove the Taliban regime but expressed confusion or suspicion regarding U.S. support for local warlords. "When the Americans first came here, they had 98 per cent support. Now, they have 20 per cent support", said one senior Afghan military officer, blaming the decline on the perceived buttressing of warlord power.[112] "The people have much goodwill towards the Americans, but when they see that they are only supporting these warlords, then the conspiracy theories start", complained one tribal leader.[113]

Other community leaders interviewed by ICG complained that American forces maintain relations only with their warlord interlocutors, never meeting with elders, mullahs, or other members of the community. "The Americans are so ignorant", exclaimed one community leader in Kandahar, "they come in here and only talk to the worst people, and they think we are all like them".[114] Even local commanders in Kandahar complained that American interpreters were all employed from among a pool provided by Governor Sherzai.[115]

Most people in the south conclude that Americans suffer from ignorance of local conditions and the politics of their country, ignorance that is manipulated by local actors. In a discussion with ICG, one American diplomat acknowledged such deficiencies, saying "We're not the British, we're not the Raj, we don't do colonialism well, we don't understand this local tribal politics stuff".[116]

Apart from collaborating with abusive commanders, the U.S. and its Coalition partners have also engendered local opposition by failing to respond adequately to reports of civilian casualties in the course of Coalition air strikes.

One such incident was the 1 July 2002 bombing of a family compound in Dehrawood district, in Oruzgan Province. According to the official Pentagon account, American warplanes came under attack from anti-

[109] "Afghan Pashtun leaders protest arrest of tribal chief by US troops", Agence France-Presse 12 January 2003. Lt. Gen. Daniel McNeill, who commands the Coalition forces, told *The Washington Post* that "there is some fairly good information connecting him [Kuchi] to things and people whose activities, and capabilities to carry out these things, probably are working to the detriment of the coalition". Marc Kaufman, "'Tribal Elders Accuse Washington of Abuse of Power," *Washington Post*, 12 January 2003.

[110] Agence France-Presse, "Afghan Pashtun leaders protest", op. cit.

[111] Conversation between the commander from Baghran district and an ICG consultant, Kabul, February 2003.

[112] ICG interview with a senior Afghan military officer, Kandahar, November 2002.

[113] ICG interviews with tribal and community leaders, Kandahar, December 2002.

[114] Ibid.

[115] ICG interviews with local commanders, Kandahar, 2002.

[116] ICG interview with U.S. diplomat, Afghanistan, December 2002.

aircraft fire and retaliated.[117] One bomb went astray killing at least 48 civilians including 25 from a family that was celebrating a wedding.[118] Compensation was one of the demands of 200 protesters who on 4 July 2002 staged the first anti-American demonstration in Kabul since the collapse of the Taliban regime. The Transitional Government condemned the attack, called for a full investigation and urged the U.S. to ensure that civilians are not targeted in the future. A subsequent U.S. military investigation maintained that the aircraft had come under fire and that the "operators of those weapons elected to place them in civilian communities" – a conclusion that Afghan Borders Affairs Minister Arif Noorzai said was unlikely to be accepted by most Afghans.[119]

On 11 February 2003, Coalition F-16s bombed opposition fighters and caves in the vicinity of Baghran district. The initial volley was followed by a second raid on 14 February in which Coalition aircraft, including B1 bombers, targeted a ridge overlooking the Baghran Valley. According to the Coalition, about 25 armed men had been sighted on the ridge, but the number of combatants killed was not disclosed. Local residents claimed that seventeen civilians had been killed in the raids, but the Coalition maintained that the only civilian casualty discovered in the course of a scouting expedition up to the ridge was an eight-year-old boy injured while allegedly accompanying his father, a Taliban combatant.[120]

In both cases, prompt and thorough investigations, as well as a dialogue with local tribal leaders, would have done much to minimise perceptions locally that the Coalition was dismissive of possible civilian deaths.

REGIONAL ACTORS

PAKISTAN

Pakistan has 10 million Pashtun citizens of its own and shares a border with Afghanistan of some 2,400 kilometres. Successive Afghan governments have refused to accept the Durand Line as an international border. Beginning in the early 1970s, Islamabad sought to offset Afghan territorial claims by supporting Afghan Islamic parties. After the Soviet withdrawal, Pakistan's Afghan policy centred on support for Gulbuddin Hikmatyar as a legitimate Pashtun claimant to power. When Hikmatyar failed to score significant military victories, Pakistan swiftly found an alternative in the Taliban. Many Afghans say Pakistan has exacerbated the ethnic component of their conflict by pursuing a lopsided policy of supporting Pashtun Islamic rule.

Islamabad's perceived need for a stable western border, the acquisition of strategic depth against India, and the prospect of using Afghanistan as a gateway to Central Asian markets sharpened its resolve to support the Taliban despite heavy political, diplomatic and economic costs. There was a domestic political incentive as well, linked to Islamabad's fears about irredentism. "Pakistan saw in the Taliban, and other fundamentalists, the opportunity to undermine support for Pashtun nationalism", claimed one respected Pakistani Pashtun political commentator.[121] More recently, Pakistan has been alarmed by India's growing political, military, and economic ties to Afghanistan, and sees its establishment of consulates in the Pashtun-majority cities of Jalalabad and Kandahar as especially provocative.

Pakistan had initially insisted on the inclusion of "moderate" Taliban leaders in any new government as a price for its support in the war on terrorism. While U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed willingness to keep Pakistan's legitimate interests in mind, the United Front, Russia and Iran were firmly opposed to any Taliban role. Many Afghans interviewed by ICG saw Islamabad's insistence on Pashtun representation in the post-

[117] Citing a leaked UN report, the *Times of London* said that a UN team had found "no corroboration" for Pentagon allegations that AC-130s had been fired upon first from the village. Dumeetha Luthra, "US Accused of Airstrike Cover-Up", *Times of London*, 29 July 2002. The UN quickly qualified its report, saying that the mission team had visited the site to conduct a humanitarian needs assessment and that some of the conclusions reached in the report were not adequately substantiated. UN News Service, "UN team finalising report on bombing in Afghanistan, UN spokesman says", 29 July 2002.

[118] BBC News, "Anti-US protest in Kabul", 4 July 2002.

[119] BBC News, "US justifies Afghan wedding bombing", 7 September 2002.

[120] Aaron Favila, "U.S. Again Denies Afghan Civilian Deaths", Associated Press, 15 February 2003.

[121] ICG interview with Afrasiab Khattak, Chairman, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Peshawar, May 2002.

Taliban political order as the "crying of crocodile tears", reflective of an inability to give up strategic designs on Afghanistan.

Western diplomats in Kabul believe that despite Islamabad's official reversal of its pro-Taliban policy under U.S. pressure, it is still active in cultivating Pashtun power brokers in Kandahar as well as those in exile in Pakistan. Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) is in contact with several Afghan mujahidin commanders living in Peshawar, notably including Haji Zaman, Jalalabad's former police chief who was expelled after his alleged involvement in the bombing of Defence Minister Fahim's convoy in that city in April 2002.[122]

"When push comes to shove, Pakistan is unlikely to hold back, and will use its long border and deep ethnic links with Pashtuns to alter the balance in its favour", says a senior Pashtun leader in the king's camp.[123] Many in Kabul and Peshawar fear that Pakistan is likely to continue its verbal support for the war on terrorism while it waits for the American military departure from the region and believe that Pashtun discontent could give the Pakistani military the opportunity to re-enter the Afghan power game.[124] According to a leading Pakistani analyst, the ISI's strategy centres on the creation of a new Pashtun Islamic formation drawing on both the Taliban and Hikmatyar's *Hizb-i Islami* party.[125]

Prominent local commanders in southern Afghanistan, such as Kandahar Governor Gul Agha Sherzai, are known to have had links with the ISI.[126] But the tension between Pakistan's desire to maintain influence simultaneously with southern warlords and with the Taliban is straining those ties. On 13 April 2003, two relatives of Sherzai were killed and his brother injured in the Pakistani border town of Chaman. Sherzai's spokesman, Khalid Pashtun, was quick to lay blame for the attack. "Without the support of Pakistan, the Taliban would not have been able to do it", he said.[127]

The election victory of an Islamic alliance, the *Muttahida Majlis-e Amal* (United Council for Action, MMA), in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan assembly elections in October 2002 was interpreted by many security analysts as presaging a deeper engagement by Pakistan in the politics of southern Afghanistan. Western diplomats during this period received reports of meetings between local authorities from southern Afghanistan and Islamic groups in Quetta, in which ISI members were present.[128] U.S. intelligence reports in October had indicated that senior Taliban commanders, including Mullah Baradar and Mullah Dadullah – both of whom were taken into custody by United Front forces after the collapse of Taliban rule in the north in November 2001 but subsequently released – had been meeting in Pakistan. Throughout December 2002 and January 2003, high level sources reported an influx of Taliban operatives and trainees from camps in Pakistan back into Afghanistan. "Hundreds have been coming back, and they are organizing in cells in Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul", said a senior Afghan intelligence officer.[129]

Cross-border infiltration and harbouring of Taliban leaders was a top agenda item for Karzai during a state visit to Pakistan on 23 April 2003. In a statement to reporters following a meeting with President Musharraf, Karzai said that he had named several Taliban commanders whom he wanted Pakistani authorities to apprehend. The list, which Karzai said would be followed by a longer and more specific one, included Baradar, Dadullah, Mullah Akhtar Usmani, and Mullah Hafiz Ahmed. Pakistani officials subsequently denied having received any such list during Karzai's visit.[130]

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[122] Lutfullah Mashal and Philip Smucker, "Afghan Puzzle: Who Shot Qadir?", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 8 July 2002.
[123] ICG interview, Kabul, July 2002.
[124] ICG interviews, Kabul and Peshawar, July 2002.
[125] ICG interview, Kabul, 14 December 2002.
[126] ICG interview with U.S. diplomat, Afghanistan, December 2002. See also Ahmed Rashid, "Jockeying for Influence, Neighbors Undermine Afghan Pact", *Eurasia Insight*, 6 January 2003.
[127] Other sources believe that the attack was motivated by a long-standing tribal feud. "Pakistan 'Backing Taliban Militants", *Gulf Daily News*, 15 April 2003. ICG interview with a Kabul-based European diplomat, March 2003.
[128] ICG correspondence with a Western diplomat, Kabul, October 2002.
[129] ICG interview with a senior Afghan military intelligence officer, December 2002.
[130] Ahmed Rashid, "Afghan-Pakistan Summit Yields Commitment to Improve Border Security", *Eurasia Insight*, 13 May 2003.

IRAN

Iran shares a long border with Afghanistan (900 kilometres) and has provided shelter to roughly 1.5 million Afghans. Iranian policymakers have long sought to prevent an alliance between Pakistan and a Sunni-dominated Afghanistan, which would span its entire eastern border. Besides Iran's competition with Pakistan for access to the Central Asian republics, Iran's Afghanistan policy is largely motivated by sectarian ties to Afghanistan's Shia minority, which it has tried both to control – for example, through the simultaneous patronage of rival Shia parties in the central Hazarajat region during the 1980s – and protect. The persecution of Shia Hazaras by the Taliban was a key factor in Iran's decision to increase its logistical, military and political support to the United Front.

Iran condemned the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and played a crucial role in promoting the Bonn agreement. Tehran has consistently expressed support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and has pledged U.S.$560 million over five years for this effort. In early 2002, Iranian authorities ordered the closure of Hikmatyar's *Hizb-i Islami* party offices throughout the country, and Hikmatyar himself was subsequently expelled. (Some Western diplomats, however, believe that Hikmatyar maintains ties to hardline elements in the Iranian government.)[131] More recently, in December 2002, Iran closed the office of the extremist Afghan Hizbullah group in the northeastern city of Mashhad.[132] However, Iran's post-Taliban relations with Afghanistan are also driven in part by fear of U.S. military encirclement, exacerbated by the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Iran has sought to maintain its influence in Afghanistan partly through a series of trade agreements and development projects negotiated with the centre. An Iranian delegation visiting Kabul in January 2003 signed an agreement to provide electricity to Afghanistan's northwestern province of Herat.[133] A visit to Iran the same month by Afghan Commerce Minister Mustafa Kazemi resulted in the conclusion of bilateral and trilateral agreements allowing Afghanistan and India 90 per cent discounts on port fees at the Iranian port of Chabahar and providing for joint India-Iran development of a railroad at Chabahar.[134] Iran is also repairing the highway from its border to Herat, which is part of a vital transit trade route that extends to Turkmenistan.[135]

Apart from legitimate infrastructure development projects, Iran has taken other steps to consolidate its political influence in western Afghanistan, a region that has close historical and cultural ties to the eastern Iranian province of Khorasan. Citing UNAMA and local sources, Human Rights Watch reported in November 2002 that Iran's presence in Herat included "troops and officers of the *Sepah-e Pasdaran*, or Revolutionary Guards, a powerful military force controlled by hard-line clerical forces in the Iranian government".[136] Most of the regional political figures backed by Iran, such as Herat governor Ismail Khan, are Dari-speakers.[137]

RUSSIA

While the campaign against international terrorism is a key area in which U.S. and Russian interests converge, Moscow is also wary of growing U.S. influence in especially the oil-rich Caspian Sea basin.[138] The jury is still out on the contours of future Russian engagement with Afghanistan.

Western diplomats in Kabul say Moscow is still actively involved in shoring up the *Shura-yi Nazar*, especially Defence Minister Fahim,[139] who visited Moscow in February 2002 to expand defence ties

[131] ICG interviews, Afghanistan, June 2002.
[132] "Afghanistan welcomes Iran's move to close Afghan Hizbullah office", IRNA, 16 December 2002.
[133] Caspian News Agency, "Iran and Afghanistan signed agreement on supplying electricity to the border province of Herat", 15 January 2003.
[134] Statement from the office of Mr. Sayed Mustafa Kazemi, Minister for Commerce and head of the Investment High Commission, 11 January 2003.
[135] "Afghan Factions Risk New Civil War", Knight Ridder Newsgroup, 22 January 2002 at http://www.capecodonline.com/cctimes/archives/2002/jan/22/afghanfactions22.htm.
[136] Human Rights Watch, "All Our Hopes are Crushed: Violence and Repression in Western Afghanistan", November 2002, p. 7.
[137] ICG correspondence with a Western diplomat, Kabul, October 2002.
[138] Russia and the U.S. are competing, says a regional expert, "to exploit the oil and gas resources of the Caspian sea and Central Asia", Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (Lahore, 2002), p. 188.
[139] ICG interviews, Kabul, July 2002.

and buy military hardware. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 2003 rejected press reports that it had signed a U.S.$40 million contract for the supply of military transport and combat helicopters. It acknowledged, however, that under a December 2002 agreement between the defence ministries of each country, Russia would provide "on a gratuitous basis" motor vehicles, spare parts for automobiles and armoured equipment, fuel and lubricants, communications equipment, and other specified light assistance.[140]

The critical issue for many Western governments, and one that the Russia does not deny, is the provision of assistance to the existing *Shura-yi Nazar*-controlled Ministry of Defence forces, rather than the incipient Afghan National Army, which is being trained by the United States and France. The Russian foreign ministry maintains that such assistance is legitimate under old treaties. Western intelligence reports also indicate that some Russian tanks and spare parts are being funnelled through Tajikistan and the port at Kunduz and warehoused in the Panjshir valley – a claim denied by Fahim.[141]

The political clout of regional actors within Afghanistan is likely to be shaped by the level of U.S. involvement. Powerful neighbours like Russia, Pakistan and Iran sustained the civil war in the 1980s and 1990s by supporting favoured ethnic factions, and these links remain more or less intact. They are already jockeying to retain their respective spheres of influence but no regional power can afford to antagonise Washington by working openly at cross-purposes with its military campaign. The fragile nature of central authority in Afghanistan, torn by chronic infighting among rival ethnic factions, however, means U.S. disengagement would likely spur renewed competition for influence.

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[140] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Concerning Russian military-technical assistance to Afghanistan", Daily News Bulletin, 18 February 2003.
[141] Ahmed Rashid, "Jockeying for Influence", op. cit.

CONCLUSION

Although political mobilisation around solidarity groups is a feature common to developing countries, and many developed ones as well, power imbalances carry much greater risks in Afghanistan, where both internal and external actors are prepared to exploit ethnic grievances. The forthcoming elections, scheduled for June 2004, represent a make-or-break opportunity to create a viable polity in Afghanistan that gives Pashtuns and other underrepresented ethnic groups a stake in governance and reconstruction.

Many of the steps that need to be taken in order to create conditions in which Pashtuns feel that they have an equal stake in the new dispensation in the country would also benefit other elements of Afghan society. To maintain its credibility and produce lasting political stability, for example, the international community must ensure that the mistakes in government formation made during the Emergency Loya Jirga are not repeated. Most critically, the Security Council should authorise an expanded mandate for ISAF, to cover the major population centres outside of the capital. It should also prioritise support for efforts aimed at political education and voter registration.

The central government must professionalise its security institutions, broaden their ethnic composition, and make them accountable to civilians. Without security sector reforms and a credible disarmament process, non-militarised parties will be unable to campaign without fear of retribution.

UNAMA, donors, and the central government should cooperate in linking human rights monitoring by the UN and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission to the development of effective deterrents and formal dispute resolution mechanisms. In particular, judicial reforms should be accelerated and receive increased commitments of international technical and financial assistance.

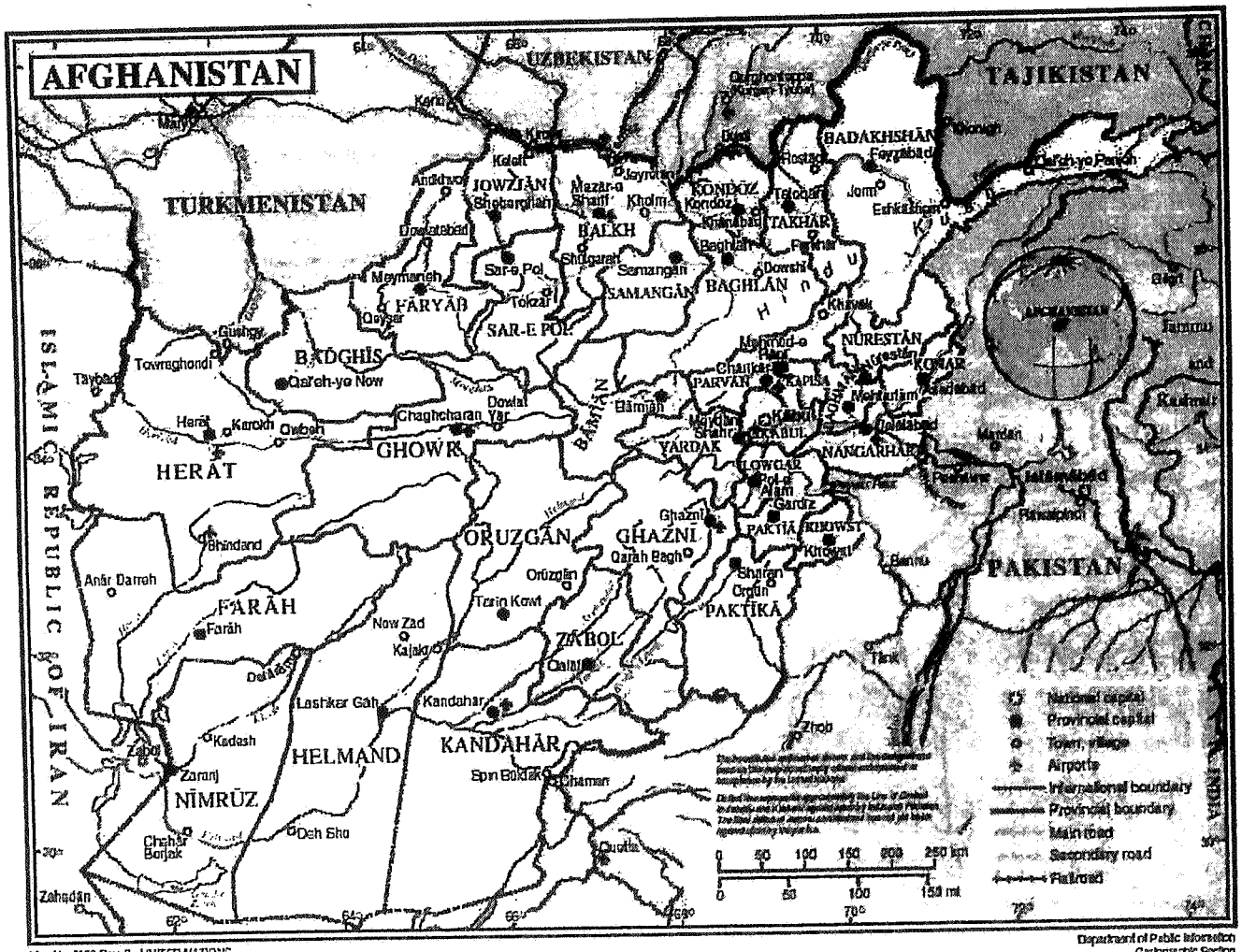
And vitally, the U.S. needs to reconcile its short-term military objectives with the political goal of rebuilding Afghanistan, including being prepared to take Pashtun and other local sensitivities into greater account when planning actions and investigating civilian casualties.

Unless such measures are taken, discontent among Pashtuns and other groups that have received insufficient attention since the fall of the Taliban could put Afghanistan's fragile stability at increasingly serious risk.

Kabul/Brussels, 5 August 2003

APPENDIX A

MAP OF AFGHANISTAN



Map No. 3768 Rev. 2 UNITED NATIONS
November 2002

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APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 90 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's Internet site, *www.crisisweb.org*. ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The ICG Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; and its President and Chief Executive since January 2000 has been former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

ICG's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York, Moscow and Paris and a media liaison office in London. The organisation currently operates twelve field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bogota, Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, Osh, Pristina, Sarajevo, Sierra Leone, Skopje and Tbilisi) with analysts working in over 30 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents.

In *Africa*, those countries include Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone-Liberia-Guinea, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe; in *Asia*, Indonesia, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir; in *Europe*, Albania, Bosnia, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; in the *Middle East*, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in *Latin America*, Colombia.

ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. The following governments currently provide funding: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Foundation and private sector donors include Atlantic Philanthropies, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation Inc., John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John Merck Fund, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Open Society Institute, Ploughshares Fund, Ruben & Elisabeth Rausing Trust, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Sarlo Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, the United States Institute of Peace and the Fundacao Oriente.

August 2003

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* The Algeria project was transferred from the Africa Program to the Middle East & North Africa Program in January 2002.

APPENDIX D

ICG BOARD MEMBERS