

**THE ROLE OF IRAN AND PAKISTAN IN THE AFGHANISTAN  
CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY (1992-2001)**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University*

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*for the award of the degree of*

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled "THE ROLE OF IRAN AND PAKISTAN IN THE AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY (1992-2001)", submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*To*

*My Mom*

*(L) L. Lamkhonei Haokip*

*And*

*My Dad*

*L. Jangkhothang Haokip*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS:**

<b>BBC</b>	-----	<b>British Broadcasting Cooperation</b>
<b>CIA</b>	-----	<b>Central Intelligence Agency</b>
<b>CSR</b>	-----	<b>Congress Strategic Report</b>
<b>IJC</b>	-----	<b>Islamic Jihad Council</b>
<b>ISI</b>	-----	<b>Inter Services Intelligence</b>
<b>JUI</b>	-----	<b>Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islami</b>
<b>NWFP</b>	-----	<b>North West Frontier Province</b>
<b>PDPA</b>	-----	<b>Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan</b>
<b>UAE</b>	-----	<b>United Arab Emirates</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	-----	<b>United Nations Commission on Human Rights</b>
<b>USDSDA</b>	-----	<b>United States Department of State Diplomacy in Action</b>

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## ***CHAPTER ONE***

## INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan, “Land of the Afghan”<sup>1</sup> is surrounded by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the north, Iran in the west, in the east and south by Pakistan and in the northeast by China. It has a total land area of 647,500 sq. km. It witness dry, cold winter and hot summer climate. It is a land of diverse language, religion, and culture, ethnic and tribal groups. The Pushtun, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turks, Aimaq, Baluch, Nuristani, etc. form the existing ethnic groups of Afghanistan. These ethnic groups together make the population of Afghanistan to approximately 31,056,997. Of the total population 99 per cent are Muslims, who were sub-divided into Sunni (80%), Shi’a (19%) and others form one per cent. It has a literacy rate of 28.1 per cent (USDSA, 2008).<sup>2</sup> Afghans are largely tribal in nature and about 80 per cent of the population is engage in agriculture. Each tribal group is under their own warlords or autonomous rulers who have been fighting each other for power. The tribal and later the ethnic and religious or political conflict continues till date. Thereby, Afghanistan shows no sign of peace in history since its inception. Conrad Schetter (2005: 56) rightly puts in that the heterogeneity of the society is so great that neither language nor religion nor culture or any other social system or cultural pattern forms a unifying national force for the country’s inhabitants.

### 1.1 AFGHANSITAN CONFLICT – AN OVERVIEW

Since Ancient times, Afghanistan has been a meeting place between different races, cultures and peoples. It occupies an important strategic location between the east and the west because of her geographical location. For millennia, according to Louis Dupree (1973: xvii), Afghanistan is the center of action, the meeting place of four ecological and cultural areas: the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and even the Far East. It was this importance that the great kings and rulers or different dynasties cast their interest on Afghanistan. Afghanistan witnessed many successive empires, which appeared and disappeared in different historical times. Darius the Great, Alexander the

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<sup>1</sup> See Dupree (1973).

<sup>2</sup> See U.S. Department of State Diplomacy in Action (2008), here after USDSA.

Great, Mauryas, Yeuhchih, Kushans, Huns, Ghazanavids, Seljuks, Ghorids, Turks, Mongols and Mughals etc. devoted their time for the stronghold of their position in Afghanistan. These rulers or dynasties, one after another, ruled Afghanistan during different period of time. In 1747, Ahmad Shah founded modern Afghanistan (Amin, 1987: 41).<sup>3</sup> However, it was only during the reign of Amir Abdul Rehman Khan that the consolidation of Afghanistan took place. Its boundaries were finally fixed and he made Islam as the source of legitimacy instead of merely tribal power (Amin, 1987: 42). Different Afghan rulers ruled Afghanistan successively from this point of time with different principles and policies. During the reign of King Amanullah (1919-1929) he made nationalism as the source of his legitimacy and introduced radical reforms in social, economic, cultural and administrative spheres. He further introduced secular code of laws along with the Sharia (Amin, 1987: 43). As these changes were unsuitable or unacceptable for the Afghan tribal structure, tradition, customs and religion, it led to rebellion and culminated in Amanullah dethronement. After his enthronement, Bacha-i-Saqao abolished Amanullah's reforms. But he could not consolidate his authority and finally Nadir Khan took control of the power by killing him. King Nadir Khan (1929-1933) changed Amanullah reformation policy and reverted into traditional pattern. Unlike Amanullah, he sought his allegiance of tribal and religious leaders. However, during the time of Sardar Doud (1953-1963), the development programmes of Amanullah were re-instated. He further initiated rapid development at a vast scale. His reign showed the development of national army and bureaucracy and centralization of government. He adopted secular policies and rejected the authority of religious leaders by abolishing "purdah". It was during his rule that a massive economic aid poured into Afghanistan. He used it for the modernization of Afghanistan. However, because of his policies and ideologies, Doud was dismissed in 1963. During his period, western culture started to influence the Afghan society. Besides, it witnesses the emergence of new ideological movement or force, which challenged the traditional authority. It is believe by many scholars that his policies initiated the emergence of leftist movement in Afghanistan (Amin, 1987: 45). Finally, in 1973, Sadar Doud led to military coup. This event witnessed the second inning of Sadar Doud in power (1973-1978). Soon after this he

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<sup>3</sup> Ahmad Shah was a Sadozai Clan, a sub-tribe of Pashtun.

abolished monarchy and declared Afghanistan as a republic. Besides, he abrogated the 1964 constitution. Together with this polarization of Afghan society also came into its visible form. From this point of time traditional tribal authority in politics in the national level became almost vanished. It was because of the rapid influence of western culture and ideologies. In the meantime, leftist movement or political party in Afghanistan sprang up during the constitutional period. However, in 1967, the two most important leftist movements of the time split and known as Khalq and Parcham. Besides, there exist Islamic group who wanted to rejuvenate Islam and pose a great challenge to the leftist movement in Afghanistan. With active influenced from western thoughts and culture, the Soviet Union backed leftist party (PDPA, who were founded in 1965) led coup d'etat in 1978.

With the onset of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the British pay active attention towards Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Czarist Russia also cast its shadow towards Afghanistan. According to the British point of view, Napoleon advancement and the apprehension of his relations with Afghans pose a great danger for their empire in the east. So, the British India made an effort to seek an alliance with Iran. Thus, world powers like British India and Czarist Russia or France saw Afghanistan as an important strategic point because of her geographical location. It was this importance that major powers and regional powers were vying for their stronghold in Afghanistan. As a result, European politics has its direct impact in Asia (Hussain, 2005: 23). However, Afghanistan during this time was politically disunited and tribal rivalry with ethnic and religious fissures (Hussain, 2005: 22). According to Adam Tarock (1999a: 803), the inter-tribal rivalry or regional conflicts and its geostrategic position has made Afghanistan an arena where regional and world powers have been vying for their influence. This ethnic or social or political rivalry paved a way for the external powers for their easy penetration into the spheres of Afghanistan. As a result of this power game Afghanistan became a buffer state between British India and the Soviet during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and she became a place of ideological warfare between the United States on the one hand and the Soviet Union or China on the other

during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>4</sup> Finally, this power game led to the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The year 1979 earmarked an important landmark in the history of Afghanistan. It was during this year that Soviet Union's military invasion of Afghanistan took place. Since, then, the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia actively involved in the spheres of Afghanistan either directly or indirectly. They helped the Afghans in terms of financial assistance and arms supply against the Soviet Union. They repeatedly put pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. With strong reaction and pressure from the Afghans and the international community the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 under the terms of the Geneva Accord in 1988. Since then different mujahideen groups, who fought the communist during the Soviet occupation, were fighting against each other for power. Polarisation and fragmentation of Afghan society took place during this time. Intense fighting led to the emergence of Peshawar Accord in 1992. However, soon after the accord, varying Afghan factions were fighting against each other on the basis of ethnic and sectarian lines. In 1993, Islamabad Accord came into being. Intense fighting broke out once again and lasted until the emergence of the Taliban in 1994. The Afghans regarded the emergence of the Taliban as saviour. However, in course of the time, the Taliban too fall into sectarian or ethnic lines. Harsh treatment against women, Shariat law, Human Rights violation, etc, led the Taliban unpopular among the masses. Being as a fundamentalist Sunni Pushtuns, the Taliban always despise the non-Pushtuns or the other religious minorities. Intense fighting broke out between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance until the dispersal of the former towards Pakistan in 2001. In the same year, Rabbani transfer the power and Interim Government was formed in Afghanistan under the leadership of the United Nations.

## **I.2: GENEVA ACCORD AND THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL**

The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union was a great shock to the international community. Since the Soviet Union invasion, the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi

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<sup>4</sup> Besides U.S. and the Soviet Union, China, and some regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan were actively involved to have the controlling power in Afghanistan.

Arabia actively involved in the spheres of Afghanistan either directly or indirectly. They helped the Afghans in terms of financial assistance and arms supply against the Soviet Union. The United Nations General Assembly convened an emergency session on 14 January 1980. The delegates of the meeting called for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the foreign troops (Misdaq, 2006: 306). They repeatedly put pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. With repeated pressure from different countries under the leadership of the United Nations, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 under the terms of the Geneva Accord of 1988. This accord was signed under the leadership of the United Nations in the Swiss Capital, Geneva (BBC Online News, 1988).

The Geneva Talks that started on 15 June 1982 were concluded after twelve rounds of indirect talks on 7 September 1987. It took six years, nine shuttle missions to the region, and 11 rounds of indirect talks at Geneva (Bokhara, 1991: 59). The United Nations sponsored talks were conducted between the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, "in reality it was the US and the Soviet Union over the withdrawal of the Soviet troops" (Bokhari, 1991: 58). As a result on 14 April 1988, Geneva Accord came in being under the auspices of the United Nations. The Geneva Accord was concluded with the following four important points<sup>5</sup>:

1. *Bilateral agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the principle of mutual relations, in particular on noninterference and nonintervention;*
2. *A declaration on international guarantees signed by the Soviet Union and the United States;*
3. *Bilateral agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the voluntary return of refugees; and*
4. *An agreement on interrelationships for the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan signed by Pakistan and Afghanistan and by the Soviet Union and the United States as guarantor-states. This instrument provided for a phased withdrawal of the foreign troops starting 15 May 1988.*

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<sup>5</sup> Imtiaz H. Bokhari (1991), *Evolution of a Dual Negotiation Process: Afghanistan*. Also see Aga Shahi (2008), Nabi Misdaq (2006).

### **I.3: PESHAWAR ACCORD AND THE FORMATION OF TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT**

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, there was political vacuum in the spheres of Afghanistan and it became a patchwork for conflict among various mujahideen groups. It was during this period that various mujahideen groups were fighting against the Soviet backed communist government in Kabul. As the mujahideens were neither to the party nor to the negotiation, they refused to accept the terms of the treaty. Soon after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, Afghan national military force came to an end and all the mujahideens or the Afghan fighters struck their own ways and means for the power in Kabul. However, it was not until 1992 or the fall of Najibullah that intense and notorious fighting for power among the mujahideens existed. It was only after the fall of the communist government that conflict on the basis of ethnic and sectarian division came into being. The primary objective of varying mujahideen groups at this time was to overthrow the Soviet back communist government under the leadership of Najibullah. They aimed for the establishment of strong Afghan national government. After prolong and intense fighting between the mujahideens and the government in Kabul, Najibullah decided to resign. However, different mujahideen parties did not allow sharing power with the government as proposes by the United Nations. The formation of the interim government became the core issue at the time. Despite many difficulties, different parties were brought into peace negotiation and as a result on 26 April 1992 the Peshawar Accord was signed (Rubin, 1995: 266). It was signed by the mujahideen political (party) groups to lay the groundwork for the formation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA).

Under the terms of the accord, an interim government was formed. It became the first mujahideen government in the history of Afghanistan. Mujaddidi became the president for two months, to be followed by Rabbani for four months. After six months the government would hold a Shura to choose an interim government for the next eighteen months. After which, election would be held. Hekmatyar became the Prime Minister, while Masud became the defence minister. The interim government arrives in Kabul on April 28 and proclaimed the establishment of the Islamic State of Afghanistan (Rubin, 1995: 271-272).

Soon after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, numerous petty warlords came into the spheres of Afghanistan. These warlords acted independently without any attention towards the authority of Kabul. Many warlords seized the opportunity to produce cash crops like opium. They levy tributes on road, traders, smugglers and government suppliers.

#### **I.4: MAJOR CAUSES OF THE STATE FAILURE 1992-1994**

Soon after the Peshawar Accord, various mujahideen parties were once again fall into power struggle. As the accord was signed only by the Pakistan based mujahideen groups it became a failure since the first day. The signing of the Peshawar Accord intensified the competition for power between the mujahideen parties, who were mainly split and claimed their allegiance between the two most important parties of the time, Hizb-i-Islami under Hekmatyar and Jamiat-i-Islami under Rabbani. The emergence of two opposite camps intensified the conflict. During this time there was a division on the basis of ethnic, regional, sectarian and linguistic lines. Afghan society was filled with chaos and ethnic rivalries or conflicts, and regionalisation and fragmentation of Afghan society emerged and took the political scene completely. It was largely aggravated by the constant involvement of the external powers. Intense power struggle and fighting led to the development of divisions between the Pushtun and the non-Pushtun. Hekmatyar sternly opposed the appointment of Masud as defence minister. Because, Hekmatyar thought that highest military post into the hands of minority ethnic groups would undermine the Pushtuns. The whole picture in Afghanistan shows no sign of peace during this time. Thus, the internecine conflict between different parties resulted in the emergence of the civil war in Afghanistan.

Between 1992 and 1995 there was an alliances system in Afghanistan. Hekmatyar of Hizb and other Pushtun groups propagated to defend the interest of the Pushtun. This alarmed the other minority ethnic groups. By which many minority groups like Hizb-i-Wahadat (Hazaaras) and Jombhesh-i-Melli (Uzbek and Turks) aligned with Rabbani against Hekmatyar. They did not want the Pushtun to re-emerge in power. Intense fighting broke out in and around Kabul between these two camps. It witnessed the



destructions of infrastructures, daily bloodbath and the displacement of the civilians. This internal conflict was exacerbated by the constant interference of the external powers.

Moreover, the warlords in the region caused a reign of terror. They acted independently beyond the influence of the authority in Kabul. On the other hand, refusal of Rabbani to hand over the power after the expiry of his tenure led to another round of intense fighting. The shifting pattern of the alliances between different groups in different period of time also accelerated the conflict. In spite of its difficulties, with constant pressure from different countries, especially by Iran and Pakistan Islamabad Accord came into being in 1993. Like the previous accords, Islamabad Accord also has its shortfall. According to Nabi Misdaq (2006: 174), Khalis of Hizb-i boycotted it. Dostum was not invited. Unsatisfied with the marginalised representation of the Pushtun and the appointment of Masud as defence minister Hekmatyar worked against the accord and launch another attack on Rabbani in 1994. This time he was in align with Masud. The internecine conflict in the form of alliances hampered the political process for peace. This internal conflict was largely aggravated by constant interference of the external powers. The conflict went on until the emergence of the Taliban in 1994.

### **1.5: THE TALIBAN AND THE ISI**

The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in 1994. It was during this period that the country shows complete chaos and political anarchy everywhere. Barnett Rubin (1999: 80) argued that the Taliban emerged as a result of the Mujahedeen's failure to create a stable Islamic state in Afghanistan. The Afghans welcome the coming of the Taliban. Because, they were weary of the prevailing lawlessness and intense fighting and conflict in the country. After removing petty warlords and independent actors one after another, they restore peace in Afghanistan. The Afghans viewed the Taliban, in the initial stage, as their survivor. They were delighted by the success of the Taliban in stamping out corruption, restoring peace and allowing commerce to resume. The Taliban are the religious students or former mujahideens who studied in the madrassas (religious school) of Pakistan. According to Kuwan Kakar (2000), "Talib is an Arabic word, which literally means "one who is seeking," but generally Talib refers to "someone who is seeking

religious knowledge.” Taliban are students of “deeni madrassas” or religious seminaries,” which have been existed in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries since the arrival of Islam in the region. Thus, led by Mullah Muhammad, a group of madrassas students and teachers formed the Taliban movement.

The members of the Taliban came mainly from madrassas set up the Pakistani government along the eastern borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan’s NWFP. According to Gasper (2001). they were funded by the US and Saudi Arabia, where they received military and ideological or theological training from Pakistan’s ISI. The emergence of the Taliban led Pakistan to change its policy in Afghanistan. By shunning Hekmatyar, Islamabad sponsored and supported the Taliban through the ISI. The Taliban are said to be created by Pakistan’s ISI<sup>6</sup>. Pakistan was also the first country to recognise the Taliban government followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Pakistan used the Taliban in formulating their foreign policy, especially with India and Afghanistan. However, because of their fundamentalist ideology and Pushtun domination they have been always in constant fighting with the minority ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Because of their harsh implementation of the Islamic laws and undermining the Human Rights, they were not recognised by the United Nations as true Afghan government.

#### **1.6: ETHNICITY AND THE CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN**

Being a meeting place of different races and culture in different period of time, Afghanistan became a land of diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic conglomeration. Since historical point of time, Afghanistan witnessed the problems of ethnic or tribal conflict. Ethnicity played an important role in the history of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet. According to Rasul Bakhsh Rais (1999: 2), ethnicity was not so strong in the Afghan politics before the Saur revolution of 1978. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, new phase of struggle emerged among varying Afghan Mujahideens. The dynamics of this conflict, according to Rais (1999: 1-2), has its roots in the political, ideological and ethnic polarization that the Soviet has caused.

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<sup>6</sup> For details see The Times of India, “ISI has links with jihadis: Mush”, Tuesday June 9, 2009. Also see Gregory (2007), Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt (2009), BBC Online News (2009).

According to Nabi Misdaq (2006: 202), it was importance given to language and locality that the two communist parties came into split. According to him locality was behind the split of the party into two; Khalq and Parcham. The followers of the former were rural Pushtun. While, Parcham are mainly from urban non-Pushtun. He further said that as their linguistic, rural/urban differences was so high in 1978; they could not run the government together. Since 1992 ethnic differences came into its visible form in the spheres of Afghanistan. The struggles between the mujahideen groups were largely based on ethnic differences. For instance, Hekmatyar represent Pushtuns, Rabbani of Tajiks and Wahadat was mainly Hazaras. As ethnic Pushtun wanted to reassert their importance in Afghanistan, the idea of identity or ethnicity came into being among the ethnic minorities. It was largely because of this, Hazaras in Central Afghansitan demanded for their autonomy. The struggle between various mujahideen groups since 1992 are known as ethnic conflict. Hekmatyar's Pushtun centric policy compelled the minorities to form an alliance. It was because of ethnicity that Afghanistan neighbouring countries in the north were supported the Northern Alliance during the war against the Taliban.

### **1.7: TALIBAN AND THE PUSHTUN CONNECTION**

The emergence of the Taliban changes the balance of power in Afghansitan and in the regional states. The Taliban are ethnically Pushtun, who emerged from the Pushtun heartland in the Pushtun majority area of Durand Line. The coming of the Pushtun was welcomed by the Pushtun ethnic community with the hope of re-establishing the past glory of the Pushtuns. With the coming of the Taliban into power, all the Pushtun support or backed them. Large numbers of Afghan Pushtuns, who were living as refugees in Pakistan's NWFP, were recruited as a Taliban foot soldier. Because of the support from based on the support they received from the Pushtun in different parts of the country. Besides, they also received supports from different countries, more importantly, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirate. Most of the financial aids were received from these Muslim countries.

The emergence of orthodox or fundamentalist Taliban compelled the ethnic parties to joint together. The Taliban were totally against the Shi'ite Muslims. In 1998 the Taliban

massacred large numbers of Shi'ite Hazaras. This act of the Taliban led Iran and Afghanistan almost in war.

### **1.8: IRAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

Iran has close relations with Afghanistan since ancient times or the inception or the creation of the former. They share a long intertwined boundary and history. They also have deep ties in language, culture and its people. As far as Iran's policy is concern, economic, strategic or security interests played an important role as far as Iran's interest is concern. For Iran, her national security and economic interests would be in great danger if the Taliban consolidate their stronghold in Afghanistan (Tarock, 1999: 801). Iran viewed the rise of the Taliban and the seizure of Kabul in 1996 as a serious ideological, security and economic threat to Tehran. Security and economic interest played important role. It was this idea in mind that after the withdrawal of Soviet, Iran and Pakistan were vying for political influence and trade and commercial advantages in Central Asia since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union.

Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran helped the Afghan mujahideens against the communist. However, during this time, Afghan fighters were against each other. Iran along with Pakistan brings the mujahideens together under the banner of Islam. It was the result of various meetings conducted by Iran to unite the mujahideens. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union varying Afghan mujahideens were fighting against each other for power. Each and every party(s) does not want the others to be in power. Intense fighting led to the destruction of infrastructures and so many civilians lost their lives. Polarisation or fragmentation of Afghan society took place. After the end of the cold war various Afghan parties fall into ethnic and sectarian lines. As a major regional player in the politics of Afghanistan, Iran enabled to bring the mujahideens for negotiation. As a result, with great efforts taken by Iran, under the leadership of the United Nations, Peshawar Accord was signed in 1992. However, as the fighting once again broke out in and around Kabul, Islamabad Accord of 1998 came into being. During the war large numbers of Afghan refugees fled to Iran. Iran gave shelter and monitored these refugees with the helped of the international community.

## **1.9: PAKISTAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

Pakistan became the most influential regional or neighbouring actor since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. It has long historical, cultural and ethnic relations with Afghanistan. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan view Afghanistan as one of the most important geo-strategic or geo-political location. Thus, Pakistan has been looking for its influence in Afghanistan since its inception. As far as Pakistan interest is concern strategic depth and Pushtunistan issue played the fundamental role. Pakistan feels insecure from its eastern and western neighbours, India and the Soviet Union. It was largely because of this reason that Pakistan wanted to have friendly relations with Afghanistan.

Pakistan was the most important regional players in the politics of Afghanistan. During the Soviet invasion, Pakistan along with other Muslim countries helped the Afghans against the Soviet. The withdrawal of the Soviet left Afghanistan with no concrete social and political structure. Varying Afghans were fighting against one another. The fighting accelerates when all the parties or groups fall on the basis of ethnic line. Pakistan along with Iran and Saudi Arabia played as a mediator brings together all the Afghan parties for negotiation. Moreover, Pakistan hosts large numbers of Afghan refugees in its territory, who fled from the Soviet invasion and during the ethnic conflict in Afghanistan.

With the onset of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the British pay active attention towards Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Czarist Russia also cast its shadow towards Afghanistan. According to the British point of view, Napoleon advancement and the apprehension of his relations with Afghans pose a great danger for their empire in the east. So, the British India made every effort to seek an alliance with Iran. Thus, world powers like British India and Czarist Russia or France saw Afghanistan as an important strategic point because of her geographical location. It was this importance that major powers and regional powers were vying for their stronghold in Afghanistan. As a result, European politics has its direct impact in Asia (Hussain, 2005: 23). However, Afghanistan during this time was politically disunited and tribal rivalry with ethnic and religious fissures (Hussain, 2005: 22). According to Adam Tarock (1999a: 803), the inter-tribal rivalry or regional conflicts and its geostrategic position has made Afghanistan an arena where regional and world powers have been vying for their influence. This ethnic or social or

political rivalry paved a way for the external powers for their easy penetration into the spheres of Afghanistan. As a result of this power game Afghanistan became a buffer state between British India and the Soviet during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and she became a place of ideological warfare between the United States on the one hand and the Soviet Union or China on the other during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>7</sup> Finally, this power game led to the Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union was termed by international community as illegal and unacceptable. However, Soviet Union's occupation was a blessing in disguise for Afghanistan. The reason being, different parties or groups stood up united against the invasion. It does not mean that rivalry or enmity did not appear in the Afghan society. In the national level, despite their differences, Afghans fight united against the foreign invasion. Islam played a critical role as the unifying force for a diverse resistance movement against the Soviet Union (Weiner and Ali, 1994: 2). The two most important Islamic movement of the time had been Hizb-i-Islami Gulbudin Hekmatyar and Jamiat-i-Islami led by Burhanuddin Rabbani. Many resistance movements also sprang up against the Soviet backed PDPA government. According to Tahir Amin (1987: 54), Islamic fundamentalism that got inspiration from Islamic movements of Egypt, Iran and Pakistan increase in strength and size. The Afghan warring tribes patched up together with Muslims from across the world and launched jihad against the invaders (Schoormans, 2007: 85). Since the Soviet Union invasion, the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia actively involved in the spheres of Afghanistan either directly or indirectly. They helped the Afghans in terms of financial assistance and arms supply against the Soviet Union. They repeatedly put pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan. Afghan nationalism became stronger with criticism from different corners of the world. The war lasted for ten years killing more than million Afghans and turning millions more into homeless refugees. As a result, with repeated pressure from the international community, Geneva Accord came into being in 1988 under the leadership of the United Nation. In accordance with the terms of the accord, the

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<sup>7</sup> Besides U.S. and the Soviet Union, China, and some regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan were actively involved to have the controlling power in Afghanistan.

communist Soviet withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. However, with the help of the Soviet, Najibullah managed to rule the country until 1992, when the combined forces of Jamiat, Jombesh and Hizb-i-Wahadat seized the power.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.10: IRAN AND PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS**

After the withdrawal and the disintegration of the Soviet Union or the end of the Cold War<sup>8</sup>, there emerged a new setup in the international as well as in the regional politics. Inter state relations also shaped up and influenced by the changing dynamics of global and regional power structures. Security and economic occupied an important place in the regional point of view. It immensely influenced the foreign policy of a country. Each and every country in the region were aware of their security challenges and economic boost, and wanted to re-focus their domestic as well as foreign policies. With this, Afghanistan played an important role in this regional politics, as she occupies an important location. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, it gave new security challenges and economic or trade opportunities in the region. Since then Iran and Pakistan have been vying for political influence and trade and commercial advantages in Central Asia, particularly to Afghanistan (Tarock, 1999a: 814). Their foreign policies revolved around these interests during this time. As far as Iran's interest in Afghanistan is concerned, strategic or security and economic played an important role (Tarock, 1997b: 185). The emergence of the Taliban, as claimed by Adam Tarock in *The Politics of the Pipeline*, poses great threat to the national security for Iran. She knew that if the Taliban consolidate and rule Afghanistan, Iran would not succeed in her Central Asian policy. Moreover, since the capture of Mazar-i-Sharif by Taliban, they killed hundreds of Shi'ite Muslims along with Iranian diplomats and journalists. This according to the Teheran is a humiliation to her nation. In course of the civil war, Shi'ite Muslims are the worse sufferers. Thus, Iran finds it difficult to remain silent to the plight and killings of fellow Shi'ites (Tarock, 1999a: 812). The persecution of Shia Hazaras by the Taliban increases Iran's logistical, military and political support to Rabbani government. As a result in 1996, Iran invited

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<sup>4</sup> The combined forces of Jamiat-i-Islami, Jombesh-i-Milli and Hizb-i-Wahadat were later known as the Northern Alliance.

<sup>8</sup> It was during this period that there emerged newly six independent states. The six independent Central Asian Republics are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

anti-Taliban for submit in Teheran, as Teheran never wanted Sunni dominated Pushtun fundamentalism in power.

In the case of Pakistan according to Patricia Gossman (2001: 11), “the Pushtun” question and “strategic depth” are the two main reasons for Pakistan interest in Afghanistan. It was in the year 1893 that the Durand Line divided the Pushtuns into two separate areas<sup>9</sup>. Successive Afghan government refuses to accept or recognize the Durand Line. This division was greatly resented by Afghanistan by declaring that they should have the option of declaring their own separate nation (Pashtunistan) or merged with Afghanistan. Pakistan on the other hand sternly opposed this idea, as the creation of separate Pushtun state will largely affect its geographical territory. Moreover, as Pakistan has always been in the opposite side with India on the issue of Kashmir, she wanted to be sure that its western border was secure, and she need friendly government in Kabul that would not support the creation of Pushtunistan. Because, Afghanistan is the western frontier of Pakistan that influence of any other power in Afghanistan will pose great danger for Pakistan. According to Gossman, it is known as “strategic depth,” as termed by Pakistan. It became the most important Pakistan’s Afghan foreign policy since 1990. Thus, since its inception, security became the most important issue for Pakistan’s external relations, and it became central to the understanding Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship (Hussain, 2005:4). Moreover, Pakistan wanted to use Afghanistan as a bridge to access into the Central Asian countries for trade. Dorronsoro (2005: 245) argued that the establishment of land link to Turkmenistan was one of the most important objectives for Pakistan. This was largely because of Pakistan’s policy of economic monopoly and political influence. Islamabad believes that the success of this policy will give her the controlling power in the region, economically as well as politically. Access to the vast natural resources of Central Asian countries will lead her to enjoy economic and political influence.

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<sup>9</sup> It was during the time of the British India that the Pushtuns were sharply segregated into two areas: Afghanistan and Pakistan.



### **1.11: THE ROLE OF IRAN AND PAKISTAN**

The geographical location of Afghanistan is so great that each and every regional and super powers wanted to have influence in Afghanistan. Iran and Pakistan became the two most important regional as well as external powers in the politics of Afghanistan. However, they knew that their economic as well as political interests would be futile unless they have good relations with Afghanistan. That is why Iran and Pakistan wanted to establish good relations with Afghanistan and the newly emerging Central Asian states. The internecine conflict in Afghanistan greatly affected or hindered Iran and Pakistan's policies in the region. Hussain (2005: 175) argued that the anarchy or the conflict in Afghanistan posed a great obstacle for Pakistani goals, Islamabad sue for peace. This idea might also be relevant for Iran during this period. In short, their success in Central Asia lies on Afghanistan. That is why Iran and Pakistan wanted to establish strong Afghan government. They knew that without any foreign help Afghans, who were in continuous ethnic and sectarian conflicts, would not be able to establish stable Islamic government in Afghanistan. That was why the crisis in Afghanistan was the main point of discussion between Iran and Pakistan during the first visit of the former president's to the latter (Calabrese, 1994:129). During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan supported the mujahideens together. With their active support and pressure the Geneva Accord of 1988 came into being under the leadership of the United Nation. However, as the conflict in Afghanistan fell on the basis of ethnic line, both Iran and Pakistan distance away each other and sided with different party(s), who could be more useful or beneficial for them. In spite of that, with their active role in the conflict, they brought together different ethnic groups or parties for negotiation. It came to be known as the Peshawar Accord of 1992 and the Islamabad Accord of 1993. An interim government came into being under the terms of the Islamabad Accord. Though there was no permanent peace and political stability, Iran and Pakistan were instrumental in this accord and for political and national reconstructions process in Afghanistan (Hussain, 2005:175).

Since the war against the Soviet and down to the transfer of power or the formation of interim authority, there was large-scale population movement in and from Afghanistan. Population movement can be broadly classified into three: during the time of the Soviet

invasion, during the civil war and during the time of the Taliban. Afghans who flight from their country went to the neighbouring countries: Iran and Pakistan. The immediate consequence of the Soviet invasion was the influx of more than two million Afghan refugees into Iran and an equal number of them went to Pakistan (Tarock, 1999a: 802). The influx of Afghan refugees into Iran and Pakistan was intensified during the civil war and during the time of the Taliban. Susanne Schmeidl argued that “the entry of the Taliaban into the Afghan war led to a dual movement of people: while large number of refugees returned to Afghanistan despite the overall ‘insecure’ situation, new refugees left the country. By 2000, “about 1.7 million Afghans had been repatriated, still leaving the largest portion (over four million) in exile” (Schmeidl, 2002:10). Nabi Misdaq (2006: 308) also claimed that over three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and about two million refugees had taken shelter in Iran. Moreover, the final phase of movement took place during the US led war against the Taliban. About 200,000 to 300,000 left Afghanistan during this period (CSR Report for Congress, 2007). These population movements were a result of intense political or ethnic conflict in Afghanistan. The Afghan refugees were warmly welcome by Iran and Pakistan and given shelter near Afghanistan border. Both the two countries met half of the financial cost and the other half by the donor states, agencies and international organizations (Schuurmans, 2007:103). The Afghan refugees are largely depended on the international aid and assistance with Iran and Pakistan as the disbursing actors. Considering the plights and homesick for the Afghan refugees, trilateral meeting was held in 1992 between Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR, for safety return of the refugees (Calbrese: 138). According to UNHCR report, only after 1992 that there was large-scale return of Afghan refugees in Afghanistan. Since then, under the United Nations repatriation programme of voluntary return, Iran and Pakistan are helping the Afghan refugees for voluntary repatriation (BBC online, 2002). These population movements goes on and on till the formation of interim government under the leadership of Hamid Karzai.

However, in course of the time, Iran and Pakistan blocked the influx of more Afghan refugees to their country by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They no longer accepted the newly arriving refugees. According to Schmeidl (2002: 13-14), Pakistan adopted closed-door policy for the first time in 2000 against the newly arriving Afghan refugees. In the

same year, Iran also passed a law known as "Article 48", which spells all the Afghan without work permits were to leave (Human Rights Watch, 2002). Both the countries refuse to consider newly arriving Afghans as prima facie refugees. They wanted them to return to Afghanistan. This stands sharp contrast to its earlier behaviours, as in the beginning Pakistan as well as Iran were extremely generous in receiving the refugees and settling them in largely self-sufficient villages. These refugees, according to Tehran and Islamabad caused great headache for them. According to the Pakistani government, these refugees produce social ills, security and crime risk, availability of weapons, and the decline in Pakistani economy (UNHCR Report, 2007). Thus, in order to prevent further influx of Afghan refugees into their territories, they started erecting fencings at the borders and begin the process of closing various camps. The steps taken by Iran and Pakistan seriously affected the displaced Afghan refugees. The poor refugees were the worse sufferers to compel with the others. They face so many hardships like discriminations, lack of housing camps, drinking water, medical and educational facilities. In spite of the steps taken by Iran and Pakistan, the penetration (either official or non-official) of Afghans into their territories did not cease. The main reason given by Iran and Pakistan against the entry of more Afghan refugees into their territories was that they are insufficient of the resources to deal with over three and half million Afghans within their territories. They charged the international community with failing to provide adequate aid and financial assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2002). These circumstances posed great difficulties and hardships for the Afghan refugees. Besides, using of refugees camps as their bases or outposts by the militias also posed a great threat to the life of the refugees.

Despite their important role to defuse the existing Afghanistan conflict, Iran and Pakistan did not produced much headway towards peace process and political stability in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan accelerated since their intervention. The active interference of Iran and Pakistan since the Soviet withdrawal exacerbated the ethnic or sectarian conflict in Afghanistan. They failed to establish compromises between varying factions and permanent solution for political reconstruction in Afghanistan. According to Hussain (2005: 174), though Iran and Pakistan actively voices their desire for peaceful

settlement, in reality they continued to back their favourite party(s), who could consider their interests. Tarock (1999a: 808) also argued that Iran and Pakistan failed to mediate between the warring Afghan factions as they followed their own self-interests policies. By ignoring the terms of the Geneva Accord, they actively interfered and being the two most important and influential regional countries, they saw one another's influence as a threat to other's interest. These policies led Iran and Pakistan actively supporting diverse or different ethnic or military forces since the Soviet Union invasion in 1979, and especially after the breakout of civil war in 1992. For instance, Pakistan wholeheartedly supported Hezb-i-Islami under the leadership of Hekmatyar (a Sunni Pushtun) and the Taliban<sup>10</sup>. Iran on the other hand, supported Hizb-i-Wahadat and the Northern Alliance. Their strong support in the form of arms and financial assistance to either party(s) led to intense conflict, attacks and counter-attacks, which shows no signs of peace and security. Thus, the intervention of Iran and proved to be the catalyst in augmenting the ethnic division in Afghanistan. It also posed a great obstacle to the peace process and political reconstruction in Afghanistan. However, the success lies in wholehearted positive participation of Iran and Pakistan.

### **1.12: ORGANISATION AND CHAPTERISATION**

The first objective of the study is to assess the historical development of the formation of Afghanistan. It will also examine the background of the conflict in Afghanistan running through the ethnic conflict after the fall of Najibullah till the formation of the interim government in 2001. Besides, it will highlight briefly the role played by Iran and Pakistan during the ethnic conflict in Afghanistan between 1992-2001. Taking advantages of the situation, Iran and Pakistan framed their domestic as well as foreign policies on the basis of the Afghanistan's condition. The internecine conflict destroyed large-scale infrastructures in Afghanistan. Restoring peace and devoting for reconstructions as a justification point, Iran and Pakistan were vying for political as well as economic benefits during the conflict. The merit is that their involvement led to the coming together of different ethnic or sectarian groups for negotiation. It led to the formation of Peshawar and Islamabad Accords. Besides, they helped the Afghan refugees with great efforts.

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<sup>10</sup> Pakistan, along with US and Saudi Arabia actively supported the Taliban till 1998.

However, having different motives in mind, rather than helping and sorting out the problems, they sided with either party(s), who could understand their interests. This policy did not pave much effective for the development and political solutions for the Afghans. Thus, the interference of Iran and Pakistan proved to be a great obstacle for the peace process in Afghanistan political reconstruction.

Social and cultural relations between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan are the main theme in the second objective. Iran and Pakistan have close relations with Afghanistan since time immemorial. The inter-mixture of races in the transborder enhances the relations between the three countries. For example, large numbers Pushtuns are in Pakistan and Baluch are also found in Afghanistan. Likewise, Iran and Afghanistan have a mixture of races. Because of these transborder settlements, they practice different culture and customs or social order. This led Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan very close to each other. Thus, push and pull factor played a critical role in their relations.

Iran's disaffection and Pakistan's mono-cultural approach in post-Najibullah will be discussed in the third chapter. Soon after the fall of Najibullah, the conflict in Afghanistan falls on the basis of ethnic and religious lines. Being a minority in Afghanistan, the Hazaras were the worse sufferers from the dominant Pushtun tribes. Religiously, they are Shi'a Muslims. So Iran cannot bear the atrocities suffered by their fellow Shi'a Muslims. Moreover, the Taliban, during their heydays, have no sympathy towards non-Pushtun or non-Sunni Muslims. Besides killing and attacking Iranian diplomats and journalist, they massacred thousands of Hazaras. All these unsatisfied Iran, as the government in Kabul cannot protect them. Pakistan on the other hand, wanted to implant a single culture called Pukhtunwali in Afghanistan. By backing the Hekmatyar and the Taliban, they wanted to achieve their political and economic interests. So to appease with them Islamabad campaigned for Pushtun culture, which mean Pushtun domination.

The fourth objective is to examine the rise of policy or ideological differences during the Taliban period. Though different parties existed, the whole ideological differences came

during the time of the Taliban. The Taliban, who were backed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, wanted to re-instate the past glory of the Pushtuns. They referred Afghanistan as a land of Pushtuns. Moreover, being an orthodox Sunni Muslim they started ethnic cleansing campaign against the minorities. The ideology of the Taliban was aware of other ethnic or religious communities of their own positions, and later started ethno-nationalism in Afghanistan. Although different groups have their own ethnic affiliation, ethno-nationalism was not the main driving force before the emergence of the Taliban. For example, Shi'ism and not Hazara nationalism was the ideological foundation of Hezb-i-Wahadat. Thus, the principle policy of the Taliban led to ideological differences between different groups and it led to civil war in Afghanistan. Chapter five is the concluding chapter, wherein, it can be concluded that Afghanistan is one of the most important countries in the study of geopolitics. Peace and security would be there in the region only if there is peace and security in Afghanistan.

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## ***CHAPTER TWO***

## **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE NEIGHBOURS**

Since time immemorial Afghanistan has close contact with her neighbours. This relationship has been largely due to the unintended outcome of successive invasions, conquests, trade, marriage, religion, and more importantly its geographical location. Thus, Afghanistan has become the meeting point, if not the melting pot, of diverse culture and traditions. As a result, different groups of people make Afghanistan their home. The conglomeration of diverse ethnic groups in Afghanistan has largely influenced its social and cultural relations with her neighbours.

### **2.1: ETHNIC GROUPS OF AFGHANISTAN**

The geographical importance of Afghanistan made her one of the most important place for diverse ethnic groups. The Pushtoon, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, and Turkoman are the major ethnic groups in Afghanistan today; they mainly profess Islam. Besides these Nuristani, Aimaq, Balochi, Kirghiz, Farsiwan, Qizilbash, Brahui, etc. and some non-Muslims form the ethnic minorities in Afghanistan. These ethnic groups are further subdivided into tribe or sub-tribes. Thus, Afghanistan is today one of the multi-ethnic state in the world where tribal groupings and the ethnicity question has become a major issue. All these diverse ethnic groups, however, can be further grouped into major racial categories. According to Louis Dupree (1973: 57) they can be grouped into three: Caucasoid (Pushtoon, Tajik, Baluch and Nuristani); Mongoloid (Hazara, Aimaq, Turkoman, Uzbek and Kirghiz); and, Australoid (Brahui).<sup>11</sup> This ethnolinguistic division and their geographical settlements can be seen following *Map 1* below.

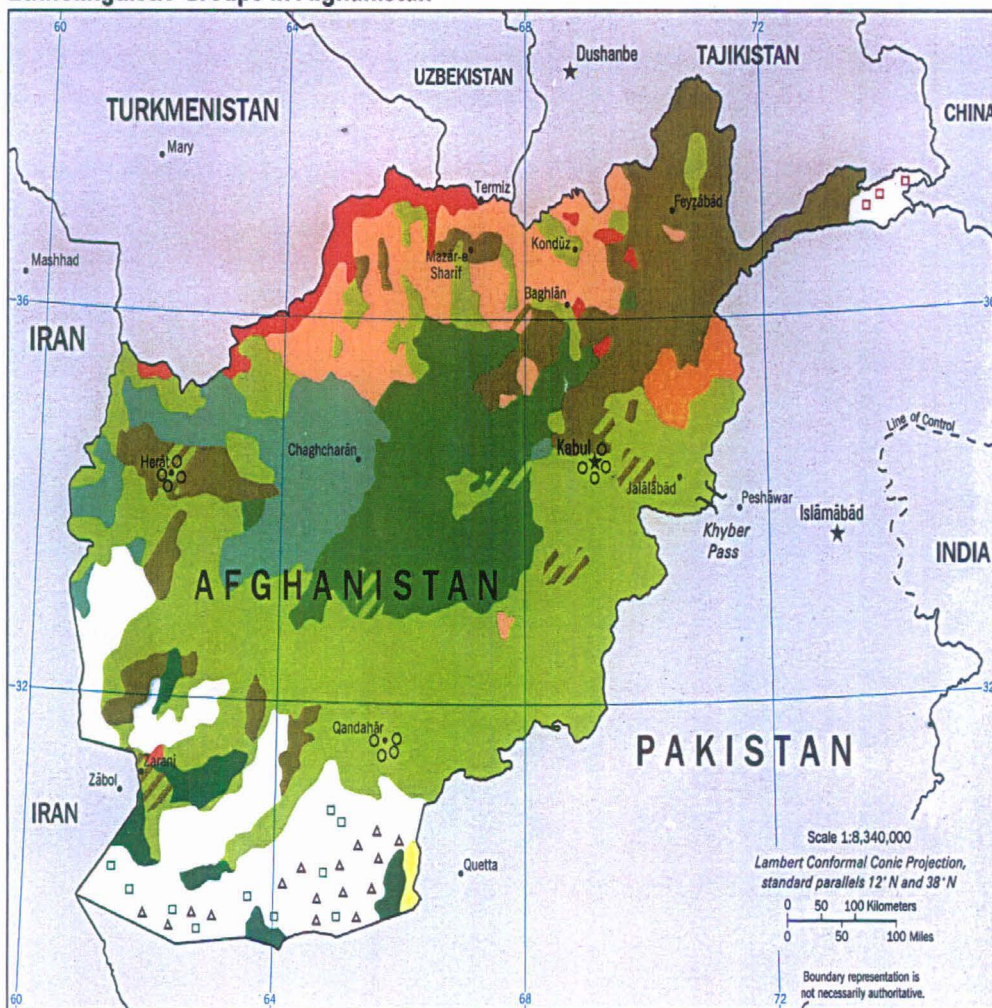
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<sup>11</sup> According to Dupree (1973), the Brahui are one of the modified ethnic groups in Afghanistan. They are Dravidian speakers but Australoid in appearance.



Map 1: Ethnolinguistic division and settlement of Afghanistan.

**Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan**



- | Iranian   | Turkic  | Other   |
|---|---|---|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d3d3d3;"></span> Baloch    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #f08080;"></span> Kirghiz | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffff00;"></span> Brahui                          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #4682b4;"></span> Aimak                              | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ff0000;"></span> Turkmen                          | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffa500;"></span> Nuristani  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #008000;"></span> Hazara                             | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffa500;"></span> Uzbek                            | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: white;"></span> Sparsely populated or uninhabited |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #90ee90;"></span> Pashtun<br><i>Durrani, Ghilzai</i> |   |   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%;"></span> Qizilbash        |   |   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #808080;"></span> Tajik                              |   |   |

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Source: [http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/afghanistan\\_ethnoling\\_97.jpg](http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/middle_east_and_asia/afghanistan_ethnoling_97.jpg)

### 2.1.1 Geographical Spread

According to the estimate made by the United Nations, the population of Afghanistan in 2003 was 23,897,000 making her the forty-sixth most populous nation in the world. In 2008, its estimate went up at 32,738,376. Pushtoos, who constituted about 40-50 per cent of the total population, formed the largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> They are also the largest and traditionally most powerful ethnic group in Afghanistan. They inhabited the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region in the east and running southward and through the southwestern part of Afghanistan-Iran border almost up to Herat. They are also scattered among other ethnic groups, especially in the northern and western interior part of the country due to the resettlement policies of Abdul Rehman Khan during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Tajiks are the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. They account for about 25 per cent of the total population. They live mainly in the Panjsher valley north of Kabul and in the north and northeastern province of Parwan, Takhar, Badakhshan and Samarqand. The fertile valleys of the northeastern part of the country are their main concentration. Like the Pushtoon, they are also interspersed among the other ethnic groups in the central mountain and in Kabul.

The Hazaras who form about 9 per cent of the total population of the country constitute the third largest community in Afghanistan. They are mainly concentrated in the Central Mountain known as the Hazarajat, the Land of the Hazaras. Some of the Hazaras also live in Badakhshan. After Kabul's campaign<sup>13</sup> against them in the 19<sup>th</sup> century some of them settled down in Turkestan, Jauzjan and Badghis provinces.

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<sup>12</sup> There is no precise or clear-cut data on the demography or populations of Afghanistan. Different groups or organizations give different figures on it. The data or census of various ethnic groups are collected from different sources from Afghanistan website, <http://www.afghanistans.com/information/default.htm>. See United Nations Volunteers, Afghanistan, here after UNVA. [http://www.unvafghanistan.org/country\\_profile/population.htm](http://www.unvafghanistan.org/country_profile/population.htm). <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Afghanistan-POPULATION.html>. Also see U.S. Department of State: Diplomacy in Action (Afghanistan), 2008, here after USDSDA. Dupree, Afghanistan, 1973. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,...COUNTRY.AFG,4562d8cf2,4954ce5ec,0.html>,

<sup>13</sup> For details see Dupree, 1973.

The Uzbeks are the next largest ethnic community in Afghanistan. Their population is estimated to be around 6 per cent of the total population in Afghanistan. They mainly live in the northern plain of Afghanistan, from Faryab Province to Faizabad, the capital of Badkshshah Province. As originated from Central Asia, they also live in north of the Afghanistan border in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Large numbers of them mix with Tajiks.

The Turkmens are 120,000 – 200,000 in number, which is about 2 per cent of the total population of Afghanistan. They settle in the northern part of the country between Balkh and Herat provinces. Some of the smaller tribes of Turkmen live in the province of Kunduz. They also live in the northern and southern part of the river Amu Darya. Turkmen are also found in the northeastern part of Iran.

According to an Afghan official website, the Baluch who make up 7 per cent of the total population are the largest community next to the Hazaras. However, it is quite debatable for us to agree with the point that they might have overtaken the population of the Uzbeks; together with those living in Iran and Pakistan, they might have made up 7 per cent of the total population of Afghanistan. However, most scholars believe that Afghan Baluch will form not more than 2 per cent of the total population of Afghanistan. Whatever it might be, they occupy and live in the southwestern part of Afghanistan, which is bordering Iran and Pakistan. Though some of them live in northwestern Faryab province, they settle mainly in the southern provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz and Farah.

With an approximate number of 191,000 persons, the Aimaq tribes stretch from northeastern Iran into western and central Afghanistan. They live in Badghis, Ghor and Herat provinces with a small group in Tajikistan.

Nuristani live in the remote mountains east of Kabul along the Pakistan border. The province of Nuristan was created from the provinces of Laghman and Kunar. The region is so densely forested and rugged that it can be reached only by foot. The Brahui on the

other, live in the desert regions of southwestern Afghanistan. Larger communities of Brahui live in Pakistan's Baluchistan province. The Kirghiz live in one of the most inaccessible regions in the world, Pamir Mountains east of the Wakhan Corridor. Moreover, some thousands of non-Muslims or Hindu or Sikh also add up the population of Afghanistan. In 1978 they were believed to be about 30,000. Being businessmen, workers, merchant and moneylenders, they live mostly in the cities and towns.

### **2.1.2: Historical Relations Among Them**

Being a multi-ethnic state, Afghanistan has a contentious ethnic relationship between different ethnic groups. Social and cultural uniformity among them are rare; hatred and enmity prevail all around over petty squabble that sometime led to feuds lasting for generations. Dispute and conflict exist between all ethnic groups throughout the country. A struggle for political power and economic benefits has been the main factors behind such conflicts. Mistrust and discrimination lead to massive confrontation and even warfare. The conflict between the Pushtoon and Hazaras during the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was a good case in point. The land resettlement policy carried out during the time of Abdul Rehman Khan exacerbated mistrusts and tensions between the various groups. Historically, stronger groups always dominated in every way of life. As a largest populated ethnic group in the country the Pushtoons dominated the government in Afghanistan. They assert their will over other ethnic groups and maintain their status as the nation's highest prestigious group.

Political subjugation by one group over the other led to resentment that sometime resulted into an armed conflict. Every ethnic group has been trying to build a pride and social superiority over the other in this mixed ethnic environment. Each group thinks their culture is superior and considers the others as subordinate. Hence, conflicts and tensions seem to have been the order of their relationship until they were, to a certain degree, united by the invasion of Soviet Union, the outside forces which had to be reckoned with a united force. Hence, there was no sense of ethnic Afghan community or identity, as it appears to be today, until the Soviet invasion. But this was shortlived. The fall of Soviet Union and the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan resurfaced the

inherent conflicts and distrust among the Afghan tribes and now also with a new face. The tribal identity has now become more rigid and along with it their political and economic interests become more assertive than before. And hence, ethnicity and ethnic conflicts has become more prominent and with the intrusion of more and more weapons in the country, civil wars now become more destructive than ever before. Since then, fragmentation or polarization of an Afghan society can be seen in its more visible form. Besides the former *mujahideens* or the Afghan fighters, many petty warlords have emerged in the scene who acted independently of the others without their own territory. In this diverse ethnic and cultural conglomeration in Afghanistan, many scholars maintain that there is no social and cultural assimilation among the varying Afghans. They have no social and cultural homogeneity; dress being one important symbol. Hence, till today there is no unified national culture which can be called an Afghan culture.

### **2.1.3: Principal Economic Activities**

In a country where a tribal system predominates, agriculture occupies an important place in their economy. Hence, agriculture is the mainstay of the Afghans' economy. In short, the principal economic activities of the Afghans revolve around agriculture. Land, water, seed, animal or mechanical power and human labour played an important element for agriculture in Afghanistan. Until 1978, 85 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, including 1.5 million nomads. The bulk of the total labour force is engaged in agriculture and cattle rearing besides a livestock base handicraft. But only 12 per cent of the land in Afghanistan is arable; only half of it is actually cultivated.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, together with agriculture, many Afghans practice animal husbandry as their mainstay economy. As such Louis Dupree (1973:164) is able to classify the Afghans into four types of people on the basis of their socio-economic activities: sedentary farmers, semi-sedentary farmers, nomads and semi-nomads. These people practice both agriculture and animal husbandry.

Sedentary farmers are agriculturists who live permanently in the same village and leave only when they have better farming or are forced by government. Semi-sedentary farmers

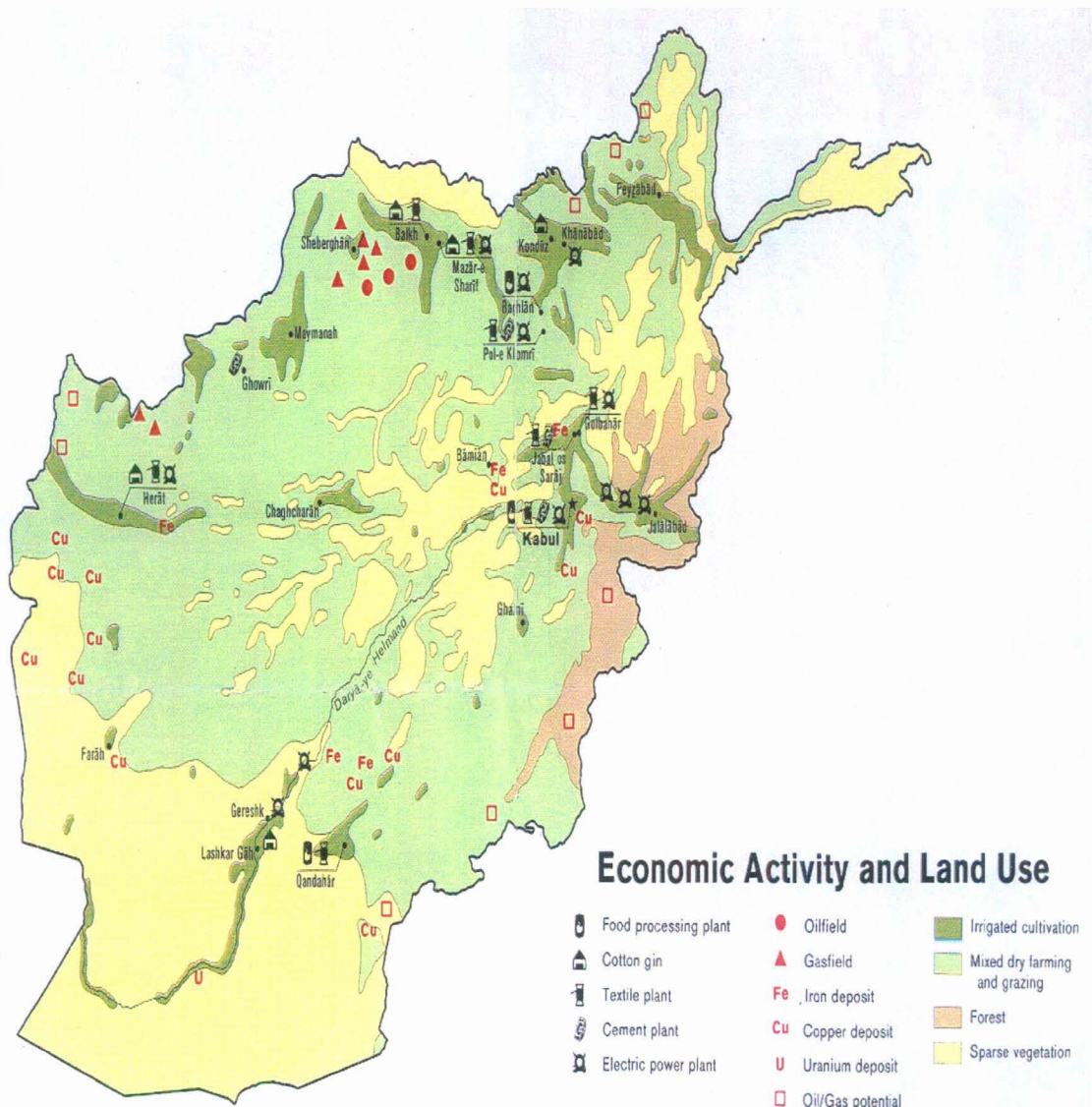
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<sup>14</sup> See USDSDA (2008)



are agriculturists who move in the summer towards the pasture along with their livestock and return to their village during winter. They also have the practice of moving to the field with their family during harvest period. While, nomads are herdsmen who move from place to place in search of pasturages, semi-nomads are herdsmen who move with their livestock to summer pasturages only. They also practice some agriculture. Most nomads are Pushtoon, Baluch, and Kirghiz. Of which, 80 per cent are Pushtoon. Pushtoon and Baluch are the most populated semi-nomadic group.

Map: 2: Economic activity and land use system



Source: [http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/afghanistan\\_ethnoling\\_97.jpg](http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/middle_east_and_asia/afghanistan_ethnoling_97.jpg)

Afghans are generally self-sufficient tribal units. In the words of Dupree: "A man is a farmer first and foremost". As there were no bazaars and wheels for transporting their goods until recently, some farmers became a part-time specialist or took up some alternative professions like carpenters, bricklayers, shoemakers, butchers, masons, etc. to sustain the closed economy. They practice their sub-specialities only during the agricultural off-season (Dupree, 1973: 132). However, all the Afghans are not an agriculturist or tribal in nature. Most of the Afghans who live in towns and cities acted as professionals. They move into the cities or town in order to carry out their part-time or secondary profession, as the towns and cities are the major commercial, administrative and communication centers. Dupree highlights the movement of many Tajiks into Kabul to work as drivers or servants. Besides, he also pointed out that the Hazaras work as labourer or manufacturer. As one of the world's poorest and illiterate country, nomads in Afghanistan played an important role as communicators of news from one place to another. Some nomads also practice trade. Wealthier nomads acted as moneylender and have become their major economic activity (Dupree, 1973:166).

Pre-war economy was based on agriculture and animal husbandry. The traditional economy is in accord with this population pattern and is based on a mix farming of wheat, rice, barley, corn and fruits. These are the main crops for Afghan farmers. Afghans were largely self-sufficient and has been a great exporter of agricultural products. They obtain tea, sugar, chimney, cloth, mirrors, kerosene, etc. from either a town or cities or itinerant peddlers. Industries are also based on agriculture and pastoral raw material. Agriculture was largely concentrated in narrow river valleys and plains where water could be available. Agriculture is the main source of government income.<sup>15</sup> However, the Soviet war has ravaged the agricultural infrastructure and Afghan's economy declined sharply. Opium became the main sources of income after the Soviet withdrawal. Economy seems to be in the state of rapid recovery during the second half of the 1990's. However, the drought that was started in 1999 lasted till date. Agriculture in Afghanistan is largely influenced by climatic condition, war and peace and government policy.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

## 2.2: RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

As far as Afghanistan's relation with Central Asian countries is concern, the peoples of northern Afghanistan shared common cultural and ethnic affinities with their neighbours in Central Asia, even though the latter had been under colonial rule of Russia until the fall of Soviet Union. They crossed the boundary at will and northern Afghanistan had stronger trade link with Bukhara than Kabul because the boundaries between Afghanistan and these states: Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were loosely marked until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the Russian policy of isolation posed a great hindrance to their relationship by hardening the frontiers (AIAS & HCID, 2008). Moreover, the people of these Central Asian countries were more oriented towards Moscow. They have the feeling of superiority, more than their neighbours culturally, economically and politically. However, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of Central Asian states the relationship between Afghanistan, especially those people living in the border areas, and the newly independent countries reached new height.

During Tajikistan's ferocious civil war in the early 1990s, Islamic forces were supplied from Afghanistan against the Moscow-backed government (BBC Online News, 2001). Uzbekistan, the most militantly anti-Taliban, provided military and other support for Dostam but has clearly lost influence since his defeat. With the fall of Najibullah in Afghanistan and the emerging ethnic conflict in Tajikistan during the early 1990s there was inflow of refugees to and from Afghanistan. It was during the civil war or the conflict between varying *mujahidin* parties in Afghanistan that large numbers of Afghan refugees have migrated to their northern neighboring countries especially in Uzbekistan (Suzuki, 2006). They became the host of Afghan refugees during this time, though the numbers of refugees in these countries were much smaller than in Iran and Pakistan. Afghanistan on the other hand, also hosted refugees from Tajikistan when the latter was witnessing a civil war since 1992. These refugees forged the relationship between the two countries greatly. Moreover, since 1992, the conflict in Afghanistan was fought on ethnic and regional line each of these ethnic communities have forged a close relationship with their fellow bothers beyond Afghan borders and asserted their autonomy. The feeling of ethnic brotherhood and the assertion for a close relationship across the borders has thus



become cause of concern for all these Central Asian countries towards Afghanistan. It was also with this idea in mind that these countries, except Turkmenistan, backed their own ethnic groups or parties during the war between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban since 1994. Thus, they have strong links with the anti-Taliban alliance and became part of it.

### **2.3: RELATION WITH IRAN**

Afghanistan has close relations with Iran since ancient times or the inception or the creation of the former. They share a long intertwined boundary and history. They also have deep ties in language, culture and its people. Iran, together with the western Afghanistan, was under the Persian Empire until early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Iranian considers western Afghanistan falling within their traditional sphere of influence because of their geographical proximity and deep-seated historical and cultural ties. Frequent and close contact between the two countries has been continued until the Soviet occupation and the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan. Hence Iran-Afghan relation should be seen from the presence of a common ethnic community in both the countries such as the Baluch.

#### **2.3.1: Nomads In Baluchistan and Helmand (Seistan Basin)**

Baluchistan is one of the most undeveloped, poorest and driest desert province bordering or connecting Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Baluchistan means the land of Baluch. According to Minahan (2002: 255), "Greater Baluchistan" includes Pakistani Baluchistan with its center at Quetta, Iranian Baluchistan (the province of Baluchistan and Seistan) with its capital at Zahedan, and Afghansitan Baluchistan (the province of Seistan and Registan in the southern district of the province of Nimruz, Helmand and Kandahar. Zaranj is the capital or the major centre of Afghanistan Baluchistan. Siestan O Baluchistan is one of the 30 provinces of Iran. It is one of the largest and distinct tribal areas in Iran. Helmand or the Seistan basin, on the other, lies in the southwestern part of Afghanistan. For general observation it lies together with the province of Baluchistan. Because of the river of Helmand this province has been one of the most important for the urban development and played an important role for cultural relations between the three traditions of eastern Iran, western Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Baluch and the Brahui are the inhabitants of the regions. According to Dupree (1973: 62), "Brahui often refer to themselves as a Baluch sub-group". James Minahan (2002: 256) also maintains that the Brahui and the Baluch are same, and differentiate them as Nharhui Baluch and Brahui Baluch. Majority of the population are Baluch. They are one of the distinct ethnic or tribal groups in the regions. They speak Baluchi and majority of them follow Sunni Islam. However, handful of them adheres to Shi'a Islam both in Iran and Afghanistan. They are believed to have been driven from their homeland on the Iranian plateau by the Seljuk Turks and migrated to the region during eleventh and twelfth centuries (Minahan, 2002: 257). Since then they live in these regions. The people of the regions lead nomadic way of life. Beside pastoral nomads there exists group(s) of agriculturist in the region. About 85 per cent of the population in Seistan region in Afghanistan engaged in agriculture. Most of the agricultural land is under the possession of the minority, Brahui. However, most of the Baluch in the regions are pastoral nomads. The practices of sedentary agriculture among them are not so prevalent.

"Nomadic movement is highly purposeful and is oriented towards achieving specific production or other goals" (Salzman, 2002: 245). The nomads are wandering or migrated from place to place through the year pursuing productive activities. Their movements depend on the ecology and the availability of pastures. Every scholar who conducted fieldwork in Iran and Afghanistan concluded that geography and ecology favours pastoral nomadism in both the countries (Tapper, 1983: 8). There is no set migration cycle or route as the availability of resources is unpredictable. In his fieldwork in Iran's Baluchistan province, Philip Salzman finds that most nomads move within a known and their large tribal territories. This may be the reason that the Baluch are not spreading so wide or mixed up with other ethnic groups. Giving the Sarhadi Baluch as an example, he said that they migrate within their own, delimited territory, which politically they control (Salzman, 2002: 250). They begin migration in the spring only when new grass turns the desert green. They need to supply pastures for their sheep, goats and camels and animals and for themselves water. Annual great migration takes place when the grass has withered. Nomads in the Helmand region mostly followed northward in shifting or movement. Nomadic people do not confine to one particular productive activity. They, at

the same time practice cultivation as well. Besides rearing cattle, the Sarhadi Baluch in Iran Baluchistan engaged in different kinds of productive activities known as mixed economy such as cultivating grain and vegetables and fruits. Nomads in Helmand region also did the same. They produce almost entirely for subsistence. Only small volume of production is traded locally. However, in the case of Komachi tribe in southern Iran, they produce for the market. They are highly specialized and oriented towards exchange or sale in the market. This nomadic way of life led push and pull factor between different people in Iran and Afghanistan as their migration pattern are largely dependent on the availability of pastures or grassland and the political outcome.

Unlike Iran, the nomads in Afghanistan do not have grazing land. It is “legally owned by the state only” (Glatzer and Casmir, 1983:311). But they simply depend on traditional grazing rights. One interesting picture is that nomads in Iran do not exchange goods directly with the sedentary agriculturalists. However, they deal with merchants or traders either to buy or to sell. Afghan nomads on the other, deal with every people usually with traders without any hesitation (Rosman and Rubel, 1976: 547). Sometimes, for some nomads, trading became their primary profession, while other nomads consider as their secondary pursuit only. Exchanges between pastoral nomads and others in Iran and Afghanistan are considered as variable economic exchanges (Rosman and Rubel, 1976: 547-548). These exchanges or interaction between groups or individuals of different economic bases crossed ethnic boundaries and brought a new set of relationship between different groups. As a result, Salzman (2002: 261) concluded that “nomads do not live to migrate, they migrate to live”.

### **2.3.2: Ethnic Groups Relations**

The relationship between Afghanistan and Iran are enhanced and made stronger by their diverse ethnic populations. Ethnicity played an important role in constructing and maintaining their relationship through the ages. At the same time, religion and language also played critical role in accelerating their relationship. Present day Afghanistan and Iran is a land of diverse ethnic, religion and mixed cultural center. Both the countries witness the existence of different types of people or groups in their countries. It shows

that each and every tribes or groups have their own language and religion. These people, since the historical period, contact each other with their counterpart from the other side of the country. The movement of the people either in the form of nomadic life or other enhanced their contact. As mentioned earlier, Afghanistan and Iran was the center of meeting point for diverse races and culture, it became a homeland for different people and group in both sides of the countries. For instances, the Baluch occupy large area stretching from southeastern Iran through Afghanistan till western part of Pakistan. The area, which they occupy, is known as Baluchistan. Besides, Turkmen, Kurds, Arabs and Jews etc. are the inhabitants of Iran in different parts of the country, as is in Afghanistan. For Iranians and Afghans in the western sectors of Afghanistan, social contacts are not unusual. The international boundary is just mere eyewash for them to show the geographical area of the two countries. It does not let them cease their contacts with their relatives beyond the boundary. This contact led to inter-marriages between Afghans and Iranians, who live near the borders. The influence of Iranian culture in the western part of Afghanistan, particularly in Herat is widely cited by scholars. Young educated people in the region are more incline to Iranian culture and thoughts than the Afghans in the other part of Afghanistan. For instance, the people of Herat and Mashad have same living style, food habits, etc. Thus, Herat is regarded as Iranian cultural center. Besides, young motivated Afghans went to Iran for higher studies. There are more than 5000 Afghan students in Iranian Madrassas. Most interesting picture is that in Iran, there are Afghan schools for Afghans only.<sup>16</sup>

Afghanistan and Iran share common language. Persian, which is the official language of Iran, is widely spoken in Afghanistan. Dari, which is the Afghan dialect of Persian, is one of the official languages in Afghanistan. Both Dari (Afghan Farsi) and Pashto are made the official languages of Afghanistan in 1964. Dari is the primary language for the Tajiks and the Hazaras. According to Dupree (1973: 66), Dari is still the “language of the Court” in Afghanistan as it was in the time of the Mughal period. Most of the Afghans prefer Dari than Pushto. About more than half of the population in Afghanistan speaks

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<sup>16</sup> From Abas Basir, First Secretary Consul, Embassy of Afghanistan, New Delhi, whom I discussed or interviewed on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009 in his office.

Dari. Moreover, Baluchi, another Iranian language is spoken in southwestern and southeastern Afghanistan.

Religion also played an important role in the relationship between Afghanistan and Iran. The populations of both the country adhere to Islam in spite of their sectarian division among them. They believe in Quran. Majority of the population in Afghanistan are religiously Sunni Islam. Iran on the other is Shi'a in practice. However, being the largest Shi'a country in the world, Iran always cares and show concern for their fellow Shi'a Islam who live in the neighbouring countries. "Shi'ite Iran has been a strong backer of the Shia minority in Afghanistan, largely confined to the Hazara nation in the central province of Bamian" (Haslett, 1998). It is in this context that Iran regarded itself as a protector of Afghanistan's Shi'a minorities, especially the Hazaras. The Hazaras are the worse sufferers in Afghanistan, ethnically and religiously. In addition, handful of population among the other ethnic groups like the Qazilbash also adheres to Shi'a Islam. This policy in mind keeps Iran always in touch with Afghanistan.

### **2.3.3: Relations During The Soviet Occupation**

The year 1979 marked two important events in the history of Afghanistan and Iran. First, it was in this year the Shah of Iran was overthrown. The second was the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. The situation in both the countries immensely affected the relationship between Afghanistan and Iran. The invasion of the Soviet Union was sternly opposed by the new regime in Iran. Also it was largely unacceptable for the international communities. It gives them great shock. However, as the Soviet Union did not pay any attention to the international communities call for their withdrawal, Iran came to the assistance of the Afghans, especially the *Mujahidins*, who fought against the Soviet. They helped the Afghans in the form of arms and ammunition and financial aid, mostly to the ethnic minorities. Kabul, on the other hand, was not happy with the involvement of Iran. Thus, bitter relationship between Afghanistan and Iran ensued and once again the strained relationship over the issue of Helmand water comes into the fore.

Before the Soviet invasion, Helmand River was the main issue of dispute between Afghanistan and Iran; it became international attention. However, in 1973 and 1977 agreement came into being under Agreement of the Helmand's Water Supply. However, since the Soviet occupation, Iran actively supported the Afghans. The new regime in Iran released a strong message to President Taraki that "if he continued to oppress Islam, he would suffer the same fate as the Shah". This message largely encouraged the Afghan fighters (Goldman, 1984: 398). However, as the *mujahidins* were a group of independently self-style based on ethnic or geographical zone, no unity against the invader could be organized. In this juncture, Iran played a critical role in uniting various *mujahidin* groups. Iran invited both the Sunni and Shi'a clerics from Afghanistan and discussed the Afghan plight. Besides giving financial aid and military assistance to the Afghan *mujahidins*, Iran also host many Afghan refugees during the war. As a result in 1985 Iran announced the merger of four *mujahidin* groups, after Iran conducted a series of talks with various *mujahidin* groups. As a result, it led to the closure of Iran's consulate in Herat, as did the Afghan consulate in Mashad. Their relationship worsened during the time of the Taliban.

#### **2.4: RELATION WITH PAKISTAN**

Since time immemorial, there have been close and continued contacts between the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>17</sup> The territories of Afghanistan and Pakistan during ancient time were part of the empires of Persian, Greek, Maurya, Kushan, Mughal, etc. The northern part of India has had links with the southern and eastern part of Afghanistan since thousand years back. The region serves as the route for trade and invasion from Central Asia to India (Hussain, 2005: 15-16). As a result, it led to the emergence of diversified linguistic, ethnic, religion and cultural character of the region, Pakistan and Afghanistan. As such the relationship of Pakistan and Afghanistan can also be seen best in the presence of various ethnic tribal communities across the two boundaries.

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<sup>17</sup> The present day Pakistan came into being in 1947, after the British partitioned India.

#### **2.4.1 Nomads In Baluchistan and Northwestern Frontier Province (NWFP)**

Northwestern Frontier Province has been created since the British time as a separate administrative province. The name has been changed into Pakistan's Northwestern Frontier Province after partition of India. This area is one of the largest provinces of Pakistan. It is mainly inhabited by the Pushtoons. On the other hand, the Tajiks, Kirghiz, Nuristanis and the Pushtoons also inhabit the eastern part of Afghanistan. The Pushtoons form the largest population in and beyond this area. The Baluch are another group of people who occupy southeastern Afghanistan and southwestern Pakistan, known as Baluchistan. The people of this area are largely tribal in nature and live a nomadic way of life. They are mainly pastoral nomads. In his book, *Nomads and the Outside World*, A. M. Khazanov defines the nomads as a "food extracting economy where the entire community is depend on its herds for the supply of food". Living in either tent or in portable hut, as mentioned by Dupree, these nomadic people move from place to place in search of pastures for their livestock. Water for animals and for them is also one of the important reasons for their movement. They move along with their livestock to the pasturage land rather than bringing fodder to herds. Their movement was not aimless rather it was purposeful, though they follow different pattern of movement. For instance, the Pushtoon and Baluch move horizontally. However, the Kirghiz in the Pamir Mountains move vertically (Dupree, 1973: 164). Besides, there are some nomadic who practice agricultural works. Most of them belong to Pushtoon and the Baluch. Their agricultural productions are for their own subsistence and only small volume are produced in the market. The nomads produce milk, meat, wool, rugs, and etc. from their livestock. They often traded these items for grains, vegetables, fruit, etc.

There has always been conflict between different groups for grazing ground. The conflict between the Kuchi nomads and the Hazara shows the best example. It was largely because of the increase in populations. Constant fighting also occurred between nomads and sedentary agriculturists. In this case the government sided with the sedentary agriculturists. In course of time, since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the shifting pattern of the nomadic life has been greatly affected by political pressure. The Afghan government viewed the nomads and their flocks non-productive and harmful for land. They want

them to settle down rather than living a nomadic life. Also, Pakistani government has followed this policy as they view it as a great burden for their economy. The issues of Pushtunistan cause a complete shift to the nomads' migration pattern (Dupree, 1973:168-169). Accordingly, the closure of Durand Line in 1961 greatly affected the nomads' movement from Afghanistan to Pakistan and vice-versa.

#### **2.4.2: Ethnic Group Relations**

Like in Afghanistan-Iran border, ethnicity, religion and culture played an important role in fostering the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both the countries witness the existence of numerous ethnic, religious and cultural groups. This diversity keeps the two countries in constant touch through the ages. Majority of the populations from both the countries are tribal. Besides that large number of them practices nomadic life, wandering from place to place. It was not until 1893 that no clear-cut demarcation of boundaries between Afghanistan and Pakistan took place. The people from either side of the countries move freely at will beyond their country. However, the Durand Line segregated the people living on both side of the two countries, especially the dominant Pushtoon ethnic group. In the southeastern part of Afghanistan and southwestern part of Pakistan, a special group of people known as the Baluch inhabited the area. In addition, handful of the Hazaras and the Tajiks are also found in Pakistan. However, despite this artificial boundaries cross the same ethnic group, such boundary line did not completely stopped the movement of these people to and from the two countries. Because the ethnic boundaries for these people extends in both the countries, the social and cultural relation remain intact and they continued to keep in touch from one another across the boundary despite the fact that such international boundary had greatly hampered their movement. Besides, ethnic or kinship ties are much stronger than such artificial geography. The living styles of people in and beyond NWFP are more or less similar. They have same tradition, food habits, folk-tales, etc. Inter-marriages are quite common as the people of the area are from same ethnic community. So many Afghan students receive education in Pakistan, either in religious or secular institutions.



Similarly, religion, which is one of the most important binding factors for the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, played a crucial role in the relationship between the two countries. Both the countries are Muslim in religion. They adhere to Sunni Islam in faith in spite of the presence of a handful of non-Sunni groups in both sides of the countries. Hussain (2005: 60) claims that, Pakistan under the Zia regime, due to her opposition to Soviet, was in favour of Afghan *mujahidin* on the basis of religion, when the Soviet invaded Afghanistan. We can assume from this point that like Iran, Pakistan did not want to see the suffering of its fellow Muslim brothers.

Language also played a significant role in the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pushtoon, who constituted the largest population in Afghanistan, are the second largest in Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> Pashto, one of the official languages in Afghanistan, is widely spoken in the tribal belt known as the North Western Frontier Province in Pakistan. It serves as a linguistic relation between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Dupree, 1963: 384). Baluchi is another language spoken by people from Afghanistan and Pakistan in the border areas. The main speakers of Baluchis are the Baluchs, who live in the southwestern part of Pakistan and the southeastern part of Afghanistan. Like the Pushtoons, they occupy the area known as Baluchistan, which extends in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, some Tajiks and Hazaras, who live in Pakistan also speaks the languages similar to their ethnic brothers in Afghanistan. These similarities struck the minds of the people to be closer, as language is the mentor of different people. Thus, it led to closer relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

#### **2.4.3: Relations During The Soviet Occupation**

Pakistan played an important role in resisting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Soon after the Soviet invasion, Pakistan sternly opposed the occupation and claimed that it is unacceptable in international law. Pakistan along with Iran helped the helpless Afghans against the communist Soviet. It was during this period that Pakistan and Iran were in

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<sup>18</sup> The Pushtoons constituted the second largest populated group (13%) in Pakistan. They are just behind the Punjabis (48%). See Pakistan, general data of the country: Ethnic composition, language, religion, <http://www.populstat.info/Asia/pakistag.htm>

good relation. Also, it was during this period that the policy of Pan-Islam movement of Pakistan took place under the then President Zia. Aziz (1988: 153) said that Muslims of Pakistan were emotionally attached to Afghanistan for faith and history. Thus, because of religion, both Iran and Pakistan did not want their Muslim brothers to fall prey in the hands of the Communist. Since then they started exchanging their views on Afghanistan. They knew that Afghanistan problems would affect their countries as well. Like Iran, Pakistan helped the Afghan *mujahidins* by supplying them arms and ammunition, and financial assistance. It allowed various Afghan *mujahidin* groups to shelter in her territory. The Pakistan's ISI played pivotal role during the period. They played as a disbursal of aids or assistances receive from different countries, especially from the U.S, Saudi Arabia and the other Arab world (Rubin, 1995: 196-197). Moreover, they were the sole actor to select Afghans' varying groups who could stand against the Soviets. "The United States CIA gave the ISI freedom of action in choosing which groups were best suited to inflict the maximum damage on the Soviets and their allies in Afghanistan" (Hussain, 2005:116). They trained the Afghan *mujahidins* and made most of the policy to tackle the Soviets.

But since the inception of Pakistan, Durand Line posed great problems and hindered their good relationship throughout. This issue, together with the demand for 'Greater Baluchistan' by the Baluch, immensely creates strain relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan. These problems have been an issue for Afghanistan and Pakistan till date. However, keeping aside their differences, Pakistan showed their efforts for restoring peace and tranquility in Afghanistan during the course of the Soviet occupation. As a result, it paved a way for the emergence of Geneva Accord in 1988. Hussain (Hussain, 2005: 6) rightly claim that religion, ethnic and cultural factor played an important role in state's foreign relation, in the state with tribal or traditional societies.

## **2.5: CONCLUSION**

It may be concluded that Afghanistan has close relations with her neighbouring countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirghizstan, Pakistan, Iran and China long before the emergence of Afghanistan as a modern state. It has a deep-rooted historical relation with

them. Because of her geographical location, it was a part of various successive empires, which came and go in different historical point of time. This invasion, conquest and trade etc. made Afghanistan a meeting point for diverse people or races. Thus, Afghanistan became a place of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic state. What makes Afghanistan a nation can only be found in their religious traditions of Islam that seems to have been overshadowed by their tribal loyalty and solidarity even today.

Present day Afghanistan was a part of Persian and Mughal empires in different period of time. Falling under these two imperial territories Afghanistan became closer to Iran and Pakistan than other neighbouring countries. The countries inhabitants are multi-ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic groups. The populations of the countries are largely tribal in nature and majority of the population practices agriculture and nomadic way of life. The movement of the nomads with their livestock from place to place keeps alive their contact with people from other side of the country(s). Dupree (1973: 170) claim that some Afghan nomads even have land in Pakistan territory. Ethnically, the three countries have multi-ethnic populations in their own territories. These ethnic groups are inter-related with each other beyond the boundaries. Many Afghans are closely related to many of the ethnic groups in Iran and Pakistan. For instance, Pushtoos are the largest populated groups in Afghanistan and the second largest in Pakistan. The Baluch on the other hand are the inhabitants of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. These ethnic groups have closer relations with their ethnic group beyond the boundaries rather than other ethnic group from their own country. Because ethnic and kinship ties were much stronger than a national identity, movement of people and continued relationship among them thrived unhindered by this national boundary. Ultimately such commonality and the presence of similar ethnic groups across the two nations have also greatly forged the relationship between the two countries.

Besides, despite many thorny issues between Afghanistan and her neighbours the Islamic brotherhood had played an important role in the relationship, especially during the Soviet occupation. Besides the fear of Communism that had tremendously threatened their very survival, Iran and Pakistan took a concerted effort to throw away the Soviets from

Afghanistan because they were Muslim, their fellow Islamic brothers. The resistance movement under the *mujahidins* against the Soviet occupation was carried out with the support of Pakistan and Iran. Again, linguistic similarity between the people of the two countries in the border areas is also one important link that combined Afghans, Iranians and Pakistanis. For instance, Persian is the national language in Iran. It is also one of the two official languages in Afghanistan. Likewise, Pashto is also widely use in Pakistan's NWFP.

However, the relationship between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan are greatly hindered by different issues in course of the time. Helmand River between Afghanistan and Iran, and the Durand Line and the 'Pushtunistan' issues keeps the three countries always on an adverse situation. Helmand river water was an issue of problem between Iran and Afghanistan until the Soviet invasion. The Durand Line, which was created in 1893, sharply segregated the Pushtoons into two divisions. Since its creation till date, Afghanistan never accepted the line and propagated for Pushtoons independence and supports the cause of Pushtunistan. However, Pakistan never accepted Afghanistan's claim. It was because of this, Afghanistan stands against the entry of Pakistan into the United Nations, right after the creation of present day Pakistan. Their relationship hampered during the war against Soviet Communists as the Communists back the government of Peoples Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (PDPA) against the involvement of Iran and Pakistan. These issues led the good neighbours into good enemies.

However, despite all these differences we can conclude that Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan have very close relations. This was because their problems are only political issues and not related to the age-old social and cultural relations, which continued to thrive through. Relationship based on social and culture never remain static rather it keeps moving and alive. For instance, people from one country to the other keeps contacting each other and travel from one country to the other without any hindrances and without knowing in which country they are (Glatzer, 2001: 383). The movement of people to and from Afghanistan to Iran or Pakistan never ends. Because of the movement

of different people across their territory to the neighbouring states, “a new social and local relationships has to be established and old ones were reflected on and perhaps revised” (Glatzer, 2001: 380). As a result, the relationship between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan are deep-rooted, and it is very important for the understanding of the present day situation in Afghanistan so that the participation of the three nations in looking into the solution for Afghanistan problems become pertinent and necessary.

## ***CHAPTER THREE***

## **IRAN'S DISAFFECTION AND PAKISTAN'S MONO-CULTURAL APPROACH IN POST-NAJIBULLAH REGIME**

With the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1989, a political vacuum was created wherein Afghanistan's political situation was that of a conflict amongst varying Afghan parties. In this kind of political environment, peaceful co-existence was a far cry. Different mujahideen parties fought against the Najibullah government in Afghanistan to dethrone the Soviet back communist from Kabul. On the other, varying parties who existed during this time fall prey into ethnic and sectarian lines. Afghan society was filled with chaos and ethnic rivalries. Conflicts, regionalisation and fragmentation of Afghan society emerged and took the political scene completely. The Afghan crisis during the Cold War has been transformed into a post-Cold War ethno-nationalist struggle. It was largely aggravated by the external powers' interests in the conflict prone Afghanistan. The constant involvement of external powers and the alliances system not only aggravated or polarised the Afghans along ethnic lines, it also created tension and suspicion among external actors (Saikal, 1998:114). This resulted in civil war and posed a great obstacle for the peace process in Afghanistan.

During the course of the civil war or ethnic conflict, the Shi'a (majority of them are Hazaras) were the worse sufferers. The atrocities meted to them by other ethnic communities or the government policies of marginalisation were greatly unbearable for Iran. Moreover, the killing of the Iranian diplomats during the time of the Taliban greatly humiliated Tehran. This posed great discontentment for Tehran. Pakistan on the other hand, played the card of Pushtoon domination or Pushtunwali to make Afghanistan a pro-Pakistan country or a sympathiser of Islamabad.

### **3.1: ETHNIC CONFLICT AND THE ISLAMABAD ACCORD**

Following the withdrawal of the Soviet Union under the terms of the Geneva Accord in 1988, political or social conditions in Afghanistan became sharply changed. Polarisation or fragmentation of Afghans along ethnic lines came into being in the spheres of Afghanistan. The mujahideens who once fought the Soviet together under the banner of

Islam rapidly splits into numerous groups. They became conscious with the idea of ethnic identity or ethno-nationalism. Thus, they refuse to recognise one's group or other into power. This power struggle between the mujahideens immensely affected the political process in Afghanistan. Intense power struggles and fighting, in general, resulted in the development of divisions between Pushtoon and non-Pushtoon. For the mujahideens, Geneva Accord proves to be a complete failure. Because, the mujahideens were neither party to the negotiation nor agreement they refused to accept the terms of the accords. According to Barnett Rubin (1995a: 85), they "refused to accept the codification of the deal, which had been worked out in secret negotiations". Thus, different parties did not recognised and pay no attention to the accord. As a result, civil war broke out in Afghanistan.

Soon after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, Afghan national military force came to an end and all the mujahideens or the Afghan fighters struck their own ways and means for the power in Kabul. However, it was not until 1992 or the fall of Najibullah that intense and notorious fighting for power among the mujahidins does not exist. Their primary objective at this time was to overthrow the Soviet back communist government under the leadership of Najibullah.

Until 1992, almost all the parties followed the policy of local or national unification rather than ethnicisation. For instance, sh'ism and not Hazara nationalism was the ideology of the Hazaras and Jombesh included in its framework all the northern communities. Jamiat on the other hand, also did not base its strategy on ethnic affiliation. Rather it maintained its goal for national unification. Therefore, the idea of ethno-nationalism was not the main principle policies of the parties at this point of time. Rather, local or national consolidation was their main determining factor (Dorrnsoro, 2005: 258). After prolong and intense fighting between the mujahideens and the government in Kabul, Najibullah decided to resign. Despite his offer to resign, the mujahideens were against the sharing of power between them and the existing government in Kabul as proposes by the United Nations representatives. The formation of the next government or the interim government became a core issue at that moment. In spite of its difficulties,



different parties or groups were brought into peace negotiation, and an interim government was formed with the signing of the Peshawar Accord<sup>19</sup> in 26 April, 1992. The signing of the accord intensified the competition for power between the mujahedeen groups, who were mainly split and claimed their allegiance between the two most important parties: Hizb-i-Islami under Hekmatyar and Jamiat-i-Islami under Rabbani. The emergence of two opposite camps paved a way for new wave of conflict. The conflict became more notorious and destructive than before. The appointment of Masood as a Defence Minister caused a great debate and dissatisfaction for Hekmatyar as he viewed it as recognition of minority ethnic groups controlling the military by surrendering the past glories of the Pushtoons. Thus, he never accepted the terms or the agreement or the accord. On the other hand, according to Rizwan Hussain (2005:156), Peshawar Accord was only signed by Pakistan based Islamist groups and hardly any group from Afghanistan participated. He further argued that to the Afghans, Peshawar Accord was another attempt by foreign powers for the future of their country according to their geostrategic aims rather than for the Afghans. The hope for restoring peace in Afghanistan was shattered with the intense fighting and outbreak of the civil war in 1992. According to Kesava Menon, "because of the situation most of the diplomatic missions have closed down and even the United Nations has withdrawn its non-Afghans personnel from Afghanistan". (Kesava Menon, 1993a: 38)

As fighting erupted again in and around Kabul, the United Nations played a good will mission for peace negotiation. Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia played a major role by bringing together all the mujahideen groups to the negotiating table in Islamabad. Thus, Islamabad Accord came into being on 7 March, 1993.<sup>20</sup> The Accord was confirmed by all the leaders of various mujahideen groups on 7 March, 1993.<sup>21</sup> This Accord established Interim Government in Afghanistan for a period of eighteen months. It has the duty to summon a constituent assembly to draft constitution within eight months and hold

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<sup>19</sup> For more details of the Peshawar Accord, see Appendix 2, p-

<sup>20</sup> It is claimed that Pakistan's ISI engineered the Islamabad Accords to get Hekmatyar onto the prime minister's seat and to evict Masood from the powerful defence ministry. See BBC News (2001), Analysis: Pakistan's Vested Interests.

<sup>21</sup> For details see Afghan Peace Accord (Islamabad), [www.institute-for-afghan-studies.org/Accords%20Treaties/Afghan\\_Peace\\_Accord\\_Islamabad\\_Accord.htm](http://www.institute-for-afghan-studies.org/Accords%20Treaties/Afghan_Peace_Accord_Islamabad_Accord.htm).

election within eighteen. There was division of powers between the President and the Prime Minister. Rabbani remained the President and Hekmatyar as a Prime Minister.<sup>22</sup> Though, Masood still hold his post, it became the central point of debate among the representatives or the mujahideens for the appointment of Defence Minister (Rubin, 1995b: 274).

The Accord was meant to install peace, harmony, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity in Afghanistan by bringing armed hostilities to an end. However, like the Geneva and Peshawar Accords, Islamabad Accord did not produce the above criteria for the country and it did not last long. Rather, soon after, all the varying parties once again fall into another conflict after Rabbani refused to transfer the power. This time, all the parties followed alliances system. The main reason for the failure of the Islamabad Accord was that none of the parties followed the terms of the Accord. They did not want to disarm neither share powers with others. Thus, according to Nabi Misdaq (2006: 174), "Islamabad meeting therefore was a non-starter." Moreover, intensive involvement of the neighbouring countries like Pakistan did not pay attention to the United Nations call for non-interference in Afghan affairs (Daniel Lak, 2001).

### **3.2: ALLIANCES SYSTEM**

The conflict in Afghanistan, which has its long historical and traditional roots, has been affected and exacerbated by the intensive involvement of external powers in the country. Due to its geographical and strategic importance, most big powers in the world and its neighbours sought their interest in Afghanistan. Being the gateway of the East and the West, controlling Afghanistan and having a firm stronghold in the country will lead into controlling power of almost the whole world economically and politically. It was this idea that neighbouring countries and the great powers have been actively involved in the spheres of Afghanistan in the name of helping the conflict torn Afghanistan for political solution and development. However, in reality, the active interference of these countries is largely enforced by their political and economic motives in the region. It was this idea

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<sup>22</sup> The President was the supreme commander of the armed forces and the Prime Minister formed the cabinet in consultation with the President.

in mind that different countries and powers have been vying for their stronghold in Afghanistan since ancient times.

Afghanistan became a buffer state between the British India and the Soviet Union during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and between the United States and the Soviet Union or China during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the Soviet invasion, neighbouring countries like Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, etc. realised the importance of Afghanistan and actively involved and focused their foreign policies towards Afghanistan. One of the most important and interesting pictures during the conflict in Afghanistan was the alliances system. It immensely aggravated the conflict in Afghanistan. This system can be divided into two: internal alliances and the external alliances. An internal alliance is the alliance between different mujahideen groups into two major camps or factions in Afghanistan. External alliance is the alliance between different countries that actively involved and focused their foreign policies in Afghanistan. The external powers are: the United States, Soviet Union, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and India. The political situation in Afghanistan led the external powers into two sharp divisions. The alliances, whether internal or external, followed a very complicated system and in course of time they switched their side(s).

### **3.2.1:INTERNAL ALLIANCES**

The year 1992 – 1995 is known as the years of alliances in the history of Afghanistan. Various mujahideen groups were re-ignited into old tribal and factional rivalries with the Soviet withdrawal from the country. However, as there was no single party(s) truly represented at the national level, the system of alliances came into being in Afghanistan since 1992 (Dorransoro, 2005: 240-241).<sup>23</sup> As mentioned earlier that various mujahideen groups or parties in Afghanistan are divided into two main camps: Hezb-i-Islami and Jamiat-i-Islami, who receives different sources of aids from foreign countries like Iran and Pakistan.<sup>24</sup> Being a Pushtoon majority group, Hezb-i-Islami under the leadership of Hekmatyar focussed on defending the Pushtoon interests. On the other hand, Rabbani, a Tajik warlord, is his main rival. As against Hekmatyar and his policy of Pushtoon

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<sup>23</sup> Also see Anders Fange (1995), *Afghanistan after April 1992: a struggle for state and ethnicity*.

<sup>24</sup> Pakistan became the main supporter and sponsor of Hizb-i-Islam. While Iran supported the non-Pushtoon groups mainly the Hazaras.

domination, many minority groups like Hizb-i-Wahadat (Hazaaras) and Jombhesh-i-Melli (Uzbek and Turks) aligned with Rabbani against Hekmatyar. In course of the time the two most important communist parties Parcham and Khalq also backed the rival parties.

Dorrnsoro (2005: 241) argued that together with the unacceptability of Hekmatyar to be in power and the control of the government in Kabul by Rabbani enabled various minority groups to joined or backed Jamiat. Nobody wished to see Heb-i-Islami actually achieve power. Because, Hekmatyar and his party's policy at this time was largely base on Pushtoon centric. That is why minority groups especially the Tajiks, Uzbeks and the Hazaras does not want the Pushtoon to come to the power again.

The common interests of the coalition between Jamiat, Jombesh and Wahadat were to forestall the settlement plan under the leadership of the United Nation. Besides, they all wanted to keep Hekmatyar out of Kabul. It is the aim of the Masud that the control of the capital will enable him to oust Hekmatyar so that it will led Jamiat to play leading role in the new balance of power. Dostum on the other hand viewed to control the northwestern province. Hezb-i-Wahadat also wanted to gain a strong foothold in Kabul, as there was substantial Hazara community (Dorrnsoro, 2005: 242). Thus, Hekmatyar became their common enemy of the time.

Intensive fighting broke out in Kabul between the two rival factions or parties. The city witnessed bloodbath, destructions of infrastructures and displacement of the civilians. It risked the lives of the people and the city witnessed complete calm of the voices of the people. Kesava Menon (1992a: 11) said that the curfew, which was imposed between 9pm. – 5:30am in the city, was advanced than during the time of Najibullah. Despite his repeated sought for shunning bloodshed for the establishment of peace, Benon Sevan<sup>25</sup> request was like a dust in the wind. As argued by Anthony Davis (1992: 26) that it is largely depends on Masood and Hekmatyar. Different ethnic origin is the most important

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<sup>25</sup> Benon Sevan was the United Nations envoy in Afghanistan during this period. See Anthony Davis (1992).

issue for their division. Repeated military assaults against Hekmatyar by the combined forces of Jamiat, Wahadat and Jombesh led to the signing of peace accord in Peshawar in 1992.<sup>26</sup> However, refusal of Rabbani to step down after the expiry of his term under the terms of the Peshawar Accord paved a way for another fighting. As the fighting broke out again for almost a year, different parties agreed for another meeting under the pressure from different quarters of the world, especially Pakistan and Iran. Thus, Islamabad Accord came into being. By sidelining the interest of other parties or groups, Rabbani once again refused to step down from his post. His attitude greatly undermined the other groups and they feel humiliated by the act of Rabbani. As a result, it affected his alliances with Wahadat and Jombesh, and it witnessed the continuation of the conflict.

The break up of the alliance, against Hekmatyar, came in when Masood launched an operation in Kabul to disarm Hizb-i-Wahadat in the latter part of the 1992. Soon after, Harakat-i-Ettehad joined the coalition by shunning Hekmatyar. The very next year, the joint forces of Jamiat and Ettehad launched an operation against Wahadat. Earlier, Harakat-i-Ettehad joined the alliance of Hizb-i-Islami, though its relations with the latter were temporary. Because, Ettehad's primary objective was to dislodge Wahadat in power as Shi'a Muslims were their main targets. The Wahadat on the other hand, struck an alliance with Hizb-i-Islami. However, their relations were not permanent like the latter's relations with Ettehad. The alliances between Hekmatyar and Dostum in 1994 paved a new wave of conflict in Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup> It also accelerated the current hostilities more significance. Their common enemy of the time is "President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military ally and Tajik leader, Ahmed Shah Masood" (Cherian, 1994: 53). The fighting between different groups goes on and on till the emergence of the Taliban in 1994. Hekmatyar's inability or weakness to suppress his rivals and his failure to control Kabul led Pakistan changed their policy. They sidelined Hekmatyar and looked for another often, most importantly, the Taliban.

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<sup>26</sup> Dorransoro argued that the ceasefire or the peace accord was imposed by Pakistan in order to rescue Hekmatyar from defeat.

<sup>27</sup> Dostum aligned with Hekmatyar after he was repeatedly refused to occupy Defence post. However, their relations or alliance did not last long.

The coming of the Taliban led to the emergence of new balance of power in Afghanistan. After conquering area by area or province, they became stronger day by day. The rapid advancement of the Taliban witnessed the disappearance of so many groups like Mahaz, Harakat-i-Enqelab, Jebhe, Ettihad and Hezb-i-Islami. Harakat-i-Enqelab on the other hand, merged into the Taliban. Hezb-i-Wahadat also split into two factions. A group of them under the leadership of Akbari entered an alliance with the government in Kabul, i.e. with Rabbani. Another group on the other hand, under the leadership of Khalili, attached themselves with Dostum in 1995. The advancement of the Taliban compelled Jamiat, Jombesh and Wahadat to re-align to counter the Taliban. However, the combined forces underwent its first serious defeat under the hands of the Taliban in Mazar-i Sharif in 1997. During this time, Rabbani was just a nominal head and the real power lies in the hands of Masood. The fall of Mazar-i Sharif into the hands of the Taliban in 1998 was a major blunder for the combined forces. It led to the disappearance of Hizb-i-Wahadat as a major military force in the north. Besides, in revenge for previous massacres, the Taliban killed several Shi'a (mostly Hazaras) civilians. Even the Iranian diplomats were not spared. Further, numbers of Hezb-i-Wahadat members joined into the Taliban (Dorransoro, 2005: 250-255).

### **3.2.2: EXTERNAL ALLIANCES**

The involvement of the external powers in the Afghanistan conflict was largely influenced by political as well as economic interest of one's particular country(s). Hafizullah Emadi (1999: 49) said "foreign policy has been regarded as a reflection and application of a country's domestic politics to the international arena." He further said that national interest became the guiding principle in the articulation of foreign policy. As mentioned earlier that Afghanistan occupying an important place in the study of geopolitics, also occupied an important route for economic activities between the East and the West. It was this importance that external powers took advantage of the prevailing conflict in Afghanistan. They, "the external actors take full advantage of the internal power struggle for ulterior motives" (Mass, 1999: 66). Because of their own motives, great powers and regional powers actively involved in the spheres of Afghanistan and patched up with either one faction or other. This system led to the emergence of alliances

system even among the external powers, as it is among various groups in Afghanistan. Pakistan and Iran are the two most important regional actors, while the United States of America, Russia and China<sup>28</sup> are the three great super powers, who actively interfered/involved in the spheres of Afghanistan either directly or indirectly. In the meantime, some non - regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, etc. also paved great concern about the Afghan conflict but in meagre role.

Like the varying Afghan groups, the external powers also group up in two different camps. Pakistan, the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Turkey struck their alliances in favour of the Pushtoons under the leadership of Hekmatyar and later the Taliban. While, another group of alliance was formed by Iran, Russia, Central Asian CIS and India in favour of the non-Pushtoon minority ethnic groups and later the Northern Alliance. The policy differences among the external powers enabled them to divide into two factions sharply.

Pakistan and Iran, who are the most important players in Afghanistan, holds a strategic position by functioning as two-way linkages between internal factional groups and external supporters (Mass, 1999: 68). Since the time of the Soviet occupation, though Pakistan and Iran supported the mujahidins against the soviet, they balanced towards their own favourite groups. After the withdrawal of the Soviet there was sharp division between the two players. Pakistan supported the Pushtoon group of mujahidin with Hekamatyar as its favourite. While Iran on the other hand, supported the Shi'ite and the other minority parties. This contradicting position between Iran and Pakistan also followed by the other external powers. The two varying camps influence the balance of power between different armed groups in Afghanistan by giving logistical, military and financial aid or assistance. However, in course of the war, the success of the Taliban and their administrative system changed the structure of the alliances system among the external powers. The United States of America withdraw its support to the Taliban. The Northern Alliance became the main military force against the Taliban. The support of the

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<sup>28</sup> China did not want to interfere in the internal conflict of Afghanistan as it can spread towards its territory. Beijing believes that it could create a great problem to ward off secessionist policy in its northwestern interior part, Xinjiang.

external actors relies on the persons or the parties, who they seem, could understand their interest(s). Thus, the alliances system exacerbated the conflict and posed a great complication for peace solutions in Afghanistan.

As far as Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan is concern, Pushtunistan issue, strategic depth and economic motives played a vital role. Pakistan needs friendly relations with Afghanistan in order to ward off any threat from its eastern sector i.e. India. Besides, peaceful relations with Afghanistan will not create a problem on the issue of Pushtunistan. According to Ijaz Khan (1998: 496), Pakistan's basic objective after the cold war was to "weaken the Afghan State" for she has cordial relations with India since 1947. As Pakistan is a natural enemy to India on Kashmir, cordial relationship between India and Afghanistan pose a great threat to Islamabad. Economically, Pakistan wants to extend its influence towards Central Asia so that she could monopolise and benefit from the rich oil and natural resources of the Central Asian countries. As far as Iran is concern, the presence of the U.S and its allies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf posed a great threat to Tehran. The regime of Saddam Hussein was also seen as a possible threat. Thus, Iran looks toward its eastern frontier for friendly relations. Further, the support of Sunni Muslim groups by Pakistan and the U.S. since 1992 have been considered by Iran as a great humiliation and "political cum-Islamist containment attempt" (Mass, 1999: 71). Moreover, during the time of the Taliban great atrocities were committed to the Shi'ite Muslims and the increasing expansionist policy of the former led Tehran to intensify its support to the Shi'ite parties.

The Central Asian States fear that the rapid advancement of the Taliban could reach northern Afghanistan or their territories. Because the Taliban are more radical in their religious decree, which could transform the societies of the newly independent countries. Beside, as their ethnic brothers in Afghanistan were sternly against the Pushtoon dominate Taliban; they have the common interest of helping the Northern Alliance against the Taliban.



The primary objective of the U.S. policy in Afghanistan was to establish a secure pipeline to export oils and natural resources from the Central Asian countries to the western market via Afghanistan. The U.S always wanted to prevent Iran and Russia's influence and expansionist policy in the region so that she could re-establish American domination and enjoy the resources of the region. However, in order to carry out this plan, America needs strong government in Afghanistan. Thus, the Taliban were viewed as the best option that could serve the U.S interest in containing the Iranian influence in the region. Because the Taliban do not share common language, religion and culture with Iran and they are totally against the Shi'ite (Emadi, 1999: 61). Thus, the U.S regarded the control of Kabul by the Taliban as a positive development. The geo-economic interest is more important than political interest for the U.S. However, in order to gain success in its economic policy, political interest should go hand in hand with the economic interest. Promoting wahhabism sect of Islam in the region is the first and foremost objectives of Saudi Arabia. Together with the U.S and Pakistan, Saudi Arabia has the same economic and political interests. Containing Iran is also one of the important motives of Saudi Arabia. It was because of this policy in mind that Saudi Arabia actively supported Ittehad-e-Islami and the Taliban, who are totally against the Shi'ite sect of Islam. Turkey, according to Citha D. Mass, has no direct political interest in Afghanistan. However, its policy was largely base on defensive and propagating Turkish secular social model among Turkic peoples in Central Asia.

Apart from supporting the communist government until the fall of Najibullah in 1992, Russia had no clear-cut objectives in Afghanistan since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union and until the emergence of the newly independent Central Asian countries (Khalilzad, 1996: 194). However, it saw Pakistan's ambition in the region as a great threat to its security. Besides, the U.S and the Soviet Union were always in the opposite site during the Great Game period until the end of the Cold War. Even after the end of the Cold War, the ideological differences still exist between the two. The motives and the active involvement of the U.S and Pakistan in Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries posed a great threat to Russia's security. Further, the rapid advancement of the Taliban had cause great concern for Russia. The Taliban being more rigid in their

religious policies, it is the policy of Russia to prevent the spillover of Islamist movements into Central Asian states. Thus, security occupied the primary concern for Russia. As a result Russia patched up with Iran and backed Rabbani government during the conflict. In case of India, Kashmir issue keeps herself distance from Pakistan. It made India and Pakistan always in opposite side. This issue will never ever lead India to support or side with Pakistan as far as the regional politics is concern. Thus, India joined the league of Iran and Russia during the course of the war.

All these motives kept the great powers and the neighbouring powers active in the affairs of Afghanistan. Their interference, either directly or indirectly, was followed by some non-regional powers as well. Ideological or interest clash led to the emergence of the alliances system, which keep them into two distinct camps. Thus, one group of alliance, under the leadership of Pakistan, backed Hekmatyar and later the Taliban with great financial and military aids. While, another group of alliance backed by Rabbani government and the Northern Alliance against Hekmatyar. The conflict between the two diverging camps within Afghanistan became commonly known as the Pushtoon versus the non-Pushtoon. The disunity among the different parties or groups became a key obstacle to peace process. It was aggravated throughout this period by the continuing support and the policy of the U.S, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, who gave disproportionate amount of military assistance to Hekmatyar led Hizb-i-Islami mujahidin group. Throughout the conflict, with the help of the CIA and ISI, Hekmatyar received the majority of assistance from these countries (Human Rights Watch, 2005). This external interference and the alliances system accelerated the conflict in Afghanistan. Because, varying Afghan parties got huge financial and material or ideological support from outside actors. The varying external actors on the other hand, did in order to meet their own interest. As a result, the internal conflict in Afghanistan became a cause of concern and it also became an international conflict. In the words of Khalilzad Zalmay (1996) “the Afghan civil war was a mini-great game.”

### 3.3: PAKISTAN AND CIA

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Pakistan became the most successful and influential external actors in the spheres of Afghanistan. Its success was mainly because of the help she received from the United States of America. Both the countries became close friends since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan tightened their friendship, for they have more or less similar motives in the region. According to Rizwan Hussain (2005: 205), because of the animosity between the U.S and the Shiite theocratic leadership in Iran strengthened the relations between the U.S and Pakistan. Both Pakistan and the U.S need each other in order to fulfill their policies towards the region. The domestic as well as foreign policies of both the countries are largely control and conducted by their secret intelligence agencies. Thus, the CIA and Pakistan's ISI played a pivotal role during the Afghan conflict.

With the help of the U.S and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan actively and directly involved in politics of the Afghans. It encourages and support the Pushtoon based radical Sunni Mujahidin group with financial and material aids coming from the U.S, Saudi Arabia and some Arab countries. Zia's policy of Islamisation during the Soviet occupation has been followed in course of the conflict in Afghanistan. However, importance has been given to Sunni Islam. It was mainly because of this, Pakistan became more close to Saudi Arabia and it led to the growth of Deobandi madrasa. The involvement of Saudi Arabia and other conservative Gulf states also fuelled the growth of Sunni radicalism in Pakistan. It is the main reason that Pakistan supported Hekmatyar, who is a Pushtoon and radical Sunni Islam during the conflict in Afghanistan. It was the idea of Pakistan to establish Islamic government in Afghanistan with Pushtoon domination. Besides, Pakistan wanted that government to be pro-Pakistan (Hussain, 2005: 235). Moreover, together with Saudi Arabia, Pakistan made it clear that the selected leaders should be sympathetic to Islamabad. The U.S, in order to fulfill its dream, sees Pakistan as the most important ally. Thus, it supported Pakistan plans with financial and material assistance through the CIA. However, in dealing with the mujahidins in Afghanistan, Pakistan sidelined the non-Pushtoon Islamists in Jamiat-i-Islami and Shiite Hazara factions in favour of Pushtoon Islamists belong to Hezb-i-Islami and Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami. Being a Sunni Islam

country, Pakistan also introduced Pushtunwali, the Pushtoon code of conduct.<sup>29</sup> This idea is to give importance to the culture and customs of the majority Pushtoon and to undermine the others. Education has been imparted in the madrasas in Urdu to thousands of Afghans who reside in NWFP and Baluchistan provinces, which encourage the youths to the jihad in Afghanistan. The madrasas also imparted military training in the tribal areas of these provinces (Hussain, 2005: 183). The ISI also monitored the recruitment and training of the jihads. Hussain further argued that the CIA gave full authority to Pakistan's ISI to recruit and train the mujahidins or the jihadis. However, as the inability of Hekmatyar to oust Rabbani and his allies, Islamabad renewed its policy and looks forward another option for the place of Hekmatyar. As a result, a new group of jihadis, the Taliban came into being in 1994. Pakistan's ISI with the help of the CIA were the sole creator of the Taliban. However, Islamabad denied its involvement or role in supporting the militia, but privately acknowledge. Hussain claimed that the ISI are instrumental in providing advice and logistical support for the formation of the Taliban organisation (Hussain, 2005: 185). Moreover, former President Pervez Musharraf revealed the connectivity of ISI and militants in his recent interview. On the question of ISI's systematical support to the Taliban, he replied, "Intelligence always has access to other network – that is what Americans did with KGB, that is what ISI also does" (The Times of India). Pakistan serves as the sanctuary of the Taliban. Financial and military aids always came from the U.S and Saudi Arabia. It was only after the attack of American Embassy in Africa in 1998 that the U.S ceased to sponsor the Taliban.<sup>30</sup>

Iran on the other hand, sternly opposed the policies and the activities of Pakistan. Islamabad's Pushtoon-centric policy led to the formation of the Northern Alliance among the non-Pushtoons (Hussain, 2005: 246). Moreover, "Iran itself planned to increase its influence in Afghanistan and was instrumental in urging the eight separate Afghan Shiite parties to form the Hiz-i-Wahadat" (Hussain, 2005: 149). The active involvement of Pakistan in the politics of Afghanistan compelled Iran to assert its influence and intervention in it.

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<sup>29</sup> For details see Nabi Misdaq (2006: 273-276), Afghanistan: Political frailty and external interference.

<sup>30</sup> The US withdrew its support to the Taliban, blaming the latter for its relations with AlQae-da. Since then the US took u-turn in its policy towards its relationship with the Taliban.

### 3.4: SUMMARY

The mujahideens' war against the communist during the 80s turned into a struggle for powers between varying parties in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan, which has its own historical roots, was aggravated by active involvement of the external power. This power struggle further led to ethnic conflict. Polarization and fragmentation of Afghan society on the basis of ethnic, religious and cultural line came into being. Since 1992, the conflict fall on the basis of ethnic and sectarian line. As internecine fighting continues, it resulted in the formation of the alliances system. This alliances system greatly hindered the political process in Afghanistan. It led the emergence of civil war in Afghanistan. Thus, this intensive power struggle and fighting led to the development of division between Pushtoon and non-Pushtoon. The Pushtoons, majority of whom are Sunni Muslims are backed by Pakistan and its allies. Iran on the contrary, backed the minority ethnic groups like the Hazaras, Tajiks and Uzbek, etc.

With the failure of the Peshawar Accord, intense fighting broke out in Kabul once again. As the fighting reach its height different parties were brought together into negotiation in Islamabad. Thus, Islamabad Accord came into being in 1993 under the major role played by Iran and Pakistan. However, inspite of their efforts towards peace process, Pakistan and Iran made secret understanding with different parity(s) against the other. In this regard their own allies of external powers backed them. This understanding was made with those party(s) who could understand their interest and motives.

As far as Pakistan is concern, the formation of strong Islamic government in Afghanistan with Pushtoon domination could only serve their interest. In order to fulfill their own political as well as economic interest in the region, Pakistan want Afghanistan be become pro-Islamabad or sympathiser of Islamabad. In accordance with this Pakistan tried to introduce the Pushtunwali. Which mean that the culture of the Pushtoon should be the national culture of Afghanistan. Pakistan support to the radical Islamic Pushtoon posed a great example in this regard. Moreover, marginalisation and discriminations against the non-Pushtoon and Shi'ite Islam by Pakistan also showed its Pushtoon centric policy. Iran on the other hand, strongly opposed the policies and objective of Pakistan in Afghanistan.

The latter policy of Pushtoon centric immensely hurt the sentiments of Iran and non-Pushtoon minorities in Afghanistan. Hatred towards the Shi'ite Muslims by Pakistan was also a cause of concern for Iran. Moreover, during the course of the conflict or the civil war in Afghanistan, Shi'a Islam's are disguised and they are the worse sufferers especially the Hazaras. Besides, the Rabbani government showed the marginalisations towards the Hazaras during the conflict. They were sideline with the policy of Rabbani. Iran felt humiliated with the treatment meted to the Hazaras and the Shi'a Islam by the government. The emergence of the Taliban into power was the period of the greatest discontentment for Iran. The Taliban after capturing Mazar-i Sharif in 1997 killed thousand of Hazaras in revenge against their lost in the past. Besides, the Iranian consulate in Mazar-i Sharif was also attacked and killed the Iranian diplomats and journalist. The act of the Taliban was so humiliated for Iran and thinks it as Pakistan's brain. Thus, the political conditions in Afghanistan became more and more complicated. With the intervention of external powers with different objective the conflict in Afghanistan turned into civil war. As a result, the civil war in Afghanistan was largely internal in its origin but exacerbated by the intervention of the external powers.

## ***CHAPTER FOUR***

## **RISE IN POLICY CONFRONTATION DURING THE TALIBAN PERIOD**

The conflict in Afghanistan has become so hostile and the balance of power became sharply changed with the emergence and the control of Afghanistan by the Taliban. The Taliban became the main opposition to the Rabbani government and it also became the most powerful non-government military force. In the meantime, the support or the assistance from various external powers remained unchanged until 1998. As a brainchild of the ISI and the CIA, the rise of the Taliban and the fall of Kabul into their hands led to the emergence of ideological or political differences between different groups or the parties. Pakistan, the US and Saudi Arabia on the one hand supported the Taliban while Iran, Russia, India and Central Asian states on the other hand supported the Rabbani led government in Kabul. The active interferences of these external actors accelerate the conflict between the two groups. These varying factions of alignment intensified the conflict and it resulted into civil war in Afghanistan. It is the idea of this chapter to discuss the ideological or political differences between the two varying parties, which hampered the peace process and as a result it led to a new phase of civil war in Afghanistan.

### **4.1: EMERGENCE AND THE RISE OF THE TALIBAN**

The internecine conflict in Afghanistan paved way for the emergence of the Taliban. After conquering Kandahar in 1994, the Talibans were growing day by day by crushing petty warlords one after another. However, it was only after the capture of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban were not recognised as a strong political and military force in Afghanistan. Since then the Taliban became the unrecognized government in Afghanistan until 2001<sup>31</sup>. However, it was only after the fall of Mazar-i Sharif in 1998 that the Taliban gain controlled of almost the entire territory of Afghanistan. The aim of the Taliban was to set up the world's most pure Islamic state, banning frivolities like television, music and cinema. They attempt to eradicate crimes and have been trying to introduce strict Islamic

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<sup>31</sup> Although the Taliban control almost 90 per cent of Afghanistan's territory, different countries, except Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and UAE, did not recognised their government in the international arena.



law. With the idea of establishing pure Islamic country, the Taliban in 1997 renamed the Islamic State of Afghanistan into the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan”<sup>32</sup> (Rubin, 1999: 80).

Barnett Rubin (1999: 80) argued that the Taliban emerged as a result of the Mujahideens’ failure to create a stable Islamic state in Afghanistan. Since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the fall of Najibullah in 1992, various Mujahideens fought against one another for power. This power struggle led to internecine conflict and civil war and as a result most of the infrastructures in Afghanistan were razed on the ground. On the other hand, the warlords in the regions caused a reign of terror for the government in Kabul. They acted independently without any hesitation. The situation in Afghanistan, since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, was filled with continuing conflict and anarchy. As a result, the mujahideens failed to establish strong central government in Kabul. Thus, it was in this context that a new form of movement known as the Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in the early 1990s. The Taliban are the religious students or former mujahideens who studied in the madrassas (religious school) of Pakistan.<sup>33</sup> According to Kuwan Kakar (2000), “Talib is an Arabic word, which literally means “one who is seeking,” but generally Talib refers to “someone who is seeking religious knowledge.” Taliban are students of “deeni madrassas” or religious seminaries,” which have been existed in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries since the arrival of Islam in the region. Thus, led by Mullah Muhammad Umar, a group of madrassa teachers and students formed the Taliban movement (Rubin, 1999: 80).

Rubin further argued that the Taliban do not represent a new phenomenon in Afghanistan (Rubin, 1999: 80). “They have been a component of religious establishment and have always lived in the shadow of other military, political, and economic groups”. However, the teaching of Islam in Pakistan influenced the current trends of the Taliban (Kakar, 2000). They attended religious schools or madrassas in Pakistan and they are the followers of the Deobandi school of thought, preached by mullahs (clerics) in Pakistani

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<sup>32</sup> However, the United Nations did not recognised the name given by the Taliban. Islamic State of Afghanistan preceded and remains in use internationally. For details see Shredded Tapestry (2001).

<sup>33</sup> For details see BBC Online News (2009), “Who are the Taliban?”, Also see Barnett Rubin (1999), Jason, Yung (2007).

madrassas. With the idea of rejuvenating Islamic society in a colonial state, the Deobandi school emerged as a reform movement in British India. The Pakistani version of the Deobandi schools in Afghan refugee camps were, however, often run by in-experienced and semi-literate mullahs in associated with Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islami (JUI) of Pakistan. However, “with a lack of appreciation on the part of the mullahs of the reformist Deobandi agenda, brought the schools and its curricula closer to ultraconservative Wahabism, which claims to teach strict adherence to the practices of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the Four Rightful Caliphs” (Kakar, 2000).

The members of the Taliban came mainly from madrassas set up by the Pakistani government along the eastern borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan’s NWFP. They are first appeared in religious seminaries, which preached a hard line form of Sunni Islam and sponsored financially by Saudi Arabia (BBC Online News, 2009). They were funded mainly by Saudi Arabia and the US, where they received military and theological indoctrination training from ISI. Thus, the ISI and the CIA actively encouraged the creation of the Taliban. Further, United States encouraged Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to support the Taliban (Gasper, 2001).

Though, it is mentioned that the Taliban are said to be created by Pakistan’s ISI and the CIA, Pakistan denies itself as the architect of the Taliban enterprise. However, a mere denial does not justify their stand. Pakistan was the first country that recognised the Taliban government in Afghanistan, followed by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. In control of about 90 per cent of Afghanistan until late 2001, the Taliban were recognised as the legitimate government by the three countries (BBC Online News, 2009). Again, Pakistan was the “last country to break diplomatic ties with the Taliban” (BBC Online News, 2009). Moreover, former President Pervez Musharraf revealed the connectivity of ISI and militants in his recent interview. On the question of ISI’s systematical support to the Taliban, he replied, “Intelligence always has access to other network – that is what Americans did with KGB that is what ISI also does” (The Times of India). Hussain (2005: 185) claimed that the ISI are instrumental in providing advice and logistical support for the formation of the Taliban organisation. William Maley (1996: 276) also

claimed that a BBC correspondent in Kabul reported on 29 September 1996 that aid workers recognised Pakistani army officers within the Taliban occupation force. Gregory (2007: 1019) said “the ISI were very much the fathers and supportive parents of the Taliban, if not perhaps the mothers and midwives”. Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt (2009), revealed the relations between ISI and the Taliban. They said, “Support for the Taliban, as well as other militant groups, is coordinated by operatives inside the shadowy S Wing of Pakistan’s spy service, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence”. In support of their claim they further said, “The American officials said proof of the ties between the Taliban and Pakistani spies came from electronic surveillance and trusted informants”. Ironically, on the other hand, Pakistan blamed the US for creating the Taliban in order to contain Iran in the regional politics. The Taliban controlled Radio voice of Sharia’ah on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1997, aired the meeting between senior Taliban official and American diplomat. It is said, “The esteemed Mola Mohammad Hasan, the deputy head of the caretaker council of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, met and exchanged views with US delegation at his offices this morning”. It further said that the “American delegation, which includes Mr. John Holzman, the US deputy head of the mission in Islamabad, and Mr. Brad Hanson, the US consul general in Peshawar, convey to the esteemed deputy head of the caretaker council of Islamic State of Afghanistan their views and perceptions on the restoration of peace, stability and security (in Afghanistan) and some other issues of mutual interest” (BBC Monitoring Online, 1997). All these discussions shows the active connections between the Taliban, the US and Pakistan.

The emergence and the success of the Taliban was received a warm welcome from the Afghans with a hope of restoring peace in the country. Because, the Afghans were weary of the prevailing lawlessness and intense fighting and conflict in the country. After removing petty warlords and independent actors one after another, they brought into and restore peace in Afghanistan. The Afghans viewed the Taliban in the initial stage as their survivor. They were delighted by the success of the Taliban in “stamping out corruption, restoring peace and allowing commerce to flourish again” (BBC Online News, 2000). However, in course of the time, the Taliban policy towards the women and their stand on human rights led them unimportant in the eyes of the Afghans and the international

community. Moreover, their interpretation of Islamic laws became a cause of concern. According to Barnett Rubin (1999: 79), the emergence of an assertive Islamic traditionalism posed new obstacles for the international community in humanitarian and peacemaking programs.

#### **4.2: AFGHAN PARTIES AND DIFFERENCES DURING THE TALIBAN**

The emergence of the Taliban coincided with the prevailing political chaos and anarchy in Afghanistan. It was during this period that various mujahidin parties were fighting each other by forging an alliance between them. Struggle for power, in course of the time, became the struggle for identity and ethno-nationalism. As mentioned in the previous chapter, most of the major helps come from external actors like Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the US, etc. As a result, the city of Kabul was in total destruction and also witnessed the collapse of the administrative system. Many civilians lost their lives and large numbers of Afghans run for their life as refugees in the neighbouring countries. As none of the party(s) became victorious, the fighting goes on and on and lasted till the emergence of strong single party, the Taliban, in Afghanistan. However, the emergence of the orthodox or fundamentalist group known as the Taliban accelerated the conflict and as a result, civil war broke out in Afghanistan.

Since 1978, ideological differences became the foremost problems of dispute for different parties in Afghanistan. It was largely because of this ideological difference that Hizb-i-Islami faction of Hekmatyar had separated from Jamiat-i-Islami in 1978 (Hussain, 2005: 100). Hekmatyar's party was an Islamist party, where a tightly controlled party hierarchy formulated the policies. Even within the fold of Hizb-i-Islami, the differences based on ideology were so high that Hekmatyar and Khalis separated with the same organisational names but different groups. For instance, Khalis and his followers were traditionalist village clergy, who are against the modern political ideas and democracy. These ideological differences keep various parties apart from one another, although they have same goals. Anders Fange (1995) argued that the Mujahedins were bind together by their common goal of establishing Islamic State but ravaged by discords, which often resulted in violent clashes. They knew that they have same political goals but differences in the

ways and means to execute their policies keeps them apart. However, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, power differences occupied an important place among the varying Afghan parties. This power struggle enabled them to splinter. Ideological differences once again emerged in the Afghans political scene with the emergence of the Taliban. During the initial stage of the Taliban, three different groups were fighting in Afghanistan. At this time the Taliban face strong resistance from Jamiat under Rabbani and Hizb under Hekmatyar, but with different forces. In course of the conflict in Afghanistan during the Taliban period, the Northern Alliance, the combined forces of different minority ethnic groups, were the strong opposition force in Afghanistan. During the second half of the 1990s, many Afghan parties either disappeared or were absorbed with the Taliban or the combined forces. Both the parties wanted to establish strong central government in Afghanistan. However, their differences were that the Taliban wanted to reassert the past glory of the Pushtoons, thinking that Afghanistan is a land of the Pushtoons. Besides, they dictated the Afghans to follow strict Islamic law, “the Shariat”. Ideologically, they wanted an institutionalised religious nationalism. The Northern Alliance on the other hand wanted joint political representations. They are fate up with the Pushtoons, controlling Afghanistan since its inception. This conflict hampered the political process in Afghanistan. Moreover, the internal conflict was aggravated by the intervention of the external powers with different objectives in mind.

#### **4.3: EXTERNAL POWERS’ INTERESTS: IRAN AND PAKISTAN**

As the various mujahidin groups fell upon themselves in a violent civil war, Iran and Pakistan, along with other external actors, cultivated ties with proxy militias to further their own interests in Afghanistan (CNA Corporation, 2006). Thus, taking advantage of the violent struggle and internecine conflict in Afghanistan, external powers paid serious attention towards Afghanistan, with the idea to interfere if they get chances. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan opened up chances for the external actors like Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the US, etc. to interfere in this regional politics. These actors struck an alliance with the Afghan party(s) together with their international ally. Moreover, the political process and the situation in Afghanistan and its adjoining region shape the international system during this time.

#### 4.3.1: PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS

Pakistan became the most influential regional or neighbouring actor since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. It had a long historical, cultural and ethnic relation with Afghanistan. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan view Afghanistan as one of the most important geo-strategic or geo-political location. As such, Pakistan has been looking for its influence in Afghanistan since its inception. Certain reasons interested Pakistan in the spheres of Afghanistan. According to Patricia Gossman (2001: 11), “the Pashtun” question and “strategic depth” are the two main reasons for Pakistan’s interest in Afghanistan. Pushtunistan has been the main issue of animosity between Afghanistan and Pakistan since the inception of the latter. By Pushtunistan, it was in the year 1893 that the Pashtoons were divided by the international boundary popularly known as the Durand Line. The British India and the Soviet was the main architect for the demarcation of the Durand Line in order to make Afghanistan a buffer zone. However, successive rulers and governments in Afghanistan did not validate the creation of the international boundary. Rather, the division of the Pashtoons into two separate areas was greatly resented by Afghanistan by declaring that they should have the option of declaring their own separate nation of Pashtunistan that might be integrated with the Pushtoon areas of Afghanistan. Pakistan on the other hand sternly opposed this because, the creation of separate Pushtoon state or area will largely affect its geographical territory. As a result, “Britain allowed the agencies to choose only between India and Pakistan” (Gossman, 2001: 11). Thus, the issue of Pushtunistan has been an issue of animosity between Afghanistan and Pakistan until today, though the two countries have long historical, cultural and ethnic relations since the inception of the two countries. Pakistan’s policy on the Durand Line, Hafizullah Emadi (990: 1516) says:

*One of its main objectives is the establishment of an interim government comprising the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic groups to replace the present Soviet-backed government in Kabul. The Pakistan government believes that such an interim government will be likely to adopt a pro-Pakistan policy and recognize the long-disputed Durand Line between the two countries as an official border.*

Since the emergence of the modern state of Pakistan, it has always been in the opposite site with India on the issue of Kashmir. She wanted to make friendly relationship with Afghanistan in order to ward off Pushtoon nationalism in its western border and to sideline its eastern neighbour India in the regional politics. Gossman (2001: 11) argued that over the years, Pakistani officials have described it as “strategic depth”. According to Ahmed Rashid (2000: 186), “the Kashmir issue became the prime mover behind Pakistan’s Afghan policy and its support to the Taliban”. Moreover, the cordial relations between Afghanistan and India economically, politically and militarily alarmed Pakistan. The establishment of Indian consulates in different parts of Afghanistan posed more suspicious for Islamabad (ICG, 2003: 22). Thus, Pakistan wanted to be sure that its western border was secure, and need friendly government in Kabul that would not support the creation of Pashtunistan. Because, Afghanistan is the western frontier of Pakistan that influence of any other power in Afghanistan will pose great danger to Pakistan. It was largely because of these motives in mind Pakistan has been actively looking for opportunities to struck friendly relations with Afghanistan. That was why Pakistan actively supported the Mujahideens and later the Taliban till the U.S. led war on terrorism in 2001. During his time as President of Pakistan, following Bhutto’s policy, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq made an effort to have friendship with Doud government in Afghanistan. However, the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan has posed great obstacle by the Pushtoon and the Baluch peoples (Hussain, 2005: 94).

The Saur coup and “change in the government in 1978” was regarded by Pakistan as a Soviet move that impinged on the security of Pakistan (Hussain, 2001: 95). It was during this time that Pakistan was in political chaos. Bhutto challenged the military junta of Zia regime. Followers and sympathisers of Bhutto who are ethnically Pushtoons and Baluch expressed their sympathies for the PDPA. The Sour coup coincided with Zia’s policy of Islamisation<sup>34</sup> of Pakistani society (Hussain, 2001: 96-97). This idea led to the support of varying Afghan Mujahideens during the jihad war against the Soviet. In the meantime, the Soviet occupation led to the fled of large numbers of refugees into Pakistan. It included many prominent leaders like Hekmatyar, Rabbani, Mujaddidi, Gilani, etc.

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<sup>34</sup> For more see Omar Noman (1989), Pakistan and General Zia: Era and Legacy.

Pakistan supported and trained them to fight the Soviet. According to Hussain (2001: 101), these Afghan Islamic groups were under the control of Pakistan. However, Zia choose Sunni Islamist groups in dealing and supporting the Afghan Mujahideens. Zia argued that “Afghans are fighting the war for Pakistan. We must support them”, (Hussain, 2001: 115). Pakistan regarded that the occupation of Afghanistan would be further used by the Soviet to expand its territory. Afghanistan would be used as a launching pad for further Soviet incursion towards Pakistan. In this regard Zia assigned ISI the task of enhancing links with Afghan mujahidin groups with their bases in Pakistan. Lieutenant-General Chishti said that Pakistan should pursue a forward policy in Afghanistan by installing a “favourable government in Kabul, using friendly Pushtoon tribes as defence of Pakistan lay in the defence of Afghanistan” (Hussain, 2001: 97). Thus, as the importance of Afghanistan was so great for Pakistan that Islamabad struck an alliance with the U.S and Saudi Arabia to counter the influence of the Soviet. During the 1980s, the ISI became the most important branch of military for implementing anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan. During the time of the Taliban, Pakistan has been followed its old policy of winning friendly relations with Afghanistan. Islamabad came to realised that Hekmatyar is too weak and Rabbani government would not entertain them so they found the Taliban as the best suit to align.

More interestingly, Pakistan needs Afghanistan as corridor to access to Central Asia. This is largely based on her economic policy to have the controlling power of the natural resources of the Central Asian countries. Dorronsoro also said that the opening of land link to Turkmenistan is the primary objective of the Pakistan government. Because, Islamabad think that it will lead her to enjoy economic and political influence. All these motives in mind led Pakistan actively involved or interfered in Afghanistan. It immensely encourages the fragmentation of Afghan society beyond rebuild.

#### **4.3.2: IRAN'S INTERESTS**

Economic, strategic or security interests played an important role as far as Iran's interest is concern. For Iran, her national security and economic interests would be in great danger if the Taliban consolidate their stronghold in Afghanistan (Tarock, 1999: 801).



Iran viewed the rise of the Taliban and the seizure of Kabul in 1996 as a serious ideological, security and economic threat to Tehran. According to Tarock (1999: 801), Iran's interest in Afghanistan is much deeper than ethnic or sectarian division, by which the Shi'a Muslims were marginalised. Security and economic interest on the hand played important role to the extent that after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, Iran and Pakistan were vying for political influence and trade and commercial advantages in Central Asia.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 also was coincided with the outbreak of revolution in Iran. Tehran sternly opposed the invasion and express strong sympathy for the plight of the Afghans. The then foreign minister, Saeq Qutbzadeh said: "Our imam (Khomeini) has described the United States a Great Satan. Unfortunately, you too have proved in practice that you are no less satanic than the United States", (Tarock, 1999: 805). Because of its internal crisis in Iran, Tehran did not played much role against the Soviet during this time. However, after the end of the revolution in 1989, Iran once again involved in the spheres of Afghanistan by helping various Afghan Mujahideens, especially the Shi'a parties, against the Soviet. Because of Soviet expansionist policy in the region, the Shah of Iran actively helped the anti-communist groups in Afghanistan since 1970s. Right up to the Iranian revolution, the Shah's government kept close watch on the political development in Afghanistan. The coup of 1973 was term by Iran as a 'dark day' for Iran (Tarock, 1999:804).

As far as Iran is concern, the presence of the U.S and its allies in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, posed a great threat to Tehran. It sees Saddam Hussain regime, as a permanent threat to its western border. Thus, Iran looks toward its eastern frontier for friendly relations. Further, active involvement in the Afghan politics and the support of Sunni Muslim groups by Pakistan and the U.S since 1992 have been considered by Iran as a great humiliation and political cum-Islamist containment attempt. In course of the civil war the Shi'ite Muslims were always sideline by Pakistan in favour of the Pushtoon Sunni Muslims. They are the worse sufferers. Iran finds it difficult to remain silent to the plight and killings of fellow Shi'ites. Moreover, during the time of the Taliban great

atrocities were committed to the Shi'ite Muslims and their increasing expansionist policy of the led Tehran to intensify its support to the Shi'ite parties. The persecution of Shi'a Hazaras by the Taliban was a key factor in Iran's decision to increase its logistical, military and political support to the United Front. Alarmed at the disintegration of Kabul coalition forces and the possibility of total victory by the Taliban, Iran invited anti-Taliban groups to a three day summit in Tehran in 1996 (Tarock, 1999: 810). After capturing Mazar-i Sharif the Taliban killed hundreds of Shi'ite Muslims and Iranian diplomats and journalist. It sparks off tension between Iran and Afghanistan during the Taliban period. Iran regarded the Taliban as Puppet of Saudi Arabia. Thus, by playing the card of Shi'a Islam, Iran wanted to create cordial relation or firm foothold in Afghanistan. Iran policy was to contain the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan backed Resistance groups. In order to increase its influence and strengthen their favourites, Iran, in 1990, induced the Shia parties to go beyond an alliance of parties by uniting into a single party known as Hizb-I-Wahadat. Moreover, Iran took full advantage of ISI-CIA-Hekmatar axis, which had undermined the role of Persian speaking Resistance groups (Hussain, 2001: 149). Since 1990, the foreign polity of Iran has been focused in its vast natural resources and most importantly its geographical location. She wanted to play leading role in the international arena particularly in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia and Caucasus (Tarock, 2001: 809).

#### **4.4: OIL AND GAS PIPELINE**

Since the withdrawal and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Pakistan and Iran become the most important and influential regional as well as external actors in the spheres of Afghanistan. Since then, the two countries have been vying for political influence and economic advantages in the Central Asian region. According to James Purcell Smith (2004), Iran adopted an assertive policy to gain influence in Central Asia, both through export of its Islamic ideology, through economic ties, and implying its political agenda in a regional dimension under the aegis of international organizations. On the other hand, the primary objective of the Pakistani was to establish a land link to Turkmenistan in order to open up Central Asia to Pakistan's economic and political influence (Dorronsoro, 2005: 245). Because of its geographical, historical, cultural and

linguistic ties with Central Asia, Iran has upper hand over Pakistan. Moreover, Iran has direct land link to the region, while Pakistan needs Afghanistan as a corridor to access to the region (Tarock, 1999: 814).

Soon after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Central Asian states, the US oil companies and their friends in the State Department have been looking for the prospect of gaining access to the huge oil and natural gas reserves in the former Soviet republics. The newly independent Central Asian countries have been a bed of huge oil and gas. It is known as one of the greatest resource potential. Every companies, developed or underdeveloped countries, are interested in procuring oil from this region. The then U.S Vice President Dick Cheney said "I can't think of time when we've had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian" (Gaspar, 2001). The question of pipeline, exit-route(s) to transport energy has emerged. This geo-economic interest largely influenced the geo-politics. The question is that which of the several exit-routes – Russia, Turkey, Afghanistan/Pakistan or Iran is the shortest, the cheapest and the safest for exporting oil and gas from that region (Tarock, 1999: 815). Companies and governments involved in the whole enterprise discuss for the suitable route. Independent energy experts and western oil companies agreed that the Iran route is the best choice (Nanay, 1998). It is interesting to note that one's interest is another's dissatisfaction. So the U.S would not agree with the proposed Iran route. In the mid 1990s, a consortium led by the California based Unocal Corporation proposed pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan. In this case stable central government in Afghanistan would be required. The U.S proposed Baku-Ceyhen route in Turkey or the Afghanistan/Pakistan one bypassing Iran. It was the containment policy of the US to against Iran from the regional politics. The US and its allies also objected the Old Russian route. Thus, until 1998, there was no clear-cut agreement for the route. Differences and enmity between parties complicated the pipeline project. The U.S proposed pipeline through Turkmenistan across to Afghanistan to Pakistan, connecting energy resources to South Asia (A.M. Chenoy, 2007: 116). If constructed, such line would deprive the political and economic influence of Iran in South Asia. For Iran, Asia and the idea of an Asian common market has always been an attractive. As there was no

consensus on the issue, China and Iran come to an agreement in 1997 on a joint venture project to upgrade a refinery in Guangdong in southern China to expand its capacity to process Iranian crude oil. For the U.S, the rise of the Taliban paved lease of life. However, it posed a great threat to Iran's national security and challenged her economically. The Taliban promised the U.S construct pipeline through Afghanistan to Pakistan. The main contender in this road would be American-Saudi coalition of Unocol and Delta oil companies (Tarock, 1999: 816-817). As we know that different warlords act independently in Afghanistan, the establishment of such a project is not an easy task. Strong and stable government would be required in order to execute such task. It was largely because of this interest; the U.S supported and supplies the Taliban until 1998 so as to meet her interest. Pakistan, having same motive with the US, has been constantly in touch with the Taliban. This policy and program enabled close relationships between the Taliban, Pakistan and the U.S. The growth and the expansion of the Taliban in Afghanistan on the other hand posed threat to the national security and economic interest of Iran and other regional or external powers. As a result, alliances between Iran, Russia, Central Asian countries and India also came into being. The emergence of the new alliance was largely because of the principle and policies in the Taliban and its allies. Differences in policies occupied an important place in this regard. Thus, through their contacts in political, economic, military and cultural spheres, the external powers seek to acquire influence and protect their interests in a number of ways.

#### **4.5: SUMMARY**

The internecine conflict in Afghanistan became sharply changed with the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, beginning from 1994. In the initial stage of the Taliban shows peace and security in the country to compare with the previous years. However, as an orthodox Pushtun Sunni Muslim, their principle policies and rigid laws created insecurity and cause of concern for ethnic and religious minorities. Their policy towards Pushtun domination caused further problems for non-Pushtoons, and it hampered the relationship between the Pushtuns and the non-Pushtoons. Although controlling about 90 per cent of the territory of Afghanistan, they were not recognised as a national government by the

international community. The non-Pushtun led Rabbani government still act as the Afghan national government in the international arena.

Differences in ideology were the main reason for the conflict between the Taliban and the other Mujahideen groups. The difference existed since the communist coup in 1978. While, some of the Mujahideen groups are traditionalist, the Taliban are the Sunni fundamentalists who are against modernization. Besides, there exist moderate groups in Afghanistan. However, the external actors who have interest in the spheres of Afghanistan bestow it to them. This was largely the result of the external actors' interests to use them as tools to meet their needs or interest. For instance, as the Soviet occupation was regarded by Pakistan as a threat to its security, many Mujahideen groups during the communist war were encouraged and supported by Pakistan and other external actors. Moreover, the Pushtunistan issue and the strategic depth have been the main foreign policy as far as Pakistan is concern. Pakistan wanted strong central government in Afghanistan who could not support the cause of Pushtunistan. It was mainly because of these issues that Pakistan helped the Pushtun Mujahideens and later the Taliban. In this system, the internal conflict in Afghanistan was accelerated by the intervention of the external powers in the name of helping the helpless Afghans.

Taking advantage of the internal conflict in Afghanistan, external powers cast their shadows towards Afghanistan. These external powers struck an alliance with various Afghan parties. Sometimes, the ideological differences between the external powers enforce the Afghans, which resulted in conflict in Afghanistan. It means that different Afghan groups were largely influenced by the outside powers. The oil and natural gas pipeline immensely created the gap between different parties. Pakistan and the U.S, by supporting the Taliban, followed a policy of containment. On the other hand, Iran felt humiliated with the growing power of the Taliban. The emergence of the Taliban and their policy of Pushtun domination marginalised the minority ethnic groups. Their policy of ethnic cleansing towards the Hazaras caused great concern for Iran. Moreover, the rapid expansion of the Taliban posed threat to Iran's security. Thus, the rise of orthodox Sunni Islam paved a way for another civil war in Afghanistan.

## ***CHAPTER FIVE***

## CONCLUSION

Afghanistan, which occupied an important strategic position between the east and the west has been one of the most ethnically disturb countries in the world. It is a place of conglomeration for numerous language, religion, and culture, ethnic and tribal groups. It was largely influenced by unintended outcome of successive invasions, conquests, trade, marriage, religion, and more importantly its geographical location. Thus, the Pushtoon, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turk, Aimaq, Baluch, Nuristani, etc. form the existing ethnic groups of Afghanistan. The Afghans are largely tribal in nature. Each ethnic group was under their autonomous rulers, who were fighting against each other for power. Social and cultural uniformity among them are rare; hatred and enmity prevail all around over petty squabble that sometime led to feuds lasting for generations. Disputes and conflicts exist between all ethnic groups throughout the ages. This internal conflict and fighting has been largely exacerbated by the interference of the external powers like Iran, Pakistan, the US and Saudi Arabia, Russia, etc.

Because of its geographical location that great powers were vying for their strong hold in Afghanistan. It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Afghanistan was made a buffer zone between the British India and Czarist Russia. It was also an important place for ideological power struggle for the US and Soviet Union or China during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the international politics has its impact on Afghanistan. Thus, ideological struggle during the Cold War led to the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979. The invasion was a great shock to the international community. Since then Iran and Pakistan actively involved in the affairs of Afghanistan.

Under the leadership of the United Nation, Iran and Pakistan along with the US played an important role in restoring peace in Afghanistan, by signing the Geneva Accord in 1988. However, the withdrawal of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of political vacuum in Afghanistan. Varying mujahideen groups were struggling for power in Afghanistan. Since then, conflict always exists in the spheres of Afghanistan. With the active role taken by Iran and Pakistan, Peshawar Islamabad Accord came in being in 1992 and 1993.

Ethnicisation or regionalisation of conflict came in the sphere of Afghanistan. It led to the formation of alliances system in Afghanistan. Varying mujahideen groups fall sharply into two different factions: Hizb-i-Islami under Hekmatyar and Jamiat-i-Islami under Rabbani. The conflict also came to be known as the Pushtoon versus the non-Pushtoon. It lasted till the emergence of the Taliban in 1994. After capturing almost the entire territory of Afghanistan, the Taliban too, fall on the basis of ethnic or religious line. The Northern Alliance was the Taliban strongest enemy during the time. Because of their economic and political interest, the external powers aligned with these varying party(s). It hampers the conflict in Afghanistan. The conflict in Afghanistan lasted until 2001, when Rabbani transfer the power to the interim government.

On the other hand, because of its geographical location, Afghanistan has been in close contact or relations with her neighbouring countries. Their ethnic population living across the border made their relationship stronger. The movement of these ethnic in the form of nomads or semi nomadic life became a binding factor for their relations. One particular ethnic group has closer link with his kin beyond the boundary. For instance, People from Herat and Mashad have same living style and culture. While, Pushtun in the eastern Afghanistan have stronger relations with the Pushtoons in the Paksitan area of NWFP. Iran and Pakistan played an important role in the conflict of Afghanistan.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, Pakistan and Iran became the most important and influential powers in Afghanistan. It was largely because of their close ethnic, religion, social and cultural relationship. Since the war against the Soviet and down to the transfer of power or the formation of the interim authority, there was large-scale population movement in and from Afghanistan. According to Amin, population movements can be categories into three phases: during the time of Soviet invasion, during the civil war and during the time of the Taliban. The war against the Soviet led to large-scale population movement from Afghanistan to the neighboring countries: Iran and Pakistan. Ali and Weiner (1987), argues that the war in Afghanistan has significantly accelerated population movements. According to Tarock (1999), the immediate consequence of the Soviet invasion was the influx of more than two millions Afghan



refugees into Iran and an equal number of them went to Pakistan. Ali and Weiner also claimed that there are more than three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and another one million or more in Iran. Moreover, the influx of Afghan refugees into Iran and Pakistan was intensified during the civil war and during the time of the Taliban. Schmeidl (2002) argued that the entry of the Taliban into the Afghan war led to a dual movement of people: while large number of refugees returned to Afghanistan despite the overall insecure situation, new refugees left the country. She said that by 2000 about 1.7 million Afghans have been repatriated, still leaving the largest portion (over four million) in exile. Misdaq (2006) also said that over three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and about two million refugees had taken shelter in Iran. These refugees were warmly welcome by Iran and Pakistan and they were given shelter near Afghanistan border. Both the two countries met half of the financial cost and the other half by donor states, agencies and international organizations (Schuurmans, 2007). Moreover, under the United Nations repatriation programme of voluntary return, Iran and Pakistan are helping the Afghan refugees for repatriation (BBC online, 2002).

However, in course of the time, Iran and Pakistan blocked the influx of more Afghan refugees to their country. They no longer accepted the newly arriving refugees. According to Schmeidl (2002), Pakistan adopted closed -door policy for the first time in 2000 against the newly arriving Afghan refugees. In the same year, Iran passed a law known as "Article 48" which spells all the Afghan without work permits were to leave (Human Rights Watch, 2002). Both the countries refuses to consider newly arriving Afghans as prima facie refugees. This stands sharp contrast to its earlier behaviour, as in the beginning Pakistan as well as Iran were extremely generous in receiving the refugees and settling them in largely self-sufficient villages. According to the Pakistani government, Afghan refugees produce social ills, including crime, the widespread and availability of weapons, drug abuse, prostitution and decline in the Pakistan economy. Iran and Pakistan on the other hand said that they are insufficient of the resources to deal with the over three and half million Afghans within their territories. They charged the international community with failing to provide aid and financial assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2002). These circumstances posed great threat to the life of the Afghan

refugees. Pakistan became the most influential regional or neighbouring actor since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. It has long historical, cultural and ethnic relations with Afghanistan. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan view Afghanistan as one of the most important geo-strategic or geo-political location. Thus, Pakistan has been looking for its influence in Afghanistan since its inception.

As far as Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan is concern, Pushtunistan issue and strategic depth became the fundamental importance. According to Patricia Gossman (2001: 11), "the Pashtun" question and "strategic depth" are the two main reasons for Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan. Pushtunistan has been the main issue of animosity between Afghanistan and Pakistan since the inception of the latter. By Pushtunistan, it was in the year 1893 that the Pashtuns were divided by the international boundary popularly known as the Durand Line. The British India and the Soviet was the main architect for the demarcation of the Durand Line in order to make Afghanistan a buffer zone. Since the creation of the international boundary, successive rulers and governments in Afghanistan did not validated its creation. Rather, the division of the Pashtuns into two separate areas was greatly resented by Afghanistan by declaring that they should have the option of declaring their own separate nation of Pashtunistan that might be integrated with the Pushtun areas of Afghanistan. Pakistan on the other hand sternly opposed this because, the creation of separate Pushtun state or area will largely affect its geographical territory. As a result, "Britain allowed the agencies to choose only between India and Pakistan" (Gossman, 2001: 11). Thus, the issue of Pushtunistan has been an issue of animosity between Afghanistan and Pakistan until today, though the two countries have long historical, cultural and ethnic relations since the inception of the two countries. Bridging links with the Central Asian countries for oil and natural gas also became one of the most important objectives of Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan.

Economic, strategic or security interests played an important role as far as Iran's interest in Afghanistan is concern. For Iran, her national security and economic interests would be in great danger if the Taliban consolidate their stronghold in Afghanistan (Tarock, 1999: 801). Iran viewed the rise of the Taliban and the seizure of Kabul in 1996 as a

serious ideological, security and economic threat to Tehran. According to Tarock (1999: 801), Iran's interest in Afghanistan is much deeper than ethnic or sectarian division, by which the Shi'a Muslims were marginalised. Rather, security and economic interest played important role. It was this idea in mind that after the withdrawal of Soviet, Iran and Pakistan were vying for political influence and trade and commercial advantages in Central Asia since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union.

Iran and Pakistan became the most influential regional or neighbouring actors since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. It has long historical, cultural and ethnic relations with Afghanistan since time immemorial. Pakistan view Afghanistan as one of the most important geo-strategic or geo-political location. Thus, Iran and Pakistan has been looking for its influence in Afghanistan since its inception.

The main reason for the conflict in Afghanistan was largely because of external intervention. Taking advantage of the situation in Afghanistan, external powers always interfere in Afghanistan ignoring the Geneva Accord of non-interference. However, we cannot simply blame it on the external involvement. Being a conglomeration of different social, cultural, ethnic and religious entity, Afghanistan witnessed tribal conflict and enmity since time immemorial. Inter-tribal conflict was exacerbated by the external intervention in the spheres of Afghanistan. This intervention accelerated the conflict and became a cause of concern. The external intervention of Iran and Pakistan has its own merit and de-merit. Because of the role played by Iran and Pakistan different groups came together to the negotiation tables. Besides, their involvement was greatly helpful for the development and the reconstruction process. On the other hand, the involvement of Iran and Pakistan accelerated the ethnic division in Afghanistan. Rather than helping and sorting out the problems of the Afghan, they deliberately focused on their own interests. However, active participation of Iran and Pakistan are much needed for the political solution of Afghanistan.

As a result, the Afghan conflict is internal in its origin, but exacerbated by the interference of the external powers. We can conclude that the interference of Iran and Pakistan led to ethnic division, which hampered the ethnic conflict. It further hindered the political process for peace. However, as they have closer relationship with Afghanistan, ethnically, politically and economically, Iran and Pakistan should work wholeheartedly for the Afghans, rather than focusing on their own political and economic motives. On the other hand, despite their generous donations for the establishment of peace, security and development in Afghanistan, international community did not fulfilled their promises for the cause of Afghanistan. It is pertinent that the international community, Non Governmental Organisations, etc. should take more steps for better development. Peace and development does not lie in Ak47/Machine guns. It only lies in the heart and soul of the people. The much needed for Afghanistan is the heart and soul of the humanitarian community to participate actively for the cause of Afghans. In this regard, regional countries should play the leading role. Bernard Kouchner, French foreign minister said, "There is a consensus that there can be no peace, security and prosperity in Afghanistan without the strong involvement of its neighbours", He further said, "there can be no security and prosperity for the region without a stable Afghanistan" (The New York Times, 2008). Thus, Afghanistan is one of the most important countries in the study of geopolitics. Peace and security would be there in the region only if there is peace and security in Afghanistan.

## ***APPENDIXES***

## **APPENDIX 1. INTERSERVICES INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE**

The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate of the Pakistani military is one of the most powerful governmental institutions of Pakistan. For over three decades, it has played a pivotal role in implementing the internal and external policies of the various military dominated regimes that have come to power in Pakistan. In fact, the ISI has been a wellspring of power and influence in Pakistani politics. It remains one of the most well organized and effective intelligence agencies of the third world.

A British army officer, Major-General R.Cawthorne, then Deputy Chief of Staff of the Pakistan army, founded the ISI in 1948. Originally, General Cawthorne had conceived the ISI as part of the military establishment, in an effort to combine and coordinate intelligence outfits of the army, air force and navy. However, as the army emerged as a politically influential institution in the Pakistani body politic, the ISI correspondingly evolve into a monolithic entity overseeing both the internal and external intelligence operations. Under the military regime of General Ayub Khan (1958-1969), the ISI not only developed as the country's primary external intelligence body but also became involved in monitoring domestic politics in order to sustain military rule in Pakistan. The ISI's operation ability expanded exponentially with the assistance of the United States' intelligence establishment during the Afghan War.

The Pakistani military allied has utilized the ISI as a tool of governance. The Generals have manipulated domestic politics through this intelligence agency by ensuring that military-friendly politicians were elected to Parliament during the so call democratic periods of rule in Pakistan especially during the 1990s. The Zia Regime (1977-1988) used this agency to encourage Islamic parties, such as the JI and the JUI, to counter domestic opposition to military rule and at the same time undermined the mainstream political parties. Moreover, the rise of ethnic and sectarian militancy in Pakistan is also partly attributed to the role of the ISI in the fomenting divisive politics in order to curtail

the rise of cohesive political challenge to the army's hold over the state. In effect, the Zia regime virtually transformed the ISI into a political instrument for eliminating internal opposition and promoting Islamic militancy in Afghanistan and India. It is even alleged that the ISI was used to assassinate the Zia Regime's opponents including one of the two brothers of the former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The ISI's importance within the Pakistani military establishment can be gauged from the fact that several of the prominent members of the military regime that came to power in Pakistan in October 1999 have served this Organisation. The top echelons of the junta including General Pervez Musharraf (appointed himself President in June 2001) and Mohammad Aziz (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee), had served with this organization at an operational level during the Afghan War.

The ISI is responsible for the collection of foreign and domestic intelligence; co-ordination of intelligence functions of the three military service; surveillance over its cadre, foreigners the media, politically active segments of the Pakistani society, diplomats of other countries accredited to Pakistan and Pakistani diplomats serving abroad; interception and monitoring of communication; and the conduct of covert offensive operations. Nearly all the upper and middle rung officers of the ISI are serving military officers. The ISI is reported to have more than 10,000 officers and staff that do not include informants and assets. However, some observers suggest that the ISI may have upto 150,000 operative and a budget running over US \$1 Billion.

The ISI is headed by a Director General, who is usually an army officer of the rank of Lieutenant General. Theoretically, the ISI DG reports to the Prime Minister. However, owing to the military's control over the political process, the DG ISI in practice reports directly to the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS). The DG ISI is assisted by three Deputy Directors General (usually holding the rank of Major-General/ Rear-Admiral/ Air Vice Marshal) heading the agencies political, external and administrative divisions that are divided into various sections. The sections are subject to change and merger according to the priorities of the time.

The ISI was organized into six to eight sections in the mid 1990s that were:

1. Joint Intelligence North (JIN) this section was reportedly responsible for backing the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Kashmir insurgency.
2. Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB) Responsible for open source and human intelligence collection locally and abroad. The section's political wing deals with domestic matters pertaining to political parties, students unions and other issues. In the past JIB has coordinated its operations with the Military Intelligence(MI) and the rather ineffective civilian Intelligence Bureau (IB)
3. Joint Counter- Intelligence Bureau (JCIB) Tasked with counter intelligence activities internally and abroad. Domestic surveillance of diplomats. Externally, it monitors Pakistani Diplomats abroad. The Bureau conducts intelligence operations in the Arab States Iran and other regions of Asia.
4. Joint Signals Intelligence Bureau (JSIB) In charged of all communications intelligence.
5. Joint Intelligence Miscellaneous (JIM) Conducts espionage in foreign countries, including offensive intelligence operations.
6. Joint Intelligence X (JIX) Administration, coordination with other sections, preparation of intelligence estimates and accounts.
7. Joint Intelligence Technical (JIT) Collects all technical intelligence and other communication intelligence for research and development.
8. Special Wing administers the Defensive service intelligence training facilities and liaises with foreign intelligence agencies.

In addition to these, the ISI has a substantial large explosives and chemical warfare section.

The ISI operated a separate Afghanistan Cell from 1970s to the early 1990s. The Afghan Cell was responsible for the induction and training of the Afghan Mujahideen based in refugee camps in Pakistan. The Afghan Cell was run in coordination with the CIA in the 1980s. It planned and coordinated the Afghan jihad, which was one of the biggest covert operations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The ISI not only provided advice and support for the



Mujahideen but also bolstered their efforts by including personnel of the Army's Special Service Group (SSG) to help guide the operations in Afghanistan. However it is not known whether the Afghan Cell was merged with the Joint Intelligence North (JIN) in the mid 1990s.

The ISI has maintained firm links with the US Intelligence Establishment over the past few decades. Moreover, the organization has worked cooperatively with the Saudi and Chinese Intelligence service in subverting Afghanistan from 1978-2001. Before the Iranian revolution, the ISI had close links with the Iranian SAVAK and the J-2 Section of the Iranian Military Intelligence besides having interactions with the Turkish Intelligence establishments, due to the membership of Iran and Turkey in the CENTO alliance system. Intelligence cooperation with Turkey has continued but coordination with Iran has been intermittent and subject to the vagaries of the post-1979 Iran-Pakistan relations.

## **APPENDIX 2. PESHAWAR ACCORD (APRIL 1992)**

### **Literal Translation of Original Dari Text**

Salutation and peace be upon the Great Messenger of Allah and his Progeny and Companions. And after that:

The structure and process for the provisional period of the Islamic state of Afghanistan was formed as under:

1. It was decided that a 51-person body, headed by Hazrat Sahib Sibghatullah Mujaddidi would go inside Afghanistan so that they could take over power from present rulers of Kabul, completely and without any terms and conditions during a two- month period. The head of this body will also represent the Presidency of the State during these two months. After this period, this body will remain as Interim Islamic Council, along with the Transitional State and its Chairmanship will be held by Hajrat Sahib. The Period of these Council will also be for (4) months.
2. It was decided that Professor Rabbani would remain as the President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan and the head of the Leadership Council for (4) months. He will commence his work officially at the time when two months of the transfer of power will have elapsed.
3. The above –mentioned period will not be extended even by a day.
4. The Prime Minister and other members of the cabinet will be appointed from the second grade members of the Tanzeemat, at the discretion of the heads of the Tanzeemat.
5. The Prime Ministership was assigned to the Hizb-e-Islami, Afghaanistan.

6. The Deputy Prime Ministership and the Ministry of Interior, to Ittehad-e-Islami, Afghanistan.

7. The Deputy Prime Ministership and the Ministry of Education, to Hizb-e-Islami of Maulvi Khalis.

8. The Deputy Prime Ministership and Ministry of Foreign Affairs were assigned to the National Islamic Front.

9. The Ministry of Defense to Jamiat- e- Islami, Aghanistan.

10. The Supreme Court to Harkat-e-Inqilab-e-Islami Organisation.

11. It was decided that the Leadership Council, in addition to making the division of appointments in the Ministries, will also determine Ministries for Hizb-e-Wahdat, Shoora-e-Etelaf (Council of Coalition) Maulvi Mansoor and other brothers.

12. The total period of these processes will be six months. As regards the Transitional Government, the Islamic Council will make a unanimous decision. The period of this Transitional Government will be two years.

### APPENDIX 3: THE GENEVA ACCORD, 1988

The 'Geneva Accords', known formally as the agreements on the settlement of the situation relating to **Afghanistan**, were signed on **14 April 1988** between Afghanistan and **Pakistan**, with the **United States** and the **Soviet Union** serving as guarantors. The accords consisted of several instruments: a bilateral agreement between the **Republic of Afghanistan** and the **Islamic Republic of Pakistan** on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention; a declaration on international guarantees, signed by the **USSR** and the **USA**; a bilateral agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the voluntary return of **refugees**; and an agreement on the interrelationships for the settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan, signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan and witnessed by the Soviet Union and the United States. The agreements also contained provisions for the timetable of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It officially began on **15 May 1988** and ended by **15 February 1989**, thus putting an end to a nine-year-long Soviet occupation and **Soviet war in Afghanistan**.

The Afghan resistance, or **mujahideen**, were neither party to the negotiations nor to the Geneva accords and, consequently, refused to accept the terms of the agreement. As a result, the civil war continued after the completion of the Soviet withdrawal. The Soviet-backed regime of **Najibullah**, though failing to win popular support, territory, or international recognition, was able to remain in power until 1992, when it collapsed and was overrun by the Mujahideen. Najibullah's regime was able to remain in power until 1992 but collapsed after the defection of Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostam and his Uzbek militia in March. However, when the victorious mujahideen entered Kabul to assume control over the city and the central government, a new round of internecine fighting began between the various militias, which had coexisted only uneasily during the Soviet occupation. With the demise of their common enemy, the militias' ethnic, clan, religious, and personality differences surfaced, and the civil war continued.

Seeking to resolve these differences, the leaders of the Peshawar-based mujahidin groups established an interim Islamic Jihad Council in mid-April to assume power in Kabul. Moderate leader Prof. Sibghatullah Mojaddedi was to chair the council for 2 months, after which a 10-member leadership council composed of mujahidin leaders and presided over by the head of the Jamiat-i-Islami, Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani, was to be set up for 4 months. During this 6-month period, a Loya Jirga, or grand council of Afghan elders and notables, would convene and designate an interim administration which would hold power up to a year, pending elections.

But in May 1992, Rabbani prematurely formed the leadership council, undermining Mojaddedi's fragile authority. In June, Mojaddedi surrendered power to the Leadership Council, which then elected Rabbani as President. Nonetheless, heavy fighting broke out in August 1992 in Kabul between forces loyal to President Rabbani and rival factions, particularly those who supported Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami. After Rabbani extended his tenure in December 1992, fighting in the capital flared up in January and February 1993. The Islamabad Accord, signed in March 1993, which appointed Hekmatyar as Prime Minister, failed to have a lasting effect. A follow-up agreement, the Jalalabad Accord, called for the militias to be disarmed but was never fully implemented. Through 1993, Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami forces, allied with the Shi'a Hezb-i-Wahdat militia, clashed intermittently with Rabbani and Masood's Jamiat forces. Cooperating with Jamiat were militants of Sayyaf's Ittehad-i-Islami and, periodically, troops loyal to ethnic Uzbek strongman Abdul Rashid Dostam. On January 1, 1994, Dostam switched sides, precipitating largescale fighting in Kabul and in northern provinces, which caused thousands of civilian casualties in Kabul and elsewhere and created a new wave of displaced persons and refugees. The country sank even further into anarchy, forces loyal to Rabbani and Masood, both ethnic Tajiks, controlled Kabul and much of the northeast, while local warlords exerted power over the rest of the country.

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