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Soviet Strategy to Dominate
Afghanistan
Nake M. Kamrany

AFGHAN
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INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan has been resisting Soviet occupation since December, 1979. Despite increasing Soviet brutality, the Afghan resistance has been resilient, and the Afghanistan issue has roused the emotions and consciousness of many in the West and the third world.¹ While the Soviet system is thought to be largely impervious to domestic and international pressures, it is increasingly difficult for the Soviet leadership to ignore the issue of Afghanistan.

Soviet soldiers serving in Afghanistan are required to sign a secrecy agreement regarding their duties there. But it is increasingly difficult for the Soviet leadership to keep Afghanistan a "secret war" with more than 15,000 Soviet Soldiers dead and 45,000 wounded and the

¹Costa Hulten, "Soviet Out of Afghanistan!" (Stockholm: The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 1985). Also, see Mary Ann Siegfried (ed.), Afghanistan Forum, A Quarterly Summary of News and Events Concerning Afghanistan, N.Y.: 201 East 71st Street, 2k, N.Y. 10021. According to a Saudi Arabian diplomat, the Afghanistan issue has become part of the weekly Friday prayers in the Mosques throughout the Islamic world. The number of private groups concerned about Afghanistan now run into hundreds worldwide; in November, 1985, 122 member governments of the United Nations General Assembly voted to demand "foreign" troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. See, United Nations General Assembly, "The Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace", A/40/12, November, 1985.

rotation of some 550,000 Soviet soldiers thus far in Afghanistan.²

Moreover, the magnitude of the damage that the Soviet Union has inflicted on Afghanistan has made it impossible for the Soviet leadership to escape world attention. More than 5 million Afghans have emigrated into neighboring Pakistan and Iran: one million civilians have lost their lives; some 15,000 villages and hamlets have been destroyed or damaged; 53 percent of the rural inhabitants have been moved out of their villages; gross domestic product losses have been estimated at \$12 billion; and damage to the productive capacity of the country including structures, irrigation canals, farmland, orchards and trees have been enormous. Ten million livestock have been killed. The country's roads, including 4,300 kilometers of asphalt highways, have been damaged. It will take decades and billions of dollars in resources to rebuild Afghanistan to its preinvasion status.³

The cost of the war in lost opportunities is incalculable. Afghanistan's prewar inflation rate of around 4 percent per year has increased to a range of between 600 and 1000 percent. A majority of the Afghan people have shifted from civilian production to war activity.

²Estimates of Soviet casualties in Afghanistan vary considerably. Mujahidin sources estimate 60,000 Soviet dead, 90,000 wounded, 7,500 damaged tanks and armoured vehicles, and 750 downed airplanes and helicopters. For scenarios of alternative casualties, see, Pierre Allen and Albert A. Stahel, "Tribal Guerrilla Warfare Against a Colonial Power: Analyzing the War in Afghanistan", The Journal of Conflict Resolution, December 1983.

³Nake M. Kamrany, "The Effects of Soviet War upon Afghanistan's Economy", University of Wisconsin 14th Annual Conference on South Asia, November, 1985; B. Karkow, "Bundestag Condemn Soviet War in Afghanistan", "The Weak in Germany", N.Y.: German Information Center, March 27, 1986. Jamila Luijckx and G.J. Wennik, "A Million Deaths Since 1979: Who Cares for Afghanistan?", Writers Union of Free Afghanistan -- WUFA, (Peshawar) Vol. 1, No. 1, 1985.

The Marxist government in Kabul has decreed a wage differential of five to one in favor of military over civilian wages. Massive terrorism and cultural genocide are reminiscent of Mongol tactics in the thirteenth century, which permanently changed Afghan society. The Soviet Union has mustered all its military ability, including biological and chemical weapons to destroy Afghanistan's social, cultural and religious legacy. Afghanistan is being used as a war laboratory for training Soviet officers and testing weapons.⁴

SOVIET STRATEGY

Soviet strategy to dominate, i.e., transform a traditional society has no precedent in Afghanistan. When conquerors managed to penetrate Afghan society, they were not able to dominate it. In periods of ancient history, Afghanistan was conquered many times but only rarely were they able to remain as a permanent conquering class. In modern times, would-be conquerors such as the Persians and the British, while

⁴For violations of human rights see the following two reports which were submitted to the United Nations by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Prof. Felix Ermacora:

United Nations General Assembly, "Questions of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in Afghanistan," U.N., A/C.3/40/L.48/Rev. 1, December, 1985 (Fourteenth Session, Third Committee Agenda item (2)).

United Nations General Assembly, "Report of the Economic and Social Council, Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan," A/40/843, 5 November, 1985 (Fortieth Session, Agenda item 12). A follow up report on Feb. 26, 1986, by the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva charged that Soviet troops in Afghanistan killed 35,000 civilians in 1985 systematic brutality characterized the conflict including the practice of torture, use of anti-personnel mines, baby trap bombs and toy bombs. Certain bombs have been used containing 40 individual rockets that explode 24 hours after deployment. Other weapons used include liquid fire, fuel air explosive catering, and fire sticks. See the N.Y. Times. Feb. 27, 1986.

achieving temporary victories, were not able to establish a permanent presence.

The population of Afghanistan consists of diverse ethnic, linguistic, and tribal particularism. The most important unit of social organization is the family, the clan, and the tribe. The tribe has a life of its own. It is an instrument of social control, of war and peace and of economic advancement. The unit of defense is the ethno-linguistic tribe in its own village. Afghanistan consists of 36,000 hamlets and villages. And for the Soviets to dominate Afghanistan, it would have to dominate every village. Afghan society is highly impermeable to foreign influence and ideas and highly resistant to alien domination.

The Soviet strategies to dominate differs substantially from the pre-invasion to post invasion since 1979. In the pre-invasion period, the Soviets were characterized in Afghanistan as brothers, altruistic donors, builders, partners, helpers, benevolent neighbors and creditors. In the post invasion and occupation period since December, 1979, the Soviets Union has destroyed in six years whatever they had built in Afghanistan over the past 60 years.

In the pre invasion period the Soviets penetrated the Afghan political, economic, military, and the system of administration. In the post-invasion period the Soviet have attempted to dominate i.e., to transform the system of Afghan society by employing power to shift the Soviet-Afghan relationship to its advantage. This drastic shift in Soviet strategy since the invasion reflects its frustration and failure to achieve a dominant role in Afghanistan through subversion and the

political process. The Soviet desire to dominate Afghanistan has a long history.⁵ Since Czarist Russian began its march from the Urals in the eighteenth century, the Russians have been trying to achieve a superior strategic and political position in the Indian subcontinent. Thus whenever the relative power of the Soviet Union vis-a-vis its rivals opened an opportunity, the Soviet Union advanced.

POLITICAL PENETRATION

Of the nation's bordering the Soviet Union today all but Afghanistan had a communist party within six years of the 1917 Bolshevich Revolution. Prior to 1948, although the Soviet Union invaded or attempted to invade Afghanistan four times, Great Britain effectively frustrated these Soviet attempts. Since, 1953, the Soviets developed a strategy for political penetration of Afghanistan.

The Soviet Union attempted to exploit King Amanullah's anti-British sentiments in the 1920s. Lenin wrote to Amanullah telling him that Afghanistan was the only free Islamic country in the world and should pursue the cause of the Islamic world. The intellectual underpinning

⁵Nake M. Kamrany, "The Six Stages in the Sovietization of Afghanistan," Boulder: Economic Institute for Research and Education, 1983, and Nake M. Kamrany, "Afghanistan under Soviet Occupation," Current History, Vol. 81, No. 475, May, 1982.

or anticolonialism in Afghanistan was rooted in the pan-Islamic movement of Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani's anticolonial, pan-Islamic campaign in the Middle East. His disciple, Mahmoud Tarzi, popularized Afghani's ideas in Afghanistan. Ever since, Soviet leaders have attempted to cast every regional issue as the legacy of Western colonial or neocolonial exploitation in an attempt to create an anti-Western mentality in Kabul.

Challenging the status quo was another prong of Soviet strategy for political penetration in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union attempted to undermine the authority structure and the social and political fabric of Afghan society. After the overthrow of King Amanullah in 1929 because of a clerical uprising, a civil war ensued and King Mohammed Nadir was installed with the British aid. His son, King Mohammed Zahir, subsequently ruled Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973. Although the King managed a loose confederation of several ethnolinguistic tribes (the traditional sector), he was constantly challenged by a small but diverse groups of modernists which consisted of the university students, bureaucrats, palace advisors, the educated elite, a small group of nationalists and leftists who wanted rapid modernization.

Between 1948 and 1953, several such groups emerged. A student union under the influence of these leaders conducted weekly conferences and demanded civil rights and social justice. Three distinct political groups emerged Watan (headed by A. Gobar) and Khalq (headed by Dr. A. Mahmoudi) and a pushtoon dominated group Wesh Zulmian (headed by Angar). The Soviet Union empathized with these groups and identified and supported Marxists like Noor M. Taraki of Wesh Zalmian and Babrak Karmal

from the Student Union.

In 1953, when Sarfar M. Dauod became Prime Minister, he coopted these groups and formed his own party. The Marxists penetrated Dauod's government, and Soviet leaders substantially strengthened the power of Dauod's central government vis-a-vis the traditional sector, aligned themselves with "the educated elite" and were able to penetrate Dauod's governmental apparatus. However, Dauod was forced to resign in 1963. The King wished to democratize the system, move away from the Soviet, and normalize relations with Pakistan. During 1963-73, some 26 private newspapers appeared. Several unofficial political parties emerged. The Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was established on January 1, 1965 by a conclave of 27 men gathered at the modest home of a writer and poet, Noor M. Taraki. During the decade (1963-73). Afghanistan moved toward a constitutional monarchy and a democratic form of government in line with the 1964 Constitution. The Marxists were not able to gain more than two percent of the seats in the Assembly (shura).

Thus despite more than 30 years of concerted effort, the Soviet drive to turn Afghanistan into a socialist system through the political process failed. The PDPA had already split into Pushtoon dominated Khalq and non-pushtoon dominated Parcham Marxist parties.

Economic Penetration

The most tragic aspect of the Afghan calamity lies in the Afghan desire for modernization and economic development. In Afghanistan, the monarchy and the educated elite were lured by the Soviet Union through substantial long-term financing of successive five

year plans beginning in 1956. The Soviet objectives were to shift the direction of Afghanistan's trade to the Soviet-bloc countries, to increase the relative share of the Afghan public sector, to create public monopolies, and to superimpose a modern sector on the traditional economic sector. Beginning in 1953, Soviet aid was massive. Afghanistan received the highest per capita aid of any third world nation. From 1953 to 1978, before the establishment of a Marxist government, Afghanistan received more than \$3 billion in Soviet aid, including some 120 projects.⁶

Most Soviet programs were designed to serve Soviet long-term political and military objectives instead of Afghanistan's economic development needs. Soviet roads and airports were designed for future Soviet military uses. In fact, the silos and hospitals built by the Soviet Union in the 1950's and 1960's were used in the 1980's by the Soviet military in Kabul. Natural gas, minerals, fruits, and other resources from Afghanistan were exported to the Soviet Union at prices substantially below international prices.

⁶Patrick J. Garrity, "The Soviet Penetration of Afghanistan", Occasional Paper 4 (Claremont, Calif.: The Claremont Institute, 1982) Nake M. Kamrany, "The First Five Year Plan of Afghanistan", The American Economist, vol. 8, no. 4 (1964); M.S. Noorzoy, "Long Term Economic Relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union", International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 17 (1985).

Soviet penetration of the Afghan economy and Soviet efforts to preempt Western competition included a favorable exchange rate and program aid rather than project aid. Under program aid large budgets were approved for financing several projects without the necessity of justifying each project. Also other Soviet tactics included free transit through Soviet territory, visible and popular programs, underbidding on projects, low interest rates, liberal rescheduling of loans, a substantial grace period, Soviet technicians to complete the programs, provisions for generous scholarships, training programs, and specific job-related technical training for Afghans in the Soviet Union⁷. The shift in Afghan trade with the Soviet Union went from 7 percent in 1921 to over 70% in 1985. In general, the Soviet Union succeeded in penetrating the Afghan economy and created a dual economy that weakened the traditional sector, in which more than 90 percent of the population lived and worked.

Military Penetration

Most important, the Soviet Union attempted to dominate Afghanistan by means of military aid. The Soviets exploited four factors to penetrate the military in Afghanistan (1) the Soviets convinced the monarchy that modernization required a strong central government to counter rebellion from the tradition sector, (2) the dispute with Pakistan over Pashtunistan required modernization of the Afghan military, (3) the

⁷Nake M. Kamrany, "Soviet Economic Aid Strategy in Underdeveloped Countries," Communist Affairs, vol. 11, no. 3 (1963). Also, see Peaceful Competition in Afghanistan, Washington, D.C.: CSC Publication, 1979; reprinted by Fundamental Books, 1986.

military aid was not available from the United States or other sources and (4) the King relied upon the military as his loyal supporter.⁸

Military aid began in 1956 (\$32 million), and by 1963 it had reached \$100 million. The Soviet Union recruited a number of disgruntled junior officers into its fold. By the time of the first Soviet-aided and sponsored military coup in 1973, more than 7,000 Afghan officers had been trained in the Soviet Union.⁹ The Soviets viewed the penetration of the military as a significant basis of its influence in Afghanistan. The Afghan military set up former Prime Minister Dauod as a figurehead and overthrew him in a second military coup in 1978 to set up a Marxist government controlled by the Soviet military. After the 1978 coup, more than 4,000 military officers who were not considered Marxist were purged. And the Afghan military was under full control of the Soviet Union.

⁸Leon Poullada, "Afghanistan and the United States: The Crucial Years," The Middle East Journal, vol. 35, no. 2 (1981). Also, see, Rosanne Klass (ed.), "Special Issue on Afghanistan," World Affairs: vol. 145, no. 3 (Winter 1982/83).

⁹The role of Soviet Union aid to the military coup in 1973 and 1978 was admitted by Col. Abdul Qadir, a leader of 1978 coup during a speech at the Ministry of Communications, April 1978. Also, see A. Rasul Amin, "The Sour Revelation?" WUFA (Quarterly Journal of Writers Union of Free Afghanistan-Peshawar), vol. 1, no. 2, January/March, 1986. At least 80% of the '73 coup leaders were the same individuals as the 1978 coup.

SOVIETIZATION

The seizure of power in 1978 by the People's Democratic party of Afghanistan (PDPA) set the stage for the Sovietization of the country. The PDPA policies were similar to the Soviet Union's draconian domestic policies of 1918 and Stalin's campaign of terror in 1936. In the countryside, the government tried to introduce land reform and break down the traditional household, lineage, clan, tribe, religious, and villiage ethnolinguistic groups. In the cities, the people were forced to attend weekly indoctrination programs. The opposition was jailed or executed.

These measures touched off a civil war. The government organized popular demonstrations in support of the regime and promised the people better food, clothing and housing as well as a new constitution. Still the insurgency continued to grow and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December, 1979 to maintain a Marxist government and spread its domination.

SOVIET STRATEGY SINCE THE INVASION

The Soviet invasion essentially showed that efforts to win Afghanistan through the political process, propaganda and subversion had failed. Since the invasion, the Soviet Union has used a three-pronged approach to Sovietize Afghanistan.

First, it depopulated the rural areas to stop the resistance. But while the rural areas have lost 53 percent of their population through emigration and death, depopulation has not wiped out the resistance.

Second, Soviet leader's attempt to exploit internal weaknesses. The

population is told of the "despotic" royal regime's repressive policies and are reminded of their language, ethnic and racial diversity. The non-pushtoon population in Afghanistan were at a disadvantage under previous regimes; due to religious diversity the Suni Moslems dominated the Shiite sect; there were tribal rivalries and blood feuds among the pushtoon tribes and village rivalry were pervasive.

However, Soviet effort to intensify these differences backfired because the Marxist groups of Parcham and Khalq are also divided along these ethnolinguistic and religious lines. This partly explains the intraparty blood feuds and lack of unity among the Marxist leadership.

Third, there has been an effort to design the Afghan system of government and society to bring it into conformity with the Soviet mold. All aspects of individual's life are affected--the way he eats, sleeps, works, interacts with members of his family and community, his education, career, security, retirement, and death.¹⁰ From 1980 to 1984, about 47,000 Afghans were sent to the Soviet Union for training and education and an additional 7,000 were sent to East Germany, Bulgaria, and Cuba. More than 10,000 children are sent to the Soviet Union each year for indoctrination. These Afghans are expected to take over middle and top government posts. There is a continuous purge of old party and government officials whose ethnics and cultural values cannot be trusted. However, efforts to Sovietize Afghanistan have failed.

¹⁰Sayd B. Majrooh, Monthly Bulletin, Peshawar, Afghanistan Information Center, 55/B-Jamal-udin Afghani Road, University Town, Peshawar, Pakistan, 1985.

A majority of Afghan nationalists who became Communists were non proletarian in origin; most of them were members of the "educated elite", and were rooted in the Kabul environment. Whatever attraction the Marxist-Leninist ideology might have had for the "educated elite" Afghans, has been largely dissipated by the violent and brutal nature of Soviet occupation. Soviet aerial bombing has destroyed many homes and have killed many relatives of PDPA members who sooner or later defect and join the resistance. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union is planning the long-range domination of Afghanistan as it dominates Mongolia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

However, this war is unique in Soviet experience.¹¹ Over the last six years, trends point to a continued draw in spite of an increase in Soviet force levels from an initial 80,000 troops in 1979 to a range of between 118,000 (U.S. estimate) and 225,000 (mujahidin estimate) by the end of 1985; with several divisions stationed north of the border.¹² The cost to the Soviet Union of the Afghan war has been estimated to have increased from \$2 billion in 1980 to over \$12 billion in 1985. Several hundred helicopters and military planes have been shot

¹¹Zalmay Khalilzad, "Moscow's Afghan War", Problems of Communism, (Washington, D.C.) January-February, 1986.

¹²Mark Warman, "Combat in Kunar", Soldier of Fortune, Jan. 1985; David F. McDermott, "The Invasion of Afghanistan", Infantry, 1985; and Bob Horton, "Afghanistan: A Holy-War Stalemate" U.S. News and World Report, 9/23/85; and "The War in Afghanistan", Orbis, Spring, 1985, with contributions by Milan Hauner, Alex Alexiev, Anthony Arnold, and Robert Canfield.

down while armored vehicles and tank casualties are in the thousands.¹³ The experience of the last six years shows that even if the Soviet Union were to increase its troop level to 300,000 or more, the nature of the draw would not be appreciably altered. During 1985 and the Spring of 1986, when the Soviets escalated military operation, the resistance effectively countered; in a short time the the Soviets lost whatever they had gained.

Desertion and casualties in the Afghan army has reduced it troop level from an initial 90,000 down to 25,000. Soviet desertation has increased over time and some soldiers from Muslim Soviet Turkistan have joined the resistance. In 1985, the Soviet military escalated both the quantity and the quality of its military operations in Afghanistan. Major military operations were carried out in Khost, Gardez, Kandahar, Wardak, Panjshire and Nangerhar. But the Soviet Union failed to seal logistical support routes to the mujahidins, it was unable to safeguard urban centers including Kabul and the airports, and failed to enlarge the number of people or the area under its control. The Soviet Union can only prolong their occupation of Afghanistan by its willingness to commit additional resources and assume greater casualties for a long time to come. Soviet leaders are aware that an increase in military operations will increase Soviet casualties and will perhaps create

¹³Casualty figures for 1984 estimated by mujahidin sources are as follows: 42,000 civilian deaths; 22,612 civilians arrested, 5,945 Soviet soldiers dead, 4,579 government soldiers dead, 1,679 mujahidin dead. For estimates of Cost of the War see Nake M. Kamrany and Leon Poullada, The Potential of Afghanistan's Society and Institutions to Resist Soviet Penetration and Domination, Fundamental Books, 1985, and Joseph J. Collins, "The Soviet Afghan War" in Robert E. Harkavy and S.G. Neumann, Eds., The Lessons of Recent Wars in the Third World, Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1985.

considerable dissatisfaction inside the USSR as well as further alarm and draw world-wide condemnation. President Reagan has indicated that unless the Soviets are serious about a political solution and set a timetable for troop withdrawal, the United States will continue to provide support to the Afghan resistance.¹⁴

Genesis_of_the_Resistance

The Afghan resistance is rooted in some 36,000 villages and hamlets encompassing all 29 provinces and all of Afghanistan's ethnolinguistic, tribal, religious and sociocultural groups. The 1979 invasion which was triggered by the Soviet conception of the "correlation of forces" in the region grossly miscalculated the Afghan tenacity for resistance, rooted in its historical experience with invaders, an innate cultural value for independence, a deep conservative religion, a strong system of tribal organization, a code of honor, and institutions that have shown remarkable impermeability for 6000 years.¹⁵ Most Afghans firmly believe that history is on their side.

¹⁴Oswald Johnston, "Reagan Renews Backing for Anti-Soviet Guerrillas," Los Angeles Times, November 24, 1985. Also see, "Afghanistan will become 'Festering Thorn', Soviets Warned." Los Angeles Times, December 14, 1985.

¹⁵Nake M. Kamrany and Leon B. Poullada, The Potential of Afghanistan's Society and Institutions to Resist Soviet Penetration and Domination, Santa Monica: Fundamental Books, 2nd edition, 1986.

Small groups of Afghans in the countryside opposed the ill-conceived Khalq reforms made by President Taraki and Amin in 1978-1979. The perception that the Marxist intrusion was ideologically inspired by atheistic Communists added fuel to the fire. Starting in some of the more remote regions of Afghanistan like Badakhshan and Nouristan, clusters of resistance began to emerge under the leadership of local chief (khans) and religious leaders (mullahs). When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the character of the resistance changed. A civil war became a national liberation movement, and the resistance spread across the country. Local commanders emerged and became more powerful when defectors from the Afghan army provided recruits and Soviet arms. The emigre groups that began to function in Peshawar funneled material and moral support to the insurgents. The resistance controls most of the countryside and many cities at night. Resistance fighters have threatened and harassed Soviet supply routes and depots. They have blown up many airplanes at airfields. They have suffered many local reverses but have scored many local victories and have always been able to reorganize and strike.

Some tribes that held back initially, like Mangul, Masud and Mohmound, have joined the resistance, frustrating the Soviet attempts to "divide and rule". The character of the resistance is changing and a network of national resistance is forming, assisted by other groups who have driven Soviet forces out of Panjshire for the seventh time.¹⁶

¹⁶Panjshire-the Seventh Offensive, Central Asian Survey, Incidental Papers Series, No. 1, 1985.

Resistance cooperation in Khost and Gurdez defeated Soviet forces in September, 1985, and Commander Amin Wardak effectively forced Soviet forces out of Wardak in October, 1985.

In mid-1985, the seven major resistance groups in Peshawar formed a coalition and sent a delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. Spokesman Gulbuddin Hekmatyar submitted an application to gain the Assembly seat for the resistance. He also made an application on behalf of the coalition of the resistance for membership in the Islamic Conference. In early 1986 when Mr. Syed Gailani was elected chairman of the coalition of mujahidins, effort were underway to gain political recognition for the coalition among the Islamic countries and the free world. In May 1986 the newly elected spokeman Bunhanuddin Rubbani attempted to broaden international presence for the resistance among the Islamic and Third World Countries. In June, 1986, a group of Afghan Patriots representing a broad section of the geo-political, religious, and linguistic segments of the population set up a government in exile. Their proclamation envisioned a federated system of government and one of the most democratic form of government in Afghanistan.¹⁷

The resistance draws its strengths from the geography, terrain and climate, the social institution of their tightly woven Afghan family unit and the tribal network. Afghans stress independence, freedom,

¹⁷"Proclamation of a Government in Exile of Afghanistan," Washington, D.C., June 8, 1986.

self-sufficiency, dignity, honor, justice and fairness. Afghan culture, poetry, music, mythology emphasize a strong sense of invincibility. Afghan political culture abhors government authority and regimentation. It emphasizes the values of democracy, egalitarianism, justice, and liberty. These values partly explain Babrak Karmal's failure to marshal popular support for his communist party. His claim of 140,000 registered party members is a gross exaggeration. Even if it were true, it constitutes less than 1 percent of the population after twenty years of concerted effort since 1965 when PDPA was first formed.

Islam (the religion of more than 99 percent of the population in Afghanistan) gives the resistance not only the moral authority to sustain the holy war (jihad) but is a network in place for communication and coordination. It is, moreover, the one unifying element in what is otherwise not a united resistance. The resistance groups in the Peshawar Valley, inside Afghanistan, and those in Iran all profess strong Islamic principles, whether they are Suni or Shiite Muslims. The Peshawar groups, almost from their inception, have been divided along political lines.

The Jamiat-i-Islami-i-Afghanistan headed by B. Rabanni is the main non-Pustun group, whose aim is a more equitable distribution of power between the ethnic non-Pushtoon and the Pushtoon groups. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Amir of Hezb-i-Islam, A.R. Sayyaf, head of the Itihad-i-Islam and Y. Khalis head of another Hezbi-i-Islam contend that the political system of Afghanistan is as an integral part of Islam and thus believe that the future political and social system must be defined in strict Islamic terms. These four groups are regarded as

fundamentalists.

The more moderate or liberal alliance is composed of the Jabha-i-Milli-Nejat led by S. Mojaddidi. The Mohaz-i-Millie-Islami is headed by A. Gailani, and Harakat-i-Ingelab-i-Islami is headed by M. Nabi Muhammadi. These leaders are in accord with the traditional role of Islam in the Afghan society which includes tribal codes.

Shiite Muslims are also divided over political interpretation although in 1985, Iran's Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazari, who has been chosen as the successor to Iran's supreme leader, Aytollah Ruhollah Khomeini; formed a coalition among them. The resistance groups inside Afghanistan have aligned themselves with one of the outside groups either by choice or by necessity to obtain aid although several groups have remained autonomous.

External Support to the Resistance

Initially the entire cost of the resistance was borne by the Afghans. However external aid may frustrate Soviet attempts to wipe out the resistance. Pakistan and Iran have provided critical sanctuary for over 5 million Afghans who settle their families in refugee camps and rotate in the battlefield. A large part of the cost (around \$2 million per day) is borne by these two countries. Moreover, Saudi Arabia, other Islamic countries, China, and the United States have provided covert and, recently, overt aid reaching about \$400 million in

1985.¹⁸

However, a number of Islamic donors pursue their own sectarian interests which could lead to a Lebanon-type of conflict among the Afghan population. Nevertheless, external support is crucial both to compensate for the Soviet economic destruction of the village economic network and to supply arms to counter Soviet aerial and military superiority. However, donors effort to aid the resistance is in disarray. There appears to be a lack of well defined United States policy as the U.S. Congress (pro resistances) and the State Department are at odds on the overall policy including the quantity and quality of aid to the resistances. It has been estimated that only 15%-20% of the military aid reaches the intended resistance groups inside Afghanistan.¹⁹

¹⁸Los Angeles Times, November 23, 1985, p. 22. It has been reported that more than 50% of aid to Afghan resistance never reaches them, see Time, December 9, 1985, and Kamrany and Poullada, op. cit.

¹⁹Los Angeles Times, December 2, 1985, p. 2, Karen McKay, "Afghanistan: How Long Before the Horror Comes Home?" The Coming Revolution, March, 1986, and Time Magazine, December 9, 1985.

External political support is crucial. As Nikolai Glasov of the Soviet Institute of World Economy and International Relations recently stated (Nov. 16, 1985): "We are unhappy to have our forces in Afghanistan...the whole tragedy of Afghanistan...dictates multiplying political effort to reach political settlement."²⁰ Glasov's statement is not new but the framework for a political settlement has been discussed.²¹ Repeatedly, the U.N. General Assembly has called for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan question based on the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the restoration of the country's independent and nonaligned status, self-determination for the Afghan people, and the safe return of all refugees.

Seven rounds of indirect talks at Geneva starting in June 1982 and ending in May, 1986, under the United Nations auspices between the Soviet backed Afghan regime and Pakistan have failed to produce a

²⁰Pre-summit statement in Geneva, reported by the Los Angeles Times, Nov. 17, 1985.

²¹See for an extended discussion of alternatives, Kamrany and Poullada, op. cit.; Ralph Magnus (ed), Afghanistan Alternatives: Issues, Options and Politics. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1983; Selig S. Harrison, "Afghanistan Stalemate: 'Self-Determination and a Soviet Force Withdrawal'" Parameters, Vol. XLV, No. 4, Winter, 1984; and several issues of Afghanistan Times, 1980-83.

settlement of the Afghan conflict. The negotiations are effectively deadlocked over the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to negotiate (through the Afghan representatives) the withdrawal of its force within a definite short term time table.²²

In the final analysis, it remains to be seen whether the Soviet Union is able to accept defeat and make peace or whether it will be caught in a quagmire of no victory and no peace for a long time to come. Incidents such as the Chernobyl accident, domestic economic pressure or new international pressures may induce the Soviets to alter their position regarding this war.

In the last six years in Afghanistan, there has been a major triumph of religion, tradition and innate cultural values over military technology. The Soviet Union has failed to dominate the Afghan society and its institutions. The experience of East-West "peaceful competition" in Afghanistan, which began in the 1950's to assist a peasant society to march into modernity has turned into ashes.²³ Detente has been replaced by a deep concern about Soviet adventurism in the third world. The Afghan society has been polarized, first by the preemption and later, the discrediting of the "educated elite" by a

²²Richard P. Cronim, "Afghanistan" United Nations Sponsored Negotiations, an administered Chronology and Analysis Congress and Research Service, Report No. 85-210F, November 22, 1985.

²³Nake M. Kamrany, Peaceful Competition in Afghanistan, op. cit.

handful of zealot Marxists and subsequently by the primacy of fundamentalism, tribalism, sectarianism, and ethnicism as the driving forces of the resistance.

In 1986, the Soviet Union may have matured to admit defeat and withdrawal from Afghanistan. President Ronald Reagan observed a willingness on the part of Secretary General Mikhail S. Gorbachev to seek a political solution of Afghanistan during the Geneva summit in November, 1985. There is no doubt that Soviet leaders hold in their pockets the key to peace or defeat in Afghanistan.

Likewise the President of Pakistan, Ziu ul-Hag believes that the Soviet Union is genuinely interested in reaching a political solution to the war in Afghanistan and withdrawing its troops. However, since the Summit, the Soviet Union has intensified its military operations. In the spring of 1986, the Soviet Union employed its elite commando units called spetsnaz to cut off supply lines across Pakistan border. Moreover, in April, 1986, Soviet installed President Babrak Karmal was replaced by Najibullah (formerly head of Afghan secret police) who is viewed a more hardliner than Karmul. These cosmetic changes and recent trends do not raise optimism for a political solution in the foreseeable future.

²⁴ Los Angeles Times, November 23, 1986.

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