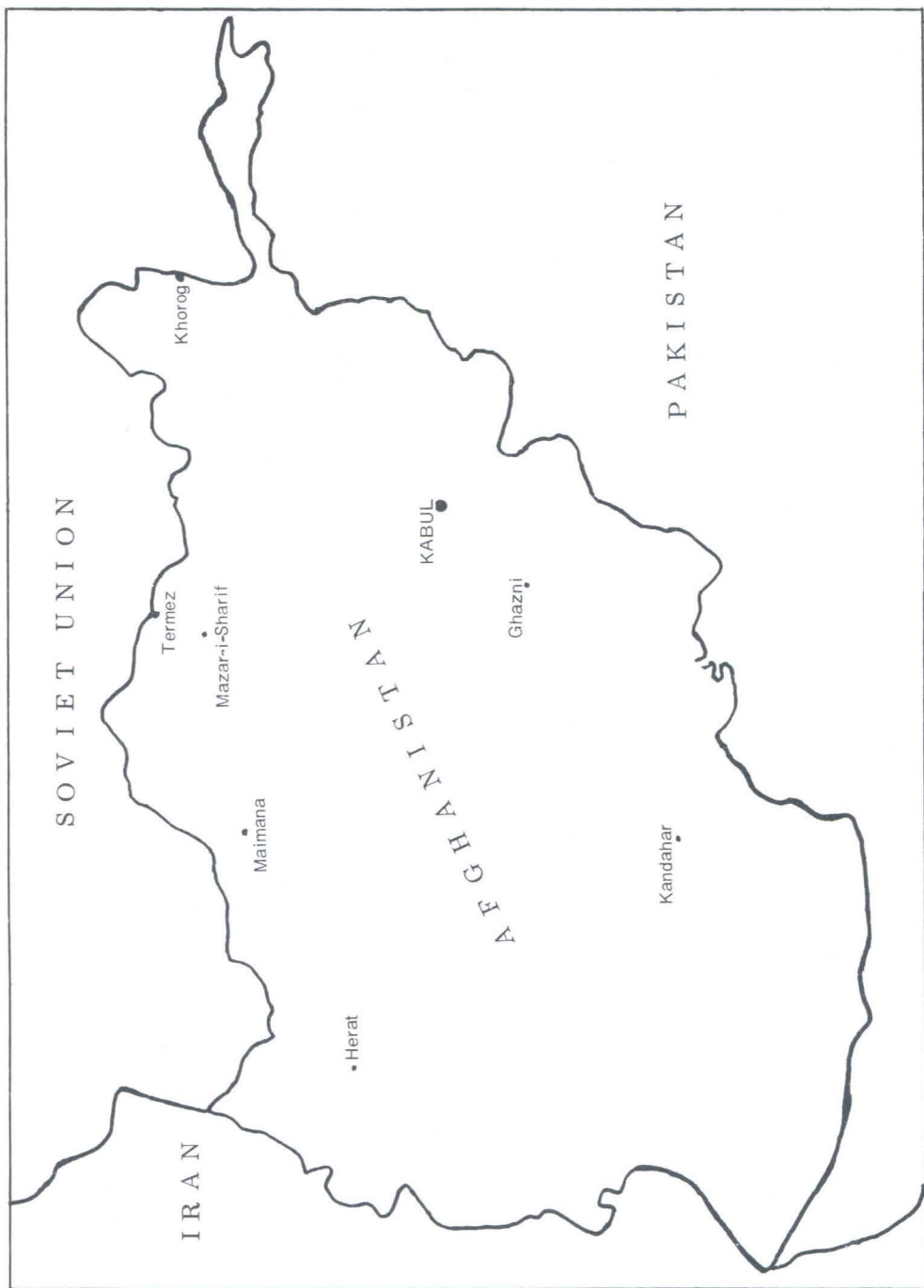


CEVS SISS - 4

afghanistan is our world





Lambert Conformal Conic Projection
SCALE 1 : 8,000,000 1 Inch = 126 Statute Miles

Statute Miles 50 0 50 100 150
Kilometers 50 0 50 100 200

GERRIT PIETERSEN

afghanistan is our world

INTERNATIONAL
DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION CENTRE
(INTERDOC)
VAN STOLKWEG 10, THE HAGUE (THE NETHERLANDS)

Copyright by Interdoc, 1981
Photographs copyright: ANP Foto Amsterdam

The author of this booklet, Gerrit Pietersen, has been engaged in the study of East-West relations and Asian affairs since the second World War. He lived in several Asian countries for some time.

The situation in Afghanistan is still entirely unacceptable for the non-communist world. In spite of the justifications and rationalisations of the Soviet Union and its followers, the indignation about this Soviet intervention has not lessened.

The more feelings are based on facts, the better it is. This booklet is an effort to give some background information, which will enable the reader to judge 'The Truth about Afghanistan' in a different way than this was put in a Soviet publication with that title. (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1980).

Détente is indivisible; it is impossible to pursue it in one part of the world and to violate it in an other part of the world. In the case of Afghanistan there is only one solution for this problem: immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan (Resolution UN General Assembly in January 1980, adopted by 104 votes to 18, with 18 abstentions).

CONTENTS

	Page
I INTRODUCTION	7
– The shock of no change	7
– The compleat Brezhnev doctrine	8
– The shock to East-West relations	9
II POLITICAL HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN	10
– Contacts with the Soviet Union	10
– The ten years of Daud (1953-1963)	12
– Further preparations	13
– The ten parliamentary years	14
– Escalation of independence	17
– The Taraki episode	17
– The rise and fall of Hafizullah Amin	21
– The failure of an ideology	23
III ISLAM IN THE USSR	25
IV THE FAMOUS REQUEST FOR AID	28
V POST INVASION INSIDE THE USSR	31
VI A HARD LINE AND A SOFT LINE LOOK	33
– The French Communist Party	33
– The Italian Communist Party	34
VII AFGHAN RESISTANCE TILL THE BITTER END	37
VIII THE COST	39
IX AFTER SOME OF THE DUST HAS SETTLED IN AFGHANISTAN	43
– The nuclear 'double' deterrent	43
– Boycott and embargo	44
– Poland to the rescue	45
– Regional complications	46
– The resistance	46
– Divided resistance	49
– Human rights	50

I. INTRODUCTION

When Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in full operational force, the free world was celebrating Christmas 1979. The attack on Afghanistan needed no surprise element; no sneaky air attack on unsuspecting defensive forces was necessary; no comparison can be made with Pearl Harbor. It had all been well prepared and well signalled to the Afghans and to the rest of the world. The Soviet Union was going to extend its sphere of direct influence over a country that could not fight back against the invading armies. When the world was shocked nevertheless, the Soviets were astonished.

The shock of no change

It took the Kremlin a few weeks or even months to realize that their invasion of Afghanistan had dramatically changed the psychological conditions under which the framework of world politics had been — precariously — constructed over the last decade. After years of *détente*, the invasion of Afghanistan brought the non communist world to the sobering realization that a policy which had aimed for a long time at cooperation and mutual understanding had come to nought. The thought that the road to a peaceful solution of differences was not blocked by fundamental obstacles turned out to be a dream that ended in a rude awakening. Whatever efforts the statesmen, politicians and large groups of the broad public in the democracies in the West — and East — had made since Prague 1968 to rebuild faith in the latent humanity of the communist regimes, could all be discarded as a waste of time. The willingness in the West, so apparent, to seek for signs of credibility in the peace proposals of the communist bloc has not disappeared — it could not as it would be against our accepted faith in mankind — but bitter scepticism will prevail for the time being. Cynical as it may seem, the violent repression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and the forceful ending of the Prague spring in 1968, could be accepted as Soviet actions within their recognized sphere of hegemony.

Those actions by the Soviet Army and their Warsaw Pact allies could even be discussed as defensive measures, the “cordon sanitaire” being threatened. Not by an imminent attack from the West but by corrosion within. The fact that the Soviet Union had been forced to make their soldiers march into Hungary and Czechoslovakia could even be used as a hopeful sign that the supposedly scientifically proved superior socialist system could not be maintained without violent suppression.

The compleat Brezhnev doctrine

The military action against Afghanistan 1980, though the same soldiers marched as in 1956 and 1968, is of a quite different nature. The West had never viewed Afghanistan as belonging to the hegemonial “reach” of the Soviet Union. The Afghan revolution of April 1978 established a Marxist and Moscow-oriented regime but that did not imply to the West that the Brezhnev doctrine was automatically applicable to Afghanistan. The effort Moscow put into making the West accept the transition of Afghanistan into the Soviet bloc proper, based on the treaty of friendship and cooperation of 5.12.1978 and therefore “legally” falling in the concept of the Brezhnev doctrine, was lost on the West, in particular on the USA. In the endless discussions of the credibility of the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence, the occupation of Afghanistan was renewed proof of lasting offensive Soviet communism and its unrelenting efforts to achieve world hegemony. The geographical position of Afghanistan – at the same time – brought back vivid memories of the nationalistic, imperialist big power policies of Tsarist Russia. What Afghanistan 1980 meant to the West was that the Soviet Union was convinced that their military power had grown to such proportions and that the West had become militarily and politically so weak that a very safe margin was obtained, within which the annexation of Afghanistan had become a very low risk operation. The combination Moscow had created of forceful introduction of ideology and superpower geopolitical motives became a fearful precedent for the West. If the Afghan

“model” became accepted as a present day line of the Soviet political credo, the countries of the Third World and Western Europe would be comprised in what could be named rightly the new and “complete” Brezhnev doctrine. One could then start to think about, for instance, the communist party of Italy, France or name your country applying for aid to the Soviet Union. A better example, in the Afghanistan context, would be a country like Norway which has a common border with the USSR, like Afghanistan, and could be very well accused of threatening the security of the USSR by consenting to stock American arms. That the threat from Norway would be of no ideological nature, like the Islamic threat from Afghanistan, would make little difference to Moscow.

The shock to East-West relations

These considerations, which the Afghan expedition by the Soviet Army brought to the surface could not but have a profound effect on East-West relations. The actions of the Soviet Union in Africa (Angola) and in Asia (Vietnam) had put the patience of the West to a severe test. The lack of real reaction by the West in these instances must have urged the Kremlin to give the green light to the “bold” faction in the Politburo when the feasibility of the Afghan invasion was discussed. The limits of tolerance for the West were, however, reached and the whole structure of “detente” was hit hard. As the policy of detente had clearly been a profitable asset in the longterm planning of Soviet strategy, there must have been overriding motives for action against Afghanistan.

II. POLITICAL HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has never been a “national” state with well defined borders. On the contrary it was a federation of ethnic groups with common traditions and customs. The purpose of the founding of Afghanistan was to unite all Pashtuni’s in one country. Present day Afghanistan was brought together as a state by Durrani Khan (1747-1772). The unification of the Pashtuni was not an easy task. Troubles with Iran and India and internal strife had their delaying effects. For the present day observer of the Afghan position on the map of the Near East it is of interest to note that Durrani Khan, the founder of the Afghan state, was able to extend his rule to the shores of the Indian Ocean. Under Durrani Khan Afghanistan not only comprised today’s Baluchistan (Iran) and the North West Frontier Province – the Pashtuni settlement in Pakistan – but also Sind and part of the Punjab and Kashmir. The territories in the South were lost in the 19th century, beginning with the Sikh wars and from 1843 onwards to the British. In the north Tsarist Russia conquered Merv, Khiva, Kokand and Bukhara, thus becoming a neighbor of Afghanistan.

The British, in two wars, vainly tried to subjugate Afghanistan. The first war, (1838-1842), ended in the complete rout of the British-Indian expeditionary force of 16 500 men in a forced retreat from Kabul to the Khyber pass. The second Afghan-British war, (1878-1880), ended when Gladstone succeeded Disraeli. The British kept control over the Khyber pass and forced Emir Jakub Kan to acknowledge this fact.

Contacts with the Soviet Union

Tsarist Russia, unlike the British, never undertook to occupy Afghanistan militarily. Moscow restricted itself to the political and commercial fields. During the first World War, Afghanistan was neutral. Appealing to Islamic solidarity Turkey tried in vain to get Emir Habibullah to attack the British in India.

The Pashtuni tribes on Indian territory could have caused the British considerable trouble if they had revolted.

Emir Habidullah was murdered in 1919 and was succeeded to the throne by his son Amanullah, who started on a course of reforms. Under his reign the third war against the British was fought. As the Pashtuni tribes also revolted against the British, the Afghani could successfully resist. The treaty of Rawalpindi in 1920 brought the undisputed independence of Afghanistan.

The first Soviet delegation visited Kabul in September 1919. In December 1919 an Afghan delegation led by general Valikman, a Tadjik, paid a return visit to Moscow. Though the USSR, early in the history of the relationship, took the line that Afghanistan was an example of her peaceful policy of coexistence, in reality both parties eyed each other warily. Amanullah sympathized with the Basmachi, the Anti-Soviet tribal warriors in the Soviet part of Central Asia. Amanullah's contacts with the former Turkish general Enver Pasha, who tried to organize an armed revolt in Central Asia against Soviet rule, did not go unnoticed in Moscow. Enver was killed fighting Soviet troops in 1922. The Emir of Bukhara, resisting the Soviets, had finally to flee to Afghanistan where he lived in exile till 1956. Up till the early thirties the Uzbek Basmachi leader Ibrahim Beg and his fighters were able to resist Soviet troops. In 1931 Ibrahim Beg sought refuge in Afghanistan. The Soviet Army, in hot pursuit, crossed the Amu Darja, the border river between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

Relations with the Soviet Union were, notwithstanding the unstable situation in the Northern border regions, developing along more or less normal lines. In November 1920 Kabul established official relations with Bukhara. In February 1921 Kabul and Moscow signed a treaty of friendship in which political and military treaties with third parties were excluded. Afghanistan obtained airplanes from the USSR and with Soviet aid a telephone network was installed connecting Herat,

Kandahar Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. King Amanullah visited Moscow in 1927, the first reigning monarch to do so. Soon afterwards, he lost his throne as a result of a Shinwari revolt. For nine months the Tadjiki gangleader Bacha Saq was master in Kabul. He was succeeded by Zahir Shah who only began to develop his own foreign policy much later, after World War II.

In 1950 Kabul and Moscow concluded a four year trade treaty. Afghanistan was to export mainly wool and cotton; the USSR was to deliver oil, sugar, textiles and cement. A Soviet trade mission was established in Kabul. After the death of Stalin the policy of the USSR towards Afghanistan entered into a more energetic phase. It looked like a new appraisal of risks by the successors to the old ruler of Soviet Russia. This more vigorous attitude coincided with the emerging of a renewed effort to introduce reforms in Afghanistan.

The ten years of Daud (1953-1963)

In 1953, in a bloodless coup, King Zahir was deposed by his cousin and brother-in-law general Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan. Daud accelerated the reform policy of King Zahir. The nomads were urged to settle down and the emancipation of women was stimulated which did not go well with the Moslim clergy and their followers. For the modernization of his country Daud willingly accepted Soviet aid.

Bread factories were built in Kabul and Pul-i-Khumri. In 1954 a pipeline was started from Uzbekistan to Mazar-i-Sharif. The US, which had offered to construct a road leading from the Iranian port of Cha Bahar through Iran into Afghanistan, had to shelve these plans for financial reasons. This setback caused the Afghans to renew the transit treaty with the Soviet Union in June 1955. As the relationship with Pakistan under Daud had become so tense, the Afghan outlet to the world through Karachi stayed closed. The route through the USSR then became of vital interest to Afghanistan. When Pakistan in 1954

went so far as to close its border with Afghanistan, Kabul was forced to intensify its relations with the USSR even more. Daud was a staunch supporter of the Pashtunistan ideology and therefore could not but envisage a revision of the border with Pakistan. To no one's amazement Daud got support for his ideas from Moscow. In December 1955 Kabul was visited by the travelling Kremlin duo, Khrushchev and Bulganin. The latter stated, while still in Kabul, that the USSR took a great interest in the Afghan policy towards the creation of a united Pashtunistan. Back in Moscow Bulganin made himself even more clear when he declared that the Soviet Union considered the Afghan claim for incorporation of the Pashtuni territories on Pakistan soil to be well founded and fully justified. In 1955 the neutrality treaty between the USSR and Afghanistan was renewed for a period of ten years. In the same year Moscow decided that its policy of getting closer to Afghanistan was well worth a loan of 100 million dollars – on very easy terms. With a view toward the tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Moscow stipulated that 40 million dollars would have to go into the acquisition of weaponry for the Afghan armed forces. The Warsaw Pact countries were ordered by Moscow to chip in and provide armament too for their possible new Afghan comrades in arms. Naturally Afghan officers were invited to the USSR for training and to make the deal complete, Kabul got the usual contingent of Soviet advisers.

Further preparations

A large part of the Soviet aid to Afghanistan went into road construction. In 1964 the strategic Salang Pass road, with its 3 km long tunnel, was completed and ready for use. Soon afterwards the allweather road leading from the Soviet border via Herat to Kandahar could be opened for traffic. Hydroelectric installations were constructed and a start was made on the building of three truck repair shops. Part of the Soviet aid program was the enlargement of the airfield at Bagram. When the second five year plan of Afghanistan began it was not sur-

prising to read that 65% of foreign aid to Afghanistan came from the Soviet Union. Though no oil was found – unfortunately – in Afghanistan, rich deposits of natural gas were a very useful compensation. In 1963 a pipeline was constructed leading from Shibergan to the Soviet border. Part of the Afghan debts to Moscow were paid in natural gas deliveries.

While all this Soviet aid was planned and carried out, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan continued to grow from bad to worse. In March 1955 Islamabad, for internal political reasons, decided to unite its Western provinces (Sind, Punjab, Beluchistan and the North Western Frontier Province) into one single province without any consultations with the Pashtuni majority, which caused an uproar. Kabul, ever keen to look after its Pashtuni brethren's interest, reacted violently and war between Pakistan and Afghanistan seemed imminent. Tensions grew to such heights that Pakistan broke off relations with Kabul in the summer of 1963. In the midst of all this, Daud did something a successful Asian statesman had never done before: he retired voluntarily. Not long after Daud's disappearance from the governmental scene in Kabul the Shah of Iran was able to mediate between Kabul and Islamabad and diplomatic relations were restored. The reaction in Moscow to this Pahlevi brokerage are not known.

The ten parliamentary years

Afghanistan then was again ruled by its king and some sort of parliament, the Loya Jirga, a traditional representative body of the population. In 1965 the son of an Afghan general, Babrak Karmal, a lawyer by profession, entered the Jirga. From 11 April till 16 May six editions appear in Afghanistan of the newspaper KHALQ (Masses or People). One of the authors is none other than Nur Mohammad Taraki. The KHALQ editorials praised the Soviet Oktober revolution and declared the inevitability of class warfare. KHALQ took care not to forget the importance of the "territorial integrity" of Afghanistan, which includes Pakistani territories in the

ideology of Pashtunistan. Words of praise could also be found in the KHALQ newspapers for the Constitution, the values of Islam and the Monarchy. In these early years of the sixties a slight change is noticeable in the relationship with the Soviet Union, though Moscow takes a more extended view of Asia as a whole. Connections with Iran, Pakistan and Turkey improve. Kosygin's successful mediation in the India-Pakistan war in 1965 added considerably to the posture of the USSR in Asia. The Kremlin was certainly contemplating a much more grandiose role for the Soviet Union in the Asiatic regions because of long range contingency planning for the Chinese "problem".

The seventies brought quite surprising events to the Asian continent. In 1971 India and the USSR concluded a treaty of friendship and shortly afterwards India went into battle with Pakistan. After the rout of the Pakistanis a new state emerged, Bangladesh. Afghanistan's neighbor was the big loser after the reshuffling of the territorial cards. What was left of Pakistan (West) was subject to internal strife. Ali Bhutto, who succeeded the ruling clique of generals after the military débacle, was faced with a rebellious movement in the North West Frontier Province, and the Baluchi tribes of the Bugti and the Marri were in a state of rebellion against Islamabad. In 1973 the Yom Kippur war exploded and since then the world had to live with the fact that the Arabs had learnt that oil was as good a weapon as a tank division.

In 1973 a famine struck Afghanistan and disturbances occurred all over the country. This meant to Daud that his second chance had come. His voluntary retirement, ten years ago, turned out to have been no more than a temporary tactical retreat. On the 18th of July, when the King of Afghanistan was outside the country, Daud not only deposed the monarch but disposed of the Monarchy as an institution. Daud became the first president of the Republic of Afghanistan. Maybe it was of significance for the future developments that Daud did not baptize his new governmental concept with the prefix Islamic. It was clear that Daud, ten years earlier, had not con-

sidered time and circumstances sufficiently favourable for what he had in mind. Maybe it occurred to Taraki that the emergence of India as an ally of sorts of the mighty Soviet Union, had given Afghanistan means to put sufficient pressure on plagued Pakistan to make concessions in the Pashtunistan question.

Taraki improved relations with Iran. Plans were made for Iran to build a railroad connecting Mashhad in Iran with Herat, Kandahar and Kabul, which would have made Afghanistan less dependent on the uncertain outlet through Karachi. What Moscow thought of this ambitious plan, which would also have made Afghanistan less dependent on transit through the USSR, it never stated publicly. Internally Daud proceeded to establish an authoritarian system of "parliamentism" which to Western readers may seem a contradiction in terms but which could be considered traditional because of derivation from the system of centralized consent in the tribal structure. In this drive for absolute power, Taraki decided to rid himself of the companions who had so ably supported him in his second coup. Among them was the influential airforce general Abdul Qadir, who had organized the leftist officers in the armed forces. Kadir was shoved aside and had to accept the humiliation of being nominated as inspector of the Kabul slaughterhouses, a rather dull function for a qualified pilot. This neutralization of the left must have been another sign to Moscow to watch the new man in Kabul closely.

In May 1977 Taraki called together a new Jirga. There were 221 elected and 130 nominated members. This "parliament" had to prepare a one-chamber representation that would have to work out a system of government for the single party in power.

The president — Daud — would get far reaching powers, such as the right to nominate judges, the decision on declaring war and the appointment of ambassadors and vice-presidents. There would be the usual guarantees of freedom of opinion and travel. Newspapers could only be edited by Afghans. Equality before the law for every citizen was assured. Land property would be subject to restrictions and industry would

be nationalized.

To Daud's former supporters and the members of the rival revolutionary group, the Parcham, all this that Daud proposed to do looked far too conservative. Their main fear, however, was that the president was going to establish himself as a true "one-man" dictator. Indeed, Daud soon began to behave as a tribal chieftain, surrounding himself with sycopants and members of his family.

Escalation of independence

Daud's moves against the left could be tolerated for awhile by Moscow as the leftist officers, who had mostly been trained in Moscow, were not physically eliminated by Daud. Moscow could also swallow the improved relations with Iran, but what must have made the men in the Kremlin sit up in their chairs was the fact that Daud deemed it feasible to be critical in public of the Cuban role in Africa. Moscow must then have come to the conclusion that Daud did not know what he was doing. It triggered Moscow to order effective counter measures. An occasion to act against Daud presented itself in the spring of 1978. A very severe famine struck Afghanistan again, triggering a series of riots which shook the country. During a demonstration in Kabul the communist trade union leader Mir Akbar Khyber was shot by an unidentified demonstrator. Daud then ordered arrests and amongst others Taraki was thrown in jail. The revolutionary council, formed by Hafizullah Amin and Abdul Qadir ordered their troops into battle and the presidential palace was stormed. Daud and most of his family and retainers were killed ruthlessly in the fracas. Taraki, freed from jail, was made the new chief of the government.

The Taraki episode

Taraki soon could present his new cabinet of ministers. Khalq was allotted a number of 11 ministers and Parcham had to do with one less. Babrak Karmal, the irresistible, was made vice

prime minister and Amin was made a second vice minister and took the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. In its first public statement to the Afghan people, the Taraki government pledged allegiance to Islamic principles and to the Charter of the United Nations. Taraki stressed the non-aligned position of Afghanistan and made it clear that his revolution did not imply that the country would now become the satellite of a superpower. Taraki would conduct a bloc-free policy and would not engage in any military treaties with other countries. His party – so Taraki stated – was neither communist nor marxist-oriented. The distance Taraki was keeping from marxism and communism was based on internal and external considerations. Afghanistan's historic pride had always been its maintenance of independence from Great Britain and Russia. The close relationship which had developed with the USSR never resulted in any significant acceptance of marxist ideology in Islamic Afghanistan. Taraki, apparently, wanted to avoid any accusation that a small élite group had grasped power by force. Taraki's efforts to keep up this image were, however, in vain as far as the Pashtuni brethren in Pakistan were concerned. The Pashtuni on the Pakistan side of the Khyber pass quickly understood why their kinsmen in Afghanistan felt no allegiance to the Taraki regime whatsoever. This had a very significant effect: the Pashtuni in Pakistan became wary of Taraki's statements on the unification of all Pashtuni and the idea of separation from Pakistan became definitely less attractive. There is little doubt that Moscow became aware of this change of mind of the Pashtuni in Pakistan. The Kremlin realized that a most valuable asset, which the future incorporation of the Pakistan Pashtuni in the Afghan state constituted for the USSR, was slipping away from Soviet manipulation and future control. But, with Taraki in power, Moscow saw no improvement possible.

At first TASS had carried the news of the Taraki Putsch without commentary. The Soviet government immediately recognized the new government in Kabul and on May 3rd Brezhnev and Kosygin sent their usual congratulations to

Taraki, expressing hope that cooperation with the USSR would continue. At the same time the Soviet news media denied any Soviet involvement, planning or plotting, in the April coup preparations. Whatever Taraki had to say on this subject was faithfully picked by Moscow and reproduced in Pravda and the like. The Soviets are simply unaware of the effect this sort of statement has in the free West where a man who protests his innocence too much without being accused first is suspect anyway. In his speeches Taraki found it for some reason necessary to state that his foreign policy would concentrate on the support of liberation movements in the Third World. Moscow did not pay much attention to these rather gratuitous declarations, not understanding what Taraki had in mind. Maybe Taraki envisaged a Cuba-like role for Afghanistan. Some of the more warrior-like tribes could be exported in return for millions of dollars in support of the Afghan cotton industry? What Moscow preferred was to stress the internal reforms Taraki had indicated he would undertake. Abolition of feudalism and nationalization of the economy. Foreign minister Amin, on his way to Cuba, made a stopover in Moscow and told his friendly Soviet hosts that Afghanistan was grateful for Soviet aid and that Afghan friendship for the USSR was permanent. More significant were Amin's statements on the non-aligned course Afghanistan intended to steer and, furthermore, his government's intention of doing everything in its power to lessen the tensions in the Asian region. Chances are that Moscow began to have fears that Taraki meant what he said through Amin and that non-alignment was not just a hollow phrase but could imply neutrality à la Afghanistan, meaning independence also from the USSR.

In July 1978 Taraki, in his drive for absolute power dismembered the rival faction in the Democratic People's Party, the Parcham. The leader of Parcham, one Babrak Karmal, who held the post of first vice-president was banished to the Ambassador's post in Prague. How little Taraki had learnt from the Soviets in letting this potential rival out of the country, the future would soon make clear. The airforce general,

Abdul Qadir, who had supported Taraki's coup with a group of leftist officers was jailed. In December 1978 Taraki, probably sensing what lay before him, signed a political cooperation treaty with the Soviet Union. But in the beginning of 1979 revolts broke out in Nuristan, a non-Pushtun region and soon afterward in other parts of Afghanistan.

The USSR, greatly worried about Taraki's mismanagement of what ought to have been a gradual process of communizing Afghanistan, let all parties concerned know that a limit to Moscow's patience had been definitely reached and that corrective measures were being seriously considered. With a frequency not to be misunderstood, Moscow accused in violent terms the US, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and – of course – China of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Moscow made convenient use of the liberty the freedom fighters had in crossing the border from Afghanistan into the refuges of the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. The accusation that the US and China, as the main culprits, were actively supporting the freedom fighters, had no basis whatsoever, but as usual, any argument was valid if it served to legitimize Soviet actions.

The situation in Afghanistan became critical in April 1979. The freedom fighters were in control of the Provinces Paktia, Khunar, Uruzgan, Mazar-i-Sharif, Takhar, Badakshan, Parwan and Farah. How serious Moscow considered the deterioration of the situation could be concluded from the fact that no one less than Soviet general of the army Yepishev was dispatched to Kabul. Yepishev is commander of the Political Chief Directorate of the Soviet Armed forces. After he returned to Moscow the Kremlin plan became clear. Soviet military advisers were dispatched to Kabul and arms deliveries were stepped up considerably.

Taraki from then on fought a losing battle, though he certainly tried hard. In March 1979 he had reformed his government, nominating himself president of the Supreme Defense Council

which made him commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Amin was made Prime Minister but Taraki reserved for himself the post of secretary-general of the Democratic People's Party of Afghanistan. But what Moscow considered to be more vital – the wiping out of the rebellion – Taraki was unable to perform. In July 1979 there were still five provinces under control of the freedom fighters and no end to the fighting was in sight. The most upsetting factor was the large-scale desertions of officers and enlisted men from the regular Afghan army. If Moscow needed more indications that Afghanistan was now fast slipping away from Soviet control, it was sufficient to realize that the Afghan army did not constitute a control element for the government any more. After all the years of training Afghan officers in the USSR and all the efforts to indoctrinate them, this “disloyalty” factor was extremely disconcerting to the Kremlin. But before Moscow decided to set a D-Day for Afghanistan, the tormented population of Afghanistan went through another “interim episode”.

The rise and fall of Hafizullah Amin

Amin, as the prime minister of Afghanistan, gave little hope that Taraki could ever pacify the country nor keep the Khalq faction of Democratic People's Party in power. To Amin and his followers it was also clear that Taraki had already been dropped by Moscow and that an escalation of Soviet “influence” was becoming inevitable. To Amin it was one thing to admit to himself that the Democratic Peoples Party of Afghanistan, like any other ruling communist party, could only stay in existence as long as the Soviet Union was present – if only in the visible background – as a guarantor, another thing was to have the Soviets physically all over Afghanistan. Whatever distorted ideas might have entered Amin's mind in the course of the years of political frustration, the Afghan form of “machismo” still played a very important role. His Afghan pride or what was left of it, made him try to do better than his floundering president, Taraki.

So, on the 14th of September, when Taraki and Amin had a

meeting with the Soviet Ambassador Puzanov, Amin had his bodyguards shoot it out with Taraki's retinue. In the fighting Taraki was wounded and was hospitalized. Amin, with Taraki out of the way, immediately assumed power. The role of Puzanov in this war of succession is a curious one. Amin accused the Ambassador of having tried to lure him into a trap by arranging the meeting with Taraki, as if Taraki had been the favourite of the Soviets. Events then, apparently, turned out otherwise. Anyway, whatever happened, Moscow did not take it very seriously and made other plans. So Puzanov was quietly recalled and replaced in November 1979 by Tabeyev, former communist party chief of the Tatar autonomous Soviet Republic.

Moscow also reacted almost routinely by sending congratulations to Amin, signed by Brezhnev and Kosygin. That Moscow had other plans of a more effective nature in mind than trying to support Amin was clear. Kosygin cancelled a visit to Kabul which was planned for September 19th 1979.

If there is any truth in Amin's claim that Ambassador Puzanov had connived with Taraki in trying to assassinate him, it is easy to conclude that Moscow already cared very little who was in charge in Kabul. The recall of Ambassador Puzanov was done without any rancor.

During the few months of Amin's government the country was kept in turmoil by continuing revolts that spread again over large parts of Afghanistan. The number of Soviet military advisers increased steadily and modern weapons were dispatched from the USSR. Helicopters (M-24) were flown to the airfield of Kabul and complete battle units were moved from the Soviet Union to Afghanistan (for the protection of the Soviet military advisers and civilian workers). By the beginning of November 1979 the Western estimate was that no less than 20 Soviet battalions were already stationed in Afghanistan. The complete occupation of Afghanistan seemed to be only a matter of weeks. Western intelligence reported a massive build-up of Soviet forces in the neighbouring areas of Afghanistan.

The actual invasion started between the 24th and 26th of December. Soviet troops were transported by air to the airfields of Kabul and Bagram. Thirty transports were used to move troops and another thirty carried tanks and other heavy equipment. On the 25th of December a Soviet airborne division captured the airfield of Kabul. A Soviet armored column rolled from Kuschka in the North on its way to Herat. A second column "took" Mazar-i-Sharif and a third proceeded through the Kunduz valley towards Kabul. In the evening of December 27th the 103rd and 105th guards brigades of the Soviet airborne division at the airfield of Kabul left their positions and stormed the city. The Darulaman Palace, where Amin had found refuge, was taken by Soviet troops and Amin was killed in the fighting. It is the Soviet Army, fighting the Afghan people who are in rebellion against their own — revolutionary, communist — government. The Afghan Army takes no part in the fighting.

In the midst of the fighting, on December 27th, the radio broadcast a speech by Babrak Karmal in which he announces the fall of Amin. At 2300 hours, when the fighting in Kabul stopped, Karmal's speech was repeated on the radio. The exact moment when Karmal was flown by the Soviets to Kabul is not known. It can be assumed however that his speech had been prepared well in advance in the Soviet Union. The Soviets, and their communist Afghan friends, were so absolutely assured of success in killing Amin that on the morning of December 28th the usual congratulatory telegram from Moscow could already be delivered to Babrak Karmal. Taraki was quickly rehabilitated posthumously and Amin was quickly unmasked as an agent of the CIA.

And so, in a few days, the Soviet Army ended the history of Afghanistan as an independent state. The *Endlösung* for the Afghan people now was put in the hands of the Soviet soldiers.

The failure of an ideology

All efforts in the past at trying to work through communist

or leftist proxies, be they Daud, Taraki or Amin, had come to nothing as the Kremlin had completely misunderstood the fierce Afghan character. The model which had worked so well for the USSR in the European satellites had turned out, disastrously, to be absolutely unworkable in a country like Afghanistan where the overwhelming majority of the people were not only opposed to communism but at the same time were willing to give their lives in fighting for freedom. The threat of Soviet military occupation did not work in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union, for a change, had been compelled to put its threat from the outside into effect by invading its neighbor. An important factor in acting the way it did at the end of 1979 for Moscow must undoubtedly have been the possible loss of credibility with its Warsaw Pact friends. Not to speak of a host of other countries that could be reckoned to – one day – come up against the same situation as Afghanistan, which was for so many years a strategically situated neighbor of the USSR.

With Babrak Karmal the Kremlin took no chances. Never again would a puppet leader of the Afghan government be nominated in Kabul without the full protection of the Soviet Army. Whatever Moscow's estimate of the new man's allegiance to the USSR, the risk was that his Afghan blood might be stronger sentiment than knowledge of the teachings of a long-dead German philosopher, Marl Marx.

III. ISLAM IN THE USSR

As a result of half a century of anti-religious campaigns, Islam in the USSR has lost a portion of its believers. Some became indifferent, a few others became genuine atheists. Islam also lost, more or less completely, its hold on the economic and political life of the believers' community. In many ways Islam became a "private affair". It adjusted to the new circumstances with apparent submissiveness. Its official leaders seemed to be willing to cooperate with the Soviet authorities in certain domains, especially concerning the Moslim world abroad. But in no way has Islam been contaminated either by Marxism or secularism. Islam in the USSR is the same pure unadulterated religion as it was before 1917. Paradoxically, nowadays, Islam in the Soviet world appears more conservative, traditionalist and less modernist than the creed practiced in many Moslim countries of the Middle East.

A Soviet Moslim and a Moslim from abroad feel completely at home with each other in whatever country they meet. Both belong to the same Moslim millet (nation) and to the same Dar-ul Islam and share the same spiritual background that rules their daily lives. They have the same traditions and share the same attitude of deeply rooted mistrust toward the non-Moslim West, represented by the Americans and Europeans in the Middle East and by the Russians in Central Asia. They are brethren facing together a hostile world.

Soviet Muslims also identify with Moslim brethren abroad through feelings of ethnic kinship. The southern frontiers of the Soviet Union have been demarcated in a purely artificial way and do not reflect any natural national or geographic divisions. As a result, almost all Soviet Moslim nationalities possess more or less important corresponding "brother" groups abroad. The Turkmeni Moslims number 2 million in the USSR and a total of about 1 million in Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Iraq. There are 3 million Tadjiks in the USSR, 3.5 million in Afghanistan and small groups in China. The Uzbeks number 12.5 million in the USSR and 1.5 million in Afghanistan. The religious, ethnic and sometimes tribal relationships

between the 43 million Moslems living in the USSR and the 100 million brethren living in the Turco-Iranian world have made for a complicated pattern of relations.

The Moslems in the USSR who associated themselves with the Soviet regime became zealots offering Moscow their help to liberate their Moslem coreligionists across the border. They were never trusted by the central government. The mistrust of Moscow went so far that very few Moslem citizens of the USSR were assigned to diplomatic missions abroad. A few interpreters, drivers and cooks were sometimes attached to Soviet missions in Moslem countries. This pattern was disrupted by events in Afghanistan, starting with the April 1978 coup against Daud and continuing through the Soviet invasion of December 1979 which overthrew Amin. Moved by the need to prevent a total collapse of state administration in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union undertook to send in large numbers of administrative and technical cadres. As there were very few Russians with sufficient knowledge of local conditions and the language, the Soviets were obliged to employ their Own Central Asians, Uzbeks, Tadzhiks and some Turkomans. By late 1979 there were some thousands of Soviet Moslems in position of all levels in the Afghan administration, from the lowest posts up to deputy minister. The rank and file of the invading Soviet forces included a fair percentage of Central Asians, though the officers in command were Slavs. In all likelihood, the Central Asians "attached" to the invading troops were very useful in the course of the military operations involved in the invasion. They probably served as interpreters and they made it possible for the Afghan administration to function under the occupation. Furthermore, their presence tended to give the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan the character of an intra-Islamic affair. This certainly seemed the intention of the Soviets in the beginning when Central Asian Moslems were spectacularly show-cased in Kabul. But the operation was not a success.

The Islamic peoples in the USSR have become aware of the existing "conflict" in neighboring Islamic Afghanistan. If the

Soviets prove unable to crush the resistance rapidly and decisively, they will have to face a lengthy guerilla war. A grim prospect, because sooner or later such a drawn out conflict will antagonize the whole Moslim world and could also awaken the never quite forgotten attitudes that motivated the great Basmachi movement in Central Asia.

As if he sensed the coming changes in the Islamic world close to the Soviet border, the Grand Mufti Babachan, in a speech in Dushanbe at the opening ceremony of a symposium on Islam, in September 1979, a few weeks before the invasion of Afghanistan, stated: "In our country (the moslim parts of the USSR) the system was changed, the social relations became different than before and a new type of state came to rule over us – but the Moslim religion continues to exist and to flower. Even more, its prestige increases and this is because we live by the Koran. The most daring part of his address, however, was his declaration that Moslims of the USSR are an indivisible part of the UMMA, the Moslim "world". "All Moslims of the world form one body, when a part is sick, the whole body suffers."

The fact that Mufti Babachan felt free to make this statement was a sure sign that deterioration of the central governmental control was on its way.

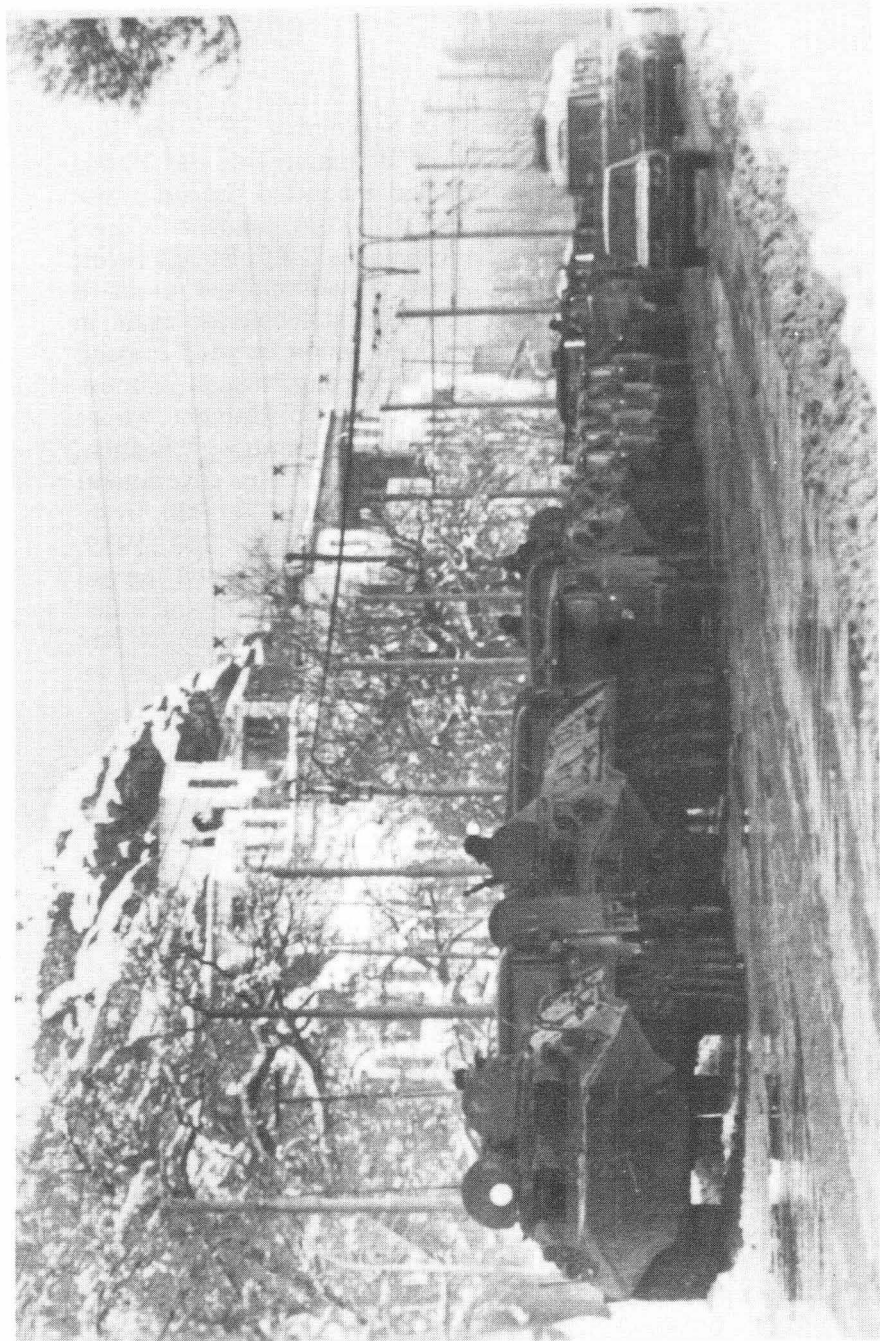
IV. THE FAMOUS REQUEST FOR AID

The urge the Soviets constantly feel for legitimization of practically all their actions, internally and abroad, came to full expression after their occupation of Afghanistan. The most important excuse Moscow felt necessary put out to the world was that the Soviet troops, all 80 000 or so, had been sent by special request of the legitimate Afghan government. Babrak Karmal, when he arrived in Kabul from the Soviet Union, hastened to stress this factor. Even now it is not clear who in Kabul in December 1979 asked Moscow to dispatch the tanks. Certainly not Hafizullah Amin, who was subsequently shot by the invaders. Babrak Karmal then? He was outside the country at the time. Possibly the Soviets, unknown to the rest of the world made Karmal chief of a government in exile? Who then asked the USSR for aid to return to his country. Unfortunately Karmal is on record as having been ignorant of the Soviet plans for the invasion.

The mystery of who actually asked Moscow to invade and occupy Afghanistan could be dismissed as more or less irrelevant in view of what happened. When we study the "requested aids" in the past, however, the recent "aid" case takes on a significant and sinister character. To start with Afghanistan Karmal claims his predecessor Taraki has asked the USSR not less than 14 times for aid. This was confirmed in Moscow. In December 1979 however, Taraki was a murdered politician. Maybe his 14 requests were finally granted posthumously, after long bureaucratic contemplation in Moscow? Maybe Taraki did ask for aid but Moscow's plans for full occupation were probably not what he had in mind. So Moscow waited. Going a little further back in the foreign aid program of Moscow brings us to Prague 1968. There exists no proof acceptable to the West that anybody in Czechoslovakia ever asked the USSR to occupy the country. Still, Moscow fervently takes the line that such a request existed.

The technique of military intervention based on a request for aid by revolutionaries has been used by the Soviet Union

since the October revolution. In September 1920 the Red Army conquered the Emirate of Bukhara after the Young Bukharan Communists revolted and requested the aid of the Soviet general Frunze. When, in 1921, independent Georgia was to be incorporated, Stalin "organized" a Bolshevik revolt in Borchalo, which the Red Army then supported, never to go back again. Stalin used this cynical technique again in 1939. One will recall that the Soviet Union invaded Finland on November 30th 1939. On that very day Moscow announced the formation of a Finnish People's Government, whose president turned out to be the Finnish communist Kuusinen, who was living in exile in the Soviet Union. This government of sorts took up its seat in the bordertown of Terijoki, freshly occupied by the Red Army. On December 2nd, 1939, Kuusinen, formally and with some pomp, requested the aid of the Red Army in overthrowing the reactionary and imperialistic government then ruling in Helsinki. The gimmick had no easy success as the Finnish people resisted the Soviet invaders — much like the Afghans in 1980.



V. POST INVASION INSIDE THE USSR

The early news of the fighting in Afghanistan was broadcast to the population of the Soviet Union by Western radios, the Voice of America, the BBC and the German Deutsche Welle. Soviet citizens living within range of Finnish television could even follow the video coverage with Western commentary. The average Soviet citizen reacted to the news in a much more restrained way than was the case in 1968 when Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Red Army, accompanied by troops from some Warsaw Pact allies. The average reaction then was that it served the Czechs right. This opinion was clearly a result of the proximity of Czechoslovakia to the territory of the USSR and the resulting feeling that an ally was trying to leave the camp possibly endangering the security of the Soviet Union. The fact that the chiefs in the Kremlin had decided to invade, what had seemed to the Soviet population, until December 1979, a faraway, strange, primitive, and neutral country, caused a certain anxiety. The *intelligentsia* in the USSR, who were accustomed to disbelieving the official statements of their leadership but had learned to live with that, were even more distinctly worried as they sensed that the Soviet Union might be entering the second stage of the Russian revolution — the conquest of the world, for the last sixty years prepared and conditioned by communist propaganda and the build-up of support in the not-yet-ruling communist parties. The general consensus after the first week of invasion, however, was that the USSR had not started the big war. Uneasiness remained since two facts became slowly clear. Firstly, the “requests” for aid by Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, once granted by the USSR, had quick results. Ordinary life was restored within a reasonable time and the communist parties were more firmly established than before. The Soviet public understood this to justify the military actions against the two countries. A small group of counter revolutionaries had quickly been exterminated by the Red Army. But when in the course of 1980, the engagement of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan seemed unending, people started

to wonder what the object of the Red Army's exercise was. The thesis that a quick rectification of a socialist situation temporarily out of control was the reason for the action seemed not to be the case.

Secondly, in all the months of fighting in Afghanistan, the Soviet media were unable to produce any significant military aid delivered to the freedom fighters by the US, China or Pakistan. No surface-to-air missiles, no anti-aircraft guns, maybe the only thing to be shown was the Chinese-made machine-gun Zbigniew Brzezinski handled when he visited Pakistan. Throughout the history of their successful resistance of foreign invaders, the Afghan freedom fighters were always able to beat the enemy with home-made weapons. The simple fact that the West is not sending large shipments of heavy arms is irrelevant to the fighting will of the Afghans. The terrain in Afghanistan does lend itself excellently to the kind of warfare the Afghans have grown used to over the centuries. The quick raid and the withdrawal in the mountain refuges are hard to counter for a regular army.

The Soviet people are quite used to the fact that actions abroad are surrounded by persistent hammering on the imperialist-capitalist threat, whatever the occasion of the Soviet action might be. Whether the Soviet citizen believes this distorted propaganda or not is irrelevant. He has learned to see through the hackneyed exhortations and tries to define the facts separate from the slogans. He does this when he is really interested or anxious, by listening to the Western radio broadcasts. He knows that the Cubans are helping out in Angola and Ethiopia. The fact that in December 1979 the Red Army proper had to be deployed indicated to the Soviet people that something of great importance to the security of the USSR was at stake. Either a real threat by invading armies, the Chinese, for instance, existed and exists or the USSR had decided to depart from the course of acquiring hegemony by "peaceful" means and was preparing for final confrontation with the capitalist world. Few people in the Soviet Union today would be aware of the Afghan sequel to Finland in 1939.

VI. A HARD LINE AND A SOFT LINE LOOK

As it is sometimes difficult to judge the reactions to certain events inside the Soviet Union, it is a useful exercise to try to gauge what is happening in Moscow by taking into account what the communist brethren in the free world think fit to tell their adherents.

The French Communist Party

The view the French communists quickly made public on what the Soviets were doing in Afghanistan is noteworthy to say the least. George Marchais, the leader of the French CP, who had yet to establish himself as a venerable European communist of stature, in the mold of Thorez, exerted himself very clearly in *L'Humanité* of January 24th, 1980. In his introduction little is left of the soft image the French CP tried to acquire a few years ago. According to Marchais the Democratic People's Party in Afghanistan, the Afghan people and the Government in Kabul were fully within their rights in requesting the USSR to come to their aid. It should be noted that Marchais adheres to the always significant "hierarchy of importance" in listing the groups in Afghanistan that simultaneously requested the Red Army to come to their rescue. As usual the Party, the Democratic People's Party which equals Communist Party, is mentioned first, then the People and as a third, almost *quantité négligable*, the Government. For a communist this sequence is quite normal. His interpretation of proletarian internationalism is clear: If a party is in danger, for whatever reason, of losing power, the others must come to the rescue.

Marchais, the leader of one of the most powerful not-yet-ruling communist parties in the world, naturally takes great interest in the timing and methods used by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Marchais knows that the USSR considers the time not yet ripe for an invasion in France. Who in his right mind would think of such a thing. An invasion in France would mean all out war between the USSR and the West and

there are no signs that anybody is ready for that. But we should take a look at what the Kremlin, incredibly for us in the West, thinks is ideologically and fundamentally feasible in the future. And not only feasible, but inexorably developing. The main consideration for Moscow is the timing. If the Politburo had calculated that the risk of invading Afghanistan was too great and that the West really would have gone to war over it, they would have refrained. The same reasoning goes for any other country in the world. Of great significance to the Western view on the grand design of the Soviet Union for global hegemony is the fact that Moscow ordered the Italian communists not to join the government. The same goes for the French communists who are not allowed (yet) to go into coalition with the French socialists. According to communist tactical theory, once a power base has been established in a state or with a government, this position must be enlarged until full power is obtained and a socialist state under the sole leadership of the avantgarde Communist Party can be established. If that line of development is not clearly seen and cannot be calculated with minimum risk, the communists will patiently wait for better times. And this is the case with France and Italy. If the communists in those countries took part in government and, imagine, a new election threw them out, the Soviet Union would be obliged to come to their rescue. Politically, economically but also with the most important aid mechanism, the Red Army. And whenever the latter possibility is not yet considered feasible by Moscow, no French or Italian communists may take part in government.

The Italian Communist Party

Every communist party in the world is intended by Moscow to play a support role. This may range from training terrorists, as the North Koreans do, to presenting a peaceful road to what nowadays is beguilingly called socialism, as the Italians under Berlinguer do. This well organized party, which does not participate in the central government in Rome but is well established in many local governments, could paralyze the

country completely in time of conflict. The pacific and sometimes even neutralistic stance of the CPI therefore makes the deeper impression. A few days after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, *L'Unità* could produce a lengthy editorial, which feat is not surprising as a good communist knows what the partyline is under any circumstances and especially as the move into Afghanistan by the Red Army certainly came as no surprise to the well-read Italian communists. The article in *L'Unità* of January 6th of 1980 begins with the declaration that there can never be reasons that justify interference and intervention in the internal life of another state. The integrity of a state cannot be disregarded for the purposes of supporting a reactionary regime, to export the revolution or to react against more or less hypothetical threats. Every non-communist reader of those lines could agree with these declaratory statements of the CPI. Moreover because the consistent line the CPI has followed the last years is that coexistence and preservation of peace are of paramount importance for the survival of mankind and civilization. This point of view might be shared by any "normal" pacifist movement anywhere in the world or by any well meaning individual who can spare the time to think about the state of the world. The Italian CP, however, is not satisfied with the peaceful survival of mankind alone. It has a more ambitious goal. The little philosophy which is added as a sort of afterthought to the "great" principle of survival goes like this: peace is the transitional period, necessary to give the emancipation movements amongst the peoples of the world the opportunity to eliminate imperialism and to proceed on the road to socialism. The "liberation" from imperialism must be obtained by the people of a state themselves, not by outside aid. After this rather soothing preparatory introduction, the Italian CP starts to lash out at president Carter's reaction to the occupation of Afghanistan and the punitive measures taken against the USSR. Postponing SALT II ratification and proposing to "freeze" the relations with the USSR increase the tension caused by the NATO decision on middle range atomic weapons (TNF) taken in December 1979. The

Government of the US, so Unità, takes on great responsibility if it continues on this road of escalation. The deep concern European statesmen – and the Pope – feel about the crisis situation is fully justified. The Italian and the European governments are urged by Unità to put pressure on the US government actively and immediately to take up the dialogue with the Soviet Union again. The West European countries, the European Economic Community and especially the socialists, together with the forces of the left and peace can and must have the function of withdrawing Europe from the 'logic' of the confrontation between the two Superpowers. Unità urges its own government to call a summit meeting of the EEC countries to reach a common European standpoint to further detente and peace.

So, within days after the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan, the Italian CP, unruffled by the event, continued its specific support role for Moscow. The purpose in the "middle" long range strategy of Moscow being the separation of Western Europe from the US. Whenever the Italian CP criticizes the mother church in Moscow, it is only to gain in credibility when it attacks the common enemy, the US. Whatever gains the Soviet Union planned to obtain from its armed incursion into Afghanistan, it unmistakably had the insight and vision that the action would – after a short period – be usable for increasing polarization in individual countries and between Western Europe and the US.

VII. AFGHAN RESISTANCE TILL THE BITTER END

In the course of 1980, the near total disintegration of the Afghan army became clear. As a fighting force, it was of very little importance anymore. If Moscow considered the pacification of the country as of vital importance to the security of the USSR, the Red Army would have to increase its combat troops to 400 000 men. Moscow, so far, seems reluctant to commit an additional 30 divisions to the Afghan theatre. Apparently the Soviet Union contents itself with occupying areas of strategic value to the Soviet Military High Command. Significantly the runways of the airfields of Kabul, Bagram, Jalalabad and Herat have been extended and permanent barracks have been built there for the Soviet garrisons. Surely, for the Mig-24 helicopter gunships, the most effective weapon against the freedom fighters, there were sufficient take-off points available.

Whatever the intention of Moscow as the Final Solution for Afghanistan, the casualty rate of the Red Army – for the better part of 1980 – is estimated to run between 12 000 and 16 000. This is a high rate considering the poorly armed opponents of the Soviet troops. In part, high Soviet casualties are the result of the compelling need the Soviet military command feels to defend its strategic positions in some depth. The guerilla tactics of the Afghans oblige the Soviets to deploy a large part of their forces along the supply routes. They have made airstrikes against rebel strongholds, followed up by tanks and armored cars of the mechanized infantry. But, as long as Moscow does not commit considerably more divisions to Afghanistan and is not prepared to seal of the border with Pakistan effectively, the fighting will go on.

A special aspect of this seemingly hesitant Soviet posture on ending Afghan resistance once and for all is the fact that continuing warfare gives Moscow the “legitimate” excuse to stay in Afghanistan militarily. Time and again, the Soviet Union has solemnly stated that they will withdraw their forces the moment the outside threat to the revolutionary and socialist achievements in Afghanistan ceases to exist. With all resistance

broken down and the country pacified, Babrak Karmal safely installed and the Afghan army reorganized and reindoctrinated, the Soviet forces would have to leave. If, however, under those circumstances the USSR continued its military presence, then the occupation of Afghanistan would have been nothing more than an imperialistic extension onto strategically valuable territory. For reasons of state, the Kremlin wants to avoid having this accusation take on a ring of truth. After the unexpected, unforeseen reactions in the West to the incursion of Afghanistan, Moscow needs some breathing time to get the world accustomed to the fact that the Red Army is in Afghanistan to stay.

VIII. THE COST

The cost of the occupation of Afghanistan and the aid the Karmal regime receives to supply part of the population with the barest necessities is weighing heavily on the Soviet budget for "foreign aid". To keep Cuba and Vietnam in more or less running economic order costs the Soviet Union billions of rubles a year. The military supplies to Libya (for use in Chad), Irak, Angola, added to the immense amounts the Soviet Union spends on supporting front organisations all over the world, make up a staggering part of the Gross National Product. The Soviet citizen has no means of knowing, not even roughly, how much of his earnings go into the foreign "aid" program of his government nor where the tanks and airplanes go that he helped to build. There is no civic restraint on the arms race the USSR conducts parallel to the usual established one with the US and Western Europe. The Western world is used to look at the number of Warsaw Pact troops, tanks and airplanes and then compares those figures with what the West has. The "imponderable" of Soviet military deployment through its proxies like Cuba, Vietnam and the rest is, for some odd reason, not included in the talks on disarmament between West and East. The Kremlin can live with the Western conception of linkage, as long as nobody gets the idea of counting the Cubans and the others as part of the Warsaw Pact armed forces.

Now that Afghanistan is added to the globe-encircling "outside" bases of the USSR, the Kremlin, possibly rightly so, calculates that, given some more time, the world will return to do business as usual. For this business with the West the Kremlin of course does not intend to make concessions about its troops in Afghanistan. In an indirect way, Afghanistan may still be a beneficial factor to the foreign currency troubles of the USSR. The Afghan military base provides the USSR with a better position whenever in its political-strategical planning the time has come to occupy the Persian Gulf. This future geopolitical advantage is already producing promising results for Moscow in its political-economical planning

against Western Europe in particular. The instability in the Persian Gulf region, to which the occupation of Afghanistan substantially added, makes the Western world feel uncertain, to say the least, about the continuity of Middle East oil supply. The Kremlin has for some time been conditioning the West to seek for a different country that can supply energy in abundance, the USSR. In an article in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of February 1981 the eventuality of an energy crisis in Western Europe was the subject. How the USSR would welcome such a crisis became clear when the author wrote: We (the USSR) are richer (in energy) and those who now plan our ruin must perhaps one day come to us with begging hands. The "rate of interest" the USSR in that case would be able to demand could well compensate for whatever billions Afghanistan had cost Moscow.

What with all the billions spent by the USSR on expanding and maintaining its global strategic positions one tends to forget is that the present day Soviets are by nature frugal and do not despise the kopek when they see one. Let us not for the moment go into what Angola, Cuba and Vietnam have to produce to pay their debts to the Soviet Union. Those are countries far away from the Soviet mother land and the concept of aid could be maintained in the form of loans, at one time to be paid back. Different it would seem with Afghanistan. One could imagine that the USSR would be so grateful for the successful *Anschluss* that they would not present a bill to their Gauleiter, Babrak Karmal. Nothing of the sort. The budget officers in Moscow coolly decided that the Afghan expedition was nothing more than protection offered to a foreign communist government in trouble. And for protection in whatever form or shape, one is supposed to pay. And, as the Karmal regime is only too glad it could find a powerful protector, they pay willingly. The natural resources of Afghanistan are vigorously exploited, stimulated by Moscow's desire to see some of its money back.

The natural gas reserves of Afghanistan are estimated at 150 billion cubic meters. A 200 km long pipeline brings approximately 3 billion cubic meters yearly to the Tashkent area in

the USSR. On the world market, Kabul could get about 180 US\$ per 1 000 cubic meters. Moscow has "fixed" the price however at half that amount and not a dollar flows back into the Afghan economy as the Soviet Union deducts the proceeds from the Afghan debt to the occupiers. The petrochemical industry in Mazar-i-Sharif produces fertilizer, which is also exported to the Soviet Union. The oil reserves of Afghanistan, officially estimated at 14 million tons are of considerable value to the USSR, judging by the fact a refinery was built in the North with a capacity of 500 000 tons. In February 1981 the Komsomolskaya Pravda brought a short announcement that large oil deposits had been found in Afghanistan. Significantly no amount was mentioned. The copper reserves at the mine near Alnak with an estimated 4.7 million tons will be exploited by the USSR starting in 1985. Practically all of the very high quality cement produced in Afghanistan, 150 000 tons a year, is exported to the USSR. The building industry of Afghanistan has to make do with inferior quality cement imported from the USSR.

A typically generous Soviet aid project are the citrus and olive plantations in the Ningrahar valley near Jalalabad. According to the stipulations of the contract of this development project, Afghanistan has to export the produce at a fixed price to the Soviet Union and must pay for the transportation. Pakistan fruit dealers would gladly pay double the Soviet price and for the transportation of the high quality citrus fruit.

A project to cut the Soviet aid budget for Afghanistan on a longer term base is the educational program Moscow has offered to the Popular Democratic government in Kabul. On January 29th, 1981 a variety of treaties – or contracts – were signed by the USSR and the Karmal regime. The period covered is 1981-1984; The list of projects is impressive indeed.

- Three research institutes and technical schools to be founded in Afghanistan. Soviet teachers will train the future Afghan technicians.
- The cost of the education of 350 Afghan students will be paid for by the Soviet Union.

- Soviet and Afghan experts of the Ministry for Higher Professional Training will cooperate.
- Pupils of the 9th grade and 500 future Afghan truck drivers will go to the Soviet Union for a two-year training course.

On January 27th, 1981 the Polytechnical Institute in Kabul delivered a group of students to the Afghan society. At the promotion festivities was present the Afghan minister for Higher Professional Training. This high official of the Parcham faction expressed his deep gratitude to the Soviet Union for having provided Soviet teachers to the institute. Professor Gol Dad also mentioned that no less than 2 000 Afghan students were receiving a professional education in the USSR.

Mrs. Anahita Ratebzad, a revolutionary of the first hour and an intimate friend of Babrak Karmal visited Moscow in early January 1981 in her capacity as Minister for Education. She attended a session of the cultural department of the Soviet Peace Council. In her – obligatory – interview for Moscow radion this enthusiastic member of the Afghan Politburo went so far as to number the Afghan students in the USSR at 7 000. Anahita Ratebzad took this as proof of the incessant and selfless aid the Afghan people were receiving from the Soviet Union. As the number of Afghan students in the USSR before the communists took over was merely a hundred, it is clear that Moscow has started an impressive program of communizing Afghanistan. Whether this project is doomed to failure, the future must show. Anyway, it is a Soviet scheme to establish a Moscow oriented cadre structure in Afghanistan. Maybe the new cadres will be able to convince the Pashtuni tribes that Soviet ideology, peace and economical concepts are the best solutions to extract their country from the morass it now finds itself in. If this Afghan army of agitprop professionals one day is able to take over part of the protective role of the Soviet Army, this may also cut down the cost of the occupation.

IX. AFTER SOME OF THE DUST HAS SETTLED IN AFGHANISTAN

The strategic philosophy of the Soviet Union, formed after the suppression of the Hungarian rebellion in 1956 and firmly established after Prague 1968, was that the West could and therefore would not resort to military action to aid the peoples of countries declared by Moscow to benefit from the Brezhnev doctrine. The occupation of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968 – made necessary for Moscow because the Czech communist party deviated dangerously from the ‘internationalist line’ – brought only, what Moscow considered a ‘formal’ reaction from the West. The events in Poland in the course of 1980 disturbed the West to a great extent but, again, did not alter the status quo between the two global powers to a degree that expectations of escalation were well founded. Emboldened by this which the leaders in the Kremlin ascribed to their increased military power in the nuclear and conventional fields, the Soviet Union considered the invasion of Afghanistan as an exercise without any ‘big’ military consequences. In which supposition the strategists of the Soviet Union were absolutely right.

The nuclear ‘double’ deterrent

The Soviet Union has built up its tremendous nuclear force as a ‘double’ deterrent. On the one hand it is directed at the US and its European allies and the Kremlin prefers to use this ‘posit’ as the main issue whenever they speak about a ‘nuclear balance’. The formidable profit the Soviets derive in the second place from this ‘balance of nuclear terror’ is that in the periphery – outside the more or less recognized fields of possible confrontation – it can act at will. The moment the West would consider military counter actions the Kremlin can and does rattle its ‘general’ nuclear sabre. This ‘second’ angle to the nuclear arms issue is seldom recognized in the West.

Boycott and embargo

As there was no question of Western effective military support to the freedom fighters to an extent that the Red Army could be thrown back from Afghan soil, the West had to confine itself to political counter measures. The fierceness of the American reaction to the invasion of Afghanistan undoubtedly must have surprised the leadership in Moscow but in the course of time certain developments in the international arena came to the aid of the Soviet Union.

The boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow by Western participants was only a partial success and indirectly the Soviet Union was able to regain some of its lost prestige through the inevitable divisions that ensued, mainly in Western Europe but to a certain degree also in the US. The Soviet Union was happy to observe that in some Western countries the athletes had to be put under pressure by their governments to adhere to the boycott of the games and in many countries a number of athletes went to Moscow anyway.

What happened to the embargo on grain, imposed upon the Soviet Union by the US, on the 14th of January, 1980 must have had a heartening effect on the West watchers in Moscow. The European Community in Brussels had pledged, in early 1980, to follow suit with an embargo on grain and agricultural products but in some way or other saw fit to export in the first half of 1980 a little more in dairy products to the Soviet Union than was the case in the whole of 1979. Grain was exported to the Soviet Union by the EC in the first half of 1980 to the amount of 840 000 tons. The figure for 1979 was only 250 000 tons. Sugar export doubled for the same periods and the export of soybean cakes rose from 25 000 tons in 1979 to 120 000 tons for the first six months of 1980. In a politically divided – or non-unified – Western alliance and with so-called non-aligned countries helping out, the real effect of embargoes is questionable to say the least. The embargo on technology probably hurt the Soviet Union most, but the Kremlin, ever practical and knowledgeable about Western weaknesses, was able to come up with a lure hard to

resist. A long-term profit on its investments in the Arab world finally looked like taking shape. After all the hard years of spending large sums of money supporting anti-Western Arab regimes, results could now be shown. As OPEC raised its prices per barrel to a nauseating level for the industries and the economies of the West and instability of oil supply from Arab fields became a political given, the Soviet Union brazenly played its own energy card. Gigantic natural gas fields and oil finds in Siberia would be opened for the hard-pressed Western economies — if only Western capital and technological know-how were offered in exchange for Soviet deliveries of natural gas and oil. Under these circumstances it would be practically impossible for the West Europeans to maintain embargoes on oil technology. Any means of improving the economic situation in Europe and thus combatting the strangling unemployment stands a good chance of being accepted if only for internal political reasons. The position of pressure on oil supplies through the Strait of Hormouz — which the Red Army now occupies in Afghanistan — is for the Soviet Union full compensation for all the political trouble this military exercise caused in its relationship with the Western world.

Poland to the rescue

The disturbances and rising tensions in Poland during 1980 were of great help to Moscow in adjusting its international position after the invasion of Afghanistan. The attention of the West was drawn away from Afghanistan and the Middle East region as Poland, with its history of Nazi German occupation and its inclusion in the Soviet orbit afterwards, was of greater concern to the West than the fate of the people in distant Afghanistan. For some apparently undefined reason the Western world attached much more importance to an eventual military occupation of Poland than it had ever shown over Afghanistan, though in the case of this neighbour of the Soviet Union, the signs that military action was imminent had been coming to the West loud and clear. The emotional

pre-invasion reaction of the US and many European governments with regard to Poland must have struck the leaders in the Kremlin as absurd when compared with the belated reaction to what the Red Army effectively did to the independence of Afghanistan.

Regional complications

In March 1981 the British government announced in Parliament that it would be willing to consider participating in a Western military force to be deployed in or around the Persian Gulf. The reaction of the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrein, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and – of course Iraq – was to denounce Mrs. Thatcher's proposal as reeking of 'colonialism'. Even pro-Western Oman joined in turning down the British offer. Perhaps quite realistically the Arab governments fear internal strife more than Soviet aggression against their countries. Providing military bases for American or Allied forces would certainly be used by the subversive forces in the Arab countries to stir up rebellion against their governments. What happened to the Shah of Iran is still a factor of great importance when any Arab government considers the pros and cons of Western military aid. There is not much the West can do about these feelings within Arab by the governments. The net result is that, for the near future at least, the Soviet military base in Afghanistan cannot be effectively counterpoised by Western bases comparable to what the Soviet Forces have at their disposition. The Arab governments are of the opinion that any military build-up in the region would only lead to an escalation of tension between the superpowers, with a chance that war might break out, a war the Arab leaders do not consider as concerning their security.

The resistance

Since the December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army, the number of refugees in neighbouring Pakistan has grown to an estimated two million. According to Teheran

there are some 250 000 Afghans who sought refuge in Iran. Apart from the humanitarian side to the refugee problem, which the West could prevent becoming a social and economic disaster, the political aspects for Pakistan are of much greater concern. These aspects are of an internal nature, of concern in its relationship with India and play a role in the relationship between the superpowers.

As has become clear after more than a year of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Red Army has not been able to wipe out armed resistance. On the contrary, large parts of the country are held by the freedom fighters. The Soviets hoped that the regular Afghan army could perform as a police force to keep the 'bandits' safely in their refuges did not turn out to be the case. The Afghan army is quickly becoming more of a liability to the Red Army than an asset. The 4th division of the Afghan army is under firm control of the Soviet troops who have orders to fire at Afghan soldiers if they show signs of retreating from battle or would refuse to attack rebel positions. The 7th division, stationed in Riskor near Kabul has seen its fighting ability severely reduced by the lack of enthusiasm of its soldiers for combat. Its officers are afraid of leaving their encampment as they refuse to leave their wives and families at the mercy of the Soviet soldiers. Recent reports from New Delhi ran that a thousand men and officers of this 7th division had defected to the resistance. The airport of Gazni, located between Kandahar and Kabul, has been under mortar fire from the insurgents and by mid-March could only handle helicopters.

According to usually well-informed sources in Islamabad and New Delhi the resistance undertook large scale actions in March 1981 in 23 of the 29 provinces of Afghanistan. The major towns of Kandahar and Herat are practically controlled by the resistance.

For the Red Army's strategic position in Afghanistan the actions by the freedom fighters most likely are, as yet, not critical. The political complications of the unabated will to continue fighting are for Moscow of much greater concern in the

long run, and a long run it now seems it is going to be. Whatever hopes Moscow had in store for itself and for Babrak Karmal, it is now clear beyond any doubt that the Karmal 'socialist' regime has not been able to gain the confidence of the population, either by promise of reforms or by exercising brute force. It also means to Moscow that it is useless to consider changing Karmal for another 'leader'. As in Poland, changing party officials is a cosmetic action that has no effect on the people anymore. Any effort by the Kremlin to turn Afghanistan into a properly run, orderly communist-satellite state in the near future seems certainly doomed to fail. The so-called political solution to the Afghanistan problem, whereby a Moscow oriented government in Kabul would take care of Soviet strategic interest, without a large scale presence of the Red Army seems farther away than ever.

For their logistic support, insufficient as it may be, the freedom fighters have to rely on what can be obtained across the border in Pakistan. Undoubtedly some weapons come through from unofficial Western suppliers to the resistance inside Afghanistan but Islamabad wants to control as much as possible the action of the Afghans. This can be confirmed from official Afghan side. Early April 1981 the Afghan Foreign Minister, Mohamad Dost, in an interview with the pro-Soviet Indian daily Patriot, declared that his government saw no reason at the present time, to ask the Soviet Union to increase the number of its troops in Afghanistan. Implicit in the statement was that an increase in arms aid to the insurgents through Pakistan might alter the situation. If the Pakistani government decided to let a considerable amount of arms through to the Afghan resistance, this could prompt the Karmal regime in Kabul to send in retaliation, arms to the autonomist Baluchi and Pathans on Pakistan territory. Islamabad would find it very hard to suppress an uprising of these tribes and would rightly fear that its fragile hold over the political situation would break down. For internal political reasons therefore, Pakistan has to restrain itself in its aid to the Afghan resistance.

In a statement before the press, prior to his visit to Washington, the Pakistan minister for foreign affairs, Agha Shahi, made it clear what the position of his country was vis-a-vis the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and the eventual threat to Pakistan. As the consequences for Pakistan of all-out support to the insurgents inside Afghanistan could be a large scale retaliatory attack by Soviet and Afghan troops the defensive position of Pakistan had to be built up first. To achieve a credible defensive force, Pakistan would need to modernize its armed forces on a large scale. As the Pakistan armed forces are mainly equipped with American material, Islamabad would have to request American aid. This would certainly antagonize India, which receives arms from the Soviet Union and could cause an escalation of tensions on Pakistan's Eastern border. The fragile relationship with India thus forms a further restraint on Pakistan aid to the Afghans. The third element in Pakistani considerations in defining its attitude towards the Afghan resistance is the rivalry between the two superpowers, one bent on expansion wherever it can and the other trying to organize the threatened countries into defending themselves. It is Pakistan's bad luck that the expansionist force, the Soviet Union, has now reached its borders.

Divided Resistance

A remarkable fact as regards the Afghan resistance in its blatant dividedness, combined with an apparent unabated rivalry amongst the major resistance groups of which there are no less than six. All these groups have their representatives in Peshawar in Pakistan near the Afghan border. Efforts undertaken by no less a person than president Sadat of Egypt to unify at least five of these groups during a conference in Cairo have not been successful. The sixth group, the Hezbi Islam, is not included in the efforts by the West or by Egypt to coordinate actions as it is orienting itself on Iran and Libya.

Whatever drawbacks not being able to deal with one resistance

organization may constitute the overall motivation to fight the Soviet invader is of such preponderance that the lack of coordination seems not to matter much. Maybe it is even preferable to leave the Afghan resistance divided as it is. A united front would most likely produce a leader who, by his efforts to promote his own followers to positions of power would antagonize the other groups to such an extent that the effectiveness of the resistance would be seriously undermined. It is clear from the point of view of the mentality of the Afghan insurgents that they fight their battle against the Soviets with their own motivation. The Afghan resistance must not get the idea that aid from abroad is provided with an afterthought of future alliances or hopes of influences in a post-Soviet Afghanistan.

Human Rights

In the turmoil of superpower involvement around Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion and the concern of the West about the stability of oil supply from Arab fields, there is precious little to be noticed in the Western world about what happened to human rights in the unhappy state of Afghanistan. It seems an anomaly that a stream of violations of human rights in the Soviet Union and other communist countries is regularly reported in the Western press but that very seldom are the large scale violations in Afghanistan considered worth while being mentioned. Hardly a day passes without a report in the Western press on a trial and conviction of a member of the Helsinki monitoring group in the Soviet Union or of some 'other' dissident. If opportune, the Soviet authorities resort to the age old Russian punishment of banishing their citizens from the motherland. But the magnitude of what the Soviets and their satellite Karmal government have committed in crime against the Afghan people seems to surpass the imagination of the public in the West. The mere fact that two and a half million people have been forced out of their country makes the banishment of Solzhenitsin, Amalrik and others look unimportant in comparison. The fact that so many

people were driven from their homes by an occupying force seems to be remedied only by sending material aid to the refugee camps in Pakistan. This 'discrimination' by the West, always so concerned about what happens to the members of Charta 77 in Prague and to Milovan Djilas in Yugoslavia, is a phenomenon that can be observed but is hard to explain.

