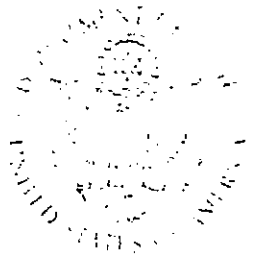


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# AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN: THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DURAND LINE

BUREAU OF  
INTELLIGENCE  
AND RESEARCH

## Summary

The recurring crises in Afghan-Pakistani relations since the partition of British India in 1947 have usually involved conflicts over the status of peoples divided by the "Durand Line." The British established the Durand Line by treaty with the ruler of Afghanistan in 1893 as a "demarcation of spheres of influence"; it has since come to be generally recognized as the international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Durand Line bisects the Pathan\* ethnic homeland--that area termed "Pushtunistan" by ethnic nationalists (see Map 1). Periodic Afghan efforts to reunite the divided tribes in some fashion have repeatedly been rejected by Pakistan in squabbles that have come to be known as the Pushtunistan dispute.

The Afghans formerly ruled much of the territory that, since 1947, has constituted Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Current Afghan feelings on the issue are based on irredentist ambitions on the part of some Afghans, a rejection of the Durand Line treaties which Afghans say were forced on a weak Afghan ruler, an extreme sensitivity to the political power of the Pathans in Afghanistan, and indignation at perceived mistreatment of the minority Pathans in Pakistan.

By rejecting the legitimacy of the line, the Afghan Government hopes somehow to foster the independence or autonomy of ethnic kinsmen in Pakistan and thereby win the favor of its own majority Pathan tribesmen. The Pakistanis have

\*Also known as Pushtun or Pakhtoon.

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rejected the Afghan position as interference in their internal affairs. The resulting dispute, which has flared up at least five times in the past 30 years, has been marked by hostile propoganda, border closures, economic disruptions, military skirmishes, and severance of diplomatic relations.

The crises have nearly always been precipitated by an Afghan perception that Pakistan is mistreating the Pathans within its borders. Pakistan's moves to exert counter-pressure on Afghanistan by shutting off the vital trade routes through Karachi to landlocked Afghanistan have usually resulted in Kabul's turning to Moscow. The Soviets promptly deliver aid, thereby strengthening their influence in Afghanistan.

The US publicly recognized the Durand Line as Pakistan's international boundary in 1956 and has privately taken the same position with the Pakistani and Afghan Governments in 1950, 1960, and 1978. US policy has been one of encouraging bilateral discussions between the two countries in the interests of regional harmony and stability.

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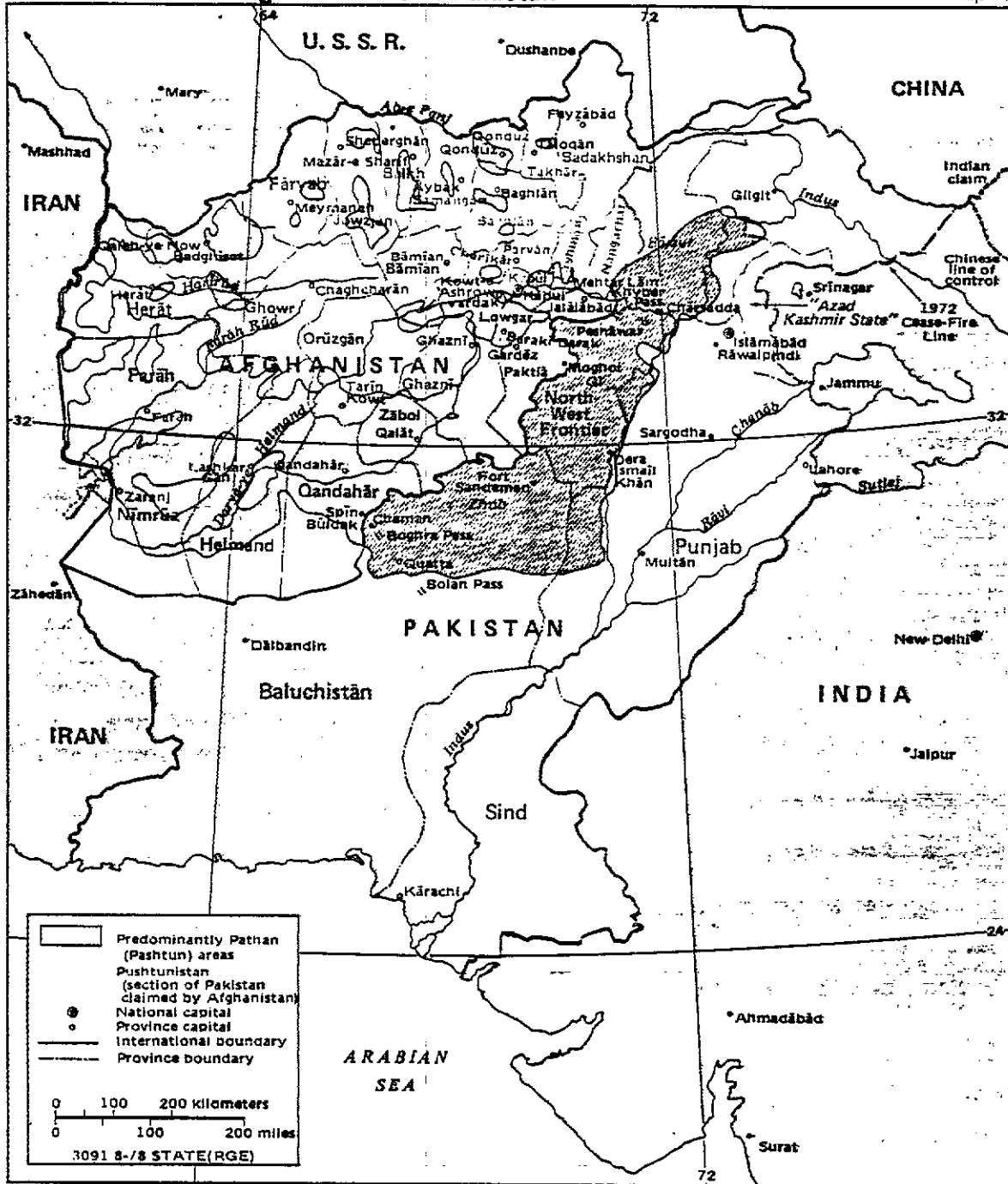
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Pathan Areas and Afghan Claims in Pakistan

Map 1



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Pathan tribesmen such as these (circa 1877) have changed little in the past 100 years

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### History of the Area Prior to 1947

The Pathan Homeland: Inaccessible, Ungovernable. On either side of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border lies a mountainous, undeveloped area inhabited by the Pathans (see Map 1, opposite), a group of tribes speaking a common language called Pushtu or Pukhtu. As frontier dwellers since the Achaemenid empire in the sixth century B.C., Pathans have historically ignored boundaries and continued their traditional patterns of migration, trade, and warfare.

Of an estimated 11 million Pathans at the time of partition in 1947, about 5 million lived in undivided India, mainly in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) in Settled ("Administered") Districts or in Political Agencies (also called Tribal Territories) close to the border. Under British rule, the tribes in the Political Agencies were subject to the political control of the Provincial Governor but generally managed their own internal affairs and strongly resisted British efforts to change the hill country into a "settled" area. The British used allowances to obtain the loyalty of tribal chieftains, fought endless skirmishes, and stationed up to 40,000 regular troops in the NWFP. Despite these efforts, some areas in the Political Agencies were always off limits to British officials and essentially impervious to British law.

The tribes on the Afghanistan side of the Durand Line have been equally difficult to govern. Afghan governments, like their British (and Pakistani) counterparts, have also resorted to subsidies for tribal allegiance; intrigues and rebellions have been commonplace.

Afghan Empires Extend Over "Greater Pushtunistan." Afghan interest in Pushtun areas dates from the 11th century, probably because the Amirs of Afghanistan were Pushtuns. (Although the Pushtuns constituted a minority of the population, the other tribal groups--Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkomans, and Hazaras--were so fragmented that the Pushtun plurality was able to retain its authority.) The Pushtun Amirs actually ruled the NWFP from 1747 to 1834. Peshawar was their winter capital and remains the cultural capital of the Pushtuns/Pathans (Kabul itself lies in a Persian-speaking area). The last King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, and the late President

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Mohammad Daoud were descendants of the last Afghan governor of Peshawar.

Even after the Pathan homeland was divided, Pathans on the British side of the Durand Line retained influence in Afghanistan. For instance, in 1929 a Pushtun/Pathan armed expedition removed an unpopular Afghan Amir and put its own candidate on the throne. (President Nur Mohammad Taraki is also a Pushtun but not of the royal clan.)

British Strategic Interest in Creating a Boundary. The UK fought two wars with Afghanistan (1838-42 and 1878-80) in an attempt to counter Russian designs on the area. From 1843 to 1896, through a series of military excursions, treaties, and annexations, the British gradually seized control of what is now Pakistan and established the NWFP in 1895. By the end of the period, the anti-British intrigues of the Amir of Afghanistan with the frontier tribesmen had led the UK to seek demarcation of spheres of influence in tribal territory.

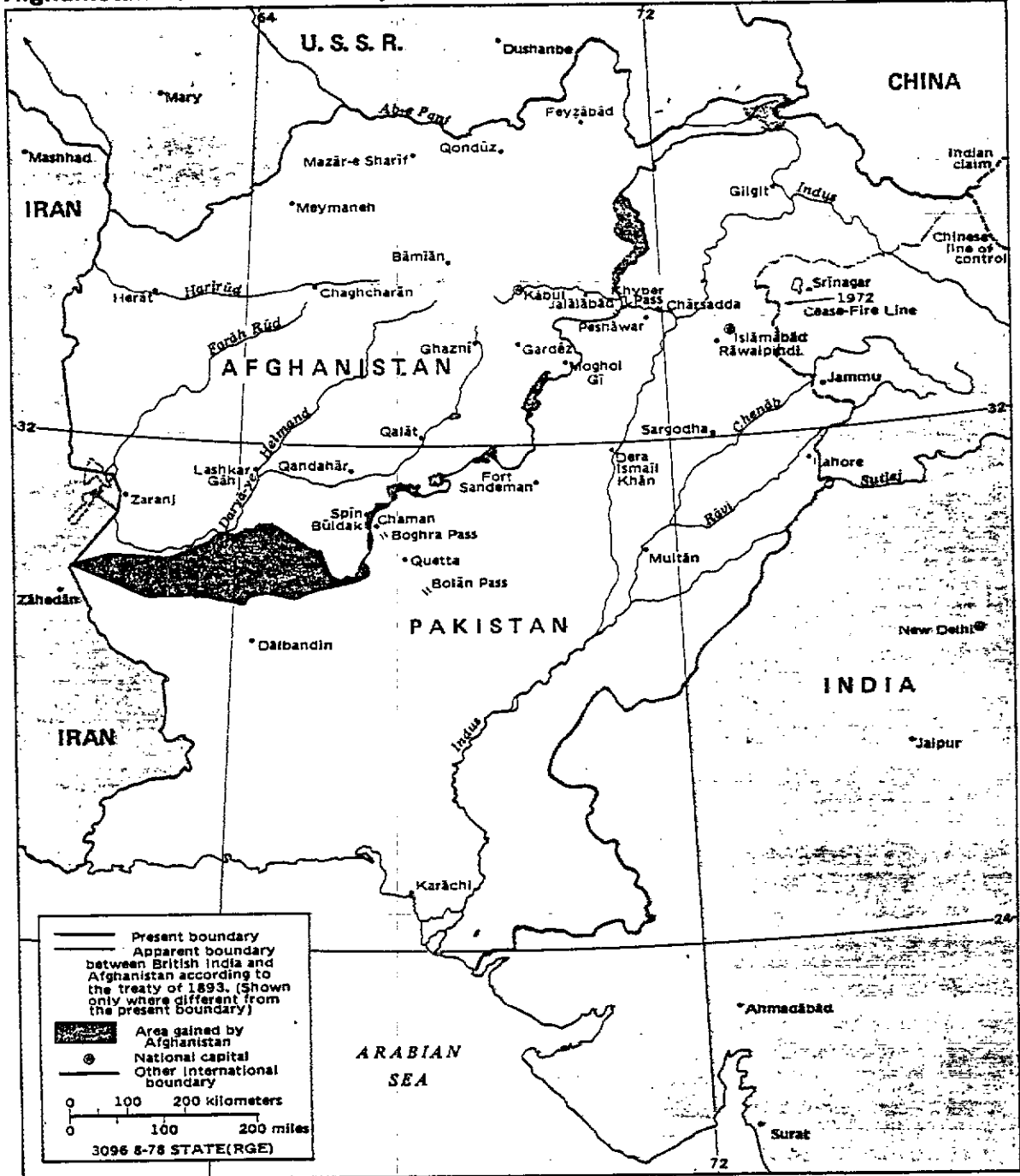
The British wanted to:

- facilitate the governing of the border regions;
- stop the raiding parties and "outrages" of Afghan tribes;
- establish control over the mountain passes into British India; and
- create a stable buffer state between British dominions and tsarist Russia.

Accordingly, in 1893 Abdur Rahman Khan, an Afghan Amir who was anxious to stop British expansion into tribal areas and whose position had been weakened by internal revolt, accepted a treaty demarcating British and Afghan "spheres of influence." The treaty provided that a boundary line surveyed by a British mission under Sir Henry Mortimer Durand would constitute "the frontier of His Highness's dominions" and that neither government would "exercise interference" in territories on the other side of the line.

Drawing Up the Durand Line. Attempting to follow the inaccurate map that accompanied the agreement, mixed commissions demarcated the line in some places and surveyed it in others in 1894, 1895, and 1896. This boundary, about 1,420 miles long and stretching from Iran to China, for much of

Afghanistan-Pakistan Boundary



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its length follows the water divide atop a chain of mountains subsidiary to the main Hindu Kush. Between 1893 and 1932, almost 100 border adjustments were made between British India and Afghanistan. (See Map 2, opposite.)

So many inaccuracies were found in the original maps and subsequent adjustments that the line was later called the "apparent boundary between British India and Afghanistan." The Afghans vaguely reaffirmed the original agreement in treaties with the British in 1905 and 1919, and in the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921 (itself reaffirmed in 1930). A supplementary British letter to the Treaty of 1921 did, however, recognize the interest of the Afghan Government in the "conditions" of frontier tribes, and each government agreed to inform the other before mounting military expeditions in the area. (Kabul has since pointed to this letter as an admission of Afghanistan's rights.)

A well-known British surveyor observed in 1901 that the Durand Line was "at one point at least seventy miles south of the position assigned to it by the Kabul Agreement. Concession was the ruling spirit of the demarcation." Notwithstanding this British spirit of "concession," the Durand Line defied ethnic and strategic logic. It crudely divided a whole people, splitting clans, tribes, and subtribes, thus calling into question any status it might otherwise have gained as a national frontier. The tribesmen felt--and feel--loyalty to fellow clan members on the other side of the Durand Line, not to non-Pushtun ethnic groups in distant locations in what is ostensibly their nation.

Over time, however, the Durand Line has come to constitute the international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan and is recognized as such by most nations other than Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

#### Political History of Afghan-Pakistani Disputes: 1947-Present

Partition and the Accession of Tribal Territories to Pakistan. The departure of the British from their Indian Empire in 1947 set the stage for the Afghan-Pakistani dispute as well as for the more violent Indian-Pakistani differences. The troubles began with a British-conducted plebiscite that gave the peoples of British India the choice of accession to either India or Pakistan.

The plebiscite was held in Kashmir and in the Administered Districts of the NWFP, but not in the Tribal Territories. The British held that the Tribal Territories were

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part of India, but not part of British India, that British control over those territories would cease with British withdrawal, and that control would not pass to any other government. The position of these territories was analogous to that of the Indian princely states: essentially cast adrift by partition, they were free to accede to India, Pakistan, or a third state (Afghanistan) or to remain independent.

Both before and after Independence Day in August 1947, Pakistani leaders quietly wooed the tribes by promising continuance of British subsidies. Within three months after assuming power, the Pakistani authorities conducted a series of *jirgas* (council meetings) at which all the tribal leaders, on behalf of their peoples, signed documents declaring: "We are part of Pakistan.... The internal management of our tribes will remain as before." During the same period, the rulers of the princely states of the NWFP signed formal treaties of accession to Pakistan.

Afghanistan, which invited several tribal leaders to Kabul, apparently obtained no pledges of allegiance. At the time, the Pathans were preoccupied with aiding the invasion of Kashmir, which put Pakistan in possession of the portion of Kashmir which it still occupies. There was little discontent with the accession to Pakistan. While the Pushtunistan idea was seriously pursued by some individuals, no tribe appears to have committed itself as a unit to the concept.

The plebiscite for the Pathans living in the Administered Districts offered a choice of accession to either Pakistan or India. Frontier advocates of, at a minimum, a greater degree of self-rule for the region (the "Red Shirts," led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan) called for a boycott of the plebiscite as a protest against its limited terms. When the results were tallied, they showed that 51 percent of those eligible had voted and that 99 percent of them had voted for Pakistan. Although the Afghan Government protested that the light vote meant that Pathans were dissatisfied, a provincial election held the previous year in more favorable weather had drawn only 60 percent of the voters. The effectiveness of the boycott has thus been held to have been trifling.

The Afghan Position: "Concern for Pathan Welfare."  
Afghanistan has continued to look upon the Durand Line as an intolerable border forcibly imposed on the country by

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the British. There are several additional reasons, however, why Kabul keeps pushing the issue to lengths that often appear inexplicable to outsiders.

First, the ruling Pushtuns are convinced that they need the goodwill of trans-Durand Pathans to retain power. Although the Pushtuns are estimated to outnumber the other ethnic groups of the country, the edge is very slight. A fulfillment of the most extreme Pushtun aspiration--the annexation of the Pathan areas of Pakistan--would add 5 to 7 million Pathans to Pushtun ranks and ensure their dominance in Afghanistan.

Recalling that the last dynasty of Afghan kings was enthroned with the aid of Pathans from across the border, political analysts generally agree that prolonged tribal opposition--especially if supported by Pakistani Pathans--could eventually topple any government in Kabul. The implicit dependence of Afghan governments on tribal goodwill necessitates constant professions of anxious concern for tribal well-being. Thus, Afghan regimes usually woo the tribes on both sides of the Durand Line by emphasizing that Afghanistan is the Pathan homeland. Conversely, Pakistan, whose tribesmen constitute only around 10 percent of the population, seeks to play down the differences between Pathans, Punjabis, Baluch, and Sindhis in the interest of national unity.

Second, the Pushtuns are concerned with the welfare and status of tribal culture and perceive indifference or animosity toward it from Pakistani rulers.

Third, Kabul has pursued the ploy of trying to obtain material benefits by playing off Great Powers against each other.

Afghan irredentist urges are documented in such statements as that of Afghan Chief of Staff Ghani on February 15, 1950 (obtained clandestinely): "Sind is our border and we must have it." Similarly, in May 1978, the new Afghan Minister for Frontier Regions asserted that Afghanistan's eastern boundary was the River Indus. Map 1 shows the maximum Afghan claim for the "independent state of Pakhtoonistan" as including the NWFP and Baluchistan. (The Baluch are not ethnic Pathans, but the fact that some Pathans live in Baluchistan, coupled with the tribal nature of inhabitants of Baluchistan, has led Kabul to include Baluchistan routinely in its claims for Pushtunistan.)

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Afghanistan has made at least two diplomatic attempts to restore its influence over all tribal territory around the Durand Line. In the early 1940's, the Afghans asked the British for the return of the Frontier territory or, as an alternative, full autonomy for the area if India were granted independence. The British consistently refused to act on such requests. Soon after the British announced that partition was imminent, the Afghans again asked to be consulted over the future of the tribal areas. The British responded that neither they nor the Government of India could set up a special regime in any territory east of the Durand Line.

Piqued at this rebuff, Afghanistan was the only country to vote against Pakistan's admission to the UN in 1947. (However, the Afghan delegation later explained that it had acted without instructions and withdrew its vote.)

The treatment that the ruling Muslim League government (long identified with the British) was meting out to Pathan leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his Red Shirts also alarmed Kabul. When Ghaffar Khan was secretly arrested in April 1948, the Red Shirts defied a ban on public assembly to gather at Babra, a village in tribal territory near Charsadda, to discuss the arrest. Pakistani authorities reacted by sending in troops, who opened fire, killing more than 40 of the Red Shirts. The following year, Pakistani aircraft went on punitive expeditions against the rebel Faqir of Ipi. (The Faqir, around whom opposition to the creation of Pakistan had centered, was probably in Afghan pay.) The planes violated Afghan airspace and bombed Moghol Gi village (see Map 1), killing 23.

Both incidents prompted loud outbursts of mutual abuse. On July 26, 1949, the Afghan Parliament--for the first of many times--officially repudiated the Durand Line as embodied in treaties concluded with Britain.

Then and now, the question of what Afghanistan actually expects to achieve by repudiating the Durand Line and espousing "self-determination" in Pushtunistan has been the subject of much debate. Kabul's demands have ranged from complete political independence for the Pakistani tribesmen (although not for Afghan tribesmen) to merely a more independent voice for Pathans within the Pakistani political framework. All the while, Afghanistan has been quick to complain about any Pakistani intrusion into its territory over the Durand Line, although it repudiates that same line.

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The Pakistani Position: "It's None of Your Business."  
Pakistan claims sovereignty over the disputed area on grounds that Pakistan inherited the British administered territories and that the unadministered tribes and princely states of the NWFP joined the nation voluntarily by written treaty and instruments of accession. However, successive Pakistani governments have greatly irritated Kabul by refusing to acknowledge that any problem has existed. They also have charged Kabul with interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, arrested Pathan leaders for sedition, mounted military actions against tribesmen in Baluchistan and the NWFP, and closed the Afghan transit links through Karachi and Quetta.

In the process, the Government of Pakistan probably has worsened its relations with its own tribesmen in the NWFP and Baluchistan. While some Pathans espoused the formation of a Pushtu-speaking administrative division within Pakistan, more often it was heavyhanded government administration that exacerbated tribal restiveness. Underlying Pakistan's refusal to tolerate Afghanistan's interest in the welfare of ethnic kinsmen in Pakistan (a right Pakistan claims for itself in the case of Kashmir) was a fear that Soviet or Afghan-supported tribal unrest could break up Pakistan.

Periods of Stress: 1950-51, 1955, 1960-61, 1973, 1978.  
The Pushtunistan issue has never become completely quiescent. Except for a period of relative calm in the 1960's, it has flared up every five years since 1950.

The proximate causes of the 1950-51 period of stress included a series of Afghan grievances over not being consulted about the political destiny of Afghan kinsmen in Pakistan and over the Pakistani "massacres" at Babra and Moghol Gi. The period was marked by themes that would become a familiar pattern over the years:

- Transit interference:* In January 1950, Pakistan barred border transit of gasoline and diesel fuel, alleging safety regulation violations by Afghan truckers. (The Afghans then turned to the USSR, signed a trade treaty in July 1950, and imported gasoline from the Soviets.)
- Propaganda:* Much of the "war" was fought with government-controlled media. Kabul began referring to the NWFP and Baluchistan as "Northern and Southern

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Pushtunistan." Kabul newspapers carried accounts of the formation of Pushtunistan "state assemblies" in Pakistan. The Faqir of Ipi was proclaimed as the President of Pushtunistan, and the "Waziristan Assembly" as the central government. Pakistani retorts compared Afghan neglect of "backward" Pushtuns with benefits that Pathans enjoyed owing to Karachi's munificence. Both sides banned each other's newspapers.

- Harboring of fugitives:* Besides the usual agent buying and cross-border intrigue, Pakistan allowed ex-King Amanullah's brother, Amin Jan, to reside in Waziristan for seven years. The proximity of this pretender to the throne irritated the Afghan ruler and brought sharp protests.
- Military movements and skirmishes:* In October 1950, an Afghan *lashkar* (expeditionary force of tribesmen or irregulars) sallied into Pakistani Baluchistan in what was said to be an effort to capture the Boghra pass leading to Quetta. The expedition was repulsed. Pakistan, which had moved most of its troops out of NWFP at independence to show that the Frontier was an integral part of Pakistan, moved some regulars back into the Khyber area.
- Harassment of diplomats:* Pakistani diplomats in Kabul complained of the hostile public attitude and the restrictions on their movements.

The 1955 crisis was also precipitated by heightened Afghan concern over the political status of the Pathans in Pakistan. On March 27, the Government of Pakistan announced its intention to institute "One-Unit" rule, whereby the four provinces of West Pakistan would be amalgamated into one (to balance the more populous Province of East Pakistan). The Afghan Government perceived this as a disinheritance of the minority Pathans--who would lose the bargaining power and leverage of a separate province--and a threat to their cultural identity. Afghan Prime Minister Daoud warned on March 28 that there would be "grave consequences" if the One-Unit plan were effected.

The next day, an Afghan mob ransacked the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul, desecrated the Pakistani flag, and raised the Pushtunistan flag over the Embassy. On the following day, a mob attacked the Pakistani Consulate in Jalalabad.

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Pakistan retaliated unofficially with a mob attack on the Afghan Consulate in Peshawar and officially by closing all its consulates and asking Afghanistan to do the same. (Embassies remained open.) Normal diplomatic relations between the two countries were not resumed until 1957.

Besides the diplomatic harassment, the crisis was marked by:

- Transit interference:* Pakistan closed Afghan trade agencies in border areas, partially blocking Afghanistan's trade routes. Once again the Soviets stepped in, and another Afghan-Soviet transit agreement was signed in June 1955. The dispute was settled in September, but by that time the Afghans had shifted much of their trade to other routes.
- Military skirmishes:* After the closure of its trade agencies, the Afghan Government mobilized troops and called up reserves. An Afghan raiding party fired on some Pakistani militia in Zhob, Baluchistan, prompting the Pakistanis to bomb raider hideouts in Afghanistan.
- Third-country mediation:* A new element in this crisis was the extensive involvement of third countries. In May 1955, both sides accepted the mediation of five Arab nations, led by Saudi Arabia, but the Saudi proposals were rejected in June. King Zahir then wrote to President Eisenhower asking for his intervention; the President declined and suggested bilateral talks to work out differences. In December, Khrushchev and Bulganin paid a three-day visit to Kabul and announced a large loan, trade agreements, and (for the first time) political support for the Afghan position on Pushtunistan.
- Propaganda:* The level of radio invective heightened. In November 1955, an Afghan Loya Jirgah (a national council) called for a plebiscite and refused to recognize Pakistani sovereignty over "Pushtunistan."

In the late 1950's, President Ayub (newly come to power) tried to integrate the tribal areas more fully into Pakistan, rekindling Afghan concerns about the status of the Pathans. At the same time, Prime Minister Daoud ran into opposition from his own tribesmen for his efforts to strengthen central control over the tribes through such measures as conscrip-

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tion, taxation, and transportation development. Relations again deteriorated.

A real crisis loomed after the failure of talks between President Ayub and Afghan Foreign Minister Naim in Karachi in January 1960. Naim indicated that Kabul would be satisfied merely "to hear that the Pathans were happy," but he did not specify what that meant. Ayub responded by denouncing Afghan interventionism (insulting Naim's Afghan pride). The result was a resumption of vigorous Afghan propaganda, returned in full by Pakistan.

The familiar pattern emerged:

- Propaganda*: During this period, Naim injected a new extreme in hard-line irredentist statements by declaring that Afghans had been deprived of their homeland by British and Pakistani "colonialists." He demanded self-determination for the Pushtuns. Kabul radio attacked the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).
- Military actions*: The most serious military action between the two countries in 30 years occurred in September 1960 in Bajaur, a virtual no-man's land of unadministered territory comprising several princely states. Both countries had been maneuvering for advantage, and several skirmishes had taken place between pro-Afghan and pro-Pakistani princes. Afghanistan moved troops to the frontier and then sent about 6,000 armed tribesmen into Pakistan to "negotiate" a dispute over roadbuilding in the area. The Pakistanis ambushed the force, killing 400-600 Afghans. The incident was a serious loss of face for Kabul and allowed Pakistan to remove a pro-Afghan *nawab* (prince) and improve its control of the area.
- Diplomatic harassment*: In March 1960, Kabul put Pakistani diplomats under heavy surveillance and arrested some local employees of the embassy. In August 1961, after publishing a white paper on the harassment and difficulties facing its diplomats, Pakistan withdrew them from Afghanistan.
- Transit interference*: Afghanistan reacted to the break in diplomatic relations by unilaterally sealing the border on September 6, 1961, just as the Afghan fruit crop was ready for export. The Soviets stepped

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in and airlifted the fruit to its destination. Trade relations between Kabul and Moscow then expanded even further.

--*Third-country mediation:* Khrushchev visited Kabul again in March 1960, at which time he announced that the USSR's sympathies were with Afghanistan. (President Eisenhower had paid a six-hour visit to Kabul in December 1959, but King Zahir later complained that the visit had brought no understanding by the West of Afghanistan's problems.) President Kennedy sent a mission to Afghanistan in late 1961 to try to mediate a reopening of the ruptured transit facilities, but the initiative failed. In July 1962, the Shah of Iran offered to mediate, but his efforts did not bear fruit until he got both sides together in Tehran in May 1963, after Daoud resigned the prime ministership. As a result of the negotiations, the two countries agreed to reopen their borders and resume diplomatic relations. The period was also marked by a bizarre plan by President Ayub to federate Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.

The 1961 border closure lasted almost two years, affecting the seasonal migration of Pushtun herdsmen--Afghan Kuchi (also called Powindah)--who traditionally winter in Pakistan. Pakistan ignored established practice and refused to permit the nomads to enter without passports and visas. For its part, Afghanistan would not issue travel documents to the nomads because that would imply acceptance of the Durand Line as an international boundary. The USSR again came to the rescue by providing the herdsmen with clothing, food, and fodder for their animals. (Although the passport requirement was not abolished, the Powindahs were again permitted to enter Pakistan without passports between 1963 and 1973.)

The entire issue simmered, apart from a temporary increase in propaganda in 1967-68, for the next 10 years. In July 1973, newly installed President Daoud raised the Pushtunistan issue on the day of his takeover. His determination to do so was probably intensified by President Bhutto's removal of popularly elected (tribal-led) governments in Baluchistan and the NWFP and by army repression in Baluchistan. The earlier themes returned:

--*Propaganda:* The media war escalated. Afghan diplomats alleged publicly and privately that Pakistan was encouraging "provocations" against the new

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regime. Afghanistan attacked Pakistan at the non-aligned summit meeting in Algiers in September for repression in Baluchistan and called for a return of all Pathans to "the fatherland."

- Transit disturbances:* Pakistan clamped down on Powindah movement again for a few months.
- Military actions:* Afghanistan arrested and detained a party of Pakistani Frontier Scouts which had "strayed" across the border. Pakistan deployed its forces closer to the border, occupied camps and cantonments abandoned since 1947, and reactivated a dormant army roadbuilding project close to the border.
- Fugitives:* Kabul offered safe haven to Ajmal Khattak, a revolutionary Pathan poet and Secretary General of the National Awami Party (NAP). (He still resides there.) The Afghans also protested Pakistan's arrest of Wali Khan and many of his fellow NAP members.

The 1973 spat was shorter and milder than previous contretemps. By 1976, Daoud and Bhutto, through a series of visits and goodwill gestures, had moved a long way toward a settlement.

On April 28, 1978, at a time when relations were better than they had been for 30 years, Daoud was overthrown. The coup brought to power a leftist coalition party (the People's Democratic Party, led by Noor Mohammad Taraki) which had made Pushtunistan a primary plank of its party platform for 10 years or more. The actual extent of the regime's commitment to Pushtunistan remains unclear. It is possible that the regime hopes to use the issue primarily as a distraction from its internal weaknesses and its "godlessness."

In any case, events have fallen again into predictable patterns:

- Propaganda:* Radio Kabul has begun referring again to "Northern and Southern Pushtunistan." Foreign Minister Amin raised the Pushtunistan problem at the non-aligned meeting in Havana last July, and Afghanistan has complained of provocation and encouragement of guerrillas by Pakistan.
- Military maneuvering:* There have been low-grade military alerts on both sides, and the Afghans have

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shifted some units to positions closer to Pakistan to cope with rebellious tribes in Paktia, Konarha, and Nangarhar (see Map 1). An Afghan MiG recently landed "accidentally" in Pakistan, but was returned.

In comparison with past Pakistani-Afghan crises, the dispute in 1978 has been more restrained and has escalated more slowly, in part because the usual apparent cause for tense relations--Afghanistan's reaction to perceived threats to Pakistani Pathans--is not present to the previous degree. A Pakistani move against the Pathans, such as military action in the NWFP or Baluchistan, or imprisonment of tribal leaders, could seriously escalate the dispute.

Recent Afghan allegations of Pakistani meddling are probably due to continuing low-level rebellions in the tribal provinces along the Pakistan border. Although Islamabad does not appear to be encouraging this activity, it is probable that some rebel Afghan Pushtuns find safe haven and aid among Pathans across the border. The Taraki government may also see a need to play the popular Pushtunistan theme to win over the Afghan Pushtuns while tribal opposition to the new government remains high.

The US Position: Recognition of the Durand Line as an International Boundary. Over the years, both Pakistan and Afghanistan have attempted to enlist US support for their differing claims in the Durand Line/Pushtunistan dispute. The US position has been one of encouraging the two countries to settle their differences bilaterally in the interests of regional harmony and stability.

In 1956 the US did, however, take a public position supporting Pakistan's claim to territory up to the Durand Line, largely in reaction to Soviet calls in late 1955 for self-determination for Pushtunistan. On March 8, 1956, SEATO Council members, including the US, meeting in Karachi issued a communique that stated:

"Insofar as these [Soviet] statements referred to 'Pakhtoonistan' the members of the Council severally declared that their governments recognized that the sovereignty of Pakistan extends up to the Durand Line, the international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan...."

While the US has made no other public statements on the Durand Line, it has given several private diplomatic assurances to both Afghanistan and Pakistan, telling them that

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the US recognizes the Durand Line as an international boundary.

- November 27, 1950: Assistant Secretary of State McGhee told the Pakistani Ambassador to Washington that a US public statement would be "inappropriate," but that the US considered acknowledgment of Pakistan's international boundary "implicit" in the prompt US recognition of Pakistan in 1947 and in the US attitude toward the dispute since that time.
- September 29, 1960: US Ambassador Byroade told Afghan Prime Minister Daoud that the US was committed to recognition of the Durand Line and asked him to exercise caution in that year's flare-up. On September 30, the State Department instructed Ambassador Rountree in Karachi to inform Pakistan of Byroade's demarche.
- September 1961: President Kennedy sent Ambassador Livingston Merchant to both countries to attempt to patch up transit links. The Merchant mission left the area after a three-week visit, unable to overcome the intransigence of either party.
- November 1974: Secretary of State Kissinger reminded Daoud and Naim of the long tradition of close US-Pakistani ties and of the US commitment to Pakistan's integrity. The Secretary avoided direct mention of the Durand Line but noted that any territorial change seemed impossible short of war. Daoud assured him that Afghanistan had no territorial designs on Pakistan.
- August 1978: US Ambassador Hummel privately reiterated the 1956 SEATO commitment to the Pakistani Government, noting that the US remains committed to Pakistan's territorial integrity.

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