

**SIX**

**CHAPTER**

**THE  
PAKHTUNISTAN  
DEMAND—A GAME?**

## The Pakhtunistan Demand — A Game ?

“All Pakhtuns, from Kandahar to Attock are one and the same overtly and covertly in respect of *Nang* (sense of honour)”

(Khushal Khan Khattak)

In September 1953, the change of government in Kabul marked the end of an era—the era of conservative *Kaka's* (uncle's) rule, the end of *Musahiban* brothers as a consequence of the tussle between the old and the new generation within the royal family of Afghanistan. The change took place within the frame-work of the Second Afghan Constitution of 1931, and involved no change of ruler. Muhammad Zahir Khan Continued to reign, while Prime Minister Shah Mahmud Khan was replaced by General Muhammad Daud Khan, son of Sardar Muhammad Aziz Khan who was murdered in Berlin in 1933. Daud was a member of the first generation of Afghans, who had received part of their training in the West. He was a cousin and brother-in-law of the King and had served the country as a Minister of Defence, Minister of Interior, Ambassador to Paris, Governor of various provinces, and Commander of the *Markazi-Quaa* (Central Forces) in Kabul. By temperament and training, Daud Khan was of an “authoritarian habit of mind<sup>1</sup>” with a democratic show and

his administration was markedly less liberal than that of Shah Mahmud. Daud, once a member of the Young Afghans Party, supporter of the *Wikh-Zalmiyan* (The Awakened Youth) Organisation, the *Klop-i-Milli* or National Club, a champion of Pakhtunistan issue within the Parliament and outside, well known to the people, as an ardent nationalist had the "reputation for hard work and honesty."<sup>2</sup> To many non-Pakhtuns in Afghanistan he was *Sardar-e-Dewana* (the Mad Chief<sup>3</sup>). Daud Khan, the young King, other youngsters of the royal family and the young educated Afghans were critical of the policies of the previous administration. Their points of opposition were:

- (a) The sluggishness of the Helmand Valley project,
- (b) Inclination of Shah Mahmud's government towards the West both politically and economically without gains,
- (c) Inadequate official support for the Pakhtunistan issue,
- (d) Lethargy, stagnation, slowness of economic progress and social reforms.

All these political, economic and social issues and problems were exploited by Daud Khan for his own ends. Daud Khan and the King were convinced that, in view of the progress made in the neighbouring countries, the Yahya Khels could not continue in power for much longer unless they could offer the people of Afghanistan reasonable prospects of progress towards a better way of life.

Daud's administration promised not only to pursue the Pakhtunistan campaign with greater vigour but also to accelerate the country's economic development and modernisation. The rise of Daud Khan in 1953, coincided

with drastic regional and international changes: Joseph Stalin died (1953) and Khrushchev emerged as the new leader of Soviet Union with a policy of "co-existence" in response to the Cold War. Hydrogen bomb was exploded and channelled their foreign aid to the non-Communist countries. Eisenhower became the US President (1952) and John Foster Dulles (US Secretary of State) expounded his "roll back" Russian Policy. Korean War (1950-1953) ended involving both Soviet Union and USA. Fidel Castro made his debut in Cuba (1953), Dr. Mussadiq fell in Iran and in Pakistan Muhammad Ali Bogra became Prime Minister.<sup>4</sup>

The foreign and domestic policies that were launched almost immediately by the new government were radically different from the traditional policy of the past regimes and reflected the new generation's aspiration for rapid reforms, development, modernisation and struggle for achievement of Pakhtunistan —the lost Pakhtun land to Imperialist Britain and after 1947 to Pakistan. What the Pakhtunistan issue really was and how it was exploited by different individuals, parties, governments and states, how the Pakhtunistan issue became a national question in Afghanistan and a legal problem in the British India and after the partition of India, a bone of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan are such questions that need to be answered but to understand this complicated issue one should know about the genesis of the Pakhtunistan issue.

## II

Like the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the Pakhtunistan dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan is the legacy of British Colonialism and Imperialism. The genesis<sup>5</sup> of the Pakhtunistan problem predates the Durand Agreement of 1893 and the Gandamak

Treaty of May 26, 1879 between Afghanistan and British India. The Durand agreement, instead of solving the border problem, envisaged more complications for Afghanistan by an arbitrary division of the Pakhtun tribes inhabiting between Afghanistan and the British India.

The ruling dynasties of Afghanistan have been of Pakhtun stock and they therefore, bitterly resented and resisted what they considered to be an amputation.

As a result, successive Afghan governments have taken every opportunity presented by fluctuation of Power in the Indian subcontinent to assert claims for the autonomy of their "brothers" across the Durand Line.<sup>6</sup>

After the Round table Conference of 1930, the Afghan government anticipated the establishment of a responsible government in India. They expected that the British hold on India would be gradually relaxed and the British might not be averse to the return of the tribal areas and the NWFP to Afghanistan, probably with a view to weakening India. According to *Sardar Najibullah Khan's* broadcast, the Afghan government requested the "British government between 1931 and 1934 that the territories inhabited by the trans-border Afghans should not be considered a part of India."<sup>7</sup> When the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed by the British Parliament, the Afghan government was apparently convinced that the transfer of real power of India was far off. Therefore, they apparently did nothing until Cripps's visit to India in 1942, when they again anticipated an early transfer of power in India. They pressed their old demands again "in more explicit terms" according to Najibullah Khan, "but the only reply given by the British government appears to have been that they were at liberty

to take up this matter when constitutional changes took place in India.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1944, when the Allies victory (in the Second World War) seemed certain and the British departure from India appeared inevitable, the Afghan government had informed the British rulers that the former hoped to be consulted “should a change occur affecting the fate of the Pashtuns living east and south of the Durand Line.”<sup>9</sup> The reply was not encouraging. However, certain statements made later by Lord Mountbatten (the last Viceroy of India) were construed by the Afghans as implying that the views with regard to the future status of the Pakhtun areas would be sought when independence was granted to India.<sup>10</sup>

Besides diplomatic gestures, the Afghan government made connection with tribal chiefs and the leaders of the *Khudai-Khidmatgar Tehrek*. According to Amir Nawaz Jalia, a relative of Khan brothers (A. G. K. & Dr. Khan Sahib) and prominent *Khudai-Kidmatgar*, “by 1942 when the World War ii was going very badly for the British and Japan was threatening India, a deputation from Kabul came to Faizabad (the village where Fazal Wahid alias Haji of Turangzai had lived) and met about thirty people. They discussed what should be done in case of a British defeat. It was decided to send a message to the British that they should not defend the frontier; the Pakhtuns would defend themselves. A resolution was adopted to the effect that “from the Indus to the Oxus and then to Quetta all Afghans were the same people”. Later on the Pakhtunistan protagonists also had a meeting at Shabqadar (a town in between Peshawar and Mohmand Agency). One Haji Muhammad Amin was in the fore-front of this Pakhtunistan Movement and received money for it from Afghanistan.”<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, in the spring of 1946, Abdul Ghaffar Khan strongly opposed the Cabinet Mission Plan of three "Groups" for India on the plea that "in the proposed plan his province being grouped with the Punjab, as he feared, would lead to the Pakhtuns being dominated by the Punjabis."<sup>12</sup> Dr. Khan Sahib, the brother of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who raised the question of Frontier during Mountbatten's visit<sup>13</sup> to the Frontier again emphasised to the members of the Cabinet Mission that they would never join Pakistan. If "India was to be partitioned, the NWFP should become independent."<sup>14</sup> Dr. Khan (the then Chief Minister) further stated on 21st December 1946, in New Delhi "the Frontier People will have their independence and nobody can force them to join any one."<sup>15</sup>

I.I. Chundrigar, Pakistan's Ambassador in Kabul reported the links of Afghan government with Abdul Ghaffar Khan by stating in the confidential *Annual Report on Afghanistan for 1948*: "Abdul Majeed Khan, the Minister of National Economy, who was one of the principal sponsors of the Pakhtunistan Movement, invited Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (of NWFP) to Kabul, during the *Jeshan* celebration of 1946. His idea was to arrange for support of his movement from the NWFP. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan arrived here but his idea was to use Afghan propoganda machinery and Afghan money to support his own movement of Pathanistan and he had no intention of merging the North West Frontier Province or the tribal area, in Afghanistan. It is further reported that Abdul Majeed Khan "in sponsoring the Pathanistan Movement was to create chaos in Afghanistan which may lead to the over-throw of the present Royal dynasty and the establishment of a Republic. He nourished the ambition of becoming the President of the Afghan Republic."<sup>16</sup>

On 20th February 1947, the British Prime Minister (Attlee) made an important declaration that British India be given independence by June 1948. The All-India Congress and the British Viceroy agreed with the Muslim League that independence be given on the basis of the partition of the subcontinent, guaranteeing the Muslims of India their own separate state. On June 3, 1947, the partition agreement about the future of India was endorsed by the British Parliament "with the provision that a plebiscite in British India (but not the Princely States) should give the population the choice of joining Hindu India or Muslim Pakistan". The Princely or native states had three alternatives; (1) join India (2) join Pakistan, or (3) remain independent for a specified period until a decision could be made to join India or Pakistan.<sup>17</sup> The case of the NWFP would be determined by a referendum enabling it to join one of the new states.

It is reported that protest conferences were held in Kabul and by 9th June 1947, Afghan Government demanded of the British Government that the people of NWFP should be given the option to form their own independent state or to accede to any other government.<sup>18</sup> But the British Government again turned down their demands. This virtually meant that instead of two, the following four options should be given to the people of the North West Frontier Province at the time of the referendum:

- 1: Formation of an independent state;
- 2: Accession to Pakistan;
- 3: Accession to India, or
- 4: Accession to Afghanistan.

Qazi Attaullah, a prominent *Khudai-Khidmatgar* and Revenue Minister of NWFP raised the demand for

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Pakhtunistan for the first time in Public by saying: "...First of all we want to have an independent sovereign state of Pathans...."<sup>19</sup> and a few days later Dr. Khan Sahib said at a press conference: "...Pathans will never be dominated by anybody but in sovereign state of NWFP."<sup>20</sup>

As a further step Mr. Girdhari Lal Puri, the then Deputy Speaker of the Frontier Legislative Assembly, was sent by Abdul Ghaffar Khan to Kabul in June 1947, "to get Afghan aid in the Red Shirt's Propaganda for Pathanistan."<sup>21</sup> He came in contact with the Press Department and supplied some material for Afghan Propaganda in favour of Pakhtunistan Movement. Sir Gils Squire (the British Minister in Kabul), however, made a strong representation to the Afghan Government and Mr. Puri was asked to leave the country after some time.<sup>22</sup>

The same G.L. Puri had been appointed as Cultural Secretary by the Indian Government and posted in the Indian Embassy in Kabul in June 1948. Puri tried his best to utilise his old connections and especially tried to get in touch with the press department of the Afghan Government. He supplied material against Pakistan and in support of Pakhtunistan.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile Mitha Singh, a notorious *Ghadrist* leader, who was in jail in Afghanistan for nearly 15 years was released. He opened a cafe in the Kabul bazaar and his cafe as reported "was a rendezvous of anti-Pakistan elements."<sup>24</sup>

On June 21, 1947 a party meeting of different political groups was convened at Bannu. The following resolution was adopted:

"A joint meeting of the Provincial *jirga* (Frontier Province Congress Committee), [Congress], members of the Assembly, Commanders of the *Khudai*-

*Khidmatgar* and the *Zalmy-Pakhtun*) was held on the 21st of June 1947 at Bannu with Amir Muhammad Khan in the chair. This joint session unanimously decided that here in this country an independent government of all the Pakhtuns should be established, the constitution of which shall be based on Islamic Principles, democracy, equality and social justice. This session appeals to all Pakhtuns to come together on one platform to achieve this noble aim and not to bow before the power of any body except that of the Pakhtuns."<sup>25</sup>

The Afghan attitude obviously increased the bargaining value and position of the Pakhtun leaders in the Frontier but like the Afghan Government's demands, the British Government rejected the demand of the *Khudai-Khidmatgars*, who consequently boycotted the referendum.

The Polling for referendum began on July 6 and ended about ten days later with the following results:

Total number of votes cast	292,118.
Votes for Pakistan	289,244.
Votes for India	2,874.
Total electorate	572,798.
Turn out in percentage	51.00. <sup>26</sup>

The tribal elders, as officially reported, opted for accession of the tribal Agencies to Pakistan. The Pakhtun leaders in the Frontier rejected the results of the referendum. The Afghans, however, were unimpressed by the seeming one sidedness of the result, declared the referendum and the tribal *Jirgas* null and void.

Pakistan and India got independence in August 1947, and NWFP became part of the former on the basis of the referendum. Thus the Pakhtun problem became a preoccupation of the new state of Pakistan, which historically had no part in creating that troublesome situation<sup>27</sup> but inherited it from the British. The Afghan Press media started anti-Pakistan and pro-Pakhtunistan Propaganda campaign, which was countered by Pakistani media with attacks on the Afghan monarchy and members of the royal family.

It was in the midst of the mounting tension in Afghan-Pakistan relations that Pakistan applied for membership to the United Nations in September 1947. Afghanistan was the only state that cast a negative vote in the matter. The shift in Policy was perhaps the talks, scheduled to be held in November in Karachi between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Afghanistan withdrew its negative vote on October 20, 1947. Besides diplomatic initiatives and Propaganda for Pakhtunistan, the Afghan Government changed its tactics. Its altered stand was that they did not want the annexation of any territory but merely claimed to take interest in the welfare of their brethren "living between the Durand Line and the River Indus."<sup>28</sup> Toward the end of November 1947, the Afghan government sent Sardar Najibullah Khan to Karachi for a series of conversations with Pakistani authorities. Najibullah stressed the Afghan concern over the fate of the Pakhtuns east of the Durand Line and requested a declaration of Pakistan's intentions in this area. During negotiation, Pakistani authorities "verbally convinced the Afghan Envoy"<sup>29</sup> that Pakhtun autonomy would be respected. This verbal assurance was followed by a letter of "necessary assurances" from Pakistan Foreign Ministry to the Kabul Government.<sup>30</sup> But soon the friendly gestures were again clouded with misunderstanding

between Kabul and Karachi with the arrest of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother in June 1948 by the Pakistan Government and military action in the tribal area. Despite this tense situation Pakistan and Afghanistan exchanged ambassadors in February 1948. As the Afghans were disillusioned about Pakistan's intention, they intensified their support for the Pakhtunistan Movement. There was four-Pronged offensive reported by Pakistan diplomats against Pakistan from the Afghan Government: Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Party in the NWFP, the Faqir of Ippi and the Government of India were acting as instigators and suppliers of money through the Indian Embassy in Kabul.<sup>31</sup> India financed the "Pakhtunistan Project" liberally to detract the new government of Pakistan's attention from its claim and war on the Muslim populated area of Indian held Kashmir and perhaps to sooth the injured feelings of the Pakhtun leaders of the Frontier Province. G.L. Puri, once the reporter for *Hindustan Times* and Deputy Speaker of Frontier Legislative Assembly was stationed at Kabul to feed the Afghan Press and information media on this issue.<sup>32</sup>

On May 23, 1948 when Pakistani ambassador arrived in Kabul, he found the Pakhtunistan propaganda going on in full swing and three days later (May 26) the king in his inaugural speech in the *Shura-i-Milli* referred to the Pakhtunistan issue in the following words:

"...The Afghan nation welcomed and viewed with utmost gratification the establishment of the Dominions of Pakistan and India and the Afghan Government did not fail in exerting their best efforts to take up the matter of our Afghan brethren living the Government of Great Britain and the newly set-

up Government of Pakistan... whilst we have openly declared our desire to set up an Embassy of Afghanistan in Karachi, with a view to cementing the relation of friendship and "Bon Voisinage" with Pakistan... We earnestly hope that whatever assurances have been explicitly given in regard to our Afghan brethren will be duly implemented."<sup>33</sup>

Pakistan's ambassador after meeting with Afghan Prime Minister and other authorities including royal family members in Kabul, inter-alia explained to them "the full implications of the Pakhtuns demand and also its likely repercussions...." Regarding Kabul's demand to take interest in the welfare of the people of the North West Frontier Province and the Tribal Areas, it was pointed out to them that consistently with their claim, they will have to concede a similar right to the people of the NWFP to take interest in the welfare of the people of Afghanistan. Was it not likely, for instance, that they might tell the people of Afghanistan that there was no responsible government here, that there was a monarchy... that the people had no voice in the government.... If such a Propaganda was carried on, it was bound to create unrest among the people of Afghanistan which might not be to the liking of the Afghan Government and the ruling dynasty...."<sup>34</sup>

In a few months, the Pakistani ambassador succeeded in his diplomatic mission for the time being through meetings with the members of the royal family and by creating disunity in them regarding the Pakhtunistan issue. Even before him the Britishers tamed and frightened Nadir Khan by presenting the thesis that if he would to co-operate with the Pakhtun leaders, who were struggling for democracy, independence, political and social reforms, the same if spread to Afghanistan will ruin the ruling dynasty.

The expected fear of the democracy and reforms and the resultant public awareness was a menace for the ruling dynasty of Afghanistan consequently at least it convinced Sardar Muhammad Hashim Khan, who according to a reliable report, told the king that the Pakhtunistan policy of the Afghan Government was likely to ruin Afghanistan, particularly the ruling dynasty, and that this Policy should be revised in the interest of the Royal family and the country. Gradually Shah Muhammad Khan, the Prime Minister, who was the most ardent advocate of Pakhtunistan modified his government's policy. Besides this, some other factors i.e. the Kashmir War between India and Pakistan and the differences between Afghan Government and Hazrat Noorul Mashaikh of Shore Bazaar, the appearance of Muhammad Amin Jan (Amanullah's brother) in the tribal area led to a change in Afghan policy by the end of 1948.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout this period the Pakhtun leaders and the Faqir of Ippi were active against the Government of Pakistan. It is reported that the Afghan Government and "Indian Embassy in Kabul were fully supporting the cause of Ippi."<sup>36</sup> The mysterious activities of Amin Jan and anti-Kabul elements in the tribal areas once again adversely affected the relaxed relations between Kabul and Karachi. Consequently the Afghan Government relinquished the hope of compromise with Pakistan and intensified their propaganda for the independence of the Pakhtun lands. The independent Pakhtun state of the Pakhtuns would consist of NWFP (called Occupied Pakhtunistan), the Tribal Agencies (Free Pakhtunistan) and some parts of north western Balochistan (inhabited by a mixed Pakhtun-Baloch population). Almost all Afghan government agencies were involved in the Pakhtunistan campaign. On the other hand

Pakistan, though maintained that the matter was of no consequence, retaliated by increasing tribal subsidies, stepping up police activities in the Frontier Province, and releasing a barrage of attacks on Afghanistan from its own press and radio.<sup>37</sup>

In changed situation, Afghanistan's traditional aim and policy of regaining the lost Pakhtun territory evolved into the Pakhtunistan issue, in essence a demand for the constitution of an independent nation, on the basis of the right of self-determination of the Pakhtuns living east and south of the Durand Line. With the political and constitutional changes in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Policy of Afghan Government about the issue evolved further and became more centered on the "restoration and safeguarding of the rights of the Pakhtuns, as defined by the Pakhtuns themselves and their leaders."<sup>38</sup> The Afghan Government further proceeded by convening a *Loya-Jirga* or Grand Assembly (which included the National Assembly) in Kabul on July 26, 1949 to deliberate on the Pakhtunistan policy of the government. The *Jirga* assured its full support to Pakhtunistan and goaded the Afghan government to pursue its realisation. It also formally and specifically abrogated the Durand Agreement of 1893, the Anglo-Afghan Pact of 1905, the Treaty of Rawalpindi 1919, the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921 and all other treaties which referred to the status of the Pakhtuns.<sup>39</sup>

After the legal and constitutional endorsement and support of the *Loya-Jirga*, the government efforts for Pakhtunistan on the one hand strengthened the position of the Afghan government and on the other it encouraged the tribes in their pro-Pakhtunistan stance. Consequently one month after, on August 12, 1949, a meeting of Afridi

and other tribesmen took place at *Tirah Bagh* which proclaimed the establishment of Pakhtunistan Assembly. A larger Assembly at Razmak (North Waziristan) elected Haji Mirza Ali Khan alias Faqir of Ippi as President of Southern Pakhtunistan. He had already served as Chairman of the Provisional Assembly of independent Pakhtunistan (Central Section<sup>40</sup>). The Afghan government pledged its full support to *Azad Pakhtunistan* (Independent Pakhtunistan) and decreed that, each year on August 31, the Pakhtunistan Day would be celebrated as a national day in Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> Special commemorative stamps were issued, books, booklets and pamphlets in support of Pakhtunistan were published and special editions of the newspapers and periodicals were printed on the Pakhtunistan day in Afghanistan and Tribal Area.

The world reaction to this new crisis varied, however, Pakistan officially dismissed these developments in the tribal area as “figments of the Afghan imagination or the work of a few dissidents in Afghan Pay.”<sup>42</sup> Pakistani authorities applied the old formula of “threats and subsidies” in the tribal area, as well as started developmental projects there. Pakistan also attempted to exert more pressure on Kabul government, halted shipments of Petroleum products in December 1949 and discouraged Afghan import and export and transit trade through Karachi for technical reasons.<sup>43</sup>

The Indian Congress Government supported Afghanistan’s Pakhtunistan policy and on January 1, 1950, signed a treaty of “eternal friendship” with Afghanistan. A massive campaign was landed by Indian Press media,<sup>44</sup> in favour of Pakhtunistan and against Pakistan and it continued despite the latter’s protests.

The Indian version of Pakhtunistan was often confused with the official Afghan Position. In the Indian version, Pakhtunistan consisted of the NWFP, the Tribal Agencies, Kalat and the whole of Balochistan, with the Makran Coast on the Arabian Sea and part of the Sindh Province, including the port of Karachi.<sup>45</sup>

In America, two associations were formed in support of Pakhtunistan under the name the *Azad Pakhtun Association of America* headed by Dr. Aurang Shah of Manki (Nowshera) and the *Pakhtunistan Association of America* (Michigan) headed by Syed Amir Shah of Charsadda.<sup>46</sup> Such pro-Pakhtunistan Associations were also formed in India.<sup>47</sup>

The Americans were not interested in the issue and they had little knowledge about Pakhtunistan and its ramifications, and the little they knew had been learned from the British officials, who had no sympathy for the Afghan's position and were not interested to solve the problem because they were the people who had created this issue during their Colonial days. Besides the Britishers, the Americans were impressed by the British trained pro-West Pakistani officials with English language, "who convinced Washington of the value of Pakistan as a bulwark of Western concepts wedged between neutralist, left-leaning India and backward, unfamiliar Afghanistan, that could easily be taken by Russia, whenever its broader objectives would be served."<sup>48</sup>

However, Washington proposed on three occasions to help mediate the dispute. Once offering to act as mediator and subsequently suggesting the offices of Egypt and Turkey.<sup>49</sup>

The Soviet Union cautious in the beginning about Pakhtunistan issue but Pakistan's deep involvement with

US changed the position and the Soviets supported the Afghan government's stance. Iran was also silent about Pakhtunistan because relations between Iran and Afghanistan were cool over Helmand River Project. The Government of Pakistan dismissed Pakhtunistan issue by declaring it as "Afghanistan's Pakhtunistan Stunt" and asked time after time that Pakhtuns west of the Durand Line should also be included in an independent Pakhtunistan.<sup>50</sup> In the rhetoric, they glossed over the contention that Pakhtunistan was to be constituted through the process of self-determination of a people who in the Afghan view, had emerged from colonial status without having been afforded an opportunity to freely determine their political future. Pakistani Government version of Pakhtunistan was declared by Dr. M.S. Kapitsa, the Soviet ambassador in Pakistan, as a "joke"<sup>51</sup> and the Afghan Government drew the attention of Pakistan to the fact that the Pakhtuns of Afghanistan had never expressed a desire to be a part of another country or constitute an independent entity and that, as they were not emerging from colonial status, the applicability of the principles of self-determination to them had no relevance.<sup>52</sup>

Besides, diplomatic manoeuvring, political initiatives, tribal incursions, press propaganda of both Pakistan and Afghanistan against each other, legal arguments and counter-arguments were put forward. The legal issue was raised by Afghanistan by challenging the validity of 1893 Treaty. The Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1893 was got signed under duress and that therefore the line drawn pursuant to that treaty was invalid; that before and after the signing of the treaty the British recognised a special interest and influence among the Pakhtun tribes east of the Durand Line; in any case the Durand Line was not conceived as an international boundary by either party but simply as

a line demarcating British and Afghan zones of influence; that subsequent ratifications of the 1893 agreement contained reservations preserving Afghanistan's interests east of the Durand Line; in any case Afghanistan had repudiated all treaties which denied to it the right to exert this influence among all the Pakhtuns; Afghanistan had no territorial claims east of the Durand Line but was simply championing the self-generated drive to this based upon ties of kinship, history, religion, race and language and that the 1947 plebiscite did not satisfy the requirement for self-determination because: (a) it was boycotted by a substantial part of the Pakhtuns; (b) it was a unilateral act taken without Afghan consultation or consent; (c) it provided the population with only two choices: join India or join Pakistan, whereas it should also have provided options for joining Afghanistan or independence; (d) the approval of the tribal *jirgas* was similarly obtained by offering as choices only a "yes" or "no" ratification of the plebiscite decision to join Pakistan.

Afghanistan further argued that Pakistan was not a successor state to Britain but an entirely new state carved out of British India. Whatever, treaty rights existed were therefore extinguished.<sup>53</sup>

Pakistan's reply to Afghan claims was that the Durand Line was valid international boundary; that it was subsequently recognised and confirmed as such by Afghanistan on several formal occasions; that the Durand Line put an end to Afghan claim of sovereignty over the territory or influence over the people east of it; and finally that Pakistan, as a successor state, derived full sovereignty over this area and its peoples. Pakistan topped-off its case by insisting that in any event, the question of self-determination for the Pakhtuns was fore-closed by the

British supervised plebiscite held in 1947 just before partition in the North West Frontier Province in which 99% voted in favour of joining Pakistan. The Tribal Areas too expressed their assent through special *Jirgas* or tribal Councils.<sup>54</sup>

Most of the Western and Pakistani analysts indicated vagueness of the Afghan stand about Pakhtunistan. This was sometimes the result of failure to distinguish between the official Afghan Government position and the demands advanced by unofficial propagandists, extreme nationalist parties like *Wikh-Zalmiyan* Organisation (Awakened Youth) and *Afghan-Millat* and individual protagonists of a "Greater Afghanistan". From the official pronouncements of the Afghan Government the following three basic themes recur:

- 1: A demand for self-determination for the Pakhtuns living east of the Durand Line,
- 2: Insistent denial that Afghanistan desires any territorial expansion;
- 3: Repeated assurances that Afghanistan wants the dispute solved only by peaceful means and that negotiations should take place between Pakistan and the intellectuals and the leaders of the Pakhtuns themselves.<sup>55</sup>

Some of the non-Pakhtun members of the Afghan *Shura* and political groups like *Sittami-Milli* were also against the very concept of Pakhtunistan for ethnic reasons. The Pakistani Government missed no chance by perceiving such position of the non-Pakhtuns of Afghanistan as representing the real stand point of the Afghan government. On the other hand, the Afghan government after 1949, intentionally included Balochistan Province of Pakistan in the

Pakhtunistan as a means of political pressure on Pakistan. They prepared maps showing Balochistan being included in Pakhtunistan and extended full support to the Baloch leaders.

Internally, during the Prime Ministership of Shah Mahmud, the government gained from Pakhtunistan issue the close alliance of the Pakhtun intelligentsia, nationalists and democrats with the government in power. Even the government impressed upon the people that the interest of the government and the public was one and the same. It also used the issue to divert the attention of the people from democratic feelings and other reforms. To gain the confidence and loyalty of the tribal *Maliks* and Chiefs, Shah Mahmud rewarded them with different honorary titles and posts and in such a way he probably wanted to pay reward for their support against *Bacha Saqao* in regaining the Kabul throne.

In the task of modernisation, the support of the Pakhtun tribes was crucial to the central government in Afghanistan. Not only was the delicate tribal balance between Pakhtun and non-Pakhtun elements was to be preserved, but also the balance of power must gradually be shifted away from the Pakhtun tribes in favour of the central government. It was during Daud's government that a strong army loyal to central government (or at least to him) was raised with the aid of Soviet military assistance "which was essential", Daud argued, "in order to strengthen the Afghan position in the Pakhtunistan dispute."<sup>56</sup> He thus overcame strong tribal and religious opposition to modernism, liberalism, secularism and later on even to Soviet penetration by justifying it on the one basis which he knew the tribes and the *Mullahs* would support. Pakhtun nationalism and the Pakhtunistan dispute were used to bridge serious cleavages

in Afghan society like (a) tribal autonomy vs centralised government, (b) ethno-linguistic rivalry between Pakhtuns and non-Pakhtuns, (c) a serious urban-rural split, (d) economic class (rich-poor) conflict, and (e) competition between modernists and traditionalists.<sup>57</sup> What had all this to do with Pakhtunistan dispute? The answer is simple. When the Afghan politicians, particularly the royal ones, were seeking a solid popular power base in the backward, divided and in-ward looking society of Afghanistan, they were logically in need of some unifying issue or principle around which they could build a consensus. Conflicting interests and conflicting ideas of the conflicting groups were channellised through different means and methods in championing the Pakhtunistan issue.

The Afghan masses generally and the intelligentsia particularly found an avenue for expression (though in the government framework) in the 'Liberal Parliament' of 1949, the *Wikh-Zalmiyan* Organisation, *Pakhtu Tolana*, *Hizbi-Watan*, *Hizbi-Khalq*, and even government controlled media. The Pakhtun educated elite found a place in the Persianid bureaucracy and were recruited in almost all government departments. The Pakhtun writers and poets on both sides of the Durand Line moved in the forefront of Pakhtunistan campaign. They contributed a lot to the development of Pashtu language and literature. The nationalistic thoughts of Khushal Khan Khattak were publicised and this period even produced an "Afghan version of sentimental socialism by welding the mysticism of Rabindra Nath Tagore with Maxim Gorky's polemical championship of the common man."<sup>58</sup> In Afghanistan from 1948 to 1976, fifty-nine books in Pashtu and eleven books in Dari, besides many pamphlets, had been published about different aspects of Pakhtunistan.<sup>59</sup> A Khushal Khan Lycee (Secondary School)

located near the tomb of Babar was reserved only for the students of tribal areas along the Durand Line with the sole aim to produce Pakhtunistan-oriented generation. In 1954, there were 500 students from age six to age eighteen in this *Lycee*.<sup>60</sup>

The urbanised intelligentsia of whom most were members of the *Wikh-Zalmiyan* Organisation succeeded at least in creating a rift in the royal family with the support of Daud Khan and Abdul Majeed Zabuli, the former being their royal political monitor while the latter was their financial supporter. Daud Khan used the public and the Pakhtunistan issue against his own uncle Shah Mahmud and consequently succeeded in becoming the *Sadar-i-Azam* or Prime Minister of Afghanistan in 1953.

It was an irony of fate that from the Durand Agreement till the death of Hafizullah Amin (1979) almost all rulers of Afghanistan found themselves confronted with the question of the lost Pakhtun lands and were in fact the "prisoners of Pakhtunistan issue."

After continuous tense relations between Kabul and Karachi (then capital of Pakistan), the former felt that as a result of the Pakhtunistan problem, three matters of importance had to be attended immediately: (i) securing of alternative transit routes, (ii) broadening of international support for Afghanistan's position in its conflict with Pakistan, and (iii) strengthening and modernising of the army.<sup>62</sup>

The American response to Afghan overtures for political support in pursuit of the Pakhtunistan issue was negligible and for military assistance utterly negative. In mid-1952, during the Korean war, it became clear that the United States had decided to choose Pakistan as one of its trusted

partners in its struggle to contain Communist expansion and was going to arm it accordingly.<sup>63</sup> This American attitude rolled slowly the Kabul ball "into the Indo-Soviet lobby."<sup>64</sup>

The Soviet diplomats in Kabul were engaged in a clandestine campaign to incite the Afghans to take over Pakhtun areas. A Soviet source (*Journal*) hinted in 1951 that Moscow suggested to Afghanistan to take over the Pakhtun areas of Pakistan, while the Soviets would take over the Tajik, Uzbek and Turkomen areas of Afghanistan "thus tidying up the ethnically massy nineteenth century boundaries." However, this information could not be corroborated from other printed sources.<sup>65</sup>

In August 1951, the Afghan Government requested the US for armaments with the recommendations of US Embassy at Kabul. The US replied in November that "the sale will have to be made public, and it would help if the Pakhtunistan claim is dropped." The American terms were not accepted and Prime Minister Shah Mahmud described it a "political refusal."<sup>66</sup> In November 1953, and again in October 1954, Daud government requested for economic and military aid and loan. But despite Nixon's visit to Kabul in December 1953, the US granted \$18.5 million loan for the Helmand Project and rejected the armament request and urging the Afghans to put an end to the pursuit of Pakhtunistan issue.<sup>67</sup>

The US reluctance to meet the Afghan requirements for economic development and armaments had left no option for Daud's government but to look towards Moscow. Most of the Afghans were aware of the dangers of Soviet involvement in their economic development, but "Afghanistan had reached a stage in its history when meaningful progress could no longer be delayed."<sup>68</sup> The

Afghan rulers "were aware, writes Arnold Fletcher in his book that "failure to do so (bring progress to their country) might prove more dangerous than any agent of the Kremlin. The revolution of rising expectations had come to Afghanistan at last; and no people so volatile and energetic could be expected to remain contented if their country lagged behind while its neighbours forged ahead."<sup>69</sup>

During the course of less than ten years 1954-1963, Afghanistan signed seventeen agreements with the USSR.<sup>70</sup> From 1950-59, Soviet assistance totalled \$246.2 million, while US assistance came to \$148.3 million. Most of the US assistance was in the form of outright grants, while Soviet Union concentrated more on long-term loans.<sup>71</sup> It should be noted that the Soviet Union offered such loans of 400 million rubles to Argentina (1958), \$100 million to Cuba (1960), and one hundred million dollars loan to Indonesia and Ethiopia.<sup>72</sup>

While the Soviets and their political allies were active with various projects in Afghanistan, the United States was busy bolstering Pakistan's defence potential. In 1954, the United States committed \$ 21 million in US arms aid to Pakistan and consequently in September 1954, Pakistan joined the SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organisation) and the following year it joined the Baghdad Pact (later called CENTO), thus becoming the key-link in the chain of mutual security pacts under the US umbrella for containment of communism and Soviet expansion.

Meanwhile, Afghan Soviet relations further improved with the exchange of visits between Bulganin and Khrushchev in December of Kabul and their support for Pakhtunistan followed Daud's visit of Moscow in October 1956. King Zahir visited Moscow in July 1957 (his visit was

the second after King Amanullah) followed by the visit of K.Y. Voroshilov, the Soviet President in October 1958 of Kabul. Sardar Naim (the brother of Daud and Foreign Minister) visited Moscow in January 1959 and Prime Minister Khrushchev visited Kabul in March 1960.

Besides these exchange visits, Soviet ideological literature appeared in English, Pashtu and Dari in Afghanistan. The Russian teaching classes under Soviet auspices attracted large numbers of young men and a considerable number<sup>73</sup> of civilian and defence personnel were sent to the Soviet Union for education and training. National planning and defence matters fell into the hands of Soviet advisers.<sup>74</sup> It is reported that "the tendency to play up everything Russian is increasing."<sup>75</sup>

By accepting Soviet military aid and training, Afghanistan realised that it was opening itself to Soviet influence. But there was no other alternative except Soviet Union for landlocked Afghanistan. In the American view the Afghan abandonment of the Pakhtunistan claim was such an alternative, but the renouncement of this issue was not possible for the Afghan rulers because their retreat from the issue meant their political death. Moreover what facilitated the acceptance of Soviet assistance was the belief held by some Afghan leaders that strong disincentives existed for the soviet Union at that time to seize Afghanistan. Major among these, in their view were Afghanistan's position among Islamic and non-aligned nations, the ruggedness of Afghanistan's terrain, regional pacts under the US umbrella against communism.

In 1955, When Pakistan merged the provinces and the Balochistan states union into a "One Unit" system, the new

scheme caused the eruption of a new wave of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Afghan Government submitted an official protest to the Government of Pakistan, citing the action as further evidence of Pakistan's determination to suppress the rights and aspirations of the Pakhtun people. Pakistan declared that the measure was an internal matter and therefore should be of no concern to Afghanistan.<sup>76</sup> As a reaction in March 1955, a mob attacked Pakistani missions in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad. Pakistan retaliated in the same way in Peshawar. Tension ran high on the border. A *Loya-Jirga* or Grand assembly was convened in November 1955 in Kabul, which endorsed the government stand on Pakhtunistan and repeated the right of self-determination for the Pakhtuns. The *Jirga* also authorised the strengthening of Afghan army even with the aid of foreign countries. Future Afghan-Soviet military cooperation was thus indirectly endorsed by the highest political institution in the land.<sup>77</sup>

Pakistan once again imposed a blockade on Afghan transit trade which seriously damaged the Afghan economy.<sup>78</sup> Afghanistan requested US government for assistance in building a new route across Iran to the port of Chahbahr on the Persian Gulf, to alleviate its transit problems. But both refused the Afghan plan, finding it economically impractical. It was after their rejection that Daud Khan turned to Moscow for renewal of the 1950 barter and transit agreement, which they signed in June 1955, and "barter protocol on commodity exchange" in August 1955. It was with the good offices of Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia that Pakistan ended the economic blockade. But still there was no thaw in the Pak-Afghan relations.

Throughout this period the Soviet Union openly supported Afghanistan's stance on Pakhtunistan, while USA backed Pakistan. The Soviets military aid, economic assistance and support for the Pakhtunistan cause made them popular in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's weaknesses, Anglo-Phobia and sensitivities were exploited by the Soviets through various means and the existing vacuum created by the disinterested West was filled by the former. Kabul's policy of neutrality and *bi-tarfi* (non-alignment) was praised by Moscow stating: "they were (Soviets) expecting nothing from Afghanistan but the permanency of its present political attitude towards the two super powers."<sup>79</sup>

Pakistan, United States and her Western allies were shaken over the growing economic and military activities of Moscow in Afghanistan. A high ranking American diplomat in Kabul reportedly told Prime Minister Daud bluntly that Afghanistan would "go down the Communist drain in a few years."<sup>80</sup> Afghanistan "had been lost to communism" was the cry from the West and Daud Khan was called the "Red Prince" by the *Time* magazine.<sup>81</sup>

On January 10, 1956, the US State Department observed in its national Intelligence Estimation on Afghanistan after the visit of Soviet leader to Kabul that "Daud's acceptance of extensive Soviet aid was motivated by his desire to strengthen Afghanistan in its controversy with Pakistan over Pushtunistan issue and also to develop Afghanistan economically."<sup>82</sup> It added "as long as Daud continued dedicated to the Pushtunistan issue, the Soviet Union would have a means, not available to the West, of making itself useful as even indispensable to him."<sup>83</sup>

Between 1950 and 1960, Kabul's dependence on Moscow in arms had become almost hundred per cent, in petroleum

products from 10 to 90 per cent and in case of foreign trade from 17 per cent to almost 50 per cent.<sup>84</sup> According to Bradsher, "Afghanistan was the first in the Third World countries to receive Soviet economic aid and second to receive military aids."<sup>85</sup>

Ultimately, it was during this period of Pak-Afghan tension and Cold War competition that the American rediscovered Afghanistan and moved to contribute to the preservation of its neutrality but it was too late because by 1962 only sixty eight Afghans were receiving training in US military institutions.<sup>86</sup> The increasing interest and assistance of the United States obliged the Afghans and their obligation resulted in better relations. Daud's visit to US in January 1959 and President Eisenhower's visit to Kabul in December 1959 further strengthened their relations.

The Afghan-US improved relations did not harm Soviet-Afghan friendship. It is reported by Prof. L. Dupree that in November 1959, Soviet oil exploration team told him in Tashkurghan that "we are here for a long time. The Afghans need our help". Why don't you Americans go home? Afghanistan is our neighbour, not yours."<sup>87</sup> This simple encounter reflects the depth of the Soviet interest in the country and their claim over Afghanistan.

In 1956, on Pakistan's insistence SEATO recognised the Durand Line as the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>88</sup> Meanwhile, on H.S. Suharwardy's invitation, the 10th Prime Minister of Pakistan, Daud Khan visited Pakistan. In the joint communique they mentioned among other things, that "both sides agreed to solve the issue of Pakhtunistan peacefully through negotiations."<sup>89</sup> This was the first time that the Pakistani government

officially accepted a document that referred to Pakhtunistan by name, although, when the communique was published in Pakistan's English daily, the word "Pakhtunistan appeared in quotation marks."<sup>90</sup> This gesture of good will in their relations did not last long and soon due to internal governmental changes in Pakistan, Pak-Afghan ties did not improve further. However, one concrete achievement of this period of relative calm was the transit agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1958.

The rise of General Muhammad Ayub Khan as Chief Martial Law Administrator and President of Pakistan in 1958 created further tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Ayub Khan, being a militarily strong man was interested in consolidation of his power base in the country and Pak-Afghan tension provided him a good chance to divert the attention of the public from internal political and constitutional crisis. For him to retreat or compromise on the Pakhtunistan issue with Daud Khan was a matter of prestige, while for Daud retreat from the issue meant his political death. Both were marching in opposite directions—the former towards Washington and the latter towards Moscow. Their personal interests inter-mixed with the national interests which reflected in their respective external policies (foreign policies)—the former allied Pakistan's foreign policy under the umbrella of US defence treaties while the latter adhered to a policy of *bi-Tarfi* and neutrality tilting towards the Soviet Union and its allies.

Internally, Daud Khan brooked no open opposition from the intelligentsia and many of them in government service were supporting his policy, though he was criticised for neglecting social and political reforms and for over concentration on the economic programme.<sup>91</sup> The Iranian *Tudeh* (Masses) Party's Marxist—Leninist literature in

Persian filtered into Afghanistan after its suppression in Iran and the reinstallations of the Shah. Some workers of the party who escaped from the persecution of the government took refuge in Kabul. Taqi Arani, a prominent Iranian theoretician became famous in Kabul over-night.<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, Daud's government took another bold step towards modernisation, rather Westernisation, by granting approval to school girls led by Mahbuba Musa to discard *Purdah* or veil. As a next step the ladies of the royal family appeared without official proclamation on the reviewing stand on the second day of the *Jeshan* in 1959. The reaction was a mob demonstration led by *Mullahs*, accusing Daud Khan of being anti-Islamic by removing *Purdah* and permitting atheistic, communist and christian westerners to pervert the nation. The government arrested the ring leaders but after one week's detention they were released. The protest of religious circles was followed by a tribal feud between Mengals and Zadrans, which resulted in the flight of 4000 Mengal to Kurram Agency (Pakistan). The political authorities of Pakistan exploited this against the Afghan government by accusing the Kabul government of being pro-Soviet and anti-Islam.<sup>93</sup>

In 1961, Pak-Afghan relations again deteriorated over infighting between Khan of Khar and Nawab of Dir resulting in armed clashes between Afghan and Pakistan's border forces. The result was the closure of the diplomatic Mission of Pakistan in Afghanistan in August 1961 followed by Kabul's decision in September 1961 to sever diplomatic relations with Pakistan and closing the border to all traffic between the two countries. The border remained closed for almost two years to all traffic in both directions and diplomatic relations also remained severed.

The immediate effect of this was that US equipments for various projects in Afghanistan were rusted away in Karachi, Peshawar and Chaman. In 1962, a transit agreement between Iran and Afghanistan established a new transit route from the port of Khurram Sher via Tehran, Mashed to Herat. This route was long and transit facilities were not enough. The border closure also affected the export of fresh fruits to India. In these hardship again Moscow came to the rescue by airlifting Afghanistan's fruit to India. The US also helped by providing some cargo flights to India free of cost. Pakistan halted the seasonal migration of the Afghan nomads into Pakistani territory. This episode created resentment among the Afghan nomads against the Government of Pakistan as well as of Afghanistan besides engendering political and economic problems for the latter within the country.

All these internal and external difficulties, troubles and problems faced by the Afghan government were the direct outcome of the closure of the border with Pakistan. The result was the dramatic and logical increase in the trade with the Soviet Union and more political and logistical dependence on it. The Western media such as *Eastern World*, October 1961, London and the *New Republic*, October 30, 1961, Washington published articles presenting sympathetically the Afghan point of view. These articles were reproduced by Afghan press enthusiastically. For instance, the Pashtu daily *Hewad*, Kabul, November 13, 1961 published an article with the title 'The truth about Pushtunistan at last emerges in Washington' discussed thoroughly the articles published in both the *Eastern World* and the *New Republic*.<sup>94</sup>

In an interview with the West German journalist, Prime Minister Daud said in answer to a direct question: "the

border will remain closed until the Pakhtunistan issue is settled." But to settle the Pakhtunistan issue was not easy. It involved US, Soviet Union, Pakistan and India. United States tried seriously to bring about a Pak-Afghan compromise but in vain. President Ayub Khan of Pakistan constantly alluded to the Kashmir issue in relations to the Afghan problem and used the China card against US and India, thus slowly moved towards neutralism in Foreign Affairs. The Soviet Union and India were supporting Kabul's policy of Pakhtunistan and were interested in pursuing their own interest through regional strife as a result of the dispute.

The King, the royal family and the senior Afghan officials reached the consensus that more and more stress on Pakhtunistan issue was damaging for Afghanistan politically and economically and the only solution of the Pak-Afghan confrontation would be through the resumption of diplomatic relations and the reopening of the Pak-Afghan border. Daud was not ready to accept the reality; consequently he resigned and the King accepted the resignation in March 1963. Pak-Afghan tension was not the only cause of Daud's resignation because there were some other reasons i.e., the King and Daud Khan were both in favour of acceleration of the democratic process in the country. But the former favoured extensive liberalisation of Afghan political life while the latter preferred a more restricted step by approach.

The King was in favour of multi-party system within the frame-work of Islamic tenets and fundamentals of the constitutional monarchy, however, Daud supported one-party system suited for backward, tribal illiterate society like Afghanistan. He was of the opinion that without familiarity with parliamentary democracy multi-party

system would create chaos which would jeopardise the process of democracy. The responsibility of the single party would be not the formation of government but to educate the people politically and within this process the multi-party system would evolve for a stable democratic government. Another point of difference between the King and Daud was that the King believed that political liberalisation and increased popular participation in the affairs of state required that the members of the royal family should not be allowed to become prime minister, cabinet members and parliament members. Daud disagreed with this policy of the King and preferred to resign with grace.<sup>95</sup>

With the fall of Daud Khan (the architect of the Afghan hardline policy on Pakhtunistan) and the rise of Muhammad Yousuf as a new Prime Minister of Afghanistan the ice melted. Pak-Afghan relations improved and the border opened but the Pakhtunistan issue still marred the relations between the two countries.

The Kabul leaders gained the confidence of the Pakhtun intelligentsia and politicians to some extent on both sides of the Durand Line and the support of the Soviet Union for their Pakhtunistan position but no concrete progress had been achieved in that area except economic assistance and military aid from Soviet Union and India but the resulting enmity, tension and border closure with Pakistan left the Afghan economy in tatters and intensified its compulsory over-dependence on Soviet Union vis-a-vis US and her aid to Pakistan.

Daud had "accomplished more for the country in decade (1953-1963) than had been done in a century"<sup>96</sup> and his bold steps against religious establishment and for the emancipation

of women made him popular among the progressive nationalist and Leftist elements. According to contemporary writers there were three groups of people who were genuinely sorry to see Daud step down: (i) those who ardently supported the Pakhtunistan issue, (ii) some members of the royal family, who stood to lose lucrative positions in the government, and (iii) those few among officers and intellectuals committed to the Soviet line.<sup>97</sup> Like Amanullah, Daud Khan also failed to achieve the lost Pakhtun land or Pakhtunistan but what he achieved through rapid economic development was the modernisation and secularisation of Afghan society, Soviet friendship and above all an honourable place for Afghanistan in the comity of nations and international forums. With his policy and geopolitical compulsion of landlocked Afghanistan, Soviet Union not only gained the confidence of the Afghans but reached their hearts through Pakhtunistan issue.