Slowly, step by step, Afghanistan is moving toward a representative system consistent with its cultural and historical patterns. Whether the successive steps have been planned, or, like Topsy, "just grew," remains a question. Whether the direction will be maintained remains for the future as well. Some Afghan and foreign observers criticize the slow rate of movement, however. Most of these critics are Western-trained, Western-oriented and Western-reacting, measuring everything in terms of time-motion efficiency, cost-benefit-ratios, and heavy capital investment. According to one’s perspective, President Mohammad Daoud and his intimate advisers (including his brother and occasional Special Envoy, Mohammad Naim) have been cautiously leading, goading, or channeling the Republic of Afghanistan, hoping to make the blows of change fall the lightest on the most people—and, not just coincidentally, remain in power.

The means they have chosen are simple. Basically, the government tries to stay slightly ahead of the expectations of the committed intelligentsia. It announces new moves unexpectedly—causing them to pause, reflect, and attempt to place the move in proper perspective. After a time frustrations emerge again until, just before the boiling point, the president (or one of his ministers) announces still a new step. Reviewing the steps taken since July 17, 1973 (26 saratan 1352 A.H., on the Afghan calendar), may help illuminate the probable path of the future (barring the ever-present possibility of a coup.)

**Step 1: Coup d’état**

Obviously, the first step was the 1973 coup d’état, planned since the 1969 elections in which Daoud replaced his first cousin and brother-in-law, former King Mohammad Zahir. The 10-year (1963-1973) experiment in constitutional monarchy had failed, primarily because the ex-king, advised by conservative members of his family and staff, neither took the steps necessary to implement the constitution nor suppressed the growing opposition. The last Prime Minister of the period, Mohammad Musa Shafiq (December 12, 1972-July 17, 1973), achieved some genuine movement, but too little and too late.

**Step 2: Parcham to the Provinces**

One of the few well-organized political parties in Afghanistan, Parcham, initially supported the coup and the republic. (Political parties had never been legalized during the monarchy and still are not, but exist *sub rosa.*) Moderate leftist and urban-oriented, with a sizable civil service membership, Parcham is probably not totally controlled by communists outside Afghanistan. Daoud used the well-organized group to help re-establish administration in the provinces after the coup.

With the military and the police as his source of power, and a ready-made administrative cadre, Daoud struck, sending about 160 of these enthusiastic, reform-minded young men (including many in the police) to staff district and subdistrict administrative positions and spread the message of the republic. The city-wise Parcham activists ran headlong into the rural power elites. Within months these frustrated reformers either accepted the fact that change would be slow and consistent with existing cultural patterns, turned cynically to corruption on well-established precedent, or returned disillusioned to Kabul and resigned—or were dismissed for leaving their posts without permission.

By March 1975 Parcham was completely fragmented; it no longer existed as an effective political entity. But in July 1977, the two main leftist groups, Parcham and Khelq, re-united under the name Democratic-Khelq to oppose the regime.

**Step 3: Establish a Potential Intellectual Base**

Initially, Daoud removed the top level administrators and diplomats associated with the monarchy. Most were kept on the government payroll with such unimposing titles as "Adviser." Some went into private business, mainly import-export. In filling their positions, many Afghan intellectuals and technocrats believe, rightly or wrongly, that educated Mohammadzai (Daoud’s lineage) but also that of the ex-king) received preferential treatment in the matter of government appointments.

President Daoud seems to have made some efforts to maintain the former officials in the public eye.
Various cultural committees were formed, jokingly referred to by the day of the week each met (the "Monday Committee," the "Wednesday Committee," etc.). Some individuals serve simultaneously on several committees, such as committees to purchase manuscripts, old photographs, and documents for the new National Archives, or to organize international conferences. While weekly meetings of the various committees stifled rumors of arrests—Afghanistan's jails probably hold fewer political prisoners per capita than any nation in Asia—the proliferation of conferences helped deflect potential critics' interests, suggesting that the international seminar has become the opiate of the Afghan intellectual. At least 11 academic conferences have been held since the founding of the republic, and Afghanistan has also been host to several regional social, economic, and political meetings, such as the Southwestern Asia Desertification Committee in July 1977.

Kabul University is enjoying an unprecedented atmosphere of academic freedom, but fear has not been completely dispelled: teachers are well aware that the situation can literally change overnight. Instructors are being encouraged to prepare individualized lectures and discard decades-old syllabi. They can, for the first time, select their own required reading lists for students. While few dare to be too outspoken, there is a spirit akin to "Let the Hundred Flowers Bloom" in China.

At the international conferences, Afghan scholars present papers of varying opinions, although well-known leftists, like Sulaiman Layek are seldom asked to participate. The regime usually carefully selects local delegates from both in-groups and out-groups. The mere act of selection becomes an act of rehabilitation, and competition for such appointments is fierce. In the conference sessions, the "outs" often joust with the "ins," and their scholarly (and sometimes personally vitriolic) dialogues carry the seeds for emerging (and ongoing) ideological positions.

**Step 4: The Search for Security**

The coup had been textbook perfect—almost too perfect—perhaps encouraging others to plot against the new regime. Indeed, Daoud's regime has felt itself threatened from both the left and the right. One group, led by military officers disaffected with the monarchy, had been preparing a coup at the time Daoud successfully struck. The 45 ringleaders, including a former Prime Minister, Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal (whose role was more passive than active), were arrested, questioned, and received sentences varying from death (5) to acquittal (2). Before sentences were pronounced in late December 1973, however, Maiwandwal was discovered dead in his cell. Sometime between midnight and dawn October 20, either he committed suicide—the official report—being unable to live with the brand "traitor," or, more probably, was murdered by overenthusiastic guards. Shocked, President Daoud began to tighten his own security, and purged a number of leftists, removing them one at a time. The survivors, hoping to keep their positions of power, did not protest too much. None of those dismissed has been executed or imprisoned; several have even been given ambassadorial posts. Only two moderate leftists remain in the Cabinet, however.

The government reportedly uncovered a plot among leftist (so-called Marxist) officers in September 1975, and arrested about 40 officers from the 14th Armored Division. Most were dismissed from the service after a short period of incarceration.

To forestall attempts from the royalist right, the government arrested Major-General Abdul Wali, commander of the Central Forces Kabul, which includes all units from Kabul to the border. Abdul Wali, first cousin of both President Daoud and the ex-king (also son-in-law of Zahir Shah), had been a great influence on the former king, and his ambitions might ultimately have led him to the throne. In September 1975, after more than two years in jail or under arrest, Abdul Wali was tried by a military tribunal for alleged crimes against the state (never tightly defined). Unanimously acquitted, he was restored to full rank and privileges but requested to leave the country. Always a soldier's soldier, Abdul Wali thanked the tribunal and returned their salute of respect, if not devotion, for most of his following had dissipated after the 1973 coup. In fact, one of the coup leaders was second-in-command of his crack force de frappe.

As a final gesture, Abdul Wali asked the members of the court to pray with him for the successful development of Afghanistan. They prayed at the very spot where King Mohammad Nadir, father of ex-king Mohammad Zahir and uncle of Abdul Wali, was assassinated in 1933. Abdul Wali went to the house of his father, the famous Marshal Shah Wali Khan, hero of the Saqqoist War of 1929. Before leaving the country, Abdul Wali reportedly said that he bore his cousin, the President, no ill feelings, and that Daoud at this time was good for the country. However, one occasionally hears talk in Kabul indicating that Abdul Wali may try to return as successor to President Daoud. Much depends on how successfully the democratic process has been institutionalized by the time President Daoud either resigns, voluntarily turns over the government to an elected successor, or dies.

**The Panjsher Insurgency**

During the 1975 *Jehn* celebration, an event occurred which shook the complacency of many in the power elite. By accident, my wife (Nancy), my youngest daughter (Sally), and I blundered into the middle of the mess. We left Kabul by Land Rover and drove north over the unpaved trail leading into the Panjsher Valley, and trekked from Bazarak to Dulan, a small village. One of our "servants" (actually a friend and member of the family for 15 years) lived in Dulan, and was making one of his periodic visits to his other "family."
Dulana sits at the high western end of an east-west valley. Numerous such valleys stretch, finger-like, to the east and west of the North-south Panjsher Valley. Small tributaries pour into the major Panjsher River from these same satellite valleys.

The people of the Panjsher are mainly Persian-speaking Tajik, and refer to themselves collectively as Panjsheris. More specifically, they refer to themselves by locality: Bazarak, Rokha, Dulana, etc. Many Panjsheris have been drawn to Kabul by the growing, diverse economic opportunities, but they maintain their rural links. An improved infrastructure and increased bus services make it easy for those working in Kabul to return often to their village homes. Far from being isolated, the Panjsher has increasingly close social, economic, and political ties with Kabul.

The three Duprees returned to Bazarak on July 22 to find the people there in a high state of excitement. Some said bandits had visited the village during the night. Others loudly denied this, stating that bad-ma'ash (bad men) from Pakistan had passed through Bazarak going south, cutting the telephone lines in many places. They suggested we wait in Bazarak until the situation cleared, but, in our usual Western "hurry-up" style, we decided to return to Kabul.

The Land Rover would not start. The man hired to guard our vehicle said the bad-ma'ash had tried to steal it but it would not start for them either. Others volunteered that our trusty guard had kept the headlights and inside lights on all night because "he is afraid of everything," an allegation he hotly denied. We still had to push the vehicle to get it started. Another of our former "servants," Abdul Aziz, now working for another foreigner in Kabul, accompanied us.

The wheat shimmered from green to gold, as it ripened by altitude—the higher, the greener. Terraced fields and gardens shone green near the river bottom. The trail wound round and round, and came out at Rokha Valley and the village of Qabzan, where huge logs stretched across the bazaar street, a classic roadblock.
Excited armed men surrounded us immediately, all shouting at once. The local governor and his police commandant pushed their way through the crowd and told us danger lay ahead. The telephone lines between Rokha and Bandar Panjsher (entrance to Panjsher Valley) had been cut, and no communication with the provincial center (Charikar) was possible. All the government knew was that armed men roamed the road between Rokha and Bandar Panjsher.

riddled with bullet holes. Around a corner about five kilometers north of Bandar Panjsher, a dramatic scene unfolded. An Afghan officer sprawled just off the road to the left near the river embankment. He lay on his stomach, one arm extended toward the river, the other twisted unnaturally at his side, his legs extended parallel and straight, as though someone had tried to drag him to safety. Blood soaked the ground under him and his blouse shone wet red. A dark brown stain disfigured his trousers.

I braked the Land Rover beside him. He was dead. I turned to our passengers to ask if we should pick him up, and immediately spotted, as did the others in the vehicle, about 25-30 gendarmes hiding in the rocks and under an overhanging ledge. They yelled, "Buro! Buro! (Go! Go!—or, Get the hell out of here!). They waved frantically, but remained crouched and under cover.

Puffs of dust in perfect line swept across the left front of the Land Rover, followed instantaneously by the familiar sharp crack and whine of small arms bullets from an automatic weapon. I needed no further urging. Luckily, I had not turned off the ignition, and we rounded the near corner to safety as rapidly as our ancient (1962) red Land Rover could trundle. According to passengers in the rear seats, bullets followed us down the road, but never caught up.

The insurgents (for such they were, although realization came only later) probably fired at us for two reasons: (1) They wanted to delay news of the insurgency from reaching the government as long as possible; (2) They had been frustrated in their attempts to start our vehicle at Bazarak.

We finished our journey to Bandar Panjsheruneventfully and deposited our passengers, who were met by the provincial governor and gave him his first solid news of the Panjsher Insurgency.

Later, on the asphalt road between Charikar and Kabul, we noted several army helicopters flying in the direction of the fighting. Nearer Kabul we met two lorries carrying troop reinforcements, followed by an ambulance.

By the time the last remnants of the insurgents were rounded up on July 27, Kabul's rumor mill had had a field day. As the following examples suggest, separating fact from fiction was not always easy.

Rumor: The American ambassador (Theodore Eliot), his wife (Pat), the British ambassador (John Drinkall), and their entourage, trekking and riding in the Panjsher north of the zone of action, had agreed to become hostages of the insurgents, all arranged through the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul. What this would accomplish was never made clear, but hostage-taking has become a great international outdoor sport. Later the rumor even included the lowly Duprees in the package hostage deal. Fact: Neither the ambassadorial party nor the Duprees had any inkling of the insurgency until it exploded on the scene.

Rumor: The insurgents managed to blow up a large section of the hydropower facilities at Naghlu on the Kabul River. Fact: The insurgents
used plastique to blow a part of one Naglu power tower, which momentarily interrupted some flow of electricity to Kabul, but only on a small grid.

Rumor: Paktya's provincial governor had been assassinated by the insurgents. Fact: The fight around the Paktya governor's Russian jeep near Urgun related to a local blood feud, in which the governor had intervened. One side disagreed with the terms dictated by the governor and wanted to ambush him. The governor had loaned the jeep to a friend to transport guests to a wedding. The ambushers believed the governor to be riding in the jeep (which he wasn't) and shot it up. The feud continues.

Rumor: Abdul Khaliq, the governor of Bamiyan Province, was assassinated by the insurgents. Fact: Abdul Khaliq, an Indiana University alumnus, is alive and well.

Rumor: The grandson of Habibullah II (also called Bacha Saqqao, son of a water carrier) participated in the insurgency. Fact: No one in Tagao, old home of Habibullah II, least of all kinsmen of the former Tajik folk-hero and king for nine months in 1929, was involved.

Rumor: Between 40-70,000 armed men rebelled in the widely separated areas of Ghazni, Andarab, Katawaz, Mazar-i-Sharif, Serai Khwaja, and Bamiyan—as well as Panjsher. Fact: Scattered actions did occur (mainly attacking police posts) at Jalalabad, Naglu, but most of the action centered in the Panjsher and Laghman. No more than 300 insurgents were involved: 5 or 6 were killed in action, several were wounded, and most were taken prisoner. The government suffered few casualties: one killed, and four wounded. About 20 or more were arrested outside Panjsher, including 2 former wakil (elected members of the Wolesi Jirga, the Lower House of Parliament, abolished with the founding of the Republic in July 1973). Almost all the insurgents were non-Pushtun and supporters of conservative religious parties such as the Ikhwana-al-Musulim (a Muslim Brotherhood, not directly related to those groupings in the Arab World, but in the same tradition of "back-to-early-Islam"—plus socialism.)

Many observers, Afghan and foreign, believed that the 1973 coup had been "communist" inspired or "Russian" sponsored. Religious conservatives were particularly disturbed at the dominantly secular character of the new breed of administrators, despite repeated references to Islam in the speeches of the prime minister and high-ranking cabinet members. Fearing persecution, 30 or so of the most active and articulate members of the Ikhwana-al-Musulim and other groups fled to Pakistan, maintaining contact with the Afghan troops from exile.

The Baluch Insurrection and terrorist acts in Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province peaked during
1973-74. Although the Afghan government offered asylum to the refugees, it attempted to limit the level of violence by controlling access to arms, ammunition, and explosive devices. Later, the Afghans attempted to close the border, so that the refugees could not return.

A team of Indian military specialists arrived in Afghanistan late in 1973, allegedly to advise the Afghan army on unconventional warfare, though Afghan officials deny this was their role. However, the Afghans did train a small number of Pakistani Pushthun saboteurs, who returned to Pakistan to blow up small bridges, culverts, buses, cut telephone lines, and make a general nuisance in the North-West Frontier Province. Pakistani government informers, posing as dissident Pushthun, infiltrated the training camp and it was closed soon after.

Who Benefits?

The action had established a precedent, however, and it is thus reasonable to expect the Pakistanis had at least a minor hand in the Panjsher Insurgency. Presumably, it would have been an information-gathering operation designed to assess the strength of the Daoud regime should an insurgency occur there. Moreover, from the Pakistani perspective, they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. A propaganda war between Radio Afghanistan and Radio Pakistan was conducted nightly, and relations between the two nations approached a nadir. If the Daoud government was weak and universally disliked, a small group of insurgents just might be able to precipitate a revolt. But if the movement failed to gain widespread support, the Pakistanis might be prepared to discuss the political differences between the two countries.

The weapons used by the insurgents are easily obtainable in the Kabul bazaar and elsewhere in Afghanistan, leading some to speculate that the rebellion was completely a local affair. They could also have easily been smuggled across the border at numerous points, with or without Pakistani assistance.

Some have suggested that a hand other than Pakistan's may have been involved. But if all or most of the insurgents were anticomunist and religiously conservative, obviously the Soviet Union would not have benefited from its success, nor would the Chinese. The United States is contented enough with Daoud's policy of bi-taraf (nonalignment). India could conceivably benefit if an ultraconservative, Islamic state proved antagonistic to Pakistan, but this would probably not be the case. An Islamic Republic of Afghanistan might even draw closer to an Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Iran, although a Muslim state, is predominantly Shia, whereas most Afghan are Sunni, and the Shahinshah is already convinced that Afghanistan is not trapped in the Soviet camp. Would even Pakistan benefit? The question became superfluous after the Panjsher Insurgency failed, and the failure may have actually been the beginning of rapprochement between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Limited Engagement

The insurgents struck at several points across the border on the night and early morning of July 21 and 22, 1975. Small groups crossed the Durand Line, a veritable sieve, at many places from Chitar to Baluchistan. Taxi cabs transported the Kabul group to link up with the Panjsher insurgents. Other small groups rendezvoused in Paktya, Laghman, Jalalabad, and Badakhshan.

The insurgents tried to raise a revolt among the Panjsher Tajik, haranguing against the "godless, communist-dominated regime in Kabul." They told the people that Kabul was in open revolt, but needed rural support to finish the task. But the year was 1975, not 1929, when the Saqqaqost Revolt succeeded partly because Afghanistan lacked an adequate communications system. Now an asphalt road runs almost to the entrance to the Panjsher Valley, making it possible to move military reinforcements rapidly from Kabul into the region. Helicopters spotted the intruders and kept them under surveillance as security forces closed in. More important, battery-powered transistor radios keep the Panjsher Valley abreast of what is happening in the world outside. So when the insurgents told the villagers that Kabul was in flames, they simply tuned their transistor sets to Radio Afghanistan. All was normal. With a collective shrug, the Panjsheris returned their radio dials to other stations, mainly in Soviet Central Asia, where they could listen to Tajik music.

Unable to swim in Chairman Mao's "friendly sea," the first prerequisite of a successful guerrilla movement, most of the insurgents were either killed or captured within a week. The Panjsheris refused to assist the insurgents, not so much because the people of the Panjsher are ardent patriots or nationalists, but because the young intruders are outsiders. In addition, the insurgency arose during the period of peak activity in the agricultural cycle, and few farmers or transhumants will desert fields or flocks to join in outside-inspired fighting. (The seasonal aspects of warfare in preindustrial societies should always be considered by revolutionary and counterrevolutionary movements.)

Although the Afghan government had been quick to accuse the Pakistanis of complicity (which Pakistan promptly denied), the Afghans subsequently played down the entire affair for several reasons:

1. the insurgency caught Afghan security forces by surprise, and their relatively slow reaction revealed weaknesses in the chain of command, prompting several transfers; 17

2. since the Panjsheris overwhelmingly rejected the insurgents' overtures, it would be better not to overpublicize the affair;
3. the Afghans preferred to believe that Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan knew little of the details of the operation, leaving it to the military to show that two could play the game of border infiltration.

Almost all the insurgents were unemployed high school graduates or university students, and had sought jobs through the employment branch of the Central Statistical Office of the Prime Ministry. The number of unemployed high school students increases annually, and is now estimated at about 20,000—a body of potential revolutionary malcontents. Of course, many other thousands of the unemployed have returned to their villages eventually to be reincorporated, albeit with hostility, into the traditional rural structure.

President Daoud instructed the military tribunal trying the 93 accused insurgents to “Judge well, that history might judge us well.” On July 5, the government announced its verdict: 3 were to be executed; 21 others were condemned to death but had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment by the president; 2 received sentences of 18 years in prison; 7, 15 years; 2, 14 years; 7, 13 years; 1, 12 years; 23, 10 years; 2, 9 years; 2, 8 years; 17, sentenced to from 12 to 18 months were released at the end of the trial, having in effect served their time; 16 were acquitted.

The stage had been set for the next step, but many observers of the left in Afghanistan are still waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Step 5: Defuse the “Pushuntunistan” Issue

Much has been written, pro and con, on the “Pushuntunistan” problem, which involves the legality of the Durand Line of 1893 as an international boundary, and the political status of the Pushuntun and Baluchi living on the Pakistani side of the line. While the problem has clouded Afghan-Pakistan relations since the 1947 partition of India, it was during the first “decade of Daoud” (1953-1963) that it reached its peak intensity. Under the constitutional monarchy (1963-1973), passions subsided, only to surface in Daoud’s first speech after the coup, he referred to “our relations with Pakistan, the only nation with which we have a political difference, the Pushuntunistan issue. We shall continue to seek a permanent solution to this problem.”

Pakistan, ever sensitive to what it considers border threats, reacted strongly, and Radio Pakistan began an intensive propaganda campaign against the Daoud regime, which Radio Afghanistan matched in vitriol. Actually, both Afghans and Pakistanis enjoyed the nightly exchanges, and usually listened to both programs, whenever possible. Pakistan’s “Kakajan,” an Afghan who defected to Pakistan about 25 years ago, was particularly well received in both countries for his comic, but biting commentary. In essence, Kakajan took the place of a free press in Kabul.

President Daoud’s goal from the beginning of his new rule, however, was to “defuse the Pushuntunistan issue” before he convened a Loya Jirgah (Great National Assembly), so as to clear the way for discussion of constitutional issues. Whereas the United States got the same “old” Nixon, Pakistan got a “new” Daoud: having spent ten years out of power conducting a running seminar, reading widely and discussing all facets of social, economic, and political fact and theory, and how they could be applied to Afghanistan, he had concluded that Afghanistan could live with the Durand Line if the Pakistanis would accept real regional autonomy for the Baluch and Pushuntun peoples.

The British never considered the Durand Line as a de jure international boundary. Many manuscripts and official documents in the India Office Library and Files in London, New Delhi, and elsewhere attest to this fact. I need only quote one example: “The Line was not described [in the 1893 treaty-LD] as the boundary of India, but as the eastern and southern frontier of the Amir’s [Abdul Rahman Khan] dominions, and as the limit of the respective spheres of influence of the two Governments, the object being the extension of British authority, and not that of the Indian frontier.” (emphasis added)

Only as the British prepared to depart India (in almost unholy haste, according to some observers) did the British Indian government under Lord Louis Mountbatten (last Viceroy of undivided India) issue aide-memoires to concerned parties (including Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder and first Governor-General of Pakistan) indicating that the British considered the Durand Line an international boundary. Pakistan, therefore, would inherit the British position.

This unilateral decision (without any discussion with the Afghans, as provided for in the Treaty of 1921) and distortion of the true position produced the “Pushuntunistan” problem, yet to be solved. Still, progress has been made.

In February 1975 Mohammad Naim, brother and occasional envoy for President Daoud, attended the funeral ceremonies for the king of Nepal. Senator Charles Percy (Illinois), a friend of Afghanistan in U.S. government circles, arranged a parlay between Naim and the Pakistani representative, Foreign Minister Aziz Ahmad. Both men agreed to try to have their country’s radio propaganda diminished, and there was a gradual softening which prepared the way for further talks.

Afghans let it be known informally that they were willing to talk and left the ball resting squarely in Prime Minister Bhumta’s court. A natural disaster provided the occasion for a formal breakthrough. March and April 1976 proved to be the cruellest months for Afghanistan. An earthquake of massive violence struck the Tashkurgan (Khulm) area of northern Afghanistan on March 19, 1976, destroying at least 600 houses.
in several villages, killing about 30 people and injuring 60. Then and in April, unprecedented floods swept through most of the major lowland areas of Afghanistan, washing away bridges, drowning people and livestock. Several nations and international and bilateral agencies responded to the tragedy. Pakistan donated $4 million (including 2,000 tons of rice) to the victims, a gift gratefully—and publicly—acknowledged by the Afghan government. About the same time the radio “war” ceased abruptly. Then, in late May, Pakistan experienced severe flooding and the Afghans responded to the disasters with reciprocal gifts of relief supplies, duly publicized by both nations.

Several Islamic countries, led by Libya, Iran, and Turkey (not jointly, however) quietly served as go-betweens, and arranged for Prime Minister Bhutto to visit Afghanistan, to be followed by a visit to Pakistan by President Daoud. With great fanfare Prime Minister Bhutto arrived in Kabul on June 7, for a four-day official visit. The result was a giant step toward reconciliation. Press and radio comments from Pakistan and Afghanistan were virtually identical, as both had agreed beforehand to issue joint daily press releases to avoid misunderstandings. The Kabul Times (government-controlled, English-language newspaper) and counterpart Pakistani newspapers of the National Press Trust printed, in essence, the same report (simply substitute “Afghanistan” where “Pakistan” occurs):

Between June 7 and 11, Bhutto and Daoud met twice privately with only an interpreter present. (Bhutto understands some Persian, and Daoud understands some English.) Both sessions lasted for about two and one-half hours. The official, across-the-table conference between the two prime ministers and their advisers took place in the afternoon of June 10. In between, Bhutto and his entourage squeezed in a flying trip to the famous Buddhist site of Bamiyan, where two gigantic Buddhas (55 and 38 meters tall), carved into the side of a sandstone cliff, dominate the valley.

An innocuous-sounding communiqué (Kabul Times, June 12, 1976) was issued as the meetings ended, but its implications may prove more far-reaching. For the first time, the Pakistanis admitted that a “political difference” existed between the two nations. (Previous Pakistani statements either ignored or ridiculed the “Pushtunistan” issue.) On their part, the Afghans agreed to solve the “political difference” within the spirit of the Panch Sheela (Five Principles) of the 1955 Bandung Conference, attended by 29 nonaligned nations.

The two most important “Principles” for the nascent Afghanistan-Pakistan rapprochement are respect for the boundaries of neighbors and noninterference in the affairs of others. In other words, Afghanistan will probably accept the Durand Line as an international boundary if Pakistan effectively implements the regional autonomy articles (Part VI) in the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistan has virtually admitted that the British sold them a bill of goods concerning the legality of the Durand Line as an international boundary, and the Afghans seem willing to accept that the Baluch and Pushtun problems on the Pakistani side of the line are internal affairs. In theory, all that remained after the first Daoud-Bhutto meeting was to complete the drawn-out choreography required by diplomacy, those time-consuming steps which international law (if not justice and reason) demand.

The two governments also exchanged views on the Baluchistan Insurrection, the outlawed National Awami Party (NAP) and its leaders, particularly Khan Abdul Wali Khan, son of the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Pakistan Supreme Court had earlier supported the legality (if not the propriety) of the government’s order to outlaw NAP, seize its assets, and arrest its leaders for activities imincial to Pakistan’s security. The Pakistanis had been pleased—and surprised—at the restraint with which the Afghan government greeted the Supreme Court decision, another key factor promoting rapprochement.

The Bhutto-Daoud talks paid an unexpected dividend: they discovered they liked each other. Both chided their respective aides for the false impressions created by external reports. This was particularly true in the case of Bhutto, for many foreign-educated Pakistani foreign service officers retain the plainsman’s contempt for the rude, crude barbarians of the hills, a hangover from the days of the British Raj. (The hillmen, I must add, return the contempt—with added measure.) But times and attitudes have changed among some Afghan and Pakistani intellectuals. As recently as March 14, early in Pakistan’s current time of troubles, Prime Minister Bhutto told me emphatically that he and Daoud were among the few leaders in the region with a real sense of historical process.

Rapprochement edged slowly forward. President and Prime Minister (he held both titles until elected president after the constitutional Loya Jirga in January 1977) Mohammad Daoud attended the Fifth Summit Conference of the Heads of States and Governments of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, August 15-19, 1976. President Daoud flew to Colombo via New Delhi, where he gave a stopover press conference. In the interview, Daoud emphasized nonalignment and Afghanistan’s friendship with India. When Daoud addressed the
delegates in Colombo, on August 26, he elaborated on by now familiar topics: nonalignment as a positive force; the need to eliminate colonialism and racism in Africa; the confrontation of the developing world with economic neocolonialism, which annually widens the gap between the haves and the have-nots; support for the ‘‘legitimate rights’’ of the Palestinians; discussed the possible creation of a South Africa-Rhodesia-Israel axis; defined the problems of landlocked states in a mobile, modern world.27

At the conclusion of the summit, Prime Minister Daoud flew directly from Colombo to Islamabad, on August 21, arriving in the late afternoon. At the banquet that evening, Prime Minister Bhutto said: ‘‘Please believe in our sincerity, and please believe the efforts we are making, along with you, to reach a solution, because once our differences—or difference as you like to put it—are resolved we know that many vistas will open up for the betterment of both peoples.’’

The Pakistanis spared no effort to make the visit a public and official success, but even they were surprised at the warmth with which the crowds greeted Daoud. The reception the next day in the famed Moghul Shalimar Gardens of Lahore proved to be the climax. Visibly moved by the crowd’s enthusiastic response, Daoud read his speech with an animation rare in his other public appearances. At Murree, the hill resort behind Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Prime Minister Daoud went on an unannounced walk, and was photographed talking to Pakistani children. Pakistani news media duly publicized the event.

In public both sides emphasized their ‘‘neighborliness’’ and desire to solve their political problem; in private, the ball bounced squarely in Bhutto’s court.

The brief joint communiqué (August 24) replicated the points spelled out in June: ‘‘dialogue initiated...‘‘to find an honorable solution of their

political difference [author’s italics] and other differences.’’ An invitation was issued to President Fazal Elahi Choudhry (a ceremonial nonentity in Pakistan) and Prime Minister Bhutto to ‘‘pay official visits to Afghanistan in the near future.’’ The invitations were accepted with pleasure.28

‘‘Pushtunistan Day,’’ celebrated annually in Afghanistan on August 31, fell flat after Daoud’s trip to Pakistan. Usually an occasion for anti-Pakistan speeches and boisterous street demonstrations which civil servants and students are ‘‘encouraged’’ to attend, in 1976 the crowds were small and subdued, attendance by civil servants and students not being required. Many key government officials and dignitaries did attend the ceremonies, including: Mohammad Naim; Dr. Mohammad Hassan Sharq (First Deputy Prime Minister, now Ambassador to Japan); Sayyid Abdul’lah (Second Deputy Prime Minister, now Minister of Finance); Dr. Abdul Majid (Minister of Justice, now Minister of State); Dr. Abdul Kayeum Wardak (Minister of Education, now Minister of Tribal Affairs); Dr. Abdur Rahim Namin (Minister of Information and Culture); Waheed Abdullah (Deputy Foreign Minister, now Minister of State for Foreign Affairs).

Dr. Ghulam Sakhi Nourzad, mayor of Kabul, gave the keynote address, in which he emphasized the recent exchange of talks between Prime Ministers Daoud and Bhutto, and the good will they engendered. He ended by saying: ‘‘I open observation of Pushtunistan National Day with sincere prayers for the ultimate success of the talks which have begun between the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan.’’ (In 1975, the same mayor had delivered an inflammatory speech in support of ‘‘the natural and undeniable rights to Pushtun and Baluch people.’’ Even Ajmal Khattak, leader of the ‘‘Pushtunistan’’ and Baluch refugees, spoke of not rocking the boat. He indicated that he and his fellow refugees would abide by any decisions reached by Pakistan and Afghanistan, but if regional autonomy is not granted, ‘‘we are prepared to fight on.’’

Subsequent events in Pakistan jeopardized partial rapprochement: The Dir Uprising (September 1976),29 the destruction of Wana bazaar (late October 1976),30 and the national elections and their aftermath (March 1977—continuing). But the Afghans have not used any of the incidents as an occasion for negative comment on Pakistani affairs.

As I write, Pakistan is under martial law, Mr. Bhutto has been deposed as Prime Minister, and the nation awaits new national and provincial elections. The Afghans want to negotiate but only after a stable Pakistani government comes into being.

(February 1978)
NOTES


3. International conferences through May 1976 are listed in L. Dupree, *Afghan Studies* [LF-4-76], ADFS Reports, South Asia Series, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1976, and L. Dupree, *The Afghan Honor a Muslim Saint: Reprise* [LD-7-76], op. cit., a seminar on Two Centuries of Pashto Publications (19th and 20th Centuries) was held in August 1977 and a September gathering commemorated the Birth of Sana’i.

4. A list of the conspirators and their sentences are found in: *Anis, Heyward, Jamouriat, The Kabul Times* (English), and the quarterly *Aryan* (English).

5. Many believe that Maiwandwal’s death was leftist-inspired, because elimination of potential rivals has been a common communist tactic. One of the few Afghan politicians with an international reputation, Maiwandwal would probably have been a leader in any subsequent democratic processes and, therefore, became a prime target for elimination.

6. Ironically, Abdul Wali’s final place of incarceration was the summer palace inside the Arg (now the Presidential Palace), where he and his wife, Princess Bilqis, spent part of their honeymoon.

7. Marshal Shah Wali is known as Fateh-i-Kabul, Conqueror of Kabul. He discusses his long career in *My Memoirs*, published in English, Kabul, 1970. On April 16, 1977, the venerable Marshal, 96 years old, died in exile in Rome surrounded by his family. He lies buried in Rome’s Muslim cemetery. Some day, his body will probably be returned to Afghanistan and reburied with full military honors.

Queen Homaira and most of the royal family joined the ex-king in exile in Italy a few days after the 1973 coup. Only Ahmad Wali, eldest son of Marshal Shah Wali Khan, and his family now remain in Kabul. Ahmad Wali, a well-liked naturalist, has never participated in the intra-family struggles for political power.

8. These phenomena are being studied by a British anthropologist, Diana Colvin, who was also in the Panjshir at the time of the insurgency.


10. Rumor-mongering is so rampant, one wag was heard to say: “Kabul doesn’t exist; it’s a rumor!”

11. I am following M.E. Yapp’s suggestion in referring to the Tajik folk-hero as Habibullah II, rather than Bacha Saqqao, which has a pejorative connotation. Habibullah II was overthrown and executed by Nadir Khan, who became Nadir Shah from 1929-1933. See Yapp, “A little game, Afghanistan since 1918,” *South Asian Review*, July-October 1975, pp. 401-406.

12. Unsubstantiated rumors that Mehdjudin Gahiz, the influential editor of the religiously oriented, anticommunist newspaper, Gahiz, had been assassinated on September 7, 1972 at the insistence of the KGB encouraged this belief. This version of the murder is reported in John Barron’s KGB: *The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents, Reader’s Digest Press*, New York, 1974, pp. 330-331.

13. President Z.A. Bhutto of Pakistan had precipitated the Baluchistan Insurgency and the subsequent reaction in the North-West Frontier Province by attempting to squelch increasing demands for regional autonomy as defined in the 1973 constitution.

14. East German P-30s, P-40s, Sten guns, etc. These types are easily purchasable from the Darra Adam Khel Afridi in Darra, Kohat Frontier Region, where Pakistani central government authority does not exist (Akbar S. Ahmed, *Social and Economic Change in the Tribal Areas*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1977, p. 37.)

15. The taxicab gambit partly accounts for the belief by some that thieves had come to loot. This pattern developed over the past few years because of the large number of Panjshiri males who work as servants in the Kabul foreign community. Thieves case villages where a large percentage of the males are known to be away at work in Kabul. The thieves come up from Kabul in taxis to rob, rape, and retire before the few remaining village males can strike back. Well armed with automatic weapons, the “taxicab bandits” remain a menace.

16. Che Guevara learned the same lesson the hard way in the unfamiliar social and natural terrain of highland Bolivia.

17. The Ministry of the Interior was sent to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs; the chief of the gendarmerie became Minister of the Interior.

18. Consider the young male high school graduate from Laghman who failed to find a government job, the aspiration of virtually all graduates. Returning home, he was greeted by derision and sarcasm from his father and his uncles. The entire family had counted on the young man finding the kind of sinecure in a government job which would have given the family prestige and “a friend in court” should a dispute arise with the government. Unable to bear the taunting, the young man committed suicide (rare in Afghanistan), and now the family bears collective guilt. (Students have also been known to commit suicide on failing exams, or on being refused admission to the university — so the pattern may intensify.)

19. The most recent potential threat from the right occurred in December 1976, when retired Brigadier Mr Ahmad Shah, one of the few high-ranking Shia officers, was arrested along with about 100 others from Khoshi (Logar), Paktya, and the northern provinces. The original cause of dissatisfaction may have been more personal than political. Prime Minister Daoud passed over Ahmad Shah for promotion in the *Jeshni-i-Jamhouri* list (July 1976). The brigadier then demanded either promotion or retirement; retirement quickly followed. Only after that did Ahmad Shah begin to talk of possible overthrow with right wing (mainly religious) dissidents. Government infiltrators monitored (and reported) the talks, and police arrested the brigadier and his cohorts. Most have now been released, after promising to refrain from political activity in the future.


22. The two main routes of commerce and communication between Afghanistan and Pakistan can be check-pointed by both nations: Kabul-Torkham-Peshawar; Kandahar-Chaman-Quetta. The rest of the frontier, however, is still relatively open.


24. The Australian Council for Overseas Aid is helping rebuild the village of Seh Ghanchel, about 12 kilometers east of Tashkurgan. Syed N. Sibtain, an Australian architect, is directing the project which will provide earthquake-proof housing for 30 families (149 people).


28. English text in *The Kabul Times*, August 25, 1976. The Afghans also suggested that it was to their mutual interest for Pakistan to drop charges against Khan Abdul Wali Khan and his 40-odd NAP associates. The Pakistanis were less than enthusiastic, although the government did subsequently release 87-year-old Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who had been incarcerated for 16 months. In the 29 years since Pakistan independence, the "Frontier Gandhi" has spent 16 years in jail, and 8 years in voluntary exile in Afghanistan.

29. The Dir uprising involved the misguided efforts by the government of Pakistan to nationalize the forests, in theory to prevent deforestation by local Kohistani tribesmen. But the Kohistani have always resisted central government authority, even after the formal absorption of the princely state of Dir into the North-West Frontier Province.

Shaikh Mohammad Rashid, a self-styled social in Bhutto's cabinet (Minister of Food, Agriculture Cooperatives, Under-developed Areas, and Land Reform) visited the area and announced the nationalization plan. When forest rangers attempted to prevent local tribesmen from entering the forests, about 2,000 Kohistanis struck back. (Probably the fight also involved discontent between Nawab Paima Khel, nominal ruler of Dir, and the contractors who bought the lumber.) At first, the tribesmen planned to march on Islamabad (150 miles away) to present their case, but local security forces used tear gas to break up this attempt at a peaceful demonstration.

Ten days of fighting resulted, and the government sent 10,000 troops (mainly the Federal Security Force, part of "Bhutto's private army"), armored vehicles (some say two tank divisions), and used jet fighters to quell the uprising. On November 4, the government admitted that about 62 Kohistanis had been killed (some claim 300-600), 12 security forces personnel killed, and 12 wounded. Nongovernment sources claim about 60 killed on each side, and 150 Pakistani troops wounded. No matter what the true figures, the important fact is that a major uprising did occur.

By mid-November, Bhutto Sahib had performed another of his periodic miracles. He flew to Dir, restored the jirgah (village council) system for settling local disputes (he had earlier abolished it), and blithely announced that 25-40 percent of the forests would be returned to the people. He announced these things as though the nationalization plan and the subsequent uprising had never happened, but he did state publicly several times that "no foreign hand was involved in Dir." Thus, Prime Minister Bhutto ended rumors that Afghanistan or India (or both) participated in—or even perpetrated—the trouble. Col. H.R.C. Pettigrew, *Frontier Scouts*, Selsey Press, Sussex, n.d., but obviously post-1947; Col. Eric "Buster" Goodwin, *Life Among the Pathans (Khattak)*, 2nd edition, Ferowsons, Rawalpindi, 1975.

30. In the heart of the Pushtun country, at Wana in South Waziristan the Wazir and their neighbors, the Masud Pushtun, have fought for generations for control of local forests. Locally recruited khas-sadars (tribal levies), together with Scout battalions of the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force with headquarters in Peshawar, have responsibility for law and order. The Frontier Constabulary (a separate unit) guards the border zone between the Settled Districts and the Tribal Areas.

In 1973, Bhutto launched an unprecedented socioeconomic development program in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which led to a 30-fold increase in expenditures in 4 years. He also reopened several deserted British cantonments, including Razmak and Wana, less than a thousand inhabitants each, many of them engaged in smuggling. In August 1973, the Shawal Rifles moved into Razmak. (In the days of the British Raj, up to 30,000 troops and Royal Air Force personnel occupied these forts. Even fabled Lawrence of Arabia served as "Aircraftman Shaw" in Miranshah in 1929.)

In fact, only a minority resisted violently. Many joined the outsiders, offering services, labor, materials, foodstuffs, and—at least temporarily—loyalty. As the government of Pakistan moved more and more military units in the South Waziristan area, the old bazaar inside the cantonment grew rapidly, and threatened to surpass the military installations. Repeated government demands that the building of shops cease, and that the older shops move outside the sensitive cantonment area, were ignored. Spies for the turbulent tribal elements wandered in and out of the bazaars, collecting information on troop movements which often led to ambushes of military convoys.

Frustrated at every turn, the government finally ordered the troops to clear the shopkeepers and camp followers from the area. A combination of artillery barrages and air strikes reduced almost all of Wana (except the central cantonment area) to rubble, and completely destroyed any sympathy that existed for its modernization programs.

Although Bhutto made several trips thereafter to the area, he was not successful in gaining support for an accelerated program of development. Indeed, there were even assassination attempts. Nonetheless, the roads have
come to stay. Schools remain open. Modern hospitals and clinics treat hundreds of patients daily. But, a significant minority still resist: the battle for the tribal soul is far from over. Akbar S. Ahmed, Social and Economic Change in The Tribal Areas, Oxford University Press (Karachi), 1977.