The Foreign Policy of the Taliban

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Winston Churchill once observed that the people of Germany had done enough for the history of the world. A similar observation could appropriately have been made about the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. The shattering events of a bright September morning in New York and Washington DC highlighted even for those who had never heard of the Taliban that something dreadful was at loose in the world. For those who had followed the rise of the Taliban, and the flourishing under their protection of networks such as Usama Bin Laden's Al-Qaida, there was in most cases a deeper poignancy: the sense of having been unable to avert a slide to disaster. For in both the constitution of the Taliban, and the detail of their foreign policy, the warning signs were written in prominent script. It is with these signs that this study is concerned.

For movements which ground their legitimacy on claims of transcendent universality, the notion of 'foreign policy' is in some ways a curious one. It implies a degree of accommodation with a world in which the fruits of universal good have yet to be exploited. When Stalin put forward the policy of 'Socialism in One Country' in 1924, it came as a shock to a number of his Bolshevik colleagues, for whom Marxism had provided a 'scientific' demonstration of the marginality of national identifications in a world in which the great boundary between peoples was set by class.[1] In the realm of religion, such compromises could be equally controversial. When the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 put an end to the hopes of an undivided Christendom, the Pope responded by labeling it 'null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, and devoid of meaning for all time'.[2] Yet on closer scrutiny, the fact that transcendent movements should also pursue foreign policies is not quite so strange. Religious movements are fashioned from what Kant called 'the crooked timber of humanity'[3], and as a result they are bearers of particularity as well as universality. It is rarely illuminating to speak of 'civilizations' as political entities, although shared cultural norms and values may provide a certain amount of context within which political actors function. It is even less illuminating to treat religions as monolithic determinants of political behavior. This is true of Christianity, and it is also true of Islam. As James P. Piscatori has observed, 'the seamless unity of dar al-islam has been as great a legal fiction as the bifurcation of the world into hostile camps'.[4] And few Islamic movements have demonstrated this as potently as the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The aim of this study is to explore the challenges which the Taliban faced in coming to terms with the wider world, particularly in the period after they occupied the Afghan capital Kabul following the retreat of the Rabbani Government in September 1996 and began to claim for themselves a status defined not simply by Islam, but by the structures of international society which had developed in the aftermath of the establishment in 1945 of the United Nations as an organization of sovereign states. It is divided into seven sections. In the first, I discuss some general problems in analyzing foreign policy. In the second, I give a brief account of the contexts within which Afghan foreign policy has

historically been devised. In the third, I note some of the specific characteristics of the Taliban movement. The fourth deals with the Taliban's broad international objectives, and traces the relationship of these objectives to concerns to achieve regime consolidation. The fifth examines the tensions between developing international norms of conduct, and Taliban domestic policies, which thwarted Taliban efforts to secure widespread acceptance. The sixth addresses Taliban policy towards a number of important states. The seventh deals with the radicalisation of the Taliban, and the circumstances which led to the September 2001 crisis in the Taliban's relations with the wider world, and offers some recommendations for U.S. policy towards Afghanistan and its region.

I

'The Taliban', Olivier Roy has argued, 'have no foreign policy'.[5] If foreign policy is viewed in purely programmatic terms this is certainly the case, but the proposition does not hold if one accepts that behavior offers a window through which policy orientations can be discerned. Those who write about foreign policy usually direct their attention to the foreign policy of states, and this considerably reduces the complexity of the task which they confront. It is commonly the case that within states one can find bureaucratic agencies charged with the task of producing programmatic documents dealing with the relations of their state with the wider world. However, such documents can at best be a starting point for serious foreign policy analysis, since the discrepancies between 'declared' policy and steps actually taken by a state can be massive. For a more nuanced account, one will need to examine the behavior of the state, in the hope of finding patterns of action from which a disposition to act in particular ways might be inferred.[6] That said, two qualifications are in order. First, the distinction between statements and 'behavior' should not be drawn too sharply, since some types of statement are also actions[7] -or as a shrewd diplomat once put it, 'words are bullets'. Second, it is by no means the case that all states will be capable of articulating or enacting a 'policy' sufficiently coherent to merit the title. Different bureaucratic agencies may be free to pursue their own agendas, free from the discipline imposed by a superordinate authority, in which case discerning a clear foreign policy line may be very difficult indeed.

Similar challenges can arise when one discusses the foreign policy of movements. In part this reflects the diversity of the phenomena which such a label can embrace. At its most basic the word 'movement' may simply be a synonym for 'party'. This usage is well established in Persian, where the Arabic word Harakat ('movement') has been used to designate organisations which might just as easily have carried the Arabic label Hezb ('party'). Movements in this sense may well produce programmatic documents on foreign policy issues, and if they are oppositional movements with no access to state power, these may provide the only basis upon which their foreign policies can be identified and evaluated. Unfortunately, matters become a good deal messier when 'movement' means more than just 'party'. This is partly because at this point, the exact meaning of 'social movement' proves hard to pin down: Paul Wilkinson has rightly pointed to the 'diversity and confusion of conceptualizations' of the term.[8] For the purposes of this study of the Taliban movement, I take as a starting point the definition of movement offered by Sidney Tarrow: movements are 'collective challenges by people with common purposes and

solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities'.[9] But even once such a precise definition of 'movement' is accepted, movements which are captured by the definition are likely to prove so inchoate that to depict them as authors of 'policy' (of any kind) is to speak metaphorically rather than empirically. This problem has been neatly captured by Tarrow: 'Internally, a good part of the power of movements comes from the fact that they activate people over whom they have no control. This power is a virtue because it allows movements to mount collective actions without possessing the resources that would be necessary to internalize a support base. But the autonomy of their supporters also disperses the movement's power, encourages factionalism and leaves it open to defection, competition and repression'.[10] This is not to deny that movements typically have leaders whose utterances can be analyzed. But they are likely also to contain a large number of undisciplined followers-some of them potential leaders-who offer their views freely on a wide range of topics, including foreign policy. The low level of institutionalization of movements can make it very difficult to tell into which category some particular 'spokesman' falls.

It is extremely rare for consolidated, highly institutionalized states to be successfully taken over by movements of this variety. A crisis in the legitimacy of a ruling elite is likely to lead to its displacement by some counter-elite, such as the military through a coup d'état, or some defecting fragment of the old elite. Where the institutions of the state have crumbled or collapsed,[11] the situation is quite different. In such circumstances, political dominance will be claimed by those who can control the symbols of the state: they need not be capable of administering complex state institutions with complex roles, for such institutions have effectively ceased to exist. In the short-to-medium term, movements which find themselves in this position are unlikely to be able to take more than symbolic steps in domestic politics, for they lack the instruments to do so, most importantly revenues, and bureaucracies to collect and spend them. In the sphere of foreign policy, it is easier to make a mark, since much can be done with words alone. However, which words matter may again be difficult to determine, for two reasons. First, a movement may not control all the symbols of the state, but only some: its foreign policy pronouncements may be contested by other political forces. Second, within the movement, too many words may flow from too many mouths, creating a cacophony of signals which defy ready interpretation by the wider world. Both these problems confronted the Taliban after they overran Kabul.

One final point. Since the foreign policy of a state is made up of a complex mixture of declarations and actions, the boundaries of foreign policy are not fixed: they are flexible and contestable, involving interaction with a wider world and feedback from it. While a regime may protest that what occurs within its frontiers is a matter of sovereign responsibility and no business of other states, to the extent that those states make it their business, it becomes a foreign policy problem for the regime. And to a far greater extent than the Taliban seem to have anticipated, their domestic policies played a significant role in shaping their foreign policy dilemmas. Those Taliban charged with attempting to present an acceptable face to the wider world rapidly found themselves entangled in a particularly awkward two-level game.[12]

II

Viscount Palmerston's nostrum that there are no eternal allies, only eternal interests, serves as a useful reminder that the foreign policy moves of the Taliban are to some extent the product of context. In the following remarks, I wish to identify some of the constraints which the Taliban faced as a result of Afghanistan's geopolitical position, and the attitudinal legacies in both Afghanistan and its region which continue to limit the freedom of action of Afghan policy makers.

What is now the state of Afghanistan emerged in the nineteenth century as a landlocked buffer between the Russian Empire and British India, dominated in the last two decades of the century by the British-backed Mohammadzai Pushtun Amir Abdul Rahman Khan,[13] and ruled almost uninterruptedly thereafter by Mohammadzai Pushtun dynasties until the communist coup of April 1978. The desire to avoid domination by its immediate neighbors prompted a search at different times for friendship and support from more remote 'countervailing powers'-including pre-war Germany, and the postwar United States[14]-in order to reinforce a stated policy of 'neutrality' (bi tarafi).[15] And its landlocked character has helped shape Afghan foreign policy ever since. The most dramatic manifestation of this surfaced during the so-called 'Pushtunistan dispute', a territorial conflict which arose, following the partition of India, from Afghanistan's refusal to accept the 1893 'Durand Line' as an international border separating ethnic Pushtuns in Afghanistan from ethnic Pushtuns in the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan.[16] When diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan were suspended between September 1961 and May 1963, Afghanistan's foreign trade was hard hit as well, and laborious maneuverings were required to secure the export of perishable commodities via India and the USSR. Indeed, the economic costs to Afghanistan of its isolation undoubtedly played a role in the resignation in March 1963 of Prime Minister Daoud, who had been a leading figure agitating on the Pushtunistan issue. Afghanistan's geopolitical vulnerability was plain for all to see.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 exposed another kind of geopolitical dilemma which Afghanistan faced, as a victim of deteriorating relations between the superpowers. In the United States, President Carter took the lead in construing the Soviet presence in Afghanistan as a possible 'stepping stone' towards the oil resources of the Persian Gulf,[17] but the subsequent release of Soviet archival material has not lent support to this interpretation.[18] Rather, reported comments in January 1998 of Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, to the effect that the Carter Administration approved support for anti-communist groups before the invasion in order to 'increase the probability' of a Soviet plunge into what would become a quagmire,[19] suggest that the Afghans may have fallen victim to Washington's perception that Afghanistan was simply a pawn on a geopolitical chessboard. It is by now a commonplace proposition that post-communist Afghanistan has been destabilized by the self-interested meddling of its self-styled 'friends', but it seems that this is not as novel a development as one might have thought.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union extracted Afghanistan from one set of geopolitical

complexities but enmeshed it in another. In developmental terms, Soviet Central Asia had long been treated as a backwater, both by Moscow and by the wider world. Corrupted local cliques enjoyed considerable power, especially in Uzbekistan,[20] but played no significant role in shaping Soviet foreign policy. As a result of the chain of events which followed the failed coup attempt in Moscow in August 1991, the Central Asian Republics found themselves thrust into independent statehood after a mere four months. While the exact scope of this 'independence' was debatable, given the continued military presence of Russian troops through the mechanism of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the post-independence leaderships were faced with the problem of finding ways of securing their own positions, and with the need to address issues which previously had not fallen within their purview, such as the management of foreign political and economic relations.[21] While Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan abut the Caspian Sea, in economic terms all five new states face problems of isolation similar to those which afflict landlocked Afghanistan. They control very significant energy resources, but require outlets for these resources if they are to be able to secure rentier income of the kind which could both detach them from the domination of their Russian neighbor, and secure social-eudæmonic legitimation for ruling elites. Afghanistan straddles a major route for the transport of energy resources to viable markets, and this has thrust Afghanistan into the vortex of international oil and gas politics, in a way which would have been unthinkable had the USSR not collapsed.

Finally, it is important to note that Afghanistan is also positioned between two other troubled regions, South Asia to its east, and the Middle East to its west. The poisonous character of relations between India and Pakistan-two nuclear-weapons states themselves exposed to significant domestic strains[22]-has prompted Pakistan to look to Afghanistan as a source for the strategic depth which Pakistan lacks.[23] This has made Afghanistan a secondary theatre in which Indo-Pakistani rivalry has been played out. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution, the antagonism between the Shiite rulers of Iran and the conservative Sunni elite in Saudi Arabia has also been played out to some extent in Afghanistan, although in different ways at different times.[24] All in all, from a geopolitical point of view Afghanistan could hardly be in a worse position.

Afghan foreign policy is also significantly affected by attitudes prevalent amongst its neighbors as a result of events in recent decades. In Russia, on the one hand, the recollection of the disaster which its 1979 invasion became is so strong that fear of further contamination spreading from present-day Afghanistan into the Russian-protected states of Central Asia is potent in Moscow. In Pakistan, on the other hand, the memory of the Pushtunistan dispute has haunted Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan's role as a 'frontline state' during the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, during which its Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) sought to promote what it saw as pro-Pakistan Pushtun elements within the Afghan resistance,[25] has left a dangerous legacy, most markedly in 'the extent to which Pakistan's military establishment has been transfixed by the conviction that in some obscure manner Pakistan's role in aiding the victory of the Mujahideen over Moscow's placemen has earned Islamabad the right to decide who should or should not rule in Kabul'.[26] The Taliban have been the most recent

beneficiaries of such Pakistani 'generosity'.

III

Who, then, are the Taliban? The answer to this question is not straightforward: supporters paint them as simply a collection of innocent students on a mission of purification, while opponents depict them as at best, agents of the Pakistani ISI, and at worst, Pakistani officers disguised as Afghans. Unfortunately, while neither of these extremes properly captures the complexity of the movement, for reasons of space the following remarks can only go a little further in exposing these complexities.[27]

The figure of the talib, or religious student, has been a familiar one for centuries in the region of the Frontier, and during the 1980s, talibs were involved in combat against Soviet forces, often under the direction of mullahs affiliated with the Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami Afghanistan, a largely Pushtun party led by Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi. The Taliban movement, on the other hand, emerged as an organized military force only in 1994, and with substantial backing from the Pakistani Interior Minister, General Naseerullah Babar. In securing a foothold in Afghanistan, the Taliban were able to draw on massive disaffection in the Kandahar area with the local Mujahideen rulers, who in the period following the collapse of the communist regime in Kabul in April 1992 had not won distinction for either honesty or competence. Pakistan played a key role in turning the Taliban into a functioning military force through the provision of training, logistical support, and equipment,[28] and this was one factor which enabled them to seize the western city of Herat in September 1995, and then the ultimate prize, Kabul, in September 1996. The scale of Pakistan's involvement was documented in a June 2001 report by Human Rights Watch: "Of all the foreign powers involved in efforts to sustain and manipulate the ongoing fighting, Pakistan is distinguished both by the sweep of its objectives and the scale of its efforts, which include soliciting funding for the Taliban, bankrolling Taliban operations, providing diplomatic support as the Taliban's virtual emissaries abroad, arranging training for Taliban fighters, recruiting skilled and unskilled manpower to serve in Taliban armies, planning and directing offensives, providing and facilitating shipments of ammunition and fuel, and on several occasions apparently directly providing combat support."[29] The most revered figure in the Taliban movement is an ethnic Pushtun named Mohammad Omar, identified by the traditional title Amir al-Momineen ('Lord of the Believers'). His base is Kandahar, also the base of the ruling shura (council) of the Taliban movement, a body heavily dominated by Durrani Pushtuns. Indeed, the entire movement is Pushtun-dominated, with only a nominal presence from deracinated members of other ethnic groups.

The Taliban leaders preach a fundamentalist form of Islam derived from the Deobandi tradition which originated at the famous Dar ul-Ulum Deoband in British India.[30] In the hands of at least some of the Afghan 'Deobandi' ulema, however, the tradition was distinctively influenced by Pushtun tribal values, and it again received a distinctive twist when Afghan refugees were inducted into Deobandi madrassas in Pakistan run by a Pakistani political party, the Jamiat-e Ulema-i Islam. As a result, the 'Islam' of the Taliban is neither endorsed by the contemporary Deobandi sheikhs,[31] nor a reflection of the

pragmatic traditions of normal Afghan village life, which few of the young talibs ever experienced. This helps explain how these Taliban could engage in activities which would be unthinkable in normal circumstances in Afghanistan, such as the beating of women in the street; in this respect there are few precedents in Afghanistan's history for such a movement, and only a few elsewhere, including perhaps the Boxer Movement in turn-of-the-century China, and later the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, which reflected a similar mixture of social alienation and ideologization. While the Taliban have sometimes been labeled 'ultra-conservative', there is a radical dimension to the enterprise of their more religiously-inclined elements, since what they wish to 'conserve' is more an imagined community, governed by the Shariah alone, rather than a community with any actual referent in recent Afghan history.

Apart from its Kandahar-based leadership, and its youthful shock-troops, the Taliban movement has drawn on three other important elements. First, as it moved through Afghanistan, it opened its doors to a wide range of ethnic Pushtuns who 'reflagged' themselves as Taliban, either for reasons of prudence, as seems to have been the case with assorted local rulers in the south of the country, or for reasons of ethnic solidarity, as occurred when various Pushtun communities in the north, descendants of settlers despatched to the north by Abdul Rahman Khan in the late nineteenth century,[32] rallied to the Taliban during the 1997 and 1998 pushes into northern Afghanistan. Second, it contains a significant number of former members of the Khalq ('Masses') faction of the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. These made their way into the Taliban by a somewhat circuitous route: in March 1990, the Khalqi Defense Minister in the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah, General Shahnawaz Tanai, had mounted a factional revolt against the regime. While this enjoyed the support of Pakistan's ISI, it failed, and Tanai and many of his supporters fled to Pakistan. It was from this group that the Taliban derived some of their key military capacities.[33] While a number of Khalqis were purged from Taliban ranks in a 1998 crackdown, others remained. The presence of such figures in the Taliban's ranks did much to fuel the suspicion that they were agents of Pakistani interests. Third, it has made use of Arab combatants from Saudi extremist Usama Bin Laden's 055 Brigade, who together with disaffected Muslim militants from other parts of the world had gravitated to areas of Afghanistan under Taliban control[34]-a development which the UN envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, in July 1999 described as an 'extremely dangerous' development.[35]

While the exact process of Taliban decision making remains quite extraordinarily mysterious, not least because leaders such as Mullah Omar are uncomfortable with foreigners and avoid meeting them, it is clear that the Taliban lack competent bureaucratic support and sophisticated, highly-educated cadres. As a result, they have little understanding of the evolved practices of modern diplomacy; virtually no comprehension of the politics of states outside the Muslim world; and a limited capacity to develop and maintain a consistent stance when dealing with their interlocutors, something which prompted one observer to compare negotiating with the Taliban to 'grasping smoke'.[36] One doubts that in the crisis of September 2001 they have had much inkling of what could befall them. The Taliban have not produced any comprehensive foreign policy manifesto; and foreign policy attitudes and initiatives are often to be detected only from radio

broadcasts, or from letters sent to international agencies such as the UN. To speak of a Taliban 'foreign policy establishment' would imply an absurdly greater degree of organizational coherence than the movement manifests. Nonetheless, a number of individuals have played a role in articulating what might broadly be regarded as 'foreign policy concerns'. Mullah Omar has on occasion expressed views on foreign policy issues; various officials held the position of 'Acting Foreign Minister', notably Mullah Mohammad Ghaus and Mullah Haji Mohammad Hassan; and eventually Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil was appointed 'Foreign Minister' and represented a point of contact for foreign officials visiting Afghanistan, although it rapidly became clear that he lacked any power of his own. In addition, foreign policy statements were on occasion issued by those Taliban despatched to New York to seek the Afghanistan seat in the UN General Assembly, a prize which eluded them, and by Taliban-appointed Ambassadors in Pakistan, one of only three statesfrom which the Taliban received diplomatic recognition. [37]

IV

The first broad foreign policy objective of the Taliban was to win acceptance as a government. Yet the issue of recognition proved one of the most frustrating with which the Taliban had to cope.In order to explain the nature of the Taliban's problem, it is necessary to go into rather more detail about the nature of recognition, and about the events which accompanied the Taliban's occupation of Kabul.

Recognition in international law involves acceptance by a state that the recognized body possesses international legal personality and the rights and privileges which flow from it, or is the exclusive representative of a body with international legal personality. The decision to grant or not to grant recognition is a political decision within the sovereign discretion of individual states. Recognition in principle can be accorded to either states or governments.[38] As to the former, it need only be noted that the state of Afghanistan has been recognized by a wide number of states, including all permanent members of the UN Security Council, for many years. However, where political power has fragmented to the extent as has occurred in Afghanistan in recent years, there may well be more than one group claiming to be the government. Deciding how best to press such claims is a serious foreign policy matter for the claimants. Deciding how to respond to such claims is a serious foreign policy matter for the governments to which they are made. A distinct, if at some levels similar, issue arises when more than one 'government' sends a delegation to represent a single state in an international organization such as the UN. Here, the problem is one of how an organization of states can devise a collective response to such a dilemma. The UN General Assembly responds by appointing a Credentials Committee to make recommendations to the General Assembly about credentials offered by the various delegations of member states.

The Taliban, upon taking Kabul, immediately demanded both recognition from other states as the government of Afghanistan, and Afghanistan's seat in the General Assembly. However, they received neither. As far as recognition was concerned, the explanation was largely political. On the night the Taliban took Kabul, 26-27 September 1996, the former

communist president Najibullah was dragged from UN premises (in which he had been living since April 1992) and murdered; his body was hung from a pylon in Ariana Square. This gruesome spectacle attracted a large contingent of international media representatives, who were then in place to report the imposition of harsh restrictions on the population of Kabul.[39] The reactions in Western states to these reports were extremely adverse, both at mass and elite levels. As a result, states such as the USA, France, the United Kingdom, and Australia in which the Rabbani Government had diplomatic or consular agents opted in the first instance to leave the status quo in place. There was a sound legal basis for this: as Lauterpacht observed of revolutionary forces, 'So long as the revolution has not been fully successful, and so long as the lawful government, however adversely affected by the fortunes of the civil war, remains within national territory and asserts its authority, it is presumed to represent the State as a whole'. [40]

The Taliban faced similar problems at the UN. The UN General Assembly on 14 December 1950 adopted Resolution 396(V), which provided that 'wherever more than one authority claims to be the government entitled to represent a Member State in the United Nations and this question becomes the subject of controversy in the United Nations, the question should be considered in the light of the Purposes and Principles of the Charter and the circumstances of each case'. This has not prevented disputes over credentials in the intervening period, but it worked to the disadvantage of the Taliban, whose invasion of UN premises in Kabul hardly bespoke a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, and whose treatment of women shocked many member states. But two other factors worked to the disadvantage of the Taliban. First, as the authors of the main commentary on the UN Charter have observed, in practice a government will be regarded by the General Assembly 'as being authorized to represent a member state as long as it has not been replaced by a rival claimant who has established effective control over the state independently of the support of a foreign power'.[41] The widespread suspicion that Pakistan had backed the Taliban in its campaign to overthrow the Rabbani Government seems to have brought this latter qualification into play in the minds of at least some of the members of the Credentials Committee in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000, since the Committee on each occasion opted to preserve the status quo. Pakistan's persistent attempts to induce the UN to adopt a 'vacant seat' formula over Afghanistan[42]- something for which Pakistan had successfully pushed during the 1996 Jakarta meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)-failed ignominiously. Second, the Taliban's nominees charged with seeking the Afghanistan seat at the UN were no match as diplomats for the Rabbani Government's representative, Dr Ravan Farhadi, a French-trained scholar who during the rule of King Zahir had served as Head of the UN and International Conferences Division of the Foreign Ministry, Counselor in the Afghan Embassy in Washington, Secretary to the Cabinet, and Afghan Ambassador to France.

The second broad foreign policy objective of the Taliban was to obtain revenue from international sources. Afghanistan before the 1978 communist coup had many of the characteristics of a rentier state: at the time of the coup, over a third of total state expenditure was financed by foreign aid.[43] By the time the Taliban took Kabul, years of disorder had destroyed any central state capacity to raise taxes in an orderly fashion. Yet

with their legitimacy as rulers still contested in significant parts of the country, monies could play a valuable role in buying the prudential support of strategically-placed local power holders. This made obtaining external financial support a major aim of the regime. 'Saudi Arabia', Rashid has argued of the period before the Taliban takeover of Kabul, 'was to become the principal financial backer of the Taliban'.[44] However, the Taliban-perhaps recalling how fickle had been the support of external backers for the Mujahideen at different times-sought to diversify their income sources. Their efforts had mixed results at best. Three particular spheres of activity merit attention.

The first related to the cultivation of international energy companies[45]. In October 1995, the US corporation UNOCAL and the Saudi corporation Delta Oil signed a memorandum of intent with the government of Turkmenistan, which anticipated the construction of a gas pipeline through Afghanistan to Pakistan. When the Taliban took Kabul, a UNOCAL Vice-President, Chris Taggart, reportedly termed it a 'positive development'.[46] However, for both UNOCAL and the Taliban, the relationship proved frustrating. For the Taliban, the relationship with UNOCAL delivered neither revenue nor wider American support. Their expectations were extremely unrealistic: according to Rashid, they expected 'the company which wins the contract to provide electricity, gas, telephones, roads-in fact, virtually a new infrastructure for a destroyed country'[47]. From UNOCAL's point of view, the Taliban proved unable to deliver the level of security which would be required to permit such a project to go ahead-and given the vulnerability not only of the pipeline itself but also the expatriate staff who would inevitably be involved in its construction, that level of security is extremely high. As a result, according to another UNOCAL Vice-President, Marty Miller, 'lenders have said the project at this moment is just not financeable'[48], and in August 1998, the company suspended its involvement in the project following US Tomahawk cruise missile strikes against alleged terrorist training camps operated in eastern Afghanistan by Usama Bin Laden.[49] In the face of these problems, the Taliban sought to maintain lines of communication with one of UNOCAL's competitors, the Argentinian company Bridas, but ultimately that avenue proved unrewarding as well and, the Taliban's hopes of securing a free revenue stream through bargaining with major multinational consortia simply slipped away. [50]

The second related to the exploitation of 'transit trade' and other smuggling between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Under the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement of 1965, certain goods can be imported into Afghanistan through Pakistan, free of Pakistani customs duties. It is clear that a significant proportion of the goods thus imported are then smuggled into Pakistan, where they are sold in smugglers' markets. In recent years, this trade has been augmented by the transportation into Pakistan of goods imported into Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan from Dubai and other trading ports in the Persian Gulf. The value of this trade has been estimated in a World Bank study at $2.5 billion, and the profit to the Taliban may be as high as $75 million, although it is unlikely that it is pooled in such a way as to permit efficient budgeting.[51] The Pakistani state is a major loser from this trade, since it is thereby deprived of the revenues from indirect taxation which would otherwise accrue to it, and its general tolerance of the loss is a clear indicator of the extent to which powerful groups in Pakistan had come to value the goal of sustaining the Taliban regime above the goal of putting Pakistan's own economic house in

order-something which should be borne in mind by international financial institutions from which Pakistan seeks lines of credit.

The third relates to the raising of revenues from opium, of which Afghanistan under the Taliban became the world's largest producer.[52] Drug trafficking has received considerable attention in recent years as a 'non-traditional' security issue,[53] and weighs heavily in the thinking of the US Administration. Yet opium also represents a revenue source of some potential for power holders in a debilitated territory such as Afghanistan. The challenge for the Taliban therefore was to extract revenue from this source without so alienating foreign governments that the costs of the undertaking outweighed the benefits. Here again, the Taliban were not especially successful. The involvement of the Taliban in the drug trade was plain almost from the outset of their rule. In a 1996 interview, Mullah Omar admitted that the Taliban received revenue from a tax on opium.=, and[54] the Afghanistan Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1998 published by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) found that the 'provinces under the control of the Taliban, at the time of the Survey, account for approximately 96% of Afghanistan's total opium cultivation'.[55] The position of the Taliban at that time was that it was 'difficult to encourage farmers to produce other cash crops'[56], and there was almost certainly some truth in this claim. However, eyewitness testimony pointed to Taliban involvement not only in compelling farmers to grow opium, but in distributing fertilizer for the crops.[57] Given the loose structure of the movement, this could well have reflected simply the greed of local Taliban, but it was not read in this way: the US State Department concluded that there was 'evidence that the Taliban, which control much of Afghanistan, have made a policy decision to take advantage of narcotics trafficking and production in order to put pressure on the west and other consuming nations'.[58] In 1999, according to a UN report, "the production of opium increased dramatically to 4,600 tonnes, almost twice the average production of the previous four years.[59]" However, on February 27, 2000, doubtless with an eye to their international standing, the Taliban ordered a total ban on cultivation of the poppy; the output for 2000 fell to 3,300 tonnes, and further dramatic falls were detected in early 2001. However, the ban was bitterly resented by farmers, for whom no alternative income sources were provided, and won the Taliban surprisingly little kudos, in part because of the suspicion that the ban was driven by the desire not to add to what was already a large stockpile, and that output falls owed much to the drought by which Afghanistan had been gripped.

V

Nonetheless, with the exception of the Taliban's hospitality to Usama Bin Laden, which catastrophically prejudiced any prospect of their developing amicable relations with the United States, the main consideration which thwarted the efforts of the Taliban to secure international recognition and legitimacy was their treatment of women. The issue is an extremely important one, not simply because women are a particularly vulnerable and long-suffering component of the Afghan population, but also because the mobilization of groups in the international community in defense of Afghan women points to ways in which the sovereignty claims of putative rulers of states may increasingly be subordinated to evolving international norms. At the same time, it points to the enormous tension which

can arise between these norms, and the norms defended by groups for whom secular rules must be subordinate to those which they see as divinely-ordained. It is this tension which is at the heart of the Taliban's growing international isolation.

The Taliban could charitably be described as the least feminist group in the world. This became clear once they reached Kabul, although the policies which they sought to impose in Kabul differed little from those which they had forcibly implemented in Kandahar from late 1994 and Herat from September 1995. In rural areas, in which the Taliban found themselves in potential competition with an existing tribal authority structure, they had far less scope to impose their puritanical visions, and as a result, there are areas nominally under Taliban control in which girls' schools continue to function.[60] In cities, there were far fewer centers of countervailing power, and the Taliban religious police, known as the Department for the Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice (Amr bil-Maroof wa Nahi An il-Munkir), had a free hand. That hand was directed against women, with a fierce paternalism of which Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor would have been proud. Decrees issued by this department forbade women to travel unaccompanied by a close male relative (mahram) or without being swathed in a stifling head-to-toe garment known as a burqa.[61] These rules were enforced in the days following the Taliban arrival in Kabul by teams of young Taliban who beat women with rubber hoses in front of foreign journalists. In addition, girls' schools in Kabul were closed, women were excluded from most areas of the workforce and from Kabul University, and-during a particularly grim period in late 1997-women were denied access to emergency hospital care, with fatal results: according to the US State Department, a non-governmental organization in October 1997 'reported that a female burn victim had died after Taliban authorities would not allow her to be treated by a male doctor'.[62] Furthermore, reports began to appear of young women being forced to marry young Taliban against their will.[63]

The topic of gender relations in Afghanistan is complex and difficult, since social roles for some but not all Afghan women changed significantly as a result of wider processes of social development in urban areas, and particularly Kabul, over the last four decades.[64] From 1959 onwards, women in Kabul had opportunities to access higher education and employment on a scale which earlier would have been unthinkable.[65] Following the 1978 communist coup, and with the backing of coercive threats, the new regime sought to extend its ideology of gender roles into unreceptive rural areas. The results were catastrophic: the regime not only faced intense opposition to its policies from affronted rural dwellers, but the entire exercise set back the cause of laudable objectives such as female literacy by linking them, in the minds of conservative village clergy, with atheism and propaganda.[66] Furthermore, with the flight of millions of Afghan refugees to Pakistan, the resulting disempowerment of Afghan males in many cases prompted an obsessive preoccupation on their part with the protection of 'female honor', one of the few exercises on which they could still embark with much hope of success.[67] As a result of these experiences, the social roles of women became increasingly salient benchmarks for distinguishing different types of sociopolitical order.

It was in this context that women's rights became a principal battleground between the Taliban and the international community. The Taliban viewed their treatment of women in

a very different way from outside observers. They rightly pointed to the grim experience of Afghan women during the brutal division of Kabul between warring militias from mid-1992 to March 1995,[68] and credited themselves with eliminating such insecurity-although in late March 1998, a Voice of America correspondent laconically reported that while a Taliban spokesman had said in a statement that there was 'complete peace and security' in the provinces controlled by the Taliban, 'at the same time, he told reporters that a lack of adequate security is another serious problem in providing education to female students'.[69] Earlier, the Chair of the Taliban's 'Caretaker Council' in Kabul, Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, had expressed himself 'perplexed at the silence of the western media regarding the tragedies and miseries that prevailed when previous governments were in power in Afghanistan', and went on to blame the bad publicity received by the Taliban on 'world Zionism fighting Islam'.[70] Raising an argument for cultural relativism, another Taliban spokesman complained that 'in the United States, they want to impose their American culture on us'.[71]

This remark obliquely reflected the way in which the Taliban had become trapped in a series of increasingly acrimonious exchanges with prominent Western women. On 29 September 1997, the European Union Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, Emma Bonino, was detained by the Taliban during a visit to what had been designated by the Taliban as a women's hospital. This represented more the confusion and incoherence of the Taliban than a deliberate and planned attempt to intimidate an international official, but it won the Taliban quite devastating media coverage (not least because Bonino was accompanied by the prominent correspondent Christiane Amanpour [72]) and it prompted the German Foreign Minister to describe the Taliban justification for the detentions as 'unbelievable and shameful in every respect'.[73] The result was to turn Commissioner Bonino into a frontline critic of the Taliban: the European Parliament adopted 'Flowers for the Women of Kabul' as slogan for the following International Women's Day, 8 March 1998. The plight of Kabuli women then figured prominently in demonstrations and activities around the world, prompting the Taliban-controlled Radio Voice of Shariah to describe International Women's Day as a 'conspiracy' by 'the infidels of the world under the leadership of Emma Bonino' and to complain of 'the provocation which has been launched by Christendom against the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan'.[74] Even more worrying for the Taliban than the opposition of a prominent European such as Bonino was US Secretary of State Albright's November 1997 description of Taliban policies towards women as 'despicable',[75] an observation which interestingly provoked from the Taliban 'Foreign Ministry' a much less splenetic response than that encountered by Bonino, namely the claim that Dr. Albright's comments were based on 'her incorrect knowledge of reality'.[76] Whether the forthright statements by Bonino and Albright represented the best way to prompt Taliban concessions on the issue of women's rights was not the point. Rather, what these episodes demonstrated was the way in which Taliban 'foreign policy' had become the victim of the Taliban's pursuit of a domestic agenda out of step with much of the wider world.

The Taliban came on the world scene at the wrong time for their own good. In the early 1980s, Afghan groups with similar attitudes to women-for example, the Hezb-e Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar-were funded with few qualms by the US Administration.[77] But

by the mid-1990s, the global strategic situation was radically different as a result of the collapse of the USSR, and new agendas of social awareness were being pressed with increasing vigor. The UN International Women's Conference in Beijing in September 1995 confirmed an agenda radically at odds with that of the Taliban, and a dense network of women's groups had formed to give effect to that agenda. Indeed, the failure of the Taliban to secure recognition or Afghanistan's General Assembly seat reflected in part the effective lobbying of those groups (which also put pressure on UNOCAL to distance itself from the Taliban). The Feminist Majority Foundation under Eleanor Smeal took a strong lead in such action, with support from American celebrities such as Mavis Leno and Lionel Richie,[78] and their position was bolstered by the release in August 1998 of a damning and widely-publicized report from the Boston-based Physicians for Human Rights entitled The Taliban's War on Women.[79] For these groups, the response of their own governments to the Taliban's demands for acceptance became an important symbol of those governments' seriousness about gender issues and (in contrast to what might have been the case had the rulers of a resource-rich state such as Saudi Arabia been under fire) there were no compelling reasons for the governments to ignore this domestic pressure.

However, the tension between the Taliban and the wider world over the gender issue reflected a deeper tension-between a vision of the world as governed by rules of an evolving international society, and a vision of the world as ruled by the word of God. For the Taliban's Amir al-Momineen, this was the key distinction. In a statement in late December 1997, Mullah Omar claimed that the United Nations had 'fallen under the influence of imperialist powers and under the pretext of human rights has misled Moslems from the path of righteousness'. Increased rights for women would lead to adultery and herald 'the destruction of Islam'. 'We do not', Mullah Omar went on, 'accept something which somebody imposes on us under the name of human rights which is contrary to the holy Koranic law'. The holy Koran, he concluded 'cannot adjust itself to other people's requirements; people should adjust themselves to the requirements of the holy Koran'.[80] This neatly encapsulated the Taliban's philosophy of international relations: an uncompromising one, which repudiated international law, international opinion, and international organization if they appeared in any way to conflict with the Taliban's idiosyncratic interpretation of what holy Koranic law might require.

As a result, the UN as an organization found the Taliban extraordinarily difficult to handle. Its Charter and its practices carried no particular weight with them, as the murder of Najibullah made clear. Yet given how few states retained a diplomatic presence in Kabul, the UN was the agency which carried the burden of giving voice to international law and international opinion, even as-in another guise-it sought to coordinate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Afghans living in Taliban-controlled areas. The 'United Nations' is really a family of loosely-connected and uncoordinated organizations, with their own interests, tactics, and strategies. The signals which the Taliban received from this labyrinth were confusing, and evoked a confused response. While agencies such as UNDCP sought to make the Kandahar leadership partners in their anti-narcotics programs, the General Assembly refused to seat the Taliban. While UN staffers in Pakistan made their way to the Taliban-controlled Afghan Embassy in order to obtain visas to enter the country, the Director-General of UNESCO called the Taliban 'madmen'

and 'barbarians who interpret the Koran as they see fit'.[81] It is perhaps not surprising that the cynicism of UN officials about the Taliban was matched by the cynicism of the Taliban about the UN. But given the tunnel vision of the Taliban, it is doubtful whether anything but wholesale support for the Taliban's policies and aims would have satisfied the Kandahar leaders.

The result was a growing contempt for the UN. On the one hand, this took the form of a willingness to exploit the goodwill of the UN for military purposes. Thus, in March 1998, the Head of the World Food Programme office in Herat claimed that the Taliban had been using displaced persons' camps in the Herat area 'as lures for fresh troops to join the front line', the basic message to male breadwinners being 'move your family down to the camp, and we'll make sure they get well fed, and you'll fight for us'.[82] On the other hand, it appeared in the form of a disdain for UN actions from which the Taliban could not benefit. This was clearly manifested in the Taliban blockade to prevent food supplies reaching the central Hazarajat region, a blockade which was implemented in the face of high-level pleas from the UN that it not go ahead, and which the Taliban enforced by bombing Bamian airport on 1 January 1998 when a clearly-identified UN plane was on the runway. Faced with a series of Taliban provocations, culminating in an assault on a UN staffer by the Taliban Governor of Kandahar Mullah Mohammad Hassan,[83] on 23 March 1998 the UN ordered the withdrawal of its expatriate staff in Kandahar and suspended its humanitarian activities in the south of the country.[84] Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN Under Secretary-General for Special Assignments, was in Pakistan at the time of the withdrawal, and sent a very firm message: if the UN could not operate as it did in all other member states, 'we should pack up and go'. He added that the 'international community has a standard and if you want to be a member of the club you have to abide by the rules'.[85] In the same vein, the UN Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Sergio Vieira de Mello, demanded 'written assurances that international humanitarian law and principles will be respected'.[86] Some such written assurances were given in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in Kabul on 13 May 1998 by the Taliban 'Planning Minister', Qari Deen Mohammad, and the UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths.[87] In other respects, however, the document proved a disaster for the UN, since Article 13, in a section entitled 'Access to Health and Education' stated that 'women's access to health and education will need to be gradual'. This prompted a scathing attack from the Executive Director of Physicians for Human Rights, Leonard S. Rubinstein, who stated that the UN 'endorsement of Taliban restrictions on women's basic rights to education and health care is a betrayal of international human rights standards and of the female population of Afghanistan'.[88] This specific issue took a back seat when the August 1998 US Tomahawk cruise missile strikes prompted a UN withdrawal from Afghanistan, in the midst of which a Military Adviser to the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), Lieutenant-Colonel Carmine Calo of Italy, was murdered in Kabul. And when the Taliban launched a further major offensive against their opponents in late July 1999, barely a week after a declaration issued at UN-sponsored talks in Tashkent, attended by Taliban representatives, had called for peaceful political negotiations in order to establish a broad-based, multiethnic and fully representative government, relations between the Taliban and the UN hit a new low.

The Taliban's relations with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) proved equally tense, and the images of the Taliban conveyed to the wider world through NGO channels were on the whole extremely adverse. While some NGOs welcomed the security which the Taliban brought, and found them less corrupt than some other groups with which they had had to deal,[89] for others they were at best meddlesome and obstreperous. The issue of gender again proved extraordinarily sensitive, and those bodies which coped most effectively with the Taliban were those engaged in 'gender-neutral' work such as mine action,[90] or those such as the International Committee of the Red Cross that were not under donor pressure to take a strongly political stand in response to Taliban policy. Tensions finally came to a head on 14 July 1998, when the Taliban ordered international NGOs in Kabul to relocate to the ruined campus of the Kabul Polytechnic, which they were invited also to repair. This was understandably interpreted as a covert expulsion order, and many such NGOs opted instead to quit the capital. The Taliban responded by seizing NGO property, notably two vehicles donated to a medical charity by the Princess Diana Fund, vehicles which days later a correspondent reported 'now ferry around turbaned and gun-toting passengers in comfort through the bumpy and potholed streets of Kabul'.[91] While some international NGOs did shift to the Polytechnic, they were displaced by the Taliban in mid-1999 'after more than 800 troops occupied the compound for a month before moving to the front'.[92] After the Tomahawk cruise missile strikes, the activities of many NGOs were further limited by restrictions imposed by donor governments; one Western government even warned that it would suspend all funding to any Pakistan-based NGO whose expatriate staff set foot in Afghanistan. Despite a Taliban decree designed to guarantee the safety of NGO staff,[93] a fundamental tension between the Taliban and NGOs persisted, for while the Taliban welcomed them as assistants, they could not abide them as witnesses. Even before the expulsion of all expatriate aid workers from Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist strikes, the position of international NGOs was approaching a crisis point following the August 2001 arrest of German, U.S., and Australian employees of Shelter Now International (SNI),[94] whom the Taliban accused of Christian proselytization. To experienced observers, this reflected less a concern with Christians per se than a desire to use an anti-Christian campaign as a way of energising Pakistani madrassa students, and as a pretext for asserting power over groups with some degree of autonomy. As so often in the past, the aid community found itself caught between a rock and a hard place.

VI

The tensions between the Taliban and the UN also reflected tensions between the Taliban and a number of powerful UN members. In the following paragraphs, I explore the dimensions of Taliban relations with three of the more important-Pakistan, Iran and the United States-since it is these three states which by virtue of their proximity or power are central to the prospects for any progress towards a settlement of the Afghan problem. I also make some brief comments about Taliban attitudes to Saudi Arabia, Russia, and India.

Pakistan has always been the state closest to the Taliban, and there is much truth in the claim that without substantial Pakistani support, the Taliban would long ago have faced

enormous problems in holding their positions in the parts of Afghanistan which they dominated. It is no exaggeration to say that despite Pakistani denials,[95] the expansion of Taliban power reflected a 'creeping invasion' of Afghanistan by its neighbor: for example, in mid-1999, Ahmed Rashid reported that in preparation for the Taliban's summer offensive, 'Transport planes from Pakistan fly military supplies at night to the ramshackle Kabul airport'.[96] To that extent, Pakistan has rightly been viewed as the state which it is vital to pressure if the Taliban are to be induced to take any interest in the concerns of the international community, and the military coup by General Pervez Musharraf on October 12, 1999, in no way altered this fundamental reality Yet the relationship between Pakistan and the Taliban is not one of direct control, for two reasons. First, the loose structure of the Taliban movement, based on personalistic ties rather than structured hierarchy, makes it virtually impossible to control in any carefully-calibrated way. This became very clear in May 1997 when the Taliban incursion into northern Afghanistan, manifestly orchestrated by Pakistan, failed dramatically through a lack of effective control over trigger-happy foot soldiers.[97] Second, the Taliban have proved adept at building ties to different lobbies in Pakistan as a way of protecting themselves from disaffection on the part of any single lobby.[98] In supporting a revivalist Sunni Pushtun movement such as the Taliban, Pakistani agencies pursued a very high-risk strategy, the consequences of which were reflected in the escalation more generally of militant religious activity in Pakistan.[99] And with the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, swiftly blamed on groups which had flourished under Taliban protection, President Musharraf found himself in the desperate position of having to choose whether to oppose the heated radicalism of Pakistan's religious extremists, or the immeasurable wrath of the United States. Having sown the wind, Pakistan was left to reap the whirlwind.

Militant anti-Shiism lay at the core of the Taliban's deeply-troubled relations with Iran. This militancy derives in part from the nature of the education available in Deobandi madrassas, but in Afghanistan it is reinforced by patterns of hostility to the ethnic group of which a large number of Shia are members, namely the Hazaras. The Hazaras have a distinctly Central Asian phenotype, and have a long experience of social marginalization. These experiences have helped shape the character of Shiite political mobilization.[100] Since the Iranian population is overwhelmingly Shiite and the Iranian political system is dominated by Shiite ulema, it is hardly surprising that the Taliban's hostility to Shiism prompted a strong Iranian response, in the form of military and moral support for the Taliban's armed opponents, most importantly but by no means exclusively the Shiite Hezb-e Wahdat. Iran delighted in highlighting some of the more eccentric aspects of Taliban behavior, not least because on issues such as female access to education and employment, Iran appeared moderate, even progressive, in contrast to their Kandahari neighbors. One senior Iranian cleric described Taliban policies as 'fossilized'.[101] A Taliban spokesman, in turn, described Iran as 'an expansionist state which wants to establish "Greater Iran" from the Gulf in the south to the Amu [Oxus] river in the north and the Indus river to the east'.[102] In June 1997, relations took a nosedive when the Taliban ordered the closure of the Iranian Embassy in Kabul, and they reached their nadir in August 1998 when the Taliban seized the northern city of Mazar-e Sharif, killed eight staff of the Iranian Consulate, and embarked on an orgy of killing in which perhaps 2,500 Shia perished in just three days.[103] This caused outrage in Iran, and brought Iran and the

Taliban to the brink of war,[104] which only dexterous diplomacy by UN Envoy Brahimi managed to avert. Iran's hostility to the Taliban is muted only by the reluctance of at least some within the Iranian leadership to see an anti-Taliban campaign provide a stepping-stone for the revival of American influence in West Asia.

When the Taliban took Kabul, they had high hopes of support from America.[105] In October 1995, the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan reportedly accompanied General Naseerullah Babar in a convoy of trucks which entered Afghan territory from Quetta, a move which could only have been interpreted as a calculated insult to the Rabbani Government.[106] Staff of the US Embassy in Pakistan had made no secret of their animosity towards the Taliban's predecessors, and the US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robin Raphel, had just a month earlier demanded that Iran 'should stop supplying Kabul'.[107] In a fatal subordination of foreign policy to commercial interests, the US Administration was also sympathetic to UNOCAL's ambitions for the region.[108] The State Department's Acting Spokesman, Glyn Davies, remarked that 'the United States finds nothing objectionable in the policy statements of the new government, including its move to impose Islamic law'.[109] An Afghan-American commentator with the RAND Corporation who had served in the upper echelons of the State Department and the Department of Defense even went into print to argue that it was time for the United States to reengage in Afghanistan, maintaining that 'the departure of Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi financier of various anti-U.S. terrorist groups, from Afghanistan indicates some common interest between the United States and the Taliban'. [110] However, disappointment set in rapidly on both sides. As noted earlier, the Taliban's policies towards women made them political pariahs, and by 1998 even won them criticism from First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Furthermore, if more explicit US interests in Afghanistan could be summed up in terms of 'drugs and thugs'[111]-in other words, the flourishing of opium crops and networks of terrorists from the Arab world[112]-it rapidly emerged that firm Taliban action could be expected on neither front. It soon became clear that Bin Laden had not left Afghanistan; on the contrary, he had been a major financier of the Taliban push to Kabul.[113] The bomb blasts on 7 August 1998 which devastated the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were blamed by US intelligence sources on Bin Laden, prompting the Tomahawk missile strikes on his training camps in Afghanistan two weeks later. This led to an upsurge of anti-American sentiment on the part of the Taliban and their Pakistani backers from the Jamiat-e Ulema-i Islam, and ultimately the promulgation by President Clinton on 6 July 1999 of an Executive Order freezing all Taliban assets in the USA and banning commercial and financial ties between the Taliban and the US.[114] As relations cooled with the Taliban, Washington began to flirt with the idea that the former Afghan monarch Zahir Shah could play a role in putting together an alternative, something which prompted the then Pakistani Foreign Minister-an ardent Taliban supporter-to remark in March 1998 during a Tokyo press conference that the Americans were 'thinking of putting puppets in Afghanistan', those puppets being 'people who hover around in Pakistan from one cocktail party to the other'.[115] It was always wishful thinking on the part of both naive Taliban and naive Americans to expect that friendly relations could develop between leaderships with such radically different Weltanschauungen, and even before the September terrorist attacks, a posture of much more active U.S. opposition to the Taliban was ironically canvassed by the very analyst

who in 1996 had argued for reengagement.[116] The US chose in part to pursue such an approach through the UN Security Council, which by Resolution 1267 imposed Chapter VII sanctions against the Taliban from November 14, 1999, sanctions which were subsequently tightened by Resolution 1333 of 19 December 2000. [117]

The attitudes of the Taliban to Saudi Arabia, Russia, and India, have been somewhat less complicated than their attitudes to Pakistan, Iran and the United States. Saudi Arabia as a financial backer was initially accorded great respect, although the relationship was not sufficiently intimate as to prompt the Taliban to return Osama Bin Laden to the Saudi government following the August 1998 bomb blasts, something which led the Saudis unilaterally to freeze their official relations with the Taliban. Russia, on the other hand, was routinely denounced in Taliban statements, first because Russia would clearly prefer that the Taliban's opponents triumph in Afghanistan,[118] but second because the Taliban, and a large number of ordinary Afghans, clearly recalled and rightly deplored the dreadful damage their country suffered at the hands of Soviet troops and Soviet politicians,[119] some of whom have made careers in the politics of post-communist Russia. Contrary to the perception of many Afghans, the Russian Federation is in important ways a dramatically different state from the old USSR,[120] but it is no surprise that in Afghanistan, painful memories die hard. India too was denounced by the Taliban, and the electoral successes of the Bharatiya Janata Party hardly pointed to any burgeoning community of interest between Afghanistan and India. The Taliban earned Indian ire over their support for Kashmiri groups such as Harkat al-Mujahideen, but the most serious rift surrounded the December 1999 hijacking to Kandahar of Indian Airlines Flight 814 during its scheduled trip from Katmandu to Delhi. The Taliban followed a course of action which appeared to serve the interests of the hijackers, and the episode ended with the hijackers escaping, and India being forced to release a significant Kashmiri militant.[121] After this, there was little hope that the Taliban could ever rebuild a relationship with New Delhi.

VII

For the people of Afghanistan, the September 2001 crisis began not with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but two days earlier. On the afternoon of Sunday September 9, two Moroccan journalists carrying Belgian passports detonated a bomb hidden in a video camera, and fatally wounded the military leader of the anti-Taliban forces, the renowned Ahmad Shah Massoud. This type of suicide attack had no precedent in Afghan circles: rather, it bore the hallmarks of the type of activities with which Usama Bin Laden had long been associated. Given that it is almost inconceivable that the Taliban leadership would not have been forewarned of an imminent Bin Laden attempt on the life of their main opponent, the attack highlighted a radicalization within the Taliban which had for some years been increasingly palpable.

The most important pointer to the radicalisation of the Taliban came in July 1999 with the assassination in Quetta of Abdul Ahad Karzai, a Popalzai tribal leader from Afghanistan, just six days after Washington's unilateral sanctions against the Taliban were imposed. The Karzai family was one of the most prominent Pushtun families of more moderate,

pro-Zahir Shah stripe who had linked up with the Taliban movement. These moderate Pushtuns were of some use in generating Washington's initial acceptance of the Taliban, but given that the Taliban's Pakistani backers had no desire to revive Afghanistan's ancien régime (which they associated with the Pushtunistan dispute), in the long run they were entirely expendable. The Karzai assassination created a significant rift within the Taliban. This did not affect its position in the tribal areas of Afghanistan, where Taliban power was exercised sporadically rather than ubiquitously, but it altered the pattern of advice coming to Mullah Omar. The original Taliban shura ceased to function, and moderate voices became less and less audible.[122] Advice to the Taliban supreme leader thereafter was dominated by elderly Kandahari judges, radical Deobandi circles, ISI officers, and Bin Laden and his associates. This development provided some of the context for the Taliban's spectacular destruction in February 2001 of two of Afghanistan's greatest treasures, the giant Buddhas of Bamiyan, which were dynamited in the face of a global outcry.[123] When the spotlight of blame finally settled on the Taliban after the atrocities of September 11, 2001, they found themselves with scarcely a friend in the world, and for this they had no one but themselves to blame.

Afghanistan stands at an utterly decisive moment in its modern history. The decisions to be made by the Bush Administration and its allies in the global struggle against terrorism will determine whether Afghanistan and its region will at last be stabilised, or Southwest Asia will slide into a ruinous state of near-anarchy in which countless innocent people, Americans included, will be engulfed. If the US Administration opts for an indiscriminate use of force against targets in Afghanistan, and no more than a "short, sharp" campaign to strike at Usama Bin Laden and his associates, then the latter scenario will most likely eventuate. There will be no winners. There is, however, a realistic alternative. It has six elements.

First, the people of Afghanistan must be partners in any operation to remove terrorist groups and the circles which nurture them. Across ethnic and sectarian boundaries, there is an overwhelming desire for peace and reconstruction-not the peace of a prison, but a real peace in which the rights of ordinary people are respected, the young can be educated, and Afghans can observe the tenets of their Islamic faith. Any intervention in Afghanistan should not be a punitive venture, but a rescue mission. This is how many Afghans will see it if it is properly executed: Zahir Shah, in an interview with the BBC, remarked that "The intervention of foreign troops in any country is something that's not easy to accept. But if it's an intervention such as we witnessed in Europe with the Second World War when the British, the American and the Canadians came down in France to get rid of the Nazis, this is different." [124]

Second, there must be a recognition of how profound and immediate is the emergency by which ordinary Afghans are faced. Two decades of warfare, combined with repression and drought, have created a mood of utter despair, and a looming humanitarian catastrophe. An intervention force in Afghanistan is likely to be besieged by almost unimaginable numbers of desperate people looking to it to provide humanitarian relief. If plans are not made to meet their needs, the political and military objectives of an

intervention will be fundamentally compromised.

Third, it should be made absolutely clear to Afghanistan's neighbours that the days in which they could determine who should rule Afghanistan are over. Pakistan still has much to learn in this respect: the statement of Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar on September 25, 2001 that any move by foreign powers "to give assistance to one side or the other in Afghanistan is a recipe for great suffering for the people of Afghanistan"[125] was not so much a mea culpa as a breathtaking display of effrontery. In the last two decades, few countries have suffered more than Afghanistan from the belief of adjacent states that they have a right either to promote or to veto Afghan rulers. For too long, Afghans have been told which leaders they must accept, not asked which leaders they would like. This must change.

Fourth, the United Nations must play a major role in managing the transition to a new set of political structures in Afghanistan, and must be properly resourced to do so. The UN can provide assistance to the Afghan people to enable them to determine their own future. For stability to be assured, the people of Afghanistan must have good reason to believe that the international community is committed, substantially and for the long-term, to see Afghanistan put back on its feet. The UN provides the appropriate framework for such guarantees, and once Afghans see that they will not again be cast adrift, they will hasten to beat swords into ploughshares.

Fifth, there must be a recognition that the dire situation in Afghanistan is a product not just of local but of transnational factors. There is a need to address in a comprehensive fashion the interlocking security dilemmas in South, Central, and West Asia which have promoted destructive rather than constructive patterns of behaviour. This approach must include Pakistan, for an unstable, nuclear-armed Pakistan is in no one's interests.[126] If the Bush Administration moves with care and sensitivity to support new architecture for regional cooperation and dialogue, including even states with which America's relations have been tense, the long-term benefits could be enormous.

Sixth, a new Marshall Plan should be implemented for Afghanistan and its region. In his June 5, 1947 Harvard commencement address, Secretary of State George C. Marshall declared that the European recovery program would be directed "not against any country, but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos."[127] Each of these evils haunts present-day Afghanistan. Marshall's far-sighted commitment to the postwar recovery of Europe helped divert an historically fractious continent into an era of unparalleled peace and prosperity. Afghanistan and its people deserve no less.

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Footnotes

1. For more detail on these matters, see Ian Cummins, Marx, Engels and National Movements (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); Vendulka Kubálková and Albert Cruickshank, Marxism-Leninism and Theory of International Relations (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Walker Connor, The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Practice (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Vendulka Kubálková and Albert Cruickshank, Marxism and International Relations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
2. Quoted in Norman Davies, Europe: A History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.568.
3. This splendid metaphor owes its revival to Sir Isaiah Berlin: see Isaiah Berlin, The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas (London: John Murray, 1990).
4. James P. Piscatori, Islam in a World of Nation States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) p.145.
5. Olivier Roy, 'Has Islamism a Future in Afghanistan?', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.199-211 at p.210.
6. For an elaboration of this point, see Amin Saikal and William Maley, 'From Soviet to Russian Foreign Policy', in Amin Saikal and William Maley (eds.), Russia in Search of its Future (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp.102-122 at p.102.
7. See J.L. Austin, How to Do Things With Words (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975)
8. Paul Wilkinson, Social Movement (London: Macmillan, 1971) p.26.
9. Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp.3-4.
10. Ibid., p.23.
11. On the dimensions of this problem, see I. William Zartman (ed.), Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995).
12. See Robert D. Putnam, 'Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games', International Organization, vol.42, no.3, Summer 1988, pp.427-460.
13. On the emergence of the Afghan state, see Sayed Qassem Reshtia, Afghanistan dar qarn-e nozdeh (Kabul: Dawlat metbaeh, 1967); J.L. Lee, The 'Ancient Supremacy': Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh, 1731-1901 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996); Christine Noelle, State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863) (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998). On the particular role of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, see Vartan Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969); M. Hasan Kakar, Afghanistan: A Study of Internal Political Developments 1880-1896 (Kabul and Lahore: Punjab Educational Press, 1971); M. Hasan Kakar, Government and Society in Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Abd-al Rahman Khan (Austin:

University of Texas Press, 1979).

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15. See Louis Dupree, 'Myth and Reality in Afghan "Neutralism"', Central Asian Survey, vol.7, nos.2-3, 1988, pp.145-151.

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17. See Gabriella Grasselli, British and American Responses to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, 1996) p.121.

18. See 'Sekretnye dokumenty iz osobykh papok: Afganistan', Voprosy istorii, no.3, 1993, pp.3-32; Odd Arne Westad, 'Prelude to Invasion: The Soviet Union and the Afghan Communists, 1978-1979', International History Review, vol.16, no.1, 1994, pp.49-69; Raymond Garthoff, Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994), pp.977-1075.

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20. See Graeme Gill and Roderic Pitty, Power in the Party: The Organization of Power and Central-Republican Relations in the CPSU (London: Macmillan, 1997) pp.149-154.

21. There is by now a very large literature on the problems of post-Soviet Central Asia. For a sampling, see Graham E. Fuller, Central Asia: The New Geopolitics (Santa Monica: Rand R-4219-USDP, 1992); Robert L. Canfield, 'Restructuring in Greater Central Asia: Changing Political Configurations', Asian Survey, vol.32, no.10, October 1992, pp.875-887; Ahmed Rashid, The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism? (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994); Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1994); Anthony Hyman, Power and Politics in Central Asia's New Republics (London: Conflict Studies no.273, Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1994); Anthony Hyman, Political Change in Post-Soviet Central Asia (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994); Martha Brill Olcott, Central Asia's New States: Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); R.D. McChesney, Central Asia: Foundations of Change (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1996); John Anderson, The international politics of Central Asia (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Olivier Roy, The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

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23. See Amin Saikal, 'The Regional Politics of the Afghan Crisis', in Amin Saikal and

William Maley (eds.), The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pp.52-66.

24. See Anwar-ul-haq Ahady, 'Saudi Arabia, Iran and the conflict in Afghanistan', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.117-134.

25. See Marvin G. Weinbaum, Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) pp.33-37.

26. Anthony Davis, 'How the Taliban became a military force', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.43-71 at p.70.

27. For further discussion of the Taliban movement, see Barnett R. Rubin, 'Women and pipelines: Afghanistan's proxy wars', International Affairs, vol.73, no.2, April 1997, pp.283-296; Rameen Moshref, The Taliban (New York: Occasional Paper no.35, The Afghanistan Forum, May 1997); Kristian Berg Harpviken, 'Transcending Traditionalism: The Emergence of Non-State Military Formations in Afghanistan', Journal of Peace Research, vol.34, no.3, August 1997, pp.271-287; Bernt Glatzer, 'Die Talibanbewegung: Einige religiöse, lokale und politische Faktoren', Afghanistan Info, no.41, October 1997, pp.10-14; William Maley, 'Introduction: Intepreting the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.1-28; Peter Marsden, The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan (London: Zed Books, 1998); Kamal Matinuddin, The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997 (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999); Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Michael Griffin, Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan (London: Pluto Press, 2001).

28. See Davis, 'How the Taliban became a military force'.

29. Afghanistan-Crisis of Impunity: The Role of Pakistan, Russia and Iran in Fueling the Civil War (New York: Human Rights Watch, July 2001) p. 23.

30. On the Deoband tradition, see Barbara D. Metcalf, Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

31. Kenneth J. Cooper, 'Afghanistan's Taliban: Going Beyond Its Islamic Upbringing', The Washington Post, 9 March 1998.

32. See Nancy Tapper, 'Abd al Rahman's North West Frontier: The Pashtun Colonisation of Afghan Turkistan', in Richard Tapper (ed.), The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan (London: Croom Helm, 1983) pp.233-261.

33. See Davis, 'How the Taliban became a military force', p.54; and Ahmed Rashid, 'Pakistan and the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.72-89 at p.87.

34. For details, see Ahmed Rashid, 'Afghanistan: Heart of Darkness', Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 August 1999, pp.8-12; Anthony Davis, 'One Man's Holy War', Asiaweek, 6 August 1999, pp.22-24.

35. Reuters, 30 July 1999.

36. Michael Keating, 'Women's Rights and Wrongs', The World Today, vol.53, no.1, January 1997, pp.11-12 at p.12.

37. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were the only other states to grant the Taliban recognition, something they did in 1997. Each withdrew its recognition following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001.

38. For more detailed discussion, see Hersch Lauterpacht, Recognition in International Law (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1948); James Crawford, The Creation of States in International Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Stefan Talmon, Recognition of Governments in International Law: With Particular Reference to Governments in Exile (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

39. See, for example, Sarah Horner, 'Kabul falls under the Islamic lash', The Sunday Times, 29 September 1996; Christopher Thomas, 'Militants bring a veil down on battered Kabul', The Times, 30 September 1996; John F. Burns, 'For Women in Kabul, Peace at the Price of Repression', The New York Times, 4 October 1996; Jon Swain, 'Kabul hushed by Taliban dark age', The Sunday Times, 6 October 1996.

40. Lauterpacht, Recognition in International Law, p.93.

41. Bruno Simma (ed.), The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p.224. Emphasis added.

42. See BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3164/A/2-3, 2 March 1998.

43. See Barnett R. Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) p.297.

44. Rashid, 'Pakistan and the Taliban', p.76.

45. For further details, see William Maley, 'The Perils of Pipelines', The World Today, vol.54, nos.8-9, August-September 1998, pp.231-232.

46. Reuters, 1 October 1996.

47. Ahmed Rashid, The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Pipeline: Company-Government Relations and Regional Politics (Washington DC: Focus on Current Issues, The Petroleum Finance Company, October 1997) p.10. Rashid notes that 'the Taliban's negotiating team with the oil companies is made up of half a dozen mullahs with a madrassa education and one engineering student who has never practiced engineering' and that the Taliban's 'Minister for Mines and Energy … was a carpet dealer in Saudi Arabia before joining the movement'.

48. Reuters, 11 March 1998.

49. Agence France Presse, 24 August 1998.

50. For a detailed discussion, see Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia, pp. 157-182.

51. See Zareen F. Naqvi, Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade Relations (Islamabad: The World Bank, 1999) p. 1. There is nothing secretive about this smuggling; in May 1998, the present writer saw trucks laden with new color televisions (an item banned by the Taliban) driving through Jalalabad towards the border with Pakistan. For further detail, see Ahmed Rashid, 'Wages of War', Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 August 1999, pp.10-11.

52. On the background to the production of opium in Afghanistan, see Hazhir Teimourian, 'Drug baron in the border hills', The Times, 25 September 1989; Scott B. McDonald, 'Afghanistan's Drug Trade', Society, vol.29, no.5, 1992, pp.61-66;

Alain Labrousse, 'L'opium de la guerre', Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan, no.68, 1995, pp.18-20.

53. See William Maley, 'Approaches to Transnational Security Issues in the Asia-Pacific', in Abdul Razak Baginda and Anthony Bergin (eds.), Asia-Pacific's Security Dilemma (London: ASEAN Academic Press, 1998) pp.109-122.

54. See 'Entretien avec Mollah Mohammad Omar', Politique internationale, no. 74, Winter 1996-97, pp. 135-143 at pp. 141-142.

55. Afghanistan: Annual Opium Poppy Survey 1998 (Islamabad: Drug Control Monitoring System AFG/C27, UNDCP, 1998).

56. See Final report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan submitted by Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/75 (United Nations: E/CN.4/1997/59, 20 February 1997) para.104.

57. See Andrew Meier, 'Afghanistan's Drug Trade', Muslim Politics Report, no.11, January-February 1997, pp.3-4 at p.4.

58. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 1997 (Washington DC: Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, US Department of State, March 1998).

59. Global Illicit Drug Trends 2001 (Vienna: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, 2001) p. 35.

60. See A.W. Najimi, Report on a Survey on SCA Supported Girls' Education and SCA Built School Buildings in Afghanistan in Regions under Southern and Eastern SCA Regional Management (Peshawar: Educational Technical Support Unit, Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 29 August 1997).

61. See Final report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan submitted by Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1996/75, Appendix I. Other decrees, detailed in this report, banned music and tape cassettes, beard trimming, kite flying, pictures and portraits, dancing at wedding parties, the playing of drums, and 'British and American hairstyles'. Not all these decrees are enforced with equal rigor; nevertheless, what is important is that they are available to be enforced should that be the whim of a particular official of the religious police.

62. Afghanistan Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 (Washington DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February 1998).

63. Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, submitted in accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 1999/14 (United Nations: E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/18, July 21, 2000) para. 12.

64. For a detailed discussion, see Nancy Hatch Dupree, 'Afghan women under the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.145-166.

65. On these developments, see Dupree, Afghanistan, pp.530-533; Fahima Rahimi, Women in Afghanistan (Liestal: Stiftung Bibliotheca Afghanica, 1986); Nancy Hatch Dupree, 'Afghanistan: Women, Society and Development', in Joseph G. Jabbra and Nancy W. Jabbra (eds.), Women and Development in the Middle East and North Africa (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992) pp.30-42; William Maley, 'Women and

Public Policy in Afghanistan: A Comment', World Development, vol.24, no.1, January 1996, pp.203-206.

66. See Nancy Hatch Dupree, 'Revolutionary Rhetoric and Afghan Women', in M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield (eds.), Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1984) pp.306-340; Micheline Centlivres-Demont, 'Afghan Women in Peace, War, and Exile', in Myron Weiner and Ali Banuazizi (eds.), The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994) pp.333-365.

67. See Inger W. Boesen, 'What Happens to Honour in Exile? Continuity and Change among Afghan Refugees', in Bo Huldt and Erland Jansson (eds.), The Tragedy of Afghanistan: The Social Cultural and Political Impact of the Soviet Invasion (London: Croom Helm, 1988) pp.219-239 at pp.236-237.

68. On this experience, see Women in Afghanistan: A Human Rights Catastrophe (London: Amnesty International, ASA 11/03/95, 1995). For Amnesty International's assessment of the status of women under the Taliban, see Women in Afghanistan: The Violations Continue (London: Amnesty International, ASA 11/05/97, June 1997).

69. Voice of America, 19 March 1998.

70. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3136/A/2, 28 January 1998.

71. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3145/A/2, 7 February 1998.

72. See Christiane Amanpour, 'Tyranny of the Taliban', Time, 13 October 1997.

73. Reuters, 29 September 1997

74. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3172/A/1, 11 March 1998.

75. Reuters, 18 November 1997.

76. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3083/A/2, 22 November 1997.

77. See Olivier Roy, The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War (London: Adelphi Paper no.259, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Brassey's, 1991) p.40.

78. Sharon Waxman, 'A Cause Unveiled: Hollywood Women Have Made the Plight of Afghan Women Their Own-Sight Unseen', The Washington Post, 30 March 1999, p.C01; Judy Mann, 'The Grinding Terror of the Taliban', The Washington Post, 9 July 1999, p.C11.

79. The Taliban's War on Women: A Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan (Boston: Physicians for Human Rights, 1998). For a further analysis from the same organization, see Women's Health and Human Rights in Afghanistan: A Population-Based Assessment (Boston: Physicians for Human Rights, 2001).

80. Agence France Presse, 29 December 1997. A similar statement-'we do not care about anybody as long as the religion of Allah is maintained'-has been made by the high-ranking Taliban official Mullah Mohammad Hassan: see Interim report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/108 and Economic and Social Council decision 1997/273 (United Nations: A/52/493, 16 October 1997) para.29.

81. UN Daily Highlights: Thursday 19 March 1998 (New York: Office of Communications and of Public Information, United Nations, 19 March 1998). The Director-General's comments were prompted by reports of public executions

carried out by the Taliban, whose means of inflicting capital punishment have included cutting of throats, and-in one particularly grisly case-the beheading of the victim with a blunt knife: see Caroline Lees, 'Police outlaw Afghan video of beheading', Daily Telegraph, 29 June 1997. The video in question was screened on Uzbek State Television on 9 July 1997: see BBC Summary of World Broadcasts FE/2970/A/1, 14 July 1997.

82. Agence France Presse, 20 March 1998.
83. Associated Press, 24 March 1998. In addition to striking an officer of the UN Development Programme, Mullah Hassan also threw a teapot, and attempted to throw a table at another UN staffer.
84. Zahid Hussain, 'UN forced out of Kandahar', The Times, 25 March 1998.
85. Associated Press, 28 March 1998.
86. Agence France Presse, 24 March 1998.
87. For the full text, see 'Memorandum of Understanding between The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and The United Nations 13 May 1998', International Journal of Refugee Law, vol.10, no.3, July 1998, pp.586-592.
88. Medical Group Condemns UN Agreement with Taliban (Boston: Physicians for Human Rights, 29 June 1998).
89. The security in question mainly takes the form of easier movement on roads, and therefore most benefits those NGOs (and UN and other international agencies) with large supplies to move. It also benefits smugglers and opium traders: see Barnett R. Rubin, "The Political Economy of Peace and War in Afghanistan" World Development 28: 10 (October 2000): 1789-1803. The phenomenon of NGOs lauding the incorruptibility of extremist groups is a familiar one: see Linda Mason and Roger Brown, Rice, Rivalry and Politics: Managing Cambodian Relief (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) pp.138-139.
90. See William Maley, 'Mine Action in Afghanistan', Refuge, vol.17, no.4, October 1998, pp.12-16 at p.15.
91. Agence France Presse, 24 July 1998.
92. Agence France Presse, 28 July 1999.
93. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3569/A/1, 24 June 1999.
94. Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan: Weekly Update (Geneva: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan) no.424, August 9, 2001: 1.
95. Pakistan's denial that it supports the Taliban forms part of a longstanding pattern of denial of involvement in Afghanistan. Former Secretary of State Shultz recorded in his memoirs a conversation which Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq had with President Reagan in 1988 after the signing of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan: 'I heard the president ask Zia how he would handle the fact that they would be violating their agreement. Zia replied that they would "just lie about it. We've been denying our activities there for eight years".': George P. Shultz, Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State (New York: Scribner's, 1993) p.1091.
96. Ahmed Rashid, 'Final Offensive?', Far Eastern Economic Review, 5 August 1999, p.12.
97. On these events, see Maley, 'Introduction: Interpreting the Taliban', pp.10-14;

Anthony Davis, 'Taliban found lacking when nation-building beckoned', Jane's Intelligence Review, vol.9, no.8, August 1997, pp.359-364.

98. Rashid, 'Pakistan and the Taliban', p.73.

99. For further detail on Pakistani groups backed by the Taliban, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, 'Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi'i and Sunni Identities', Modern Asian Studies, vol.32, part 3, July 1998, pp.689-716; S.V. R. Nasr, "The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics" Modern Asian Studies 34: I (January 2000): 139-180; Vali R. Nasr, "International Politics, Domestic Imperatives, and Identity Mobilization: Sectarianism in Pakistan, 1979-1998" Comparative Politics 32: 2 (January 2000): 171-190

100. See David Busby Edwards, 'The Evolution of Shi'i Political Dissent in Afghanistan', in Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (eds.) Shi'ism and Social Protest (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) pp.201-229; Hassan Poladi, The Hazaras (Stockton: Moghul Press, 1989); Kristian Berg Harpviken, Political Mobilization among the Hazaras of Afghanistan: 1978-1992 (Oslo: Report no. 9, Department of Sociology, University of Oslo, 1996); Sayed Askar Mousavi, The Hazaras of Afghanistan: An Historical, Cultural, Economic, and Political Study (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998). On the contemporary political activities of Hazaras, see Hafizullah Emadi, 'Exporting Iran's Revolution: The Radicalization of the Shiite Movement in Afghanistan', Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 31, no. 1, January 1995, pp. 1-12; Hafizullah Emadi, 'The Hazaras and their role in the process of political transformation in Afghanistan', Central Asian Survey, vol. 16, no. 3, September 1997, pp. 363-387.

101. Reuters, 4 October 1996.

102. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, FE/3145/A/2, 7 February 1998.

103. For details, see Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mazar-i Sharif (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1998); Kenneth J. Cooper, 'Taliban Massacre Based on Ethnicity', The Washington Post, 28 November 1998, p.A01.

104. See Dana Priest, 'Iran Poises Its Forces On Afghan Border: Analysts Warn Of "Incursion" Targeting Taliban', The Washington Post, 5 September 1998, p.A01; Adam Garfinkle, 'Afghanistanding', Orbis, vol.43, no.3, Summer 1999, pp.405418.

105. For a more detailed discussion of US-Taliban relations, see Richard Mackenzie, 'The United States and the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.90-103.

106. On this trip, see Dennis Kux, The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) p. 335.

107. Crosslines Global Report, nos.22-23, August 1996, p.13. Raphel also 'spoke favorably of the Taliban' during Congressional hearings: see Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998) p.184.

108. See Olivier Roy, 'Avec les talibans, la charia plus le gazoduc', Le Monde diplomatique, November 1996, pp.6-7; Rashid, Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and

Fundamentalism in Central Asia, p. 163

109.　　　Voice of America, 27 September 1996.

110.　　　Zalmay Khalilzad, 'Afghanistan: Time to Reengage', The Washington Post, 7 October 1996.

111.　　　Barnett R. Rubin, 'U.S. Policy in Afghanistan', Muslim Politics Report, no.11, January-February 1997, pp.1-2, 6.

112.　　　On Arabs in Afghanistan, see Anthony Davis, 'Foreign Combatants in Afghanistan', Jane's Intelligence Review, vol.5, no.7, July 1993, pp.327-331; Anthony Hyman, 'Arab Involvement in the Afghan War', The Beirut Review, no.7, Spring 1994, pp.73-89; Barnett R. Rubin, 'Arab Islamists in Afghanistan', in John L. Esposito, Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform? (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997) pp.179-206.

113.　　　Steve LeVine, 'Helping Hand', Newsweek, 14 October 1997. On Bin Laden's earlier involvement with the Afghan Mujahideen, see R. Hrair Dekmejian, 'The Rise of Political Islamism in Saudi Arabia', The Middle East Journal, vol.48, no.4, Autumn 1994, pp.627-643 at p.641.

114.　　　'Executive Order: Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with the Taliban', Federal Register, vol.64, no.129, 7 July 1999. See also John Lancaster, 'Afghanistan Rulers Accused of Giving Terrorist Refuge: Clinton Bans Trading With Taliban Militia', The Washington Post, 7 July 1999, p.A15.

115.　　　'Gohar warns of new arms race in region', Dawn, 12 March 1998. The Pakistan Foreign Office subsequently made a somewhat laboured attempt to repair the damage done by this outburst: see 'FO Clarifies Gohar's Remarks', Dawn, 13 March 1998.

116.　　　See Zalmay Khalilzad and Daniel Byman, "Afghanistan: The Consolidation of a Rogue State" The Washington Quarterly 23:1 (Winter 2000): 65-78.

117.　　　Pakistan was a vocal and energetic critic of these sanctions, not least because those imposed by Resolution 1333 were directed against Pakistan in all but name. Pakistan dressed its critique in humanitarian garb. However, the UN Secretary-General in July 2001 advised that while "there are adverse humanitarian effects from the current sanctions regime", those effects "are limited, and their scope and magnitude is greatly exceeded by the effects of the other factors causing humanitarian suffering, most notably the unprecedented drought, the continuation of the conflict and the widespread deprivation of human rights": see Report of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian implications of the measures imposed by Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1333 (2000) on Afghanistan (New York: United Nations, S/2001/695, July 13, 2001) para. 67.

118.　　　See Anthony Hyman, 'Russia, Central Asia and the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban (New York: New York University Press, 1998) pp.104-116.

119.　　　On this damage, see Amin Saikal and William Maley, Regime Change in Afghanistan: Foreign Intervention and the Politics of Legitimacy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) pp.135-142.

120.　　　For evidence which establishes this very clearly, see John Löwenhardt, The Reincarnation of Russia: Struggling with the Legacy of Communism, 1990-1994

(Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, How Russia Votes (Chatham: Chatham House, 1997); Matthew Wyman, Public Opinion in Postcommunist Russia (London: Macmillan, 1997).

121.   See Françoise Chipaux, "Le rôle ambigu des talibans dans l'affaire du détournement de l'Airbus" Le Monde, January 7, 2000; Ayaz Gul, "Eyewitness in Kandahar" Asiaweek, January 14, 2000.

122.   See Barnett R. Rubin, Ashraf Ghani, William Maley, Ahmed Rashid and Olivier Roy, Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in a Regional Framework (Bern: KOFF Peacebuilding Reports no.1/2001, Swiss Peace Foundation, 2001) p. 12.

123.   On the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, see Pierre Centlivres, "Adieu aux Bouddhas de Bamiyan" Afghanistan Info 48 (March 2001): 6-7; Véra Marigo, "Bamyan: Naissance et destruction de deux géants" Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan 93 (April-June 2001):16-21.

124.   "Today", BBC Radio 4, 25 September 2001.

125.   R.W. Apple, Jr., "Issue Now: Does U.S. Have a Plan?", The New York Times, September 27, 2001.

126.   See Rubin, Ghani, Maley, Rashid, and Roy, Afghanistan: Reconstruction and Peacebuilding in a Regional Framework, pp. 39-40.

127.   Quoted in Henry A. Kissinger, Diplomacy (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) p. 454.