

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar:
Afghanistan's Persistent Insurgent

By

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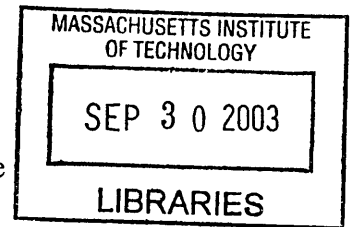
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ABSTRACT

From the fall of the Afghan monarchy in 1973 to the fateful days of Taliban control, Afghanistan has proved to be one of the most dangerous and unstable political environments in South Asia, if not the world. Against this backdrop, Islamic fundamentalist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has waged a continuous guerilla war to gain control of the state. Towards this end, he has fought ambitious rivals, every Afghan government, the Soviet Union, and now US forces sent to drive out al Qaeda and destroy the Taliban. This thesis explores Hekmatyar's persistence in such a fluid and violent political landscape, tracing his islamist Hezb-e Islami party's genesis and evolution in the last 30 years. With a rigid Leninist-styled party, Hekmatyar's ability to draw from religious, ethno-regional, and socioeconomic support, as well as foreign aid, has provided him the means to survive and flourish during Afghanistan's enduring devastation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

On May 6, 2002, a CIA-controlled Predator drone fired Hellfire missiles at Hezb-e Islami leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his associates on the outskirts of Kabul. After the Afghan insurgent chief survived the strike, US intelligence officials acknowledged they had targeted Hekmatyar. With so few acknowledged Predator air strikes, this announced action underscores both the importance of his elimination to US forces and the threat he poses to the Karzai government and US interests. After returning from exile in Iran in February, Hekmatyar aligned himself with al Qaeda and Taliban remnants and implicated himself in terrorist attacks against the Afghan government.¹ However, Hekmatyar's recent attempts to overthrow the Afghan government represent merely the latest manifestations of his longstanding insurgency campaign. For 30 years, he has both contributed to and survived the high level of violence that is Afghanistan. He has fought against the monarchy, the Soviets, the Taliban, as well as any Afghan standing in the way of his quest for power. And now, he has targeted US forces and the Karzai government. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is a survivor in one of the world's most turbulent and violent political environments. This thesis investigates Hekmatyar's persistence as an insurgent in Afghanistan's fluid and constantly changing landscape

Answering this question requires a look at the origin of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami party, its actions during the Soviet invasion, and the years of the Taliban to the present. I argue that Hekmatyar has cultivated a Leninist-styled party that can quickly and

¹ "U.S. Attack on Warlord Aims to Help Interim Leader," *The New York Times*, May 9 2002, A15

effectively switch bases of support, adapting to Afghanistan's constantly changing political environment.

Although recent coverage has only examined Hekmatyar's cooperation with al Qaeda and Taliban remnants, there is a larger story behind Hekmatyar's involvement in Afghanistan. From an Islamist activist at Kabul University through his tenure as interim Prime Minister to his current alliance with al Qaeda and the Taliban remnants, Hekmatyar has had a violent and longstanding impact in Afghanistan for more than 30 years. He is indeed Afghanistan's persistent insurgent.

Hekmatyar's longstanding goal is to turn Afghanistan into an Islamic state governed by the religious laws of *Shari'a*. His Islamist ideology can be traced to the Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood movement of 1928 and its more militant offshoots of the 1960s and 1970s.² Islamist ideology stresses that the Islamic state can be established only through political action, which is conducted outside of the mosque. The more militant adherents of this ideology, such as Hekmatyar, Ayman al Zawahiri, and Osama bin Laden believe that the use of violence is not merely justified, but necessary to achieve the political revolution necessary to found the Islamic state.³

The formation of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami group mirrors the plethora of University Muslim youth organizations which spawned Sunni Islamist militant groups across the Muslim world, namely Egypt's Al Jihad which has merged with al Qaeda to provide it the operational and logistical expertise to perpetrate September 11.⁴ Unlike the

² Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1996), 35. See also Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accommodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, n27 (1995)

³ Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*...35-6

⁴ For more on Egyptian Islamic Jihad and al Qaeda, see Peter Bergen, *Holy War Inc.* (New York: Free Press 2001) and Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2002). These sources lack the sensationalism that permeates the literature on al Qaeda.

other Afghan resistance groups fighting the Russians, Hezb-e Islami is a well-organized Leninist style party that originated *before* the Soviet invasion. Once Pakistan's foremost proxy and a major recipient of CIA funding to fight the Soviets, Hekmatyar fought on all sides of the Afghan alliances. On two occasions, he served as the country's Prime Minister until he was ousted by the Taliban and fled to Iran. Returning to Afghanistan in the spring of 2002, Hekmatyar declared war on the US and is currently linked to al Qaeda and the Taliban.⁵ Understanding Hekmatyar's persistence may help explain the success of other rigid Islamist organizations operating in traditional, undeveloped, and fragmented societies such as Algeria, Sudan, and Somalia. In addition it can gauge the threat Hekmatyar poses to US regional and security interests.

In addressing his survivability, it will provide an historical explanation of Hekmatyar and his rigid organization. Hekmatyar, an Islamist and anti-traditionalist with no large representative base, has managed to not only maintain a well-armed fighting force but also become Afghanistan's Prime Minister following the Soviet withdrawal until his ouster by the Taliban militia in 1996. Hekmatyar's story is a testament to the notion that a small highly organized group can play off Afghanistan's fragmented society to secure external support and command political authority.

Methods of Investigation

Fortunately, there is extensive literature on the Soviet invasion and the ensuing civil war. In addition, there is a surprising amount of declassified documents to corroborate or contest claims made by journalists and academics. Following September 11, journalists have scoured the country, producing many reports on the various factions.

Sensationalism par excellence is Yossef Bodansky's *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America* (New York: Prima Publishing 2001).

That being said, there is no comprehensive account tracing Hekmatyar and his group from the last days of Afghan monarchy through the Soviet invasion to the present.

A sizable portion of the literature on Afghanistan's civil war addresses the role of traditionalism and Islam in anti-Soviet resistance. French scholar Olivier Roy provides a focused look at radical Islam's role in the Afghan resistance. Although Roy coined the term "Islam-Leninist," to describe the Hezb-e Islami, he has neither explained his definition nor applied it thoroughly to Hekmatyar's insurgency.⁶ Area experts such as William Maley, Larry Goodson, and Barnett Rubin provide insightful and in depth analysis alongside their methodical field research. Journalist Ahmed Rashid's look at the Taliban provide a wealth of information on the role of fundamentalist and political Islam in Afghanistan as well as an inside source on how the group stole Hekmatyar's ethnic and regional bases of support.

Although there is little on Islamist organization, traditional organizational theory literature offers a helpful lens to gauge Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami. Most particularly, Phillip Selznick's *The Organizational Weapon*, which focuses on the Leninist "combat party" provides insights on how an organization conducts itself and sets the mechanisms for its goal to forcibly take power. With such a wide pool of sources on Leninism as a strategy, there is a great deal to extract on this particular style of subversion and alliance formation. Scholars such as Richard Pipes and Neil Harding have provided an immense contribution to the understanding of this particular insurgency strategy.

⁵ Ben Barber, "Warlord Returns to Afghanistan," *The Washington Times* March 5, 2002

⁶ Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* ... In this source, Roy describes the Islam-Leninist party as a vanguard but does not explore their actions and how it relates to the subversion strategies and alliance formation enshrined by Lenin. Roy's only example is the Muslim Brotherhood which differs greatly from Leninist party described in this thesis. Roy does explain very well that the fusion of Islamism and Leninism seems paradoxical.

Declassified documents have also contributed focused yet significant insights on the changing specifics of Afghanistan's constant conflict. US State Department communications explore refugee conditions and political support among insurgents. Reports from the Central Intelligence Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency also provide snapshots and particular nuances of the military balance during the Soviet invasion.

Leninism – A Strategy of Subversion

Before exploring Hekmatyar's four different bases of support, it is crucial to understand Leninism and its use of a political party as a weapon for subversion and the seizing power. Much can and has been written on Lenin's contribution to Marxist political thought. However, this study will focus on Leninism as means, an organizational subversive strategy to seize power. Though a large portion of Lenin's insurgency strategy deals with the global struggle against capitalism, this analysis will focus exclusively on the internal dynamics used in a single country.⁷ Particularly in its relationship to Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami and other non-Marxist actors, Leninist organization should be seen as a tool or means rather than as a refinement of Communist thought. Philip Selznick asserts that Leninism exists primarily as a political doctrine, and furthermore as an organizational strategy, "a detailed design of weapons and strategy for continuous conquest of power."⁸ This chapter will explore Leninist organizational theory, as well as

⁷ To be sure, there is an international component to Islamist terrorist groups. However, the cohesiveness does not come close to Lenin's International Communist movement. While the Muslim Brotherhood of the late twentieth century displayed similar characteristics as well as a cohesive agenda, today's Islamist terror network seems to be more of a loose, amorphous collection of like-minded groups exchanging spiritual, financial, and technical advice and materiel.

⁸ Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon: A Study of Bolshevik Strategy and Tactics* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press 1960) 41-2

salient elements of its operational code, namely infiltration, propaganda, and alliance formation.

The Leninists did not invent insurgency. Instead, they incorporated previous subversion strategies with a greater focus on managerial organization and its relation to acts of subversion.⁹ The Leninists also achieved a large degree of innovation in global insurgency following the establishment of the Soviet Union by linking mutually reinforcing vanguard parties by a common ideology as well material support orchestrated from Moscow.¹⁰ On the internal level, Lenin's innovation and adaptation of subversion manifests itself in strategy and process. Richard Pipes contends that Lenin's adaptation was in militarizing politics: "His innovation, the reason for his success, was militarizing politics...The objective of which was not to compel the enemy to submit but to annihilate him. This innovation gave Lenin significant advantages over his opponents, for whom warfare was either the antithesis of politics or else politics pursued by other means."¹¹ Lenin concluded that playing by the rules and engaging in strictly legitimate endeavors was insufficient to seize power. Open armed conflict would ultimately be used to seize power, but by itself and without preparatory measures, it was unlikely to overthrow an existing government with trained, equipped forces.¹² It is such that Leninist subversion falls between these two endpoints, using a militarized organization in both party politics as well as political violence to maintain support and destabilize the existing government to seize power.

⁹ Laurence W. Beilenson, *Power Through Subversion* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press 1972) Beilenson explains Lenin's adaptation of traditional subversion, as manifested in the French Revolution.

¹⁰ Laurence W. Beilenson, *Power Through Subversion*... 144

¹¹ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1995) 392

¹² Laurence W. Beilenson, *Power Through Subversion* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press 1972) 139

Centralized Leadership

The most apparent feature of a Leninist organization is a small, insulated, and strong central leadership capable of issuing commands to its agents. Lenin's obsession with a highly centralized vanguard leadership stemmed from a variety of concerns, including utility and security. Lenin felt that only such a strong central nucleus could organize efficiently and effectively to represent the working class and those it perceived as oppressed by the government.¹³ Functionally, limiting control to a select few allowed the Bolsheviks to counter the increased surveillance and sabotage operations conducted by the Russian government at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁴ In criticizing the Party rules, Trotsky explained accurately "The organization of the Party takes the place of the Party itself; the Central Committee takes the place of the organization; and finally the dictator takes the place of the Central Committee."¹⁵

Having looked at the party's top-level structures, one must now examine it from the base. This hierarchy is not just spontaneously created, as Selznick writes, but rather transitions from a voluntary association into the vanguard-led group. As a result, participants outside the top leadership core transform from members into agents, even as the organization maintains total control over the individual.¹⁶ Membership is characterized by extreme and unconditional devotion to the organization, and in essence, its leadership. This extreme devotion allows the leaders to command the party in actions that may conflict with its ideology. The enforced focus on loyalty, Richard Pipes argues, clarifies the Bolsheviks' "un-Bolshevik" behavior, such as certain alliance formations, in

¹³ Neil Harding, *Leninism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1996) 178-9

¹⁴ Neil Harding, *Leninism*... 28

¹⁵ John P. Roche, *The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis 1984) 16

their quest to seize power. The agents, while versed and indoctrinated in Marxist thought, were not following ideological principles, but rather unquestionably following their leaders' commands.¹⁷

Having explored the mission and structure of the Leninist organization, it is vital to understand its specific means to seize power. Leninist adherents aiming to seize power realize they are unpopular and represent a minority of the population as such, they tended to view "any group or individual who was not a member of [the] party as ipso facto an enemy, and hence a threat...It followed that such a person had to be silenced and suppressed."¹⁸ However, to seize power, Leninist parties must effectively interact with and ultimately manipulate society, institutions, and people that they oppose:

Rather, these features of the existing society not only *can* be used, they *must* be used, if the party is to succeed. They are the material, the only material, with which the party can work; they are the element...that makes the wheels of history go around, and the party must act as the general staff of social engineering in this interplay of forces. For the party, society constitutes not a laboratory but a universe of forces, basically unfavorable and hostile, but in which judicious manipulation can create a new balance more favorable to the party's aims.¹⁹

The efficacy of Leninist subversive strategy rests in how well the unpopular group can manipulate the institutions of society.

Propaganda

As Selznick maps out, the propaganda and printed media serves Leninist organizations in two distinct fashions; it communicates insurgent tactics and regulations

¹⁶ Philip Selznick, *The Organization Weapon...* 40-50

¹⁷ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1995) 115 For the Bolsheviks, un-Bolshevik behavior included alliances with the German government during World War I. The Germans provided the group with resources to destabilize Czarist Russia. As it will be explained further on, Hekmatyar's party enters into similar un-Islamist

¹⁸ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History...* 104

¹⁹ Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism* (New York: Praeger 1962) 80

and it provides operational guidance and goals. The act of printing propaganda is itself a task that helps “train, prepared, and unite the rank and file” and ultimately develops the party’s organization.²⁰ To be sure, the Bolsheviks used propaganda as a bridge from the centralized vanguard to the base of support. The means in which the Bolsheviks disseminated their newspapers allowed them to strengthen their networks and infiltrate select institutions:

Agents would be required in every locality, both to report on events and to create a clandestine distribution network to the workers in local plants and industries. They would be the party’s links with grass roots support, and they would communicate with regional agents of the party who, in their turn, were to be responsible to the editorial board of the newspaper. The editorial board itself would comprise proven veterans of the movement, well-versed in theory and so able to generalise from the particular and to anticipate the next phase of the struggle.²¹

Along with its latent organizing capacities, propaganda proves vital in paving the way for seizing power. The key feature of Leninist propaganda is that the truth is irrelevant. Instead, propaganda should adapt as the Party changes its line.²² While propaganda will not neutralize the current government, it paves the way for effective infiltration of key institutions.

Infiltration

Infiltration is central to Leninist subversive strategy in that it prepares agents to target rivals and perpetrate destabilizing acts against the target government. As explained above, the Leninists rejected exclusive open warfare against the well-armed government in favor of subversive measures to include political violence. Infiltration, essential to the

²⁰ Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon*...50

²¹ Neil Harding, *Leninism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1996) 31

²² Laurence W. Beilenson, *Power Through Subversion*...84

Leninist strategy of subversion, entails the positioning of party agents within target institutions and organizations.²³ The Bolsheviks placed a high priority in infiltration, advocating the piercing of every available institution. The participants at the second Congress of the Communist International of 1920 proclaimed: “In every Soviet of Workers’ Deputies, in every trade and industrial union, cooperative association, factory, tenants’ union, in every government institution everywhere, even though there may be only three people sympathizing with Communism, a Communist nucleus must be immediately organized.”²⁴ Selznick adds that Leninist hierarchy directly complements infiltration. The efficacy of having a handful of agents positioned within key areas of a university or government department will depend on how they are organized.²⁵ For the Leninists, the party leadership could instruct the infiltrating agents, who in turn are exclusively loyal to the party leaders, to conduct any number of activities ranging from propaganda and recruitment to espionage, sabotage and violent action. The agent’s consuming devotion and the leadership’s hierarchical organization prove vital in the party’s ability to penetrate and exploit target institutions.

Alliance Behavior

Understanding Leninist alliance behavior aids greatly in illustrating its larger subversive strategy. For the Leninist, alliance formation is strictly utilitarian and determined by a common enemy. The goal of the alliance is to neutralize the common threat.²⁶ Alliances greatly benefit the Leninist party, as it provides greater numbers

²³ I am drawing this definition of infiltration from Selznick’s citing of the second Congress of the Communist International (1920) in *The Organizational Weapon* as well as Alfred Meyer and Laurence Beilenson’s work on Leninism

²⁴ Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon*...66

²⁵ Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon*...66-7

²⁶ Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*...82

against a common threat. It also allows the party to free ride, manipulate and take advantage of its partners while providing relatively little in return. Given the extreme distrust of those outside the party, Leninists view their alliance partners as enemies themselves. Once they outlive their usefulness, they are to be dropped. As Alfred Meyer elaborates, “They are considered undependable, treacherous, ill-willed, if not agents of the bourgeoisie. Allies must be controlled by the party as much as possible lest they obtain mastery over it. They must be abandoned and betrayed at the proper moment, lest they anticipate the party by abandoning and betraying it.”²⁷ Furthermore, Leninist parties are very careful when allying with ideologically similar groups, as those partners compete for the same social base. It should come as no shock that Leninist parties infiltrate these ideologically similar parties.²⁸ Alliance behavior is determined by threats and opportunities. This can drive the Leninist to ally with a foreign power towards destabilizing the government. Or when ideologically similar parties threaten the Leninist party’s social base, alliances with the group’s traditional enemies may be more likely. One need only look at Lenin’s own alliance with the German government during and after World War I and the post-War cooperation with conservative paramilitary forces against the German socialists who opposed the Communist International.²⁹

Despite the lack of an existing comprehensive analysis of the group, scholars and policymakers versed in the late twentieth century Afghan Civil Wars conclude that

²⁷ Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*...82

²⁸ Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon*...228

²⁹ Richard Pipes, *A Concise History*... 122 Alliances with the WWI German government provided substantial funding estimated at 50 million deutsche marks in gold – roughly 6-10million dollars. This proved instrumental in printing and distributing the Bolshevik *Pravda* propaganda newspaper. See also John P. Roche, *The History and Impact of Marxist-Leninist Organizational Theory*...18 for the Bolshevik alliance with the German Freikorps.

Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami is a well organized Leninist-styled party.³⁰ The emphasis of the Leninist strategy is the acquisition and consolidation of state power through subversive acts to include political violence. This goal of seizing power is of highest priority.

Chapter Review

Chapter two will explore the four bases of support from which Hekmatyar has effectively drawn in the last 30 years. Chapters three, four, and five will chart Hekmatyar and his Hezb-e Islami movement from the fledging days of the Afghan monarchy to the present alliance with al Qaeda and the remnants of the Taliban. The conclusion will examine policy relevant issues with Afghanistan today and the War on Terror.

³⁰ For scholarly views on Hekmatyar's Leninist party see Olivier Roy's respected works: Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1996) and Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1990). In the policy arena, Congressman Charlie Wilson and CIA Case Officer Milt Bearden make observe Hekmatyar's Leninist style: George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2003) and Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House 2003)

Chapter Two: Bases of Support

Although some parties are married to a particular base of support, Hekmatyar's Leninist orientation has allowed him to draw from many different constituencies. In line with this strategy, manipulating constituencies is simply a means towards the end of conquest. This chapter will explore the four bases of support from which Hekmatyar has drawn in the last thirty years. It will provide an overview of Afghanistan's cleavages and divisions, and in doing so, briefly examine provide some important events in Afghan history. The scope of history explored in this chapter has been limited to provide an overview of Afghanistan's bases of support.³¹

The Ethno-Regional Base

Ethnic identity is a salient base of political parties around the world. In aggregating their interests, groups form or are constructed by elites around a collective identity.³² The application of the security dilemma to intrastate conflict provides insights into the role of identity and its ability to consolidate groups afraid of subordination. The fear of being dominating by a rival ethnic group feeds the security dilemma, triggering greater group identity, the consolidation of power and armament.³³ With such fears, the ethnic or regional group's power status precedes and can often mask other issues such as material and economic needs.³⁴ Hekmatyar played off certain ethnic groups' fears of

³¹ For detailed histories on modern Afghanistan, see Olivier Roy's *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1990), Willem Vogelsang's *The Afghans* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers 2002)

³² For more on the creation of these parties, groups, and elite construction see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, UK: Verso 1983)

³³ Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* v35 n1, Steven van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security*, v18 n4 (Spring 1994)

³⁴ Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2000) 187

dominance by others, forming alliances with them to supplement his party's inability to consolidate territory of its own or cultivate broader Pashtun ties.

Table 1.1 Afghanistan's Main Ethnic Groups, 2002

Group	Population	Percentage	Location
Pashtuns	12,200,000	44	South and Southeast, although present in most regions
Tajiks	6,940,000	25	North, Northeast, and Kabul Province
Hazaras	2,780,000	10	Center and Kabul Province
Uzbeks	2,220,000	8	North
Minor Ethnic Groups (Aimak, Turkmen, Baloch)	3,610,000	13	Each group regionally concentrated

Sources: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2002* (available at www.cia.gov)

Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press) 26

The Pashtuns

Amounting to a little less than half of the country's population, the Pashtuns represent Afghanistan's dominant group. As shown in table 1.1, the Pashtuns are the largest group, while the remaining population is divided among several smaller ethnic groups. However, within the Pashtun group there are tribe, subtribe and clan denominations. Pashtuns are split into tribes, the dominant being the Durrani and Ghilzay tribes of South and Southeast Afghanistan.³⁵ The majority of Pashtuns reside in the southern and southeastern portions of the country, particularly those that border with Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan, although there are considerable amounts that have settled across the rest of the country, particularly in the Kabul area.³⁶

Political power within most Afghan tribes is secular, with the mullah, the Muslim

³⁵ Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers 2002) 25

³⁶ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press) 26

religious leader, very low in influence and status.³⁷ The Pashtuns employ a tribal code known as *Pashtunwali*. Being anti-traditionalist, Hekmatyar and the Islamists had tremendous difficulties in gaining support among the Pashtun tribes for they only allowed their own version of Shari'a, Islamic law, without accommodating the traditional code of laws. As it will be discussed below, the Taliban on the other hand had greater success in that they advocated a mixture of Shari'a and *Pashtunwali*.³⁸

Despite being the largest and traditionally dominant ethnic group, the Pashtuns are not one cohesive political force. Like their tribal distinctions, Pashtuns are not politically homogenous. They enjoy representation across the spectrum of political groups, from the monarchists and moderates who support the former king, Zahir Shah to the two extremes of neofundamentalist Taliban and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami, advocating Islamic law and the rejection of Afghan traditionalism.

The Tajiks

The Tajiks, the second largest ethnic group concentrated in Kabul and in the north and northeast, represent a formidable force in the country. However, the Tajik identity is less concrete than other groups in Afghanistan. According to Brent Glazer, the term largely refers to Persian-speaking Sunnis that organize "along local lineages, village clusters, valleys and occupational groups" though "there is no recognisable cultural, social, or political boundary between them and the others."³⁹ A large portion of Tajiks

³⁷ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1990) 35

³⁸ I am making this assertion from the basis of Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1990) and Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2001). Roy has described the friction between the Islamists and the traditionalists, whereas Rashid has explored how the Taliban accommodated existing tribal structures. Rashid also asserts that the Taliban's strict punishments that drew international condemnation are more rooted in *Pashtunwali* than in Shari'a.

³⁹ Brent Glatzer, "Afghanistan: Ethnic and Tribal Disintegration?" *Fundamentalism Reborn: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, William Maley (ed.) (New York: New York University Press 1998) 170

joined the original Islamist movement at Kabul University. The two most notable Tajik figures are Jamiat-e Islami leader Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military commander, the late Ahmed Shah Massoud. Although originally a part of Hekmatyar's group, the Jamiat-e Islami fractured along ideological and to a lesser extent ethnic lines. Rabbani and his party moderated their political and religious views and broadened their base to accommodate other parties, tribes, and ethnic groups.⁴⁰ Hekmatyar's extreme dislike for Rabbani, Massoud, and Jamiat-e Islami stems not from any ethnic hatred but from the political and military power wielded by the group.

The Uzbeks

Residing exclusively in Northern Afghanistan, the Uzbeks are a small yet concentrated minority. The Uzbeks settled northern Afghanistan in the late fifteenth century. Though they employ a tribal and clan structure, it is not as much of an issue compared to the Pashtuns and their divisions.⁴¹ The most visible Uzbek leader, Abdul Rashid Dostum, has been a major force in Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion, in which he sided with the communists and commanded up to 50,000 Uzbeks. Despite this alignment, his group, which shrunk to 35,000, would be the arbiter of Afghan politics prior to US intervention following the terrorist attacks of September 11. Though he constantly switched sides as determined by the threat, Dostum's support was invaluable to both the Afghan interim government and those, including Hekmatyar, that were bent on toppling it.⁴²

⁴⁰ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1990) 78

⁴¹ Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers 2002) 28

⁴² Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997* (New York: Oxford University Press 1999) 9, 54-5. After the initial Afghan government forms, Dostum initially signs on to help protect Kabul from Hekmatyar. A spokesman stated "if we leave, the Hizb-e-Islami would send Mojdeddi packing back to Peshawar"

The Hazaras

The Hazaras, representing 10% of the total population, are Imami Shiites and occupy the highlands in Central Afghanistan.⁴³ Although they also reside in the bigger cities and parts of the North, it is negligible compared to the central region known as Hazarajat.⁴⁴ Despite a universal dislike for Pashtuns since the late nineteenth century when the Pashtun government began taking Hazarajat farmland, the Hazaras had long been divided across the political spectrum. Following in fighting, and the emergence of the Taliban, the Hazaras seemed to have consolidated and rallied in support of the most powerful, Iran-backed Hezb-e Wahdat. This group entered into several alliances of convenience with Hekmatyar against the Soviets, Rabbani's government, and later the Taliban.⁴⁵ Cooperation between the two groups extended beyond coordination of separate offensives but to joint operations against the Soviets, as well as combined offensives against the Rabbani government and later the Taliban.⁴⁶

Religion

As one sees across the world, from the Philippines to Afghanistan to Algeria, Islamic fundamentalism is a potent force capable of harnessing disaffected youths and disenfranchised individuals and directing them towards militancy and radical thought. As Martin Marty has expressed, fundamentalism is an effective tactic for the mobilization of a clear base as it is used "for setting boundaries, for attracting one's kind and alienating

⁴³ The Imami sect is also more widely known as the Twelver Shiites.

⁴⁴ Brent Glatzer, "Afghanistan: Ethnic and Tribal..." 171

⁴⁵ Brent Glatzer, "Afghanistan: Ethnic and Tribal..." 171

⁴⁶ Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, (Quantico, VA: United States Marine Corps Studies and Analysis Division 1995)

other kinds, for demarcating.”⁴⁷ Even without taking a detailed look at Afghanistan’s history, one can see that though the Muslim community is divided, elites are still capable of mobilizing a base of support by invoking the name of Islam.

With a minute percentage of Hindus and Sikhs, Afghanistan is almost completely Muslim. It is the only commonality among the country’s ethnic diversity.⁴⁸ However, there is no single and monolithic Islamic base in Afghanistan. Much like its extremely heterogeneous ethnic composition, Afghanistan’s adherents of Islam are divided into a plethora of groups, which in turn have numerous subdivisions. Scholars such as Olivier Roy have extensively detailed the nuances and differences. In addition to the Shiite and Sunni divide, there are splits among the Sunnis.⁴⁹

Long before the Islamists attacked the government, or the Soviets intervened, Islam provided Afghan political elites with a potent vehicle for gaining support. In 1891, Afghanistan’s leader Amir Abdurrahman proclaimed a *jihad* against the British and Russian neighbors and instituted an oath of loyalty to the Koran. Through these measures, Abdurrahman “strengthened his own position and legitimacy, not by way of tribal confirmation as in the case of his predecessors, but by professing his adherence to Islam and by linking Islam to the independence of Afghanistan.”⁵⁰ Secularism, implemented by King Amanullah in 1924, marginalized the Islamic scholars who had previously wielded immense power and commanded a substantial base of supporters.⁵¹ This wave of secularism and modernization continued through the new monarchy in 1929

⁴⁷ Ann Elizabeth Mayer, “The Fundamentalist Impact in Iran, Pakistan, and the Sudan,” *Fundamentalisms and the State*, Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1993) 123

⁴⁸ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1990) 30

⁴⁹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*...38-43

⁵⁰ Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans*...266

⁵¹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*...29

led by Nadir Shah and later Zahir Shah.⁵² Referred to as the *ulama*, this community of Islamic scholars was further undermined by Islamic radicals like Hekmatyar who fused Islam with politics to mobilize against the monarchy, the leftists, and later the Soviet Union. By and large, the *ulama* did not endorse the radicals, as they questioned their lack of religious education and their similarities with the communists.⁵³

Islamism distinctly identifies political change as the means to its ends of imposing *shari'a* or Islamic law formally establishing the “Islamic Republic.” The level of violent and intensity employed towards this demand, Michael Scott Doran explains, will depend on the degree of militancy and extremism within the particular Islamist organization.⁵⁴ It is important to underscore the political nature of Islamist actions. As French scholar Olivier Roy writes,

The Islamists speak of Islamist ideology rather than of religion in the strict sense of the term. The great challenge that faces them is to create from Islam a political model capable of competing with the great ideologies of the Western world. In the forefront of their thinking is the problem of the state (the “Islamic republic”). They have worked out a theory concerning the nature of the political party, and their political militancy goes hand-in-hand with a sense of history. Instead of wishing to manage civil society, their ambition is to reconstruct society, starting with the state.⁵⁵

This focus on ideology and politics sets the Islamists apart from the traditional *ulama*, concerned with more traditional matters devoid of politics.

The Islamists lack of religious legitimacy vis-à-vis the country’s traditional Islamic scholars severely hampered their ability to expand their base beyond the

⁵² Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans...* 287-292

⁵³ For more on the conflict between the scholars and the radicals, see David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2002)

⁵⁴ Michael Scott Doran, “Somebody Else’s Civil War,” *Foreign Affairs* Jan-Feb. 2002

⁵⁵ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge: New York 1990) 6

universities, and urban population. As it will be explained in chapter 2, the Islamists' attempts in 1975 to initiate a coup through regional peasant uprisings failed miserably. However, the 1978 communist coup and the Soviet invasion that followed prompted sustained uprisings that the younger Islamists were eager to fit in the framework of Islam. As Olivier explains, Islam became a potent base of support in that it contextualized the struggle against the communist government and the arriving Soviets. Though the peasant and tribal revolts were not "directly linked with religion...Islam provided the intellectual framework that allowed the peasants to articulate and legitimize their grievances against the new regime."⁵⁶ Even as the facet of young radicals invoking Islam may be a new phenomenon reflective of foreign influences to be discussed below, the use of Islam as a political base of support is neither new nor shocking in a Muslim country.

Although much of it overlaps with the fourth support base identified in this chapter, one must look at the sub-state international Islamist network's effects. While bolstered at times by state involvement such as Saudi Arabia or the yet virulent states such as Iran, Libya, Sudan, this transnational phenomenon arose in the mid twentieth century with the spread of the sub-state Muslim Brotherhood movement. The war against the Soviet Union brought cooperation between the amorphous Muslim Brotherhood and Saudi Wahhabi clerics. Instead of backing the traditional Muslim scholars and mullahs, they exclusively supported the young radicals, especially Hekmatyar by supplying them with the bulk of funds and the influx of foreign Muslim volunteers.⁵⁷ Even without

⁵⁶ Olivier Roy, "Afghanistan: An Islamic War of Resistance," *Fundamentalism and the State*, Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1993) 496

⁵⁷ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance*...233 It must be noted that contrary to popular belief, the Arab volunteers were largely ineffectual in the war against the Soviets. Like accounts of their activities in Bosnia, their minimal impact was negative: precipitating and engaging in massacres of minorities such as Shiite Hazaras and attempting to spread their version of Islam.

extensive literature on Hezb-e Islami connections with the international Islamist movement, there are several. Of all the Afghan resistance groups, Hekmatyar's had the strongest connection to the influx of Arab money and fighters, primarily Abdullah Azzam's Peshwar-based aid agency, the precursor to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda.⁵⁸

Socioeconomic Bases of Support

Afghanistan is primarily an agrarian peasant society. However, the country was a large recipient of foreign aid even before the Soviet invasion, which decimated much of Afghan farmland, along with other vital arteries of society.⁵⁹ However, other than timber and gemstones whose quantity declined as the fighting intensified, Afghanistan's primary export is narcotics.⁶⁰ A subset of farmers, the poppy growers represent a budding economic group, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. With constant fighting and sufficient and increasing demand in Pakistan as well as across the world, opium cultivation "remains crucial for the survival of [Afghanistan's] local peasants."⁶¹ However, the poppy growers are an interesting political constituency in that all they desire is the security, protection, and ability to generate sufficient revenue through the cultivation of opium. As long as they are guaranteed the opportunity to grow and collect revenue for their crop, they are relatively indifferent to the group that taxes them and watches over them.⁶² Though opium taxation and administration remains a common activity among the regional warlords and mujahadeen, Hekmatyar was the only figure to

⁵⁸ Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1994) 117. Azzam was bin Laden's mentor until the former was assassinated in Peshawar.

⁵⁹ Larry P. Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban* (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press 2001) 92

⁶⁰ Larry Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War...*96

⁶¹ Geopolitical Drug Watch, *The Geopolitics of Drugs: 1996 Edition* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press 1996) 127

⁶² Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2001) 117

control heroin-processing laboratories located across the border in Pakistan. However, this would be less of an issue as numerous local laboratories emerged after the Soviet-backed leader, Mohammed Najibullah's fall 1992.⁶³

The refugees fleeing the Soviet invasion represent a potent group increasing directly with the hostilities. Coming from across the country, particularly from the hardest hit provinces, the 3 million refugees that reside in Pakistan would provide an ample base as the Hezb-e Islami operated from its Peshawar headquarters. With superior organization and the favor of Pakistan, Hezb-e Islami not only had more tents, rations, and food to distribute, but also had a role in the administration of the camp, including education.⁶⁴ One should not overlook the support that can be generated from providing goods and services, along with political affiliation, to the numerous disenfranchised refugees.

Foreign Support

With the majority of Hekmatyar's foreign support coming from Pakistan, one must explore Pakistan's strategic interests in backing the Hezb-e Islami. As Amin Saikal explains, Pakistan sought "to enmesh the identity of Pakistan's and Afghanistan's Pushtuns into one and settle once and for all the longstanding Afghanistan-Pakistan border dispute in line with Pakistan's interests."⁶⁵ The origins of Pashtun nationalism date back to British involvement in the nineteenth century. To stabilize their areas of control following violent uprisings, the British partitioned the Pashtuns along the Durand Line in 1893 that would later become the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. This division left

⁶³ Geopolitical Drug Watch, *The Geopolitics of Drugs...* 127

⁶⁴ Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994) 57

an equal amount of Pashtuns on either side of the border, splitting the ethnic group into two separated regions.⁶⁶ The British further divided what would be the Pakistani side into the NWFP and Balochistan, with the majority of Pashtuns residing in the former of the two provinces.

Ultimately, the British struck an agreement with the Pakistani Pashtuns that allowed them to not only maintain autonomy but also their weapons. As a result, newly formed Pakistan had little means to gain hegemony over NWFP.⁶⁷ In essence, the central Pakistan government had little control over a well-armed and fairly autonomous population that still harbored nationalist aspirations for a Pashtun homeland. From its relatively stable years to the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan's leaders consistently sought to incite the Pashtuns across the border, in part to unbalance their stronger neighbor. Prince Daud, who would overthrow his cousin, King Zahir Shah in 1973, was extremely attached to the Pashtunistan cause throughout his tenure in Afghan government, although in his final years he ended his support for the cause. Towards this end, Pakistan sought to back a friendly Pashtun Islamic group bent on seizing the Afghan government. That proxy that could bring the fight to the Afghan government, but also maintain ideological connections with Pakistan that would dampen any nationalist desires for a Pashtunistan. As it will be explained in the next chapter, Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami proved the most desirable, as it was a disciplined. One can assume that its Leninist characteristics were advantageous in that the party was not vulnerable to the whims and fancies of a mass movement, nor would it be accountable strictly to the Pashtuns for the base of support.

⁶⁵ Amin Saikal, "The Rabbani Government, 1992-1996," *Fundamentalism Reborn: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, William Maley (ed.), (New York: New York University Press 1998) 38

⁶⁶ Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2002) 136

After the Soviets withdrew, and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan neared collapse, Pakistan broadened its objectives. Establishing an Islamic state would allow Pakistan to gain “strategic depth” in its conflict with India, as well as open up trade with new Central Asian republics.⁶⁸ Towards this end, Pakistan continued to back Hekmatyar until he proved unable to consolidate territory or seize and hold the government. Instead, the Pakistani government chose the Taliban, an emerging fundamentalist group in the Southeastern Afghanistan.⁶⁹

Afghanistan is certainly a fragmented and fluid political environment. There is more to Hezb-e Islami than merely its Leninist framework, its Pashtun leader or its Islamist ideology. Instead one must see how Hekmatyar maneuvers between four different bases of support, drawing from each when it serves his goal of power. This ability to manipulate different portions of Afghan society, manifested in his party’s organization, allows him to persist in for over 30 years in arguably the most dangerous place on earth.

⁶⁷ Ikramul Haq “Pak-Afghan Drug Trade in Historical Perspective” *Asian Survey*, v36, n10 (October 1996) 947

⁶⁸ Barnett R. Rubin, *Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1995) 247 See also Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2001)

⁶⁹ For more on this, see Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2001)

Chapter Three: Enter Hekmatyar - The Origins of Hezb-e Islami (1963-1978)

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was born in 1947 to a Ghilzai Pashtun family, which had traveled from the Pashtun-dominated east to Kunduz province in the north.⁷⁰ Details of his childhood and family are scarce, although one might assume. Prior to entering Kabul University's Engineering College, Hekmatyar had attended two years of military high school in the capital before dropping out.⁷¹

Hekmatyar's career as an insurgent began at Kabul University in the mid 1960s. During this time King Zahir Shah instituted a series of democratic reforms, generating a massive backlash from Islamists and Communists in the form demonstrations, political violence, and upheaval. Operating largely in the open until the leftist 1973 coup led by Prince Daud, Kabul University's Muslim Youth Organization, of which Hekmatyar was an influential member, served as the vanguard for Afghanistan's Islamist movement. Following the change of government, the Islamists went underground and set up their base in neighboring Pakistan, where they would continue their struggle for power. This period is also marked by Islamist infighting that led to the creation of Afghanistan's two major Islamist parties, Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami and Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat-e Islami. This chapter will examine the emergence of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami from Kabul University's Muslim student organizations and chart its early years as an opposition party against the both the monarchy, and the leftist government that overthrew

⁷⁰ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 2002) 151 and Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House 2002) 280.

⁷¹ Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House 2002) 280

it. It will also chart the group's exile to Pakistan, the ensuing power struggles and the events leading to the Soviet invasion.

Even with significant pressures and splits in his organization, Hekmatyar's party maintained Leninist-style organization and subversive strategies. As the political environment changes to more open forms of conflict, Hekmatyar cultivates different bases of support, at first drawing support strictly from university Islamists and then attempting to branch out as demonstrated in the events leading up to the group's attempted uprising in 1975. Following the 1973 coup and his flight to Pakistan, he begins to garner massive Pakistani material and ideological support. Just prior to the communist coup in 1978, Hezb-e Islami's future seems dubious. Despite having a well-organized political party capable of infiltration and subversion, Hekmatyar's religious base fractures as substantial portion adopt more moderate positions following the 1975 failed coup. The splits also result in the significant loss of certain Pashtun tribes and locales that had strongly supported Hekmatyar's cause. While it shows his limitations in gaining representation, this initial period also demonstrates the diverse bases of support his Leninist-styled party can draw upon.

University Days (1963-1973)

Afghanistan's Monarchy and Democratic Reforms of 1963

Following the third and final Anglo-Afghan war in 1919, Afghanistan gained its independence from the British Empire and instituted a constitutional monarchy, which until 1963 had a rubber-stamp legislature that quickly signed off on the King's proposals.⁷² In 1963, King Mohammed Zahir Shah instituted a series of reforms. This

⁷² Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 2002) 40-1

attempt at democratization resulted from a variety of events. The crown had exhausted the state's financial resources on a variety of development projects, and had closed the border with Pakistan over a growing dispute regarding the Pashtuns in the region. The coups in the Middle East also played a role in the King's desire for reforms.⁷³ Wishing to further modernize the country, Zahir Shah implemented several risky measures to liberalize the political system, including a democratically elected parliament, independent media. However, this influx of openness only strengthened the elements that opposed the government. Of the 7 independent newspapers founded, 5 were hostile to the central government.⁷⁴

Kabul University – A Hub of Opposition

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's political career started at Kabul University as an engineering student. Never completing his degree, Hekmatyar spent the majority of his time on campus involved in the Muslim Youth Party, organizing rallies, recruiting members, and later subversive acts against the government.⁷⁵

From 1965 through the end of Zahir Shah's reign, Kabul University represented a breeding ground for anti-government organizations.⁷⁶ However, while Kabul University served as a vital base for the Communists to organize, demonstrate and recruit, it also provided extensive opportunities for Afghanistan's Islamists to congregate, and formulate their opposition to not only the monarchy, but also the communists. It is here that the

⁷³ Hasan Kakar, "The Fall of the Afghan Monarchy in 1973," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, v9, no2 (April 1978) 199

⁷⁴ David B. Edwards, "Summoning Muslims: Print Politics, and Religious Ideology in Afghanistan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* v52 n.03 (August 1993) 610

⁷⁵ David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2002). Hekmatyar would be arrested for the slaying of a Maoist demonstrator prior to the 1973 coup. However, following Daud's ascendance, Hekmatyar was released and managed to flee to Pakistan

⁷⁶ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press 1986) 71

voluntary Muslim Youth Party begins its transformation into a hierarchical Leninist organization that would later be known as Hezb-e Islami. The efforts of the Kabul University leftists groups sparked anger among observant Muslims, who then began to voluntarily congregate and organize. A former member of Kabul University's Muslim Youth Party elaborates on the formation of the group:

In the beginning, when the demonstrations and meetings of [the Marxist parties] were first going on, students with Islamic ideas got to know each other because they would argue with the communist students. Because of these discussions, the Muslim students came to know which ones had an Islamic ideology and hated communism and other colonialist activities.⁷⁷

Although there had been prior Muslim self-identification, Edwards argues that the Islamist identity had been forged in the university amidst leftist mobilization. This demographic represents Hezb-e Islami's initial small base of support.

Though the young Islamists may have banded together due to the large and vocal communist presence on campus, printed media served a vital role in organizing and directing the Muslim Youth. Media, as an organizing tool, and central to Leninist subversive strategy, provides immense explanatory power in understanding the rise of Hekmatyar in the university and his group's attempts to garner.⁷⁸

The Islamist's generation of propaganda underscores its uses as not only a means to inform, but also to organize and rally around the group identity. In 1972, the University's Muslim Youth Party sought US assistance, particularly towards acquiring a printing press to release a newspaper. An appeal by a university Islamist to a State

⁷⁷ David B. Edwards, "Summoning Muslims..." 612

⁷⁸ As Edwards has written, this is very much inline with Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, in which elites use printed media to construct identity and form a coherent political group. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, UK: Verso 1983)

Department officer reveals the group's significant lack of funding.⁷⁹ While they did not receive the printing press from the Americans at this time, it is clear they quickly acquired one due to the volume and professional binding of their pamphlets and material.⁸⁰ In line with Selznick's assessment of the press and organizing tool, David Edwards explains the pamphlets offered practical instructions to the Islamists similar to that of Leninist propaganda. In addition to providing them with broader issues of Islam that they could relate to and discuss:

The pamphlets also gave Afghan students the tools they needed to challenge the assertions of leftists who denigrated the role of religion in the modern world, and they provided the students with the ideological foundation they needed to assert their own vision of social and political reform, a vision that was at least as radical in its scope as that being advanced by the rival Marxist groups at Kabul University.⁸¹

While Hekmatyar and the Islamists indigenously developed a subversive network, they looked to the Islamist pioneers in Egypt and Pakistan for ideology and direction.

The Islamist Organization

The Afghan Islamists, particularly Hekmatyar, understood early on that their successes would depend largely in part on political organization. In addition to drawing from the influences of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which obsessively focused on political activism and the party, the Afghan Islamists also were ardent followers of Maududi, a prominent Islamist from the Indian subcontinent and founder of Pakistan's Jama'at-e Islami. In a critique of earlier Muslim revivalist movements, Maududi argues that past failures were a result of no political organization and the rejection of both

⁷⁹ US Department of State Telegram, "Merajuddin: Portrait of a Moslem Youth Extremist" 05/24/1972

⁸⁰ David Edwards, "Summoning Muslims..."616

⁸¹ David Edwards, "Summoning Muslims..."616

modernism and its technology.⁸² Hekmatyar's command of foreign Islamist thought enhanced his status among the university Islamists, allowing him at first to gain the respect of and later challenge the older Islamist leaders at Kabul University, notably his future rival Burhanuddin Rabbani who served in the Theology department.⁸³

The Group Expands

The Kabul University Islamists had largely confined their activities to campus. However, starting in 1970, the group began to expand across the country.⁸⁴ The young Islamists, with no formal training, began what Olivier Roy describes as “politico-religious preaching,” which was mildly successful in gaining footholds in regions across the country, although it would ultimately be a failure in preparing for the coup in 1975.⁸⁵ Along with infiltration and propaganda, the Islamists soon engaged in acts of terror. Those under Hekmatyar's direction, began attacking emancipated women, who without their veils provided easily identifiable targets for the groups. In the last few years of the monarchy, the Islamists threw acid on the faces of women, hospitalizing approximately 200.⁸⁶

Daud's Coup and the Islamists' Split (1973-1978)

Monarchy Overthrown

Increasing violence in the universities spilled over into the cities. The central government was unprepared and unresponsive to famine raging across the country.⁸⁷ On

⁸² Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (New York: Oxford University Press 1986) 68

⁸³ David Edwards, *Before Taliban...*238

⁸⁴ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...*73

⁸⁵ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...*73-4

⁸⁶ Hasan Kakar, “The Fall of the Afghan Monarchy in 1973”...203

⁸⁷ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2002) 16 Maley cites Michael Barry's account of a Ministry of Agriculture official in Kabul saying “If the peasants eat grass, it's hardly grave. They're beasts. They're used to it”

July 17, 1973, Prince Daud overthrew the monarch Zahir Shah and quickly granted government positions to the Kabul University leftists and allied with the communists, notably the Parcham faction of the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).⁸⁸ Daud increased the intensity of the crackdown on the Islamists. Realizing their vulnerability, the Islamist leaders who had escaped earlier detention or had been released with in the chaos of Daud's coup fled to Pakistan.⁸⁹ This period between the coup and the Soviet invasion reveals a tremendous amount of information on Hekmatyar's activities and strategy. During this period, the Islamists failed in a coup attempt of their own to overthrow Daud. As a result a split emerged among the group that created two competing parties, one of which is Hezb-e Islami, lead by Hekmatyar. The other party, Jamiat-e Islami, lead by the Tajik leader Burhanuddin Rabbani would moderate significantly and move away from the Islamist camp.

Exile to Pakistan and the Failed Islamist Coup

The failed Islamist coup is a major focal point in the development of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami. In 1975, the Islamists attempted to overthrow Dawud's regime with a spontaneous acts of violence across the country, hoping to ignite a revolution. While fellow leader Rabbani spent the summer in Saudi Arabia, Hekmatyar and the younger, more radical members commenced a series of simultaneous uprisings, all ending in failure. Following training by the Pakistani military, in Peshawar, the Islamists crossed the border and initiated uprisings across the country. While fierce fighting occurred in certain cities and locations, the areas where Hekmatyar commanded were quiet. It was as

⁸⁸ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars...* 17

⁸⁹ David Edwards, "Summoning Muslims..." 618

if he had deliberately sat out of the very course of action he had planned for the Afghan Islamist movement.⁹⁰

There are several interpretations of the summer uprisings. On one level, the failed uprising demonstrated the Islamists' shortcomings regarding Leninist subversive strategy. According to the strategy, propaganda and infiltration set the preparatory conditions that ensure that later targeted uprisings set off the larger reaction among state institutions such as the military and the masses. The preparatory work to establish support in key areas had clearly failed.

The other level of failure was manifested in the disunity of the Islamists. Hekmatyar's critics within the Islamist camp allege he acted to ensure failure, so that the other Islamist leaders would be imprisoned allowing him to further strengthen his power over the movement.⁹¹ This would be a precursor to the intense showdowns between Hekmatyar and the Tajik leader Rabbani that would occur prior to the Soviet invasion.

The Islamists Split – Organizational Differences

While there is an ethnic component, the Rabbani-Hekmatyar split represents the deeper ideological and organizational differences between the two leading Afghan Islamists. One cannot ignore the Islamists ethnic divisions, as Tajik supporters rallied around Rabbani whereas Hekmatyar garnered the Pashtuns. However, even from the initial split to the Soviet Invasion, Rabbani's Jamiat-e Islami and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami co-existed in largely homogenous Tajik or Pashtun areas.⁹² Rabbani, who would

⁹⁰ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...* 75

⁹¹ David Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2001) 236

⁹² David Edwards, *Before Taliban...* 243

abandon the strict Islamist ideology to garner greater support, understood the necessity of local legitimacy and support and therefore broke off and formed the Jamiat-e Islami:

Rabbani, after the creation of the Jamiat, spoke in terms of united fronts and new groups; in particular, he realized that it would be impossible for them to establish themselves in tribal zones by means of a simple party structure and that it was necessary to adapt tribal institutions. He underlined the necessity of accommodating liberal intellectual circles. He was equally opposed to the elitist views of the Jama'at in Pakistan, which had absolutely no interest in developing into a mass movement.⁹³

Rabbani's rejection of the Leninist party structure and organization reflects a moderation of his political and religious views, brought about perhaps by the drastic failure of the 1975 uprisings. Although Leninist parties enter united fronts, they do so only to balance a common threat and maintain acts of subversion against their alliance partners, as will be displayed in Hekmatyar manipulation of his allies during the Soviet invasion and the ensuing civil war.

A Second Split – Hekmatyar Hemorrhages Support

Hezb-e Islami suffered a second split in 1978 that resulted in the loss of significant ethno-regional backing. Younis Khalis, a religious leader of the Pashtun Nangrahar tribe broke with Hekmatyar, preferring a more accommodationist and inclusive interpretation of Islam. Khalis' vision of Islam mirrored that of Tajik leader Rabbani, which would undercut Hekmatyar's later attempts to woo moderate Pashtuns.⁹⁴ However, the split goes beyond just the interpretation of Islam, to include the divisions between the younger Islamists and the more traditional elements of the Afghan Muslim community, notably the scholars. Khalis viewed Hekmatyar and the other younger radicals as "schoolboys," in that they lacked religious education offered at the religious schools

⁹³ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...* 1986

⁹⁴ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...* 78

known as *madrasas*, and instead supplemented their theological deficiencies with political extremism found in the secular universities that conflicted with traditional Afghan values.⁹⁵

Although the departure of notable and respectable leaders Rabbani and Khalis may have significantly loosened Hezb-e Islami's control of the Islamist base and cost it significant regional support, it seems to have had a centralizing effect on the group. With the departure of the more moderate elements, only the radical and devoted adherents to Hekmatyar and Islamism remained. These hardcore elements of Hezb-e Islami would remain with Hekmatyar to the present, serving as aids, deputies, and top commanders.⁹⁶

Wooing Pakistan

After losing the moderate Islamists and the Pashtun tribes under Khales, Hekmatyar landed significant Pakistani support. This initial rebound underscores his abilities to draw from multiple avenues of support. Hekmatyar's radical Hezb-e Islami appealed to core Pakistani power circles: Prime Minister Bhutto's central government, the military, and the Pakistani Islamist Jama'at-e Islami (not to be confused with the Rabbani's Tajik Jamiat-e Islami in Afghanistan).⁹⁷ Hekmatyar garnered the most support from these groups as it not only opposed the Pashtunistan nationalism coming from Kabul, but also was more ideologically and organizationally in line with Pakistan's Jama'at-e Islami Islamist party that began to grow in popularity and stature.⁹⁸ Furthermore, as it did not seek to accommodate other Afghan groups or transform into a

⁹⁵ David Edwards, *Before Taliban*...247-250 The group of Islamic scholars is often referred to as the *ulama*. A pervasive critique of Islamist movements across the Arab and Muslim world identifies the Islamists lack of connection with the *ulama*.

⁹⁶ David Edwards, *Before Taliban*..., "Hundreds arrested over fear of coup in Kabul," *The Guardian*, April 5, 2002

⁹⁷ Marvin G. Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994) 6

mass-movement, Hezb-e Islami offered Pakistan's civilian and military leaders a more reliable proxy than Rabbani's group.

In 1977, Daud called for a traditional Afghan meeting of political leaders, known as a *Loya Jirga*, in which the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan were banned from attending.⁹⁹ This would set the stage for a showdown between Daud and the Communists that would initiate a series of events including increased subversive acts by Hekmatyar, a communist coup, and culminate with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Moscow's intervention saved Hekmatyar in that it exponentially increased his foreign support, legitimated his holy war among a larger religious base, and allowed him to take advantage of the growing humanitarian crisis to cultivate a growing socioeconomic class in Pakistan's teeming refugee camps.

⁹⁸ Bennet Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2002) 30

⁹⁹ Ralph Magnus, *Afghanistan...* 118-9

Chapter Four: The Bear Intervenes (1978-1989)

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is a fascinating section of later Cold War history. Rather than provide a comprehensive account of the war, this chapter will instead focus on Hekmatyar's actions to garner foreign support pouring into the country, and his attempts to cultivate regional, socioeconomic support against the backdrop of the war. During this period, Hekmatyar relied extensively on his base in Peshawar, Pakistan to direct the war. Though the previous chapter described the split and disunity among the Afghan Islamists, the Hezb-e Islami effectively applied the Leninist style of alliance making to expand its operations and bases of support. During the Soviet invasion, Hekmatyar employed a Leninist organization and massive outside support to supplement as well as expand his relatively low levels of support from regional, socioeconomic bases.

The Communist Coup

Although he had initially supported the communists, who had operated out of Kabul University, Daud soon initiated a crackdown on his former allies, particularly the Marxist Khalq and Parcham political factions that split and later reconstituted the People's Democratic Part of Afghanistan (PDPA).¹⁰⁰ This would set the stage for a communist coup perpetrated by elements of the PDPA. Following the breakdown and infighting of the PDPA, the Soviets decided to intervene with a large military force.

Hekmatyar's Provocation

Before the communist coup and Soviet invasion, Hezb-e Islami stepped up its subversive actions against Daud's government by increasing assassinations and acts of

violence against high profile government targets. The most notable and provocative act initiated by Hekmatyar had drastic effects on the Afghan government, provoking drastic responses from the communist elements of the country. Following the assassination of a prominent Marxist in April 1978, the PDPA, having themselves infiltrated the upper echelons of the Afghan military, overthrew Daud. The following year leading up to the Soviet invasion was characterized by intense internal power struggles among the Afghan communist elite and instability.

The Soviets Invade

In September 1979, Prime Minister Hafiz Allah Amin seized power from Ghalji Tarakki. The Islamic revolution in neighboring Iran coupled with Amin's desires to distance Afghanistan from the Soviet Union prompted the communist superpower to invade and reestablish the country's Marxist leadership. By December 27, 1979 the Soviets had taken Kabul, killed Amin, and began to restructure the PDPA.¹⁰¹

The Soviet strategy in Afghanistan, while evolving over the course of different leaders in Moscow, consistently incorporated massive amounts of ground troops armed with overwhelming firepower. By 1983, Moscow had deployed to Afghanistan 110,000 troops from the Soviet 40th Army along with advisors. In addition, three more army divisions mounted cross border operations from Soviet territory.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers 2002) 301

¹⁰¹ Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans...*307-310 Vogelsang provides an excellent account of the years leading up to the invasion.

¹⁰² Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...*194

Hekmatyar's Strategy

Manipulating the Allies

Hekmatyar's exploitation of other resistance groups eager to form alliances underscores his Leninist strategy of maximizing his personal and party gains at the expense of prosecuting a unified war against the Soviets. From the beginning of the Russian invasion there was a general consensus among the diverse collection of Afghan leaders that a broad alliance was needed to direct resistance to the Russian invaders. The communist government and the arrival of the Soviet Union threatened local customs and traditions across the board, endangering the different and often opposed ethnic groups. While only Hekmatyar and the other Islamists had a cohesive, although no less oppressive, vision for a post-Soviet Afghanistan, the longstanding "tradition of opposition" in the country rallied groups of all denominations to oppose the communists.¹⁰³

As early as March 1980, as many as five Afghan opposition groups formed an alliance against the Soviets. The alliance consisted of both moderate traditionalists and the Peshawar-based Islamists, notably the Hezb-e Islami splinter group lead by Younis Khalis and Rabbani's Jamiat-e Islami, which had also split from Hekmatyar as explained in the previous chapter.¹⁰⁴ Hekmatyar vehemently opposed the alliance as it would undercut his own authority as well as level the playing field by developing the other less politically astute Afghan figures into party leaders.

In May 1985, Hekmatyar finally agreed to the broad-based alliance extracting concessions from other groups eager to accommodate in hopes of a broad-based front

¹⁰³ Central Intelligence Agency, *The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: Five Years After*, Declassified 1999

against the Soviets. The seven Peshawar-based groups, which represented not only the majority of Afghan opposition but also a broad spectrum of the country's political and ethnic groups form the alliance known as the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahadin.¹⁰⁵ From the outcome, one can see how Hekmatyar withheld his support until he could achieve the maximum gains for Hezb-e Islami. In October, as Hekmatyar, who had assumed the rotating presidency, used the forum to slander his rivals and insult President Reagan by refusing to meet with him, snubbing the very superpower that gave the Afghan resistance the tools and training to drive out the Soviets.¹⁰⁶

Regional Expansion

Before the Soviet Invasion, Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami represented the only coherent and organized Afghan opposition party. Unlike other the other Afghan opposition leaders, Hekmatyar viewed resistance against the Soviets as a minor priority compared to dominating other Afghan parties and organizations. Although his party was involved in some of the fighting, its focus on achieving military gains against the Soviets was minimal. Instead, Hekmatyar and his cadre kept their focus on seizing power for themselves.¹⁰⁷ Following the arrival of Soviet forces, Hekmatyar immediately attempted to subordinate rather than cooperate with other resistance groups, including Rabbani's organization. Olivier Roy explains the group's attempts to expand its base of support:

Its commandos were the first to leave their own territory to impose party authority on neighboring territories. The Hizb disarmed the other parties and would not tolerate their presence in its own territory. Its first goal was to control the civilian population, and being well organised it succeeded in

¹⁰⁴ US Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "The Afghan Resistance Movement in 1981: Progress, but a Long Way to Go," Report, January 19, 1982 (declassification date unknown).

¹⁰⁵ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 2002) 238

¹⁰⁶ need citation

¹⁰⁷ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...* 133-135

setting up a solid and diversified administration. The traditional influential families were brushed aside and even the [traditional religious judges] were only allowed to exert their influence within the framework of the party. The party was very highly centralized and homogenous. The elite members were visionaries, dogmatic, and living their whole life for the party and devoted to Hekmatyar; they were thus more detached from the group solidarity of the [local communities] than was the case in the other groups.¹⁰⁸

The Hezb-e expansion reflects the Leninist characteristics of strict hierarchical control, party discipline, and ideological purity relevant to the combat party. However, these actions also reveal a desire to expand the group's regional support.

Waving Islam's Banner

As mentioned above, Hekmatyar had lost significant credibility among both moderate elements of the Islamist movement and the traditional Afghan Islamic community, resulting in the fracture of his group. However, after the Soviets arrived, the younger Islamist radicals gained stature domestically as well as internationally. Following Moscow's intervention, the country's Islamic scholars, a traditional facet of Afghan society, were further alienated as they could not respond with a consistent political program.¹⁰⁹ The Islamists filled that vacuum, offering a political strategy to accompany their religious goals of instituting Islamic law.

The Saudis and the amorphous Muslim Brotherhood organization vigorously attempted to restore Hekmatyar to the forefront of the Afghan Islamist movement.¹¹⁰ By 1984, Arab volunteers began arriving in mass in conjunction with the immense Saudi aid earmarked for supporting the radical Islamists and spreading Wahhabism. This included

¹⁰⁸ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...* 133

¹⁰⁹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance...* 49

¹¹⁰ Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1994) 118

building madrasas to be established in Pakistan for the Afghan mullahs.¹¹¹ Hekmatyar and another Islamist leader, Sayyaf, not only garnered the majority of the funding but also anywhere from 6,000 to 20,000 Arab volunteers to fight the Soviets.¹¹² The money from the gulf also allowed Hekmatyar to recruit from poor regions and from refugees settled in Peshawar, Pakistan.¹¹³ With the ideological support and funding of the Saudis and Muslim Brotherhood, Hekmatyar would, as the Soviets contemplated withdrawal, establish training camps that served not only those fighting the Russians, but also Philippine, Kashmiri, and Palestinian Islamic militants.¹¹⁴ These camps would be the prototype for those that Osama bin Laden would establish under Taliban protection.

Hekmatyar even captured support from the radical Khomeini government in Iran, winning early support for specific regional operations outside the scope of Iran's normal Hazara proxies. A DIA background paper indicates substantial material support, particularly to Hekmatyar. Along with uniforms, boots, and small arms, Iran provided man-portable shoulder-fired antitank rockets and heavy machine guns to Hekmatyar specifically "for operations in southern and eastern Afghanistan."¹¹⁵

The Pinnacle of Foreign Support – Hezb-e Islami's Peshawar HQ

Pakistan's border provinces, proving to be a vital center of gravity for the Afghan resistance, allowed Hekmatyar to fuse his bases of support and establish an effective network to conduct his insurgency. By 1985, approximately three million Afghans had

¹¹¹ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance*...218

¹¹² Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994) 35-36. The range is so large because Pakistan did not keep any records

¹¹³ Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance*...219

¹¹⁴ Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*... 118

¹¹⁵ Defense Intelligence Agency, "Iranian Support to the Afghan Resistance," Briefing Paper, July 11, 1985 (declassification date unknown)

settled in Pakistan's 300 refugee camps.¹¹⁶ As resistance to the Soviets emerged, Hekmatyar's headquarters in Peshawar maximized the group's efficacy in infiltration and propaganda, particularly against other opposition parties. The group's actions in Peshawar also reveal the extent of Pakistani support that facilitated the group's subversive activities.

Cultivating the Socioeconomic Base of Support

While it may not amount to a substantial support base, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan contributed to Hezb-e Islami's socioeconomic constituency. On one level, the swelling of refugee support for Hekmatyar reflects opportunism. As the best-funded, most organized group controlling the refugee camps, Hezb-e Islami appealed to refugees. Kristian Berg Harpviken has explained that refugee status could only be obtained if one claimed membership in a "resistance party."¹¹⁷

Much is made of Afghanistan's opium fields a key source of insurgency, particularly for the well-networked and externally funded Hezb-e Islami. As covert funding from the West and Middle East poured in through Pakistan's Inter-service Intelligence (ISI) to the Afghan clients, the Afghan resistance began to seize key agricultural locations. According to Alfred McCoy, the opposition groups convinced farmers to plant more opium and the country's output of the crop doubled to 575 tons.¹¹⁸ However, this jump is relatively minor as to the exponential growth that occurred following the Soviet withdrawal. When the Soviets prepared to withdraw in the late

¹¹⁶ Richard P. Cronin, *Afghanistan After Five Years: Status of the Conflict, the Afghan Resistance, and the U.S. Role*, Congressional Research Service, January 1985

¹¹⁷ Kristian Berg Harpviken, "Transcending Traditionalism: The Emergence of Non-State Military Formations in Afghanistan," *Journal of Peace Research*, v.34, i.3 (August 1997) 277

¹¹⁸ Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill 1991) 453-4

1980s, Western funding for the Afghan resistance began to decline. To supplement the income, Afghan leaders turned to opium and heroin dealing.

Hekmatyar's involvement in the drug trade goes beyond simply opium cultivation, the staple of regional warlords controlling the drug fields. With Hekmatyar's ISI connections, he profited from controlling the supply routes used by CIA and ISI teams providing weapons. With substantial help from the ISI, he established opium processing and refinement laboratories just across the border in Pakistan to produce and export heroin. Hekmatyar only began to challenge regional warlords for the opium fields as other sources of support declined.¹¹⁹

Subversive Activities

At this time, Pakistan's accommodation of Hezb-e Islami is of critical importance. Hekmatyar's group was not only permitted but also aided by government authorities in activities restricted to the general Pakistani public. Unlike Pakistan's own political opposition parties, the Hezb-e Islami could freely assemble, publish and distribute their propaganda, as well as organize and coordinate their operations in neighboring Afghanistan.¹²⁰

However, the most striking element of the Hezb-e Islami in Pakistan is their security apparatus. Even beyond the refugee camps, the party maintained security forces ostensibly to monitor communists and infiltrators. However, in reality they targeted other Afghan Islamist and resistance groups and coordinated their actions extensively with

¹¹⁹ Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin...Despite McCoy's sensationalist and polemical rant against the CIA, he provides a very interesting snapshot of Hekmatyar's war against local warlord Mullah Nasim Akhundzada. Hekmatyar only challenges Nasim, controller of the opium-rich Helmand Valley, when the price of opium rises. High prices in opium complicated Hekmatyar's abilities to cheaply produce heroin from the poppy.*

¹²⁰ Marvin G. Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction* Boulder, CO: Westview 1994) 81-2

Pakistani law enforcement. Hezb-e Islami coordinated significantly outside the refugee camps

Beginning early in the war, Afghans arrested by Pakistan's law-enforcement agencies were often interrogated in the presence of Hezb-i-Islami security personnel. Hekmatyar's followers were also widely believed to maintain their own jails, incarcerating and badly treating not only suspected communists but followers of other parties.¹²¹

Hekmatyar exploited this cooperation to the fullest. In February, 1988 Hezb-e Islami assassins, allegedly with substantial support from Pakistani law enforcement, murdered an influential Afghan professor and supporter of the former monarch Zahir Shah. The professor, Sayd Majrooh, had been formulating a political compromise among the different Afghan groups that involved the return of Zahir Shah. Pakistani authorities tacitly aided in the assassination, which had a devastating effect on the secular royalist Afghans, essentially moderate Pashtuns that opposed Hekmatyar's radicalism.¹²²

The Bombing of the Interior Ministry - A Case Study in Leninist Subversion

Even though the group's Headquarters remained based across the border, it still retained the characteristic absolute, centralized leadership of a Leninist party. Its maintenance and direction over individual cells demonstrates its continued control over the entire organization. For example, in May 1983, a Kabul-based cell planned to bomb the Afghan Ministry of Interior with the goal of assassinating the minister while maximizing other casualties. The cell recruited and trained a gardener at the building, and provided him with four explosive devices with timers hidden in large flowerpots. The

¹²¹ Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan*...82

¹²² Barney Rubin, "Policies of the Pakistani Military toward the Afghan Resistance: Human Rights Implications," *Asia Watch* February 27, 1989

Hezb-e Islami asset then smuggled in the bombs and planted them around the Interior Minister's office.¹²³

The cell planned to detonate the explosives during the daytime while the building was full and the minister present, however the Hezb-e leadership in Pakistan overrode the cell leader and demanded the minister be spared and the bombing occur at night. Hekmatyar and his lieutenants prioritized politics over a possible tactical blow against the Soviet-backed government. The cell leader, Haji Mohammad Yakub explains that the Hezb-e leadership "wanted to keep Minister of the Interior Galub Zoy alive since he was a leader member of the Khalq faction and his survival would insure that the friction between the Khalq and Parchim communist party factions continued." With a hint of frustration he adds: "If we had set off the bombs during the day, we would have killed Galub Zoy [the Interior Minister], Ghazi (his body guard), Sheruddin (his aide-de-camp) and perhaps a hundred others."¹²⁴ Hekmatyar's calculations placed politics, notably internal divisions to be manipulated, above the operational goal of imposing significant costs on Soviet and Soviet-backed forces. It also displays the centralization and hierarchical control extended to the very cell involved in fighting.

US Support

Though being the United States' most vocal critic, Hekmatyar received the largest share of the superpower's funding. During its time, US involvement in Afghanistan represented the most expensive covert operation in history, costing approximately 2.5

¹²³ Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, (Quantico, VA: United States Marine Corps Studies and Analysis Division 1995) 369

¹²⁴ Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *The Other Side of the Mountain*...369

billion dollars.¹²⁵ Despite the hollow claims and polemics of conspiracy theorists, the CIA had little operational control over the massive monetary dispersal.¹²⁶ Instead, “to avoid offending the sensibilities of [Pakistan]” a selection of its own generals managed the funds, which resulted in “poor accounting and no accountability for the aid, almost an invitation to graft.”¹²⁷ Fully in control of the funds, Pakistan dispersed 75 percent of the funds to the four main Islamist parties, with Hekmatyar’s group alone taking 25 percent of the total.¹²⁸

Any belief that the US intentionally favored Hekmatyar should be dispelled by the tremendous problems that the US, and specifically the CIA, had in dealing with the Hezb-e Islami leader. After assuming the rotating presidency of the Afghan alliance in October 1985, Hekmatyar snubbed President Reagan by refusing to meet with him. After being misled by Pakistani ISI Generals into backing Hekmatyar, US officials would have tremendous problems working with Hekmatyar. Meetings between CIA case officers and the Hezb-e Islami leader were cold at best, in which the latter insulted the former, and often accused him and his agency of plotting to kill him.¹²⁹ While Hekmatyar would accept every iota of aid coming ultimately from the US, he maintained his virulent

¹²⁵ John Prados, *Presidents’ Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations From World War II Through the Persian Gulf* 363

¹²⁶ Polemical claims include Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill 1991), Bob Woodward, *VEIL: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) This source includes a fabrication of an interview with William Casey. Casey, who would die as a result of a brain tumor, was incomprehensible at a time Woodward claimed to have interviewed him.

¹²⁷ John Prados, *Presidents’ Secret Wars*...363 With hindsight, the decision seems obviously ridiculous to leave the discretion of fund allocation to ISI Generals under Zia. However, given that the US wanted no visible footprint for the Soviets to see, it seems to be an understandable and cautious decision given the historical context.

¹²⁸ Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan*...34-5

¹²⁹ Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA’s Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House 2003) During a highly decorated career at the CIA, Milt Bearden served as the Agency’s Pakistan Chief during the war. Bearden’s account should be considered extremely credible.

rhetoric perhaps to maintain his position in the fundamentalist Islamist movement, and please his contemporaries in the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly the types that would form al Qaeda.

Stingers and Sweet Talk

As the war dragged on, it was clear that Soviet air assets, notably the MI-24 helicopter gunship, could wreak havoc on the Afghan resistance with relative impunity.¹³⁰ The Stinger missile's arrival in Afghanistan is a complex story in itself, in which Afghan war proponents in Congress campaigned against the wishes of the cautious CIA, eager to avoid the controversies, and commissions of the previous decade.¹³¹ Along with its counterparts at Langley, the Pentagon feared that supplying the rebels with Stingers might provoke massive Soviet military action directed at Pakistan.¹³² Needless to say, there was tremendous opposition to supplying the rebels with Stinger missiles. Until the first of the advanced anti-air missiles arrived in Afghanistan in September 1986, the US supplied the rebels with other less mobile weaponry, such as the Swiss Oerlikon cannon. Despite differences in numerical results, it is clear the Stinger missile had a decisive impact on the war. From its introduction to the Soviet withdrawal, the advanced anti-air missile accounted for the downing of over 250 Soviet and DRA aircraft. Though

¹³⁰ By the early 80s, the Afghans possessed Soviet SA-7 man portable SAMs, and had brought down Soviet and DRA aircraft.

¹³¹ Alan J. Kuperman, "The Stinger Missile and U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan," *Political Science Quarterly*, v112 n2 (1999) 222 For more see George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2003) and Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the KGB* (New York: Random House 2003) Crile and Bearden offer two separate yet overlapping accounts of the stinger episode. Crile covers Congressman Charlie Wilson's story, whereas Bearden provides his experiences as the chief CIA officer in Pakistan coordinating the US covert aid program.

¹³² Alan Kuperman, "The Stinger Missile..." 223 Kuperman interviewed Fred Iklé, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy who headed the Pentagon's covert programs during Soviet invasion. Iklé asserted that at the time, there was genuine fear that "one million Soviet troops" would invade Pakistan.

having a minimal impact on the ground, Hekmatyar's forces were eager to shoot down planes and hoard the remaining weapons for themselves.¹³³

Towards the end of acquiring advanced weaponry, Hekmatyar knew which Americans to charm. Unlike the cold meetings with the CIA where he insulted and harassed case officers, Hekmatyar was open and receptive when meeting with members of Congress, specifically Charlie Wilson. During a meeting in March 1987 with Milt Bearden, the CIA's top official in Pakistan, Hekmatyar scoffed at American support, proclaiming that he had no need for American-supplied Stingers: "I don't need support from you or your Congress. I can capture enough weapons from the enemy to fight the jihad."¹³⁴ However, in his meetings with Congressman Wilson, Hekmatyar actively sought to acquire more weapons from his willing patrons, even accepting weapons "the little Satan" Israel had captured from the PLO.¹³⁵ As Stingers arrived, Hekmatyar's group procured the lion's share from the middlemen in Pakistan's ISI.

Hekmatyar's strategy during the Soviet Invasion demonstrates his exceptional abilities to persist in such a dangerous and fluid political environment. During this period, Pakistan's support proved vital to Hekmatyar's designs in that it allowed him unfettered access in the Peshawar refugee camps which resulted in the substantial broadening of his support to include the numerous refugees fleeing the war. Pakistani favoritism allowed Hezb-e Islami to garner the majority of US funding and weaponry which would no doubt be used against Hekmatyar's rivals once the Soviets withdrew.

¹³³ Alan Kuperman, "The Stinger Missile"... 246 Kuperman lists a variety of studies with different results and concludes that figures in the realm of 269 are accurate. Hekmatyar's group allegedly downed the first MI-24 Hinds. A stinger team lead by Hezb-e Islami member Engineer Ghaffar was trained by Bearden

¹³⁴ Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy*...282

¹³⁵ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press 2003) 223-4

Chapter Five: Afghanistan in a Post-Cold War World

The period following the Soviet withdrawal to the present underscores the fluid Afghan political environment where power shifts quickly, and alliances are defined by threats. Though Hekmatyar was appointed as the country's Prime Minister and persists following his ouster, he lost considerable support as the Taliban movement emerged in 1994. This chapter tells the story of Hekmatyar's fall from power and his current involvement with al Qaeda and Taliban remnants.

Najibullah's Rise and Fall (1989-1992)

Although the last of the Soviets withdrew in 1989, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) lasted until April, 1992. As the Soviets prepared to leave, Mohammed Najibullah replaced Barbak Kamal in 1986 as the head of the DRA. Najibullah, formerly in charge of the communist state's intelligence service Khad, allegedly ordered the execution of over 80,000 people as well as masterminded a series of attacks across the border in Pakistan, which had killed hundreds.¹³⁶ Shortly after Najibullah assumed power, Hekmatyar's group further infiltrated the regime, and won a sizable portion of the most hard-line communists of the regime. While an alliance with hard-line communists may seem questionable, it should now be no surprise that a Leninist-styled group would enter into seemingly a peculiar alliance:

Aside from their common desire to oust the Najibullah government, the Khalqis and Hezb-i-Islami leaders appeared to share a similar fate in their almost certainly being left out of any internationally sponsored political compromise that would favor more moderate elements. For Pakistan's military and civilian authorities, the coup offered a possible chance to

¹³⁶ Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press 2001) 1

short circuit the war. It was a return to a military solution made attractive by the lack of progress in finding a negotiated political settlement.¹³⁷

The coup attempt ultimately failed, as Najibullah survived Khalqi air strike and the fighting was largely contained.¹³⁸ However, Hekmatyar would rebound, attempting two years later with better results.

Najibullah's Fall - Hekmatyar Plays the Ethnic Card

Through cooperation with the remnants of the DRA's interior ministry, Hekmatyar attempted another coup as the Najibullah regime began to crumble. After a small force of Uzbek troops led by former Communist ally Rashid Dostum turned on Najibullah and prepared to enter Kabul, and following a dissention within the DRA government, the Soviet-backed leader sought refuge in the UN compound.¹³⁹ With the regime collapsing, Hekmatyar attempted to capitalize on the political chaos. On April 25, 1992 Hekmatyar proclaimed control of the city, ignored the other opposition members and threatened to shoot their plane down if they attempted to land at the airport.¹⁴⁰ On the same day, Mojaddedi, who had been selected as the Afghan Interim Government President, appointed Ahmed Shah Massoud as the Afghan Defense Minister and tasked him to clear the city of Hezb-e Islami forces. Leading a coalition of the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazara factions, Massoud successfully drove Hekmatyar's forces from the city.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Marvin G. Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994) 47

¹³⁸ Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan...* 47-8

¹³⁹ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2002) 190-2

¹⁴⁰ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars...* 192

¹⁴¹ Barnett R. Rubin, "Situation in Afghanistan," Hearings on Afghanistan: U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations on Asia and the Pacific, May 9, 1996

The military action represented a significant milestone, as it was the first time in Afghan history that Tajiks and Uzbeks had ever controlled Kabul.¹⁴²

Hekmatyar attempted to exploit this fact by appealing to a larger segment of the Pashtun population for support.¹⁴³ However, the moderate Pashtuns, which Hekmatyar would further alienate with daily rocket and artillery barrages, preferred the moderate Tajiks such as Rabbani and Massoud. The Tajik archenemies of Hekmatyar had not only joined with moderate Pashtun parties but also provided “conciliatory gestures” to counter Hezb-e Islami attempts to foment an ethnic conflict as the Najibullah regime evaporated.¹⁴⁴ This does not mean Hekmatyar’s manipulation of ethnic divisions did not bear fruit. Even though moderate Pashtuns in the Kabul area did not openly oppose the Tajiks, Hezb-e Islami efforts produced a “studied neutrality” among Pashtuns fearing minority dominance and second-class status.¹⁴⁵ However, Hekmatyar would further complicate his own efforts to win over a larger Pashtun base of support by allying with Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum.

He Who Would Shell His Own Capital (1992-1994)

The Afghan Interim Government

There were many attempts both during and after to the Soviet invasion to produce a viable Afghan Interim Government. While chronicling the many attempts would be both confusing and frustrating, one must understand some of the key arrangements and agreements which lead to Hekmatyar’s ascension to the country’s Prime Minister. The

¹⁴² Shah M. Tarzi, “Afghanistan in 1992: A Hobbesian State of Nature,” *Asian Survey*, v33, i2 (Feb 1993) 170

¹⁴³ Barnett R. Rubin, “Situation in Afghanistan,” Hearings on Afghanistan: U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations on Asia and the Pacific, May 9, 1996

¹⁴⁴ Shah M. Tarzi, “Afghanistan in 1992”...170-1

¹⁴⁵ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*...214

Peshawar accords of 1992 granted the presidency to Mojaddedi, a traditionalist and moderate.¹⁴⁶ Following his two-month term, the title would be handed over to Rabbani. Hekmatyar's group would receive the Prime Ministership, while Rabbani's Jamiat-e Islami would take the Defense Ministry. A council would then form to organize elections 18 months later. Wanting more for himself and his party, Hekmatyar denounced the interim government as "communist" and refused the post. In reality, the Hezb-e Islami leader wanted at the least more influence and at the most control of Kabul.¹⁴⁷

Following his rival Rabbani's ascension to the Presidency in August 1992, Hekmatyar began the artillery barrage of Kabul, which will be explained further below. With Pakistani pressure on Rabbani mounting, the Kabul government capitulated, signing the Islamabad accords with Hekmatyar in March 1993. As a result, the Defense and Interior Ministries were put under "collegial control" which would allow for Hezb-e Islami participation, if not outright subversion and infiltration.¹⁴⁸

The Shelling of Kabul

In August 1992, Hezb-e Islami forces positioned outside Kabul commenced the sustained artillery and rocket barrage of the capital, that would claim approximately anywhere between 10,000 to 25000 lives.¹⁴⁹ As Afghan experts generally conclude, it's doubtful that Hekmatyar could forcibly topple the Afghan government. Instead, the Hezb-e Islami shelling of Kabul should be regarded as a coercive effort to undermine the

¹⁴⁶ Shah M. Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992"...

¹⁴⁷ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars...* 197-202

¹⁴⁸ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars...* 197-202

¹⁴⁹ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars...* 204-5. Figures on the death toll from the shelling of Kabul vary significantly. The Afghan Red Crescent Society attributed 10,000 deaths to 1993 alone. In a 1995 report, Amnesty International reports a figure of 25,000 dead.

interim government and extract concessions.¹⁵⁰ Hekmatyar assumed the daily massive artillery and rocket barrages would undermine the current administration; however, he underestimated the attacks' effects on his basis of support. To supplement his unpopularity with moderate Pashtuns, Hekmatyar allied with one of his fiercest opponents, Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader who fought on the side of the communists.

The Taliban – The New Kids on the Block Emerge (1994-2001)

While Hekmatyar preoccupied himself with shelling Kabul and combating the Afghan government, the Taliban emerged in southern Afghanistan and over the course of two years consolidated its control. By the end of the 1996, the militia seized Kabul. Along with providing some historical details, this section will examine how the Taliban drew from Hekmatyar's bases of support, leaving the Hezb-e Islami leader to briefly reconcile with his former foes before fleeing to Iran.

Pakistan and the Taliban's Southern Sweep

With Hekmatyar concerned with gaining more personal power by shelling Kabul, Pakistan searched for a better proxy. By 1994, Hekmatyar had done little but kill thousands of civilians, while he lost territory to Rabbani's forces commanded by Ahmed Shah Massoud.¹⁵¹ With the majority of Pashtuns loathing Hekmatyar, Pakistan sought a more effective Pashtun group that could consolidate territory and ensure safe transit routes ultimately opening up trade routes into Central Asia.¹⁵² It had to look no further

¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵⁰ Shah M. Tarzi, "Afghanistan in 1992"... 170

¹⁵¹ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban...*26

¹⁵² Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban...*25-7

than its own tribal provinces bordering Afghanistan, where Saudi-funded madrasas instructed young Afghans and Pakistanis in the ways of Islamic fundamentalism.

To strengthen their newfound proxy and tie up loose ends, Pakistani Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) directed them against Hekmatyar's weak spots along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. In early October, 1994 ISI provided intelligence and support to the 200 Taliban fighters that raided Hekmatyar's strategically vital post and refueling spot at Spin Baldak. The Taliban went on to raid the post's arms depot, securing 18,000 Kalashnikov rifles, "dozens of artillery pieces, large quantities of ammunition and many vehicles."¹⁵³

Following their takeover of Hezb-e Islami arms depot, the group moved towards the southern cities. In the following month, the Taliban captured Kandahar without a shot fired and gained control of more military hardware, namely tanks, helicopters and six Mig-21 fighters left from the Soviets.¹⁵⁴ Four months after the group raided Hekmatyar's key arms depot, the Taliban grew to roughly 20-25,000 men, 200 tanks, numerous artillery pieces, as well as Soviet-made helicopters and MiG jetfighters.¹⁵⁵ Between November 1994 and February of the next year, the Taliban advanced virtually unopposed through the southern half of Afghanistan. By early February 1995, the Taliban advanced on the outskirts of Kabul forcing Hekmatyar to flee his Charasiab headquarters, the strategic position from which artillery struck the capital.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban...*27-8

¹⁵⁴ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban...*29

¹⁵⁵ Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press 2001) 40

¹⁵⁶ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars...*203-4

Hekmatyar's Grip on a Religious Base Slips

While Hekmatyar's command of a religious base of support was always tenuous and difficult to evaluate, it is clear that the emergence of the Taliban drastically challenged his position as the leading proponent of instituting Islamic law. Hekmatyar's anti-traditionalist bent, no doubt influenced by Leninism and Middle East Islamism, alienated Pashtun tribes content in maintaining their local traditions and code of laws. Where Hekmatyar failed, the Taliban succeeded, in that they simultaneously garnered a religious and tribal base by fusing Islamic law with traditional Pashtun customs.¹⁵⁷ Hekmatyar deliberately and forcefully removed the local mullahs, Islamic scholars, and tribal elders from the decision-making process after Hezb-e Islami established itself in a rural area; whereas, the Taliban integrated these forces into its power base.

Although different in organization style and particular interpretation of Islamic fundamentalism, the Taliban movement has many similarities with Hekmatyar's handful of ill-equipped religious students, which quickly spread across the southern portion of the country and began its conquest of Afghanistan. Like Hekmatyar's group, Pakistani funding and the taxation of opium cultivation greatly enhanced the Taliban's ability to challenge other actors. However, where Hekmatyar failed in getting an ethno-regional base, the Taliban initially succeeded. Its unique ability to co-opt initial support in the south demonstrates the importance of an ethno-regional base of support.

The Taliban Approaches Kabul - An Alliance Too Late

As the Taliban approached Kabul and commenced their own indiscriminate shelling of the capital, the central government composed of a newly formed coalition of

Tajiks, Uzbeks, and moderate Pashtuns rallied under the seasoned commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud. In an attempt to create a larger base of support and win over a greater amount of Pashtuns, the alliance extended its membership to Hekmatyar, who had been routed south of Kabul by Pakistan's new proxy. Rabbani and Massoud believed that following the Taliban's victories over the Hezb-e Islami, Hekmatyar would be too weak to demand more power from the central government as he had done while shelling Kabul.¹⁵⁸ After having lost so much territory and support from the southern Pashtuns, Hekmatyar joined the central government in May, returning to his post as Prime Minister. Upon arriving in Kabul, Hekmatyar began imposing Shari'a, in a bid to reestablish himself as the country's foremost Islamic figure.¹⁵⁹

Rabbani and Massoud had calculated correctly that Hekmatyar was in no position to deliberately undermine the central government. However following the May 1995 alliance, his weakness forced the central government to stretch its forces too thin to cover the Hezb-e Islami's poorly-defended bases.¹⁶⁰ This would set the stage for the Taliban's September 1995 victory at Kabul and Hekmatyar's flight to Tehran.

Exile to Iran

Though the regime in Tehran sheltered Hekmatyar, the degree of support they provided him during this period is unclear. Furthermore, the extent of Hezb-e Islami's operations inside Afghanistan and Peshawar is also unclear, as coverage of Afghanistan shifted to explore the Taliban's attempted conquest of the country and its sheltering of Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda organization. Along with backing the Hazara

¹⁵⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2001) 112

¹⁵⁸ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 215-6

¹⁵⁹ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 216

minority, Iran also supported the Northern Alliance of Tajiks, Uzbeks, and moderate Pashtuns opposed to the Taliban.

Enduring Freedom and Its Aftermath (2001-Present)

On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda attacked the United States in an unequalled act of brutality. With firm evidence that the conspiracy to commit wholesale murder originated from al Qaeda's leadership in Afghanistan, the United States and its allies commenced military actions on October 7 known as Operation Enduring Freedom to destroy the terrorist group and its Taliban hosts. By December, the US had driven the hard-line fundamentalist regime from power and established the framework for a broad-based Afghan government to stabilize the country.

Hekmatyar's Lukewarm Revival

Following the catastrophic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Hekmatyar quickly arrived to the aid of the Taliban, his former enemies that stole both Pakistani support as well as the regional and socioeconomic base of support that had previously benefited Hezb-e Islami. Despite residing in Tehran, Hekmatyar allegedly began communicating with the Taliban shortly after September 11. A week after the US-led Coalition commenced Operation Enduring Freedom, Hekmatyar provided the Taliban with "huge quantity of arms, including 12 Stinger missiles."¹⁶¹ Though the arms procured from Hezb-e Islami seem virtually insignificant given the Taliban's existing military hardware, the symbolic gesture from a formerly bitter enemy is striking.

Sometime in February 2002 Hekmatyar left Iran and returned to Afghanistan. Facing pressure, Tehran likely urged him to leave to wash their hands of him and

¹⁶⁰ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 216

simultaneously create trouble for US forces in Afghanistan.¹⁶² With a nonexistent regional, socioeconomic base compared to the days of the Soviet invasion, Hekmatyar's plan may be to wave the Islamist flag again, siding with the Taliban and al Qaeda against the US. Perhaps Hekmatyar may be using this alliance to gain influence in the global Islamist terror network. Since the beginning of the alliance in fall of 2001, Hezb-e Islami involvement and participation has only increased, with continued acts and attempted acts of terrorism against US forces and the Karzai government. His statements converge on the standard al Qaeda line, consisting of the demonizing of the United States, the urging of suicide attacks against the West, as well as purported sympathy and support for Iraq before the US toppled Saddam.¹⁶³ However, the most significant involvement thus far has been the effective incorporation of Hezb-e Islami into the global Islamist terror network as the Afghan mouthpiece of al Qaeda. Although Osama bin Laden, his advisor Ayman al Zawahiri, and his spokesman Suleman Abu Gaith have all previously issued statements themselves through letters and audio tapes, Hezb-e Islami members have recently recorded and disseminated a video on behalf of the group, claiming responsibility for the May 2003 suicide attacks in Riyadh and Casablanca.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ "Taliban Reportedly Receive 12 Stingers, Other Arms From Hekmatyar," *Islamabad Khabrain* Oct. 14, 2001 Translation by fedworld.gov

¹⁶² Ben Barber, "Warlord Returns to Afghanistan," *The Washington Times* March 5, 2002 Dates of Hekmatyar's departure from Tehran and arrival in Afghanistan vary due to the Iranian regime's desire to keep the matter a secret.

¹⁶³ "Afghan Rebel Urges Attacks Against US," *The Associated Press*, February 23, 2003

¹⁶⁴ "UK Islamist Sources Question Authenticity of Alleged Al-Qa'idah Tape" *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, June 23, 2003

Chapter Six: Conclusions

Hekmatyar's persistence in insurgency is a testament not only to Afghanistan's exploitable divisions but also to the efficacy of Leninism as a strategy for power. While foreign support factored heavily into Hekmatyar's persistence and advancement, he should not be regarded as simply a proxy that fell out of favor with its sponsor. Hekmatyar is Afghanistan's archetypal survivor, not only persisting but also prospering in arguably the most dangerous environment of the last 30 years. A university dropout, Hekmatyar emerged as one of Afghanistan's most powerful elites, perpetrating dozens of coup attempts, seizing the position of Prime Minister on two separate occasions, and bearing responsibility for murder of tens of thousands of civilians. Traditional parties, particularly those that appeal strictly to ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic constituencies, have great difficulty in switching bases of support. Choosing certain alliance partners can alienate traditional support. Hekmatyar has had no trouble in drawing from religious, ethno-regional, and socioeconomic groups as well as from foreign sources to wage his war against every Afghan government and opposition group since the early 1970s and against superpowers of the past and present. Why is Hekmatyar so persistent? Rather than being tied to a single constituency, he adopted a Leninist strategy that allows him to manipulate multiple bases of support.

Decapitation - The Body Will Wither

Like Osama bin Laden, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is a dead man walking. There is no debate among US policymakers as to what action to take should his location be discovered. One can be confident that Hekmatyar will eventually be captured or killed. Whether his al Qaeda and Taliban allies betray him or he simply makes a mistake, he is

in a very vulnerable position; his religious, ethno-regional, and socioeconomic bases of support seem to have further eroded, and he lacks outside funding. Hekmatyar does not wield the arsenal of weaponry he once possessed to indiscriminately kill tens of thousands of Kabul's civilians. Though the details are unclear, his closest associates seem to be either relatives or die-hard Islamists that supported him from the start at Kabul University.¹⁶⁵ Despite cooperation and integration with the symbiotic al Qaeda-Taliban duo, Hekmatyar heads a distinctly domestic Afghan terrorist group. With his removal, Hezb-e Islami will wither with the loss of its leader. The insatiable die-hards will most likely absorb themselves completely within the al Qaeda and the Taliban structures, rendering Hezb-e Islami organizationally defunct. While this study has focused on Hekmatyar's persistence, there are some broader issues in US foreign and counterterrorism policy. To conclude, I offer some policy recommendations for US involvement in Afghanistan.

Policy Recommendations

Accept Decentralization

Currently the Karzai government does not extend far outside Kabul's city limits, and it is virtually powerless to control the ethno-regional leaders and petty warlords who control and administer sections of the country. Since the Taliban's collapse, there has been a wave of calls for the Bush administration to back a vigorous reconstruction of the country and expand the operating area for the international security forces, currently

¹⁶⁵ "Hundreds Arrested over fear of Coup in Kabul," *The Guardian* April 5, 2002. In the scarce literature on the group, Hezb-e Islami deputies are never described in depth. Various Reuters, AP and AFP news reports describe his son as a key member, however details remain extremely vague. See David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2002). Edwards seems to reinforce the idea that Hekmatyar's closest aides came from the pool of university Islamists.

deployed only to Kabul.¹⁶⁶ Though a central government that can extend itself into the peripheries to effectively maintain order, it is important to be realistic and take into consideration Afghanistan's recent, violent history.

The country's political environment is often defined by both power ambitions as well as threats. These two factors often bring together seemingly unlikely alliance partners, such as Islamists and communists or Pashtuns and Uzbeks. Regarding the reconstruction of Afghanistan, it has often been alleged that the US and its allies are not doing enough to expand the central government's authority and pacify pockets of resistance. Ethnic, tribal, and regional groups have a history of autonomy from the central authority. Afghanistan has seen scores of attempts by a central government to expand and dominate the periphery, all of which have ultimately failed. The US can assuage the periphery's fears by keeping a low profile in reconstruction efforts while maintaining key support for the Karzai government. A sudden and massive attempt to disarm regional leaders could seriously jeopardize the local population's trust in the United States. Furthermore, if the US is seen as encroaching on tribal or local norms, it could be perceived as a threatening actor and rally unlikely allies together in violent opposition of US actions.

Attempts by the center to consolidate and control the periphery have all failed, rallying unlikely allies. As long as the major ethno-regional leaders, such as Rashid Dostum, support the central government and cooperate in the hunt for al Qaeda, the Taliban and Hekmatyar, the US should accept these leaders' de facto control and the autonomy they provide. These leaders should be differentiated from warlords, in that they

¹⁶⁶ One need only read the New York Times editorials and op-ed columns by Thomas Friedman and Nicholas Kristoff. For more polemical critiques of the Bush administration's take on Afghan nation

not only have a representative base but have also demonstrated managerial administration over large sections of the country. Attempts to disarm these major regional forces will be met not with suspicion but outright hostility. However, should they side with al Qaeda and its allies, oppose and obstruct the Karzai government and inhibit US efforts to revitalize national infrastructure, they should be regarded as threats and treated accordingly.

However, the sub commanders and lower-level regional warlords present a greater concern. Even without the leadership and administration experience of larger ethno-regional leaders, these autonomous warlords maintain large arsenals of weaponry. Should economic conditions deteriorate, there is the potential for the al Qaeda-Taliban-Hekmatyar axis to bribe their support, enlisting their foot soldiers as well as their weapons. In addition, these warlords are most certain to involve themselves in Afghanistan's resurging poppy harvests, which undoubtedly arrive in the United States in the form of processed heroin. Every effort should be made to observe and monitor these independent warlords to determine the threat they pose.

The US and coalition forces need a stable environment and receptive population to aid in the hunt for al Qaeda and its allies. Rashly attempting to centralize the country and disarm regional centers of power, some of which fought along side US Special Operations Forces against the Taliban and al Qaeda, could draw an unnecessary though certainly winnable fight, that will deter the Coalition from its objective: the complete and total destruction of al Qaeda's presence in the region.

building, one can also look at Maureen Dowd's articles.

Enhance Afghan Army Capabilities

Afghanistan's battlefield environment has changed: Al Qaeda, Taliban and Hekmatyar's elements seem to have broken into smaller units, residing in South Asia's cities. Local forces have proven and will continue to prove vital in arresting or killing hostile forces located in foreign urban environments.¹⁶⁷ While the US and coalition forces should continue counterterrorism operations against the al Qaeda-Taliban-Hekmatyar axis, Afghan allies can aid in the hunt. Towards this end, an Afghan National Army would greatly support US regional capabilities. However, the creation of the unit leaves many questions and conflicts with the above recommendation of accepting decentralization. If the al Qaeda-Taliban-Hekmatyar axis is operating in smaller units, the US should at the least train and develop indigenous forces' abilities in scouting, reconnaissance and other tasks that aid in the tracking of small unit enemy forces.

Those influencing policy should never forget what prompted US forces to operate in Afghanistan. The liberation of the Afghan people from the oppressive Taliban regime was a virtuous and just cause fulfilled, yet the core mission is the elimination of September 11's perpetrators and those who support them. Al Qaeda and their allies, Taliban and Hekmatyar included, pose a threat to regional, international, as well as homeland security. The quick reconstruction of Afghanistan is a desirable interest, however the destruction of al Qaeda's international network of terrorism is the most vital national interest.

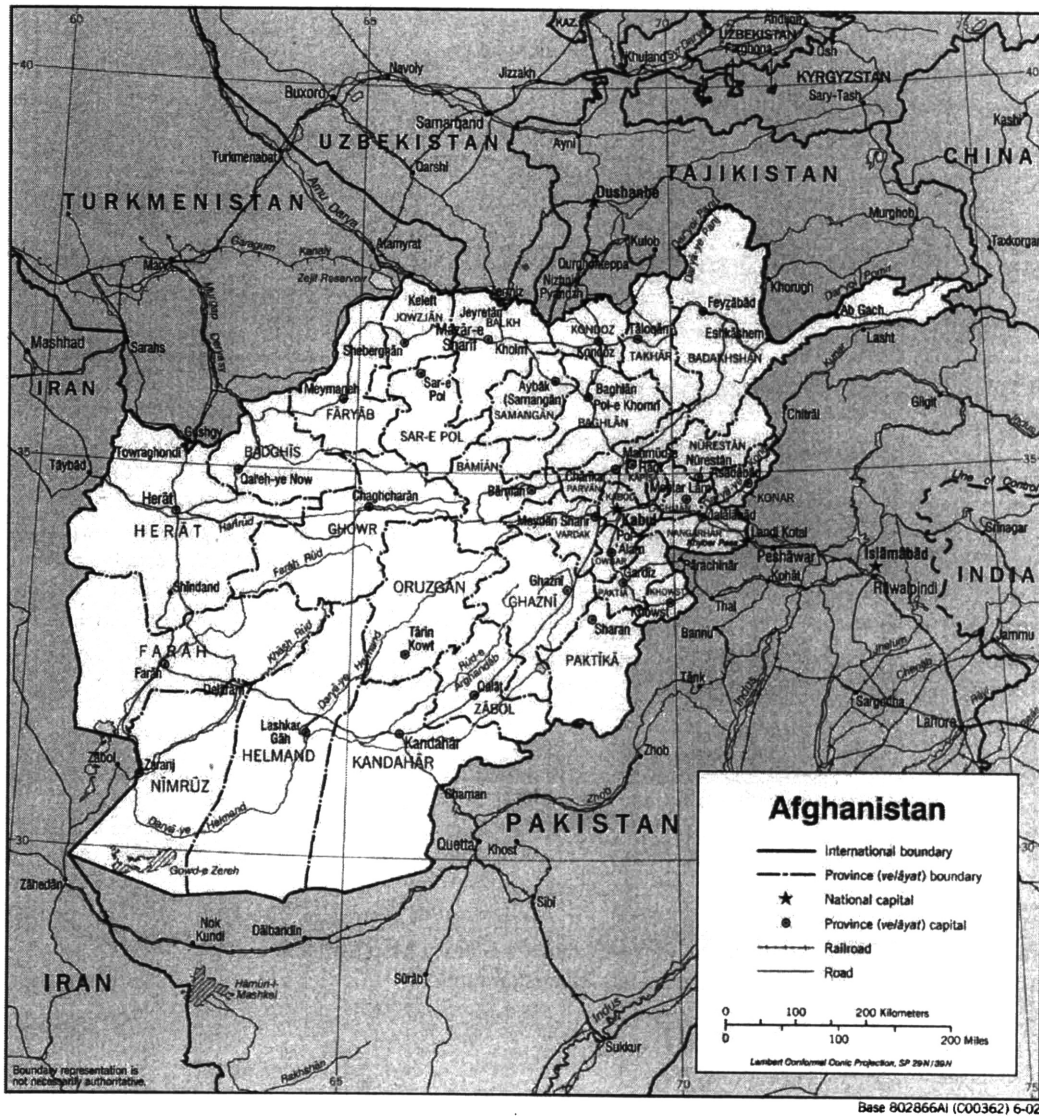
Dangerous and fragmented environments like Afghanistan are havens for violent megalomaniacs such as Hekmatyar, who can draw from multiple bases of support.

Despite the frequent skirmishes between US forces and the remnants of Islamic militants, Afghanistan has never enjoyed such a relative degree of tranquility since the fledging days of the monarchy. If the US and its allies proceed cautiously, incrementally and responsibly, they can decapitate the Hezb-e Islami organization and prevent the materialization of other persistent insurgents so that Afghanistan will emerge as a key regional contributor to the certain victory over al Qaeda.

¹⁶⁷ The arrests of high-profile al Qaeda leaders, such as Abu Zubaida, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, and Khaled Sheikh Mohammed have been in cities and involved local Pakistani forces acting in cooperation with the US intelligence community.

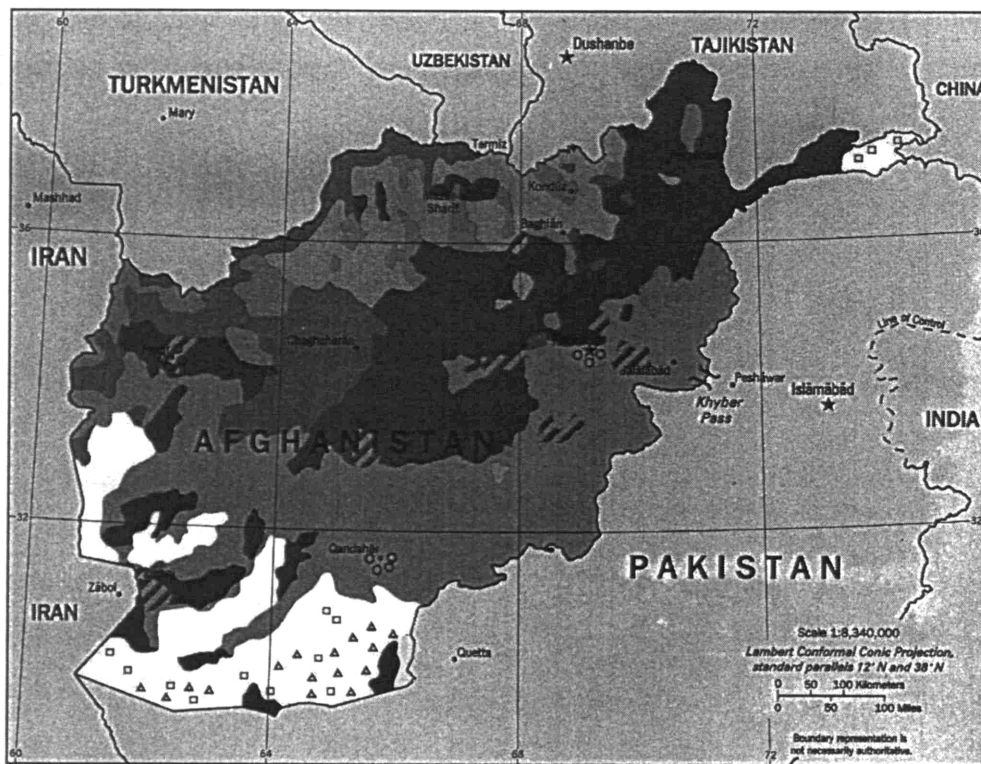
Appendix A: Maps of Afghanistan

Afghanistan – 2002



Source: University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection
Available at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/afghanistan.html>

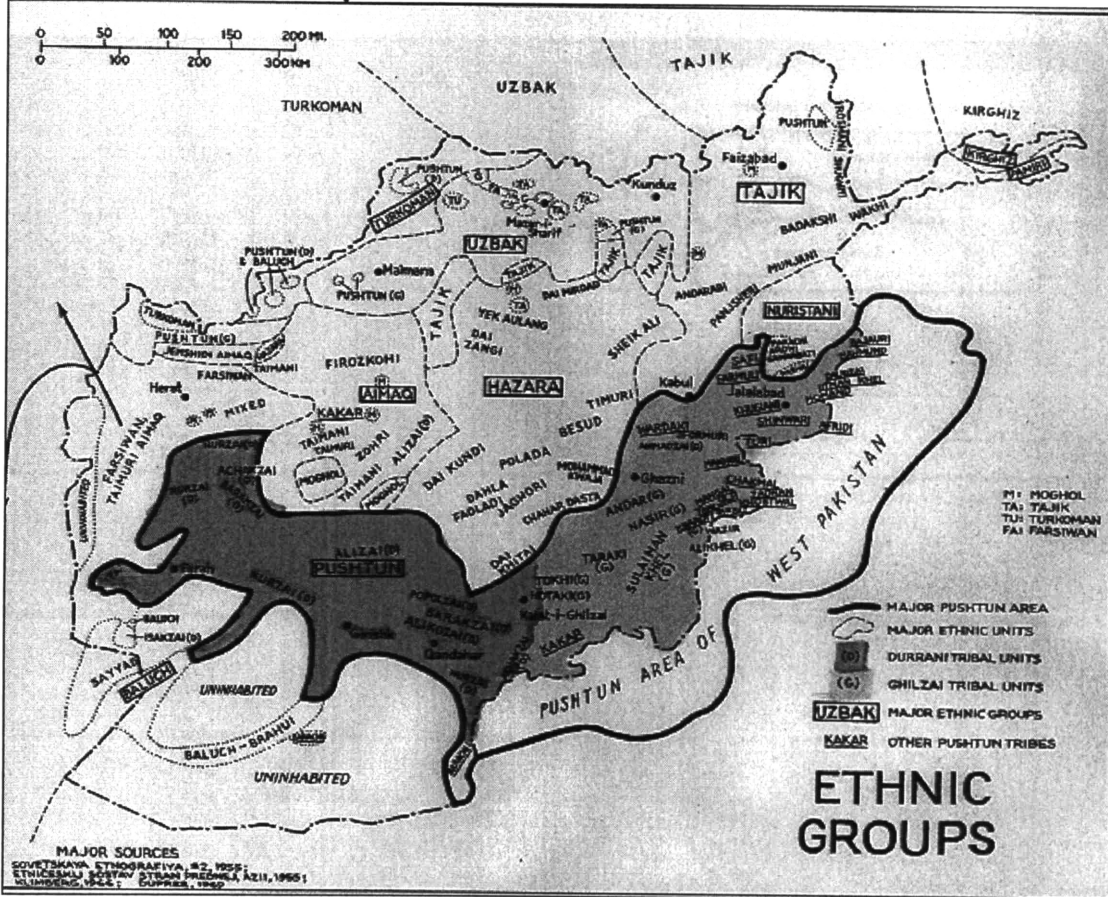
Afghanistan by Ethnic Group – 1997



Iranian		Turkic		Other	
	Baloch		Kirghiz		Brahui
	Aimak		Turkmen		Nuristani
	Hazara		Uzbek		Sparsely populated or uninhabited
	Pashtun <i>Durrani, Ghilzai</i>				
	Qizilbash				
	Tajik				

Source: University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection
 Available at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/afghanistan.html>

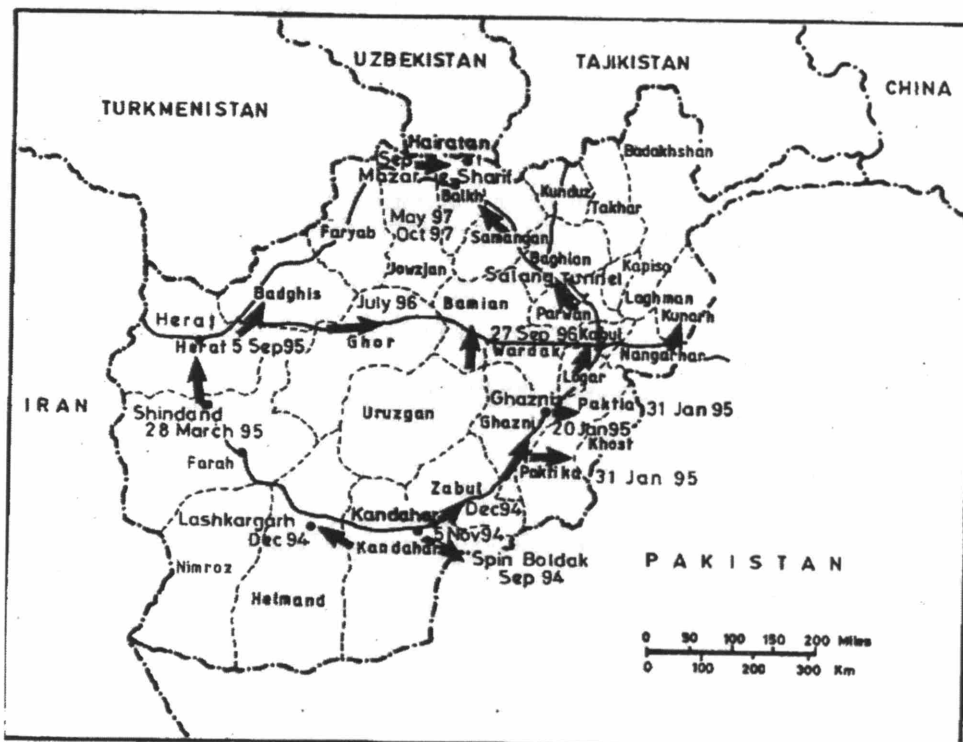
Afghanistan's Pashtuns by Tribe – Pre-1973



Note: Hekmatyar and the Taliban's Mullah Mohammed Omar come from the Ghilzai tribe, whereas Hamid Karzai and deposed King Zahir Shah are Durrani.

Source: Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press 1973)

The Taliban's Sweep – 1994-7



Source: Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon* (New York: Oxford University Press 1999)

Appendix B: Chronology of Modern Afghanistan (1929-2003)

1929

King Amanullah abdicates the throne. Nadir Khan, supported by Pashtun tribal federation, takes control and is proclaimed king

1933

Nadir Khan assassinated, Zahir Shah assumes the throne

1947

After India is partitioned and Pakistan gains independence, Pashtunistan nationalists accelerate their

1961

Pakistan and Afghanistan in crisis over Pashtunistan

1964

Zahir Shah's reforms such as an independent media, freedom of speech, and a democratically elected parliament, approved by grand council.

Increased protests in the universities by communists and Islamists, both opposed to the central government.

1973

July 17 – Left-leaning Prince Daud topples King Zahir Shah, ending the Afghanistan's constitutional monarchy

1975

July – Islamists attempt a coup by staging simultaneous revolts across the country. It fails to ignite a larger revolution. Despite large participation by the Islamists, Hekmatyar who was a key instigator of the attempt, abstains from commanding his forces. Numerous Islamist leaders are imprisoned, and executed. Event would catalyze the split between Hekmatyar's Pashtun radicals and Rabbani's Tajik moderates.

1977

Daud purges his government of the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and excludes them from the formulation of a new constitution.

1978

Younis Khalis and the tribal Pashtuns of Nangrahar split from Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami

April 27 - Parcham and Khalq factions of the PDPA unite to overthrow Daud

September – Amin takes control of the PDPA. Moscow fears the instability on its border.

1979

December 27 – The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan and kills Amin

1980

Refugees flee Afghanistan en masse

1983

May – Hezb-e Islami bombs the DRA's Ministry of Interior

December – The US Congress calls for military aid to the Afghan resistance groups

1985

May – Peshawar-based Afghan resistance groups form an alliance with a rotating presidency.

October – Hekmatyar, after assuming the rotating presidency, snubs President Reagan by refusing to meet with him.

1986

April – The decision to send Stinger missiles to Afghanistan is approved

September – Stinger missiles arrive in Afghanistan.

September 25 – A Hezb-e Islami Stinger team is the first to use the missiles, downing 3 MI-24D Hind gunships.

1988

February – With help from Pakistani intelligence, Hekmatyar's forces assassinate moderate Pashtun and head of the Afghan Information Center, Sayid Bahauddin Majrooh.

Gorbachev agrees to withdraw Soviet troops over the course of 10 months

August 17 – Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq dies in a plane crash along with US Ambassador Arnold Raphel and Defense Attaché BG Herbert Wassom, USA.

1989

The last of the Soviet troops withdraw

February – Soviets withdraw the last of their forces, as stipulated by the Geneva accords

June – After promising safe passage through Hezb-e Islami territory, Hekmatyar forces massacre 30 prominent Jamiat commanders

1990

March – Hekmatyar infiltrates Khalq faction of the DRA and attempts a coup along with Afghan Defense Minister General Tanai. Coup fails and Tanai escapes to Pakistan.

1992

April – The Najibullah regime collapses

April 25 – Hekmatyar claims control of Kabul. A coalition of Tajiks and moderate Pashtuns form to eject Hekmatyar and the Hezb-e Islami from Kabul. Following his ouster, Hekmatyar's forces take up positions outside Kabul and shell the capital, beginning what would kill tens of thousands of civilians.

August – Rabbani assumes Presidency. To commemorate his rival's ascendance, Hekmatyar accelerates the artillery and rocket barrage.

1993

March – Rabbani's Government in Kabul concedes Prime Minister position to Hekmatyar, hoping he will cease his artillery barrages on the capital.

1994

September – Taliban captures Hekmatyar's major refueling station and arms depot at Spin Boldak, along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border

Late October – While the Taliban consolidates its control, Hekmatyar is preoccupied with fighting Rabbani.

November 5 – Taliban marches into Kandahar as the city's defenders throw down their arms and join the movement.

December – Taliban seizes Helmand and Zabul provinces, occupying the majority of Afghanistan's opium fields

1995

January 21 – Hekmatyar attempts to retake area lost in Ghazni to the Taliban but is beaten back

January 31 – the Taliban gains control of Paktia and Paktika provinces, areas formerly under Hekmatyar's influence.

February 14 - the Taliban overruns Hekmatyar's Charasiab headquarters, the strategic position overlooking Kabul from which Hezb-e Islami shelled the capital.

September 11 – Taliban captures Jalalabad

1996

Osama bin Laden leaves Sudan and takes up residence in Afghanistan

May – In a bid to enlist support against the Taliban, Rabbani's central government reaches out to Hekmatyar offering him again the post of Prime Minister. The persistent insurgent accepts the post, and proceeds to issue Islamist decrees upon entering the capital.

September – The Taliban defeats Hekmatyar forces at Sarobi and Pul-Charkhi

September 27 – The Taliban takes control of Kabul and executes former DRA Prime Minister Najibullah who had been residing in the UN Compound since 1992.

1998

August 20 – Retaliating for twin al Qaeda terrorist attacks on US Embassies in East Africa, the US Navy launches 80 cruise missiles at bin Laden training camps as well as the al-Shifa plant in Sudan.

2001

September 9 – Ahmed Shah Massoud fatally wounded by al Qaeda suicide squad posing as journalists.

September 11 – Al Qaeda terrorist attacks murder 3,000 at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Somerset County, PA.

October 7 – US commences Operation Enduring Freedom to destroy al Qaeda and the Taliban

Mid October – Hekmatyar provides his weaponry to the Taliban indicating support against the US

October 26 – Hekmatyar tells French news service AFP he is in negotiations with the Taliban to form a united front against the US

November 9 – Taliban evicted from Mazar-e Sharif

November 13 – Kabul liberated

December 7 – Kandahar, the Taliban's spiritual capital, surrenders to Hamid Karzai's forces

2002

Mid-February – Hekmatyar returns from Iran to plan attacks against the US and the Karzai government.

March 2 – Coalition forces launch Operation Anaconda to eliminate Al Qaeda and Taliban forces staging in the Shah-I Kot valley of Paktia province.

May 6 – CIA-operated Predator drone engages Hekmatyar and his associates on the outskirts of Kabul. Hekmatyar survives.

Early April – Afghan authorities crackdown on Hezb-e Islami, arresting 350 of its members. Hekmatyar had planned to launch a wave of bomb attacks to disrupt the grand council convening in the coming months to formulate a government.

June – Grand Council meets to form Afghan government. Hamid Karzai appointed President

September 5 – Car bomb kills 26 in Kabul. Hours later, a gunman targeted President Karzai in Kandahar. While the gunman's affiliations are unknown, Hekmatyar was implicated in the bombing.

2003

January 28 – US and Afghan government forces kill at least 18 of Hekmatyar's forces 15 miles north of Spin Boldak along the Pakistani border

January 31 – Al Qaeda-Taliban-Hekmatyar axis detonates roadside bomb south of Kandahar, destroying a bus killing 18 Afghans.

February 7 – Hezb-e Islami murders 5 Afghan soldiers and kidnaps 2 others in Helmand province in the south.

February 19 – US names Hekmatyar as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist and freezes all his known assets.

July 1 – Hekmatyar appears in a video message, urging Afghans to perpetrate terrorist attacks against the coalition and the Karzai government.

Early July – Hekmatyar reportedly meets with senior Taliban commanders Jalaluddin Haqqani and Saifur Rahman across the border in Pakistan to coordinate their strategies.

July 19 – US forces kill at least 22 Taliban fighters at Spin Boldak

Appendix C: The Major Players of Afghanistan

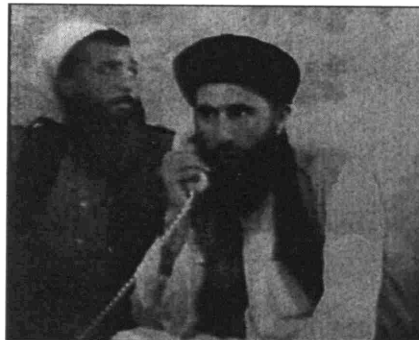
Leader	Party	Ethnicity	Location	Bases of Support	Status	Additional Notes
Abdul Rashid Dostum	Jumbish-e Milli	Uzbek	North	Ethno-regional	Pro-central government.	US-ally in defeating Taliban. Occasionally fights with Tajik competitors
Gulbuddin Hekmatyar	Hezb-e Islami	Ghilzai Pashtun	Primarily Southeast	<i>Draws upon ethno-regional, religious, socioeconomic, and outside support (Saudi, Pakistan, US, Muslim Brotherhood) when he can</i>	Alliance with al Qaeda and Taliban. Stages terrorist attacks and hit and run strikes	The persistent insurgent
Hamid Karzai		Durrani Pashtun	South	Originally ethno-regional.	President Karzai leads the Afghan government in Kabul	Not involved in the fighting of the early 90s
Younis Khalis	Hezb-e Islami breakaway	Tribal Pashtun from Nangrahar Province	Southeast of Kabul	Ethno-regional and traditional religious	If not dead, Khalis is in his late 70s/early 80s. Most of his commanders defected to the Taliban in 1994-5	US-ally in defeating Taliban. CIA-supported Commander Abdul Haq executed by Taliban
Mohammed Omar	Taliban	Ghilzai Pashtun	South, Southeast	<i>Ethno-regional, socioeconomic, religious, outside support (Pakistan, Saudi)</i>	Driven from power by US-led coalition.	Especially after Enduring Freedom, has a symbiotic relationship with al Qaeda.
Burhanuddin Rabbani	Jamiat-e Islami	Tajik	Northeast	Ethno-regional, formerly religious	Pro-central government.	During Taliban domination, Rabbani recognized by UN as president.
Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Ittehad-e Islami	Pashtun	East	Religious, Foreign (Saudi) support	Maintains armed force Unclear	Referred to by many as exclusively Saudi proxy

Appendix D: Miscellaneous Photographs



Hekmatyar at a 1996 news conference in Islamabad

Source: Reuters



Al Qaeda Fundraiser Enaam Arnaout (left) with Hekmatyar (right) in Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion. After September 11, Arnaout, a naturalized US citizen, was arrested and convicted of using a Chicago-based charity organization to aid Islamic militants.

Source: Reuters



The Hezb-e Islami Flag

Source: www.afghan-info.com