

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION

November 10-13, 1990, San Antonio, Texas

"TOWARD PEACE AND INDEPENDENCE IN AFGHANISTAN"

TRIBALISM, ETHNICITY, AND THE STATE
IN THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN

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Most Western observers who have examined the roles of tribes and ethnic groups in the polity of Afghanistan have argued from one of two basic positions. A common view, as represented in the writings of Fred Halliday (1980), Olivier Roy (1986), Leon Poullada (1973), Vartan Gregorian (1969) and others, is that the qawm (or communal group) is a feudalistic anachronism responsible for many of the maladies and inherent structural weaknesses of the Afghan central state. In this perspective, oddly uniting Marxists and modernizationists who both view primordial affiliations as impediments to nation-building and economic development, the kin-based social order and popular ideology of the tribe and ethnic group restrict contact, trust, and identification with officials and institutions of the central government. As a consequence, micro-level social and political affiliations have obstructed the development of modernized political groupings and processes as well as the successful integration of linguistically and ethnically diverse peoples into a unified national entity.

An alternative interpretation favored by such anthropologists as Nazif Shahrani (1984, 1986), Robert Canfield (1973, 1986, 1989), Nancy Tapper Tapper (1973), Richard Tapper (1983), Ashraf Ghani (1978), and other

researchers (see especially the collection of essays edited by Shahrani and Canfield 1984) is that local-level patterns of internal solidarity, tribal segmentation, and inter-ethnic conflict may best be understood as adaptive responses to ecological and political pressures that emanate from sources beyond the local community. That is to say, the nature of social segmentation is itself a reflection of interaction with macro-level structural entities such as the central state. Furthermore, diverse regions and populations are characterized by varying forms of interaction, potentially ranging from full linkage and cooperation to patterns of intense opposition, with institutions of the central state. In this view, tribal and ethnic identity are thus neither uniformly emphasized throughout Afghanistan, nor are they simply irrational and dysfunctional continuations of age-old patterns of social solidarity and segmentation or inter-ethnic animosity and political opposition.

Based upon these two alternative interpretations of past political circumstances and adaptive patterns and processes, we may project two different scenarios for the future of tribal and ethnic diversity in Afghanistan. It is highly unlikely, especially given the continuing tribal, ethnic, and sectarian politics being practiced by the parties and resistance groups, that the Afghan civil war has reduced the significance of such bases for affiliation. Nevertheless, the contexts and functions of primordial ties have necessarily been affected by the loss of life and resources, as well as by new bases for interaction across traditional divisions of Afghan society.

In this paper I will examine the bases for the alternative paths that may lie before tribes, ethnic groups, and the central state in the future of Afghanistan, perhaps hoping against hope that these roads may indeed someday lead to peace and independence in that country.

AFGHAN TRIBALISM AND FEUDALISM

Writing in the New Left Review shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the socialist political journalist, Fred Halliday, refers to "Afghanistan's archaic social system" (1980:23) as the basis for a number of the "aspects of the rural system that complicated any programme of social transformation" attempted by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (1980:24). Specifically, he argues that the ethnic, religious, and tribal divisions of the countryside impeded class formation, maintained provincial patterns of local independence and hostility toward the central government, perpetuated the use of violence in place of political negotiations, and helped both develop and spread "a popular ideology [of Islam] that could be mobilized by counter-revolutionary forces more effectively than is the case with any other religion in the world" (1980:25).

Halliday quotes Hafizullah Amin, who violently took over the presidency of the revolutionary government from Nur Taraki in September 1979 until he was himself executed by Soviet troops in December 1979, as saying that "the originality of the Afghan revolution lay in its making the transition from feudalism to socialism" (1980:35), that is, in skipping over the intervening stage of capitalism. However, Halliday also points out that the failure of this socialist transformation was brought about in large part by a movement inspired by a "leadership [that] tends to be in the hands of tribal leaders and [religiously-oriented] intellectuals" (1980:36). Ultimately, he adds, this counter-revolution also attracted the support of Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazara, and did not come only "from Pashtun tribes, whose social organization and previous ethnic dominance were most threatened by the reforms [attempted by the revolutionary government]" (1980:40).

In Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan Olivier Roy concentrates his attention on the contrasts in the political and religious objectives of the tribal leaders and religious intellectuals whom Halliday links with one another. Roy notes that "the Afghan resistance movement [is not] a survival from the past, a struggle in pursuit of narrow sectional interests" (1986:2), and he adds that "what constitutes modernity is not as clear-cut as it might once have seemed" (ibid). That is, a simplistic view of modernization that continues to assume that secularization is one of the necessary end-products of the process proved to be as illusory in the United States as in the rest of the world during the 1970s and 1980s. In explaining the basis for Islamic resistance in Afghanistan, Roy sharply distinguishes between "traditionalists," who "desire to freeze society so that it conforms to the memory of what it once was. . . society as described by our grandfathers," and "fundamentalists" for whom "it is of paramount importance to get back to the scriptures, clearing away the obfuscation of . . . everything which is not the Tradition of the Prophet (the *sunnat*)" (1986:3).

Roy's analysis of the ideological and structural foundations of Islamic resistance groups goes on to emphasize the opposition between the tribal code of *pashtunwali* and Muslim law (1986:35), as well as the contrasts between tribal law and state law (*qanun*) (1986:34). He argues that Islamism "represents a complete break from Afghan cultural tradition" (1986:69), and that "The Islamists are intellectuals, the product of modernist enclaves within traditional society" (1986:69).

Although, as we shall see, Roy occasionally seems to support such an interpretation himself, he claims that a false equation of Afghan tribalism with feudalism was one of the serious miscalculations made by Khalq, the faction of the Communist Party headed by Taraki and Amin that ruled

Afghanistan from the April 1978 coup until the Soviet invasion. He criticizes Khalq's simplistic view of tribalism and their neglect and misunderstanding of a tribal mode of production (1986:85), and he argues that "the aim of the [agrarian] reform was to destroy the whole socio-economic framework of the Afghan countryside" (1986:89). Literacy programs and marriage reforms were equally misguided and disastrous (1986:93-94), and their consequences alienated not only the tribal sectors--including many individuals and groups opposed to any kind of reform of Afghan society, but also clerical and other elements of the society who "held that far-reaching reforms were necessary." (1986:95). Because of the irrelevance, religious effrontery, brutality, and repression of the Khalq regime, the revolt against the revolutionary government "was as much anti-state as anti-communist" (ibid).

Nevertheless, despite the contrasts he drew earlier between Islamists and traditionalists, Roy states that the Islamic parties formed in Peshawar themselves became the

victims of the same evil which undermined the Afghan state and now undermines the government at Kabul: the corrupting influence of the *qawm*. This view of politics as nothing more than the operation of networks formed by interpersonal links explains the way in which the parties have evolved at Peshawar. Temporary alliances are followed by further splits. The president of a coalition transforms the coalition itself into a new party, which is then added to those which make up the coalition in question (1986:120).

He later adds that "Social divisions such as the *qawm* and the tribe (*qabila*) make it easy to cut existing social ties, but difficult to fill the vacuum with a state machine "(1986:179). Furthermore, it was Soviet strategy, according to Roy, "to encourage the Afghan tradition of warring factions, in order to exacerbate quarrels in the resistance movement and to swing groups behind the government, not on an ideological basis but on the basis of local

rivalries between *qawm* and *khan* [tribal faction leader]" (1986:194). Thus, although Roy treats Khalq ideology and tribal sociology with considerable cynicism and dismissiveness, he is not himself immune to a tendency to denigrate tribal polity and to hold it responsible for problems of the central state, both before and after the Afghan revolution.

In a more recent publication Roy continues to decry "traditional Afghan political structures, such as tribal loyalty, patronage, and nepotism, which can persist even inside the Communist party" (1989:51). But he also argues that "The biggest obstacle to sovietization is the strength of tradition" (1989:56), and he refers to

An empirical survey concerning recently emigrated college students [that] shows that the actual impact of sovietization on young people who retained ties to the resistance through their families is negligible. The orphans are more vulnerable, as are the very poor, because they lack the strength and numbers required for the successful maintenance of a countermodel capable of resisting the Soviet one" (1989:57).

Roy concludes this essay with the following prediction about future patterns and potential problems:

Sovietization, in my view, is not really endangering Afghanistan at this very moment. As I see it, the more serious problem lies in the growing contrast between the rural and the Kabul way of life, which will make it more difficult for the resistance to integrate the new urban masses. The real sovietization will begin years after the regime's consolidation--when, and if, the resistance is militarily crushed. So far, this has not been the case (1989:58).

Thus, he seems to offer at least grudging credit to the potential ability of traditional polities and loyalties to re-establish Afghan cultural patterns, or at least to continue to resist the cultural domination of the Soviet Union, once peace is established.

Of course, this tendency to evaluate de-centralized ethnic and tribal politics as anachronistic and anarchistic, even if more legitimate, meaningful, and effective than state-level identities and institutions to its adherents, is not restricted only to post-revolutionary analyses of Afghan political patterns. I will not give extensive attention here to earlier discussions of political structure, but it does not take much hunting through the modernizationist-literature to find repeated statements of the following sort:

The Afghan rulers were successful in restoring political and administrative unity to Afghanistan, using technological and institutional borrowings as well as skillful diplomacy to advance their designs. They failed, however, to achieve the economic, social, and cultural integration of the kingdom in large part because of their dependence on the Afghan tribes, which committed them to a policy of sustaining the tribal-feudal structure of the Afghan kingdom. . . . The 'closed-door' policy of the Afghan rulers was motivated by their fear of European political and economic encroachments and their apprehensions about the reactions of the religious establishment and the Afghan feudal-tribal chieftains (Gregorian, 1969:6-7).

Gregorian's discussion is particularly revealing on the subject of tribe-state relations because of his explicit reference to ethnic diversity, sectarianism, and social organization as "divisive forces" and "great obstacles to the development of a modern state" (1969:25). According to Gregorian, even as recently as during the reign of Zahir Shah, "The monarchy, ever fearful of disturbing vested tribal-feudal interests and alienating the religious establishment, attempted to fit modern technology and institutions into existing feudal arrangements, without upsetting their foundations" (1969:397).

There is no denying some of these facts, of course, and a tribal advocate like Louis Dupree echoed many of the same basic structural points made by modernizationists like Gregorian and Leon Poullada (1973) even while taking a different political stance on the objectives of this struggle:

A nation-state, in the Western sense, is not simply a piece of real estate enclosed by boundaries, but more a pattern of attitudes, a reciprocal, functioning set of rights and obligations between the government and the governed--with emphasis on the individual rather than the group. In non-literate societies, however, kinship replaces government and guarantees men and women born into a specific unit or functioning set of social, economic and political rights and obligations. . . . Need 'tribalism' (however it is defined) necessarily be bad? A desire to retain group identity and, more important, sets of rights and obligations within the group are not in themselves a threat to the creation of a nation-state. . . .[or] anarchistic, archaic, and anti-unity. But how many central governments can *replace* the delicate network of rights and obligations which make group survival possible? (1973:659)

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SEGMENTATION AND FACTIONALISM

More recently, an alternative kind of account, in many cases clearly inspired by Eric Wolf's Europe and the People Without History (1982), of the relationship between tribe, ethnic group, and state has begun to emerge in the analyses offered by anthropologists such as Nazif Shahrani and Robert Canfield, the co-editors of Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan (1984), and others. Shahrani, for example, states that

The assumption that Afghanistan's rural population is hostile to any form of central authority or outside interference is true only of some nomadic segments of the population. . . . Considerable autonomy may be common among nomadic Pashtun tribes due to their ecological and economic adaptation, but it is not so true of the vast majority of sedentary Pashtun. In fact, the relationship between Pashtun tribes and the Pashtun-dominated central government has varied historically. Local, tribal, and regional groups have sometimes supported and sometimes resisted the government (Shahrani 1984b:7).

Nevertheless, in all but two of the case studies represented in the Shahrani and Canfield collection of essays, there is a significant history of regional and tribal conflicts with the central state. Only among the Kalasha of Nuristan, discussed by Katz, and in Shahrani's examination of Badakhshan

is there a pattern of more peaceful and cooperative relations between local peoples and government officials, and Shahrani admits that the latter instance was traditionally characterized as much by avoidance as by accommodation between the local populations and officials of the central government (1984a). As I shall return to at the end of this discussion, perhaps it is also more than mere coincidence that these two settings are the only two examples in the volume in which the resistance groups that later emerged were not organized and mobilized on the basis of indigenous political principles and local political leaders. Rather, among the Kalasha, Katz reports serious conflicts between "conservatives" (or Roy's "traditionalists") and "fundamentalists" (Islamists) for local control of the resistance movement, and Shahrani describes a movement led by an urban and educated Islamist elite rather than by traditional political figures.

Irrespective of differences in regional conditions, groups, and political actors, the consistent theme in the political economy perspective on Afghan tribalism and ethnicity is the insistence on an examination of historical process and structural articulation between local populations, the central state, and the wider geopolitical environment of Afghanistan. Shahrani, for example, states that

The most critical development of the period of foreign imperial rule, and one which had significant consequences for the future of Afghan political processes, was the imperial policies toward the Pashtun tribes and the *resultant development* of Pashtun tribalism. . .Moghul policies toward the Pashtun and the Pashtun anti-Moghul agitations played a very important role in the *development* of consciousness, which became increasingly manifest through the emergent Pashtu poetic and literary tradition (1986:27-28, italics added).

Unlike the tendency found in many of the discussions of tribal feudalism to attribute tribal social organization and political relations

with the state to the ideological and psychological characteristics of Pashtuns or other peoples of Afghanistan, the political economic studies focus upon the sociopolitical and ecological conditions that influence the patterns of local-group consolidation and segmentation. Such studies thus attempt to deal more thoroughly with the specific patterns and causes of political variation, found among the diverse peoples and regions of Afghanistan and in their relations with the state; e.g., between so-called *qalang* (taxpaper) and *nang* (honor-bound) Pashtun tribes (Shahrani 1986:27).

The most thorough and successful application of the same theme to the issue of ethnic and sect-group formation remains the classic study done by Robert Canfield, Faction and Conversion in a Plural Society: Religious Alignments in the Hindu Kush (1973). Like Shahrani's examination of the wider political context of seemingly kin-based and particularistic political conflicts, Canfield shows how Hazara sect groups emerged and continually realigned themselves as political interest groups in the varied political and ecological contexts of the Hindu Kush. Broadening his examination to the country as a whole, Canfield has more recently written that

The viable units of sociopolitical activity among the rural populations of Afghanistan have not, on the whole, been ethnolinguistic types. Rather, they have been other kinds of sociopolitical units. Those have taken form in respect to three types of influences, the geographical conditions of the region, the historic traditions of obligations and understanding existing among these populations, and the impingements of government. Despite the government's impingements, however, some of the rural populations do find ways to evade or resist the government. . . Perhaps one failing of Soviet strategists, when they decided to invade Afghanistan, was the failure, as had earlier rulers, to consider the scope and strength of the implicit and potential coalitions of the rural populations (1986:99-100).

Furthermore, this failing also continues to pervade the types of news accounts and alliances that characterize U.S. relations with Afghanistan, both during and after the Soviet occupation (e.g., see such stories as "Rebels with Too Many Causes" and "New Afghan Challenge: Government," and consider the favored treatment received by the rebel faction of the unusually authoritarian Gulbuddin Hekmatyar despite his general unpopularity and military ineffectuality). Unfortunately, the lack of understanding of the bases for tribal and ethnic politics is not only associated with British and Soviet failures to deal with Afghan polity through war, but also with Washington's inability to comprehend or to appreciate indigenous political patterns in times of peace. Canfield ends his discussion with the ironic comment that "We social scientists who sympathize with the resistance activities of the Afghans may congratulate ourselves for having kept the importance of these coalitions from any Soviets whom [sic] might have consulted our work" (ibid). However, it is also necessary to admit that, until relatively recently, we social scientists have kept an understanding of the articulation of micro- and macro-political patterns and processes outside of our own theoretical analyses as well.

THE NATION-STATE, GEOPOLITICS, AND OTHER MYTHS OF AFGHAN POLITICS

Whether we take a modernizationist perspective or a political economy approach, there is no point in disputing the fact the nation-state is not the primary basis for political identity or affiliation in Afghanistan. It certainly does not serve this function under Najibullah, nor did it do so under Abdur Rahman or Amanullah or Zahir Shah or Mohammed Daoud, let alone under Nur Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, or Babrak Karmal. Also, the historical structure of the central state cannot serve as the basis for potentially unifying the

resistance groups or for forging whatever future coalition government may eventually be assembled in Afghanistan. There is no institution in the country that provides the central political authority, hierarchical organization, control of internal factionalism and succession disputes, monopoly of coercive sanctions, professional bureaucracy, and self-legitimizing and self-sustaining ideology that Newell, following Richard Cohen, associates with the basic characteristics of the nation-state (1986:105).

It is also possible that the nation-state as we know it will never play a primary role in the political life of the people Afghanistan, but that may also depend upon the structural characteristics of the central state and the ways that state policies are formulated and implemented. A lot, that is, depends on the state and its representatives and not only on the political patterns of rural populations. Nevertheless, there is a history of relations with the state that must be understood in order to be able to assess the future possibilities.

Newell, for example, summarizes the historical and structural impact on contemporary patterns of politics among the resistance groups as follows:

The Afghan resistance is rooted in the primordial social bases available in the various regional/ethnic communities. Its leadership is a blend of traditional community notables and members of the urbanized elite, civilian and military, who have returned to the country to oppose the central regime. As in the past, opposition is fragment and factionalized, reflecting the social and spatial segmentation of Afghan society. These divisions limit its effectiveness especially in gaining international support, but together with the sense of outrage at interference with Islam they virtually assure its universality (1986:120).

Based on these structural conditions, Newell projects five alternative scenarios for the future, and at least three of these--a total Soviet victory, continued Soviet control of the infrastructure, and a partitioning of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and surrounding regional governments--are already obsolete.

This leaves Newell with two scenarios, one of which involves a victorious resistance force and "a long process of tactical, political, and ideological amalgamation among the various resistance groups" (1986:121). Through this amalgamation, Newell says, "[a]n overriding sense of Afghan nationality emerges, born of a common struggle for physical, cultural, and religious survival," along with a "representative, federal system of popular government consistent with the segmentary, locally autonomous character of Afghan society. . . weakly governed at the center. . ." (ibid). Newell's second surviving scenario again portrays a Soviet withdrawal, but this time "followed by the emergence of a strong national government in Afghanistan motivated and disciplined by a commitment to a militant Islamic revival. . . [l]ed by a disciplined, highly organized elite that was created in the process of successfully combating the Soviet occupation. . ." (1986:122).

It is only this latter scenario (of the original five) that Newell thinks can offer "the possibility of a centrally strong, internationally independent state" (1986:122-3). This may be so, but it is also possible that this scenario, too, is flawed by Newell's assumption that the traditional obstacles to the development of the central state have been "inherited from Afghanistan's legacy of individualism, social segmentation, and physical fragmentation" (1986:124). Rather, as I discussed in the previous section, the alleged individualism and social segmentation of Afghan polity may themselves need to be investigated as consequences, and not causes, of weak structural linkages with the institutions of the central state; that is, in the context of ecological and structural conditions linking local political patterns to those of wider-ranging regional, national, and even international events and processes.

At the same time, the role of the international context must not be given exaggerated importance at the expense of investigation of the indigenous structural patterns and political culture of Afghanistan. Although it would be naive to ignore the geopolitical context of resource competition, for example, it is also ludicrous to attempt to interpret the future of the country in terms of the "mineral determinism" and resource warfare projected by Shroder and some of the other geographer newcomers to discussions of the Afghan political scene (1989).

To be sure, Afghanistan's future has probably already been influenced by what has been going on in the Muslim-dominated republics of the Soviet Union, the economic calamities in the Communist nations in general, the unstable political situations in the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan, and possibly a new war in the Persian Gulf region. Also, it would be directly contrary to the analytical insights I have attributed to the political economy (world systems) approach to ignore the broader ecological and political contexts of Afghan politics. Fortunately, however, most of the scenarios for the future of Afghanistan offered by geopolitical analysts and strategists have not transpired. These projections have ranged from total Soviet victory and incorporation of Afghanistan as an additional Muslim republic (as if the Soviet Union did not already have enough on its hands!), to sovietization of urban Afghanistan, to geographic partitioning of the country into spheres of political influence and resource exploitation.

It is remarkable how much such "thinking" is still carried out very much within the "great game" mentality of a century ago, and its proponents have typically not given up on "domino theory" either. Nevertheless, as the two nineteenth-century defeats of the British and the contemporary

embarrassment of the Soviet Union should remind us, it would be a serious mistake to ignore the active involvement of the indigenous populations of Afghanistan in their own struggles, and to make the players seem like pawns on a Brezezinski chessboard. Long before they were goaded to take back their homeland by Brezezinski waving a machine gun at the Khyber Pass, and before they were made into heroes of the American right, the Afghan "freedom fighters" had already indicated their determination to force the Soviet troops to withdraw. The returning resistance fighters, the four million, mostly impoverished, refugees from Pakistan and Iran, and those who somehow survived in their homes, fields, and pastures during the many years of killing, will obviously take an active part in determining their own futures, though not necessarily futures created under conditions of their own making.

TWO SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

"The model for a future Afghan regime will be chosen by Afghans themselves and, naturally, will be far from that of a Western democracy," says Afghan political scientist, Alam Payind (1989:127). So, what will this model look like? Or, rather, what are some possible scenarios that may be considered? The "tribal feudalism" perspective of Halliday, Roy, and, as we have now seen, of Newell too, would not hold out much hope for an amalgamation, or even a federation, of tribal and ethnic constituent populations into a nation-state system. It seems from events during the civil war and since the Soviet withdrawal that Newell's other remaining scenario is also unlikely to tell us much about the future of Afghanistan since no "disciplined, highly organized elite" has emerged from either Islamist or traditionalist elements of the resistance.

On the other hand, Canfield's recent discussion of "the trajectory of internal alignments" gives us a different kind of perspective on the future, one that corresponds directly to the political economy approach's attempt to bridge the structural and analytical gaps between macro- and micro-level political processes. Canfield portrays a future in which "the ability of the Afghans to establish a viable future government" is potentially enhanced by "the increased contact among the diverse peoples, the rise of political parties, the ascendance of commanders in local areas, and the effect of local rivalries on the configurations of mujahidin alliances" (1989:640). He adds that

The society that emerges in the wake of the hostilities in Afghanistan will be a distinctive configuration of relations derived from that which preceded it in the period of hostilities. It will reflect similar contradictory pressures, some in the direction of strong central government and others in the direction of greater local autonomy. The pressures for local autonomy will come, of course, from the [local military] commanders. . . . The pressure for a strong central government will come from refugees, for when they return to their communities from the camps or the cities where they have been living, they are going to want the support and services to which they have become accustomed. They will bring some new perspectives about what they want from their government. Services that before the war were sometimes considered unnecessary intrusions, such as improved roads, schools, and medical care, will now be demanded (1989:646).

Canfield concludes with the view that "Despite the persistence of many divisions, Afghanistan could stabilize in response to the social pressures toward unity and stability, or, if it does not, it will continue to be a dangerous arena of internal conflicts and intrigues" (1989:648).

SCENARIO ONE: The eventual peace treaty, cessation of fighting, and nominal reconciliation between the Peshawar-based resistance and the forces loyal to Kabul will allow the return of the mujahidin and the refugees to their homes in Afghanistan; however it is likely that the urban population will

continue to be artificially swollen, not only by refugees from the war zones but also by those eager to take part in future political and economic developments in Kabul and other major administrative and marketing centers. Although the expanded urban population will be dependent upon and at least initially supportive of the coalition central government, their un-met employment, health, and education needs will also add further burdens to the devastated economic base of the government.

In the countryside we may anticipate that the return of resistance fighters and refugees, especially those in the geographically remote and economically self-sufficient eastern provinces and in the Hazarajat, will eventuate in what some analysts have referred to as a Balkanization (and others have called a Lebanonization) of the country, characterized by tribal factions, renewed parochialization of sectarian and ethnolinguistic politics, multiple centers of power, and "local war-lordism," the latter ironically a feudal-like pattern that did not exist to any considerable or widespread degree prior to the revolution and civil war.

Despite the larger urban population base, possibly greater opportunity for the use of religious, educational, health, and military institutions and the media to consolidate and to help legitimate the central government, and potential economic assistance from world powers (more likely to include China than the Soviet Union, and possibly more from the EEC than from the United States, which quickly loses interest in Afghanistan whenever the Soviet Union is not immediately on the scene), the structural problems of linkage between center and periphery will continue unabated, and will probably even be exacerbated by the experiences of hostility and brutality during the civil war and by greater taxes imposed upon the agricultural and herding population by

the revenue-hungry central government.

This, of course, is the scenario we might expect if the basic positions taken by the modernizationists prove to be an adequate base for analyzing Afghanistan's political characteristics and evaluating her future prospects. Lacking other historical experiences, structural alternatives, and culturally meaningful bases for political identity, Afghan tribes and ethnic groups will revert to pre-revolutionary provincialism and feudalism, characterized by local political affiliations and regional hegemonic competition.

SCENARIO TWO: Many features of the first pattern cannot be disputed, including an expansion of the urban population, intensification of refugee demands and pressure upon government resources and revenues, and possibly greater support offered to the central government in return, at least while it is still able to meet the demands of the citizens of Kabul.

There is no need, however, to assume that the primordial ties of tribe, sect, and ethnic group in Afghanistan are automatically at odds with these developments. These forms of affiliation have gone through many historical phases and experienced many structural transformations. They do not have the same meanings or adaptive purposes associated with them today as they did twelve years ago, and they were also not the same in 1978 as they were in 1880 when Abdur Rahman came to power and substantially strengthened the role of the central state in the lives of rural peoples. The cyclical patterns of articulation and separation--usually an option more available to be sure to nomadic herding populations than to sedentary cultivators--between rural groups and the central state have varied both historically and in terms of different ecological and cultural zones of the country.

The populations discussed by Katz (1984) and Shahrani (1984b), for example, were able to work with the central government to promote their own ends, or were at least able to accommodate themselves to the power of central government officials in the absence (literally, the extermination) of traditional political leaders. Both regions proved to be ripe for an emerging Islamist/fundamentalist leadership in place of conservative, traditionalist, or tribal political elements. Such a pattern is likely to be repeated throughout Afghanistan where local power vacuums existed and have quickly been filled by anti-government forces. The resistance movement is obviously also anti-communist, but it is perhaps more emphatically anti-state, given that its members were already actively expressing such sentiments, and suffering brutally for their opposition, under Mohammed Daoud.

Based on the Kalasha pattern described by Katz, we may expect that such groups and regions, irrespective of their mountainous terrain and isolation, will not remain anti-state should there be any significant representation of Islamists within a coalition government. On the other hand, any persecution of Islamists would predictably lead to immediate opposition by the Kalasha to the central state. Similarly, there is still little reason to expect that Shi'a Hazara, who have established their resistance movement in Iran and received most of their economic and military assistance from the Islamic Republic, will be allowed to play much of a role in a coalition government. There is also little basis, therefore, to anticipate improved relations with Kabul in the Hazarajat.

Prior to the civil war there seemed to be four dominant patterns reported by anthropologists represented in the relations between rural and micro-political institutions and those of the central state. The first pattern was one of fairly smooth and stable micro-macro articulation in the cases of

Kalasha, Nuristan (Katz 1984) and Badakhshan (Shahrani 1984). During the war, these became areas of intense and successful mobilization of an Islamist religious movement, and, in Kalasha, competition with more traditional sources of political and religious authority. The second pattern was found in Kom, Nuristan (Strand 1984), Darri-i Nur, Nuristan (Keiser 1984), Kunduz (Barfield 1984), and Nahrin (Beattie 1984), and in each instance the researchers indicated a potential for multi-ethnic unity among the resident populations and consolidated opposition to the threat of a hostile central government. None of these four regions was typified by major inter-ethnic conflicts, and all were characterized by relative ethnic homogeneity or peaceful co-existence among a number of distinct groups (Kunduz). The people of these regions were able to unite quickly across ethnic (in Kom as well as in Kunduz), geographical (Darri-i Nur), and urban/rural (Nahrin) boundaries, demonstrating that these are not structurally or ecologically impossible achievements for the rural populations of the country.

The third pattern, in which an Islamic idiom seems to have temporarily brought together some different ethnic and tribal groups during the civil war, is most likely to result in the groups going their separate ways after peace is negotiated. Neither are the Sheikhanzai (Tavakolian 1984) nor Ghilzai Pashtuns (Anderson 1984) peoples who have proven to be eager to open up a permanent door to cooperative economic or political relationships with other ethnic and religious groups in their regions, or with a central government that they somewhat curiously identify as anti-Pashtun (because of their histories of conflict and the perceived treachery in relations with this government). In addition an ideology of local egalitarianism and political segmentation also supports a coalescence of political and religious leadership

in opposition to acceptance of any external sources of authority.

Finally, in Saripul (Tapper 1984) and Bamyān (1984) we find a fourth historical pattern of structural conflicts between competing sect groups and classes, and once again an Islamic idiom is used to express temporary commonalities in opposition to non-Muslims, Russians, communists, etc.. However, the internal factions that already exist within these settings are far more likely than in the more egalitarian and segmentary pattern just described to experience further centrifugal forces (especially of an economic nature) and splintering.

Thus, at least the final two of these patterns conform to expectations of the "feudal" model and the first scenario in that they may continue to resist entreaties and opportunities to attach themselves more firmly to the institutions of the state. However, no "feudal" institutions actually exists in either setting, and they will only emerge in the future because of the effects of the central state and not on an autochthonous basis. In the first two political patterns I have described, the cards are again in the hands of the future government and how it makes rural linkage feasible and attractive.

While the ethnic and tribal groups we have examined here will not sit by passively waiting for their political and economic needs to be served by a frequently unreliable central government, their past political experiences should also not lead us to any generalized expectations that they will make decisions about their political futures on the basis of irrational, sentimental, or even primordial ties. As active agents in their political lives, they will make political judgments and choices according to practical and adaptive considerations about their ability to maintain as much political autonomy, social justice, and cultural integrity as they can continue to achieve in a

world that wants to grant them precious little. The conditions of their adaptive strategies have been made that much worse by more than a decade of hostility, death, and destruction. But the tribal peoples of Afghanistan also have learned from their own histories that they can bounce back, and repeatedly, of course, they have had to do so. They do not need our models of governance any more than they need our patronizing tone about their inability to recognize the value and advantages of the central state. I have to agree with Payind. If we are serious about wanting an Afghanistan for Afghans, it is time that we learned to be flexible in our fundamental political concepts and and implicit favoritism for the nation-state as the dominant political entity of our times. Indeed, perhaps we might need to think of an alternative for ourselves before too much longer.