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MUJAHIDEEN CAPTURE KHOST

The town of Khost finally fell to the Mujahideen on March 31 following a long resistance during the past twelve years of war. During the Russian pressence in Afghanistan, the regime did not feel any need to permanently deploy Russian troops in the area. The local militiamen and regime troops defended well the town against constant mujahideen pressure. The Russians sent only advisors to direct operations against the mujahideen in the area. The Russians only sent troops there when Russian-Kabul forces opened the Gardez-Khost highway for a very short time in 1987.

The mujahideen encircled the town on several occasions, but they were unable to capture it despite heavy losses and casualties. Also, the residents of the town suffered hunger and many other problems, but they would not surrender.

The mujahideen scored major successes when they began their recent offensive on March 14 and captured some important regime positions in eastern Khost. Their operations, however, remained slow during the last week of the offensive. In particular, severe bombardment by regime aircraft and Scud rockets caused a two-day lull in their offensive. There were no signs of the fall of the town. The situation, however, changed dramatically when the mujahideen captured the town on March 31.
Naim Majrooh Visits Khost

Naim Majrooh, AIC Director, visited the town of Khost on April 3 following its fall to the mujahideen on March 31. Here is an account of his visit:

I left Peshawar on April 2 on my way to Kurram Agency. Having travelled in a mujahideen vehicle for three hours from the Pakistani border, I reached a mujahideen base near Khost on April 2. I saw a number of women and children along with a young man who had been evacuated by the mujahideen from the town to the base. They were waiting there for their evacuation to Pakistan. I also saw some one hundred POWs, including forty-eight Jowzjani militiamen, in the base. I found several boxes of ammunition and different types of weapons, including anti-aircraft guns, one tank, one 76mm cannon and several military trucks and jeeps in the base. In addition, I found a heap of foodstuffs near the base.

On April 3, I left the base in a mujahideen vehicle for Khost, a beautiful town in a fertile plain valley. The seasonal rains had doubled the beauty of the valley. On my way to the town, I saw a number of tractors carrying domestic goods from Khost to the outskirts of the town. I came across a number of soldiers who were accompanied by the mujahideen to abandon the town. I also a number of domestic animals, such as sheep, buffalos and cows, which were being taken out of the town to its outskirts.

I reached the new airbase (north-east of the town) which had been captured by the mujahideen who accompanied me during the journey to the area. I counted some 20 damaged aircraft in the airfield. I saw the wreckage of Russian Antonov aircraft all over the field. I also saw the wreckage of two aircraft which had been destroyed by mujahideen rockets upon the fall of Khost at night. The dead bodies of those on board presented a
tragic scene. A number of mujahideen were engaged in removing tanks and vehicles from the base to the outskirts of the city.

At a distance of 500 metres from the airbase, we reached a regime post of the artillery unit where the mujahideen had captured three 122mm howitzers in working order.

Later on we entered the bazaar of Khost. Apparent signs of plunder were visible, because I saw broken doors of shops in the bazaar. But it is believed that the shopkeepers carried out their valuable goods in a hurry during the fall of the city, and the remainder was plundered by others. I also saw furniture and carpets in front of the houses with broken doors. The goods had been collected in front of the houses for their transfer to the outskirts of the town. Apparently, anybody who entered a government or private house was considered its owner. Everybody was engaged in removing their goods from the town to the surrounding areas.

There was a lack of order in Khost. The mujahideen were also engaged in removing damaged vehicles from the town.

The once beautiful town assumed a pitiable condition. However, private and government buildings still looked intact, because the mujahideen did not have weapons of mass destruction to use on the town during the past twelve years of war.

Dead bodies of regime troops, who had not been buried, lay in every nook and cranny of the city. The bodies presented a tragic scene of war and destruction.

As the cloudy weather was becoming clear following continuous rains in the area, I felt that regime aircraft would bombard the town in retaliation. After a brief tour of the town, I
Beautiful City of Khost

Khost Agricultural Department
KHOSH BAZAR

A Mine Victim
left the bazaar for the old airbase (south-east of Khost) in the company of seven mujahideen vehicles.

While I was taking photographs of a deady body at the airbase at 10:30 a.m., I heard the sound of jet fighters which had probably spotted the vehicles on the runway. From a high altitude, the jets dropped cluster bombs which hit damaged aircraft in the base. Fortunately nobody got hurt and I was able to take photographs of the bombardment. The mujahideen dispersed themselves; I was able along with another mujahid to seek shelterin a water channel. The jets dropped several bombs on the group, but they could not explode due to the soft rainy land.

When the aircraft flew away, I entered the old airbase along with the group to take some photographs. I saw some forty aircrafts, mostly damaged transport planes, a few jet fighters and helicopters.

In order to avoid further air attacks, We began to move from the town towards the base where I had spent the night.

At some distance from the town, I saw regime aircraft bombarding the town three times until 2 p.m. The bombardment stopped when the sky became cloudy again.

When I returned to the base, I met the chiefs of the eastern fronts of Khost. They met in the base to adopt measures for the security of the town of Khost.

The two-week offensive on Khost was launched simultaneously on March 14 by six shuras of mujahideen (councils) in the vicinity of the town.

Though the shuras were formed on the basis of tribes in
Khost, the assignment of targets and shares took place on party basis. The effectiveness of mujahideen parties has come to an end following the decision of Pakistani military authorities to bypass them and issue arms to the commanders. However, the division of spoils still took place on a party basis. Overall, the tribal structure is reviving in the country.

I met members of one of the six shuras. Interestingly, when I asked them to tell me about their casualties and captured areas including their losses and gains, they said, "In the general meeting of six shuras, we pledged to avoid any claims which gives supremacy to one group over another." They were even not prepared to give the exact number of their casualties. They said that if disclosed their casualties and losses, it would show how active a role they played in fall of Khost and demoralize other shuras or groups.

Such an attitude, in itself, showed the respect of those mujahideen to their pledges and their determination to carry out successful operations. They did not disclose the number of their losses to me, because they did not want to sadden mujahideen of other fronts. On the contrary, there were others whose propaganda about the capture of Khost dominated the Pakistani media, though they played a very minor role in the fighting for Khost.

The attitude of those mujahideen and the claims of others reminded me the story of a dragon in my childhood. To summarize it: A dragon had forced the residents of a city to offer him a young girl in a bridal dress as food upon his attack on the city. When the turn of the princess came, a young stranger appeared and resisted the attack of the dragon. Having suffered heavy wounded, the young man was able to kill the dragon and liberate the princess. When the residents knew about the death of the dragon, each of them went to the site of the incident, lowered his sword into the
dragon and came to the king to receive a prize. The king met many people who claimed that they had killed the dragon. Finally, the king knew the fact and sent his people in search of the young man who had left his kingdom.

The same story can be applied to the situation in Khost, where the mujahideen offered great sacrifices to capture the town estimated at around 1000 casualties. When those mujahideen evacuated their wounded and buried their dead, others engaged in looting and plunder. However, there were some clever ones who occupied important positions, hoisted their flags, gathered prisoners and claimed that they had captured Khost. Obviously, everybody believed that they played an important role in the fall of the town, because they possessed the means for propaganda and enjoyed necessary facilities and the support of their friends abroad.

The propaganda, on one hand resulted in inter-group differences, and caused disappointment among others. A number of people were immediately sent to Khost, and it was claimed that they had captured Khost and important positions in the town.

These people, who do not come from the area, did not participate in the offensive. If people from other areas claim that they have captured Khost for its mujahideen, it will cause a grave danger to people’s relations in future Afghanistan. On the basis of my thirteen-year experience with the people of Paktia, I must say that such a matter will cause a blow to the prestige of the tribes of Paktia, if the fruit of their heavy sacrifices are taken by others.

The town of Khost remained under the siege of the mujahideen for the past twelve years of war. Its fall bears merits and demerits for the Kabul regime and the mujahideen.
Following are the effects of the fall on the Kabul regime.

1. The town was a headache for the regime which kept it under its control at a very high cost during the past years. The regime sent most of its supplies by air to the town and spent large amounts of money to keep it under its control against constant mujahideen pressure. It also spent large amounts of money on the salaries of local people whose only business was warfare.

2. The fall of the town was a challenge to the Kabul regime which resulted in its defeat in the area. It exposed the hollowness of regime claims of successess.

3. The capture of Khost was a strong psychological blow to the regime which announced one-day national mourning in the country following the fall of the town to the mujahideen. In addition, the area is the birth-place of many hard-line Communists, such as Said Mohammad Gulabzo, Shahnawaz Tanai, Abdul Ghafar Lakanwal, Prof. Mahmud Soma, Asstt. Prof. Guldad, Faqir Mohammad Faqir, Pacha Gul Wafadar, etc.

4. The capture of the town has deprived the regime of its links with the Pakistani tribemen across the border. The regime created great problems for Pakistan through its links with the Pakistani tribesmen.

Following are the impacts of the fall on the mujahideen:

1. The fall of the town broke the stalemate in the political and military position of the resistance. It enabled the friends of the resistance to take a strong position at the negotiating table.
2. As Khost is a fertile and populous valley, the fall will encourage a large number of the refugees in Pakistan to return to the area. The UN organisations may use the two airbases of the town to provide supplies to the returnees.

3. The protection of POWs and civilians on the basis of tribal traditions will bring an end to the policy of revenge if that traditional system continues to be respected.

4. An urgent appeal was made by the president of the AIG, Prof. Mujadidi, to the International Committee of the Red Cross to take care of the war-wounded and protect the POWs. The positive reaction of the mujahideen in the area has demonstrated their respect for humanitarian international law.

5. The fall will encourage the supporters of military victory to expedite military activities. However, if the mujahideen suffer a defeat in another area, the sacrifices of the mujahideen will be pointless. This will also weaken the position of the mujahideen politically.

6. The fall of the town will encourage the demoralised Afghan Interim Government (AIG) to revive its artificial credibility by transferring its offices there. However, it will not receive a positive response in the area.

7. In order to create anarchy in the area, some people might encourage groups of Mujahideen around the valley to confiscate the fertile lands of local people because of their connections with the Kabul regime. This would bear serious consequences for the country.
Interviews With Members Of Khardand Council

On April 2, Naim Majrooh asked the commanders of the eastern front of Khost and the members of the Khardand Shura (a tribal council) about the fall of Khost.

A member of the council, identified as Ghatol, said that between 100 and 150 people were killed and 200 others wounded in the fighting that continued for seventeen days in the area. He said that mines were the main cause of casualties.

Ghatol said that his council had enlisted 2,000 mujahids for the offensive, but the authorities maintained that they could issue weapons to only 700. They however promised that they could give ammunition to them, he said.

He said the councils operating in the area had decided to prevent plunder in the city, but it was looted upon its fall to the mujahideen. The mujahideen also took away light weapons as their own goods from the depots of the town. The councils, he said, are formed on a tribal basis and will distribute heavy weapons among themselves. He said that most of the local militiamen surrendered to their tribes upon the fall of the town.

Regarding the offensive, Ghatol said that the regime suffered a psychological blow when the mujahideen captured the sub-districts of Yaqubi and Bak. He, however, maintained that the occupation of the hill of Kokarak by the mujahideen of his council was very important, because it enabled them to launch an attack on the strategically important hills of Takhta Beg. He said that the mujahideen of his council captured one hundred people, including thirty-eight Jowzjani militiamen.
He said that the hill of Matun Baba was another important position in Khost which was attacked and captured by the mujahideen of his council under the command of Haji Farooq. He said that his mujahideen handed over captured troops to Hezb-e-Islami (Hekmatyar) men when they reached the place afterwards. He said that most of the troops surrendered to Commander Haqani, but 1,800 were captured by the councils.

Ghatol said that Commander Farooq was injured by a mine blast following the capture of new airbase in Khost. He has been admitted to ICRC hospital in Peshawar.

Haji Mohammad Amin, a commander of the council of Ahmadzai tribe, said:

"It is a victory for tribes, because the residents of Khost were afraid of the parties. They thought that their life would be in danger, if they surrendered to the organisations or parties. For this reason, everybody surrendered to his respective tribe. He said that his mujahideen captured twelve tanks, five howitzers, twenty vehicles and many weapons.

About the offensive he said:

"We entered the new airbase of Khost at 4 p.m. on March 31. We hit two aircraft at the base and captured it. When we entered the town the following morning at 4, mujahideen of Commander Haqani entered the town from the south. As a result, the mujahideen of Commander Haqani captured the strategically important Takhta Beg."

Commander Haji Mohammad Amin said that forty-five Scuds were fired by the regime during the offensive. He said:
"We are trying to convene a meeting of all tribal elders and commanders in order to ensure the security of the town. We are also trying to encourage the repatriation of the residents of Khost to the area, because Khost is a fertile valley."

First Guest In Khost

The Kabul regime has been sending messages to various organisations and countries regarding Pakistan's involvement in the fighting of Khost since its fall to the mujahideen. In the meantime, Pakistan ambassador to the U.N. raised his voice against the bombardment of Khost by the Kabul regime.

In the course of these diplomatic moves, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, leader of Jamaat-i-Islami of Pakistan, visited the town of Khost along with Hekmatyar (leader of Hezb-e-Islami) and congratulated the mujahideen on their victory.

As Qazi Hussain Ahmad is a senator of Pakistan, his visit to Khost came under criticism by several members in the National Assembly of Pakistan. The members maintained that he had ignored passport and visa regulations by crossing the border.

It should be mentioned that Hekmatyar, in an interview in 1988, had hoped for a confederation of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON AFGHANISTAN

An international seminar, "Rebuilding Afghan Political and Legal Institutions," was organised by the Writers Union of Free Afghanistan (WUFA) in Peshaswar’s Pearl-Continental Hotel, March 9 through 11.

The organisers of the seminar invited noted Afghan, Pakistani and foreign scholars who shed light on various aspects of the Afghan issue.

Aziz Naim, Sayed Shamsuddin Majrooh, Azizullah Wasifi and Habibullah Tegey, are prominent Afghan former-bureaucrats who addressed the seminar. Ms. Benazir Bhutto, former prime minister of Pakistan and leader of opposition in Pakistan’s National Assembly, addressed the participants who welcomed her address with enthusiastic applause.

Although the speakers had been assigned topics for their speeches, most of them addressed current issues faced by the Afghan people.

The first day of the seminar began with the recitation of a few verses from the Holy Quran. Then Amir Gulistan Janjua, governor of N.W.F.P., formally inaugurated the proceedings. He shed light on the history of the Afghan jihad and praised the heroism of the Afghan people. He said that faith was the guiding force in the twelve-year struggle of the Afghan people and
emphasized political settlement through democratic elections.

At the outset, it seemed that English would be the language of the seminar, but most of the Afghan participants suggested that the speeches be interpreted in Dari or Pashtu for their convenience. While most of the Afghan speakers spoke in Dari or Pashtu, summaries of the speeches by foreign speakers were presented in Dari and Pashtu to the participants.

The three-day seminar was also attended by AIC correspondents who prepared the following report on some important speeches of the seminar:

The first panelist, Christian Sigrist (a German scholar) shed light on the history of the Afghan people, saying that Afghans resisted foreign colonialists including British India and the Soviet Union. He laid great emphasis on the traditions of the Afghans, especially Pashtuns, saying that Pashtuns constituted the majority of Afghanistan. He said that Pashtuns were not opposed to progress and development, though they wanted to maintain their identity. He talked about various characteristics of Pashtunwali, Pashtun code of life.

Sardar M.Y. Effendi, a Pakistani scholar, said that Islam and tribal values were two important elements of the Afghan society. He said that the Afghans had achieved their objective: the Soviets have withdrawn from Afghanistan, the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) has renounced communism, the PDPA has changed its name, and the Afghan government, by inviting the former monarch to the country, has shown its respect to the traditional patterns of society.

Ieng Mouly, secretary-general and member of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, in his address, shed light on the
history of the resistance of the people of Cambodia against their occupation by Viet Nam.

Habibullah Tegey, former professor of Kabul University, said that various proposals had been presented by different sides, such as Mohammad Zahir Shah, Dr. Yusuf, Dr. Abdul Samad Hamed, Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, a group of Afghan intellectuals in the West, the political party of Afghan Melat and the Kabul government. He said the proposals had some common elements, such as a Loya Jirgah, or international conference, drafting a constitution, holding elections and holding national dialogue.

Tegey said that the proposals talked about only technical aspects, neglecting the real problem. The real question is who is going to make all these arrangements possible, he said. Both external and internal forces want to continue the current war. He said that external forces pursue their own interests in the war, while internal forces were reluctant to give up their drive for power.

Rahimullah Yusufzai, renowned journalist of the N.W.F.P., sent an article which was read by one of his colleagues in the seminar. The article said that large amounts of money were pumped into Afghanistan for mass destruction during the Russian intervention. He opined that Afghans might lose international support due to polarization and the threat directed towards foreign voluntary agencies working for Afghans.

Anthony Hyman, a well known British scholar, talked about various international proposals regarding a political framework in Afghanistan.

Abdul Rahim, member of Jamiat and director-general of Reconstruction Authority for Afghanistan (RAFA), was critical of
foreign aid to the Afghan people. He said that the ongoing tragedy was a product of Russian aid to Afghanistan. He also criticised the U.S. for changing the nature of its aid to the Afghans when the final stage of victory was in sight.

Ayatullah Taqadussi, an Afghan Shia scholar, said "most Afghans want an end to the current fratricide and destruction in the country. We have a glorious history; the British empire suffered a defeat on this soil, while the invading policy of neo-Czarists received a setback in this country. Those neighbours, who interfere in our internal affairs, will face the fate of our past enemies, because we want an Afghan government that guarantee the aspirations of the heroic people of a free and independent Afghanistan."

Taqadussi demanded the formation of a leadership council and a revolutionary council in order to eliminate differences between the mujahideen and discourage a drive for power. He rejected the traditional electoral system in the country, saying proper representation should be given to the nation's minorities. He expressed surprise over the system in which one district of 8,000 families and another of 20,000 families had equal-delegates in the parliament. He said that Afghans should listen to the views and suggestions of outsiders, but they should enjoy the right to make a final decision.

Following Taqadussin's address, Mr. Chinzai, an Afghan intellectual, said that the Russian defeat was the fruit of the sacrifices, historical nature and valour of the Afghan people. He said that Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia should learn a lesson from the Russians' puppet regime in Kabul.

When he charged that interference by Pakistan's military intelligence put the national sovereignty of Afghanistan in question,
Nawab Salim, spokesman of Hezb-e-Islami (Hekmatyar), jumped from his seat and shouted at Mr. Chinzai: "you are worst than Najib. We cannot listen to your absurd nonsense. While you are condemning others, you do not talk about the U.S. Down with the U.S. and the CIA. Death to Zahir Shah. You are all CIA agents. People like you are the dust of Mujahideen leaders’ feet and this seminar is a plot against Jehad."

A Pakistani participant, showing himeself to be a journalist by having a pen and a piece of paper in his hand, said: "It is shameful, because Pakistan provided asylum to you. You now urinate in our own bowl."

The charman of the seminar said that every one has the right to freely express themselves and asked him to speak in turn. In this connection, an Afghan writer, sitting nearby, read out the following Pashtu stanza:

"While I was moving with a garland of accusations, Your complexion turned pale with a single accusation."

"Local Government in Afghanistan" and "Judicial Reforms in Afghanistan" were the themes of the second day of the seminar.

Eng. Mirza Abdul Hai, chairman of Khorasan Assistant Group Executive Council in Baluchistan (Pakistan), advocated Islamic democratic federalism as an ideal system for Afghanistan. He said that such a system should represent all tribes and groups according to their population. Also, equal rights of women and equal distribution of resources among the individuals of society should constitute an economic aspect of government.

Dr. Jadwiga Pstrusinska of Institute of Oriental Philology, Poland, was the second speaker of the day. She proposed to the
Africans that all government employees should not not be removed immediately when the resistance comes to power. For instance, she said that the new government of Poland removed only high ranking officials from the government machinery.

Mr. Son Soubert, member of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, said that his Council was prepared to seek a political settlement of their issue.

Qazi Jamil, former justice of Peshawar High Court, emphasized that the legal system of Afghanistan must have workable blend of the two major segments of society; tribal or rural and urban. He said that a judiciary, independent of the executive, was vital to the efficient working of a new legal system in Afghanistan. He expressed hope that our rich Afghan cultural heritage would help in the positive reconstruction of society.

Following Jamil's address, Justice Badrul Chowdhury, former chief justice of Bangladesh, emphasised the independence of judiciary. The rule of law, he said, ensures the freedom and security of all individuals in society. He praised the bravery of Afghan people against alien aggressors.

The former lord president of Malaysia, Hon Tun Salleh Abbas, talked mainly about Islamic and secular law. He said that democracy is not contrary to Islamic law. He envisaged a democratic Islamic government in Afghanistan.

Said Shamsuddin Majrooh, former minister of justice and chairan of the Afghan consitution commitee, said that the judicial system in the past was based purely on Islamic Shariat Law and that the Afghan Constitution was a noble creation of Islam and democracy with which Afghanistan already has long experience.
Fazul-ur-Rahman, member of Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, discussed issues relating to administrative justice. He said that there were various systems and mechanisms for developing accountability in administrative systems. He described the appointment of an ombudsman as the most effective system for accountability in an administrative system in future Afghanistan.

Qazi Abdul Rahim Koshki, head of Coordinating Committee of Afghan Commanders in Iran, was the last speaker of the day. He said that the Afghans should form a unified military command to bring an end to the current stalemate. He also laid emphasis on political unity among the mujahideen.

The third and final day of the seminar covered two panels "Legislative Reforms in Afghanisntan" and "Foreign Relations."

Sayed Shamsuddin Majrooh, former deputy prime minister and minister of justice of Afghanistan, in his speech, said, "I do not want to talk about the issue of the constitution in future Afghanistan, though I was given the topic of Afghan constitution for my address." He said such topics should be discussed when Afghans saw an end to the ongoing miseries in the country. He said the regime in Kabul still existed, and faced resistance throughout the country. He said that the resistance had not scored any important successes during the past two years. There was a chance for us during the signing of Geneva accords, but we lost it, he said.

He said that the Afghan people had their own national, historical, and cultural means to bring an end to their miseries in Afghanistan, but both enemies and friends of the country had blocked those ways. He said that divergent ideological trends eclipsed settlement. These developments cannot lead to peace in
the country even in case of victory, he said. Ideological differences and conflicts of national interests between our friends have provided a pretext for our enemies to interfere in Afghanistan.

He said the neighbours and other countries of the world supported the Afghans in their resistance for the sake of their own national interests. He said that the liberation of Afghanistan ensured the security of its neighbours. They cannot remain secure if there is no security in Afghanistan, he added.

He said that though the Russians left Eastern Europe and withdrew their troops from Afghanistan, they still continue their interference in Afghanistan and back their own allies.

He said that Russians gave power back to Eastern Europe but the Russians were troubled by Afghanistan. The Russians fear that Afghanistan may fall into the claws of other neighbours in any form, because there is no single political framework in the country. They fear that puppet regimes of Pakistan or Iran will come to control Afghanistan.

He said the Afghan issue had entered a new phase. Control over the Afghan issue should be taken away from intelligence offices and given to the ministries of foreign affairs. Thus the U.N. will urge all parties involved to accept the fact that the Afghans have the right of self-determination as a nation.

Azizullah Wasifi, former minister of agriculture, touched on various aspects of the Afghan issue.

Wasifi, a tribal leader who was chairman of Loya Jirgah prior to the April coup of 1978, described the term "future Afghanistan" as dangerous and inappropriate, as though it would be cut off from its past and remade as a different nation. He said...
that there is only one Afghanistan, past, present and future: "Afghanistan is the country, and Kabul is its capital." He said.

"The lack of a strong national centre and the cruel interference of aliens in our homeland, have brought destruction to the ancient country where Ahmad Shah Abdali, Mirwais Baba and other heroes of Afghan soil were born. The Afghans sought refuge in Pakistan and Iran, waiting to return to their country. They did not come to these countries to live forever at the cost of their homeland."

He said that the Americans were also involved in the division of Afghans as well as were Iran and Pakistan. He said that Brezhinsky, a key U.S. official in the Carter administration, once said that the U.S. had divided Afghans into various groups to prevent the creation of a unified centre. Brezhinsky said that a unified centre could make a compromise or understanding with the Russians.

He said that the formation of political forces among the Afghans by neighbours was a basic cause of ongoing bloodshed. He said that such forces did not respect the national interests of Afghanistan. For this reason, Afghan intellectuals and traditional elders are not allowed to carry out any activity in the interests of the country, he said.

He said that the neighbours should give up games, such as those launched in Rawalpindi because they damaged the historical status and bravery of the Afghan nation. The Russians, he said, destroy the houses of Afghans, but all these are studied in the framework of Pakistani intelligence.

Wasifi said that time was not ripe for drafting an Afghan constitution because the task requires territorial integrity and
national leadership. He said that Islamic values should not suffer damage in the drafting of a constitution.

Mohammad Hakim Aryubi, a former Afghan diplomat, spoke about the significance of various kinds of jirgahs in Afghan society. He said that most Afghans support the convention of loya jirgah (grand assembly) to create unity and pave the way for nationwide elections.

Dr. Sayed Farooq Hasnat, a member of the political department of Punjab University (Lahore), said that a legal system for Afghanistan should comply with the requirements of Afghan society. He proposed the establishment of a federal system in Afghanistan to give autonomy to provinces and settle local disputes locally.

Prior to the arrival of Benazir Bhutto, former prime minister of Pakistan and leader of opposition in Pakistan national assembly, Hashmatullah Mujadeddi, brother of Prof. Mujadeddi, and Shamsul Huda Shams, a leader of Afghan Social Democratic Party, exchanged words when the latter criticised the despatch of a mujahideen contingent to Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Benazir Bhutto, in her address, said that Pakistan encouraged the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) upon its formation in February 1989 to establish itself in Afghanistan and broaden its base. She said that Pakistan did not formally recognize the AIG, because the AIG could not achieve the objectives. She said that the formation of a commanders' shura was another hope, but it was too early to predict success.

She said that mujahideen groups were still riddled with divisions. On the other hand, Najibullah, as a shrewd man, launched a policy of national reconciliation and mass contact. She
said that internationally Najibullah gained acclaim while the AIG and the mujahideen suffered badly.

Inter-mujahideen clashes and fundamentalism have forced Western supporters to gradually reduce aid to them, she said.

She said that Pakistan supported the U.N. secretary-general's proposal based on the U.N.-sponsored elections, ceasefire and Halting arms supplies.

She said that Iran was an important country in the region, and that relations between Kabul and Iran have improved steadily. Iran has told Pakistan not to depend solely on a military option: Iran is no longer adverse to a settlement process in which Iran and Hezb-e-Watan (including Najibullah) has a role.

In the Gulf war, she said, the AIG split with the fundamentalists supporting Iraq and the liberals supporting the allied forces. She believes that we will gain U.S., Soviet and Saudi sympathy, thus strengthening the liberal elements within AIG and Afghanistan to the detriment of the fundamentalist elements who miscalculated the dynamics of the Gulf war.

She said that Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoyed close religious, historical and cultural relations. She said short sightedness should not bring an end to such the closeness created during these crucial years. Pakistan should maintain its friendship with the people of Afghanistan in a spirit of good will and brotherhood. Pakistan should remember that Afghans are proud people who have fought fierce battles for their freedom and independence, she said. They want their independence; they want to freely choose their leaders, and they will not tolerate interference of anyone in this respect.
Aziz Naim, is a son in law of former Afghan monarch Zahir Shahand nephew of President Daoud, and a former professor at Kabul University. He shed light on the history of Afghanistan, especially its active non-aligned policy. He said that Afghans should be provided with the opportunity to rebuild their political, legal, social, educational, economic and cultural institutions. He has also emphasized good ties between Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India for economics, culture and common development in other fields.

Mushahid Hussain, a noted Pakistani journalist, supported the expressions of Benazir, saying that the Gulf war brought about strange alignments in reference to Afghanistan. It brought the Soviets and the Saudis together, because Saudis offered four billion dollars in assistance to the Soviet Union. It brought the Afghan fundamentalists and Marxists closer, because they supported Iraq against U.S. military intervention. It brought the Afghan royalists closer to Saudi royalists. He said that there was a growing acceptability for Najibullah in the world. He said that Najib went to mosques and conducted prayers. He said that Pakistan should try to promote a political settlement through various organisations, such as the U.N., Iran and the Soviet Union.

Imtiaz Bukhari, member of Strategic Studies (Islamabad), Dr. Rasul Bux Rais, member of Area Study Center for North and South America & Africa, Quaid-e-Azam University (Islamabad), and Prof. Raja Ihsan Aziz, Foreign Relations Department, Quaid-e-Azam University (Islamabad), also addressed the seminar.
SITUATIONS REPORTS

Situations In Uruzgan

Malim Abdullah, AIC correspondent in Quetta (Balouchistan), visited Tirinkot, the provincial centre of Uruzgan, in February. Here is his report:

When I reached Tirinkot on February 9, I was amazed to see destroyed walls, broken bricks, curved bars and dusty rooms in the city centre. I had not expected such a situation, because the memories of my last trip there were still fresh in my mind. I did not believe that I had reached Tirinkot. When I saw the new condition of the town, I admitted the fact that war is a misery.

During the period of President Daoud, a new town was established in the area of Tirinkot, where new apartments, hospitals, parks and water tanks were constructed. The government then shifted its offices from Khas Uruzgan (old provincial centre) to the new centre.

When the mujahideen captured the town, they operated several schools for the large population of the area. But I saw a very small number of residents in the town, because most people left due to diseases, homelessness, the difficult environment, etc.

For the first time I saw examples of man's barbarism by man: graves each of which held 20 dead bodies. An old man showed me a place where twenty-seven person had been killed. The old mansaid that the flesh of their bodies was eaten by birds.
I met a few mujahideen who said that the remaining Afghans would lose their lives in tribal, organizational and personal clashes. Some one thousand and five hundred people were killed in the clashes between Hazaras and Pashtuns some months ago. Those people were not government supporters.

Each commander of the area has designed his own rules and regulations in the area. For instance, four persons were killed in a clash that took place between Commander Kaku Mohammad Azim (Mahaz, Gailani) and Commander Jan Mohammad (Hezb-e-Islami, Khales). The clash took place after the distribution of foodstuff and medicine sent by some foreign agencies to the area.

Collection of customs is yet another problem in the area. Each commander has established his own post to collect duties: a passenger has to pay 20,000 Afghanis as transport fare from Baluchistan to Tirinkot. The daily wage of each labourer is only one thousand Afghanis.

Agriculture and livestock are the main sources of economy in the area, but plant diseases have reduced production of wheat, rice, maize, potatoes, etc. In addition, farmers lack chemical fertilizer and insecticides to grow good crops in the area. For this reason, the people are engaged in poppy cultivation. I saw many barren almond trees hit by strange diseases. Also, heavy rains and floods have destroyed many agricultural lands in the area.

Health problems are considerable. The complexion of the people has turned black. A strange disease has broken out in the area; some people describe it fever, while others call it malaria. Dysentery, diarrhoea and children diseases are common in the area.
Interview with Commander Aziz Agha

Aziz Agha, a mujahideem commander of Jabha (Prof. Mujadidi) in Tirinkot, was recently interviewed by AIC when he came to Peshawar.

Following is the transcript of the interview:

Q. When the mujahideen captured Tirinkot, how was the situation in the town?

A. The town has suffered destruction. No reconstruction has taken place in the town. A large number of people left the town upon its fall to the mujahideen, but few people have returned to it. The residents have not sought refuge in Iran and Pakistan.

Q. What is the condition of crops in Uruzgan?

A. There were high floods in the province. The floods destroyed vast agricultural lands and mud houses, but human losses were not very high.

There are good crops in the province, but various diseases have hit fruit trees. A kind of insects has damaged mulbery and fig trees in the area. Most people plant poppy. Some foreign organizations sent their teams to Tirinkot to prevent various plant diseases in the area, but they did not implement their plans after their preliminary survey.

Q. How are relations between Mujahideen commanders and the people?

A. There are no specific problems between the people, but occasional clashes occur between mujahideen commanders. Also,
tribal differences continue in the province, but such problems are well solved by tribal elders in accordance with local tribal conventions and customs.

Various kinds of diseases are common in the province. For example, cholera killed twenty people in the area of Chehel Chino this year. There is shortage of medicines in the area.

Q. How is Tirinkot administered?

A. We have a provincial council led by a president. The president, whose position is equal to that of governor, was elected by all mujahideen groups in the area. The president, known as Abdul Zahir, comes from the Barakzai tribe. He is affiliated to Itihad-e-Islami (Sayaf). Besides, each district has its own council.

Q. What do you think about a political settlement of the Afghan issue?

A. To end the Afghan war it is necessary to form a Loya Jirgah. Tribal elders, religious elders, important commanders and intellectuals should play a significant role in the formation of such a jirgah.

The commander gave the following price list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>4.5 kgs.</td>
<td>500 Afghanis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>4.5 kgs.</td>
<td>900 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edible Oil</td>
<td>4.5 kgs.</td>
<td>3,500 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene Oil</td>
<td>barrel</td>
<td>9,000 &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Situation In Ningrahar

Transportation of foreign goods from Jalalabad to Pakistan
are the main activity in the province. These goods pass through the areas of Kan and Qatargha in Samarkhel until they reach the Jalalabad-Torkham highway in the area of Rodat on their way to Pakistan.

Eye-witnesses in Torkham say that five families have been daily entering Afghanistan for the past 15 days.

On March 19, twelve families were seen crossing Torkham on their way to Afghanistan.

Mohammad Yonus, a resident of Achin district (Shinwar), said that he was happy to return to his homeland despite his damaged home.

On March 28, 20 refugee families were seen at Torkham on their way to Afghanistan. One of the refugees said that the war was leading to the destruction of the country. Death in the homeland is better than a needy life in a foreign land, he said.

The regime has recently established three posts in the areas of Kan and Qatargha to ensure the safe transportation of goods in the area under its control.

On March 12, Maulawi Khales, Leader of his faction of Hezb-e-Islami, received a cool response when he instructed mujahideen to block the the Kabul-Jalalabad highway after March 15.

On March 6, regime aircraft dropped leaflets on various parts in Nangahar province. The leaflets said that civilians should move from the mujahideen-controlled areas within few hours because of forthcoming bombardment.
For the past several days, regime aircraft have been bombarding positions on the Jalalabad-Torkham highway where frequent mujahideen movement is seen.

On March 8, a regime security post was attacked by the mujahideen in the area of Chaparhar. Two vehicles were destroyed.

On the same date, according to a traveller, mujahideen set a quantity of chemical fertilizer on fire in the area, describing it in connection with the regime. ‘The fertilizer had been brought by farmers from regime side for use on their lands.

On March 18, sixteen mujahids were killed when their vehicle hit a land mine in the area of Kokrak. The bomb had been planted by regime agents intended for Maulawi Khales, who was travelling in a vehicle to inspect mujahideen bases in the district of Surkhrud.

On March 19, four mujahideen vehicles hit land mines in the area, of Fatehabad, Surkhrud district. As a result, twelve mujahids of Hezb-e-Islami (Khales) were killed.

According to some sources, the mines had been planted by another mujahideen organization in the area.

On March 28, regime troops based in Jalalabad fired rockets on mujahideen positions at Samarkhail. As a result, one mujahid was killed and another wounded.

Situation in Laghman

Mohammad Qasim and Mohammad Ali, residents of
Charbagh (Laghman province), who arrived in Pakistan on March 11, were interviewed by AIC.

The two farmers, who have come to Pakistan for the first time during the past twelve years, gave the following account of the situation:

We have spent most of the time in Charbagh, though we were forced on several occasions to leave the village and seek shelter in other areas. This practice was common in our area due to air bombardment and ground operations by the regime.

When the Russians left Afghanistan, the area fell to the mujahideen. The residents built some shops and houses to carry out their normal business in the area. Transportation of Russian goods from Kabul to Pakistan was in full swing for some months in the area, but it was finally forbidden by the mujahideen.

Though most of the residents have prepared their lands for cultivation, they are not willing to rebuild their houses due to insecure conditions in the country. Only bachelors have returned to the area from their temporary dwellings in Pakistan. Each resident carries a weapon for security. Internal differences and conflicts displaced hundreds of families three months ago. They either left for Pakistan or sought shelter in other areas of the country.

The lands of Charbagh have earned a reputation for fertility. Wheat, maize, rice and cotton are well known products of the area. Fifty percent of the area grows rice.

Due to the lack of chemical fertilizer and good quality seeds, a fifty percent reduction has taken place in the rice products of the area. The cost of one jerib (2000 square meter) of land,
which was sold at a cost of 50,000 Afghans during the Russian presence, has reached 1,000,000 Afghans. Mujahideen commanders are the eager buyers of land in the area.

There are no schools in the area. There are only a few mullahs who teach the Holy Quran to the children in mosques. There are no good clinics or qualified doctors.

**Situation In Kandahar**

Malim Abdullah, AIC Correspondent in Quetta, left for Kandahar on February 24 to prepare a detailed report about widespread destruction of rains and floods in the province this winter.

He visited the districts of Maruf, Arghistan, Daman, Shah Wali Kot, Khakrez, Panjwaii, Arghandab and Mohalajat, and gave the following account:

Heavy rains and floods have caused widespread destruction in various parts of the province. The rains and floods have killed and wounded some people and innumerable domestic animals. Agricultural lands, orchards, houses, karezes (underground water channels), mosques, clinics, schools, and hospitals were nearly destroyed by rains and floods. The rains has also destroyed several mujahideen shelters in the province.

The rains are described as "black rains" by the people, because their water has slightly blackened the soil. In addition, the rains have caused heavy losses to the residents of the province. Some people say that colour of the rains have turned black as a result of the burning oil wells in the Gulf region. For the first time, the people saw snowfall (in January) followed by continuous torrential rains in the province.
The rains have also resulted in great losses inside the city of Kandahar, where rocket attacks had made cracks in the buildings and houses. In addition, the Russians built new roads, destroying the drainage system of the city. As a result, heavy rains destroyed and damaged many houses and many century-old buildings in the city.

Floods and rains have also brought destruction to the district of Panjwaii where a three-member family (husband, wife and their one-year child) experienced a strange incident in their one-room house. The family possessed a kalashnikov and an amount of cash money at their home. While the family was sleeping in their room at night, three thieves entered the room and skillfully removed the child from his cradle. The thieves took the child to a corner of the house and forced him to cry. The cries of the child awakened the parents who were alarmed by the cries of their child outside the room. When they found the child and returned towards their room after some time, their room collapsed. The following morning the parents were again surprised to find the dead bodies of three persons holding their kalashnikov, money and goods in their hands amongst the debris of the walls. Hence family escaped the incident miraculously.

The rivers of Kadani (Spinboldak), Arghistan and Tarnak (Daman district) are still full of rainy water. Between 130 and 150 people were drowned in the rivers of Arghistan and Kadni. The residents of the area have made rafts of inner-tubes to cross the rivers. These boatmen, who charge Afs. 3,000 for one person, earn 180,000 Afs daily. When a vehicle is blocked in the water, it is drawn out by tractors at a cost of seventy thousand Afghans.

The rains and floods have caused an increase in transport fares in the province. For example, Afs. 6,000 was charged by transport owners for the journey between border (near Chaman)
and Kandahar. The rate has reached 14,000 Afghanis.

The floods has washed and destroyed hundreds of houses in the village of Band-e-Temor in the district of Maiwand.

The Kabul has regime has extended great assistance to its supporters in the city of Kandahar. Regime authorities have given cash money, tents, foodstuffs and blankets to its supporters, but international organisations have not provided any kind of assistance to other people in the province.

The people of the province are pessimistic about the performance of mujahideen organisations. The organisations have lost their importance among the people. Instead, tribal relationship have further consolidated, because several tribes formed their own tribal unions. In this regard, the tribes of Achakzai, Alekozai, Popalzai, Barakzai, Ishaqzai and Noorzai have organized their tribal bodies. Other tribes are also trying to form their own unions.

Inter-party differences have created disappointment and dispair among the people. These differences have led to armed clashes in some areas.

The mujahideen of Commander Mullah Naqib of Jamiat (Rabani) and Commander Zabet Jalil of Hezb (Hekmatyar) have taken positions against each other in the area of Khwaja Malik in Arghandab. So far, five mujahids have been killed in the clashes between the two sides.

Haji Mohammad Rasool of Harakat (Mohammadi) is in a state of war with his commander in the village of Dukhana, Khakrez district.
Six people have been killed in the fighting between Ustad Abdul Halim of Itihad (Sayaf) and Sayed Abdul Latif Agha of Hezb (Hekmatyar) in Mirwais Mena.

The mujahideen attacked military installations and positions inside Kandahar with ground-to-ground rockets and heavy guns.

In Baluchistan, refugees say that they're rations have been reduced. Most refugees complain about high prices, unemployment and critical economic problems. Many refugees are expected to return to their collapsed shelters across the border. The residents have cultivated wheat, barley, cumin and poppy, though floods have destroyed most of the crops in the province. Price are high in Arghandab, Panwaii and Mohalajat.

Food price in Kandahar province:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutton /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene Oil /gallon</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edible Oil /16 kgs.</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opium /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashish /4.500 kgs.</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Fare from Chaman to Arghandab</td>
<td></td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Fare from Tirinkot to Pakistan</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rains and Floods have also caused vast destruction in the provinces of Helmand and Nimroz.

**Poppy Cultivation**

Poppy cultivation is in full swing this year in the provinces of Helmand, Uruzgan and Kandahar, because most of the lands grew poor crops and the price of opium is very high. For example, large-scale advance purchase of the opium is a major business in the area.

Despite reports of execution of some Afghans in Iran for their involvement in the opium business, opium is transferred in great quantities to Iran and the border of Turkey by armed smugglers. Some smugglers killed some Pakistani officers on the Afghan-Pakistan border recently.

**Refugee Family Faces Tragedy**

Three persons were killed and two wounded when the house of an Afghan family was attacked by eight armed men at Tehkal Bala (Peshawar) on March 25,

Gulab Khan, head of the family, said that eight armed persons broke into their house at 6:40 p.m. to plunder the family. He said that the armed men opened fire on the members of the family when one of them resisted the intruders. As a result, a mother and two brothers, identified as Ghulam Jailani and Ghulam Rabani, were killed. Also, one brother and one sister were wounded in the incident. One armed man was killed and another captured while the family resisted.

He said that he handed over the captured man to Pakistani police, though Hezb (Hekmatyar) wanted the man.