Clashes designed to disrupt Hal-o-Aqд

The four-day armed clashes between Wahdat, a radical Shia party, and forces loyal to the Islamic government resulted in killing or wounding of many people in Kabul.

The fighting started after a security incident in the northern part of the city, and quickly spread to other parts of Kabul.

Some irresponsible armed men belonging to Hezb Wahdat stole a government car in Taimani district on December 4. The security authorities chased the thieves, which resulted in a brief armed clash. The situation was brought under control quickly.

The city became tense as the result of the clash, which led to incidents of kidnapping the next day.

The peace commission tried to prevent fighting but its members were alarmed by the preparation of Hezb Wahdat for a full-scale war. Fighting spread to various parts of the city very quickly, indicating Hezb Wahdat's preparedness for the war.

When the clashes began, the Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Masood was in Charikar, about 50 kilometers north of Kabul. He returned to Kabul to deal with the situation.

On Saturday night, Hezb Wahdat attacked the government positions at the grain silo and at Chindawal, one kilometer from the presidential palace. The government forces fought a defensive battle.

Since the government forces were not ready, Hezb Wahdat captured Silo and the forces defending it retreated without offering much resistance. Hezb Wahdat also tried to capture Koh-i-Asmaie, dividing the city into two parts, but the attack was repulsed by the government forces.

Hezb Wahdat tried to give the clashes a racial color in order to rally Hazaras against the government. This trick worked in involving some commanders from Harakat of Mohsini in the war, but Division 80 which belongs to Hazaras of the Isma'ili sect, did little fighting.

The forces of the Defense Ministry exercised restraint, generally avoiding the use of artillery and heavy rockets, against Wahdat to avoid civilian casualties.

To bring about a ceasefire, negotiations were held between the two sides. At the start, Wahdat showed no interest in a ceasefire. Wahdat leaders agreed to the ceasefire when they lost hope of any military gain.

According to reliable sources within Wahdat, the moderate leaders of the party were unhappy about the start of war by Abdul Ali Mazari, the leader of Hezb Wahdat.

Mazari is a resident of Charkent District of Balkh Province. At the start of Jehad, he developed differences with Harakat of Mohsini and was forced to flee to Iran. In Iran, he continued his religious studies in religious schools.

When Hezb Wahdat was formed under the auspices of Iranian government, Mazari was appointed as the head of that organization. Mazari is believed to be very close to Ali Khamenei, the spiritual leader of Iran. He receives funds from Iran. But Iranian officials have told the government that the funds reaching Mazari comes from private sources and that the government was not providing any money to him.

Iranian diplomats in Kabul tried to mediate a ceasefire. Foreign Minister Ali Akber Velayati sent a letter to Prof. Rabbani expressing deep concern over the clashes in Kabul. During Velayat's visit to Kabul, Afghan officials had complained to him about the extreme policies of Mazari.

Hezb Wahdat expected Hikmatyar to join fighting against the government. According to a source in the Defense Ministry, Mazari or his representatives, had met with Hikmatyar in Charasayab seeking Hezb's assistance before the start of war. Hezb Islami had promised to send him arms and ammunition, but forces of Prof. Sayyaf prevented the dispatch of Hikmatyar's supplies to Wahdat during fighting.

The government believes that Hezb Wahdat initiated the clashes to disrupt the Hal-o-Aqд council. Hezb Wahdat claims to represent all Afghan Shias who, according to Wahdat, form 25 percent of the population of the country. Convening of the Hal-o-Aqд disproved that party's inflated claims.

When the government and Wahdat were signing the ceasefire agreement, forces belonging to Dostum carried out a show of force in the eastern parts of the city. It was prompted by an accident involving security forces and a group of Dostum's men.

They quickly brought out their tanks and took control of the roads between the airport and Baibash. They looted houses and beat up people along the roads. They also attacked a unit of Mujahideen under Commander Qaseem. Qaseem was injured and some of his men were killed, and had to withdraw from Baibash. Dostum forces took control of these areas because the forces of the Defense Ministry were not expecting an attack from east while they were busy fighting in the west.

Although the incident was described as 'misunderstanding' it is believed that the show of force was pre-planned to bully political concessions from the government.

Government intelligence sources

To page (2)
Clashes designed to disrupt Hal-o-Aqd

From page 1

As reported by Radio Moscow, Radio Teheran, BBC and VOA as a successful coup. They reported that Commander Masood was missing and Prof. Rabbani was besieged. They also reported that the presidential palace and defense ministry were bombed by Dostum planes.

Despite the presence of foreign journalists in Kabul, why did international news agencies spread such a lie?

Hezb Wahdat had misled Radio Teheran, while the former communists passed the wrong story to Radio Moscow. The Western media were deceived by the UN officials based in Kabul. They passed the disinformation through their fancy satellite phone to Islamabad, where it was given to news agencies. The UN label stuck on the false report, gave it undeserved credibility.

The Western news agencies ignored the true reports of their correspondents in Kabul and accepted the wrong story passed by the UN officials. The incident forced an honest foreign journalist based in Kabul to apologize to his colleagues, for the harm done to the government and people of Afghanistan by international news agencies.

Why did the UN commit such a mistake, and why was their report taken more seriously than the reports of correspondents present in Kabul?

The Kabul office of UN is run by Afghans. These people had connections with the former regime and have a secular outlook. A government headed in name by Pir Gailani and supported by Dostum would be more acceptable to them than the Islamic government of Prof. Rabbani. The Afghans working for the UN consider themselves part of the issue and cannot remain neutral. This is the reason for their indulgence in spreading rumors against the Islamic government.

In a press conference, Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Masood said that the main purpose of troublemakers was to disrupt convening of the Hal-o-Aqd meeting. He said no force in the face of the earth could stop the Hal-o-Aqd council. He added that foreign hands were involved in the disturbances, but did not elaborate.

Dostum showed readiness to ease tension and pulled out his troops from some of the positions they had captured.

Hindus destroy Babri mosque

The destruction of the historic Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India, by extremist Hindus on December 6 has angered Muslims all over the world.

The Afghan foreign ministry has issued a statement condemning the destruction of the mosque.

The Babri mosque was built in the 16th century. Hindu extremists, who claim it rests on the birthplace of their god Ram, want to destroy the mosque and build a Hindu temple in its place.

The supreme court of India had refused to sanction the extremists' plan, but the central government failed to protect the mosque when the mob of Hindu activists attacked. Police on duty for the protection of the mosque made little effort to stop them from destroying it.

The incident provoked a chain of violence in India. More than 1,000 people, mostly of them Muslims, were killed either in clashes with the police or during communal violence. The central government of India promised to rebuild the mosque, and also banned six Hindu and Muslim parties accused of spreading communal hatred. Jamaat Islami of India was one of the blacklisted parties.

Muslims all over the world protest the destruction of the mosque. In Pakistan, thousands of people took to the streets to demonstrate against the crime. Angry protesters set fire to several Hindu temples and attacked shops owned by Hindus. Protest rallies were also reported from Bangladesh, the UAE and some other countries.

Destroying a mosque and building a temple in its place would have dangerous consequences for stability and peace all over the world. There is not a single country whose subjects are all followers of one religion. Rebuilding the Babri mosque is the only way to assure Indian Muslims that their mosques and shrines are safe. It will help restore confidence in the government of India that it is able to safeguard the rights of its minorities.
100,000 Tajiks take refuge in northern Afghanistan

About 100,000 Tajik refugees have crossed the Amu river into Afghanistan since the communists regained power in Dushanbe about one month ago. The refugees include men, women and children. The bulk of the refugees have crossed into Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz and Balkh provinces. The local authorities in the north, Mujahideen parties and ordinary people are providing assistance to the refugees. They have been lodged in schools, government buildings and mosques. The refugees are in dire need of food, warm clothes, shelter and medicine. Most of the refugees have come empty-handed leaving behind all their belongings. The refugees cross the river during the night on improvised barges because the soldiers of the CIS who guard the border do not allow them to cross the river into Afghanistan in daytime. There are reports of the drowning of several hundred refugees in the river.

The massive influx of the Tajik refugees is prompted by the oppressive measures taken by the supporters of the former communist regime. Supporters of the movement of Islamic and democratic reforms are being attacked by supporters of the government. They are driven out of their villages and their houses are being burned. A Western aid worker heard a communist saying that the villages were being burnt so that refugees should not return.

Unrest in Tajikistan began with the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. The people were demanding Islamic and democratic reforms. President Nabiev, the head of the communist party of Tajikistan, was forced to flee, leaving the Islamists and democrats to take control of Dushanbe. Communists provoked regional and ethnic hatred to pave way for their return to power. It seems that the forces of the CIS states, stationed in Tajikistan, sympathizes with the communists. The neighboring Uzbekistan which is also ruled by the former communists seemed worried about taking of power by non-communists in Tajikistan.

Afghanistan is being accused by the forces of CIS states of providing weapons for the Tajik insurgents. The Islamic State of Afghanistan has categorically denied the charges stating that what was happening in Tajikistan was an internal problem of that country. While the stated policy of the Kabul is clear, it is difficult to control the border between the two countries. Some people might have tried to get weapons from some individuals and groups in Afghanistan, but the scale of that in relation to the invasion crossing the border has always been exaggerated by the security forces of the CIS.

The violence of communists in Tajikistan is directed mainly against the people of Pamir who are thought to be supporters of the Islamic movement. Aid workers have reported that unarmed opponents of the regime are being killed in the streets of Dushanbe by communist bands.

The Tajik refugees have been forced to take refuge in Afghanistan in a difficult time. The winter, political problems in Afghanistan and shortage of essential commodities will make provision of aid to the refugees difficult for the Afghan government.

The people in the north sympathize with the Tajik refugees for many reasons: Some of the people living in the north had escaped the communist persecution of the Stalin era. They also experienced the tyranny of the Afghan communists and the occupation of Soviet forces. They know how difficult it is to live under the communist rule. The people of Tajikistan share common religion, language and culture with the people of Afghanistan. They also have been forced to leave their homes to protect their religion against communists onslaughts. Sympathy of the local population might help the refugees to feel safe despite economic hardship.

The reaction of the international community to the exodus of the Tajik refugees has been slow.

Nasruddin's Fables

That's why they bunged it up

Nasruddin was very thirsty and was happy when he saw by the roadside a water-pipe whose outlet was bunged with a piece of wood. Putting his open mouth near the stopper, he pulled. There was such a rush of water that he was knocked over.

"Ooh!" roared Nasruddin, "That's why they bunged you up, is it? You have not yet learned any sense!"

There is a different time-scale

Nasruddin went to a Turkish bath. As he was poorly dressed the attendants treated him in a casual manner, gave him only a scrap of soap and an old towel. When he left, Nasruddin gave the two men a gold coin each. He had not complained, and they could not understand it. Could it be, they wondered, that if he had been better treated he would have given an even larger tip? The following week Nasruddin appeared again. This time, of course, he was looked after like a king. After being massaged, perfumed and treated with the utmost difference, he left the bath, handing each attendant the smallest possible copper coin.

"This," said Nasruddin, "is for last time. The gold coins were for this time."

Narrated Aisha: Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) used to accept gifts and used to give something in return.

[Al-Bukhari]
Editorial

Tajik refugees should be helped

While Afghanistan faces its own economic problems, the influx of around 100,000 Tajik refugees will pose extra problems for our war-torn country.

Afghanistan is facing tremendous problems of an economic, political and security nature. These problems were created by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the oppressive rule of communists.

These difficulties will severely limit the effective assistance Afghanistan can provide to Tajik refugees.

The Tajiks, however, enjoy the sympathy of the people of Afghanistan. They have been forced out of their country by people like those who forced five million Afghans to flee their homes and take refuge in neighboring countries.

Like Afghans, Tajiks are struggling to establish a just Islamic and democratic government in their country after long years of tyranny. Such people deserve support and sympathy of all peace-loving people of the world, especially Muslims.

While the government of Afghanistan will abide by international laws and abstain from interference in the internal affairs of other countries, it should help publicize the plight of the Tajiks to the world community. This will pave the way for the supply of international humanitarian assistance to the refugees and raise the awareness of the world community about the events in Tajikistan. Such an awareness is necessary to pressure the authorities in Dushanbe to put an end to the persecution of the opponents of communist rule.

The world community should act quickly in providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees in the north of Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan should help the UN and other relief organizations to bring aid to the refugees. The world community also should exert pressure on the government of Tajikistan to stop forcing its own people out of the country. The government of Tajikistan might try to hide the violence unleashed by communists against supporters of democracy as a "campaign against Islamic fundamentalism." The world should not be misled by these slogans. What is taking place across the Amu river is the massacre of ordinary people by communists. Now that communism has been defeated world-wide, the world community should not tolerate persecution of the people of Tajikistan by a gang of hard-line communist survivors.

Disinformation campaign against Islamic government

The mass media of neighboring and western countries broadcast a false story on December 9 that General Dostum's warplanes had bombed the presidential palace and defense ministry during an attempted coup. They also reported that Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Masood was missing, possibly a captive of the coup-makers, and that rebel forces were besieging President Rabbani in his office.

While Radio Iran and Radio Moscow heard the disinformation from opponents of the Islamic government affiliated with Russia and Iran, UN officials in Islamabad fed the tale to the Western media.

Hezb Wahdat - which had signed a ceasefire agreement with the government the day before - sent word of the "successful coup" to Tehran, and the state-controlled radio of Iran published as they would have any other political commune from that party. Communist followers of Gen. Dostum gave the false news to Radio Moscow.

UN employees in Kabul, who are Afghan nationals, passed the news of the bombing of the presidential palace to the UN office in Islamabad on their satellite phone. From there it was passed to all Western news agencies. The Western news agencies used the false news without checking it with their own correspondents based in Kabul.

Refugees return home from Iran

Afghan refugees in Iran officially started to return home on December 1 from Dokhtar border point in Taybad, Khurasan Province, in the presence of representatives of Afghanistan, Iran and the United Nations high Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), IRNA reported.

Over two million Afghan refugees sought asylum in Iran after the 1978 communist coup. Some 300,000 of these refugees have already returned home since the establishment of the interim Islamic Government in Kabul last April.

Jean Marie Fakhouri, UNHCR deputy director of the regional bureau for southwest Asia, and Ahmad Hassani, deputy director for foreign citizens' affairs at Iran's Interior Ministry, discussed the return of the Afghan refugees.
Dear editor,

I hope that you and your family are well, and that your important work for the reconstruction of Afghanistan is continuing fruitfully. In appreciation of your assistance to Fazel Haq Saikal and myself when we were working in Peshawar earlier this year, I enclose a copy of our International Peace Academy Occasional Paper: Political Order in Post-Communist Afghanistan (Boulier: Lynee Rienner, 1992), which examines a number of steps which might be taken to assist the restoration of social and political stability.

I also enclose a cheque to cover the costs of my subscription to AFGHANews, which remains an indispensable source of information for those of us who are trying to follow Afghan affairs from afar.

Dr. William Maley
Australia

Dear editor,

I want to thank you for sending me AFGHANews for the last many years, particularly since the Mujahideen government moved from Pakistan to Afghanistan and the communist government has moved to the pages of history. I have found this publication to be very informative and useful.

In one of your earlier issues of AFGHANews from Kabul you reported on a conversation between you, Mr. Masood, and Professor Rabbani regarding the importance of FREE PRESS in Afghanistan. I could not agree with you more. Without a free and impartial press, it would be impossible to establish a democratic system of government where issues could be freely discussed, all opinions heard, all options evaluated, and the best decisions made. I am looking forward to a day when a freely elected government takes control in Afghanistan.

I wish the current Mujahideen government best of luck for working toward paving the way for the establishment of an elected government in my beloved Afghanistan. In the meantime, I hope all Mujahideen groups realize that the people of Afghanistan have suffered more than their fair share. Until last April the people suffered because of a communist government, which was imposed upon our people by a major imperialist power. It took the cooperation of the Mujahideen parties and the sacrifice of the entire nation to put an end to an illegal and unrepresentative government. There doesn't appear to be any legitimate reason now to inflict more pain and suffering upon the already devastated community.

Read about all the fighting and destruction especially in Kabul makes me sad that the Mujahideen groups cannot solve their disagreements peacefully and through discussions and compromises. As I recall from my days in the Faculty of Engineering and the Kabul University dormitory in the late sixties and early seventies, many of the current Mujahideen leaders were among the leading figures who fought against the Parchamites and Khalqites side by side to reverse the spread of communism in Afghanistan.

I believe it is time for all Mujahideen parties to set aside their differences and work toward establishment of a democratically elected government. Afghanistan is big enough for all Afghans to live side by side in peace and prosperity. If a particular party believes that it has a larger support than others give them credit for, eventually the people will speak and people will elect the best servants to govern them. Also, as the government moves towards democracy, the Mujahideen should attempt to learn the bitter lessons that the Islamic Republic of Iran learned and make sure they do not repeat Iran's mistakes and copy those policies and procedures that worked.

In summary, I would like to repeat the message of your June 1, 1992 editorial titled "Elections sole path to peace." The goal of the interim government of Afghanistan should be to bring peace to the already deeply wounded populace and work toward a speedy election. Let the vote of the people speak. Afghanistan cannot afford any more destruction and the people have suffered more than enough.

To help you with the continued publication of your very fine fortnightly paper, I am enclosing a check.

Zia A. Yanmayee, Ph. D.
Dean, School of Engineering
Gonzaga University
Spokane - U.S.A.

Gulabuddin Shirzai, a trader, has donated two cars and $5000 to the commission organizing the Hal-o-Aqil council.

The birthday of Guru Baba Nanak, the spiritual leader of Sikhs, was celebrated by the Hindus and Sikhs of Kabul in Kartê-i-Parwan on November 13. The Minister of Information and Culture Mohammad Sedique Chakari attended the ceremony along with the Indian ambassador in Kabul.

Security forces in Kabul seized 33 guns which were being smuggled out of capital on November 5. The smugglers were arrested.

Prof. Rabbani has congratulated Yasar Arafat on the occasion of the anniversary of formation of the State of Palestine. He assured the Palestinian leader of Afghanistan's support for the right of self-determination of the people of Palestine.

The deputy governor of Ningarhar Haji Shemali has escaped unhurt from a bomb explosion in his office. The bomb exploded after Shemali had left the office. Shemali has accused a commander of Ithihad-i-Islami of Prof. Sayyaf. That party has rejected the allegation.

Admission examinations for the Ningarhar University were given to 1600 boys and girls. Those passing the exam will be accepted in agriculture, education, theology and health faculties.

In interview with Iranian TV and Radio, General Dostum has claimed that he commands 150,000 armed men. The claim seems highly exaggerated. Dostum used to say that he had 30,000 armed men in Kabul while in reality his forces in Kabul were less than 3000 men.

Sayed Salman Gallani, the foreign minister of the Islamic State, attended the sixth extraordinary session of OIC foreign minister's conference to discuss the situation in Bosnia. Afghanistan has cut its diplomatic relation with Belgrad.
THE BEAR TRAP: AFGHANISTAN'S UNTOLD STORY is the name of a book written by Brigadier Mohammad Yousuf, who served as the head of Afghanistan Desk of Pakistan's directorate of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) for several years during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. This book is useful, but could mislead those who do not have enough background on the complicated Afghan issue.

The writer claims that he led the Afghan war against the Soviet Union until close to their final victory, and regrets that after his untimely retirement, the Mujahideen's advance to victory slowed due to foreign conspiracies designed to prevent establishment of an Islamic government in Afghanistan. He blames the US for creating hurdles on the way of Mujahideen's final march to victory.

Brigadier Yousuf overstates his own role and that of ISI in forcing the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan, and underestimates the role of Afghan field commanders and political leaders in achieving the historic victory. He calls the Mujahideen "my men," and boasts that it was "my job" to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan.

This theme of self-praise is not only inconsistent with the reality, but an insult to Afghans. No reasonable person can ignore the positive role that Pakistan played in giving shelter to the Afghan refugees and allowing the passage of arms and ammunition to the Mujahideen through its territory. But calling an officer of Pakistan's secret service "the leader of Jihad" is absurd.

The writer's description of the character of an average Afghan follows uncritically the simplistic stereotype British writers created during their abortive efforts to conquer Afghanistan. It is both imprecise and probably tailor imposed to impress Western readers.

The writer's evaluation of the Mujahideen parties is interesting, but heavily biased. He has tried to present Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and his party in the best possible light. Dividing the Mujahideen into fundamentalists and moderates, he portrays Hikmatyar as the leader of the first group. Describing Gulbuddin as a man whose honesty was beyond doubt, and whose party was the most effective and organized among the Mujahideen, helps Yousuf justify the decision to give Hizb-i-Islami the lion's share of foreign assistance.

As an example of Hikmatyar's "effectiveness" he describes the thoroughness of the communication links Hikmatyar allowed to be established between Hizb battefronts and ISI headquarters in Pakistan. Most major field commanders opposed this project, because it would have made them tools of foreign influence. Hikmatyar and his commanders, however, obediently complied.

Yousuf wrongly claims that Hikmatyar helped Massoud during the Soviet's seventh offensive on Panjshir in 1984. Hizb not only failed to cooperate with Massoud, but also - as he had during past offensives - blocked Massoud's communication lines while the fighting was in progress.

Despite his adulation and his post as one of Pakistan's top spymasters, Yousuf's information about Hikmatyar's background appears sketchy. He describes Gulbuddin as a qualified engineer, graduated from the Kabul University, when in fact Hikmatyar only finished the first year of engineering coursework before leaving college to pursue his political activities.

Brigadier Yousuf claims that the Mujahideen were opposed to direct deals with foreign countries, especially the USA, in order to preserve their credibility. This was, certainly true to an extent, but most parties felt that living in the shadow of a neighboring country's intelligence organization was also discrediting.

Prof. Rababi tried to break the mould, forged by ISI in order to limit the political activities of the Mujahideen, by asking foreign countries to recognize the Afghan resistance as the sole representative of the Afghan people. He visited Washington in 1986 to try and achieve this. ISI, who wanted a monopoly on Afghan affairs, persuaded Hikmatyar to denounce the visit.

The author claims that distribution of arms, ammunition and funds to the Mujahideen parties was based on their military strength. There is plenty of evidence to show that this was not true. Hizb-i-Islami received most of the assistance sent to the Mujahideen without producing any great result on the battlefield. On the other hand, effective commanders like Massoud and Ismail Khan received very little assistance, despite their outstanding military performance in the war against the Soviets. They were penalized because they did not take orders from outsiders on how to fight their war.

The unfair distribution of arms and ammunition had been so obvious that US Congressmen who sponsored bills authorizing aid to the Mujahideen began to complain publicly. The CIA continued to support ISI's Afghan policy, but Congress began pressuring the American administration to make sure that aid reached the effective commanders. ISI, apparently with the backing of their deluded loyalists in the CIA, ignored these recommendations and followed the same policy until the fall of the communist regime.

Yousuf admits that weapon and funds were used as a means of influence. At the start of Jihad, the parties were involved in the distribution of weapons. This helped the parties to exert some control over the commanders and to check the level of corruption. ISI's control over arms distribution increased with the passage of time until it eventually alone had any say. As the parties' control decreased, the level of corruption and arms-dealing among some Mujahideen increased.

Brigadier Yousuf exaggerates the effectiveness of military training given to the Mujahideen by Pakistani instructors. The Mujahideen were not given new weapons from them, but it is completely untrue that the training programs run by ISI made the Mujahideen more organized or improved their tactics. In those areas of Afghanistan where ISI was directly involved, in fact, no organization was introduced on the battlefields till the last days of Jahad. On the contrary, the areas away from the influence of ISI - like Herat and the northeast - became more organized with the passage of time.

The author complains that journalists who visited Afghanistan accorded undue importance to some commanders. This probably is an indirect reference to Commander Massoud. Developments during 1992 proved the journalist's observation to be more accurate than ISI assessments set forth in THE BEAR TRAP.

The author states that Pakistan tried to create unity among the Mujahideen. Efforts to unite the Mujahideen parties according to preconceived Pakistani plans were always in the works, but ISI never helped the Mujahideen to unite on a plan of their own design. Some of the problems that we have witnessed since the fall of the communist regime were created in Pakistan.

Pakistan's strongman Gen. Zia U Haq evidently had learned a lesson from the PLO's 1971 "Black September" experience in Jordan, during his tour as a military advisor there. While the chances of a Mujahideen victory seemed remote, Pakistan did not want an Afghan PLO to emerge on its soil.

On the plus side, THE BEAR TRAP reveals that 50 percent of the assistance reaching the Mujahideen was given by Saudi Arabia. The media used to talk a lot about the US assistance to the Mujahideen without throwing enough light on the assistance the Saudis gave the Afghans.

Nevertheless, the book's most telling aspect is that it bemoans "the failure of the Jahad, though it reached print several weeks after the Mujahideen entered Kabul. One chapter of THE BEAR TRAP is entitled "KABUL MUST BURN." This refers to ISI director-general Abdullah Khan Akhbar's vow to intensify fighting in Kabul to make life difficult for the Soviets. This never quite happened the way Akhbar wanted during the Red Army occupation, nor even during Najib's reign.

Better late than never, though, Akhbar's protege Gulbuddin Hikmatyar finally fulfilled his patron's motto this year - months after the fall of the communist regime and the formation of an Islamic government in Afghanistan.

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Better late than never, though, Akhbar's protege Gulbuddin Hikmatyar finally fulfilled his patron's motto this year - months after the fall of the communist regime and the formation of an Islamic government in Afghanistan.
Hezb threatens to kill POWs

It is interesting that Hezb is threatening to kill Russian POWs after the establishment of the Islamic government while Afghan currency was also being printed in Russia during the former communist regime. Hikmatyar had never threatened to kill POWs because of Moscow's support to the communist regime.

The UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has called for the release of all POWs of the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan. He said ICRC was ready for cooperation in securing the release of POWs.

Iona Andronov, a member of the Russian Parliament and advisor to President Boris Yeltsin, visited Kabul on November 25 to discuss the release of POWs with the Afghan authorities. He met with President Rabbani, Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Masood and other officials. He asked for the release of Russian POWs.

President Rabbani has asked for reopening of the Russian embassy in Kabul, which was closed during Hezb's rocket attacks on Kabul in August.

Mujaddidi visits India

Prof. Mujaddidi, the first president of the interim government, paid a private visit to India where he was received by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of that country. The Indian government provided hotel accommodation to Mujaddidi and dozens of his bodyguards.

Mujaddidi described his visit to India as 'private', 'nonpolitical' and 'spiritual', refusing to disclose the contents of his talks with the Indian leaders. Mujaddidi, who wished to become the president of the country, might have discussed political and military situation in Afghanistan with his Indian hosts.

Ironically, the visit of Mujaddidi with the Indian Prime Minister coincided with the destruction of the Babri mosque by extremist Hindus.

The warm welcome accorded to Mujaddidi, a Muslim and spiritual leader, by the Indian officials might have been designed to help the Indian government in its domestic political situation at a time when Muslims were critical of Delhi's handling of the Babri mosque issue.

Making use of his 'private' and 'spiritual' visit to India, Mujaddidi attended a gathering of Afghans in the Afghan embassy in Delhi and talked to them about the situation in Afghanistan. Although there is no information about the contents of his talks, Mujaddidi has generally been unable to refrain from criticizing the government and launching personal attacks on President Rabbani and Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Masood.

Organizing such anti-government meetings in Afghan missions abroad is nothing new or strange. Old diplomats, and even some newly-appointed ones, have not hesitated to speak against the Islamic government in public and to allow the embassies to be used by the opponents of the government for propaganda reasons.

Swedish Committee celebrates its tenth anniversary

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, a private relief organization, celebrated the tenth anniversary of its establishment in Peshawar.

This committee gives aid to Afghanistan in the fields of health, education and reconstruction.

Its main office is in Peshawar while it has opened its regional offices in Takhar, Jalalabad and Wardak.

The Swedish Committee was formed by volunteers and women who sympathized with the struggle of Afghans for freedom. The committee has a central office in Stockholm and 25 local committees operating in different parts of Sweden.

The projects launched by the committee are funded partly through private donations and partly through Overseas Development Fund of the government of Sweden.

One of the people who played a leading role in expansion of the work of the committee was Anders Fange, the director of the committee in Pakistan, who is now working for a relief organization in Ethiopia.

The Swedish Committee has done a great deal of support work for the cause of freedom of Afghanistan.

Parwan people live in peace

Government offices, schools and business are open in Charikar, the provincial capital of Parwan. Azimi, the deputy Amir of Jamiat in Kapisa and Parwan provinces, has been appointed the governor of Parwan. The transfer of power in Charikar was orderly, and government and private properties were protected.

The road between Charikar and Kabul is open, but some Mujahideen groups have established checkpoints along the road. They collect tolls and take government vehicles and property passing along the road. Hezb Islam's joining the government in Kabul has not improved the situation.

The Defense Ministry has avoided the use of force to provide security for the road so far, hoping that political measures could solve the problem.
Disinformation campaign against Islamic government

From page(4)

BBC, in fact, had received the story filed by its reporter in Kabul - contradicting the false reports - at least an hour before the BBC's 1330 news report, but for reasons which remain unclear, the UN-sourced false report, filed from the far-off BBC Islamabad bureau, was broadcast instead.

There were obvious reasons for Radio Teheran and Radio Moscow to use the false reports passed along by their clients. But the UN officials' motives and the unquestioning acceptance of the false reports by the Western media, without checking with their own sources, requires some study.

The Kabul-based UN employees responsible for spreading the false report are Afghans. They were affiliated with the former communist regime, and have secular views.

The abortive Dostum show of force which prompted the coup d'état rumors could have brought a secular government to power. Rumors of such a coup, led by supporters of the former regime, had been circulating in Kabul's tiny foreign community for weeks. The UN employees who saw a pro-government jets flying over Kabul in the aftermath of the previous evening's street clashes were victims of their own wishful thinking: they merely broadcast their fantasy.

These employees were hired by the UN when Benon Sevan was head of the UN office in Afghanistan. The collapse of his peace plan turned him against the Mujahideen; it is quite possible that the Afghan UN workers still share Sevan's antipathy.

The false report issued from the same office in which Najib remains in hiding. It was passed to the outside world over the same satellite telephone which connects Najib to his exiled wife for nightly chats. The possibility that Najib had a hand in spreading the disinformation is not confirmed, but one cannot rule out the possibility. As the former head of KHAD his experience in that regard is vast and probably unparalleled.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan should raise the issue of involvement of the UN officials in Kabul in spreading rumors against the Islamic government to high officials in that organization. It should make clear that the political immunity of UN officials does not entitle them to engage in activities harmful to the host country.

The UN should investigate and punish those who misused the name of the UN for political ends. The news agencies must also be more careful in reporting stories sourced to UN officials in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The UN and the foreign media owe the Afghan people an apology for the role they played in spreading propaganda against the Islamic government and creating worry for Afghans all over the world.

The Islamic government has always cooperated with foreign journalists and has not put any restriction on their journalistic activities. Fortunately, the foreign journalists based in Kabul were not involved in the false December 9 reports. All were deeply unhappy that their bosses accepted the false propaganda spread by irresponsible UN employees.

It is worth mentioning that some foreign correspondents, who have been busy spreading false reports against the Islamic government, come to Kabul in the company of some Mujahideen parties without holding valid visas from the Islamic government. One such so-called reporter is Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan, a Syrian Arab who works closely with Hikmatyar. He came to Kabul, without a valid visa, in the company of Afghan journalists working for foreign organizations. He stayed in the BBC house while filing his reports.

While the Islamic government should extend all sorts of support to genuine foreign journalists, it should not allow foreign nationals to enter Afghanistan without proper documents and valid visas. Nor should the government allow political propagandists to pose as journalists.

Appointments in the North

The Defense Ministry of the Islamic State of Afghanistan has announced the following new appointments in the North of the country:

- Sayyed Najmuddin, commander of 6th army corps
- Mohammad Amir, commander of Kunduz division
- Mohammad Arif Khan, deputy commander of Kunduz division
- Abdul Basir Khalid, commander of Badakhshan division

AFGHANews wishes its Christian readers a merry Christmas and a happy new year