

THE TRAGEDY OF UPROOTED AFGHANS

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Introduction: This article was written prior to, and updated after the September 11 incident with a view to documenting the main observations of the author concerning the uprooted Afghans for the benefit of Diaspora, Islam and Gender research project (SSHRCC) at York University in Toronto.

Afghan Diaspora: The world wide Diaspora includes 13 million refugees displaced outside their homelands by war, persecutions or disaster. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated on behalf of international community to protect and assist them mainly through supporting the host governments. The worldwide internally displaced persons (IDPs) consist of 25 million people. International community has not as yet mandated any UN agency to support IDPs. They are being supported collectively by the aid agencies that may, or may not, be present (or invited) in their countries of origin. Afghan Diaspora consists of two major groups. The smaller urban elite groups (hundreds of thousands), who left Afghanistan in search of physical, mental and legal security, as well as equitable opportunities. They consist of the more educated and resourceful refugees and migrants, who have mostly sought asylum in (or immigrated to) the 13 more affluent democratic countries, generally known as the traditional refugee recipient countries [1]. Tens of thousands also migrated to India (over 20,000), Central Asian countries and Russian Federation (some 100,000). By far the larger group (millions) of poor Afghan farmers and shepherds with little or no formal education were obliged to leave their homeland to save their lives, in search of physical security, water, basic food and temporary gainful employment. They had no other options but to cross the border (legally and illegally) to Pakistan and Iran; the only two Muslim neighboring countries, which more often kept their borders open, and helped save the lives of millions of Afghan asylum seekers. Nearly 80% of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan consist of women, children and elderly.

Since the Coup D'etat of People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) on 27 April 1978 and the fall of Mohammed Davoud's government, Afghanistan entered a dramatic political upheaval. Deterioration of politico-military situation, intervention of the Soviet forces, intervention of USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran and Uzbekistan, perennial armed conflict between different Afghan ethnic groups, and finally intervention of the coalition forces continuously gave rise to successive waves of internal and cross-border displacements. As the conflict intensified, the number of uprooted Afghans in Iran and Pakistan gradually increased to 6.2 million. The first wave of rural inhabitants started to cross the border along with their remaining herds, due to aerial bombardments of their farmlands and water canals. Some managed to sell their properties cheaply before their departure. The first phase of cross-border movements started in 1981, and steadily continued until the resignation of Najibullah (14 April 1992), and occupation of Kabul by non-Pashtun *Mojahedin* [2] forces, lead by Masoud on 26 April 1992. After the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA) came into power (28 April 1992), over 1.5 million jubilant and hopeful Afghans repatriated voluntarily and mostly spontaneously (without waiting to receive assistance from UNHCR) during 1992-1993

(1.15 million from Pakistan, and over 350,000 from Iran). According to UNHCR statistics, over 4 million refugees returned home between 1992 and 1999. Among whom however, many who could not become engaged in farming due to drought, and those whose areas of origin became a combat zone were obliged to return back (mostly illegally) to their previous countries of asylum (Pakistan or Iran). The second major successive waves of Afghans crossed their borders mostly illegally, entering Iran and Pakistan during the years of Taleban rule (1996-2001). The number of IDPs also increased to over 1.2 million, some of whom crossed the border to Pakistan and border areas of Iran during American air strikes after the September 11. According to the UN, 40-70% of residents in Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Herat and other cities and towns fled their homes during October and November 1991 air strikes. The lawlessness, banditry, looting of relief goods and attacking aid workers and other foreigners (8 foreign journalists were killed in Afghanistan in November 2001 alone) discouraged the large-scale return of many Afghan refugees. The truck drivers became more fearful. Moreover, the minority Pashtuns who were displaced from the north did not return because they feared the revenge killings and lootings of the Northern Alliance forces, whose human rights records may not have been as bad as the numerous massacres and torched earth policy committed by Taleban forces, but it was as inhuman and deadly towards the prisoners of war, and women of other ethnic groups (i.e. Hazara, Pashtun).

Iranian Scenario: During the last 22 years Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted the largest refugee population in the world, including over 3.1 million Afghans and over 1.4 million Iraqis, who fled from Iraq during the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran War and the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Refugees in Iran numbered around 4.5 million at its peak in 1991-1992 (out of a global refugee population of 17.5 million during that time, or 25.7%) [3]. the government has been suffering from international political isolation since the beginning of Revolution. For a number of years during the later part of Davoud's government, Iranian authorities were admitting a sizable number of Afghan seasonal workers into Iran. The author interviewed one of the Afghan refugees in Tehran in 1987, who was working closely with the Afghan border authorities during Davoud time. According to him, the number of Afghan seasonal workers in Iran before the Revolution was some 300,000. The same source revealed that after the Coup D'etat, half of the Afghan seasonal workers in Iran (150,000) voluntarily returned to their country, primarily because the Taraki government had announced that they would distribute land among the landless farmers. At the beginning of Afghan influx into Iran, the government's attention was focused on the Iraqi military attack and occupation of vast territories in the west and southwest provinces, and underestimated the consequences of Afghan refugee's presence in eastern provinces. The Afghan refugees freely moved to areas where they could find access to water near small villages and tertiary towns without serious local opposition, and gradually constructed their own villages (consisting of mud-brick houses, shops, bath houses and mosques). The author personally visited the famous and beautiful Shams-Abad village in South Khorasan, which was later raised to the ground by the local authorities, after the inhabitants were repatriated and relocated to other "Agro-Residential Complexes" (communities) in isolated desert areas. At the beginning of Afghan influx, the government was under the impression that they can afford to admit and support the fellow Muslim Afghans without international assistance. This policy continued until they

faced a situation where the communicable diseases which had been previously eradicated, started to reappear again in the eastern provinces of Sistan/Baluchestan and South Khorasan. In 1985 UNHCR agreed to provide an average of 12-15 million dollars per year to the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran (GIRI), as “complimentary assistance” to some two million Afghan and Iraqi refugees in Iran. The pretext was that Islamic Republic of Iran is an oil producing country and can afford to absorb most of the burden. The Iranian authorities estimated the cost of maintaining 2 million refugees in Iran at US\$10 million per day (or US \$5/P/D) [4]. This is an issue, which the GIRI has never failed to complain about since the beginning of refugees’ influx. On the other hand, the government never approved a separate budget for the upkeep of refugees in the country. They expected the provincial authorities to absorb the relevant costs (for health and education) within their provincial budgets. The bread was traditionally subsidized centrally. This generous policy continued until 1995 when the government stopped any subsidies for refugees’ health and education services.

The government of Iran had ratified the 1951 Convention and 1964 Protocol on the Status of Refugees before the Revolution, mainly due to the 1975 Iran-Iraq Algiers Accord and the tens of thousands of Barzani Kurds (previously supported by Iranian government) taking asylum in Iran. The Iranian Parliament and Senate had passed the Convention and Protocol with some reservations (e.g. employment, property ownership, naturalization, etc.), which were then signed into law by the king in 1976. Nevertheless, the Afghan Refugees legal status (Convention-based) in the Islamic Republic of Iran was not officially recognized as such. Until 1992, most Afghan refugees fleeing the communist regime and entering Iran were provided with “blue cards,” indicating their status as involuntary migrants (*Mohajeran*), not refugees (*Panahandegan*). The blue cardholders were granted indefinite permission to stay legally in Iran, and until 1995 also had access to subsidized health care and food, as well as free primary and secondary education. However, they were bared from owning their own private businesses, houses, and working as street vendors [5]. At a later stage, the registered Afghans were officially allowed to engage in 16 hard labor jobs, mainly in construction and agriculture sectors. A small number of Afghans hold “white cards”, which clearly stipulated their status as refugees and entitled them to greater rights than the blue cards, including exemption from taxes, the right to work, and the right to obtain travel documents as stipulated by the 1951 Convention on Refugees Status. However, the white cards were issued inconsistently mainly to educated professionals, and disproportionately to those Iraqi refugees who had been granted refugee status by the Imperial Government of Iran prior to the revolution.

INGOs: In 1991 at the time of large scale Kurdish influx into Iran, many international non-government organizations (INGOs) volunteered to come and provide assistance to the Kurdish refugees. However, the authorities’ treatment of INGOs was such that, with the exception of Medicine San Frontiere (MSF), Okenden International (OI) and ICRI (an umbrella of British and Dutch aid organizations) which came to Iran at a later stage, most of the INGOs never came back to Iran in spite of repeated requests and workshops arranged by the government. The Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of Ministry of Interior hosted an international seminar on refugees in 1993 with participation of 20 INGOs. As a result, some clarifications were made on the ways

international assistance could be extended to refugees in Iran and provide relief to the displaced in the neighboring countries, such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan. Some willingness was also mentioned to provide land and facilities as integration assistance for some refugees in Iran, who may not be able to return to their country of origin (i.e. the Shi'a marshland dwellers of south-eastern Iraq, whose habitat became drained by Iraqi authorities). Part of the problem stems from the fact that there was no law, clarifying the status and conditions under which INGOs could operate in the country. The difficulties reportedly included opening bank accounts, delays in issuance of visas, approval of INGO project proposals and restrictions on internal travel. However, at an international NGO symposium held in Tehran in May 1999, the BAFIA announced that a new law that would establish the required legal framework was under consideration [6].

Smuggling: The GIRI has adopted a strong anti-narcotics policy since the 1979 revolution. But, due to severe economic underdevelopment of the south-eastern region, many Baluchs and Afghans have been engaged in smuggling between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan for centuries. Some of them even have dual or triple nationality. According to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), an opium poppy field is worth 15 times more than a food crop field. Afghan farmers sell their opium for the equivalent price of USD\$30/kilo in food. Smugglers earn US\$15-30 a day. Iran is the shortest route with only two border crossings from Afghanistan producers to European consumers. The Iranian anti-drug forces seized over 250 tons of narcotics in 2,000. UNDCP estimates that on average the states intercept between 10-20% of all the drugs [7].

Smuggling of fuel and other commodities has also undermined the economy and largely contributed to widespread corruption in the country. According to Ahmed Rashid, the transport Mafia's smuggling of fuel and other goods from Iran to Afghanistan and Pakistan led to revenue losses, crippled local industry and corrupted people at the highest level of government. Iranian officials privately admitted to Ahmed Rashid that the "Bonyads", or the state-run industrial foundations (which have been exempted from the beginning of revolution from paying taxes to GIRI, mainly due to their mandate of providing shelter and medical services to the homeless, powerless destitutes, and war handicapped), and the Revolutionary Guards were among the beneficiaries from smuggling of petroleum products, whose sale in Afghanistan earned 2,000-3,000% profit compared to Iran.

Afghanistan Scenario: In Afghanistan various people of different ethnic origin [8] and tribes, with different languages and religious beliefs have long lived and fought together and with each other. They have also suffered from long lasting transnational interventions and political crisis. Their history goes back to 3,000 BC when it was called Aryana. After 700 AD it was called Khorasan, and since beginning of 19th century it has been called Afghanistan. The Shi'a Hazaras together with other Afghan minorities and Pashtun patriots, who were against foreign domination and interference, have been perennially targeted for 200 years by Pashtun rulers, and subjected to continuous discrimination, persecutions and genocide. The inhuman treatment of Hazaras was especially pronounced during the reign of Amir Abdul Rahman, when the Hazaras resistance took place for 10

years. Hence, during the period 1880-1890 a large number of Hazaras fled to Iran, India (present day Pakistan), and Central Asian countries. Modern Afghanistan gradually took shape between 1884 and 1919, when Britain during the 3rd Anglo-Afghan War agreed to surrender its control of Afghan foreign policy and officially recognize Afghanistan's independence.

After the Coup D'état of April 27, 1978, the successive communist governments attempted to impose their radical and anti-religious policies through terror. Consequently, the armed resistance became widespread and the army rapidly disintegrated. This prompted the Soviet Union to airlift troops to Kabul on December 24, 1979 and began a 9 years occupation of the country. During the course of 1980s over 6 million Afghans were forced to flee their country, and many became internally displaced (IDPs) [9]. During the rule of Taleban, the socio-political situation in Afghanistan deteriorated on weekly, monthly and yearly basis, giving rise to the second phase of massive Afghan cross-border movement, and reduced rate of repatriation. The first decade of the conflict focused on rural areas, reducing the cultivable lands and agricultural production. The second decade brought widespread destruction of urban infrastructure, disintegration of government bureaucracy, economic deterioration, political isolation, and increasing dependence on remittances, begging and child work.

Afghanistan has some of the worst social indicators in the world. According to the World Bank Country Update (18 Dec. 2002) most people in the country still live in dire poverty. 70% of the population is malnourished. Only 23% have access to safe water, 12% to adequate sanitation, and 6% to electricity. Despite 82% increase in agricultural production during 2002 compared to 2001, an estimated 7 million people remain vulnerable to hunger. Most of the country's primary roads and 70% of the schools need repairs. Life expectancy at birth is 44 years, compared to 59 years for low-income countries worldwide. Some 45 women die each day (one every half an hour, 15,000 each year) of pregnancy-related causes due to lack of appropriate medical care, and indirect causes such as anemia and malaria. The estimated maternal mortality rate is 1,700 per 100,000 live births. A quarter of all live-born children (257 per 1,000 live birth compared to 74 in the region) die before the age of 5-many due to prenatal causes (including birth trauma and neonatal tetanus), diarrhea, pneumonia and vaccine-preventable diseases. Iron deficiency anemia is widespread, affecting half to two-third of children under 5, and as many as 30% of children have iodine deficiency in certain areas. One of every two children is malnourished, of whom large numbers are chronically malnourished. 45-59% of children show high levels of stunting (which is a contributing factor to maternal mortality amongst adolescent girls), and as many as half of the girls are married before the age of 18. Lishmania and TB remain public health problems that affect children directly and indirectly.

By late 1990s it is estimated that 10.3 million of the 21.4 million population of Afghanistan are children under 18 years of age. During the last two decades, protection and care for children has not been a priority or consideration of the authorities. During the last decade there was no countrywide recognized government and functioning constitution, no independent judiciary, and no provisions that prohibit or protect Afghans

against discrimination based on sex, religion, or ethnicity. The country was at the mercy of localized application of varying interpretations of Islamic law mixed with traditional (tribal) codes of justice. War continued to find its way into children's play, discussions and role models. Increasing number of boys were migrating to avoid conscription pressures and in search of work and education. By the end of the decade, 8 of every 20 school-age boys (around 1.5 million) and 19 of every 20 girls (around 2.2 million) across the country were not going to school (SCF-UK, Executive Summary). As a result of donor-assisted Back-to-School Campaign, over 3 million students enrolled in the 6,500 schools during 2002, and another 1.5 million are looking for schooling opportunities. Girls constitute 30% of total enrolment. Of the 70,000 teachers, almost 1/3 are women. Secondary schools and Kabul university are also functioning again.

400,000 Afghans were killed and another 400,000 injured in mine explosions since 1979. A staggering 13% of all Afghan families have had a relative killed or crippled in mine accidents, and over 300 people are killed or maimed every month. A third of all casualties are children under 18 years. Some 4,000 de-miners working for the UN and other NGOs were trying to de-mine the country as fast as possible. In 1998, after six years of extensive work, some 200 square miles of Kabul (out of a total of 500 square miles) had not been de-mined [10]. According to the Italian director of Kabul Rehabilitation Center, run by ICRC, 80% of the patients were landmine victims, of whom about 35% were younger than 14 years. The center (85% of its staff were also amputees) had treated 26,000 amputees and churned out 39,000 prostheses since opening in 1988. Experts estimate that Afghanistan has more than 300 square miles of un-cleared mine fields mostly in agricultural and grazing areas, and as many as 14 million antipersonnel and antitank mines might be present in those and other undiscovered fields. Moreover, UN officials estimate another 190 square miles have been littered with unexploded bombs, shells and mortar rounds, including about 25,000 "bomblets" from cluster bombs, since the start of the US military campaign. The UN estimates that it would take 7 years and cost about USD660 million to clear Afghanistan of its unexploded ordnance and mines. Finishing the job in 3 years would raise the price tag to about USD900 million [11]. Mine clearing started in Afghanistan in 1992 with the support of UN and international institutions. 25% of the active workforce in mine clearing was obliged to be reduced in late 1990s due to shortage of funds.

Repatriation: It is noteworthy that GIRI in 1990 organized the 9 Afghan Shi'a groups in Iran into a unified political front, called Wahdat. From November 1998 until the summer of 1999, the GIRI authorities began a stepped-up campaign to deport undocumented Afghan refugees, resulting in the involuntary return of up to an additional 130,000 Afghans. Consequently, UNHCR and GIRI agreed in June 1999 to resume the voluntary repatriation program intended to repatriate up to 104,000 Afghans and 30,000 Iraqis by the year 2000. The main element of the new program was a joint refugee status screening process for unregistered Afghans conducted jointly by UNHCR and the Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA). According to the last official registration carried out by BAFIA in two phases from February-May 2001, there were 2,563,827 registered refugees in Iran. Of whom 2,355,427 were Afghans, 202,878 Iraqis and 5,522 others (i.e. Tajiks, Azerbaijanis, Bosnians, Chinese Uighurs, etc.). According to Deputy

Head of BAFIA, during the year 2001 over 140,000 Afghans voluntarily and spontaneously (without any assistance from international organizations) repatriated to Afghanistan. Since September 11, 2001, according to the Secretary-General report, the largest worldwide voluntary repatriation within the last 30 years has taken place with the return of some 1.7 million refugees to Afghanistan from mainly Pakistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and the Central Asian states. Of whom about one million returned to Kabul and Nangarhar provinces, and some 0.3 million to Parwan, Baghlan, Qunduz and Qandhar provinces. Moreover, over 0.4 million IDPs have also returned to their areas of origin. Real difficulties are faced by some Pashtuns (who previously were implanted in non-Pashtun territories by Pashtun rulers for political reasons) waiting to return to their homes in the north, which they left to escape persecution, and Kuchis (nomads) plus others who are deprived of their means of livelihood due to the drought. The prolonged drought (last 4 years) has had a devastating effect on the underground water resources in 13 provinces bordering Pakistan, Iran and Turkmenistan. Some 2 million Afghans in the north, west and central highlands were identified as the most vulnerable with respect to their winter needs.

From January to December 2000 UNHCR staff conducted 4,406 interviews with heads of returnee households, covering a total of 24,073 returnees. Of those interviewed, 50% had returned from Pakistan and 50% from Iran. In general, 79% of the returnees were women and minor children, 23% children below school age, and 38% between 6 and 18 years of age. Afghan women headed 5% of the returnee households. 12% of the returnee households had one or two physically, mentally or socially vulnerable family members. 4% of the interviewees were involuntarily returned (from Iran). 12% of the households could not return to their places of origin (or former habitual residence), for the following reasons: lack of security, shortage or lack of water for consumption and agriculture, or owned no property. 11% were facing landmines and unexploded ordinances (UXO) in their farmlands. 42% were able to recover their immovable properties (land or houses). 39% found their houses completely destroyed. 5% were unable to reclaim their previous property because they could not return to their places of origin. 17% of returnee households from Iran were landless, whereas 11% of those from Pakistan were landless. 53% of returnees were Pashtuns (81% from Pakistan and 26% from Iran), 30% were Tajiks (10% from Pakistan and 49% from Iran), 8% were Hazaras (from Ghaznai, Wardak and Kabul), 2% Arabs, 4% Baluchs, 2% Uzbeks and 1% Turkmen. 27% of the interviewees were working as laborers, 36% farmers/herders/nomads, 10% traders, 1% teachers and 1% civil servants. 25% were unemployed, whereas only 4% were jobless while in exile. 16% of returnee households from Iran and 9% from Pakistan had left one or more family members in the country of asylum due to economic reasons. 42% of returnees from Pakistan and 30% from Iran were able to generate income from farming or animal husbandry in Afghanistan. 34% of returnees from Iran and 15% from Pakistan did not have any regular source of income. 56% of returnees had access to health services in reachable distance (2-38 km).

Opium was grown in Afghanistan in small scale during the time of Zahir Shah, gradually increased throughout the Soviet invasion and turbulent *Mojahedin* years, and substantially increased during the Taleban times. "Between 1992 and 1995 Afghanistan

was producing between 2200-2400 metric tons of opium every year, rivaling Burma as the world's largest producer of raw opium" [12]. Production and sale of opium and heroin increased dramatically in Taleban-controlled territories from 1995-2000. Taleban were collecting 20% of the value of a truckload of opium as "Zakat" tax [13]. Moreover, individual commanders and provincial governors imposed their own taxes to keep their soldiers fed. According to UNDCP, farmers received less than 1% of the total profits generated by the opium trade; another 2.5% remained in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the hands of dealers, while 5% was spent in the countries through which the heroin passed while en route to the West. It is conservatively estimated that some one million Afghan farmers were making over US \$180 million dollars a year on account of growing poppies [14]. According to the '1999 Annual Opium Poppy Survey' conducted by UNDCP, an estimated 4,581 mt of dry opium were produced in an estimated 90,983 hectares of land. The average national opium yield was 50.35 kg/ha. At the time of Survey in 1999, approximately 97% of the total cultivated opium poppy was under the control of Taleban. During the Taleban's rule, trade and transport of illicit drug routes significantly expanded. "A 1995 UN study estimated that Afghanistan-Pakistan's total illicit drugs exports, which use the same routes and carriers as the Afghan Transit Trade (ATT), were worth 50 billion rupees (US\$1.35 billion) per annum. By 1998 heroin exports had doubled in value to US\$3 billion. Drugs money funded the weapons, ammunition and fuel for the war, food, clothes and salaries for the soldiers. Moreover, by 1996 influential heroin smugglers also began willingly to pay a 'Zakat' tax of 10% to the Taleban exchequer for permission to transport heroin out of the region. By 1997 dealers began flying out opium on cargo planes from Qandhar and Jalalabad to Persian Gulf ports such as Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. Central Asia was the hardest hit by the explosion in Afghan heroin. The Russian Mafia, with ties to Afghanistan established during the Soviet occupation, used their networks to move heroin through Central Asia, Russia, and the Baltic into Europe. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan developed important opium routes and became significant opiate producers themselves. Whereas previously Afghan opium would be refined in laboratories in Pakistan, a crackdown in Pakistan and the new diversification in routes encouraged dealers to set up their own laboratories inside Afghanistan. Acetic anhydride, a chemical necessary to convert opium into heroin was smuggled into Afghanistan via Central Asia" [15]. According to UNDCP, Afghanistan supplied 80% of Europe's and 50% of the world's supply of heroin.

Pakistan scenario: Being a more recently established country, and still dominated by a feudal class and military elite, with close ties to UK and USA; the refugee situation in Pakistan may become more meaningful if a short historical perspective is provided for the reader. According to the Pakistani scholars, only 1% of the population (including 70 families) are ruling and holding most of the power in Pakistan. As a result of the mass movement and liberation struggle lead by Mohandas Mahatma Gandhi and others since WWI, and insistence of some Muslim leaders lead by Mohammad Ali Jenna to have an independent Muslim state in areas where the Muslims were in majority, in 1947 the subcontinent was liberated and at the same time partitioned leading to the creation of Pakistan, composed of two regions West Pakistan and East Pakistan situated almost 1000 miles apart. As a result of this religious and political divide between India and Pakistan, some 10 million people were displaced between India and Pakistan. Numerous atrocities

happened and many women suffered from revengeful dishonoring rape by opposing groups. However, the Muslim leaders of Kashmir refused to join West Pakistan, which gave rise to Pakistani forces invading Kashmir, and India siding with the non-joining Muslims, thus the beginning of a long-standing strategic dispute between Pakistan and India. Moreover, the East Pakistan with more population than West Pakistan (75 million VS 55 million) received much less investment from the government of Pakistan (GOP). Hence, the political antagonisms between the two Muslim regions eventually led to a popular separatist movement, armed conflict and civil war. As a result of brutal suppression of the rebellion, many East-Pakistanis were killed and millions fled across the border into India, among whom many belonging to the Hindu minority. After 9 months of bloody civil war, India entered the conflict and forced the West-Pakistani troops in East Pakistan to surrender. Thus, the People's Republic of Bangladesh achieved its independence from Pakistan in 1971. This conflict also gave rise to many people displaced to Pakistan as "Mohajers". The Mohajers in Karachi have been in sporadic conflict with GOP ever since.

The Afghan refugees' inflow into Pakistan started about the same time as it did in Iran (1981). However, the government of Pakistan (GOP), which unlike GRI enjoyed a very good political relationship with the international community at the time, did not allow the Afghan refugees to scatter throughout the country without close monitoring. In fact, GOP had a political agenda for Afghan refugees. From the beginning, they were accommodated in numerous village camps, lead by Afghan political groups. Distribution of aid was done through the Afghan group leaders. Even though Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention and 1964 Protocol on the Status of Refugees, most of the UN specialized agencies and 100s of INGOs were invited and allowed to become active in Pakistan, with a view to providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugee villages. The annual budget that UNHCR alone was spending in Pakistan at the beginning of the conflict was over 65 million dollars. UNHCR and WFP continued their more generous support to Afghan refugees in Pakistan until 1995, when the food assistance was stopped by WFP, and Afghan refugees gradual displacement to the urban areas was tolerated by the GOP. Most of the recent refugees concentrated around the northern city of Peshawar (capital of North-West Frontier Province), with reports of 170,000 having crossed into the country since September 2001. Many of the recent arrivals were accommodated in camps (Shamshatoo and Akhora Khattak). There were an estimated 72,000 people in the transit camp of Jalozai. Unofficial estimates indicated that there were 700,000 Afghans (registered and unregistered) living in and around Peshawar and nearby camps. Peshawar's population was around 1.7 million, making it the city with possibly the highest concentration of refugees in the world (41.18%). As a result of the substantial increase in the number of Afghan refugees entering the country, the GOP halted efforts by UNHCR to officially register the refugees, and was insisting (as UNHCR had previously declared Afghans who had crossed the border due to drought as non-refugees) that the recent arrivals have crossed the border due to economic reasons, and they should return to Afghanistan, leaving them in legal limbo (WFP 05/01/01; WFP 02/02/01; OCHA 01/03/01). The Pakistani officials declared that Afghans would be allowed to arrive in Pakistan only on valid documents. The policy of deporting illegal Afghan refugees and those suspected to be involved in crime has continued. Moreover,

Pakistan was not allowing thousands of Afghans awaiting deportation from several Persian Gulf states on criminal charges, to transit Pakistan on their way home. GOP maintained humanitarian flights were exempted in the Sanctions against Taleban, and the countries concerned could fly Afghans under deportation, directly to Afghanistan.

Smuggling: As explained by Ahmed Rashid, the smuggling trade to and from Afghanistan, which extended into Central Asia, Iran and the Persian Gulf represented a crippling loss of revenue for all these countries but particularly for Pakistan, where local industry was decimated by smuggling of foreign consumer goods. What was euphemistically called the Afghan Transit Trade (ATT) became one of the biggest smuggling rackets in the world and enmeshed the Taleban with Pakistani smugglers, transporters, drug barons, bureaucrats, politicians, police and army officers. This trade became the main source of official income for the Taleban, even as it undermined economies of the neighboring states. As the transport Mafia extended their trade, they also stripped Afghanistan bare. They cut down millions of acres of timber in Afghanistan for the Pakistani market, denuding the countryside, as there was no reforestation. They stripped down rusting factories, destroyed tanks, and vehicles and even electricity and telephone poles for their steel and sold the scrap to steel mills in Lahore. Car-jacking in Karachi and other cities (as well as in south Khorasan and Sistan/Baluchestan provinces of Iran) flourished as the transport Mafia organized local car thieves to steal vehicles and shift them to Afghanistan, where they were resold in Afghanistan or Pakistan with changed number plates. The transport Mafia also smuggled in electrical goods from Dubai, Sharjah and other Persian Gulf ports while exporting heroin hidden in Afghan dried fruit and seasoned timber on Aryana, the national Afghan airline, controlled by the Taleban. The ATT fuelled the already powerful black economy in Pakistan. According to an academic study [16], the underground economy in Pakistan snowballed from US\$250 million (15 billion rupees) in 1973 to US\$18.58 billion (1,115 billion rupees) in 1996, with its share in GDP increasing from 20% to 51%. During the same period, tax evasion (including customs duty evasion) escalated from US\$25 million (1.5 billion) to US\$2.53 billion (152 billion rupees) per year. The smuggling trade contributed some US\$1.66 billion (100 billion rupees) to the underground economy in 1993, which escalated to over US\$5 billion (300 billion rupees) in 1998. That is equivalent to 50% of the country's total imports [17].

It is noteworthy that in 1988 when the Soviet troops were retreating from Afghanistan, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of GOP helped establish a union of 7 Afghan Sunni parties in Peshawar without inviting the representatives of the Afghan Shi'a groups in Iran. As explained by Ahmed Rashid, during the 1980s the ISI handled billions of US dollars, which had poured in from the West, and Arab states to help the Mojahedin. With encouragement and technical support from the CIA, that money had also been used to carry out an enormous expansion of the ISI. The ISI inducted hundreds of army officers to monitor not just Afghanistan, but India and all of Pakistan's foreign intelligence as well as domestic politics, the economy, the media and every aspect of social and cultural life in the country. The CIA provided the latest technology, including equipment that enabled ISI to monitor every telephone call in the country. By 1989 ISI was the most powerful political and foreign policy force in Pakistan, repeatedly overriding later

civilian governments and parliament in policy areas concerning India and Afghanistan. The ISI supported the Taleban under the assumption that they would recognize the Durand line, would curb Pashtun nationalism in the NWFP and provide an outlet for Pakistan's Islamic radicals, thus forestalling an Islamic movement at home. In fact just the opposite occurred. The Taleban refused to recognize the Durand line or drop Afghanistan's claims to parts of the NWFP. The Taleban fostered Pashtun nationalism, albeit of an Islamic character and it began to affect Pakistani Pashtuns. The triumph of Taleban virtually eliminated the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. On both sides, Pashtun tribes were slipping towards fundamentalism and becoming increasingly implicated in drug trafficking. "The de facto absorption of Afghanistan will accentuate centrifugal tendencies within Pakistan," predicted Olivier Roy in 1997. In fact the backwash from Afghanistan was leading to "Talibanization" of Pakistan. A new breed of anti-Shi'a Islamic radicals, who were given sanctuary by Taleban, killed hundreds of Pakistani Shi'as between 1996 and 1999, including several Iranian officials and military cadets. This sectarian bloodshed was fuelling a much wider rift between Pakistan's Sunnis and Shi'a minority and undermining relations between Pakistan and Iran. The Lashkar-e Jhangvi and Sepah-e Sahaba (offshoots of the JUI) who demanded the expulsion of all Shi'as from Pakistan, sent thousands of volunteers to fight with the Taleban and in return the Taleban gave sanctuary to their leaders in Kabul [18].

Conclusion: Since the Taleban and their Arab and Pakistani allies took the upper hand in Afghanistan, the overwhelming majority of the population became captive by a regime, claiming to establish a pure Islamic state. In reality however, the interpretation of the Taleban from Qoran and the tradition (deeds and alleged sayings) of prophet Mohammad concerning governance was profoundly limited by their level of cultural underdevelopment, limitation of their global and technological exposure, their primitive tribal tradition in the way they educate their children, treat their women and the extent to which they were unable to communicate with the international community. In short, there was a wide gap extending to several centuries of scientific advancement, social development, cultural tolerance and political development between the world view of the international community, as represented by the United Nations system, and that of *Mojahedin* and Taleban who were ruling in Afghanistan since May 1992. The value system of the UN agencies' officials, as reflected in the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, etc. was alien to the value system of *Mojahedin and Taleban* in Afghanistan, who had not previously experienced such exposures.

In Afghanistan everything was executed through sheer force, or bribe. Taleban had been trained in a patriarchal and despotic system of upbringing and power relationship. They did not fully understand, nor trusted, the kind of power relationship stemming from freedom of individual choice and democratic participation. Their conception of peace was equivalent to disarming the contenders and dominating the minorities. They created a political climate, restricting the independent judgements and expressions of their own officials. The Afghan Intelligentsia due to persecution, or flight, was deprived of having a

role in the rank and file of the presumptive authorities in the country. Thus, there was an intellectual vacuity in the system of governance of *Mojahedin* and Taliban regimes. Sustainable political stability and development is based on a system and process of justice and ethics. A prerequisite to justice is elimination of discrimination. In Afghanistan, this means eradication of discrimination against women and girl children, as well as ethnic and religious minorities.

Females in Afghanistan had unequal, or no access to the remaining rudimentary health and education facilities, and had to endure the additional trauma resulting from family loss, perennial conflict, discrimination and restriction in their movements. Self-medication among women to treat chronic depression and insomnia was a common practice. Violence against women was widespread at an alarming rate both in rural and urban areas. Many households in Afghanistan were dependent on remittances from relatives living abroad. Relatives sent money through *havaleh* (an international system of cash exchange with outlets in most major cities of the world). Many *havaleh* traders were closed after September 11 because the anti-terrorist forces believe terrorists use them to move money globally. The remittances made huge differences in the welfare of people—often the difference between having food and going hungry. Many widows, in particular, depend on remittances to survive [19]. Thousands of female-headed households with minor children (28,000 of whom were identified in Kabul and 22,000 in Mazar), were obliged to resort to begging in the streets, and an unknown number committed suicide. The plight of an estimated 500,000 widows is of concern. Likewise, the plight of many Afghan families in remote and geographically inaccessible places is of concern. Women are reportedly the predominant inhabitants in Afghanistan, estimated to comprise over 55% of the population. Many sectors—agriculture, water, sanitation, education, health, de-mining, economic development and drug control affect women. Women and girls in Afghanistan have lived in fear (“of the men with guns”) for over two decades. The accumulated and combined effects of 23 years of war, gross human rights violations, drought and Taleban regime have inflicted deep psychological scars on Afghan women and young girls.

The children had become victims of land mines, prolonged period of un-education, drought and severe food insecurity. For some destitute and hungry families the solution was to sell some of their children off as domestic help, or marry them off at younger age, to avoid watching them starve, with a view to keeping the children and their families alive. The WFP conducted extensive house to house surveys in Herat and Kabul to determine vulnerability. They found in Herat that 78% of the population of the city was vulnerable and required food aid. A recent MSF nutrition study showed 36% of mothers and 10% of children suffered from malnutrition in Herat [20].

Approximately three million Afghans are refugees, or IDPs. Of whom nearly 0.6 million are displaced within Afghanistan, a large portion of whom is women and children. IDP camps provide little security. According to the relief agencies, women have been raped in the camps in Mazar and Herat. Displaced women do not have a voice. They are not represented in camp leadership committees. Hence, very few people are aware of their needs and problems. Kuchis (nomads) lost large number of their animal stocks due to

drought and have become destitute. They are now settled in the IDP camps. They have become targeted by non-Pashtun IDPs in the camps, because the Kuchis cooperated with and were well treated by the Taleban. Of those displaced during 2001, over 170,000 new arrivals crossed the border into Pakistan, and over 130,000 illegally entered Iran. Since 1999, Pakistani authorities have refused to allow Shi'a Hazaras to enter Pakistan. Taleban in Afghanistan and their Taleb supporters in Pakistan gravely intensified the ethnic and religious divide in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As pointed out by Olivier Roy, the war in Afghanistan can not be categorized as a civil war; it has been a transnational war. The fact that this conflict has continued for over two decades despite repeated changes in the identity of the antagonist forces, indicates that its causes transcended the national boundaries of the country. No government in modern Afghanistan prior to the change of Taleban regime had come to power on the basis of a direct popular mandate since the mid-18th century. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 some people argue that security has become a commodity for sale at the global level. Does that mean that human civilization is facing an ethical crisis at the global level, and further development of human race depends on resolving this crisis? According to "the State of World Population 2002", a report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), global population is projected to increase from 6.28 billion today to 9.2 billion by 2050. Half the world's population, or over 3 billion people, live on less than USD 2 a day, and one billion live on less than USD1 a day. As articulated by Jackie Alan Giuliano, some 780 million people are suffering from chronic hunger worldwide, with 40 million people are at risk of starvation on the African continent alone. More than 153 million of the chronically hungry in the world are under the age of five. According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), six million children under the age of five die every year as a result of hunger. Ironically, the world produces plenty of food, more than enough to provide at least 2,720 kilocalories per day per person, which could sustain life. These people are poor customers in a world economy that classifies everything, even life sustaining food and water, as a commodity that only goes to those who can afford it. The UN committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights has declared that "water is fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a healthy life in human dignity. It is a pre-requisite to the realization of all other human rights." According to the World Health Organization (WHO) figures, an estimated 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water; and 2.4 billion people still do not have access to a safe latrine.

In the developed countries, we are dying prematurely from diseases of excess such as heart disease, which is the number one killer. Strokes, lung cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer, and stomach cancer are the next top killers, followed by traffic accidents, self-inflicted injuries, and diabetes. These diseases come from consuming too many calories, eating excess protein, particularly animal protein, and eating too much sugar. When you combine those factors with our sedentary lifestyle and our chemically polluted soil, air, and water, the result is deadly. Your risk of having a heart attack is decreased by 90% if you eliminate the consumption of meat, dairy products, and eggs from your diet [21]. Poverty is characterized by insecurity, inequality, poor health (including poor reproductive health), illiteracy and powerlessness. In the beginning of third millennium

who is responsible for and can provide international security? The only mediator and third party at our disposal, which has a collective responsibility is the United Nations. That is why the Security Council, which needs to get rid of the veto power of its permanent members, has a special responsibility to resolve the Afghan conflict, and ensure that no other internal and trans-national conflict develops into a safe haven for training fanatics, mercenaries, exporting terrorism, as well as producing and exporting illicit drugs.

Before the September 11, Afghanistan was receiving over US\$200 million annually from the international community through the budgets of various UN agencies, INGOs, periodic appeals by the UN and through the Red Cross Movement. The UN system was mobilizing approximately half of the total aid for Afghanistan, the bulk of it in the form of humanitarian assistance. The ICRC, IFRC, international and Afghan NGOs accessed the other half directly from donors, notably the European Union, Switzerland, Japan and USA. NGOs have played an important role as implementing partners for the UN agencies. Many lives were saved and successful rehabilitation activities implemented. Nonetheless, crucial humanitarian needs were not met. In absence of a durable cease-fire, and establishment of a representative, broad-based government, supported by all the Afghan groups inside and outside the country, the donor countries were reluctant to provide more assistance to Afghanistan. Recovery from crisis in Afghanistan, as elsewhere, will fail unless it is “illuminated from within”. Peace building will not be successful or legitimate, unless there is national participation in the process. An effective peace-building strategy can afford no ‘disconnects’ between the political, human rights, humanitarian and development aspects of the response. Political, operational and other conditionalities must be subordinated to the humanitarian imperative of saving lives and to the right of victims to receive humanitarian assistance (Strategic Framework, UNOCHA). The coalition forces may win the war, but may lose the peace process if they do not disarm all the factions with a view to protecting the civilian population throughout the country. There is an accumulated historical animosity between the plurality of previously ruling Pashtuns and other minority ethnic groups, especially Hazaras and Uzbeks. While Mojahedin and Taleban were in power, numerous atrocities were committed by various ethnic groups, especially Taleban Pashtuns and their non-Afghan supporters, against minority ethnic groups with impunity. Thus, in order to prevent further revenge killings, lootings and rapes, the Security Council should mobilize a sizable (tens of thousand) international force to act as a peace making and peace building force in Afghanistan, with the clear objectives of:

- i) Disarming all the Afghan groups with a view to providing basic security across the country,
- ii) Formulating a national constitution protem, and supervising a free democratic election, and
- iii) Helping train sufficient Afghan civil servants, judiciary, police force, and national army.

In order to win the peace process and prevent Afghanistan from slipping back again into a safe haven for exporting terrorism, illicit drugs, and trafficking women and children,

the international community should aim to build a genuinely non-dependent, free, open, participatory, inclusive, self-reliant and viable economy in that country, where, the basic human rights of all the minorities, women, and children are respected. The emerging national government can have balanced politico-economic relations with all its trade partners within an atmosphere of fair and mutually beneficial trade, if the international norms and conventions are respected and abided by.

Sustainable peace, reconciliation, reconstruction and development cannot be built upon a foundation of impunity. Effective and credible efforts to address the issue of impunity and ensure accountability are key to building a sense of confidence among Afghans towards new institutions responsible for administration of justice. Transparency and accountability can also act as deterrents against further violations. There can be no amnesty for perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights.

The cost of such an operation should be born by those governments who have intervened most in the country, such as Russian Federation, USA, UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Pakistan and Iran, as well as those who have sufficient good-will and wealth, and may wish to share the burden, such as the European Union, Japan, Switzerland, etc.

Afghanistan also needs to learn some hard lessons from its own experiences and that of its neighbors. It should resolve not to imitate blindly any non-indigenous politico-economic ideology, and or distorted theocratic doctrine. As articulated by Dr. Seyed Hassan Al-Hosseini, the human societies always have had difficulties in arranging a balanced and constructive relation between religion and state. They should keep in mind that God never sanctioned the governmentalization of the religion. Meaning that God has never entrusted any government, or power, with his/her revelations to guide the people. Thus, the governments should not take upon themselves the duty of prophesizing.

Notes:

01. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, UK, France, Holland, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand.
02. Warriors for the cause of "Allah".
03. Bahram Rajaee, The Politics of Refugee Policy in Post-Revolutionary Iran, The Middle East Journal, Vol. 54, No.1, winter 2,000, P. 59
04. Ibid, P.45/6
05. Ibid, P. 56
06. Ibid, P. 57/8
07. Cedric Gouverneur, the Heroin Route from Afghanistan to Europe, Iran loses its drugs war, Le Monde Diplomatique.
08. Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Qezelbash, Aimaq, Mogul, Uzbek, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Pamiri, Baluch, Arab, Kazaks, Hindu and Sick
09. Mohammad Ghasem Danesh Bakhtiari, How the Taliban Appeared and External Context, Ensejam monthly, Vol.1, No. 6-8, Nov./Dec./Jan. 2,000/2,0001, P. 110
10. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban-Islam, Oil, and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, I.B.

- Taurus Publishers, 2,000, P.120
11. John Ward Anderson, Needy Afghans stream to mine-filled dump area bombed by US rich in metal and peril, Washington Post Foreign Service, 16 March 2002
 12. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, P119
 13. Ibid, P.118
 14. Ibid, P. 119
 15. Ahmed Rashid, Pakistan and Taliban, *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, William Maley editor, Vanguard books, 1998, P. 78
 16. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 'Study on informal economy', December 1998
 17. Ahmed Rashid, Pakistan and Taliban, P. 77
 18. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, P. 189-94
 19. Judy A. Benjamin, Post-Taliban Afghanistan: Changed Prospects for Women? UNCO, Afghanistan, February 2002, P. 7
 20. Ibid, P. 11
 21. Jackie Alan Giuliano, Who's Hungry? Not Those Making the Decisions, Environment News Service, Dec.8, 2002

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