
I. London's Afghansi

War in Afghanistan spawned a global narco-terrorist force

by Jeffrey Steinberg

On Christmas Eve 1979, the Soviet Red Army invaded Afghanistan. Advance echelons of KGB units captured the presidential palace, assassinated the once staunchly pro-Moscow President, and installed a more pliable successor, who announced—from Soviet territory—that he had “invited” the Russian forces to intervene under a recent Soviet-Afghani friendship treaty. Within a short period of time, Moscow had 89,000 troops inside Afghanistan.

Less than a month later, U.S. President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, stood at the Khyber Pass in Pakistan, and was photographed pointing a rifle across the border into Afghan territory. Brzezinski was in Pakistan to deliver a commitment from President Carter that the United States was ready to provide the government of Gen. Mohammed Zia ul-Haq with massive military aid to help build up the Afghani mujahideen resistance to the Soviet invaders.

The ensuing decade of surrogate warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union drew the two superpowers into a geopolitical trap that proved disastrous for both. The defeat that the Red Army suffered at the hands of the massively western-backed Afghan mujahideen aggravated the ongoing crisis within the Warsaw Pact, that was actually triggered on March 23, 1983, when President Ronald Reagan announced his Strategic Defense Initiative, a policy that Moscow's top leadership knew had been designed by Lyndon LaRouche. The SDI—not the Afghan War—was the principal, driving factor that accelerated the collapse of the Soviet system. The defeat in Afghanistan was but one more serious sign that the Bolshevik system was headed for the scrap-heap of history.

The impact upon the United States and the West as a whole would be more subtle, but, in the long run, equally disastrous. By falling for a British-authored geopolitical strategy of encouraging the spread of a virulently anti-western, nominally Islamic form of fundamentalism, the United States gave aid and comfort to the creation of a new terrorist international—far more deadly than the earlier global terrorist apparatus that stalked world leaders during the decade of

the 1970s. The new terrorist international—built around the mujahideen veterans of the 1979-89 Afghan War—is responsible for such terrorist incidents as the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York City. And British intelligence-controlled operatives, such as Lord William Rees-Mogg's underling Dr. Jack Wheeler, who were actively involved in the recruitment and training of the Afghani mujahideen, were implicated before the fact in the April 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, which claimed 168 lives. The Afghani mujahideen are the primary force carrying out the irregular warfare destabilization of France, since the election of Jacques Chirac as President, and France's ensuing break with the British “Entente Cordiale.”

Over the ten-year period that followed Brzezinski's visit to the Khyber Pass, the United States would officially pour \$3 billion into the Afghan mujahideen war against the Red Army, a relatively small fraction of the total cost of the effort. A broad spectrum of nations—from Britain and Israel, to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, China, and even Iran—would collectively contribute an equal amount of money.

According to one well-placed U.S. intelligence source, the combined Medellín and Cali Cartel contribution to the Afghan mujahideen was \$10-20 billion!

A new opium war

Whether that figure is accurate or not, the profits from illegal narcotics sales unquestionably bankrolled the war—on both sides. By the mid-1980s, the Golden Crescent, extending from Iran to Afghanistan and Pakistan, was providing one-half of the heroin reaching the streets of the United States. Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) became a hub of guns-for-drugs trade, and Pakistan's gross revenue from opium and heroin sales soared to \$8-10 billion a year by 1988. That figure represented one-quarter of the Gross Domestic Product of Pakistan. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration statistics as of 1994 still identified Afghanistan as the source for one-third of all the heroin sold in the United States.

Prior to the outbreak of the Afghan War in 1979, the



Opium poppy production in Afghanistan. As of 1994, Afghanistan was identified by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration as the source for one-third of all the heroin sold in the United States.

region's opium production had been relatively small, after early 1970s eradication programs pushed through by the Nixon administration had taken the Golden Crescent out of the world heroin trade. What opium poppy was produced, went into the small addict population in South Asia. The Afghan War changed all of that. Not only did the Golden Crescent of Southwest Asia surpass the Southeast Asian Golden Triangle in opium production in the mid-1980s; by the same date, Pakistan's opium addict population had skyrocketed to over 1.3 million people. In 1980, the figure was 5,000.

In the aftermath of the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, Afghanistan degenerated into a battlefield of rival mujahideen factions, who were more interested in controlling the lucrative opium poppy fields and in using the wartime military bases and vast stockpiles of hardware as training grounds for a whole new generation of international terrorists. According to one senior U.S. intelligence official, Iran moved quickly into the vacuum created by the sudden U.S. pullout.

At the center of both the drug and the terror efforts was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the head of one of Afghanistan's seven rival mujahideen factions, who enjoyed the most active support of Pakistan's British-trained and -modeled military intelligence agency, the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI).

Although American diplomats and intelligence officers posted in Pakistan often warned of Hekmatyar's strong anti-

western and pro-Iranian views, speculated about possible Soviet KGB links, and even acknowledged his undisputed status as Afghanistan's "heroin king," his forces received the largest portion of American and other international military support throughout the Afghan War. Intelligence reports back to Washington about the progress of the war were notoriously biased, and filled with disinformation portraying Hekmatyar's mujahideen as the most successful fighters. Often the reports to the Pentagon and the CIA were identical to the reports prepared by British intelligence—complete with the same spelling and typographical errors. More reliable on-the-scene reports indicated that Hekmatyar spent more time and effort fighting rival mujahideen groups than battling the Soviets.

Yet, months after the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan, CBS journalist Kurt Lohbeck witnessed a massive delivery of weapons to Hekmatyar's camp at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border by American intelligence officials. And according to Lohbeck, the Bush administration placed so much emphasis on Hekmatyar's conquest of postwar Afghanistan that U.S. diplomats were ordered to drop all public criticisms of Hekmatyar, as the arms pipeline remained open.

A new terrorist international

Under a summer 1979 Presidential Finding, the Carter administration expanded the already-ongoing covert financ-

ing of the Afghan mujahideen for the stated purpose of “increasing the costs” to the Soviet Union of its efforts inside Afghanistan. Even after the December 1979 Soviet invasion of the country, the goal remained essentially the same.

When Ronald Reagan was inaugurated President in January 1981, the U.S. objective in Afghanistan shifted. No longer satisfied to heap additional penalties on the Soviets, the Reagan administration sought to drive the Red Army out of Afghanistan. To accomplish this, it was estimated that a mujahideen fighting force of no less than 150,000 trained and well-equipped troops would have to be created. To accomplish this, a worldwide recruitment effort was conducted, which stretched from the Afghani exile communities in Europe, to North Africa, to other parts of the Islamic world, to the streets of America.

By the time the Red Army completed its pullout from Afghanistan, in February 1989, the ranks of the Afghan mujahideen groups were swelled with combatants who had been recruited to fight the “Great Atheistic Satan” in Moscow. Out of that operation evolved a mercenary force, currently estimated at over 10,000, who have shifted their anger from Moscow to the West, and who now comprise the largest labor pool of potential terrorists ever seen.

According to the April 1995 edition of *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, “afghansi” fighters are now actively deployed “across North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, China and Kashmir, the Philippines and Tajikistan and the U.S. eastern seaboard.”

Among the largest “Afghan veteran” contingents: 5,000 Saudis, 3,000 Yemenis, 2,000 Egyptians, 2,800 Algerians, 400 Tunisians, 370 Iraqis, and 200 Libyans. According to the *Jane’s* report, the Chechen capital of Grozny became “a key transit point for Arab veterans of the Afghan war.”

While the majority of these veterans are not part of the new terrorist international, enough of them have been recruited—either by British intelligence, Iran, or other intelligence services or crime syndicates—that they now represent a serious national security concern for virtually every nation on earth.

Sinking into the trap

The United States had become involved—at a token level—in bankrolling several Pakistani-supported mujahideen groups in May 1979, when CIA station chief John Joseph Reagan was introduced, for the first time, to a pre-selected group of Afghani rebel leaders. The Pakistanis told the Americans that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was the most skilled, best armed, and most popular of the half-dozen mujahideen leaders actively engaged in battling the Soviet client regime in Kabul. Reagan had virtually no independent intelligence profile of the Afghan rebels, and had no alternative but to take the Pakistani ISI briefings at face value. The briefings were a British-scripted lie.

Ironically, back in Washington, President Carter’s CIA

director, Adm. Stansfield Turner, had initially voiced his opposition to even the token aid program for the Afghan mujahideen. According to several published accounts, including Bob Woodward’s biography of William Casey, Turner was disturbed that U.S. intelligence had fallen under the near-total domination of British intelligence; and it was apparently the British, who were gung-ho to get the Americans engaged in a surrogate war against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Turner’s prescient concerns were ignored by President Carter, who had by then fallen increasingly under the sway of his national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski had, in turn, been seduced by a senior British intelligence figure, the Oxford-trained Arabist, Dr. Bernard Lewis, into believing that Islamic fundamentalism could be played as a “geo-strategic” card to destabilize the Soviet empire all across South Asia. In a *Time* magazine cover story published on Jan. 15, 1979, Brzezinski proclaimed Iran, Afghanistan, and the Indian subcontinent as an “arc of crisis” that posed a grave challenge to the West, but could also spell doom for the Soviet empire.

Time’s cover story on “The Crescent of Crisis” ended with the following observation: “In the long run there may even be targets of opportunity for the West created by ferment within the crescent. Islam is undoubtedly compatible with socialism, but it is inimical to atheistic Communism. The Soviet Union is already the world’s fifth largest Muslim nation. By the year 2000, the huge Islamic populations in the border republics may outnumber Russia’s now dominant Slavs. From Islamic democracies on Russia’s southern tier, a zealous Koranic evangelism might sweep across the border into these politically repressed Soviet states, creating problems for the Kremlin. . . . Whatever the solution, there is a clear need for the U.S. to recapture what Kissinger calls ‘the geopolitical momentum.’ That more than anything else will help maintain order in the crescent of crisis.”

Fifteen years later, when some of the very Afghani mujahideen who had given Moscow a bloody nose were turned loose as an international terrorist force, carrying out some of their most heinous crimes on the streets of America (including at the front gate of the CIA headquarters), a senior CIA officer who had played a central role in the Afghan War admitted to *New York Times* reporter Tim Weiner that, back in the late 1970s and early ’80s, when the United States first began pouring in billions of dollars in aid to the Afghans, it had never occurred to anyone inside U.S. intelligence that the program would blow back in such a bloody fashion. Charles G. Cogan, the CIA’s operations chief for the Near East and South Asia from 1979-84, told Weiner: “It’s quite a shock. The hypothesis that the mujahideen would come to the United States and commit terrorist actions did not enter into our universe of thinking at the time. We were totally preoccupied with the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. It is a significant unintended consequence.”

Replaying the 'Great Game'

Maybe it was unintended in Washington and Langley, but not so elsewhere. Such American naiveté was anticipated in London, where British intelligence had a 200-year history of playing what Rudyard Kipling had dubbed the "Great Game" across the steppes of Central Asia, and where Islam had been probed, prodded, and profiled by the British East India Company, and by the successor British India Office's Arab Bureau, since the time of James Mill, and, later, Lawrence of Arabia.

Great Britain jealously guarded its Great Game, and, at times, fiercely fought to keep the United States out of the picture.

In 1943, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had gone so far as to assert that Afghanistan was "denied territory" to the Americans, when President Franklin Roosevelt dispatched his most trusted military aide, Gen. Patrick Hurley, to Kabul to get a first-hand picture of how Afghanistan might be drawn into FDR's vision of a postwar decolonized world. British intelligence did everything short of assassinating Hurley to prevent him from successfully reaching the Afghan capital. When Hurley did finally get to Kabul and spend four days with the king and senior government officials, he made such a lasting impression that the Afghans immediately declared themselves anxious to forge a partnership with the Americans, whom they saw as totally different

from the two imperial Great Game rivals, England and Russia, who had kept the country in a state of enforced backwardness and poverty for half a century, preventing the construction of even a railroad or a paved highway. Senior British military officials, based out of the North West Frontier Province across the border in Pakistan, had, however, put their stamp of approval on the production of vast crops of opium poppy in the rich mountains of Afghanistan, and had facilitated the processing and distribution of that opium in the South Asian and Chinese markets.

With the death of FDR, Afghanistan's vision of economic partnership with America died as well. Once again, Afghanistan fell into the category of denied territory for the United States.

The British destabilization of the "arc of crisis" began with the Khomeini Revolution in Iran, which overthrew the Shah in February 1979. Khomeini had been a longstanding British intelligence tool, and Khomeini's Islamic Revolution was a crucial ingredient in the Bernard Lewis Plan.

Brzezinski, long schooled in British geopolitics, had locked the United States into the British Great Game in the early days of the Carter administration, when he rejected Japanese offers to finance major development projects in Iran and Mexico. Brzezinski had declared that there would be "no new Japans in the Persian Gulf or south of the Rio Grande." That American embrace of British geopolitics doomed the



Afghan "freedom fighters" call for holy war against Russian occupation of their country, at the annual convention of the Muslim Students Association at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, May 1980. Many militants such as these became combatants against the "Great Atheistic Satan" in Moscow, but as the years went by, some of them were recruited as mercenaries and terrorists against the West.

Shah, and drew the United States into the British covert drive to install Khomeini in power. With the taking of the American embassy hostages in November 1979, the United States was drawn ever deeper into the “arc of crisis.”

It would be an oversimplification to say that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the result of a fine-tuned British conspiracy. However, mujahideen operations had been launched inside Afghanistan as early as 1974, when Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was manipulated into sponsoring a 5,000-man guerrilla force under the direction of a young Islamic fanatic, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, to destabilize the country and dissuade Afghanistan’s President Muhammed Daud from pursuing a “Greater Pushtun” nation extending into Pakistan’s North West Frontier Territory. Back at the height of the Great Game in the late nineteenth century, the British had deliberately created an Indian-Afghan border that cut through the middle of the Pushtun tribal territory, thereby setting up a border crisis that could be manipulated at will.

Although Hekmatyar’s forces and other allied groups were soundly defeated in 1974, the effort did result in Muhammed Daud’s decision to negotiate a border deal with Prime Minister Bhutto that brought a temporary peace to the area. The situation dramatically changed when Prime Minister Bhutto was overthrown in 1977 by the Pakistani military, under the direction of Gen. Mohammed Zia ul-Haq. During the same period, the Soviet-backed Afghan communists launched their own drive to power, which ultimately resulted in the overthrow of Muhammed Daud and the installation of a Soviet-puppet regime in April 1978.

British brains and American dollars

A careful review of the covert apparatus established to support the Afghan mujahideen effort against the Red Army (see other articles in this section) shows that the entire program was directed, top-down, from London—either directly through senior British intelligence figures like the Privy Council head, Lord Cranbourne, or through notorious Anglophiles within the U.S. intelligence establishment, like Wall Street banker John Train and International Rescue Committee President Leo Cherne.

Under National Security Directive 3, signed by President Reagan in early 1982, Vice President George Bush was placed in charge of the entire global covert action program. It was Bush’s Special Situation Group (SSG) and Crisis Pre-Planning Group (CPPG) at the White House, that deployed Oliver North, Richard Secord, “Public Diplomacy” head Walter Raymond, and the entire Iran-Contra crew. Throughout the 1980s, the Afghan War was the largest single program under this Bush chain of command. And because the Afghan program was sold to the U.S. Congress as an opportunity to give the Soviets “their own Vietnam,” it enjoyed nearly unanimous support and financing—and was to remain a well-kept secret.

Private sector figures like John Train and Leo Cherne (who also served on President Reagan’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, PFIAB), who coordinated the American aid program to the Hekmatyar forces, were senior officials in the Bush-directed program.

The ‘Get LaRouche’ effort

It is particularly noteworthy that Train and Cherne simultaneously played central roles in the campaign to slander and then frame up Lyndon LaRouche and his associates, on behalf of George Bush and Henry Kissinger.

While heading the Afghan Relief Committee (ARC), Train organized a media salon, involving the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith (ADL), NBC-TV, *Readers Digest*, the *New Republic*, and others, which churned out mountains of black propaganda against LaRouche, and set the stage for the railroad prosecution and jailing of him and many of his associates. Train’s chain of command on the “Get LaRouche” effort ran into the White House via Walter Raymond—the same person who coordinated Train’s Afghan support efforts within the Bush White House task force.

Cherne used his position on PFIAB to ensure, on behalf of his close friend Henry Kissinger, that the FBI launched a bogus “national security” probe of LaRouche in January 1983—at the very moment that LaRouche was serving as a back channel for National Security Adviser William Clark in sensitive talks with Moscow on what later became President Reagan’s SDI.

How FDR planned to outflank the British

by Edward Spannaus

Surprising as it may seem today, at the end of the Second World War, both Afghanistan and Iran looked to the United States as their hope for economic development, and for protection from the imperialist designs of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Both Afghanistan and Iran had long been pawns in the “Great Game” between Britain and Russia, and both saw in the principles of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Atlantic Charter, the possibility of fulfilling their aspirations for freedom from foreign domination and exploitation.

The transformation of the image of the United States, from the protector of exploited nations, to the “Great Satan” and sworn enemy of pan-Islamic fanatics, is a case study in British methods of manipulation and control.

The favorable image of the United States held in the eyes of the leaders of both Iran and Afghanistan was largely due to the deployment of President Roosevelt’s personal repre-