

Jun 1961 - "Pakhtoonistan" Dispute. - Military Operations in Frontier Areas. - Pakistani Allegations of Afghan Incursions.

Fighting occurred in the Bajaur area of the Pakistani frontier with Afghanistan (north of the Khyber Pass) in September 1960 and again in May 1961. The Pakistani Government announced that it had repelled Afghan incursions on its territory allegedly carried out with the support of the Afghan Army, while the Afghan Government alleged that the Pakistani armed forces were engaged in operations against discontented Pathan tribesmen.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been strained for a number of years as a result of Afghanistan's demands for the establishment of an independent Pathan State of "Pakhtoonistan" or "Pushtunistan." Diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off in 1955 but resumed in September 1957; King Zahir Shah visited Karachi in February 1958, and an agreement on the improvement of transit facilities for Afghan goods through Pakistan was signed on May 29, 1958. In the later months of 1959, however, relations again deteriorated; the Pakistani Government protested in September of that year against broadcast speeches by King Zahir Shah and Sardar Mohammed Daud Khan (the Afghan Premier) reaffirming Afghanistan's support for the establishment of "Pakhtoonistan," and on Nov. 23, 1959, made a further protest against unauthorized flights over Pakistani territory by aircraft believed to have come from bases in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Foreign Minister, Sardar Mohammed Naim, visited Rawalpindi on Jan. 10-12, 1960, at President Ayub Khan's invitation, for talks aimed at easing the tension between the two countries. Although no communique was issued, the Pakistani Foreign Minister (Mr. Qadir) said the talks had been "very frank and cordial" and that it was agreed that there should be more frequent contacts between leaders of the two countries. Afghanistan's claims were openly supported by Mr. Khrushchev in March 1960, leading to a suggestion by Mr. Qadir that there should be a referendum among Pathans in Afghanistan to decide whether they wished to join Pakistan [see page [17323](#)]; this suggestion was rejected by Sardar Naim.

As a result of the dispute, the Afghan Government refused to renew visas for Pakistanis living in Afghanistan, and the British Foreign Office confirmed on July 18, 1960, that the British and U.S. Embassies in Kabul were no longer able to retain Pakistanis on their staffs. Mr. Qadir stated on Aug. 4, 1960, that Pakistan had sent a number of Notes protesting against maltreatment of Pakistanis in Afghanistan.

Details of the various incidents on the frontier between **Pakistan** and Afghanistan were as follows:

(1) In a statement on Sept. 28, 1960, Mr. Qadir alleged that **Afghan** troops supported by a few tanks had been concentrated on the border west of Bajaur; that the **Afghan** Government had called up nearly

70,000 reservists; and that the **Afghans** were “reported to be claiming that they have the support of a certain big Power in the execution of their designs.” Mr. Qadir said that some elements of an **Afghan** *lashkar* (armed band of irregulars) stationed near the border had infiltrated into Bajaur but were forced to withdraw by Pakistani tribesmen, who had inflicted heavy casualties on the intruders.

Kabul Radio strongly denied Mr. Qadir's allegations on Sept. 29, asserting that his statement was intended to “divert public opinion” from what was going on there and to “cover up” the fact that Pakistani troops had been sent to the areas “against the wishes of the local population.”

The Pakistani Government lodged a strong protest in Kabul on Oct. 5 against the “hostile concentration of **Afghan** regular and irregular forces on the Pakistani border for the past three weeks,” and against the alleged infiltration by **Afghan** tribal militiamen, which was stated to have taken place on Sept. 23-24.

(2) In March 1961 Kabul Radio broadcast a series of statements alleging that Pakistani forces were carrying out repressive operations against the Pathans, including repeated and extensive bombing attacks in the Bajaur area. An article published in *Pravda* on April 3 under the signature “Observer” (believed to be the pseudonym of a high Soviet official) alleged that eight Pakistani divisions, supported by tanks and aircraft, were active in the Pathan areas, bombing villages and causing substantial casualties. The article reaffirmed the Soviet Government's support for the **Afghan** demand for Pathan self-determination, and declared that “the situation emerging in the direct proximity of our frontiers is not a matter of indifference to us.” Sardar Mohammed Daud Khan arrived in Moscow on April 4 for talks with Mr. Khrushchev.

The Pakistani Government admitted on April 6 that bombing operations had taken place in the Bajaur area early in March. Lieut.-General K. M. Sheikh (Minister for States and Frontier Regions) said that two houses had been bombed 24 hours after residents of the area had been warned to leave, because they were being used as a headquarters and ammunition dump by a certain Badshah Gul. The latter had been acting as an **Afghan** agent for the distribution of arms, ammunition, and money among the tribesmen of Bajaur, and had been repeatedly warned to leave the area; he and his two accomplices had now gone to Afghanistan.

(3) At a press conference in Peshawar on May 21, Lieut.-General Sheikh stated that **Afghan** forces had attacked two Pakistani posts at Miskinai and Sangpura in the Bajaur area on May 19-20, and that Pakistani Air Force planes had gone into action on May 21 and destroyed machine-gun and mortar positions from which the attacks had been carried out. **Afghan** troops equipped with mortars and machine-guns had also infiltrated into Pakistani territory in three places in the Bajaur area; these troops had been repulsed, and prisoners had confessed that over 1,000 **Afghan** troops had infiltrated into **Pakistan**. As Afghanistan did not manufacture arms (Lieut.-General Sheikh went on) they must have been supplied by some other country. Mortars and ammunition bearing the markings of that country had been seized, in addition to handbills, posters, and letters which proved that “**Afghan** authorities were issuing instructions for sabotage and creating discontent among the people of **Pakistan**.”

The Minister also stated that 20 **Afghan** agents had recently been arrested in the Peshawar and Mardan districts; they had confessed during interrogation that they had been commissioned by the **Afghan** Government to kill Pakistani officials and start terrorist activities in **Pakistan**, and had been promised "handsome rewards." Lieut.-General Sheikh added that the situation in the border areas was now completely under control and that the areas concerned were calm and peaceful.

It was subsequently announced on May 26 that Pakistani aircraft had on the previous day attacked **Afghan** machine-gun positions which had opened fire on them near the border, silencing the guns and killing some of the gunners. It was also announced that certain areas in Bajaur had been declared prohibited for one month.

President Ayub Khan stated on May 21 that while in the past there had been raids by irregulars from Afghanistan, the **Afghan** Government had now for the first time used Army troops in a border incident. In a further statement on May 23 he said that Afghanistan had recently received large quantities of Soviet arms, commenting that the border situation was becoming serious as the great Powers were showing interest. He declared that the people of the areas concerned did not want the setting-up of any "Pakhtoonistan," adding that trouble was being fomented among "the disgruntled and the poor."

The President subsequently disclosed in an interview to the *New York Times* that U.S. representatives had asked the Government of **Pakistan** whether the latter had used "American equipment" in ejecting **Afghan** elements from her territory; he had replied that "if our territory is violated we would spend our time dealing with the enemy rather than putting the American weapons in cotton wool." Lieut.-General Sheikh repeated on June 11 that **Pakistan** would use not only jet bombers but all types of weapons in her possession to repulse any aggression from across the Durand Line, adding that if there were any "fresh machinations from across the border" the **Afghan** Government would have to "face the consequences." It was reported by Pakistani military sources that a heavy concentration of **Afghan** troops had taken place along the Durand Line after the last Pakistani air action.

Mr. Qadir announced on Oct. 8, 1960, that Nawab Shah Jehan Shah (70), ruler of the border State of Dir (north of Bajaur), and his son Khan Jandul Khan, ruler of Jandul State, had been arrested and deposed.

Mr. Qadir said this action had followed the "careful appraisal of many accusations of double dealing" brought against the two rulers "by the people and leaders of the tribal area while they were engaged in repelling the recent **Afghan** aggression." He added that the Nawab of Dir and the Khan of Jandul, "while outwardly joining with other chiefs and leaders with whom they had long-standing enmities to repel external aggression, were making secret attempts to take advantage of the fact that those who were dealing with the aggression had become more and more vulnerable internally. These attempts did not succeed because their own people turned down these overtures with contempt." The people of Dir, Mr. Qadir said, had been "agitating for a long time against the tyrannical rule of the Nawab," against whom they had unsuccessfully rebelled in 1958.

In a statement in April 1961, Lieut.-General Sheikh announced that the Pakistani Government had decided to set up an advisory council in Dir, consisting of 20 elected members, to advise the new Nawab—the eldest son of the deposed ruler—on administrative matters. The Government was also reorganizing the revenue administration of Dir, had approved road and afforestation projects, and had established a new hospital and opened a number of schools.—(Government Press Information Department, Karachi - Pakistan High Commissioner's Office, London - Times - Daily Telegraph - Guardian - Soviet Embassy Press Department, London) **(18126 A)**