

Appointment of Cabinet under New Prime Minister - Establishment of Supreme Defence Council - Other Internal Developments - Activities of Moslem Rebels - Assassination of US Ambassador - Relations with Socialist States in Asia

The Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (originally set up in April 1978)—see 29037 A) decided on March 27, 1979, to appoint as Prime Minister Mr Hafizullah Amin, until then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, to succeed Mr Nur Mohammad Taraki the latter, while remaining President of the Republic, relinquished not only the Prime Ministership but also the post of Minister of Defence which he had assumed in August 1978.[see 29264 B]

Mr Amin presented his Government to the Revolutionary Council on March 31, its composition being as follows (with any previous ministerial responsibilities indicated in parentheses):

Mr Hafizullah Amin (Deputy Minister and Foreign Affairs)	Prime Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs
Dr Shah Wali (Public Health)	Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health
Dr Saleh Mohammad Ziray	Agriculture and Land Reform
Mr Ghulam Dastagir Panjshiri	Public Works
Dr Abdul Karim Misaq.	Finance
Professor Mahmud Suma	Higher Education
Maj. Aslam Watanyar (Interior)	Defence
Dr Abdurrashid Jalili	Education
Mr Abdul Hakim Shara'i Jozjani	Justice and Attorney General
Professor Mahmud Hashemi	Water and Power
Mr Sadiq Alemghar	Planning
Mr K. Malek Katawazi	Information and Culture
Mr Faiz Mohammad Ghulabgul	Communications
Mr Sheryan Mazduryar	Interior

Mr Mohammad Ismail Daneshwar	Mines and Industries
Mr Abdul Quddus Ghorbandi	Trade
Mr Hussain Mubaraq Shafi	Transport
Mr Saheb Jan Sahra'i	Border Affairs

*No change.

Following the arrest, in August 1978, of the Ministers of Defence, Public Works and Planning—respectively Brig.-Gen. Abdul Qadir Lt.-Col. Mohammed Rafi and Mr Soltan Ali Keshtmand - President Taraki had on Aug. 28 made further cabinet changes, in which Mr Ghulam Dastagir Panjshiri had surrendered the Ministry of Education to Dr Jalili (president of the University of Kabul) and had himself been appointed Minister of Public Works, while Mr Saheb Jan Sahra'i (until then Governor of Kunduz Province) had become Minister of Border Affairs. Responsibility for Planning was assumed ad interim by Dr Shah Wali

Maj. Watanyar (who had been reported as having also been arrested in August 1978) had been appointed Chief of the General Staff of the armed forces on March 19, 1979, but was succeeded in this post on April 1 by Maj. Mohammad Yakub, former commander of the National Guard.

On March 29 it was announced that the Revolutionary Council had appointed a Supreme Council for the Defence of the Country in order to "foil the conspiracies of internal and external enemies, to eliminate traitors and to protect the glorious April revolution" (of 1978—see 29037 A).

The new Council was presided over by President Taraki who, in addition to being President of the Revolutionary Council and secretary-general of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, also became Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The other members of the Council included Mr Amin (as Vice-President), the Ministers of Defence and the Interior and Maj. Yakub.

Earlier internal developments included the adoption of a new national flag, the implementation of the land reform announced in August 1978 [see 29198] and a programme for the abolition of illiteracy.

The new flag, officially adopted on Oct. 19 to replace Afghanistan's red, black and green flag, was red with the symbol of the People's Democratic Party in the top right-hand corner.

Under the land reform, promulgated in a decree on Jan. 1, 1979, ownership of good irrigated land was limited to not more than about six hectares (or 15 acres) per family, and to rather more in the case of land of poorer quality, with the remainder of land not so allocated being distributed among poor peasants. (Private ownership was encouraged in small and medium-sized undertakings both in agriculture and in industry, but poor peasants without farming implements were advised to form co-operatives.)

The programme for ending illiteracy (given as 90 per cent among men and 98 per cent among women) was to be launched on April 27, 1979 (the first anniversary of the revolution), with the objective of teaching 2,600,000 children between the ages of eight and 14 years and 5,500,000 adults between 15 and 50 years to be able to read and to count within five years.

The above-mentioned government changes and the setting-up of the Supreme Council for the Defence of the Country were preceded by heavy fighting in various parts of Afghanistan between government troops and armed groups of Moslem rebels opposed to President Taraki's regime.

Mr Amin said shortly after the formation of his Government before Western reporters in Kabul (on April 3) that his Government had proof of "armed imperialist involvement in the conspiracy against our revolution", but that he did not wish to mention any countries by name. While denying that Soviet pilots were flying Afghan Army helicopters in anti-rebel operations, he stated that there were a total of 1,900 foreign advisers in Afghanistan, of whom 1,100 were Soviet citizens. He attacked the role of "religious reactionaries" in the rebellion and confirmed that there were mullahs (Moslem religious leaders) among the country's 1,400 political prisoners, but he denied that his Government was hostile to Islam, for which it had "deep respect".

(It had been officially announced on Oct. 23, 1978, that 72 women and children, mainly members of the former royal family, had been released from prison. When it was announced on Dec. 17 that 12,223 prisoners—mainly incarcerated under the former regime—had been released and 2,300 others had had their sentences reduced, it was not made clear whether they included any political detainees.)

The two principal rebel organizations, both based in Peshawar (in the North- Western Frontier Province of Pakistan) were (i) the *Jamaat-i-Islami* led by Mr Ustad Burhanuddin Rabbani (and supported by the party of the same name which was a major component of the Pakistan National Alliance, which then provided most of the civilian ministers in the Government of President Zia ul-Haq); and (ii) the *Hezb-i-Islami* (Islamic Party) led by Mr Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and seeking the restoration of the monarchy in Afghanistan. Both organizations proclaimed as their objective the overthrow of the "atheist, communist and pro-Soviet" Government in Kabul.

A National Liberation Front, of which the *Jamaat-i-Islam* formed part and which was led by Professor Sibhatullah Mojaddedi, on March 12, 1979, called for a *jihad* (holy war) against the Kabul regime.

The Moslem rebels were openly supported by some of the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran, among whom the Ayatollah Shariatmadari (the second-ranking leader in the Shia Moslem hierarchy of Iran—see page 29383) called, on March 16, on "all the Moslems of the world to support the Afghan Moslems", claiming that thousands of them had been killed by the Kabul regime. [For relations between the Governments of Iran and Afghanistan, see below.]

As early as in September 1978 the Government of Afghanistan had declared a *jihad* against the *Ekhwamis*, i.e. the Moslem Brotherhood, but it did not confirm reports emanating from Pakistan of heavy fighting between guerrillas and government troops, especially in eastern Afghanistan, in

October 1978, as a result of which there was an increasing flow of refugees to Pakistan, their number reaching about 30,000 by Jan. 16, 1979.

The Government of Pakistan stated officially on Jan. 31 that it had accepted refugees from the fighting in Afghanistan on purely humanitarian grounds; that it did not allow them to train as guerrillas near Peshawar; and that its policy towards Afghanistan was one of "good-neighbourliness and of respect for the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs". (President Zia ul-Haq had visited Kabul on his own initiative in September 1978 and had said afterwards that the Afghan Government wanted peace and friendship with the countries of the region, including Pakistan.)

A rebellion which had broken out in the city of Herat (in north-western Afghanistan, near the border with Iran) on March 12 was crushed by government forces within 10 days, by when, it was reported, up to 5,000 people had lost their lives. Intelligence sources in Washington said on April 12 that among those killed were a number of Soviet military advisers.

In view of the major disturbances in Herat, the Iranian Government closed its border with Afghanistan on March 18, partly in order to prevent an influx of Afghan refugees into Iran and partly to avoid being accused of interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. On March 19 the Iranian Government emphatically denied Afghan allegations that it had sent Iranian soldiers to Afghanistan in disguise. The Afghan Government, however, expelled the Iranian consul-general in Herat on March 20 for alleged interference in Afghan affairs, and in retaliation the Iranian Government, on March 22, declared Mr Mohammed Nader Ayubi, first secretary at the Afghan embassy in Tehran, persona non grata and asked him to leave the country within 48 hours.

In the Soviet Union it was alleged (in *Pravda*, the organ of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, on March 29) that "one of the principal leaders of the counter-revolutionary forces" had, on the eve of the Herat rebellion, been "received at the highest level" in Washington.

Rebel activities, however, continued in eastern parts of the country.

On March 25 the Government of Pakistan protested against the "bombardment" of Pakistani territory by Afghan artillery and the "violation" of Pakistan's airspace by Afghan jet aircraft, and on April 9 it emphatically denied Afghan allegations that Pakistani troops had raided two police posts across the border two days earlier.

Maulana Mufti Mahmud, the president of the Pakistan National Alliance, said during the third week of March 1979 that the Kabul Government had killed a total of 25,000 Moslems and that it would not last much longer.

Although the rebels had continually claimed to have achieved great successes against Afghanistan's armed forces, Professor Mojaddedi, the leader of the Islamic Liberation Front, declared in Islamabad (Pakistan) on March 21 that all Western countries had refused to supply his movement with arms and that China had made no offers of help, while the Government of Pakistan had prohibited the transit of arms through its territory and was merely supplying the

most urgent needs of between 30,000 and 40,000 refugees from Afghanistan. Nevertheless, he claimed, rebels were fighting in eight of Afghanistan's 26 provinces.

The Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighbourliness and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, signed on Dec. 5, 1978[see 29459 A], was approved by Afghanistan's Council of Ministers on March 12 and ratified by its Revolutionary Council on March 17; subsequently, the treaty was ratified by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on April 20.

Among other agreements between the two countries was one on economic and technical co-operation, concluded in Kabul on March 1, 1979.

In Moscow *Pravda* on March 19 and again on March 21 expressed great concern at the situation in Afghanistan.

In the first article the writer stated that the "ringleaders" of the Moslem Brotherhood had recently held a conference in Peshawar, which had been attended by Mr Gulbeddin and "other Afghan reactionaries" as well as by a number of foreigners; that the conference had "discussed the question of starting a war against the existing regime in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan"; and that those who took part in the conference were "relying on the support of certain circles in Pakistan, China and some Western countries". The writer continued: "Everything indicates that it was not without the knowledge of the official Pakistani authorities that the activities of the rebels developed.... These authorities are failing to put a stop to these activities.... Chinese instructors take part in training sabotage and terrorist gangs which are sent into Afghanistan from Pakistan. There is heavy traffic on the motor road from Sinkiang to Pakistan, built by the Chinese, carrying weapons, equipment and propaganda material intended for the organization of subversive activities in ... Afghanistan.[The "Karakoram Highway" was officially opened on June 18, 1978; see also 23652 A] Some reactionary Arab regimes are also aiding the Afghan counter-revolutionaries. For instance, Egyptian representatives in Pakistan regularly meet the ringleaders of the Moslem Brotherhood and supply them with large sums of money." The writer assured the Government of Afghanistan of strong Soviet support.

On March 21 *Pravda* attacked the United States, China, Egypt and West Germany for allegedly spreading anti-Afghan propaganda, and Pakistan for "giving encouragement" to Moslem rebels operating in Afghanistan, where "reactionary elements" among the Moslem clergy and also the Moslem Brotherhood (the newspaper claimed) were trying to restore the monarchy by exploiting the religious sentiments of the people.

The Government of China rejected the Soviet accusations on March 24, describing them as an attempt to cover up "Soviet interference" in Afghanistan's affairs.

Mr Adolph Dubs (58), the US ambassador in Kabul, was kidnapped and killed there on Feb. 14, 1979.

Mr Dubs was seized by four unidentified armed men, who took him to a hotel where they held him hostage while they demanded from the Afghan Government the release of three "religious figures" said to be held as political detainees. A few hours later when, according to Afghan

reports, a 10-minute ultimatum set by the kidnappers had expired, the police stormed the hotel room where the ambassador was held, all four kidnappers were shot dead and Mr Dubs was found wounded and died shortly afterwards. The police action had been taken despite a warning by the US embassy that fire should not be opened on the armed men while efforts were being made to obtain the ambassador's release peacefully.

In the United States it was reported on Feb. 22 that, according to a confidential cable from the embassy to the State Department, Soviet advisers in Kabul had played a role in the incident by helping the Afghan police in their attack on the room where Mr Dubs was held. The Soviet authorities subsequently denied any such involvement of Soviet advisers, and both the Soviet and the Afghan Governments expressed their condolence to the US Government, with the Afghan Government ascribing the killing of Mr Dubs to "enemies of the Government" who wished to "destroy the friendship between Afghanistan and the United States".

In Afghanistan the terrorists responsible for the incident were later described as members of the *Setem-i-Melli* ("against oppression and tyranny") group opposed to "Pushtu domination" in Afghanistan, especially in Badakhshan province (north-eastern Afghanistan) inhabited by minorities, in particular Tadjiks (who were Shia Moslems, as distinct from the Sunni Moslem majority in the country). The three prisoners whose release they had demanded were named as Mr Taher Badakshi (the movement's leader), Mr Vasef Bakhtali (a poet) and Mr Baruddin Bahes (of whom the authorities declared that they did not know the whereabouts).

President Carter announced on Feb. 23 that the United States would make "a considerable reduction" in US foreign aid (amounting to \$15,000,000 for 1979) planned for Afghanistan, and Mr Jody Powell, press secretary at the White House, stated on the same day that a military aid programme for Afghanistan, worth \$250,000, would be cancelled. These decisions were, however, officially declared to be unconnected with the assassination of Mr Dubs.

Earlier Mr Louis Dupree-a US academic and an authority on Afghan affairs, who claimed to have witnessed scenes of torture at the office of the Ministry of the Interior, inter alia inflicted on Mr M. Nuristani, an Afghan professor of anthropology, members of whose family were said to have killed three high-ranking Afghan officials-was expelled from Afghanistan after being detained for six days.

On March 23 Mr Hodding Carter, spokesman for the US State Department, rejected Soviet allegations of US support for the rebels and stated: "We would regard external involvement in Afghanistan's internal problems as a serious matter with a potential for heightening tensions and destabilizing the situation in the entire region.... We expect that the principle of non-interference will be respected by all parties in the area, including the Soviet Union.

According to statements made by the US State Department on March 28, Soviet military supplies to Afghanistan had included 25 helicopters for troop transport, as well as light tanks and armoured troops carriers (transported to Kabul in 25 cargo aircraft within the course of two days).

The Government of Afghanistan announced on Sept. 17, 1978, that it had broken off its diplomatic relations with South Korea (which had been established under the regime of the late

President Daud) and that it would henceforth recognize only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea).

A North Korean Government delegation led by Mr Ho Dam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Afghanistan on Oct. 17–22, 1978, when an economic, scientific, technical and cultural co-operation agreement was signed by the two sides in Kabul.

After the signature in Kabul on Sept. 27, 1978, of a trade agreement between Afghanistan and Vietnam and on Sept. 30 of an economic, technical and scientific co-operation agreement, it was reported from Vietnam on Dec. 29 that the two Governments had decided to raise the status of their missions in each other's capitals to that of full embassies.

On Jan. 10, 1979, the Government of Afghanistan officially recognized the new regime in Cambodia (Kampuchea), led by Mr Heng Samrin, on the grounds that "it had full control of Cambodia, enjoyed the active support of the people and would help to preserve peace in the region and the world"[see also page 29615]—(BBC Summary of World Broadcasts - Le Monde - Financial Times - Guardian - International Herald Tribune - New York Times - Neue Zürcher Zeitung - Soviet Embassy Press Department, London) (*Prev. rep. Internal Development 29264 B; Afghan-Soviet RElations 29459 A*)

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