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Thomas H. Johnson, Naval Postgraduate
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Johnson, Thomas H.

Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

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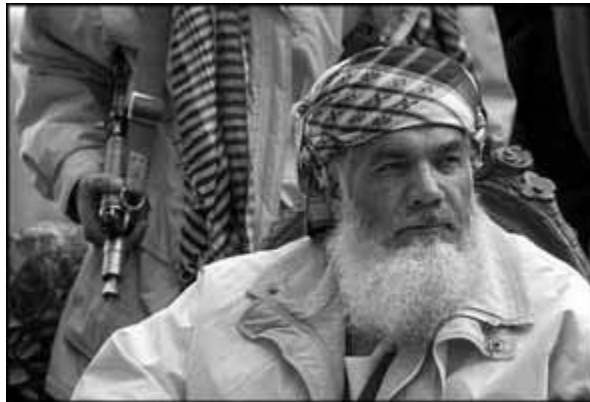
Ismail Khan, Herat, and Iranian Influence

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by Thomas H. Johnson

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Recent Photo of Ismail Khan

Introduction: The "Amir" of Western Afghanistan

The planned September national elections in Afghanistan are viewed by the United States as critical in broadening the legitimacy of Kabul and strengthening its authority to address the persisting problems of violent extremism, factionalism, drugs, and human rights. In addition, the elections may represent an expansion of Kabul's authority in the regional provinces. Recent violence in Afghanistan, however, has again raised questions about whether the country can successfully hold its first post-Taliban elections. Important considerations for the ultimate success of the elections are how the elections are viewed and supported by Afghan regional power brokers and commanders as well as by Afghan's regional neighbors. The purpose of this essay is to assess Ismail Khan, one such power broker, and his relationship with Iran. There is little doubt that Ismail Khan, self-proclaimed Amir of Western Afghanistan, has important ties and relationships with Iran.

Ismail Khan is a Persian speaking Sunni Tajik who in March 1979, as a Major in Afghan army, led the original mutiny/insurrection against the Taraki regime's Sawr (or April) Revolution (Taraki's inspired Afghan societal liberalization and land reform). Khan's revolt resulted in the slaughter of Soviet Afghan advisors and their families. This insurrection was met by a brutal Afghan and Soviet response that killed an estimated 24,000 Heratis in a single week and destroyed much of the famous Central Asian crossroad city. Khan's insurrection was a significant impetus for the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

For the next decade Khan waged a bitter guerrilla war against Soviet occupation[1] . Despite the devastation around him, eventually Khan disarmed the population and established an effective administration with functioning health care and schools in three western Afghan provinces. In 1992, two years after the Soviets left Afghanistan, Khan's militia took back Herat and Khan declared himself Amir of the West.

In March 1995, the Taliban captured the provinces of Nimruz and Farah. The Taliban marched on Shindand (a large former Soviet-built air base) but Khan, with help from Massoud, repelled them. Khan later maneuvered south and launched an offensive against the Taliban in Kandahar, but the Taliban regrouped with help from Pakistan's ISI and new recruits from Pakistani madrassas. Simultaneously, Uzbek General Rashid Dostum switched sides to the Taliban and his air force started to bomb Herat; Khan retreated and the Taliban overran his forces.[2]

In September 1995, Khan and some 8,000 men fled to Mashhad, Iran, after the fall of Herat. Khan returned in October 1996 and joined forces with Dostum in Badghis province.

The Taliban eventually captured Khan in May 1997 after being betrayed by General Abdul Malik, one of Dostum's Deputies. Khan had gone to Mazar to meet with Dostum who by this time had rejoined the Taliban. After his arrest, Khan was put in a Kandahari prison.

In March 1999, Khan escaped to Iran with the help of two Taliban guards who were former mujahideen. After September 11th and the start of United States' war against the Taliban, Khan returned and took Herat back after the Taliban fled.

Ismail Khan rules Herat like a duke and is regarded with suspicion and resentment in Kabul. Yet Khan is a popular and independent leader of Herat, a large province in western Afghanistan, adjacent to Iran. Khan was and is a bitter enemy of the Taliban who was clearly considered one of the most prominent and effective commanders against the Soviets during the Afghan jihad. Since the defeat of the Taliban he has defied Hamid Karzai and the central government, refusing to hand over to Kabul most of the tax and customs revenue he has collected. This has caused considerable consternation towards Khan in Kabul. Although he was one of the least tainted of the mujahideen commanders, Human Rights Watch has recently cited him and his militia leaders for alleged arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions and Taliban-like intrusions on people who do not conform to rigid Islamic behavior. Though Khan could be ruthless, he tended to seek reconciliation rather than revenge during the war with the Soviets. Moreover, Khan has not been linked to the kinds of massacres and atrocities regularly attributed to other commanders. Nor is there evidence of Khan's involvement in opium production or trafficking, unlike many of the Afghan warlords. Do these facts make Ismail Khan a proponent of Western-style democracy? Certainly not, but the lack of combat atrocities and the absence of involvement in narcotics production or trade is relatively rare for Afghan leaders.

Herat and Iran

Herat, for centuries the crossroad for competing Turkic and Persian empires, is a cradle of Afghanistan's history and civilization and has had historic ties to Persia and the Silk Road trade routes. Herat is frequently cited as both the best and the worst example of postwar Afghanistan. Herat's advantageous geographical position and accompanied wealth is complemented by the fact that Khan is a legendary commander and much venerated and revered by the majority of Heratis. Khan has repaved roads, is upgrading parks, building schools, cleaning streets and erecting monuments, thanks to the substantial influx of customs revenue he collects from the busy border crossing with Iran - money that Karzai's government says belongs to the central government[3]. The BBC has reported that millions of dollars in tax revenues are collected every month -- little, if any, of which is sent to Kabul[4].

Much of Khan's success is clearly attributable to the fact that Herat is now the most prosperous city in Afghanistan, which reflects its location as a crossroads between the Gulf and Central Asia, bordering both Iran and Turkmenistan. Khan and his administration have remarkably rebuilt a city that was nearly totally devastated during the wars with the Soviets and the Taliban[5]. "Khan has provided a degree of security, education, and food supplied unrivaled in the rest of the country"[6].

Iran has traditionally had close relationships with Herat and probably will continue to have close relationships, regardless of the position of Ismail Khan. Iran shares a 400-mile border with Western Afghanistan and Tehran has always felt a sense of possession towards Herat. Khan has used this dynamic to his advantage over the years during which Iran has supplied him with significant resources in his campaigns against both the Soviets and Taliban[7]. For decades Khan has had a clear *quid pro quo* with Iran. During the jihad against the Soviets, Iran supplied Khan with fuel, ammunition, and arms in exchange for use of Shindand as an air bridge to Shi'a communities in Hazarajat. Likewise during his battles with the Taliban whom were particularly disdained by the Iranians, Khan received considerable Iranian material support.

Khan is by no means the only Afghan leader to receive considerable Iranian support and resources. Iran has played all sides of the Afghan conflict. Iran, for example, played a significant role in arming the Northern Alliance. General Mohammed Fahim[8], Afghan Defense Minister and Deputy President, as well as other Tajiks now controlling key central government ministries have depended heavily on Iranian support during their decade long struggle against the Taliban. Many of these ministers have been persistently courted by Iran, which was the first country to reopen its embassy in Kabul[9]. Since the Karzai Government was installed in Kabul, Iran's foreign ministry has organized a series of private trips to Tehran for key members of the Karzai government, including Defense Minister Fahim, Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, Interior Minister Yunis Qanuni, and National Security Chief Aref Sarwari. "Without Iran, most Northern Alliance commanders couldn't have operated in Afghanistan at a time when they had no other source of international support," says a senior Afghan government source. "Almost every important Afghan commander has family living in Iran and most of them were educated in fundamentalist religious schools, or madrassas[10]."

After the defeat of the Taliban when many of Afghanistan's interloping neighbors vied for advantage - almost mimicking the geopolitics of the 19th Century "Great Game" - it was reported that Iran had supplied Khan with at least twenty truck loads of cash between November and December 2001 to secure loyalty of his forces in Herat[11].

During this time Iran also sent large stocks of weapons to Herat and Khan, which culminated in the United States firing a cruise missile at Khan's Headquarters, killing eighteen of his men in January 2002[12]. The Bush Administration is obviously extremely concerned about Iranian influence in Afghanistan.



Ismail Khan assessing troops during the anti-Soviet jihad.

Ismail Khan: Iranian Lackey or Independent, Nationalist Regional Leader?

The understandable United States concern of Iranian influence on Ismail Khan depends upon the assumption that Khan has been co-opted by the Iranians. Is there any validity to this concern? Politics in Afghanistan have always been local and Afghan leaders like Khan have traditionally used whoever is exploitable for their best advantage. Indeed, Afghans are famous for shifting and changing alliances. This phenomenon is illustrated by Pakistan's ISI Afghan Section's motto: "you cannot buy an Afghan, but you can rent one."

Regardless of motivations, Iran has genuinely helped the people of Herat and Western Afghanistan, as well as the Northern Alliance as a whole in their battles against the Soviets and the Taliban. Moreover, Iran not only served as a place of exile for Khan[13], but it also accepted over two million Afghans during the war with the Soviets and, unlike Pakistan, integrated these refugees into Iranian society. This has all occurred in the context where Iranians have traditionally looked down on Afghans as impoverished cousins while Afghans have regarded their powerful neighbor with suspicion.

Ismail Khan has demonstrated that he is a pragmatic Afghan nationalist who abhors foreign influence. Khan himself downplays his relationship with Iran and states that it is a "disgrace to be dependent on outside help...after the experiences the Russians and the Pakistanis had with us, every neighbor should know that it does not pay to meddle in our affairs[14]."

Indeed Khan has been extremely reluctant to be co-opted by outside influence. For example, in the summer of 1986 Khan disbanded Sunni (but not Shi'a) Hezbollah groups operating near Herat who were supported by Iran[15]. He also expelled Arab volunteers in the West during the jihad against Soviets because of their fanaticism and scorning of Afghan traditions[16], unlike other commanders. And, of course, during the long war with Soviets, Khan abhorred Pakistani influence and mujahideen leaders who accepted it. After the liberation of Herat from the Taliban, a Shi'a Muslim and Iranian-supported group, Hezb-e-Wahdat, was furious with Khan because they were not given any positions of power despite their joint effort in ousting the Taliban. Khan's refusal to share any power with Hezb-e-Wahdat would appear to be powerful inferential evidence of Khan's reluctance to give an Iranian-supported group explicit political influence in Herat.

Journalists have reported that not a single dollar of promised aid by the international community has reached Herat and, regardless of the influx into Herat of Iranian aid, "nobody in his town, Khan believes, would want to give Iran a role in Afghan politics[17]."

Khan plays down his relationship with Iran. "The Iranians are good neighbors, nothing else," and points out that the two countries share a four-hundred-mile-long border, which is crossed by traders every day. Khan has conceded, "Iran supported the struggle of the mujahideen, as did other countries," but dismisses the charges that he received arms from Iran as late as 2002[18].

When asked by EurasiaNet if he was "Iran's man in Afghanistan," Khan replied:

I have to say very unambiguously that for the last 23 years of civil and foreign war in Afghanistan, it was only Iran and China that were consistent in their support of us.

Now, about relations between us and Iran, there are a lot of malicious lies and distortion. Yes, it is true that we have a lot of respect for Iran. First, we have no alternative- we are neighbors and we have a long border with them. Second, during the jihad and resistance years, Iran gave us critical support. They never wavered in this. You must know something, we Afghans never forget it when a stranger offers us help. Third, we have an important business relationship through Islam Ghalleh and Dougharoun [between Mashhad and Herat]. Fourth, Iran hosted more than 3 million Afghan refugees and they were taken care of reasonably well.

We are rebuilding the country and we need friends. We need Iran's friendship. That doesn't mean we lose our independence or they have undue influence on us. I'm sure the Iranians have no plan to attack our country or anything like that- and if they did it would be a mistake.[19]

Khan has always been independent, even from his Afghan brethren. While he accepted arms and resources from Jamiat-i-Islami and Rabbani, he refused their authority. Many of his current problems apparently stem from the fact that he openly disdains Karzai and makes no secrets about it. Yet he was pragmatic enough to recognize Kabul's eventual role in the future Afghanistan and consented when his son -- Mirwais Sadiq -- was appointed Karzai's Minister of Labor and Social Affairs. Despite Khan's pragmatism and pronouncements of independence from foreign influence, the United States is extremely nervous concerning Iranian influence in Afghanistan. This concern is highlighted by reports such as the one published in *Insight on the News Website* stating that:

According to intelligence reports, three Iranian Revolutionary Guard officers were killed during 2001 in U.S. air strikes against the Taliban army's 17th Detachment in the western Afghan province of Herat, which now is ruled by Iran's close ally, Ismail Khan. Advised by as many as 10 Iranian generals who are operating undercover as Afghans, Khan is believed to be planning the creation of a 'Western Federation' that eventually might challenge Kabul's rule[20].

Should one find it unusual at all that Khan was being advised by Iranian Generals during the height of the United States and the Northern Alliance's campaign against the Taliban? Khan had just returned from his exile in Iran to rejoin the Northern Alliance and recognizing his long-standing relationship with the Iranians, it seems reasonable to expect such council. While Khan considers his role as "Amir" of Western Afghanistan seriously and openly challenges Kabul's leadership, there has been no evidence that he plans to create a formal, break-away "Western Federation," much less become a pawn of the Iranians.



Map of Afghanistan

The Legacy of Afghan Regional Politics

Afghanistan has always been a tribal, segmented country with Kabul exerting little influence on the provinces. "Fiefdoms" have clearly been established by Khan and others such as Uzbek General Dostum[21], who repeatedly has challenged Kabul's control over the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif; Ismailis (in alliance with Dostam) in Pul-i-Khumri; the Tajiks in the Northeast, and multiple Pashtun powerbrokers in the Eastern provinces. Such regional spheres of influence have long dominated Afghan politics and reflected in provincial leadership. They are an established fact of Afghan political life. Afghanistan has no history of secular democracy. The characterization of Afghanistan by the 19th Century British diplomat Sir Henry Rawlinson as "consist[ing] of a mere collection of tribes, of unequal power and divergent habits, which are held together more or less closely, according to the personal character of the chief who rules them. The feeling of patriotism, as it is known in Europe, cannot exist among Afghans, for there is no common country" is still true today and suggests critical nuances for any realistic Afghanistan reconstruction and future political agenda.

The fragmentation and complexity of Afghanistan presents particular challenges to reconstruction as well as to peaceful, stable post-Taliban country free of terrorists. To understand Afghanistan, one must recognize and be sensitive to the fact that group identities and power relationships as well as coalitions are based on ethno-linguistic affinities. Pashtuns have traditionally been the dominant ethnic group and the Afghan state has in the past been a tool for Pashtun domination. The second most prominent ethnic-linguistic group is the Tajiks who represent the Afghan Persian-speaking, nontribal population such as that found in Khan's Herat and Western Provinces. Other prominent Afghan ethno-linguistic groups include the Uzbeks, Hazaras, Nuristani, Baluch and Brahau. The peaceful coexistence of the different groups has been destroyed by 25 years of war that witnessed scores of atrocities committed by one group against another. Each of these groups continue to dominate the lives of Afghans in particular regions and locales.

One must be sensitive to this ethno-linguistic fragmentation. It is probably unrealistic to expect that the post-Taliban government in Kabul over the short term will have much significant control over regional and local power relationships that have long dominated. Kabul can serve a useful mediating role in conflicts at the regional level, but over the short to medium term that is about all that can realistically be expected. It is instructive to recognize that during the Sawr (or April) Revolution in the late 1970s, Soviet-supported Afghan Communists attempted to institute certain development policies, including land reforms, that disregarded local and regional ethnic realities and relationships. These policies failed miserably and led to civil upheaval and Ismail Khan's original revolt. Any future Afghan reconstruction plan formulated in Kabul and imposed on the regions in disregard to local realities will most certainly meet the same fate. Reconstruction must have as a goal the restoration of basic economic and social infrastructures not the rebuilding of the entire state or country from the top down. A regional reconstruction strategy has the added benefit of minimizing competition of control of the central government and giving a vested interest to local leaders such as Ismail Khan for the maintenance of peace. It must be remembered that people's allegiance is primarily with ethnic and tribal groups and local authorities[22].

Recent Events

The relationship between Khan and Karzai is an excellent near-term indicator of the success of the future Afghan state. Khan is viewed by many as one of the main obstacles to Karzai's efforts to extend his authority outside Kabul. If this is a valid assumption then the past months have seen some extremely troubling indicators.

On March 21, 2004, bloody conflict erupted in Herat between Khan's forces and those loyal to the central government after a reported failed assassination attempt on the life of Khan and the killing of Khan's son, Aviation Minister Mirwais Sadiq[23]. This fighting, which represents some of the worst seen Herat since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, erupted after Sadiq was killed as he went to investigate the earlier assassination attempt of his father.

While accounts of exactly what happened vary widely, according to an account by U.N. workers in Afghanistan as reported in the *New Yorker*,

Tensions had been mounting between Khan and one of his bitter rivals, General Abdul Zaher Naibzadah, who had been appointed by the central government to head the Afghan 17th division, over control of the Afghan military's Herat garrison. Khan's son heard reports that there had been an assassination attempt on his father, and drove to the General's house, where Naibzadah's bodyguards gunned him down, along with others. According to the U.N. dispatch, Ismail Khan took violent revenge on his attackers, burning down the local headquarters of the Afghan militia and killing scores. Some press accounts put the death toll of the subsequent daylong battle at a hundred or more; other accounts, emanating from Kabul, said that fewer than two-dozen were killed. The U.N. account included reports that a personal phone call from Karzai to Khan was necessary to defuse the situation." During the next days, a division of the Afghan National Army consisting of fifteen hundred soldiers was sent to Herat to restore order[24].

The U.N. Report cited by the *New Yorker* suggested, that Khan "may become even more intractable in his dealing with the central government[25]."

According to the BBC , during a visit to Herat, Karzai demanded that Khan disarm his forces as part of a nationwide plan to disarm 40,000 fighters by June[26]. Karzai also suggested that Khan would not be allowed to keep his private militia. Do not expect this disarmament or the voluntary dismantlement of Khan's militia to happen any time soon!

Three times this year Hamid Karzai has dispatched troops from the newly formed Afghan national army to combat factional fighting and disarm regional militias. Most recently, in late June, Afghan troops with "embedded" U.S. military trainers were sent to the province of Ghor to assert central government control. These actions to impose authority in the provinces and disarm militias have had limited success.

Conclusion

Ismail Kahn personifies how difficult it is for the U.S. to separate its enemies from its allies in Afghanistan. "If Mohammed Fahim is a government minister and Ismail Khan is a warlord," one American official [has suggested], "you're abusing the language." The official's point was that Khan has provided better security and more stability for the local population than is found in other Afghan provinces, and international observers believe that he would probably win a provincial election. But he treats Herat as a private fiefdom, and has alarmed many in the United States with his vocal support of Iran; last fall, he was quoted as calling it "the best model of an Islamic country in the world[27]."

Khan is a legendary Afghan commander and has been a fixture in Western Afghanistan for decades. He is extremely popular with the forces he has led since his original mutiny against the Taraki regime's Saur (or April) Revolution. As Ahmed Rashid has written, "few mujahideen commanders have the prestige of Ismail Khan and few have sacrificed more than the people of Herat during the war against the Soviets[28]." While it is not without its blemishes, Khan has established an effective administration and has won the respect of the people. It is a fact that Herat under Khan's leadership is thriving relative to the rest of Afghanistan.

Ismail Khan has and probably will continue to have significant relationships with his powerful neighbor, Iran - a fact that should not be viewed as surprising considering Afghan history or his personal history. But evidence suggesting that he is controlled by or acts as an Iranian lackey is far from convincing. Khan time and time again has demonstrated his independence and disdain of foreign influence.

It is instructive to review Khan's passionate desire for greater unity from foreign influence of mujahideen field commanders when he organized the first meeting for field commanders in the Ghor province in July 1987. "Over one thousand commanders from across Afghanistan attended the conference. They adopted twenty resolutions of which the most important was the demand that they, rather than the Peshawar leaders, dictate the political movement. 'The right of determining the future destiny of Afghanistan lies with

the heirs of the martyrs and with the Muslims of the trenches, who are struggling in bloody fronts and are ready to be martyred. *Nobody else is allowed to make decisions determining the fate of the nation*[29].'

Ismail Khan will use the Iranian resources to benefit Herat; it is extremely unlikely that he will allow Iran or anybody else -- including the leadership in Kabul -- to replace him as "Amir" of Western Afghanistan.

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References

1. Khan became the leader of Jamiat-i-Islami's western command where he was nominally loyal to Jamiat's leader Burhanuddin Rabbani. Along with Ahmad Shah Massoud, Ismail Khan was recognized as one of the most effective leader of the Afghan resistance against the Soviets and was so acclaimed by the United States.
2. See footnote #20.
3. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 October 2003. Significant revenue is raised by custom officials who demand as much as \$300 for trucks to pass through the city.
4. It should be noted that such revenue has allowed Khan to continue to pay his militia (estimated to number 25,000).
5. After Khan's mutiny in 1979, "Moscow, fearing copycat uprisings in other Afghan cities, sent 300 tanks from the Soviet Turkmenistan to crush the revolt and began to bomb one of the oldest cities in the world indiscriminately. Fifteen years later, large tracts of the city still looked like a lunar landscape with rubble stretching to the horizon." (Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001):37.
6. Lutz Kleveman, *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003): 202.
7. Ismail Khan and Jamiat-i-Islami in general did not receive significant U.S. aid during the war with the Soviets, especially when compared to commanders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, arguable now one of the U.S. worst Afghan enemies. Khan was not a favorite of the Pakistani ISI that played a critical role in decisions concerning the distribution of U.S. arms and supplies to the Afghan mujahideen.
8. Fahim, a Tajik from the Panjshir Valley, replaced Massoud as the military leader of the Northern Alliance after the legendary Afghan leader was assassinated. He played a key role in the ground war against the Taliban. The U.S. however has reportedly recently reevaluated its relationship with the Northern Alliance and its view of Fahim. One Western official with long experience in Afghanistan according to the *Washington Post* (Susan B. Glasser and Pamela Constable, "Tensions Rises Between Two Key Afghans: Defense Chief is Seen as Threat to Karzai and Nation's Stability," *The Washington Post*, 5 August 2002, A12) has stated that "The U.S. government is making a terrible mistake in supporting Fahim...The U.S. has the resources to understand this is not a reliable partner and that he could easily be replaced...Fahim's tendencies are those of a street thug." Fahim has an interesting past. Fahim reportedly replaced Najibullah as the head of KhAD (the Soviet's puppet PDPA's brutal secret police and intelligence agency during the Soviet occupation). He is close to the Russians (he was the

clear Russian favorite to lead the Northern Alliance after the death of Massoud) and is extremely disliked by many Pashtuns, Hazaras and Uzbeks.

9. *Insight on the News*, 12 November 2002.

10. Ibid.

11. *Los Angeles Times*, 6 Jan 2002 and *The Guardian*, 24 Jan 2002. Khan's militia forces that not only wear uniforms supplied by Iran but are distinguished by their Palestinian-style black and white checkered keffiyehs.

12. Ibid.

13. During Khan's exile, Iran provided arms, money, and training for Khan's best soldiers by the Sepah-e Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards); Khan himself oversaw training camps near the town of Mashhad in eastern Iran. See: Kleveman, pp. 202-3.

14. Kleveman 2003: 213.

15. Olivier Roy, *Afghanistan: From Holy War to Civil War* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1995): 98.

16. Roy, 1995: 89.

17. Kleveman 2003: 213.

18. Ibid.

19. "A EurasiaNet Q&A with Ismail Khan," June 24, 2002.

20. *Insight on the News*, 12 November 2002,

21. Abdul Rashid Dostum is the ruthless leader of ethnic Uzbek's the Jombesh-e Melli Islami (National Islamic Movement), a predominantly Uzbek militia forming part of the Northern Alliance. He is an ex-communist member of the Afghan PDPA during Soviet occupation. He has pursued a complex and opportunistic strategy to preserve his northern fiefdom. His mutiny from Najibullah and later alliance with Massoud was decisive in bringing Mujahideen to power in Kabul. Dostum has aligned with almost everyone at one time or another and is famous for "switching sides. He has had past alliances with the PDPA, Massoud, Hekmatyar, and the Taliban. It has been alleged that he has been on payrolls of Russia, Uzbekistan, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey (in 1995, he was on the payroll of both Iran and Pakistan).

22. This and the previous two paragraphs were taken from: Thomas H. Johnson, "The Loya Jirga, Ethnic Rivalry and Future Afghan Stability," *Strategic Insight* 1, no. 6 (Monterey, CA: Center for Contemporary Conflict, Naval Post Graduate School, August 2002).

23. For an account of this episode see: "Warlord Khan regains control of Afghan city after bloody clashes," 22 March 2004, and "Troops head to west Afghan city as funeral held for slain minister," 24 March 2004.

24. Seymour Hersh, "The Other War," *The New Yorker*, 12 April 2004.

25. Ibid.

26. Andrew North, "Karzai Warning to Herat Governor," *BBC News*, 11 May 2004.

27. Op. Cit.

28. Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: *Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001): 36.

29. Ibid: 96, my emphasis.