

## **Afghan Political Parties: a short outline**

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### *Summary*

Political parties are controversial in Afghanistan. Associated with recent conflict and ethnic or military factions, they are not considered a potentially positive force by the public or the Afghan Government. Strong ties to tribal, regional, religious, or ethnic identities, the lack of class awareness, and the very small size of the intelligentsia limited the formation of political parties in Afghanistan. Besides patron-client relationships (*qawm*) are still striving and stalling the full development of political parties. As a matter of fact *qawm* is so important that it overrides any ethnic, religious or family ties.

Therefore, the term 'political party' has a number of connotations. It does not necessarily denote an organization that is politically active in the way parties are in established democracies. While distinguishable, ideological currents of political activity exist today, few parties hold individualized, identifiable platforms or have cohesive internal structures. Many have connections to ex-mujahidin military factions previously active in Afghanistan's civil conflict. A more accurate term for these parties is 'proto parties', as they lack the institutionalization more commonly associated with parties in the conventional sense.

The New Democratic Parties (NDP) that came into being after the Bonn Conference in 2001 are different from the mujahideen parties in that they are more likely to embrace moderate state-building or national unity platforms. They have no direct ties to the power structures from the former resistance movement but in the contrary are supported by NGOs, lawyers or socio-political associations. After the 2005 parliament elections the NDPs, however, did not manage to get any seats upon which the International Community (IC) decided not to support them anymore. The mujahideen parties won these elections based on their effective military-based organization. Yet, before the 2009 elections the IC realized that the NDPs are the only parties that give hope for a more democratic Afghanistan in the future. Subsequently they decided to assist the NDPs in party development and organization.

Party in general is hindered by inadequate legislative. The government feared that in the beginning party development might entice ethnic and religious strives thus decided, also for practical reasons, to organize the first elections on basis of the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system. This now still stands in the way of democratization through party development. Other steps to stimulate this process are: state funding of parties, independent party registration and altering the Parliamentary Rules of Procedures.

### *Early Afghan Parties*

The modernization policies of King Zahir Shah (1933-1973) in the 1940s led to the formation of a number of parties. The development of mature political parties in

Afghanistan did not occur until the 1960s, following a provision in the 1964 Constitution legally recognizing their right to form, of which only Afghan Millat\* remains. However, no laws were ratified to authorize their formation until later. That decade saw the formation of a variety of leftist parties of which the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) is the most important but the history of the many leftist political movements in Afghanistan is a short one. The development of these parties was limited by their own inability to engage the public in political activity, their lack of promotion of national interests and a tendency towards extremism. Besides they were minimally important in the resistance in the mid-1980s. These factors contributed to the King's refusal to sign the Parties Law and his later reversal of earlier liberalization policies.

Following the overthrow of the King in 1973 by the former premier Mohammad Daud\*\*, the Saur revolution of May 1978 led by the PDPA and the subsequent Soviet occupation the next year, seven mujahedin parties formed with the common goal of resisting Soviet rule. Daud merely used the PDPA (Parcham branch) as a political tool against the threat from the Islamist right. Next, the PDPA revolution in 1978 badly failed and before the year was over, populations in large areas of the country had revolted against the regime's hasty and ill-considered reforms. The reformation of Islam failed, as did the comprehensive reforms designed to transform the countryside. The Soviets, who intervened in 1979, stayed for over 10 years in Afghanistan, only supported by 3-5 % of the population.

In 1986 the Soviet marionette president Najibullah, opened the political environment formerly with a new law on political parties. Yet, the majority of parties choosing to take part in this 'controlled democracy' were leftist and the elections in 1988 were fixed to favor PDPA candidates. In retrospect, the new law was introduced too late: by the end of the decade the Soviets had left and the PDPA government had collapsed. Up to this point, leftist parties had been politically active, often printing publications and establishing women's wings and youth movements, but they were not a unified or institutionalized political force.

### *Parties Opposing the Soviet Occupation*

Opposition to the Soviet occupation came from the mujahedin, Shia, Islamic fundamentalist and traditionalist parties. The mujahedin were assisted in part by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and indirectly funded by anti-Soviet international powers, including the United States and Saudi Arabia.

\* The spellings of the names of political parties in this document may vary from that in other documents and causes some difficulty in keeping track of the parties and their various incarnations. There are no strict rules for the transliteration of Persian based languages to roman orthography and so names may appear differently in different documents. I have tried to maintain a consistency of spelling and rendering of names in this document. The spelling of the official party list on the MoJ website (in English) has been followed closely.

\*\* The understanding of what correct naming conventions in Afghanistan actually stand for is very important. Only a small percentage of Afghans have last names. Afghans are generally identified by their Real Names (middle name), then their father's name, and possibly their place of birth and the tribe to which they belong. I have tried to identify the persons with their Real Name as much as possible.

These mujahedin parties incorporated Jamiat under Burhanuddin Rabbani, and parties led by Sayyaf (Tanzim-e Dawat), Mujaddidi (Jabha-e Najat), and Gailani (Mahaz-e Milli) along with two factions of Hezb-e Islami led by Gulbadin Hekmatyar and Yonus Khalis. After the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989, many of the mujahidin factions became rivals in the ensuing civil war.

There were also a number of primarily Shia parties. The most important was the Mazari-led Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan. Hezb-e Wahdat splintered over the years into a variety of parties including a non-Hazara group led by Mohammad Akbari and factions led by Karim Khalili, Mohaqeq, and Kazemi. These parties held different alliances that could be categorized as Islamic fundamentalist, parties led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, Sayyaf, Khales and Hekmatyar, and traditionalists.

The traditionalist parties like the ones led by Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, Sibaghatullah Mujaddidi and Pir Sayed Gailani, relied on different traditionalist networks: ulama, or Islamic scholars and their followers; Sufi communities, organized around a pir or holy man; and tribal networks whose leaders often had blood or other ties to the old royal family. For example, since 1964 Gailani leads the Sufi order Qadiriya, which goes back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century where his ancestor founded the order in Baghdad. Gailani's grandfather came to Afghanistan in 1905 on invitation of his Pashtun followers where King Habibullah gave him a residence near Jalalabad. They stayed ever since. Gailani was an important resistance leader during the Soviet invasion and he is still playing an important role in Afghan politics together with his sons and daughters. He is more the spiritual leader of the group than anything else.

The Mujaddidi family is leading the Sufi order Naqsbandiya order with followers mainly in the North and South. The order dates back to the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century Indian subcontinent. In 1979 the leader of the family, Mohammad Ibrahim, was killed in Kabul with almost 100 male family members by the Marxist regime. Sibaghatullah Mujaddidi, who survived the massacre of 1979, developed into a religious and political leader in the 1980s and fought against the Soviets and the Marxist regime in Kabul.

The armed strength of the traditionalist parties tended to be organized in loose networks of adherents, whereas the four Islamic fundamentalist parties had relatively coherent command structures that made them more effective militarily. All of these anti-Soviet groups functioned primarily as military factions and were divided along personal, ethnic, tribal, and religious lines; it reflected the fragmentation of Afghan society.

Military operations, particularly those of tribal forces, have always been vital factors in shaping the country's history. Hence, the celebration of military prowess firmly embedded in folklore and songs. Unlike other historical rebel movements, the Afghan resistance has hardly anything new to show the visiting observer: no new elected village committee, for example; no program for the integration of women into the struggle; no new clinics or schools; no newly created stores that sell or exchange essential goods; no small workshops contributing to economic self-sufficiency of the sort one finds in guerrilla camps elsewhere throughout the world.

The Afghan rebels have undertaken no political experiments and achieved only little social improvements. It remained, however, a formidable movement, capable of denying the regime control of as much as 80 percent of the countryside, assassinating state and party officials, and attacking regime and Soviet targets even in the heart of the capital.

During the Soviet war some extreme interpretations of Islam along its instigators were making their way mainly from Pakistan to Afghanistan and were settling in some of the minds and hearts of Afghans. These forms of Islam that espoused extreme societal reforms and fighting against corrupt 'Western' influences gained several converts. The fundamentalist Islamic parties had a broadly consolidated ideology of opposition to the PDPA and later the Soviets, but they dispersed quickly with the absence of a common enemy in the early 1990s. Even though the Islamic concept of jihad is a theme common to all the major resistance groups, it would be simplistic to assume that they share a single Islamic ideology.

Rather, there are several Islamic constituencies with widely diverse perspectives on religion, society, and the state. In a country where 99 percent of the population is Muslim, Islam ostensibly provides a basis for unity and legitimacy. Yet, the variations within the Muslim community are so pronounced that different groups, professing Islamic goals, have little in common except the vocabulary of the Koran, hostility to the foreign invader and, sometimes, appreciation of the material benefits of united action. It was probably as much an expression of local political interests as it was a religious struggle. Revolt, moreover, was nothing new. In Afghan politics, violence is not extremism but part of a centuries-old status quo.

During the violent conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s, alliances between resistance groups evolved rapidly as various factions formed coalitions in search of a military advantage. These alliances were rarely based on clear ideological or political goals outside of the military struggle for power. In some cases, former communists and leftist groups formed alliances with fundamentalist Islamists, in order to create power centers along geographic or ethnic lines. One military force that emerged and eventually formed a political party was General Dostum's Hezb-e Junbesh-e Milli Islami Afghanistan, which controlled much of the north-west of the country. It is clear that neither leftists nor Islamists were disposed to tolerate opposition and that violence served as a key political tool.

Parties maintained their violent reputation throughout the civil war, alienating a large proportion of the population through brutality and the frequent targeting of civilians. They managed, however, to establish extensive management, organizational, and communication structures. In the wake of this, the Taliban were welcomed in some areas with their commitment to restoring order and Islamic principles, but they would tolerate opposition no more than previous regimes. The vacuum of political activity in which no party could function effectively continued during the Taliban regime (1996-2001). Still, the pre-existing organizational abilities allowed these groups active in Afghanistan's conflict-torn 1980s and 1990s to command considerable resources and public recognition after the Taliban fell.

### *Party Development since the 2001 Bonn Conference*

The new parties formed in the post-Taliban period tended to be less closely aligned with particular ethnic groups and were more likely to embrace moderate state-building or national unity platforms. The beginning of the Bonn process provided the freedom to conduct activities openly and to register formally. The two key reasons for party formation were: new opportunities (and space for opportunism) in a new political era; and disputes with the leadership of the old parties to which party members belonged previously. A factor to consider finally, however, is that not all the parties showed the same desire to parliament (as distinguished from political influence more generally). It is in this context that the so-called New Democratic Parties (NDPs) have, in the years following the 2001 Bonn Conference, formed, reformed or registered.

Already after the Bonn Conference it becomes more or less clear that the success of Afghanistan's democratic system will largely depend on the development of well organized, transparent, and broadly representative political parties. In the period prior to the presidential elections of 2004, concerns that political parties would form along fractious ethnic and religious divisions led many to conclude that a party-based political system could be destabilizing in Afghanistan. From the government's perspective, it is feared that encouraging parties may fuel civil tensions and contribute to the already deteriorating security situation. This is reflected in the way the government has placed enormous emphasis on 'national unity' and on preventing groups forming in parliament on the basis of ethnicity, region, language or other potentially divisive factors.

This is not unusual in countries emerging from conflict, where it has been shown that parties can exacerbate existing ethnic tensions, especially when ethnic divides correspond with the unequal distribution of economic resources. Some are of the opinion that the environment in Afghanistan at that time was not conducive to the support of parties and other demands on government and donor resources (such as security) should be prioritized. Others argue that even if parties were formally supported, they would be limited by high levels of corruption in government institutions and a weak rule of law, while decreasing security levels would enforce self-censorship and a limited scope for party political activities.

These are some of the reasons why the Government of Afghanistan and the international community have focused on the technical formation and development of other democratic institutions and others, such as political parties, have been sidelined. Further, the lack of focus on political party affiliation for candidates in the pre-Taliban elections did not contribute much to a strong belief in the new political parties. Besides, without strong party organizations, many anticipated that the legislative branch of government would be severely weakened by infighting among hundreds of independent members. Others predicted that the only political parties organized and disciplined enough to take advantage of the idiosyncrasies of SNTV (Single Non-Transferable Vote) would be warlords and parties with ties to Afghanistan's violent and unstable military past. All of these developments counteracted the initial optimism in the new parties and more in particular their development into strongholds of democracy. However, the only

way to arrive at the implementation of successful, legitimate elections is to start building a culture of democratic participation - and parties provide a key mechanism through which to do this.

Following the collapse of the Taliban regime the older parties had substantial institutional advantages over any newly formed political parties. They had clearly identified leaders, access to resources, widespread public recognition, and, in some cases, maintained strong local authority in the regions they had formerly controlled. After the 2005 elections it became clear that old party-affiliated representatives were a dominant force in the National Assembly, and independent members of parliament (MPs) were coming under increasing political pressure to join party organizations or to form some kind of caucus grouping in the Lower House. Today, Afghanistan has a multi-party political system in development, with numerous parties in which no one party has a chance of gaining power alone. Thus, parties must work together to form coalition governments.

The western-style democracy was laid down at the Bonn conference in November 2001. It was decided to hold an Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002 and a Constitutional Jirga in December 2003. The Bonn Conference and subsequent Loya Jirgas established that Afghanistan would be governed using a presidential system with a bi-cameral legislature. The lower house, or Wolesi Jirga, would be elected and the upper house, or Meshrano Jirga, would be appointed with two thirds of the members appointed by elected provincial and district councils and one third appointed by the president.

An Election Law, adopting a Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) election system, and a Political Parties Law (2003) were promulgated and over 80 political parties were registered by the Office of Political Party Registration, Ministry of Justice, in advance of the parliamentary elections held in September 2005. Under the Political Parties Law, parties must meet the following criteria: parties must not pursue objectives contrary to Islam; use force; incite violence; disrupt public order; have military organizations or affiliations with armed forces; have been convicted of human rights violations; or receive funds from foreign sources. Parties are also required to have a constitution and a minimum of 700 members in order to be registered. Despite initial difficulties in the administration of 2004 and 2005 the registration saw of over 80 political parties. Some parties had difficulty obtaining registration due to resistance from interests within and outside of the government, but these parties eventually were approved. In addition, multiple parties were registered despite objections that they were led by former warlords who maintained links to armed elements or who were seen as having committed human rights violations.

The decision to register these parties came as a disappointment to international human rights advocates and Afghans who had hoped that warlords would be sidelined in the electoral process. Many younger Afghans and some of the independent representatives in the National Assembly were also disillusioned as they blame the leadership of the old-line parties for the destruction and carnage of the early 1990s.

A Single Non-Transferable Vote is seldom used in other countries, but was chosen for the first elections in Afghanistan because it is relatively simple to implement in a post-conflict setting and does not require political parties, which at the time were considered by the government and international stakeholders to be highly unpopular with the general public. SNTV dictates multi-member constituencies (provinces, in the case of Afghanistan) in which an unlimited number of candidates may stand for election. Party affiliation is not required. Indeed, in the 2004 presidential and 2005 parliamentary elections, candidates were not allowed to mention party affiliation on the ballot paper, even if they wanted to.

The electoral system was expected to change for the 2009 elections but it did not. Still, the candidates are represented on the ballot sheets by symbols only. At first glance, SNTV limits the extent to which parties can be successful in the elections, because there is no formal incentive for candidates to join parties when they can stand and win seats independently. However, as became clear after the 2005 electoral success of many older, ex-mujahidin or Islamist parties (such as Jamiat, Junbesh, Hezb-i Islami, Wahdat), it is possible for parties to out-manuever the constraints of the system.

While the high number of Afghan political parties provides some evidence of the level and strength of interest in the political process and in political parties, it also reflects a fragmented political environment. Although the number of active parties (approximately 25 in 2006) is relatively large, it represents a significant reduction in comparison to what existed in the pre-election period. SNTV system's bias against political parties was clearly demonstrated in the parliamentary and provincial council elections. One of the unresolved factors in the organization of the parties in the National Assembly is the formation of Parliamentary Groups. In January 2006 the Wolesi Jirga adopted provisional rules of procedure to make it advantageous for members to declare their allegiance to a party and form larger coalitions during parliamentary sessions. It remains to be seen when Parliamentary Groups will actually be declared.

There is a definite sense of political identity among most of the parties. This is particularly true of the Mujahedin and Shia parties that were formed in the pre-Taliban era. However, this sense of political identity remained more strongly tied to regional, ethnic, and religious factors rather than political ideology for most of these groups. This is still compounded by the parties' strong identification with a particular leader or specific personalities. All of the parties espouse the same principles—Islam, peace and stability, reconstruction, and national unity—but there is often little effort made to expand on these principles and articulate in any detail how these principles would be translated into specific policies.

The New Democratic Parties (NDPs) comprise a current of political activity, which came to prominence in the wake of the Bonn conference. Not all of the parties categorized under this heading are new, but they generally began to function openly (and solicited international attention) after 2001. Some have connections to the previously active PDPA factions, but they have recently made commitments to political pluralism and democratic principles. Common characteristics include: a stated commitment to encouraging

democratization; an anti-fundamentalist stance; a preference to justice over amnesty in the judging of war criminals; and a general desire to work with the international community. In terms of public recognition a number of these new parties have generated some awareness among the public, while others are not well known or widely identified. These parties are, however, probably more advanced in terms of identifying and communicating a clear definition of their political purpose and ideology. In some cases, the newer parties have succeeded by making a clear distinction between their identity and that of the old mujahedin parties. The new parties did not participate in any direct way in the civil war, and generally are not dependent on a regional power base or military organizational structures. They tend to emphasize creating a membership base that encompasses all of the ethnic groups across the country.

Nonetheless, NDPs have not yet been able to form a consolidated or influential political force. There are many factors hindering their activities—both external, contextual factors related to the political environment in Afghanistan and internal issues such as a lack of capacity and organization. In spite of the concerted encouragement of several international agencies prior to the 2005 elections, not one of the NDPs was able to win a seat in parliament. This was probably the result of a combination of factors, but it also demonstrates the relative weakness of NDPs in comparison to their ex- mujahidin and Islamist counterparts. At the same time it contributes to the way in which these parties have been considered marginal by international actors and thus not a priority for technical assistance. However, while NDPs did not meet international expectations in terms of their capacity to mobilize voters for the elections, many were expecting much more support from the international community in order to promote a democratic agenda. It appears that there were unfulfilled expectations on both sides.

Another potential problem with the NDPs is that they are not particularly representative of the population as a whole, in terms of class at least. They are largely comprised of the educated elite and have limited connections to rural Afghanistan. To their credit, NDPs in general have a stated commitment to bridging ethnic divides and have not resorted to increasing support networks on the basis of ethnic representation. This does not mean though that their relationships with each other are not affected by ethnic concerns - NDPs that relate to previous PDPA factions, Khalq and Parcham, have a history of ethnic opposition because these divisions were emphasized by Soviet influence and operations.

With no historical blueprint of solid, democratically organized institutions, NDPs have (re-)developed and adopted many of the characteristics of previous political entities, albeit with different opportunities in a new environment. They are still formed on a hierarchical and top-down model, and thus their development cannot be directly compared to that of European mass parties formed in the wake of industrial or agrarian revolutions. This does not necessarily render Afghan NDPs ineffective—rather, it demonstrates that their initial role in democratization may differ to that of the early European parties, given the current political context of Afghanistan.

Significant challenges remain with Afghan's political parties. If they are to play a larger role in defining candidate platforms and organizing campaigns in subsequent elections,

significant party strengthening will be required. The interim period prior to the next election (2009) will be a critical time for parties to build their institutions so that they can develop and implement more robust election plans. All parties faced a challenge in providing campaign resources to their candidates and abiding by campaign finance or reporting requirements. Few, if any, parties went through an internal election to select their candidates in the 2005 elections. There is also a need for NDP parties to develop election organization skills close the gap between them and pre-existing parties with military ties and established regional followings.

However, there are some positive signs. The pool of relevant parties is now much more clearly defined than before the 2004-05 elections when there were as many as a hundred party organizations partaking in the elections. The predictions that the National Assembly would be gridlocked by independent candidates and weak parties have not borne out. The parliament is functioning, and is not being unreasonably obstructionist in relation to the government's agenda. The National Assembly has adopted functional rules of procedure that encourage and benefit parties and caucus groupings. Parties that had limited electoral success are focused on party building and organizational strengthening, and are looking to future elections rather than dwelling on the weaknesses of the election process. It remains to be seen whether the present parties will evolve into institutions with broad ethnic and geographical membership driven by policy interests, or become highly centralized organizations that exacerbate ethnic and religious extremism. Many emerging parties have the potential to become the kind of stabilizing, effective, and broadly representative organization that Afghanistan requires to lead and consolidate the country's emerging democratic institutions.

#### *Party system towards 2009 Elections*

Despite the dramatic deterioration in the security in Afghanistan we can see clear evidence that the seeds of democracy have been sown in Afghanistan. The Afghan people are a receptive audience. Research in southern Afghanistan (IOS, 2009) and Kabul throughout 2008 and into 2009 indicates an understanding of the idea of democracy, and a vigorous and open discussion of a wide variety of candidates. The abundance of political parties and candidates operating in Afghanistan is to the immense credit of the country's emerging political scene. With 102 approved parties in 2009, and a potential upwards of 20 actively campaigning presidential candidates, this is a vibrant landscape that stands in stark contrast to many of its neighbors. Many are little more than small cults of personality, but several have begun to exert influence on the political scene. Parties based primarily along tribal lines have not, to date, made an impact on Afghan politics. Research has also revealed a remarkable absence of concern over the Karzai's ethnic background, and an openness to consider female candidates in electoral conversations.

#### Presidential elections 2009

With an uncertain security situation it is doubtful that the state has the capacity to hold a truly representative election. Should adequate security not be possible, then we are in danger of providing the insurgency with a golden opportunity to affect the reality and the

perception of security and the functioning of the state outside Kabul. The very act of casting a vote is fraught with danger in many areas, and may in fact be functionally impossible in some southern and eastern districts. However, the annual seasonal increase of kinetic activity during the lead-up to elections may cause the perception of insecurity linked to the election, regardless of enemy forces (EF) intentions. The EF is assessed to most likely attempt to disrupt the electoral process through violence and intimidation as they did during the previous presidential elections in 2004. They will focus on influencing the vote in some districts through intimidation of the local population, and by harassing election officials and targeting unoccupied polling stations. They will avoid indiscriminate civilian casualties.

This strategy will not enable them to translate violence into widespread disruption in urban centres where the majority of polling will be taking place. Sustained intimidation could contribute to a low voter turnout. In addition to the many indicators that the West will not refrain from meddling and influencing the election process, there is the ever present danger that the country's own political veterans will try to fix the election in favor of their candidate.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General presented a set of 'Essential Guidelines for Conduct during the Election Process', but it is highly questionable if the politicians will keep to it. Next, Karzai's authorities will be decreased to an extent once the campaigns officially begin June 16. Many Karzai supporters will use their positions in local administrations to rig votes, pressure their fellow tribesmen, or intimidate other residents to vote. For example, it is known that Ahmad Wali Karzai, President Karzai's brother and chief of Kandahar Provincial Council, has intimidated local Provincial Council members to vote for his brother. President Karzai will continue to intervene in local politics and reward individual power brokers should they demonstrate their loyalty to his re-election campaign, as he did in Helmand. Those who fall in line with electoral competitors will be punished through their removal from key positions within provincial administrators. To achieve this, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) will continue to act as the arm of the President. Several governors may choose to resign or seek promotion after the election, which will be seen as a political milestone in their careers. The remaining governors will have to have proven their capacity to motivate the population to engage in the electoral process in order to retain President Karzai's confidence. Following the election, the key political challenge for the international community will be motivating President Karzai to focus on relevant critical governance issues.

Due to legal restrictions the party affiliation of several presidential candidates is unknown. As a matter of fact when party leaders were recently asked which members of parliament belonged to their party most of them were very reluctant to do so neither were the MPs themselves forthcoming in declaring their party allegiances. One party leader would only disclose the female MPs of his party but not the male MPs. This culture of political ambiguity does not sit comfortably with notions of how parties should function in established democracies. Perhaps the most notable contributing factor to this culture of political ambiguity, however, is the lack of security. Given that there is little history of

political pluralism and tolerance of opposition it is not surprising that Afghan parties now are cautious about advertising their activities and revealing the identity of those who support them. Evidently, the deteriorating security situation and corresponding culture of political ambiguity is significantly affecting the ways in which parties function. In established democracies, parties are inherently public organizations, which readily disseminate information about their activities. In Afghanistan, they are ambiguous, fluid institutions about which very little is publicly known. This is especially the case with the NDPs.

The way in which parties function in Afghanistan at present can be related to their connection (or lack thereof) to the legislature. This indicates, first, that NDPs do not have the resources to organize regular meetings of their own and so make use of informal opportunities; and second, that the connections between parties and parliament are not fixed or formalized in the way that they are in established democracies. This is partly due to the way in which parliament itself functions and the parties are represented: not officially or formally. In an attempt to formally organize MPs into identifiable voting blocs a parliamentary groups system was established.

Individual MPs were invited to form issues-based groups, which were intended to lead eventually to the formation of parties. However, to date these groups have been for the most part superficial or dysfunctional. Despite attempts to introduce this organizing mechanism, both houses of parliament function as they did previously, with most representatives voting, at least on the surface, as independents.

Important candidates with unknown party affiliation are Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Dr. Ashraf Ghani, Ali Ahmed Jalili, Zalmay Khalilzad, Gul Agha Sherzai and Ramzan Bashardost, Abdul Jabbar Sabet, Hedayat Amin Arsala, Mohammad Atmar and many others. Both Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Dr. Ashraf Ghani are by many observers seen as the strongest challengers to Karzai. The first five are known as the 'US Five' who are believed to be viewed positively by the US. A total of 41 candidates of which two women, have been approved to run in the presidential elections, two were disqualified and one candidate dropped out. Yet, in the course of time several candidates like Sherzai withdrew their candidacy after negotiations with president Karzai. In order to determine the order of the candidates, the IEC organized a ballot lottery for the presidential candidates. This marks a big difference compared to the 2004 presidential elections when the interim president Karzai was facing 18 contestants. Yet, the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) has expressed concern that the standards for candidates have been set too low. Although it might be too early in the political careers of many candidates for them to become President, the fact that they are able to mount a challenge is an encouraging sign for the country's democracy. They will be players in the election campaign, and likely survivors with prominent roles in the next government.

#### Provincial Council elections 2009

For the Provincial Council elections 3,324 candidates signed up to run for one of the 420 seats in the 34 provinces. Nearly 30 percent of sitting provincial council members across the country, most belong to the Kabul province, will not contest forthcoming elections for

what they call 'lack of authority, security concerns, personal preoccupations and inability of the councils to serve the masses'. 'Provincial Councils have no authority as neither anyone listens to them nor acts upon their advice', as one of them observed. Others are seeking a seat in parliament during the parliamentary elections in 2010. Similarly, many incumbent members in southern provinces are not in the run this time. In Kandahar, 43 candidates are in the race for 19 seats, but two sitting members are disinterested. Six incumbents in Helmand have no plan to seek new tenure. Deputy chief Haji Qurban acknowledged they were unable to resolve people's problems, much less meet their demands. In Uruzgan, six of the nine members including a female are still working. In the upcoming elections, 26 aspirants including one woman are running. On the whole 54 provincial candidates were disqualified the reason being that most of them were affiliated or had ties with illegal armed groups.

There will also be an increase in the visibility of Provincial Council members in local politics as they begin to think of their own re-election. The Karzai family will use presidential endorsement to encourage supporters to run in the Provincial Council election and many family members fund even some individuals' campaign. Up towards the elections, provincial politics will continue to be dominated by power struggles between those appointed as agents of Kabul and the more traditional power brokers operating across the south.

#### *Political parties and Qawm*

There could be many potential reasons why parties and MPs talk in ambiguous terms about their allegiances in Parliament, one of which could be linked to patron-client networks. Parties in Afghanistan have been (and continue to be in many cases) vehicles of patronage. It could be that MPs informally agree to represent certain parties, but may bargain with these parties for some kind of return. They could also keep a number of parties on hand to find the best offer or to benefit from more than one party simultaneously. In this way, their allegiance to a party could shift at any time. This seems to have been reflected in general trends of political support.

Traditionally, power had been generated by primordial affiliations: dynastic patronage and spiritual charisma or social interactions within tribes, class, lineages or villages. Royal authority was remote from most Afghans. Afghans identify themselves by *qawm*, rather than by tribe or nationality. *Qawm* is an Arabic word used in Afghanistan to denote an opportunistic solidarity network. *Qawm* are a dominating feature of Afghan society. It is the Afghans most cohesive and intimate group exercising much more immediate authority over each member. It permeates all different spheres of Afghan social life and represents a complex interpersonal networks of political, social, economic, military and cultural relations. Afghan social structure does not take the form of a unified hierarchy, nor does an individual *qawm*. However, each has a *primus inter pares* who competes with other *primi inter pares* as well as with *qawm* internal rivals for manifold reasons. It is the primary source of identity and affiliation. It has been argued that the authority of the *qawm* renders interactions outside of it secondary and hence without validity should a conflict with *qawm* interests arise.

Outside interactions are seen as opportunities for aggrandizing the *qawm* such as winning favors from a government official or robbing a passing traveler. It represents social stratification insofar as strongmen, i.e. politicians, religious leaders, commanders, businessmen and organized criminals, form affiliations with one another, while “ordinary agents,” i.e. civilians, warriors, farmers and drug farmers, form patron–client relationships with strongmen.

Each actor may incorporate a variety of roles. For example, a commander can be a commander, a politician and a drug lord at the same time. Individual role pluralism and mutual interdependence are closely related, i.e. each actor has virtues another actor may be in need of and vice versa, leading to cooperation and interdependence. In due time the system converges toward a situation in which no new links are created anymore - but neither are there any links retracted. The system of *qawm* is consolidated. In fact, this means that the network segregates into smaller units and that within these sub networks, or clusters, interaction becomes more intense.

In a space emptied of restricting norms, i.e. an anomie as in conflict-torn societies, virtually everything goes along with the creation of power structures to one’s own ideas and interests. *Qawm* are a means of acquiring, maintaining and increasing that power. The functional rationale of it can be understood in the broader notion of neo-patrimonialism, which has been identified as an overall important organizational principle in contemporary conflicts. In the Afghan context, the interactions within *qawm* determine a pattern of actions that could be described as episodic clusters of cohesion building and dissolution. Such *qawm* level behavior leads to interactions amongst the *qawm* that cause episodic alliance building or conflict of unpredictable magnitude, duration and outcome. Although 30 years of conflict accentuated two important factors in Afghan society, namely ethnicity and religion, the traditional organizational principle of *qawm* rested sound. Neo-patrimonialistic *qawm* also appear to be a root cause for Afghanistan’s being a rentier economy. International aid and organized crime, i.e. poppy cultivation and smuggling, being the only noteworthy resources, a small number of stakeholders build up considerable assets, leaving the rest poor or unsuccessful. This is a paradox in a system that is founded on the accumulation and redistribution of resources, and for which the notion of anomie provides an explanation.

The causes of this development are complex, but nevertheless directly linked to the jihad of 1979–1989. Although trends of neo-patrimonial politics were already recognizable at the very beginning of the jihad and have indeed been a characteristic of Afghan politics throughout history, the war’s fundamental goals started to mutate with its increasing duration. Mutual interaction among different types of actors leads to the emergence of a complex organizational structure which contains a number of centers of power, which themselves consist of a number of political, economic and military stakeholders cooperating in a limited way. That these networks tend to be small-world in scale has an important politico-social implication: because small-world networks are regarded as being more robust against external perturbances than alternative network topologies. This is the reason why *qawm* exhibit a high level of robustness toward exogenous influences. The history of military and cultural invasions of Afghanistan has proved this to be true.

In a cultural environment where *qawm* plays a prominent role, the players lack the autonomy to play by rules that enable parties to function, such as openness to persuasion, tolerance of overlapping loyalties, discipline based on acquired convictions, freedom to join and to leave groups that exercise power, etc. Political parties were culturally marginal entities. Implementation of power was hierarchical and authoritarian. The behavioral and intellectual demands stemming from the values motivating party politics might require a radical shifting of such hierarchies.

Ascribed roles and customary practice determined how discussion was conducted and information evaluated and who made decisions and carried them out. Tribal *jirgahs* typically governing *qawm* permitted vigorous arguments, but consensus was reached through inherited procedures. With the neo-patrimonialistic relations, *qawm*, still in place and difficult to change, it will be even more complicated for political parties to fully develop into vehicles for democracy.

### *Conclusion*

Political parties have long been a source of contention and conflict in the country. From their development in the late mid-20th century until 2001, with a few minor exceptions, there has not been an era in which Afghan parties could compete freely as political institutions in opposition to a ruling regime. This has shaped the ways in which parties have formed, and has resulted in a culture of political ambiguity in which information about parties and their membership is not widely publicized. Especially the New Democratic Parties are currently not functioning as an effective means to organize democratization. They are constrained by outside factors, such as the historical lack of precedent for open-party competition, deteriorating security, a lack of support from the government and fluid or informal connections between parties and Parliament. They are also limited by internal factors, such as an absence of funding to undertake significant activities, and a general lack of capacity and concerted effort to mobilize voter networks effectively. Generally, allegiances between parties, groups and prominent individuals in Afghanistan have been characteristically fluid, shifting according to the convictions of leaders rather than determined by a single ideology. Although 30 years of conflict accentuated two important factors in Afghan society so far, namely ethnicity and religion, the traditional organizational principle of *qawm* rested sound. In fact it is still an important phenomenon shaping day-to-day politics.

The following steps are recommended to stimulate Afghanistan's democratization through party development (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2009)

- The government must publicly and actively recognize the potential contribution of all parties to the country's democratization, primarily by changing the electoral system to one that requires some degree of party activity.
- An independent body, such as a Parties Registration Commission, must be created to replace the role of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in registering parties and monitoring their activities. To maintain independence, senior posts within the Commission should be selected by committee and not by presidential decree.

- Parties cannot function without funds. In future, state-funded incentives could be granted to parties based on membership numbers or percentages of votes gained, provided that the allocation of these incentives is carried out by an independent body such as a Parties Registration Commission (as suggested above).
- Significant changes need to be made to the way that Parliament functions to offer more incentives to parties to operate as organizational mechanisms for democracy. This could be achieved by altering the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure.

Nonetheless, the country's ability to hold free and fair elections is a key benchmark of its progress. Although the western concept of democracy overlaid upon Afghanistan can be argued to be deeply flawed, remarkably it has taken root in the country, and this is one of the few successes of the international community's involvement in Afghanistan.

## *Afghan Political Parties*

All of the 84 approved political parties for the 2009 elections listed on the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) website in English (102 in Dari) are listed below<sup>1</sup>. In total 161 political parties are listed. The parties are ordered alphabetically.

Minor parties with influence are printed in *italics* and major parties with influence are printed **bold**. The classifications

- (A) = Approved by MoJ before 2005
- (B) = Not approved by MoJ before 2005
- (C) = Not approved by MoJ before March 2009
- (D) = Approved by MoJ before March 2009.

### *Afghan Millat (Ahadi)*<sup>2</sup> (A)

The 'Afghan Nation (Ahadi)' also called the 'Afghan Social Democratic Party (Ahadi)' is Pashtun nationalist and self-declared social democratic party. It was founded in 1966 by Ghulam Mohammad Farhad, a German educated intellectual with some Nazi sympathies. The party looks after the Pashtun ethnic group and has its support only from them. It favors the ideas of the Pashtunization of Afghanistan and a Greater Afghanistan. By its critics it has also been called ethno fascist and it has never joined the Socialist International. In 1978 the party was banned and its leader Farhad thrown into prison until 1980. The party chose to stay outside the government. The relationship with the government in 1986-87 split the party in several factions. The 'Afghan Nation (Shams)' went its own way led by Shams ul Huda Shams. Since 1995 the other faction is led by Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi, a former Minister of Finance. He has attempted to expand its membership and function as a nationalist party, rather than an ethnic one. IDLG Director Jelani Popal is Mellat's deputy; the group attracts primarily educated Pashtun. Mellat supported Karzai in 2004 and is likely to support Karzai in 2009, as Ahadi did not register to run for president. There is little reporting on the Provincial Council or Wolesi Jirga activities of this party. It has estimated 8 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a nationalist background, some say ultranationalist or crypto-fascist, and is in general rated Pashtun, Islamic and moderate.<sup>3</sup> URL: <http://www.afghanmellat.de>

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<sup>1</sup> accessed 20 June 2009

<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of the Dari words used in party names see the glossary at the end

<sup>3</sup> Some ratings are taken from the National Democratic Institute: Political Party Assessment, Afghanistan (Spring 2006) and others from Anna Larson: Afghanistan's New Democratic Parties: A Means to Organize Democratisation? (March 2009)

Afghan Millat (Shams)

The 'Afghan Nation (Shams) also called the 'Afghan Social Democratic Party (Shams)' split off from Afghan Millat (Ahadi) in 1987. The faction was led by Shams ul Huda Shams. It was previously based in Pakistan.

AIA

The 'Afghan Interim Authority' agreed upon at the Bonn conference late 2001. As the chairman of the AIA Hamid Karzai was chosen on 22 December 2001. In June 2002 it was replaced by the TISA, the 'Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan'

AIG

The 'Afghan Interim Government' a shadow government founded in February 1989 in Pakistan. It was formed by 7 Islamic parties erected by traditional Afghan clergy who fled to Pakistan in the late 1970s. They elected Sibghattullah Mujaddidi, currently Speaker of the Upper House, as president but very soon conflicts arose and the HIG withdrew from the AIG.

ALO

See Sazman-e Raha-e Afghanistan

ALRO

See Sazman-e Enqelabi-e Kargaran-e Afghanistan

ASP

See Hezb-e Hambastagi Afghanistan

Da Afghan Watan Islami Gond (D)

The 'Islamic Party of the Afghan Land' is led by Mohammad Hassan Ferozkhel.

Da Afghanistan Da Milli Mubarizinu Islami Gond (D)

The 'National Islamic Fighters Party of Afghanistan' is led by Amanat Nangarhari.

Da Afghanistan Da Milli Wahdat Wolesi Tahreek (D)

The 'People's Movement of the National Unity of Afghanistan' is led by Abdul Hakim Noorzai.

Da Afghanistan Da Solay Ghorzang Gond (A)

The 'Peace Movement of Afghanistan' was founded in 1993 by former Defense Minister in the communist regime Shah Nawaz Tanai. He was a former member of the PDPA Khalq faction who changed sides in 1990 and joined Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami. In 1990 he attempted a coup against President Najibullah, president since 1986. Tanai is a preliminary candidate for the 2009 presidential elections. It has estimated 3 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. He has campaigned for a bigger role for Pashtuns, former jihadis and religious leaders. The party has a communist background and is in general rated Pashtun, secular and for state building. Tanai is critical of US involvement in Afghanistan.

Da Afghanistan Da Solay Milli Islami Gond (A)

The 'National Peace Islamic Party of Afghanistan' is led by Shah Mahmud Popalzai

Da Afghanistan Mujahid Woles Yaowaali Islami Tahreek (D)

The 'Afghanistan's Mujahid Nation's Islamic Unity Movement' is led by Saeedullah Saeed.

Da Sol-e Mell

See Da Afghanistan Da Solay Ghorzang Gond

Democrat See Hezb-e Demokrat-e Afghanistan

Democratic Republik of Afghanistan

The official name of Afghanistan during the regime of the PDPA from the coup of 27 April 1978 till the Soviet invasion on December 27 1979.

Development and Democracy for Afghanistan Party

This party is putting up a preliminary candidate for the 2009 presidential elections: Dr. Habib Mangal

DWPA See Hezb-e Watan Demokratik-e Afghanistan

ECC Electoral Complaints Commission

EF Enemy Forces

Goroh-e Kar The 'Labour Group' split from the Uzbek faction of the PDPA founded in the 1960s, in 1992 and joined the party of general Dostum (Hezb-e Junbesh-e Milli Islami Afghanistan) but left after the US invasion.

Hambastagi Jawanan

See Hezb-e Hambastagi-e Milli-e Jawanan-e Afghanistan

Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami

The 'Islamic Revolutionary Movement' was a party led by a cleric Maulawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi formed in the late 1970s by traditional Afghan clergy who fled to Pakistan. Harakat was less a moderate party than a neither-nor group of urban intellectuals and village clerics under the same roof. Because it was loosely organized and had an opaque political personality, Harakat got little attention among Peshawar-based journalists, but nevertheless boasted a large number of fighters in Afghanistan. Their aim was to fight the Marxist government in Kabul and later the Soviet occupation.

## Harakat Islami

See Hezb-e Harakat-e Islami-e Afghanistan

## Harakat-e Islami-e Mardum

See Hezb-e Harakat-e Islami-e Mardum-e Afghanistan

## Haqiqat-e Afghan

The 'Afghan reality' is a party founded by engineer S.A. Sadat in the Netherlands. Its most important objective is the rebuilding of Afghanistan. The intention to that is to reunite all Afghans. The party has beliefs in the program and respect Islam as a religion stands. Persons with other religions can also be part of the party, but must show respect to the religion which supports the largest part of the population. URL: <http://www.haqiqat-e afghan.vpweb.nl>

## Hezb-e Adalat-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'Justice Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Hasan Fayrozkhalil

## Hezb-e Adalat-e Islami-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Islamic Justice Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Kabir Marzban.

## Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Naveen (B) (D)

The 'Party of New Afghanistan' was founded by Mohammad Yonus Qanuni, currently Speaker of the Lower House and former Minister of Interior, former Minister of Education and presidential candidate in 2004. This party was founded in 2005 and led by Qanuni, a Tajik by birth, as he moved away from the National Movement of Afghanistan. In 2005 he took the initiative to form the 'National Understanding Front of Afghanistan' as a broad opposition alliance. The front did however become inactive after a couple of months. In December 2005 an agreement was reached between Qanuni and Burhanuddin Rabbani, Member of Parliament and former President, and the party and a section of the 'National Movement of Afghanistan' would merge into Jamiat-e Islami. As of 2006 there are conflicting reports whether the merger has actually been effective. Qanuni is considered one of the few figures with the potential to unite Uzbeks, Hazara and Tajiks. During the first Presidential elections he came second. Today he is very active in Presidential campaign strategizing. He was formerly a member of the 'United Front' This party is part of a political alliance called 'Jabahai Tafahim Milli' or 'National Understanding Front'. It has estimated 13 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party is Post-Taliban is in general rated as Tajik, Islamist and anti-Karzai opposition.

Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Wahid (A)

The 'United Afghanistan Party' is led by Mohammad Wasel Rahimi and is founded in 2002. This new democratic party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front). It is rated as democratic and has previous connections to PDPA.

Hezb-e Afkar-e Ama-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'Public Opinion Party of Afghanistan'. No more information available.

Hezb-e Arman-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'People's Aspirations Party of Afghanistan' is led by Al-Hajj Sarajuddin Zafari.

Hezb-e Azadi-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Freedom Party of Afghanistan' is led by Abdul Malik. In the mid 1990s he was a confidant and senior adviser to Dostum, the strong Uzbek leader. However, he made a secret deal with the Taliban, turned against him and invited the Taliban into northern Afghanistan. The deal did not last long and a major battle occurred between Malik's forces and the Taliban where thousands of Taliban were killed.

Hezb-e Azadi-e Bakhsh-e Milli-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'Freedom Party National Faction' is led by Shams al-Haq Naibkhail

Hezb-e Azadi-e Khwa-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (D)

The 'People's Freedom Seekers Party of Afghanistan' is led by Fida Mohammad Ehsass.

Hezb-e Azadi-e Khwahan Afghanistan

The new democratic party was founded in 2004 and is led by Mohammad Zarif Naseri. It has past links to Maoist armed resistance against Soviets and houses members from other leftist groups. It is part of the National Democratic Front.

Hezb-e Azadi-e Khwahan-e Maihan (D)

The 'National Freedom Seekers Party' is led by Abdul Hadi Dabeer.

Hezb-e Demokracy Afghanistan (D)

This 'Democratic Party of Afghanistan' is led by Al-hajj Mohammad Tawoos Arab.

Hezb-e Demokrat-e Afghanistan (B) (D)

This 'Democratic Party of Afghanistan' was founded by former members of the 'Parcham' wing of PDPA and is led by Abdul Kabir Ranjbar, a Member of Parliament and the head of the Afghan Lawyers Association.

This new democratic party, part of the NDF (National Democratic Front), has estimated 1 seat in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005.

The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, secular and for Rule of Law. Not to be confused with Hezb-e Demokracy Afghanistan

#### Hezb-e Democrat-e Khalq-e Afghanistan

The 'People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan' or PDPA, is a pro-Soviet party with a Marxist-Leninist ideology. It was founded in 1965 by Babrak Karmal, Hafizullah Amin, and Nur Mohammad Tarakki. Karmal grew up in Kabul in relative rich and well to do family. His father was a general in the Afghan army and governor of the Paktya province. Tarakki was an independent writer after he held a job as a translator at the American Information Centre. According to his own saying he grew up in a poor family in the countryside. Before the elections of 1965 the PDPA aimed for a national front and a national democratic government, completely in line with Soviet politics. Karmal got with two other members chosen into the national parliament while Tarakki failed to do so. This caused a break between the two leaders and in 1966 the party split into two factions: Khalq (The People) led by Tarakki and Amin, and Parcham (The Banner) led by Karmal. The split reflected deep ethnic (Ghilzai-Durrani), class (rural-urban), and ideological difference (Leninist-Marxist). In 1977, the factions temporarily united and the PDPA was installed in power through a bloody coup on 27 April 1978. At the end of the year the 'Parchamis' were accused of a second military coup and were arrested or fled in exile. Karmal was put on hold as ambassador in Czecho-Slovakia. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan at the end of 1979 they made Karmal president, chairman of the Revolutionary Council and Secretary-General of the communist party till he was replaced in 1981. A year before he ordered the execution of early followers of his competitor Amin.

#### Hezb-e Etedaal Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan (D)

The 'National Islamic Moderation Party of Afghanistan' is led by Qara Baik Izadyar

#### Hezb-e Ettemad-e Milli Afghanistan

This new democratic party was founded in 2007 and is led by Kohzad. It has links with Hezb-e Jumhuri by Barahawi and separated from Hezb-e Kongra-e Milli-e Afghanistan by Latif Pedram.

#### Hezb-e Falah-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'People's Welfare Party of Afghanistan' is led by Ustad Mohammad Zarif.

Hezb-e Hambastagi Afghanistan (A)

The 'Afghanistan Solidarity Party' (ASP) is an alliance of 6 parties led by Abdul Khaleq Niamat founded in 2004. It left the National Democratic Front. It has Maoist and Jihadi roots. It is considered leftist. URL: <http://www.geocities.com/hambastagihag/index.html>

Hezb-e Hambastagi-e Milli Aqwam-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Tribes Solidarity Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Zarif Naseri

Hezb-e Hambastagi-e Milli-e Jawanan-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Youth Solidarity Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Jamil Karzai. It has estimated 1 seat in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. It was formerly part of the National Democratic Front. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated Pashtun, Islamic and moderate.

Hezb-e Harakat-e Inqilabi-e Islami wa Milli-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'Islamic & National Revolutionary Movement of Afghanistan' is led by Ahmad Nabi.

Hezb-e Harakat-e Islami-e Afghanistan (A)

'Islamic Movement of Afghanistan' was led for a long time by Ayatollah Mohammad Asef Mohseni until he announced that he would step down in 2005. It was one of the Shi'i resistance groups based in Pakistan opposing the Soviets in Afghanistan from 1978 to 1992. The Shi'a movement emerged in 1978 as a political formation of non-Hazara Shiites. It was one of the Shi'i parties with strong ties to Iran that did not partake in the AIG though it had become disillusioned with Iran's revolution. It allied for short times with the 'Teheran Eight', an alliance of Shi'ite mujahideen factions, with the Northern Alliance and with the Hezb-e Wahdat Islami. After 2001 a dissident section broke away and formed the People's Islamic Movement of Afghanistan led by Seyed Hossein Anwari. They had a more secular political outlook. In February 2005 Said Mohammad Ali Jawid became the new leader of the movement. In April 2005 they joined the National Understanding Front of Afghanistan, a 12-member front of opposition parties that soon became inactive. It has estimated 1 seat in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, Islamic and conservative.

Hezb-e Harakat-e Islami-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Islamic People's Movement of Afghanistan' is led by Al-Hajj Sayed Hussain Anwari. It has estimated 1-3 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a militant background and is in general multi-ethnic and rated Islamic and moderate

Hezb-e Harakat-e Milli-e Wahdat-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Unity Movement of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Nader Atash

Hezb-e Ifazat az Hoquq-e Bashar wa Inkeshaf-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Human Rights Protection and Development Party of Afghanistan' is led by Barylai Nasrati

Hezb-e Inqilabi-e Milli

The 'National Revolutionary Party' was the only party in the one-party state that Afghanistan became under Daud as laid down in the new Constitution, which was adopted by the Loya Jirgha in 1977. This party would select the members who were represented in the National Assembly. However, the new Constitution was never implemented as the Marxists were still too strong and difficult to get rid off as was the intention of Daud. This soon led to the merge of the two factions of the PDPA, though temporarily. The PDPA later that year forced Daud from power in a bloody coup.

Hezb-e Iqtedar Melli (B)

The 'National Sovereignty Party' is led by Sayed Mustafa Kazimi. It has estimated 4-12 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has an anti-Taliban background and is generally rated multi-ethnic, secular and pro-business.

Hezb-e Iqtedar-e Milli wa Islami Afghanistan (D)

The 'National and Islamic Sovereignty Party of Afghanistan' is led by Engineer Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai.

Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin) (HIG)

The 'Party of Islam (Gulbuddin)' or HIG is a split from Hezb-e Islami-e Afghanistan (HIA). In 1979 Mulavi Yunnus Khalis split with Hekmatyar and established his own Hezb-e Islami with its power base in Nangarhar. Since, the Hezb-e Islami of Hekmatyar is called the HIG, Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin. The non-violent faction of the HIG, the Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan split in 2002.

Hezb-e Islami (Khalis)

The 'Party of Islam (Khalis)' is a more moderate group than Hekmatyar's group and split off from Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin) since 1979. It is led by Yonus Khalis, an Afghan cleric and former schoolteacher. Khalis played an important role in Afghanistan's anti-communist war. Because of its tribal support among Pathans in the regions of Kabul, Jalalabad, Ghazni, and Kandahar, Khalis' group was among the most significant militarily, boasting respected commanders like Abdul Haq, Haq's brother Abdul Qadir, and Jalaluddin Haqqani.

Because of his age and lack of interest in details, Khalis allowed the day-to-day operation of his party to be controlled by another of Haq's brothers, Din Mohammad. In October 2003 it was reported that he had joined the Taliban to fight the US invasion. Shortly afterwards he went into hiding. His son took over the party leadership when it was announced that his father died in 2006.

#### Hezb-e Islami-e Afghanistan (HIA) (A) (C)

The 'Islamic Party of Afghanistan' is considered fundamentalist and an Islamic organization commonly known for fighting the Soviet occupation. It also turned against the traditional leaders of Afghanistan, against the local traditional clergy and against the followers of Sufi. It was led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and was established in Pakistan in 1976 and grew out of the 'Muslim Youth' organization, an Islamist organization founded by Kabul students and teachers in 1969 to combat the communists. Hekmatyar was affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood since the 1970s. As a student of engineering in Kabul University, he led most of the demonstrations in Kabul from 1967 to 1972. He was favored by Pakistani and American intelligence services, who provided him with more arms than any of the other parties. Its membership was drawn from ethnic Pashtun and its ideology from the Muslim brotherhood. Hekmatyar was by other Mujahedin often blamed for non-cooperation. In 1979 it split into Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin) and Hezb-e Islami (Khalis). Not to be confused with Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan run by Farooqi.

#### Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan (D)

The 'Afghan Islamic Party' is a non-violent faction of the HIG that split from the more militant HIG in 2002 as they wanted to join the political process instead of fighting the new government with arms. It was led by Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal and today by Mohammad Khalid Farooqi. The party claims to be open to all ethnic groups though especially appeals to conservative Pashtun. The party has branches, well-organized through shuras, in all 34 provinces and seems to exist largely at grass-roots level. In the 2005 parliamentary elections 40 former HIG members won seats but not all publicly declared to be a member of this new party. It is rated supportive of the government. Not to be confused with Hezb-e Islami-e Afghanistan (HIA).

#### Hezb-e Islami-e Tamadan-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'Islamic Civilization party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Nabi Nafeh.

#### Hezb-e Istiqlal-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Freedom Party of Afghanistan' is led by Dr. Ghulam Farooq Nejrabee. The party is putting up its leader as a preliminary candidate

for the 2009 presidential elections but is unlikely to pose a serious threat to the presidency.

**Hezb-e Istiqlal-e Milli-e Afghanistan (D)**

The 'National Independence Party of Afghanistan' is led by Taj Mohammad Wardak.

**Hezb-e Itifaq-e Hoquq Khawahane Islami-e Afghanistan (C)**

The 'Islamic Rights Advocates Party of Afghanistan' is led by Sayed Abdul Qahar.

**Hezb-e Jamiat-e Islami-e Afghanistan (D)**

The 'Islamic Society of Afghanistan', one of the oldest Islamist conservative parties in Afghanistan, was established in 1971 by students at Kabul University where its leader, Badakhshan Burhanuddin Rabbani, was a lecturer. The former President is presently a Member of Parliament. Rabbani, of Sufi Naqshbandi background, fled to Pakistan when Daud came into power in 1973 and soon started to campaign against the fundamentalist Islamic groups. There he started the first resistance against the central powers in Kabul. Though Rabbani is the party leader, the most powerful figure was Ahmad Shah Massoud, fighting in the Panjshir Valley, till September 9, 2001 when he was killed. The party's power was concentrated on the northern half of Afghanistan, inhabited by Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other minorities. Both Rabbani and Massoud are ethnic Tajiks. It is one of the oldest political party in Afghanistan (1968). It has a communitarian ideology based on Islamic law but is also considered moderate progressive. During the Soviet war and the following civil wars the party was one of the most powerful of the mujahideen groups. By 1980 the Islamic movement had split into 4 factions, including the original 'Jamiat-e Islami', 'Hezb-e Islami (Khalis)', 'Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin)' and 'Ittehad-e Islami Bara-e Azadi Afghanistan' These political groups were more regional militias than political parties, and each of their leaders had been allied with 'Jamiat-e Islami (Afghanistan)'. After the Taliban Jamiat has undergone splintering and new factions were created. Prominent members are Mohammad Ismael Khan, fighting in Herat and presently Minister of Energy and Water, and Atta Mohammad. Rabbani was president of Afghanistan from 1992-1996 after the fall of Soviet occupation and before the full rise of the Taliban. It has estimated 22 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005 of which Rabbani himself. Jamiat has sought a parliamentary-led government rather than a presidential government, and wants governors to be popularly elected, rather than appointed. These two goals became the goals of the Rabbani-led United National Front, which attempted to pull multiple ethnic groups and political parties under one opposition umbrella. All the same, the party has a militant background and is in general rated Tajik, Islamic and conservative. Not to be confused with the Pakistan based Jamiat-e Islami.

## Hezb-e Jumhuri

A new democratic party founded in 2007 and led by Mohammad Karim Barahawi. It is estimated to be pro-government.

## *Hezb-e Jumhuri-Khwahan-e Afghanistan (A)*

The ‘Republican Party’ was formed in 1998-99 and is led by Sebghatullah Sanjar. It was the first party to register with the Ministry of Justice after the law on political parties was passed in 2003. The party was previously part of the NDF. The group supported Karzai’s 2004 presidential run. Sanjar said in 2004 that the party focused on developing female politicians because they had been excluded from the political process for so long, and has an estimated 0 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The Republican Party recognizes that its strategy for Wolesi Jirga seats in 2005 was flawed and is changing tactics to win Provincial Council seats in 2009 and, it hopes, Wolesi Jirga seats in 2010. Sanjar, is Karzai’s Chief of Policy and serves on Karzai’s re-election committee. The party has said it prefers a presidential system of government rather than a parliamentary one. It was formerly part of the National Democratic Front. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, secular and pro-business.

## **Hezb-e Junbesh-e Milli Islami Afghanistan (A)**

The ‘National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan’ (Junbesh) brought together northern, mostly ethnic Uzbek, former militias of the communist regime who mutinied against President Najibullah in early 1992. In 1998 it lost all of the territory under its control, and many of the commanders have since defected to the Taliban. Its founder and principal leader is Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek strong leader from Mazar-i-Sharif. Since the fall of Mazar in 1998 the Junbesh has largely been inactive, although Dostum returned to northern Afghanistan in April 2001. He stepped down on April 18, 2005 to take up a post in the government. In 2004, the group officially disarmed and became a political party. In 2008, Sayed Noorullah was elected the group’s leader, and Dostam agreed to be viewed as a party founder and “elder statesman.” Leadership conflicts have reportedly arisen between the two since. It has estimated 15-33 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. It claimed membership in the United National Front (UNF) coalition of political parties, but opted to support President Karzai’s 2009 presidential bid rather than the UNF candidate. For the 2009 Provincial Council elections, the party is planning to create de facto single-member districts in order to channel votes from certain areas to specific candidates. If this strategy works, they could be expected to increase its presence in the Wolesi Jirga in 2010. Since December 2008 Dostum has been in Turkey.

The party has a militant background and is in general the party is rated Pro-Uzbek, Pro-Turkmen, not supported by the Tajiks, and federalist.  
URL: <http://www.angelfire.com/ny/Chapandaz>

Hezb-e Junbesh-wa-Democracy Mardum-e Afghanistan (B)(D)

The 'People of Afghanistan's Democratic Movement' is led by Mohammad Sharif Nazari. It has estimated 0 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, secular and for peace.

Hezb-e Kar wa Tawsea-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Labor and Development of Afghanistan Party' is led by Zulfiqar Omid. This new democratic party was started by Hazara intellectuals and founded in 2004. It is estimated to be democratic and non-leftist. The party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front)

Hezb-e Khedmatgaran-e Milli Afghanistan

This new democratic party was founded in 2007 and is led by Haji Mumtaz Hemat. It is leftist/democratic in character.

Hezb-e Kommunist-e (Maoist-e) Afghanistan

The 'Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan' was founded in 2004 by merger of the Communist Party of Afghanistan with 4 other Maoist groups. It is a continuation of the line started by the 'Sholay-e Jawid' movement and the PYO leader Akram Yari. Today it is underground and their goal is to start a Peoples National War of resistance against the occupying forces. See also PYO. URL: <http://www.sholajawid.org/index.html>

Hezb-e Kongra-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Congress Party of Afghanistan' is a liberal, secular and multi-ethnic political party, formed in 2003 by former SAZA and Parcham members. It is the only major opposition party that is not linked to an armed group. It is led by Prof. Dr. Abdul Latif Pedram who is an opponent of the communist, Islamist and Taliban regime and a critic of Hamid Karzai's government. This party is putting up its leader as a preliminary candidate for the 2009 presidential elections who came fifth in the 2004 elections. It is rated as a liberal, secular, multi-ethnic political party.

Hezb-e Liberal-e Afghanistan (D)

This new democratic party was founded in 1998 and is led by Ajmal Sohail. It is liberal democratic in character and part of the National Democratic Front.

Hezb-e Liberal-e Azadi-e Khwa-e Mardum-e Afghanistan

The 'People's Liberal Freedom Seekers Party of Afghanistan'. See Hezb-e Liberal-e Afghanistan.

*Hezb-e Mahaz-e Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan (A)*

The 'National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA)', originally founded in Pakistan in the late 1970s, is a party led by Sufi-leader Pir Sayed Ahmad Gailani. Prior to the war he was the representative in Kabul of the French auto company Peugeot. He left Afghanistan after the Saur Revolution and founded the National Islamic Front (NIFA) in Peshawar. His movement was part of the seven-member alliance which in 1989 formed the "Afghan Interim Government", he also chaired the Afghan Jirga Commission. He is a moderate Pashtun leader and wealthy businessman. He is supported by pro-royalist Pashtuns and Western educated elites of the old regime. Gailani is married to a granddaughter of emir Habibullah and related to Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi. The party's most stringent base of support was in the southern region of Kandahar. Haji Latif was one of the famous commanders from the party who fought against the communists; he was poisoned in 1989. During the 1990s it was a minor party within the Northern Alliance. Although the party does not hold a great number of significant positions, it remains influential because of its legacy and ties to Afghan royalty. Gailani has always been considered a moderate and traditionalist resistance leader and still pleads for a clear separation of legislation, the judicial system and the enforcement of state power. It has estimated 3 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a militant background and is in general rated Pashtun and pro-Karzai.

*Hezb-e Maihan (C)*

The 'Homeland party' is led by Pohandoi Mohammad Rahim

*Hezb-e Majmah-e Milli-e Fahalin-e Sulh-e Afghanistan (A)*

The 'Peace and National Welfare Activists Society' is led by Shams al-Haq Nur Shams. The party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front).

*Hezb-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (D)*

The 'People's Party of Afghanistan' is led by Ahmad Shah Asar and was founded in 2003. This new democratic party wants to join the National Democratic Front. It is considered leftist and nationalist (Tajik/Uzbek). Apparently the party is no longer functioning.

*Hezb-e Mardum-e Muslman-e Afghanistan (D)*

The 'Muslim People of Afghanistan Party' is led by Bismillah Joyan.

*Hezb-e Milli Dareez (D)*

The 'National Stance Party' is led by Habibullah Janebdar

*Hezb-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)*

The 'National Party of Afghanistan' is founded by former members of the 'Khalq' wing of the PDPA and is led by Abdul Rashid Aryan,

a former minister of justice. This new democratic party, founded in 2003, is rated as democratic and is part of the National Democratic Front.

Hezb-e Milli-e Wahdat-e Aqwam-e Islami-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Tribal Unity Islamic Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Shah Khogyani.

Hezb-e Milli Islami Afghanistan (D)

The 'Afghanistan's National Islamic Party' is led by Ruhullah Ludin.

Hezb-e Moghol

Beginning in the 1960s, educated Hazara youth, resentful of sayed privileges, joined Maoist, nativist, or Islamic fundamentalist organizations. The latter had close affinities with movements in Iran. One of the earliest youth groups, the Hezb-e Moghol (Mongol Party), reflected their self-conception as an oppressed "Mongol" people, unlike other inhabitants of Afghanistan. This viewpoint may have encouraged ties with fellow "Mongols" in China in the 1960s and 1970s.

Hezb-e Mutaraqi Democrat Afghanistan (D)

The 'Progressive Democratic Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Wali Aria.

Hezb-e Muttahed Islami Afghanistan (D)

The 'United Islamic Party of Afghanistan' is led by Wahidullah Sabawoon.

Hezb-e Muttahed Milli-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'United National Party' is a social democratic party founded in 2003 by members of the 'Parcham' faction of former PDPA, as well as other remnants of the PDPA, and is led by Gen. Nur-ul-Haq Ulumi, former Chair of Defense Commission. It has estimated 8 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. Ulumi was probably elected on basis of his tribal origins, rather than his party affiliation. The party has a communist background and is in general rated leftist/democratic with social democratic leanings, multi-ethnic, secular and in favor of Rule of Law.

Hezb-e Niaz-e Milli Afghanistan

This new democratic party was founded in 2008 and is led by Fatima Nazari. It is social democratic in character, Hazara based and focuses on women.

Hezb-e Nukhbagan-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (D)

The 'Elites People of Afghanistan Party' is led by Jawaad.

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Azadi wa Demokrasy-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Freedom and Democracy Movement of Afghanistan' is a new democratic party led by Abdul Raqib Jawed Kuhestani. The party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front). It has estimated 0-7 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic secular and for peace.

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Bedari-e Falah-e Afghanistan

A new democratic party founded in 2002 and led by Ms Soraya and Eng. Yasin Habib. It is social democratic in nature.

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Faragir-e Democracy wa Taraqi-e Afghanistan (D)

The 'All Nation Movement for Democracy and Development of Afghanistan' is led by Sher Mohammad Buzgar and founded by former members of the Parcham wing of the PDPA. In 2005 Buzgar founded Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Faragir wa Demokrasi Afghanistan (see there) and this party was dissolved

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Faragir wa Demokrasi Afghanistan

This new democratic party was founded in 2005 and is led by Buzgar. It had links with the Parcham faction of PDPA, with the former All Nation Movement for Democracy and Progress in Afghanistan. It has recently formed alliance with Ulumi's Hezb-e Muttahed Milli-e Afghanistan. It is considered to be leftist/democratic. See also Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Faragir-e Democracy wa Taraqi-e Afghanistan

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Hakimyat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'People's Sovereignty Movement of Afghanistan' is a new democratic party and led by Hayatullah Subhani. The party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front).

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Hambastagi-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan' is led by Pir Sayed Ishaq Gailani. It supported Hamid Karzai in the 2004 presidential elections despite its previous support for the former King Zahir Shah. It is connected with powerful conservative families in the Pashtun region. It has estimated 2 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic and for Rule of Law. URL: <http://www.nsmafghanistan.org>

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Movement of Afghanistan' is led by Ahmad Wali Massoud, brother of the slain Ahmad Shah Massoud. Yonus Qanuni was a member but not for long.

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Milli Islami Afghanistan (D)

This new democratic party was founded in 2004 and is led by Mawlawi Mukhtar Mufleh. It is considered Islamist.

Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Milli Sulh-e Afghanistan (C)

The 'National Peace Movement of Afghanistan' is led by Sayed Sami'ullah Sadat

Hezb-e Paiwand-e Maihani-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'Patriotic Unity Party of Afghanistan' is led by Sayed Sulaiman Kamal Sadat

Hezb-e Paiwand-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Solidarity Party of Afghanistan' is led by Sayed Mansur Nadiri. It has estimated 1 seat in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated Shi'ite (Ismaili), pro stability and national unity.

Hezb-e Rastakhaiz-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'People's Uprising Party of Afghanistan' is led by Sayed Zaher Qayed Omul Beladi

Hezb-e Rastakhaiz-e Milli

The 'National Uprising Party' was founded by former members of the 'Parcham' wing of the PDPA

Hezb-e Refah-e Afghanistan (D)

The 'Welfare Party of Afghanistan' was founded by members of 'Khalq' faction of the PDPA and is led by Mir Mohammad Asif Zarifi. It has estimated 2 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a humanitarian background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, secular and for social welfare.

Hezb-e Refah-e Mardum-e Afghanistan

The 'People's Welfare Party of Afghanistan' is a new democratic party led by Mia Gul Waseq. The party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front)

Hezb-e Refah-e Milli Afghanistan (D)

The 'National Welfare Party' is led by Mohammad Hasan Jahfari

Hezb-e Risalat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'People's Message Party of Afghanistan' is formerly led by Nur Aqa Rueni and today by Noor Aqa Wainee.

Hezb-e Sahadat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)

This new democratic party, the 'People's Welfare Party of Afghanistan', was founded in 1998 and is led by Mohammad Zubair Peroz. It is part of the National Democratic Front. It has previous connections to PDPA and was previously registered as United National Front formed in 1989. Today the party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front). It is considered leftist/democrat.

Hezb-e Sahadat-e Milli wa Islami-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Welfare and Islamic Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Osman Saligzada.

Hezb-e Soleh The 'Peace in Afghanistan Party' is preliminary participating in the 2009 presidential elections with the candidate Alhaj Shamahmood Popal

Hezb-e Subat-e Milli (D)

The new democratic party 'National Stability Party' is led by Samir Kharoti in 2004. It is considered Islamist and is now a part of the Untied Front.

Hezb-e Sulh-e Milli-e Islami-e Aqwam-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Peace & Islamic Party of the Tribes of Afghanistan' is led by Abdul Qaher Shari'ati

Hezb-e Sulh wa Wahdat-e Milli

Led by Gullah Bodeen Shirzai. It has estimated 1 seat in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, Islamic and moderate.

Hezb-e Sulh wa Wahdat-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Peace & Unity Party of Afghanistan' was led by Dr. Nisar Ahmad Ahmadzai who replaced Abdul Qader Imami (Ghowri) in 2005. He was a prominent member of the Northern Alliance and staunch opponent of the Taliban. Previously he called for an end to ethnic and linguistic privileges. However, today the party is again led by Abdul Qader Imami (Ghowri).

Hezb-e Tafahum wa Democracy-e Afghanistan (A)

This new democratic party was founded in 1999 and is led by Ahmad Shaheen. It is considered leftist and has past links with Parcham, PDPA. The party is part of the NDF (National Democratic Front)

Hezb-e Tahrik-e Wahdat-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

The 'National Unity Movement' is led by Sultan Mahmood Ghazi. It has estimated 0-5 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005.

The party has a Post-Taliban background and is in general rated multi-ethnic pro-monarchist.

#### Hezb-e Tanzim-e Dahwat-e Islami-e Afghanistan (D)

The 'Islamic Mission Party of Afghanistan' was registered in 2005 and was formerly known as 'Ittehad-e Islami Bara-e Azadi Afghanistan' meaning 'Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan'. It is still led by Abdul Rabb al-Rasul Sayyaf, a Pashtun. It has estimated 9 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a militant background and is in general rated multi-ethnic, Islamic (Salafist) and conservative.

#### Hezb-e Tanzim Jabha-e Najat-e Milli Afghanistan (A) (C)

The 'Afghan National Liberation Front' was led by the Sufi Pir Sebghattullah Mujaddidi, currently Speaker of the Upper House, and formed in the late 1970s by traditional Afghan clergy who fled to Pakistan. He was interim President of the Islamic State and chairman of the Jihad Council from 28 April to 28 June 1992. Like NIFA, a royalist party with a base of support in Kandahar. Despite the brave personal record of the party's leader it had few troops in the field and consequently got the least aid from the Pakistanis and the Americans. Their aim was to fight the Marxist government in Kabul and later the Soviet occupation. Mujaddidi was imprisoned between 1959-1964 on the accusation of murder of several Soviet leaders. In the 1970s he fled to Denmark. He was a compromise figure selected to lead the mujahedin government-in-exile in March 1989. In general the party is rated Pashtun and pro-Karzai.

#### Hezb-e Taraqi-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)

This new democratic party was founded in 2004 and is led by Dr. Asef Baktash. It is part of the National Democratic Front and is considered leftist. It also has past links with Parcham faction of PDPA.

#### Hezb-e Umat-e Islami Afghanistan (D)

The 'Afghanistan's Islamic Nation Party' is led by Turan Noor Aqa Ahmadzai.

#### **Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan (A)**

The 'Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan' is a principal Shia'a party with support mainly among the Hazara ethnic community. It was founded in late 1988 by the Iranian-based parties under the leadership of Abdul Ali Mazari. It was originally formed to unite eight Shia'a parties in the run-up to the anticipated collapse of the communist government. It is the only party really promoting unity between Afghans regardless to ethnicity or religion.

The party helped with the Afghan resistance in defeating the Soviet invasion and later-on helped to overthrow the communist government in Kabul.

Over two decades the single Wahdat banner has fractured into at least six significant parties. Today Wahdat-e Islami is the largest Shi'a party and led by Mohammad Karim Khalili who presently is the second vice-president and very close to President Karzai. He took over the party after Mazari was assassinated. A second faction, led by Parliamentarian Mohammad Mohaqeq, began to take shape in 2004 when Mohaqeq ran for president against Karzai's ticket. The two parties continue to fight for dominance among the Hazara population. The party is supported by Iran, although relations have been strained over issues of control. It is also supported by Hazara traders. It has estimated 3 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a militant background and is in general rated pro-Hazara and for stability. See also 'Sazman-e Nasr' and 'Pasdaran'.

#### **Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Mardum-e Afghanistan (A)**

The 'Islamic Unity Party of the People of Afghanistan' is led by Haji Mohammad Mohaqeq, Member of Parliament and Hazara leader. During the Taliban rule he led a militia and later served for a while as the Minister of Planning for the interim president Karzai. He ran for president as an independent candidate in 2004 and received the vast majority of the Hazara votes. After his candidacy in 2004 the second faction began to form, hence the new party Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Mardum-e Afghanistan. In general the party is rated pro-Hazara and for stability and peace. Mohaqeq is very popular among the Hazaras and is outspoken anti-Karzai. It has estimated 9 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. The party has a militant background and is in general rated Hazara and for national unity.

#### **Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami Millat-e Afghanistan (D)**

The 'Islamic Unity of the Nation of Afghanistan Party' is led by Qurban Ali Irfani.

#### **Hezb-e Wahdat-e Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan (A)**

The 'National Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan' is led by Mohammad Akbar Akbari. It has estimated 2-4 seats in the Wolesi Jirga elected in 2005. It split off from another party when Akbari struck a deal with the Taliban which gave him de facto control over some Hazara areas. The party has a militant background and is in general is rated Hazara and for national unity.

#### **Hezb-e Wahdat-e Milli-e Afghanistan (A)**

The 'National Unity Party of Afghanistan' is founded as 'Organization for National Unity of Afghanistan' in 1986 by members of the 'Khalq' faction of the PDPA and supporters of Hafizullah Amin. It is led by Abdul Rashid Jalili and is part of the National Understanding Front.

Hezb-e Wahdat-ul-Muslimeen Afghanistan (D)

The 'Muslim Unity party of Afghanistan' is led by Wazir Mohammad Wahdat.

Hezb-e Watan Demokratik-e Afghanistan

The 'Democratic Watan Party of Afghanistan' (DWPA) was founded in 1965 as 'People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan', since 1990 called 'Homeland Party' and since 2002 is has changed its name to the present one. It is controlled by former members of the 'Parcham' wing of the PDPA

Hezb-e Wolesi Tarhun Afghanistan (D)

The 'Afghanistan's Peoples' Treaty Party' is led by Sayed Amir Tahseen.

Hezullah-e Afghanistan (D)

This party is led by Qari Ahmad Ali.

HIA See Hezb-e Islami-e Afghanistan (HIA)

HIG See Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin)

HWK See Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan

HWM See Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Mardum-e Afghanistan

IDLG Independent Directorate of Local Governance

ISA Islamic State of Afghanistan (1992-1996) is the name given to the state of Afghanistan during the rule of the Northern Alliance till he Taliban took over the capital.

ISI Inter Services Intelligence, Pakistan

Ittehad-e Islami Bara-e Azadi Afghanistan

'Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan', a fundamentalist party, is led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, a former university professor in Kabul and educated at the Azhar university in Cairo. Founded in the 1970s it was originally an attempt to bring unity amongst Islamist opposition forces in Afghanistan. He received most of his support from radical elements in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and other Muslim countries. Sayyaf converted to Saudi Wahabism at the onset of the war. The "University of Dawa and Jihad" was founded by Sayyaf in 1985, in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. Sometimes referred to as the "Islamic Sandhurst," the university provides training for Islamic militants.

In spring 1995, the university came under investigation by Pakistan authorities and the U.S. FBI, according to the Pakistan press, for reports

that it was training Afghansi terrorists showing up in Asia and North Africa. Based in Kabul, Sayyaf is still funded by Saudi Arabia. He survived the massacre of 1979 because of his relation with Hafizullah Amin. The organization split and it became a political party of its own. It was part of the 'Peshawar Seven' fighting against PDPA government and the Soviet forces. Sayyaf was initially supported by the Saudis and Arab volunteers supported by the Saudi entrepreneurs fought alongside his forces. During the civil war in 1993 Sayyaf's forces took part in a series of massacres and rapes on members of the Hazara minority in west Kabul along with the Jamiat-e Islami forces. During the Taliban years it formed part of the 'Northern Alliance'. In 2005 it registered under the new name 'Tanzim-e Dahwat-e Islami-e Afghanistan'

#### Jabahai Tafahim Milli

The 'National Understanding Front' is a political alliance publicly announced on March 31, 2005. The a 12-member front of opposition parties did however become inactive after a couple of months. It includes the following parties: Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Naveen, Wahdat-e Mardum Afghanistan, Hezb-e Iqtedar Islam, Hezb-e Harakat-e Islami-e Afghanistan, Wahdat Milli, Hezb-e Isteqlal Milli Afghanistan, Hezb-e Harakat Inqelab Islami, Hezb-e Wahdat Aqwami Milli Afghanistan, Hezb-e Iqtedar Islami Afghanistan, Hezb-e Islami Jawan Afghanistan, Hezb-e Sulh wa Wahdat-e Milli-e Afghanistan.

#### Jabha-e Muttahid-e Islami-e Milli bara-e Nijat-e Afghanistan

The Jabha-e Muttahid-e Islami-e Milli bara-e Nijat-e Afghanistan is translated into the 'United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan' (UIF). The United Islamic Front (UIF), as it commonly known, also includes the Northern Alliance that was resurrected. The multi-ethnic mujahideen fighters formed the United Islamic Front on 27 September 1996 with Burhanuddin Rabbani as the titular head of the party. It united various Afghan resistance groups who before were fighting each other and now joined forces to fight the Taliban after they captured Kabul in 1996 and ousted the mujahideen government, the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA), and their president Rabbani. After the fall of the capital to the Taliban the mujahideen fighters resorted to the creation of UIF because Rashid Dostum and other warlords who belonged to various tribes but to no specific political party did not want to recognize the ISA as a legal entity, so the defeated government devised a military strategy to utilize these forces while not offending their political sensibilities. The alliance is primarily comprised of three non-Pashtun ethnic groups – Tajiks, Uzbeks and the Hazaras. The real power was, until his assassination in September 2001, the United Islamic Front's military leader, Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was also the ISA's Minister of Defense. Mohammad Fahim, the next most senior Tajik commander, succeeded Massoud a few days later.

Although recognized by most foreign nations as the legal government, the alliance only controlled about 30% of the country. In November and December 2001 the UIF gained control over most of the country with the help of the USA and UK. The United Islamic Front was extremely influential in the transitional Afghan Government under Hamid Karzai. The precise membership of the United Islamic Front has varied from time to time, but includes

- Hezb-e Jamiat-e Islami-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Junbesh-e Milli Islami Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Harakat-e Islami-e Afghanistan
- Ittehad-e Islami Bara-e Azadi Afghanistan

Throughout the civil war in Afghanistan, the major factions on all sides have repeatedly committed serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including killings, indiscriminate aerial bombardment and shelling, direct attacks on civilians, summary executions, rape, persecution on the basis of religion or ethnicity, the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, and the use of anti-personnel landmines. Many of these violations can be shown to have been "widespread or systematic", a criterion of crimes against humanity. Some of the military strength of the UIF has now been absorbed into the Military of Afghanistan, while many of the remaining soldiers were disarmed through a nationwide disarmament program. Most of the country's senior military personnel are former members of the UIF. The majority of the alliance is now part of the United National Front (Afghanistan) which is led by Rabbani.

Jabha-e Najat See Hezb-e Tanzim Jabha-e Najat-e Milli Afghanistan

Jamiat See Hezb-e Jamiat-e Islami-e Afghanistan

Jamiat al Dawat il'l Quran wa Sunnat al-Afghanistan (A)

The 'Afghan Society for the Call to the Koran and Sunna' is led by Maulawi Sami'ullah Najibi.

Jamiat Demokrate-e Mottaraqi

The 'Progressive Democratic Party' was founded by the popular prime minister Mohammad Hashim Maiwandwal (1965-1967) who succeeded Mohammad Yussuf in 1965. It advocated evolutionary socialism and parliamentary democracy.

Jamiat-e Demokratiqi Khalq-e Afghanistan

See PDPA

- Jamiat-e Islami**  
 ‘Society of Islam’, a Pakistani party led by Qazi Hussain Ahmad, main fundamentalist supporter of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and some other fundamentalist groups in Afghanistan. Not to be confused with Hezb-e Jamiat-e Islami-e Afghanistan.
- Jumhuri**      See Hezb-e Jumhuri-Khwahan-e Afghanistan
- Junbesh**        See Hezb-e Junbesh-e Milli Islami Afghanistan
- Junbesh-e Hambastagi Milli**  
 The ‘National Solidarity Movement’ was founded in 2002 by majority of the ‘Labour Group’ and led by Engineer Ahmad and Enyatollah Edoyat.
- Junbesh-wa-Democracy**  
 See Hezb-e Junbesh-wa-Democracy Mardum-e Afghanistan
- KHAD**          See Khademat-e Attela’at-e Dowlati
- Khademat-e Attela’at-e Dowlati**  
 ‘State Intelligence Services’, Afghanistan’s secret police during the Russian occupation led by Dr. Mohammad Najibullah. The KHAD was known for its tortures and mass executions in the Pul-e Tjarkhi prison.
- Khalq**          ‘The People’ is a faction of the pro-Soviet ‘People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan’ led by Tarakki and Amin who succeeded Tarakki as premier when his position became precarious in 1979. Khalq differed from the ‘Parchamis’ more on account of their Ghilzai or Eastern Pushtun cultural identity than because of their greater ideological radicalism. Tarakki was murdered by Amin’s men in the autumn of 1979 when both were struggling for power in the government. Amin himself died fighting off the Soviet troops in his palace when they invaded Afghanistan on December 27 1979. See also ‘Parcham’ and PDPA
- Liberal Democratic Party of Afghanistan**  
 The party, founded in Germany at the end of 2001, is headed by Prince Abdol Ali Seraj. At the start they claimed that their membership was 34% women. Its program states equality for men and women, and separation of state and religion. It is principally a diaspora organization, registered in Germany. URL: <http://www.afghanistan-djamhuriat.de>
- Loya Jirga**     ‘Grand Council’, a traditional meeting of elders of all tribes to solve some big problems.
- Mahaz-e Milli**  
 See Hezb-e Mahaz-e Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan

Meshrano Jirga  
The Upper House of Afghanistan with 102 members

Millat See Afghan Millat (Ahadi)

MMIA See Hezb-e Mahaz-e Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan

MoJ Ministry of Justice

MP Members of Parliament

Muttahed Milli  
See Hezb-e Muttahed Milli-e Afghanistan

National Country Party (D)  
This party is led by Ghulam Mohammad.

#### Northern Alliance

In the beginning of 1992 the Northern Alliance was established in opposition of the communist government led by President Najibullah. They proclaimed the Islamic State of Afghanistan (1992-1996). The group consisted of General Abdul Rashid Dostum, former head of Najibullah's militia forces; Ahmad Shah Masood, head of the Jamiat-e Islami Party; and Hezb-e Wahdat, a pro-Shi'a party. These Islamic fundamentalist groups committed hair-raising crimes when they entered Kabul after the fall of the regime of Dr. Najib in 1992. More importantly they were the first who imposed numerous restrictions on women including wearing the veil. Though they were instrumental in bringing down Najibullah's government in April 1992 by mid-1993, due to a struggle for power between Dostam and Masood the alliance unofficially disintegrated. When the Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996, the three groups resurrected the Northern Alliance, in opposition once again. By early 1997, the Taliban had launched a large-scale offensive against the Northern Alliance, capturing several of the positions it held to the north of Kabul. To complicate matters further, General Abdul Malik, a key commander in the Alliance, staged a pro-Taliban revolt and forced General Dostum, a major Alliance leader, to flee the country and seek refuge in Turkey. However, as Taliban troops began infiltrating several northern areas and disarming anti-Taliban forces, General Malik restored his allegiance to the Northern Alliance and reclaimed Mazar-i-Sharif, driving the Taliban out of the area. See also 'Jabha-e Muttahid-e Islami-e Milli bara-e Nijat-e Afghanistan', the United Islamic Front.

## National Democratic Front

Based on the former National Front for Democracy, the NDF is composed of some 13 so-called new democratic parties, some of which are of secular inclination:

- Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Wahid
- Hezb-e Azadi-e Khwahan Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Demokrat-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Kar wa Tawsea-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Liberal-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Majmah-e Milli-e Fahalin-e Sulh-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Milli-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Azadi wa Demokrasy-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Hakimyat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Refah-e Mardum-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Sahadat-e Mardum-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Tafahum wa Democracy-e Afghanistan
- Hezb-e Taraqi-e Milli-e Afghanistan

This is the latest result of several attempts to form a consolidated group of these parties over the last six years. Previous attempts have been unsuccessful due to the large number of parties interested (up to 50 according to some sources) and the inherent differences among them.

While parties inclined to join this front have had a generally unified stance on the need for peace, the upholding of democratic principles and an anti-fundamentalist approach, they have diverse stances on other issues, such as the relationship between Islam and the state, and state-level economic management.

Tensions among certain groups have caused some parties (such as Hezb-e Jumhuri-Khwahan-e Afghanistan and Hezb-e Hambastagi-e Milli-e Jawanan-e Afghanistan) to leave the Front.

The National Democratic Front has received Western backing, most particularly US support. However, it is argued that the Front is unlikely to find much support in rural areas and other sectarian strongholds.

## National Front for Democracy

See National Democratic Front

## National Understanding Front

See Jabahai Tafahim Milli

## Naveen

See Hezb-e Afghanistan-e Naveen

## NDF

See National Democratic Front

## NDP

New Democratic Parties, general name of the new founded parties after the 2001 Bonn Conference

- NIFA See Hezb-e Mahaz-e Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan)
- Northern Alliance  
See United Front/Northern Alliance.
- Nuhzat-e Azadi  
See Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Azadi wa Demokrasy-e Afghanistan
- Nuhzat-e Hambastagi  
See Hezb-e Nuhzat-e Hambastagi-e Milli-e Afghanistan
- Paiwand Milli  
See Hezb-e Paiwand-e Milli-e Afghanistan
- Parcham 'The Banner' is a faction of the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan led by Babrak Karmal. Dr. Anahita Ratebzad was one of the highest ranking woman in the 'Parcham' faction. It was shut down in 1969. The faction profited but also suffered from their association with Daud who seized power in 1973 and sacked the king. See also 'Khalq' and PDPA.
- Pasdaran This Iranian-based party, meaning 'Revolutionary Guards', founded in 1983, was imbued with Islamic fervor resulting from the Iranian revolution and ruthlessly pushed out the more moderate Shi'ite parties, like the one led by Beheshti, together with Sazman-e Nasr. They gained at least temporary control over most of the Hazarajat. In the late 1980s the Iranian-based parties united in a political front called the 'Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan'. See also Sazman-e Nasr.
- Payman-e Kabul  
In 2002, the 'Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Afghanistan' and six other former leftist and Maoist groups amongst them SAZA and Wolesi Mellat, forged an alliance called Payman-e Kabul (Kabul Accord). The members of the alliance envision the creation of a modern political party with a social democrat ideology. Nowadays the Payman-e Kabul represents a grouping of leftist liberal parties. There is no visible dominant leader and the constituent parties are wary of each other's power base and appeal to urban youth.
- PDPA See Hezb-e Democrat-e Khalq-e Afghanistan

## Progressive Youth Organization

The first communist organization in Afghanistan, 'Progressive Youth Organization' (PYO) was formed in 1965. The 1960s was a decade of revolutionary uprisings all over the world.

In Afghanistan the breeze of these world-wide struggles had ignited a political storm for democracy and social justice. There were daily demonstrations, and street fighting between students, workers, and social justice activists and police and armed forces of the then King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan. These struggles led to the formation of Progressive Youth Organization. A few circles of intellectuals and political activists came together to form the first communist organization to answer the needs of daily struggles of the country and work for the ultimate goal of the revolution in Afghanistan. Akram Yari, a Maoist, was the leader of one of these circles, who played a prominent role in the formation of PYO. PYO remained an underground organization. The PYO leaders published a magazine called Sholaye Jawid. The magazine claimed to be a new-democratic journal, which was widely and openly circulated. After publishing 11 issues, Sholay-e Jawid was seized by government and banned its publication. Though the publication of these 11 issues had a huge impact on Afghan politics.

It politicized tens of thousands of people and stirred up a huge mass movement all across Afghanistan, unseen of before in the history of the country. When the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power in a military coup, the PDPA regime declared their number one enemy to be the PYO led Maoist movement. In late 1980s one of the PYO circles broke from that right-opportunist tradition and formed Revolutionary Communist Cell of Afghanistan. RCCA along with others formed Revolutionary Communist Organization of Afghanistan, which in 1991 proclaimed the establishment of the Communist Party of Afghanistan. In the wake of invasion of Afghanistan by United States and its allies, the CPA called on the Maoist organizations to unite in a single-united Maoist party. For that purpose the CPA with 4 other Maoist organizations formed the Unity Committee of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Movement of Afghanistan. The Unity Committee after 3 years of ideological and political struggle went for the Unity Congress of the Communist (MLM) Movement. The Unity Congress was concluded in May 1984 and the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan was formed. Today the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan is an underground organization. The stated goal of the Party is to start a Peoples National War of resistance against the occupying forces and the United States of America and establishing a new democratic society and struggling towards establishing socialism in Afghanistan.

## PSDP

The Pashtun Social Democratic Party is the unity and independence party of all Pashtun. It is a Social democratic political party in Afghanistan and Pakistan with its headquarters in Pashtunkhwa.

It was founded by Kabir Stori in 1981, a German educated Pashtun intellectual, who was the follower of the non-violent philosophy of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan for national unity, independence and the well-being of the Pashtun nation.

PYO See 'Progressive Youth Organization'

Refah Afghanistan

See Hezb-e Refah-e Afghanistan

SAMA Sazman-e Azadibakhshi-e Mardun-e Afghanistan.

SAZA See Sazman-e Enqelabi-e Zahmatkashanha-e Afghanistan

Sazman-e Azadibakhshi-e Mardun-e Afghanistan.

The SAMA, the 'Organization for the Liberation of the Peoples of Afghanistan', a leftist party, was formed in 1978 by remnants of the Sholay-e Jawid. Its leader, Abdul Majid Kalakani, was arrested and executed by the regime in 1980.

Sazman-e Enqelabi-e Kargaran-e Afghanistan

The 'Afghanistan Labour Revolutionary Organization' (ALRO) is a faction split off from the 'Sazman-e Raha-e Afghanistan' (ALO) in 1996 and led by Adil Afghani.

Sazman-e Enqelabi-e Zahmatkashanha-e Afghanistan

The 'Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Afghanistan' (SAZA) was founded in 1968 as 'Setem-e Milli' and refounded under the present name in 2002 and since led by Manbullah Kushani.

Sazman-e Islami-e Afghanistan Jawan (A)

The 'Young Afghanistan's Islamic Organization' is led by Sayed Jawad Husaini. It was formerly part of the National Democratic Front.

Sazman-e Jawanan-e Musalman

During the 1965-72 period, when Kabul University was wracked with political turmoil, students formed the Sazman-e Jawanan-e Musalman (Organization of Muslim Youth). More militant than their teachers, they held demonstrations against Zionism, United States involvement in Vietnam, and-most controversially-against the creation of Pashtunistan. Given the importance of this issue to the government, they suffered severe repression. Muslim students also had violent confrontations with leftist students. The organization gained recruits not only at the university but also at teachers' training colleges and the polytechnic and engineering schools in Kabul. Among the most important were engineering student Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, (leader in late 1985 of the Hezb-e Islami, or

Islamic Party) and polytechnic student Mahsud, the Panjsher Valley commander. Islamic fundamentalist students came from diverse regions of Afghanistan; but significantly, the movement gained only a few adherents from Pashtun tribal areas.

#### Sazman-e Nasr

Sazman-e Nasr is a pro-Iranian Shia party, which was founded in Iran in 1978. In 1984 the Sazman-e Nasr and the Pasdaran were successful in driving Beheshti of the Shura-e Inqelabi-e Itfaq-e Islami-e Afghanistan out of his capital at Varas in Ghowr Province and gaining at least temporary control over most of the Hazarajat. See also Pasdaran and Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan

#### Sazman-e Raha-e Afghanistan

The 'Afghanistan Liberation Organization' (ALO) is a Maoist political group founded in 1973 by Dr. Faiz Ahmad. It is one of the organizations that grew out of the 'Sholay-e Jawid' (Eternal Flame) movement. It was originally named revolutionary group of the peoples of Afghanistan and was renamed in 1980. It was highly critical of the Soviet invasion and fought against 'social imperialism' It formed an united front with Islamist elements, and sometimes with democratic groups to rise up against the government in place. The uprising was suppressed, leaders thrown into prison or executed. Dr. Faiz Ahmad himself was assassinated on November 12, 1986 by the HIG. Today they are opposing the American occupation and the Karzai government. In 1996 a faction split off, the 'Sazman-e Enqelabi-e Kargaran-e Afghanistan', led by Adil Afghani. Also see PYO. URL: <http://www.maoism.ru/alo/>

#### SCN

The 'Supervisory Council of the North'. See Shura-e Nezar-e Shamali

#### Setem-e Milli

The 'Against National Oppression' party left the PDPA led by the ethnic Tajik Taher Badakhshi was established in 1968. It was Marxist-Maoist and had a strong anti-Pashtun policy. In its emphasis on militant class struggle and mass mobilization of peasants it resembled Sholay-e Jawid. It allegedly held United States ambassador Dubs hostage in February 1979 who subsequently died in the attack of the Afghan army. Badakhshi was imprisoned in 1978 and killed a year later. Most of the group was exterminated largely by Islamic groups.

#### Sholay-e Jawid

The 'Eternal Flame' party was a popular Marxist/Maoist party founded in 1964. It was led by Rahim Mahmudi who was imprisoned between 1953 and 1963 and subsequently died from the effects of his maltreatment in

prison. Their constituency drew from alienated intellectuals, professionals and Shia Muslims (Hazara). In 1978 remnants of the group formed the Sazman-e Azadibakhshi-e Mardun-e Afghanistan.

#### Shura-e Inqelabi-e Itefaq-e Islami-e Afghanistan

In 1979 Hazara religious, temporal, and intellectual leaders established the Revolutionary Council of the Islamic Union of Afghanistan and elected Sayed Ali Beheshti as their president and as their military leader Sayed Mohammad Hasan Jagran. Beheshti was educated in the holy Shia cities of Iraq and was a traditional spiritual leader. By 1981 the insurgents were successful in expelling Soviet and Afghan forces from most of the Hazarajat that became more or less a state in a state. The Shura took over the local government, dividing the territory into nine provinces. Governors and mayors were appointed, and the majority of the population was disarmed. This was, for Afghanistan, a relatively strong-but also corrupt and oppressive-state. The Shura was soon divided by factional infighting, the 3 major ones being a sayed-dominated traditionalist group, a leftist (Maoist) group, and a pro-Khomeini, Islamic fundamentalist group. In the mid 1980s the Shi'ite areas of Afghanistan, primarily the Hazarajat, were taken over by Iranian-based parties as Sazman-e Nasr and Pasdaran. The party did not partake in the AIG. After years of internal struggle the new leading Hazara resistance groups united in 1990 and formed Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan under the leadership of Abdul Ali Mazari.

#### Shura-e Nezar-e Shamali

The 'Supervisory Council of the North' (SCN), a military-political semi-autonomous sub-group within Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat-e Islami led by the military commander Ahmad Shah Masood. It is composed of Panjshiri Tajiks who were the followers of Massoud who was killed in September 9, 2001. He coordinated commanders in about 5 provinces and also created region-wide forces which developed into Masood's Islamic Army (Urdu-e Islami). By mid-1991, his power extended over most of the north-eastern provinces including parts of Baghlan, Kunduz, Samangan and Balkh.

SNTV Single Non-Transferable Vote. A one-man-one-vote voting system.

#### Sulh wa Wahdat

See Hezb-e Sulh wa Wahdat-e Milli

#### Tahrik-e Wahdat

See Tahrik-e Wahdat-e Milli-e Afghanistan

#### Taliban

The Taliban, a Persianized Arabic word meaning religious student, is a movement that arose among the Afghan refugees in Pakistan in the early

1990s. It also received support from elements within the Pakistan government. The Taliban preach a puritanical form of Islam that combined Wahabi-style Islamic practices with strict tribal customs regarding the proper role of women and public behavior in general. Most of its followers were from southern Pashtu tribes in the Kandahar area.

The Taliban seized control of Kandahar in 1994, and although opposed at first by most non-Pashtu groups, they were able to exert their control over most of Afghanistan by 1998. By December 2001 they were forced from power. The leader of the Taliban government was Muhammad Mullah Omar

#### Tanzim-e Dahwat

See Hezb-e Tanzim-e Dahwat-e Islami-e Afghanistan

#### TISA

The 'Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan' headed by President Hamid Karzai chosen to be the president of Afghanistan at the Loya Jirga in June 2002 till the June 2004 elections. It followed the 'Afghan Interim Authority' installed on 22 December 2001.

#### UIF

See United Islamic Front

#### UNF

See United National Front (Afghanistan)

#### United Islamic Front

See 'Jabha-e Muttahid-e Islami-e Milli bara-e Nijat-e

#### United National Front (Afghanistan)

The United National Front (Afghanistan) (UNF) was founded in March 2007. It is a coalition of various political parties led by Rabbani and includes many former leaders of the United Islamic Front. It was a significant political development that several influential figures of the past thirty years decided to form into a new coalition. The group is a broad coalition of former and current strongmen, commanders from the anti-Soviet resistance, ex-Communist leaders, and encompasses various social and ethnic groups. Members include the grandson of the last king Prince Mustafa Zahir, Mohammad Qasim Fahim, Sayed Mustafa Kazimi, Ismail Khan, Sayed Mohammad Gulabzoy, Yonus Qanuni, Ahmad Zia Massoud, the current vice-president and brother of the famous commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, and Abdul Rashid Dostum. The party wants to secure unity in the divided country. It wants to amend the 2003 constitution to allow political parties to stand in elections, to change the electoral system from a single non-transferable vote system to a party-list electoral system and to hold direct elections for provincial governors. Other objectives are Afghan government oversight of the actions of foreign forces in the country, enabling the possibility of negotiations with the Taliban as a last resort and recognition of the Durrand Line. It also has positioned itself as a

"loyal" opposition to Karzai. Their exact size is unknown but it claims to be backed by 40% of Afghanistan's Parliament. Despite the influential figures it has brought together, there are serious doubts over the disparate UNF's ability to work together and over how long such an eclectic group will remain united.

The military weight of the UNF is of particular interest. It is very hard to see how this odd grouping of political actors can bring any improvements to the Afghan political landscape.

Wahdat Milli See Hezb-e Wahdat-e Milli-e Afghanistan

Wahdat-e Islami

See Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Afghanistan

Wahdat-e Milli Islami

See Hezb-e Wahdat-e Milli-e Islami-e Afghanistan

Wahdat Islami-e Mardum

See Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-e Mardum-e Afghanistan

Wikh-e Zalmayan

The 'Awakened Youth' movement emerged in 1947-52 in Kandahar and was formed by members of the Pashtun upper class. It engaged in harsh criticism of the royal family.

Wolesi Jirga Presently the Lower House of the Afghan Parliament with 249 seats.

Wolesi Millat The 'People's Nation' is a split from 'Afghan Millat'

*Glossary of the Dari words used in party names*

Hambastagi	Solidarity/sovereignty
Harakat	Movement
Hezb-e	Party
Hezb-e siasi	Political party
Jamiat	Association
Jihad	Struggle
Junbesh	Movement
Mahaz	Front
Mardum	People
Millat	Nation
Milli	National
Mujahedin	Guerrilla fighters
Mutahed	United
Tanzim	Party
Tahrik	Stimulation
Wahdat	Unity

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