



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 March 1982

Dear John,

Call at No. 10 by the Afghanistan Support  
Committee: 6pm on Thursday 18 March

We understand that Mr Temple-Morris MP will be bringing the following MPs with him: Mr James Tinn (Labour), Mr Ian Wrigglesworth (SDP) and one Liberal (yet to be chosen). Lord Bethell (who was the originator of the Afghanistan Day initiative) will also be in the party.

There will be at least three Afghans in the party:

- a. Fatma Gailani, a daughter of the Resistance leader, Syed Ahmed Gailani;
- b. Mrs Karima Farani, a leading member of the Afghan community in London; and
- c. Mr Mohammed Ibrahim, a Hazara from the central region of Afghanistan.

Mr Peers Carter (Director of the ASC and former Ambassador to Afghanistan) has assured us that the Afghans will not raise their political differences during the call on No. 10.

Mr Carter also hopes to include one of the Afghans who are currently on an official visit to the UK as guests of HMG. He is still discussing this with the London based Afghans. We shall let you know as soon as we hear. I am afraid that last minute changes cannot be ruled out.

Mr Temple-Morris may use the call as an opportunity to tell the Prime Minister about the work of the Afghanistan Support Committee (ASC). As I mentioned in my earlier letter, the ASC is giving help to an Austrian-run organisation in Peshawar which runs dispensaries in some of the refugee camps and also supplies a medical team which operates inside Afghanistan itself. Mr Carter has been active trying to raise support for this venture, and he has managed to arrange with a drug company for £4,500 worth of medicines to be sent to Peshawar (carried free of charge by British Airways). He has also obtained £18,000 from Oxfam. The ASC has however had little success in generating public interest within the UK. Its own direct fund raising operation has not yet got off the ground, possibly due to shortage of funds hitherto to prime the pump.

/The FCO



The FCO gave the ASC a grant of £20,000 in March 1981 towards administrative expenses. The Committee still have some £10,000 in the bank, but they may make a further request for additional financial help in the next financial year. We have made clear to the ASC that any request for further help must be judged in the light of the efforts which the committee itself makes to raise funds.

One idea which Mr Temple-Morris may raise with the Prime Minister is a suggestion that the ODA should channel part of its aid for the Afghan refugees through the ASC. This is an idea we have been considering with the ODA. Much will depend on whether the ASC successfully organise their own fund raising.

I enclose some suggested talking points for the Prime Minister.

*Yours ever*

*John Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street





CALL AT NO. 10 BY THE AFGHAN SUPPORT COMMITTEE:  
6pm ON THURSDAY 18 MARCH

Points to Make

1. Admire the courageous resistance of the Afghan people to the Soviet invasion. Sympathise with the suffering experienced by those who have been forced to leave their country, and by those who remain in Afghanistan.
2. We shall not allow Afghanistan to be forgotten. We have called repeatedly for complete Soviet withdrawal- have given our support to the UN General Assembly resolutions; have put forward practical proposals which would open the way to a political solution.
3. The refugees are a major humanitarian problem. Essential that the international community should help Pakistan provide support. We shall continue to play our part both bilaterally and through the European Community. Total British aid for the refugees since January 1980 amounts to some £8.7 million including a recent food aid donation of £750,000. We are also helping in other ways. The ODA has just announced a scheme for enabling Afghan refugees to come to the UK for higher education.
4. Welcome the initiative to designate 21 March as Afghanistan Day. Trust that there will be a world wide response.
5. Admire the work of Afghanistan Support Committee. What success in raising funds?

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME: THURSDAY 18 MARCH 1982

PROPOSED VISIT TO UK BY AFGHAN MINISTERS

Line to take

1. The Government are not prepared to issue visas for Ministers of the Karmal regime to visit the UK. The Government does not have any substantive dealings with the Karmal regime which was installed by the Soviet invasion of 1979, and which is kept in power by the presence of some 90,000 Soviet troops.



PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME: THURSDAY 18 MARCH 1982

PROPOSED VISIT TO UK BY AFGHAN MINISTERS

Background

1. Mr Ron Brown, MP (Leith), wrote to the Home Secretary on 27 March 1981, asking whether a visa would be given to Dr Ratebzad, Minister of Education of the Karmal regime, to enable her to visit the UK. The Home Office replied that the Government are not prepared to issue visas for Ministers of the Karmal regime.

*Mr. C. S. S.*  
*9K - 18/2*

LORD CARRINGTON'S INTERVIEW FOR BBC 'WORLD THIS WEEKEND'  
18 MARCH 1982 (TO BE BROADCAST 21 MARCH 1982)

Afghanistan Day

Q What is the point of Afghanistan Day today?

L.C I think we have all got to be very careful not to forget what happened in Afghanistan over two years ago now. So often something hits the headlines and then, after a period of time, it dies away and people forget the injustices and misery and the horrors that have been caused by actions which at the time seemed awful and have faded into insignificance.

Q Doesn't Afghanistan Day really demonstrate the impotence and ineffectiveness of the Western response to what happened two years ago in Afghanistan?

L.C Well, if you mean ineffectiveness in the sense that the Russians are still in Afghanistan and 90,000 of them are still in Afghanistan, it demonstrates that we haven't been successful so far in getting the Soviet Union to withdraw. But we have been successful in preventing it being forgotten. One of the things we have managed to do is to unite almost the entire world against the Soviet Union and this is terribly important because we, in Britain and France and the rest of us, are always the target of anti-Colonialism. The United Nations are always united against us. Now the United Nations is united against the Soviet Union. 116 countries voted against them last November. I think the Soviet Union find this uncomfortable. We have got to keep up the pressure.

Q It's a kind of a diplomatic unity that has been achieved. What in practical terms has that done for Afghanistan and the people of Afghanistan?

L.C. Alas, it hasn't done very much for the people of Afghanistan because there are now I suppose, if you take into account



account the refugees in Iran, there must be well over 3 million refugees outside Afghanistan. This is an indictment. Over one-sixth of the Afghan population are now outside Afghanistan. They find life there insupportable. Being Afghans, after all we fought three Afghan wars, we know what brave people they are. They are not going to sit down and let the situation exist as it now is and the result is that there is still a bloody civil war going on in Afghanistan and a great many people have left. Short of ourselves going to war about this, there is nothing we can do except keep up the diplomatic pressure and this is what we are doing.

Help for the Resistance?

Q What about practical aid to the people who are resisting the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan? That's a practical step that could be taken is it not?

L.C ~~We'll~~ The freedom fighters are getting arms.

Q How much support are we giving them?

L.C ~~We'll~~ We have always very carefully never said, who is supporting, who is not supporting. What we have always said is that they are getting arms.

The Position on the ground

Q What is the latest position on the ground as you have it?

LC I think probably that the position is that the Soviet Union, the Russians, hold the towns and the key communications and not very much of the countryside. It is very uncomfortable for the Russian troops, after all they are increasing the number of troops there, they suffer casualties, probably not enough casualties in the context of the enormous size of the Russian army and the Russian economy generally, to make it necessary for them militarily to think of coming to a solution. It is important, not only that the Afghan freedom fighters go on but that political pressure, diplomatic pressure, from outside is kept up.

Q There have been American reports that the Soviets are actually using chemical weapons. Do you have any evidence to support that?

L.C We haven't personally any evidence to support that, no.

Afghanistan & Poland

Q Is there perhaps in a sense a strategic advantage in having the Russians bogged down in Afghanistan? They might be diverting their attention to other places otherwise. Is that a consideration?

L.C Well it's not a consideration for not getting a settlement. But, of course, there is no doubt that the Western response to what happened in Afghanistan has, I think, acted as a brake upon the Soviet Union. For example, in Poland. I do not believe but for the very sharp Western response to what happened in Afghanistan, you would have seen the restraint which the Soviet Union has used in relation to Soviet intervention in Poland. What has now happened in Poland is that with Russian complicity, the Poles have managed, for the time being at any rate, to repress their own people. I am quite sure that but for what had happened in Afghanistan, there would have been a very much greater likelihood of Soviet military intervention in Poland.

The European Proposals

Q You put all your stress obviously on the diplomatic pressure that can be applied yet your plan to guarantee the neutrality of Afghanistan seems de facto to have failed. Where do you go on the diplomatic front?

L.C Well it lies on the ~~plan~~<sup>table</sup>: ~~Incidentally it is the only sensible plan.~~ Incidentally it is the only sensible plan that has been produced, which is to say no outside intervention in Afghanistan, and guarantee the non-alignment and neutrality of Afghanistan. Actually it's sensible and it's a way out for the Russians if they want to without losing face.



Q Well it's sensible, but it hasn't made progress.

L.C It hasn't made progress yet. It still lies on the table. If the pressures are kept up against the Soviet Union both diplomatic and the pressures of the Afghan resistance movement are imposing on them, there may come a time, I hope there will come a time, when the Russians will pick up what is a sensible plan, which saves their face and which suits everybody.

Q Are they not unlikely to want to do that unless the Americans can be brought more directly into this and the Americans certainly, at the moment, seem to have other preoccupations do they not?

L.C If you remember this proposal was a European plan and the Americans supported this very strongly and I have no doubt whatever that they will join in in any negotiations that brought about the sort of solution which the plan was designed to bring about.

Q Would you welcome a more direct and more positive pressure from the Americans on Afghanistan at the moment?

L.C I think the Americans are doing the same as we are about Afghanistan Day. Everybody is joining in on all this and the more diplomatic pressure the better. I don't think that I have any criticism about the Americans not doing enough, they are doing as much as we are.

Keep up the Pressure

Q Is it not time now to abandon really hope of changing the situation very much in Afghanistan that hasn't been achieved so far and rather to concentrate on rather bitter lessons that have to be learnt from the future from what's happened?

L.C One of the bitter lessons we have learnt from the past is / precisely not to do that. This is what happened in Czechoslovakia and this is what happened in Hungary when the Russians moved in and took them over. There was outrage for about six months and then everybody said Oh well, its a fait accompli, it's done, nothing more we can do about it /and

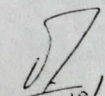
and everybody forgot about it and went back to normal. This is precisely the lesson that I think we ought to have learnt from that which is not to forget about it, but to go on and never to allow a situation in which the Soviet Union occupy Afghanistan to be regarded as acceptable or normal and however long it takes and however much effort we have to put into it, we must always bear in mind that this is unacceptable and we must go on doing what we can to turn it round.

Q But do you really think that what we are doing at the moment and what we can do on the diplomatic front is really going to change the situation in Afghanistan in the foreseeable future?

L.C I don't know. I think it's almost impossible to say because this will depend very much on the situation in the Soviet Union. After all the Soviet Union aren't in a very good situation, their economy is in fairly poor shape, they are spending a lot of money in Vietnam, they are spending a lot of money in Cuba, got themselves into this difficulty in Afghanistan. Nobody could say that Poland showed that the Soviet system was acceptable to people who have had it imposed upon them. They are in trouble. I think that if we go on pressing, sooner or later we may get some results.

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MR DONALD

AFGHANISTAN

1. I returned recently from the first part of my familiarisation tour of the SAD area in the course of which I visited Pakistan (Islamabad and Peshawar), Delhi and Kabul. In Peshawar I was the first Western visitor to be received by the three moderate nationalist leaders collectively as a demonstration of their new-found unity; I also met some of the fundamentalist leaders and some of the few middle class Afghans in Peshawar, mainly doctors, who were able to give a rather more objective analysis. In Islamabad and New Delhi I spoke to government officials and journalists. Finally, during a three-day visit to Kabul I spoke to the senior members of all the non-Communist missions, plus the Chinese, as well as observing the very obvious signs of the Soviet presence for myself.

2. Having therefore discussed the Afghanistan problem with quite a large selection of people from all these different angles I thought it worth putting my impressions into a paper, which I attach. Although the conclusions I draw are entirely personal they are not significantly at variance with the reports from our posts in the area or with current intelligence assessments. I do not include any policy recommendations, which will be made separately.

*M StE Burton*

M StE Burton  
South Asian Department

16 February 1982

cc PS/PUS  
Sir A Acland  
Mr Broomfield, EESD  
Mr Miers, MED  
Mr Moss, PUSD  
Mr Mallaby, Planning Staff  
Mr Longmire, Research Dept  
Mr O'Neill, Cabinet Office  
Mr P Wright JOS

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PERSONAL

A J Coles Esq



~~John~~

T-a.

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*With the compliments of*

SOUTH ASIAN DEPARTMENT

Richard B.

As discussed.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

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PERSONAL.



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THE AFGHANISTAN PROBLEM 1982

Conclusions

1. The Soviet flag flies to-day over the Bala Hisar, the old fortress of Kabul, as the symbol of the Russian hold over Afghanistan. The question is how long it will remain there.
2. The Russians are most unlikely to leave Afghanistan until they can be certain of leaving behind a stable political situation in which their interests would be safeguarded. This point will not be reached in the foreseeable future. Furthermore Soviet strategic aims have to be taken into account, presumably relating to future developments in Iran and/or Pakistan. The Karmal regime is bitterly resented throughout most of the country and is unlikely to succeed in gaining wider internal support in the short term. The Pakistanis have made considerable capital out of their steadfast opposition to the Russian invasion hitherto, but the balance of advantage might in time appear to them to favour an accommodation with Kabul if this appeared to offer some prospect of leading to the refugees' return home; meanwhile their high posture in relation to the Russians is taxing their nerve and they are faced with the risk of it leading to an increase in internal subversion. India is highly uncomfortable over developments in Afghanistan but by a process of ex post facto reasoning continues to argue that attempts to pressure the Russians into withdrawal are bound to be counter-productive. The Iranians are beginning to take a somewhat greater interest in spite of their absorption with their own revolution. As for the West, there is a real concern in the region over any sign of a lessening of its interest due to the Polish crisis; the Indians on the other hand consider it evidence of the artificiality of the fuss hitherto made by the West.

The Russians

3. Two years after their military intervention in Afghanistan, the Russians are facing a dilemma. If their objectives are partly related to the internal situation and partly strategic - as they are generally thought to be - they are in trouble on both fronts.

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Internally they are committed to the irreversibility of the Afghan revolution, and yet if their troops were withdrawn the Communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the PDDPA, would almost certainly be extinguished, so unpopular has it now become.

Strategically their forces provide a jumping off point which would enable them to have a significant impact on events in Iran and/or Pakistan should the opportunity for their doing so arise. But their losses of men and equipment to the insurgents are sufficiently serious that Afghanistan must be reckoned in the Kremlin to be far from being a cost-free strategic gain. The financial drain must also be significant although there are compensating economic gains, particularly the acquisition of Afghan natural gas. In short, they cannot go back, for reasons both of substance and of prestige, and yet it must be difficult for them to see how to make the situation more satisfactory for their purposes.

4. Their political tactics for the present are to divide and rule and to play the game long. Current policy as announced by the Karmal regime is to divide the country up into regions which would enjoy a certain measure of local autonomy. Those regions are carefully drawn so as to subdivide some of the more powerful tribal groups, such as the Pushtuns. Some tribes, such as the Shinwaria (on the route from Jalalabad to the Khyber Pass) receive - according to the Pakistanis - sizeable direct payments to ensure their loyalty. One view is that there may also be a long term plan to assimilate the area of the north of the Hindu Kush adjoining the Soviet Union more closely into the Soviet system. Other areas, on the other hand, such as the predominantly Shi'ite Hazara region in the centre of the country, are said to be more or less left to their own devices. Large numbers of Afghans are taken off for training in the Soviet Union and the Russians must hope that in the long run these young people will provide the bedrock for a more permanent pro-Soviet alignment of the country.

The Karmal Regime

5. This has patently failed to gain control over the country or acceptance by the population. Nevertheless it should be remembered that no preceding Afghan Government has exercised more than loose



control over many areas and the preceding regimes of Taraki and Amin were scarcely more popular or accepted. The current policy of the Karmal regime (or rather the Russians) is to broaden its support by (a) uniting the PDPA by holding a conference in the spring for the purpose of healing the breach between the Parchami and Khalqi factions; (b) defusing religious opposition by making life easier for the mosques; and (c) building broad popular support for the regime through the mechanism of the National Fatherland Front, a body designed to bring together all factions and to unite the country. It is very doubtful whether this policy will have any success in the short term. If the Russians thought that Karmal was an obstacle in this process, they would probably not hesitate to replace him. Nevertheless if a replacement were to come up through some quasi democratic process, such as the NFF, Third World support for the robust Western line might be expected to waver, even if the replacement were (in Western eyes) transparently another puppet.

#### The Resistance

6. Since the Afghan Resistance is divided along regional, tribal, ethnic and even sectarian lines, it is hardly surprising that it does not present a united front. The main division is between the three Islamic fundamentalist groups and the three moderate nationalist groups. The groups on each side are linked in loose association. The fundamentalists (notably Hikmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami) reject the possibility of any political solution and claim that the struggle against the Russians is a Jihad, or Holy War; they are highly motivated and have had a number of military successes. The moderate nationalists on the other hand (Gailani, Mujadeddi and Nabi Mohammedi) do not believe that the Russians will be beaten militarily and accept the need for a parallel political operation, e.g. through the UN. They claim to receive less aid from Pakistan. They tend to deny that the struggle is a Jihad and point out that Afghanistan has never been an extreme Moslem country. In their view the West should recognise who its true friends are and compensate them for the relative lack of support they receive from Pakistan.

7. Prospects for the two groups working together are not good. The

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moderates claim that they have hitherto made the major effort and went to the lengths of allowing a fundamentalist to lead a joint fund-raising mission to the Gulf at the end of which the fundamentalist made off with the proceeds. Recently there have been some clashes on the ground and loss of life on both sides. It is difficult for an outside observer to be able to say with any confidence that one group or the other carries more weight within Afghanistan, although it is generally known which is stronger in any particular area.

8. Most of the resistance is organized on a local and tribal basis, and some of the local leaders, for instance Massoud in the Panjshir valley, are not based in Pakistan and are autonomous although probably drawing support in equipment from the Peshawar-based groups. Overall the resistance have been successful in denying the countryside to the regime, attacking convoys, and tying up large numbers of Soviet troops; but they have recently been taking worrying casualties, particularly 'civilians' in unarmed villages from Soviet helicopters against which they have no effective answer.

Pakistan

9. For Pakistan the two year old Afghanistan crisis has presented both a problem and an opportunity. The main problem arises from the presence of more than 2.4 million registered refugees. Pakistan bears about 40% of the total cost which is an enormous burden for a poor country to sustain. The authorities are no longer permitting refugees to be registered in the North-West Frontier Province to the west of the Indus River; new refugees are being directed to the Hazara region to the east of the Indus. The presence of such a large influx from across the border with their herds has led to acute pressure on scarce grazing land and serious deforestation in some areas. Furthermore, although there have been few actual cases coming to court, there has been some increase in tension between the refugees and the local population, partly due to the superior commercial acumen of the refugees who have been particularly successful in taking over the transport sector. The help given the refugees by the UNHCR has been contrasted by some of the locals with their own subsistence level condition.



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10. Pakistan's policy in the support it gives the refugees appears to be to keep a firm grip over the situation, to help the fighters in Afghanistan, but to keep a curb on political activity in Pakistan. As regards refugee political activity, they probably fear that an unduly successful Pushtun-led resistance might in time give an unhealthy fillip to Pushtun nationalism with consequences within Pakistan. Furthermore their opposition to last year's attempt to hold a Loya Jirga, a sort of Afghan national tribal gathering, could have been due to apprehensions at the comparison which would have been drawn with the lack of permissible political activity in Pakistan.

11. On the other hand, Pakistan has been notably successful in seizing the opportunity presented by the Afghanistan problem to increase its support from the West, notably of course the United States. It has also been highly skilful in capitalising on the Soviet/Afghan threat, while at the same time enhancing its standing within the Third World and - up to now - keeping its relations with India on a fairly even keel. Nevertheless its problems are very real; the economic burden of the refugees could in the long run become difficult to support, and a threat to the regime from Soviet-backed dissidents (e.g. in Baluchistan) could also become serious. Already there are voices raised in Pakistan, for example in the recent restricted session of the Federal Council devoted to foreign affairs, calling for a less dangerously provocative attitude towards the Soviet Union and recognition of the Karmal regime. Indian pressure could be exerted in the same direction if the two sides get to the stage of making mutual concessions of substance in the interests of a genuine detente between them.

India

12. The essence of the Indian position on Afghanistan is their claim that it - alone - is based on a realistic assessment of the problem. The Russians, they say, will not be forced out of Afghanistan by overt pressure from the West - rather the reverse. Furthermore the Russians, as the adjoining super power, have legitimate interests in Afghanistan which have to be accommodated. The Karmal regime is no worse than its two immediate predecessors, and if anything rather better. The Indians dismiss the UN

/ Resolution

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Resolution, which they conspicuously failed to support, as an irrelevance. Nevertheless there are signs that the Indians are increasingly embarrassed by their idiosyncratic position on Afghanistan. They are at pains to point out that privately they do not fail to make their objections known to the Russians. It is true that Mrs Gandhi told Grómyko soon after she returned to power that she did not recognise their reasons for intervening militarily in Afghanistan. It is also true that the Russians have recently failed to dissuade the Indians from embarking on talks with China and Pakistan. The Indians probably realise that their position on Afghanistan has weakened their standing in the Non-Aligned Movement and made a rapprochement with the United States harder to achieve. But their feelings are probably both strong and genuine: that the real problem over Afghanistan is that it has introduced super-power rivalry more directly into the sub-continent - the syllogism is frequently used that Afghanistan is making the Russians bleed, the Americans are in favour of anything that makes the Russians bleed, and therefore the Americans are in favour of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan - coupled with acute irritation that the Pakistanis have been cleverer at exploiting the situation than they have.

Iran

13. There are no reliable figures for the number of Afghan refugees in Iran. The Iranians claim there are well over a million, but this figure probably includes Afghan immigrants who have always formed a proportion of the working population in Iran. The Iranians admit however that the refugees now constitute a real economic burden and that they are, for the first time, putting them in separate camps. They may also for the first time request the help of the UNHCR in dealing with the problem. It may be this growing perception of the economic problem which led the Iranian Government to produce its proposals last year which, although extreme, had the merit of identifying Soviet withdrawal as the necessary first step. Whatever the reason the new political fact is that the Iranians are taking an interest in Afghanistan. They are likely to receive the UN Secretary-General's personal representative, when appointed, on his next round of shuttle diplomacy in the area. They are also said to be training some of the / (Shia) mullahs



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hia) mullahs in Iran, presumably as a vehicle for establishing eventually a fundamentalist regime in Afghanistan, sympathetic to the Iranian revolution. However they are unlikely to have much practical influence on events in Afghanistan, which is mainly Sunni.

The West

14. Apart from our own residual mission, the United States, France, Italy, West Germany and Turkey all have small missions in Kabul headed by Chargés d'Affaires. The Indians have a full Ambassador, a competent diplomat who was formerly the government spokesman. Pakistan has a beleaguered but well-informed Chargé. So does Iran. Apart from the Indians, none of these missions has dealings with the Karmal regime. Although their access to information is therefore very limited they nevertheless perform a useful function: they are useful listening posts on the ground and they keep the flag flying. The UNDP keeps up a reduced aid programme. Hitherto this has been politically compromised under a Bulgarian Director (who, for example, sold off a number of UNICEF vehicles without removing the UN emblem which now provide perfectly camouflaged transport for the local secret police); under the new West German acting director, however, the programme now achieves a better balance. The cutting off of Western bilateral aid programmes, particularly in the educational field, although resented by the Afghans, cannot have been unwelcome to the Russians for whom it removed the main source of competition for their own efforts to swing Afghanistan irreversibly into their orbit.