

# THE PASHTUNS: UNDERSTANDING HISTORY AND CULTURE

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In August 2021, when the Taliban seized control of Kabul, there was much jubilation and backslapping in Pakistan. It was seen as the crowning glory of Pakistan's two-decade long duplicitous covert support to the Taliban despite being part of the US 'War on Terror'. The then Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that the Afghans had broken the shackles of slavery, whatever that was supposed to mean. There was a conviction that the Taliban would strengthen Pakistan's security by reining in the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), among other things. Pakistan's celebration, however, proved to be premature. The mood today is grim against the backdrop of the increasing number of TTP attacks. In the past three months, the TTP has claimed more than 150 attacks, including the mass casualty Peshawar Mosque attack on January 30, 2023.

Clearly, Pakistan underestimated the Afghan Taliban's ties with the TTP and they also underestimated the strength of Pashtunwali—the code of the Pashtuns—that dictated that just as the tribal belt provided the Taliban sanctuary when they were forced out of

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Afghanistan in 2001, now it was the turn of the Taliban to return the favour. While Pakistan has accused the Afghan Taliban of providing sanctuary to the TTP, the reality is more complex. In a large part, it stems from Pakistan's lack of understanding of who the Pashtuns are and following a policy that does not factor in Pashtun history and culture.

### **THE LAND OF PASHTUNS**

The land of the Pashtuns—Pashtunistan—straddles an area of more than 100,000 square miles that traditionally stretched from the Indus to the Hindu Kush. This ancient land and its people have been contested between empires and have seen many a vicissitude over the centuries. Until the Sikh conquests in the nineteenth century and then the British Raj, the Pashtuns were politically united and part of an Afghan empire that stretched eastwards as far as the Indus. Today, the Pashtuns stand divided by the 2,640 kilometre-long disputed Durand Line between Pakistan, a country created in 1947, and Afghanistan, a country that started taking shape two centuries earlier in 1747.

Though divided between two countries, the Pashtuns share a common ideology of descent, common ethnic, cultural, linguistic and familial bonds, common historical memories, and belong largely to the Sunni Hanafi School of Islam with pockets of Shias. These unifying bonds makes it easy to see them as a single entity inhabiting a single piece of real estate, as it were, distinct from its neighbours. Moreover, the present division of the Pashtuns is just one of the several avatars that this land and its people have been subject to over the centuries. Pashtuns on both sides of the Durand Line being one nation is best expressed by the Pashto phrase: *Lar O Bar, Yaw Afghan*, i.e., the Afghans in the low as in lowlands of Pakistan and High as in highlands of Afghanistan, are one.

The geography of the area has been both a weakness and strength for the Pashtuns: weakness because of being located on the land route to the wealth of India, and strength due to its mountainous terrain. The former attracted all manner of invaders, while the latter developed the robust character of the people, giving them the power to challenge every aggressor. Almost all invaders were to learn the hard way how

difficult it was to rule over the Pashtuns. About geography there is a popular saying: "When God created the world, there were a lot of stones and rocks and other lumber left over, which were all dumped on this frontier." Hence, you have names like Dozakh Tangi—the gorge of hell; Giddar Khula—the mouth of the Jackal.

Through most of history, the Pashtun region now included within the boundaries of Afghanistan and Pakistan had witnessed more invasions than any other in Asia, or, perhaps, the world. From the Greeks, Persians, Sakas, Kushans, Hephthalites (White Huns), Arabs, Mongols, Turks, Mughals, British and Soviets, to the US, the region has perhaps seen it all. Most attempted to conquer and subdue the Pashtuns but ultimately failed.<sup>1</sup> The reason was that, as all invaders found out, the Pashtun tribesmen would not be defeated. As has been well put:

"You cannot defeat people who have no concept of defeat in the classical sense. They only believe in survival. They know when to fight, when to run and hide, and when to talk. Military operations against such adversaries can only have one objective: to bring them to the negotiating table."<sup>2</sup>

Not surprisingly, these invasions have bred a tough and hardy people with a unique way of life and a unique way of looking at the world.

In medieval times, Pashtunistan was a borderland and contested between empires that ruled from India, Iran or Central Asia. In the last two centuries, it has had the unfortunate distinction of being invaded by each of the great powers of the times: Great Britain in the 19th century, when the Pashtuns became pawns in the chessboard of the Great Game between Great Britain and Russia; the Soviet Union in the 20th century when they became victims of the Cold War between the United States and the USSR, and were subjected to an invasion

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1. Nabi Misdaq, *Afghanistan: Political Frailty and External Interference* (London: Routledge, 2006); Zahid Nawaz Mann, *The Nature of Insurgency in Afghanistan and the Regional Politics*, Masters Diss., Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, June 2010.
  2. Muhammad Yahya Effendi, "Watch and Ward on the Frontier (1849-1947)", Report of the seminar Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan held at Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, and Hanns Seidel Foundation, December 7-8, 2004.

and a destructive civil war; and the United States in the 21st century when the Pashtuns became a central factor in the 'war on terror' and its aftermath. At the time of writing, it again faces an uncertain future with the Taliban back in the saddle.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, as Arthur Swinson puts it: "No area of comparable size has seen so much action, bloodshed, intrigue, gallantry, savagery, devotion, patience or sacrifice. Here, both virtues and vices have been bred on a heroic scale; and the centuries have passed without eroding them." Pashtunistan has seen great conquerors like Alexander the Great, Timur, Babur and Nadir Shah; in more modern times, soldiers, administrators and leaders like Pollock, Napier, Nicholson, Roberts, Churchill, Wavell, Lytton, Curzon, Gandhi, Nehru, Attlee, Jinnah and Mountbatten.<sup>4</sup> Of the many famous names in Pashtunistan, none is more so than the Khyber Pass. As James Spain puts it: "History hangs heavy on the Khyber and has left its mark upon its sombre stone. Ground into the dust of the pass is Persian gold, Greek iron, Tartar leather, Mogul gems, Afghan silver and British steel. All have watered it with their blood."<sup>5</sup> Great generals like Alexander and Babar paid Afridi tribesmen guarding the Khyber to allow passage into India. Attempts to force their way, like Mughal emperor Aurangzeb did, led to the loss of thousands of lives, great expense and humiliation.<sup>6</sup>

### WHO ARE PASHTUNS?

There has been a fair amount of confusion about the terms Pashtun, Pakhtun, Pathan and Afghan. The ambiguity stems from the fact that the Persians referred to the Pashtuns interchangeably with Afghan and this name stuck. The British tried to make a distinction between Afghan and Pathan: the Afghans were considered under Persian influence and spoke Dari while the Pashtuns or Pathans had greater

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3. Amin Saikal, *Zone of Crisis: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014); Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002).
  4. Arthur Swinson, *North-West Frontier: People and Events, 1839–1947* (London: Corgi, 1969).
  5. James W. Spain, *The Way of the Pathans* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1972).
  6. Akbar Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam* (India: HarperCollins, 2013).

interaction with India, and spoke Pashto. Tribes in the north of the region use the term Pakhtun while the southern tribes use the term Pashtun. Similarly, Pakhto is used to describe the language in the north and Pashto in the south.

There is no unanimity amongst scholars about the origins of the Pashtuns or when they came to settle in Pashtunistan.

The various hypotheses about the origins of the Pashtuns vary from Semitic beginnings to an Indo-Aryan inception. Some view them as the descendants of “Afghana, the son of Jeremiah, the son of Saul, who was Solomon’s Commander-in-Chief and builder of his temple”.<sup>7</sup> According to others, they are of Aryan origin. Some others think they are of a Turko-Iranian type with a considerable mixture of other physical types found beyond the Indus. To some others, they are closer to Arabs.

While scholars continue to debate the issue of Pashtun origins, there have been many attempts to codify the Pashtun genealogies, the most famous being the *Makhzan-i-Afghani* (History of the Afghans) compiled in India by Ni’matullah al-Harawi after being commissioned by Mughal emperor, Jehangir in 1613.

According to the chronicles, the Pashtuns themselves claim descent from a common ancestor—Qays bin Rashid or Qays Abdul Rashid who went to Medina in 622 AD and was converted to Islam by the Prophet himself. On his return to Ghor, Qays is supposed to have successfully propagated the new faith, and died there in the forty-first year of the Hijrat, aged eighty-seven.<sup>8</sup>

This narrative is an article of faith amongst the Pashtuns,<sup>9</sup> who determine the start of their lineage with the conversion to Islam, ignoring their whole history before Qays. They believe in the purity of the descent of their religion, believing that they “have no infidel

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7. Major R. T. I. Ridgway, *Pathans: Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1910), cited in Haq, *Northwest Tribal Belt*.

8. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans: 550 BC-AD 1957* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1958).

9. Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “No Sign Until the Burst of Fire: Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan Frontier”, *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 41-77, at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30129791>. Accessed on July 8, 2019.

past, nor do they carry in their history the blemish of defeat and forcible conversion”—almost like a “chosen people”.<sup>10</sup>

Qays had four sons—three biological and one adopted—who are, today, accepted as the founders of the major tribes under the Pashtun lineage.<sup>11</sup>

There are about 31 million Pashtuns in Pakistan, making up about 16 per cent of the population and the third-largest ethnic group after the Punjabis and Sindhis. There are another 15 million in Afghanistan where they are 40 per cent of the population and the largest ethnic group, though not the majority. The city of Karachi is home to the largest Pashtun population in the world—superseding Pashtun cities such as Peshawar, Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar.<sup>12</sup>

### PASHTUNWALI

The Pashtuns have a unique and defining tribal code called Pashtunwali or the “way of the Pashtun” that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups. It is an unwritten set of values, customs and cultural codes that governs routine life. The various elements of Pashtunwali taken together represent the Pashtuns’ notion of a *gairatmand* Pashtun, i.e., an ideal Pashtun who leads a completely honourable life. At its core, Pashtunwali is about *nang* (honour) rooted in the triangle of *zan* (woman), *zar* (gold/wealth) and *zameen* (land). “I despise the man who does not guide his life by honour”, wrote Khushal Khan Khattak, the seventeenth-century Pashto warrior-poet. “The very word honour drives me mad.” He wrote:

“The very name Pashtun spells honour and glory  
Lacking that honour what is the Afghan story?”

Since the responsibility of upholding individual and tribal honour rests with the males, most carry weapons, which have

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10. Frederik Barth, *Features of Person and Society in Swat: Collected Essays on Pathans* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981). Quoted in Z. T. Sungur, “Articulation of Tribalism into Modernity: The Case of Pashtuns in Afghanistan”, Thesis (Graduate School of Social Sciences, Middle East Technical University, January 2013).

11. *Ibid.*

12. Iftikhar H. Malik, *Pashtun Identity and Geopolitics in Southwest Asia* (London: Anthem Press, 2016).

become a tangible expression of the code of honour. The obligatory weapon symbolises a man's status in society, signalling his role as protector of his community.

The obligation to take revenge, or *badal*, is a critical part of Pashtunwali. As a young Churchill put it: "no injury was to be forgotten and no debt left unpaid." Every Pashtun knows that transgressions against another's honour will lead to revenge against the transgressor and it is in his interest not to provoke *badal*. As a Pashtun proverb states: "He is not a Pushtoon who does not give a blow in return for a pinch."

There is no time limit for revenge. As a well-known saying goes: "The Pashtun who took revenge after a hundred years said, 'I took it too quickly.'"

The most important issue involving tribal honour concerns women—their behaviour and transgressions against them. This is so because it directly relates to the honour of men in the family and clan. Violation of their honour is perceived as one of the greatest threats to a tribe's honour and thus provokes the most intense blood feuds. Cases concerning honour of women are called *tor* (black). In most cases, they can only be converted to *spin* (white) by death.

Ghaffar Khan's eldest son, the poet and artist Ghani Khan, described the working of *badal*:

"[If dishonoured, the Pathan] must shoot, there is no alternative. If he does not, his brothers will look down upon him, his father will sneer at him, his sister will avoid his eyes, his wife will be insolent and his friends will cut him off ... One day he goes out and never comes back. He has laughed his way into a bullet that was fired by another of his own blood and race."

Other critical parts of Pashtunwali are *Melmastia* or hospitality and *Nanawati* or refuge. The concept of hospitality is held in such high esteem that a Pashtun has to show mercy even to his enemy if the latter shows up at his doorstep and has to offer him food and provisions. By forgiving his enemy, he shows magnanimity and grace, which enhances his power and prestige. A recent example of this was Mullah Omar refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden,

who was his guest, to the Americans or even to fellow Muslims, the Saudis and Pakistanis. Interestingly, Mullah Omar prioritised Pashtunwali over Sharia in defending his decision when the *ulema* argued that under Islamic principles bin Laden should be handed over for trial.

For a long time, much of what had been written about the Pashtuns was from the British who were involved in trying to subdue the tribes,<sup>13</sup> and the ethnographic material on the frontier tribes was produced not by academics but by political administrators in the form of personal accounts.<sup>14</sup> The first Briton to encounter what would become the North-West Frontier of the Raj was Mountstuart Elphinstone, an East India Company civil servant and later the governor of Bombay Presidency. He was given the responsibility of opening relations with the Afghans. In 1809, he met Amir Shah Shuja in the Pashtun winter capital of Peshawar, marking Afghanistan's inclusion into western politics. While in Peshawar, Elphinstone and Shah Shuja concluded a treaty of 'eternal friendship'. The treaty was directed against the French and the Persians, as part of the grand British strategy to contain Napoleon. With the treaty, the Afghans committed themselves to help the British if the French and Persians attacked the Indian subcontinent. Although, in the end, the treaty came to nothing, Elphinstone's visit led to the first full Western report of Afghan history and society. The book about his experiences in Peshawar, titled *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, has retained its value to the present day.<sup>15</sup> In his book, Elphinstone equated the Pashtuns to the Highlanders of his native Scotland and his description of the Pashtun character became the gold standard for future British administrators. According to him, "their vices are revenge, envy, avarice, rapacity and obstinacy; on the other hand, they are fond of liberty, faithful to their friends, kind to their dependents, hospitable, brave, hardy, frugal, laborious, and prudent."<sup>16</sup>

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13. Major R. T. I. Ridgway, *Pathans: Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1910).

14. Paul Titus, "Honor the Baloch, Buy the Pushtun: Stereotypes, Social Organization and History in Western Pakistan", *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 3, 1998.

15. Willem Vogelsang, *The Afghans* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

16. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, and Its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary, and India: Comprising a View of the Afghaan Nation and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy* (London: R. Bentley, 1842).



In 1832, a British visitor to Afghanistan was struck by the absence of prejudice against Christians. He wrote:

“It is a matter of agreeable surprise to anyone acquainted with Mahomedans of India, Persia and Turkey and with their religious prejudices and antipathies, to find that the people of Kabul are entirely [devoid] of them. In most countries few Mahomedans will eat with a Christian; to salute him, even in error, is deemed unfortunate and he is looked upon as unclean. Here none of these difficulties or feelings exist. The Christian is respectfully called a ‘Kitabi’ or ‘one of the Book’.”<sup>17</sup>

However, a century of interaction with the British would change the benign attitude towards Westerners.<sup>18</sup>

### **CRITICAL ELEMENTS IN PASHTUN HISTORY**

Taking an overview, several strands in Pashtun history are noteworthy.

First, a major failing of the Pashtuns as a collective is that they have *shown unity and nationalist solidarity only when seriously threatened by foreigners*. To a lesser extent, they, or a section of them, have also united when engaged in successful military offensives, territorial conquests and plundering raids. Other than that, the long history of the Pashtuns shows fragmentation and feuds and conflicts with one another. Attempts at unity by some leaders have either been futile or have not lasted beyond the lifetime of the leader. As a result, outsiders have subjected them to intermittent invasions and even occupation, however limited in time and space it may have been.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, one of the greatest laments of the seventeenth century warrior poet Khushal Khan Khattak was the disunity amongst the Pashtuns whom he had vainly tried to bring together. He wrote:

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17. Quoted in Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 119.

18. Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, *Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx and Mujahid* (New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), p. 50.

19. Amin Saikal, 2014, n. 3.

“More skilled in the swords are the Pashtuns than the Moghuls,  
Would only more intelligence was theirs.  
Were the tribes but of agreement amongst themselves,  
Emperors would prefer to bow before them.  
Every deed of the Pashtun is better than that of the Moghul,  
Concord is what they lack, how pitiful that is.”

The second strand in Pashtun history is the *representation of their proclivity for conflict and warfare*. An apocryphal story tells that Alexander the Great’s mother sent him a letter taunting him for being stuck in Afghanistan for three years after conquering Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Persia in a year. Alexander sent her back a sack full of Afghan soil, asking her to spread it around her palace. She did as her son asked. When the Macedonian nobles walked over the Afghan soil, they began to bicker and fight amongst themselves. She then understood what Alexander was facing in Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup>

Not surprisingly, in literature—both colonial and contemporary—the Pashtuns, especially those in the tribal areas, have been portrayed as violent and warrior-like. Thus, for Denzil Ibbetson, these tribes were the “most barbaric of all races ... bloodthirsty, vindictive and bigoted”.<sup>21</sup> For Winston Churchill, the Pashtun tribes were ‘animal-like’. He also wrote:

“Except at the time of sowing and of harvesting, a continual state of feud and strife prevails throughout the land. Tribe wars with tribe. The people of one valley fight with those of the next. And to the quarrels of communities are added the combat of individuals. Khan assails khan, each supported by his retainers. Every tribesman has a blood feud with his neighbour. Every man’s hand is against the other and all against the stranger.”

Such a representation can be attributed to over a hundred British military expeditions against the Pashtuns and the latter’s

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20. Quoted in Rajiv Dogra, *Durand’s Curse* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2017).

21. Sir Denzil C. J. Ibbetson, “Panjab Castes: The Report on the Census of the Panjab, 1883” (Lahore: Government Printing, Punjab, 1916).

reactions and resistance to such expeditions. Excessive reliance on colonial literature for understanding the tribal Pashtuns has led to the perception of Pashtuns having a “propensity for violence”. This view has persisted even after 1947.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately for the Pashtuns, the emergence of the Taliban, both Afghan and Pakistani, has further reinforced the violent image of the Pashtuns.

While the propensity for violence has received attention, it is unfortunate that there has been a lack of counter-narratives about the Pashtuns. This has led to the persistence of colonial stereotypes and the association of violence, and now terrorism, with tribal Pashtuns and refugees. What has not received due attention is the non-violence of Ghaffar Khan and the activities of progressive Pashtuns and tribal elders. They have historically stood against the Taliban and al-Qaeda since their influx in the tribal areas, especially on the grounds that radical Islamic values were not compatible with the Pashtun culture.<sup>23</sup> They have paid a huge price for such resistance. What has also not received due attention is the fact of Pashtun tribal elders convening various jirga (council of elders) meetings and forming anti-militant lashkars (tribal militia). This suggests that a large number of these Pashtuns were against militant activities in their region. More recently, the evolution of the non-violent Pakistan Tahafuz Movement (PTM) highlights that such stereotypes of violence about the tribal Pashtuns are based on persistence of colonial representations and generalisations.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the lack of counter-narratives, while there is an abundance of British literature on the Pashtun, there are not many Pashtun versions of how they saw themselves or saw the British. As Ghani Khan, Ghaffar Khan’s son, puts it: “The Pathans have no written history but they have thousands of ruins where the hungry stones tell their story to anyone who would care to listen.”<sup>25</sup>

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22. Farooq Yousaf, “Pakistan’s ‘Tribal’ Pashtuns, Their ‘Violent’ Representation, and the Pashtun *Tahafuz* Movement”, *Sage Journals* 9, no. 1, February 9, 2019, at <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019829546>. Accessed on February 2, 2022.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Khan Abdul Ghani Khan, *The Pathan* (Peshawar University Book Agency, 1947).

Ghani Khan in his book *The Pathan*, has best expressed what a Pashtun is like and what a Pashtun thinks about Pashtuns.<sup>26</sup> He admits that the Pathan is not easy to love because he takes a lot of knowing and his is the most complicated simplicity. Amongst his traits is a love of fighting but he hates being a soldier; a love of music but contempt for the musician; a temperamental neighbour who could become a loving friend, or a deadly enemy. "He knows no happy medium; that is his greatest virtue and his greatest drawback." Though kind and gentle with a tender heart, he dislikes showing it and tries to hide it under a rough and gruff exterior. "He is too good a fighter to leave his weakest part uncovered." "Don't be so sweet", he says, "that people may swallow you up, nor so bitter that people may spit you out." "He keeps a rough face because he does not want you to see his soft eyes. He would rather you thought he was a rogue than let you see him weep his eyes out for his wife."<sup>27</sup>

He adds that the father and mother of the Pashtun have inured him to the hardness of their own lives. "The eyes of the dove are lovely", they tell him, "but the air is made for the hawk. So cover your dove-like eyes and grow claws." When the Pathan is a child, his mother tells him, "The coward dies but his shrieks live long after", and so he learns not to shriek. "He is shown dozens of things dearer than life so that he will not mind either dying or killing. He is forbidden colourful clothes or exotic music, for they weaken the arm and soften the eye. He is taught to look at the hawk and forget the nightingale." He will forgive you anything if you do it bravely enough.

Third, a critical thread after the creation of Pakistan in 1947 has been the *Pashtunistan issue*. The newly created state of Pakistan inherited the British territories and with it the issue of Afghan irredentism. The efforts of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to unite the Pashtuns into Pashtunistan at the time of the partition of the subcontinent came to naught but it sowed the seeds of doubt amongst the Pakistani leadership about the loyalty of his followers. Post Partition, several Pashtun-led Afghan governments, notably

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26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

those of Mohammad Daoud Khan, intermittently raised the issue of Pashtunistan and about the validity of the Durand Line, and challenged Pakistan's right to rule over its Pashtun areas. Afghan governments have vacillated between alternatives like an autonomous Pashtun state to be created within Pakistan, an independent Pashtunistan to be carved out of Pakistan, or a Greater Afghanistan by reemerging the Pashtun territories of Pakistan back into Afghanistan, thus totally undoing the British-era Durand Line.<sup>28</sup>

For its part, Pakistan has worked systematically to overwhelm Pashtun impulses for Pashtunistan. This central thread has been one of the key drivers of Pakistan's policy towards the Pashtuns and its efforts to snuff out Pashtun nationalism and have a friendly government in Kabul has been mainly responsible for the current turmoil in Pashtunistan. A watered-down version of Pashtunistan is the unification of all Pashtun areas in Pakistan, encompassing the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province and northern Balochistan in a new province of Pakhtunkhwa that would seek greater autonomy.

Pashtuns matter and matter vitally. An understanding of the key trends amongst the Pashtuns and their history, especially of Pashtunwali, the way of the Pashtun and of two important forces—Pashtun nationalism and Pashtun extremism and their potential combination—are critical for peace and stability in the region. Superficial understanding and prescription has had, and could continue to have, devastating consequences for the region. Insecurity and instability in this 'crossroads' would continue to radiate insecurity in the whole region, lead to a surge of refugees, an increase in drug trafficking and provide space for global terrorists in ungoverned spaces.<sup>29</sup>

*Disclaimer:* The article is extracted from the author's book titled *The Pashtuns: A Contested History*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2022.

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28. Amin Saikal, 2014, n. 4.

29. Dr. Sima Samar in conversation with Sally Armstrong, "How to End the Endless War in Afghanistan", April 29, 2021, at <https://www.macleans.ca/news/world/how-to-end-the-endless-war-in-afghanistan/>. Accessed on February 2, 2022.