



Background Paper Afghanistan: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups 1978-2001

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Map of current Afghan provinces | 4 |
| Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan Map | 5 |
| Glossary | 5 |
| 1 Government/Soviet Aligned 1978-1992 | 8 |
| PDPA (People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan) – the Communist party | 8 |
| PDPA (Khalq faction)..... | 9 |
| PDPA (Parcham faction)..... | 9 |
| 2 Anti-Soviet Groups (Mujahideen Tanzim) | 10 |
| 2.1 Pashtun-dominated groups | 11 |
| Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar) (HIH/HIG)..... | 11 |
| Hezb-e Islami (Khales) (HIK/HIA) | 12 |
| Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami (Nabi) (HII)..... | 14 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Ittehad-e Islami (Sayyaf)..... | 15 |
| Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan (Mojadeddi) | 16 |
| Mahaz-e-Melli (Gailani) | 17 |
| Taliban Movement (till 2001) (Omar) | 18 |
| 2.2. Tajik-dominated groups..... | 20 |
| Jamiat-i Islami (Rabbani)..... | 20 |
| Shura-e Nazar (Massoud) | 21 |
| 2.3 Uzbek/Turkmen-dominated groups | 22 |
| Jombesh-e Melli Islami (Dostum) | 22 |
| 2.4 Hazara and Shia-dominated groups..... | 25 |
| Background to Hazara Parties and Hazara Civil War of 1980s..... | 25 |
| Hezb-e Wahdat..... | 27 |
| Hezb-e Wahdat (Akbari)..... | 29 |
| Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)..... | 30 |
| Sazman-i Nasr..... | 31 |
| Sepah-i Pasdaran..... | 32 |
| Nahzat-e Islami | 33 |
| Da'wat-e Islami..... | 34 |
| Harakat-i-Islami | 34 |
| Shula-e-Javid..... | 35 |
| 2.5 Alliances and Coalitions | 38 |
| Peshawar Seven (Alliance of Seven) | 38 |
| Afghan Mujahideen Government (1992-96) | 39 |
| Northern Alliance..... | 40 |
| Maps relating to Afghan parties..... | 41 |
| 1 Major insurgent groups during Soviet-Afghan War | 41 |
| 2. Taliban control 1997 | 42 |
| 3. Taliban control 1998 | 42 |
| 4 Taliban control 2000-2001..... | 43 |
| 5 Taliban control October 2001 | 43 |
| Photos of Afghan leaders..... | 44 |
| References..... | 46 |
| Index of Groups and Leaders | 49 |

Introduction

Since the [Communist Party](#) seized power in Afghanistan in 1978, the country has been involved in a succession of military insurgencies and civil wars which have overthrown three regimes (in 1992, 1996 and 2001). The groups which formed to oppose these regimes sometimes were called ‘parties’ (*hezb/hizb*), but more often were known as ‘organisations’ (*tanzim, sazman* or *kanun*), ‘movements’ (*harakat, tehrik, nohzat, jombesh*), ‘societies’ (*jamiat*) or ‘fronts’ (*jabha* and *mahaz*). As most of these groups arose for a military purpose, many lacked a detailed political programme or philosophy (though many were Islamist). Many groups formed around a powerful leader and were extremely hierarchical, authoritarian and often organised along ethnic, tribal or sectarian lines. Since the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, many of these organisations have attempted to become more traditional political parties rather than military organisations. This paper gives a short outline of the major political and military organisations, parties and alliances which have been involved in the Afghan wars between 1978 and 2001. It includes information on the parties’ leaders, history, relationships, support bases and provinces of operation. (For information on organisation after 2001, see *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.)

Since the 1978 coup there have been four regimes which have been opposed by various groups as summarised below:

| Years | Regime | Opposed by |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1978-1992 | Communist (PDPA) | Various Mujahideen groups |
| 1992-1996 | Mujahideen government | Mujahideen opponents , then Taliban |
| 1996-2001 | Taliban government | Northern Alliance |
| 2001-2013 | Karzai democracy | Taliban and other insurgent groups |

This paper deals with the organisations and parties that were involved in the fighting in the Communist era, the Mujahideen government era and the Taliban government era. The organisations have been grouped by ethnicity, since most organisations (except the Communists) tended to be dominated by particular ethnic groups. Many of these groups, or their descendents, continue to play an important role today.

References:

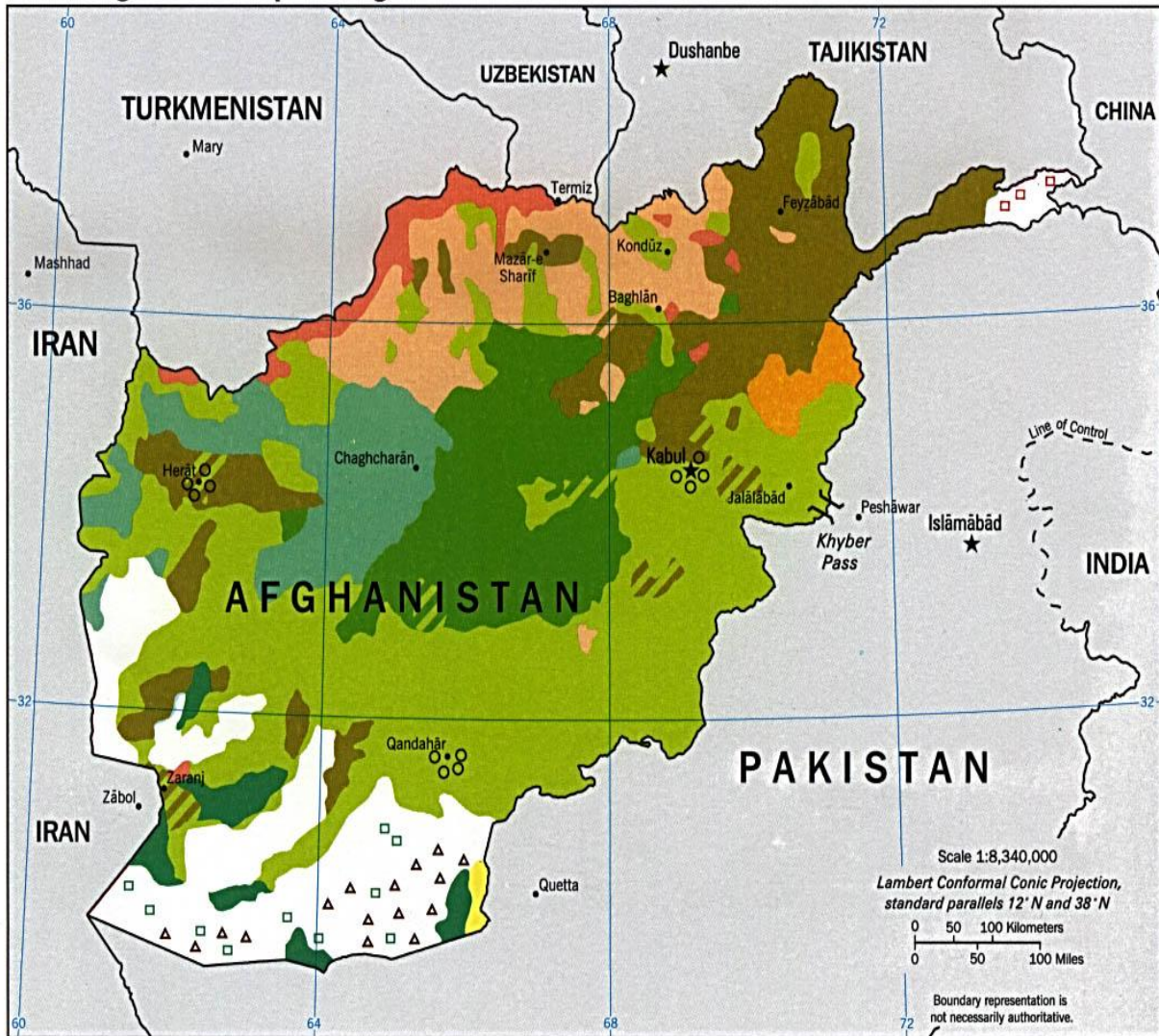
- Maley, William 2002, *The Afghanistan Wars*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK.
- Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan’s Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper <http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf> Accessed 11 December 2012

Map of current Afghan provinces



Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan Map

Ethnolinguistic Groups in Afghanistan



- Iranian**
- Baloch
 - Aimak
 - Hazara
 - Pashtun
Durrani, Ghilzai
 - Qizilbash
 - Tajik

- Turkic**
- Kirghiz
 - Turkmen
 - Uzbek

- Other**
- △ Brahui
 - Nuristani
 - Sparsely populated or uninhabited

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Glossary

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Hanafi | One of four schools of Sunni law interpretation, named after its founder Abu Hanifah. The most widespread and most liberal school. Dominant among Afghanistan's <i>Sunni</i> population. |
| Harakat | Movement |
| Hazarajat | A mountainous area in Central Afghanistan where the Hazara people predominate. It includes all of Bamian and Dai Kundi provinces, as well as western Wardak, northwestern Ghazni, eastern Ghor, southern Sar-e Pul and southern Samangan. |
| Hezb (Hizb) | Party |
| Ittefaq | Alliance, confederation |
| Jabha | Front |
| Jam'iat | Society |
| Jihad | Islamic holy war |
| Jihadi | One engaged in holy war; sometimes equivalent to mujahiddin |
| Jirga | Council of elders convened on an ad hoc basis to address problems |
| Jombesh | Movement |
| Kanun | Organisation |
| Khan | Village leader or landlord |
| Kuchi | Nomadic pastoralists; usually Pashtun |
| Loya Jirga | Great (National) Council. A loya jirga is a mass meeting for the discussion of major events such as choosing a new king, adopting a constitution, or discussing important national political or emergency matters. |
| Madrassa | Religious school |
| Mahaz | Front |
| Majmu'a | Association |
| Malik | Village representative, landlord; may be appointed by the community, and liaises in a quasi-official capacity between community or government; may also fulfill an executive role |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Mir | Traditional title of nobility or tribal chief |
| Mujahideen | Fighters in a holy war (Jihad), Afghan resistance fighters in the Communist era (1978-1992) adopted this designation, as they were fighting a jihad against a non-Muslim (Communist/'infidel') enemy. |
| Mullah | Village-level religious leader |
| Nohzat | Movement, also <i>Nahzat</i> etc |
| Qawm | Group of primary loyalty, which basis could be extended family, clan, village, ethnic groups or profession. |
| Sayyed | Sayyeds (Sayids) are descendants of the Prophet Mohammad; there are both Shi'a and Sunni Sayyeds. They are greatly respected in Muslim societies, particularly Shi'a Muslim communities, and have also historically been held in an elevated position among Hazaras. (see AFG41585 for further information) |
| Sazman | Organisation |
| Sharia | Islamic law – based on the Koran and the <i>Sunnah</i> (sayings and practices of the Prophet) (also spelt <i>Shari'a</i>) |
| Shi'a | (also <i>Shia</i> , <i>Shi'ite</i> , <i>Shi'ism</i>) The smaller of the two major sects of Islam. About 18% of Afghans are Shias, including almost all Hazaras. The largest part are 'Twelvers', while there is also a branch of 'Seveners', also called Isma'ili |
| Shura | Consultative assembly, council |
| Sunni | The larger of the two major sects of Islam. About 80% of Afghans are Sunnis. Sunnism is divided into four schools of law: <i>Hanafi</i> , <i>Maliki</i> , <i>Shafi</i> and <i>Hanbali</i> . Most Afghans Sunnis are of the <i>Hanafi</i> school. |
| Taliban | Literally 'Religious students', now an Islamic insurgent organisation. |
| Tanzim | Organisation. The term <i>tanzim</i> is used by most Afghans for the Sunni Mujahideen parties that fought the Communist regime and Soviets between 1978 and 1992. Western sources nowadays sometimes label them 'jihadi groups'. The most famous <i>tanzim</i> were those of the Peshawar Seven |
| Tehrik | Movement |
| Wolesi Jirga | National Assembly |

SPELLING OF AFGHAN WORDS. There is considerable variation in the spelling of Afghan words and names, particularly in the vowels: for example, *Kuchi* is also spelt *Koochi*, *Kutchi* or *Kochi*.

1 Government/Soviet Aligned 1978-1992

PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) – the Communist party

Alternate Names: *Hezb-e Dimokratik-e khalq-e Afghanistan*

Later called the *Watan* (Homeland) Party (from June 1990)

Years of Operation: 1965-1992 – The party ruled Afghanistan from 27 April 1978 to April 1992

Leaders:

- Nur Muhammad Taraki (led PDPA after 1978 coup until October 1979 – Khalq faction);
- Hafizullah Amin (President Sept-Dec 1979 – Khalq faction);
- Babrak Karmal (President 1980-1986 – Parcham faction);
- Dr Mohammad Najibullah (better known mononymously as Najibullah or Najib) (President 1986-April 1992 – Parcham faction)

Based in: Kabul but operated nationally

Supported by: Soviet Union (USSR)

History:

The PDPA was a pro-Soviet Communist party established in 1965. In 1973 the party helped Mohammed Daoud Khan, a former prime minister of Afghanistan, to overthrow his cousin, King Mohammed Zahir Shah, and establish the Republic of Afghanistan. In April 1978 the PDPA, helped by the Afghan army, seized power from Daoud in what is known as the Saur Revolution and PDPA leader Nur Muhammad Taraki become President of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Following their takeover, the PDPA enacted land reform and many other changes and arrested or assassinated former government officials and other political opponents. Many middle class Afghans were caught up in these arrests and the Communist secret police tortured and killed thousands of opponents.

The brutality of the Communists and the radical policies they pursued provoked resistance by anti-Communist [Mujahideen groups](#). The growing resistance, and Hafizullah Amin's provocative ruthlessness, led the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan on 27 December 1979 to support the Communist regime. The Soviets supported the more effective Babrak Karmal as new leader. The Soviets tried for 10 years to defeat the *Mujahideen*, which was supported by the US and Pakistan. The Soviet forces eventually withdrew in February 1989. The PDPA changed its name to the *Watan* Party and continued to rule Afghanistan until 1992 under the leadership of Dr Najibullah. The regime fell when it was defeated by the combined anti-Communist *Mujahideen* groups who took Kabul in April 1992. (See [Afghan Mujahideen Government \(1992-96\)](#)).

Related Groups: Two main factions: [PDPA \(Khalq faction\)](#); [PDPA \(Parcham faction\)](#)

Fought against: All anti-Soviet Groups ([see 1.2](#)) from 1978 to 1992.

Military Forces:

Afghan Army - estimates of Afghan Army vary – c.85,000

Soviet Army (1979-1989) – 155,000 Soviet troops were based in Afghanistan in this period

Local militias – up to 50,00

KHAD – the feared State Security Service (*Khadamat-e Aetla'at-e Dawlati* – often written KhAD) – controlled thousands of operatives, secret police and informers, as well as the National Guard and fighting units. From 1986 it was called WAD (Ministry of State Security (*Wizarat-i Amaniyyat-i Dawlati*))

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London (under PDPA, Taraki, Amin, Karmal, Najibullah, Saur Revolution, Khad, Soviet Invasion)
- Maley, William 2002, *The Afghanistan Wars*, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, p.22
- Amstutz, J.B. 1986, *Afghanistan: the first five years of Soviet occupation*, National Defense University Press, Washington, p.111.

PDPA (Khalq faction)

Years of Operation: See [main article on PDPA above](#)

Leaders: Nur Muhammad Taraki (led PDPA after 1978 coup until October 1979); Hafizullah Amin (President Sept-Dec 1979)

Supported by: mainly Pashtuns; mainly from outside Kabul

History of: When in power in 1978-79 the Khalq faction launched a purge against the Parcham faction. According to William Maley, after the fall of the PDPA, many Khalq Pashtuns fled to Pakistan and later joined the Taliban.

Related Groups: [PDPA](#), [Parcham faction](#)

PDPA (Parcham faction)

(means 'Banner' faction)

Years of Operation: See [main article on PDPA above](#)

Leaders: Babrak Karmal (President 1980-1986); Dr Mohammad Najibullah (President 1986-April 1992)

Supported by: mainly non-Pashtuns and Kabulis.

History of: The Parcham faction was purged in 1978-79 by the Khalq faction but gained power following the Russian invasion in December 1979.

Related Groups: [PDPA](#), [Khalq faction](#)

2 Anti-Soviet Groups (Mujahideen Tanzim)

In response to the radical policies of the Communists in 1978 and the Soviet invasion of 1979, resistance groups were organised both inside Afghanistan and in Pakistan. Most groups mainly fought for one aim: to remove an imperialistic foreign power and preserve Islam and traditional Afghan ways.¹ These groups and their fighters came to be known as *Mujahideen* or ‘fighters in a holy war (*Jihad*)’ (Afghan resistance fighters adopted this designation, as they were fighting a jihad against a non-Muslim (Communist/’infidel’) enemy). The term *tanzim* (organisation) is used by most Afghans for the Sunni Mujahideen groups that fought the PDPA regime and Soviets between 1978 and 1992. Western sources nowadays sometimes label them ‘jihadi groups’. The most famous *tanzim* were those of the [Peshawar Seven](#). Most groups were essentially aggregations of followers of one or another opposition leader, and the names of the leaders are generally more important than the political program.

This section lists the main anti-Soviet groups. As most groups were ethnically based, they are listed below by ethnicity. The main alliances between these groups are also listed.

| Pashtun-dominated groups | Tajik-dominated groups | Hazara and Shia-dominated groups |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Hezb-e Islami (HIG)</i> (Hekmatyar) | <i>Jamiat-i Islami</i> (Rabbani) | <i>Hezb-e Wahdat</i> |
| <i>Hezb-e Islami (HIK/HIA)</i> (Khaless) | <i>Shura-e Nazar</i> (Massoud) | <i>Hezb-e Wahdat</i> (Akbari) |
| <i>Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami</i> (Nabi) | Uzbek/Turkmen-dominated groups | <i>Shura-e-Itifaq</i> (Beheshti) |
| <i>Ittehad e Islami</i> (Sayyaf) | <i>Jombesh-e Melli Islami</i> (Dostum) | <i>Sazman-i Nasr</i> |
| <i>Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli</i> (Mojadeddi) | Alliances | <i>Sepah-i Pasdaran</i> |
| <i>Mahaz-e-Melli</i> (Gailani) | <i>Peshawar Seven</i> (Alliance of Seven) | <i>Harakat-i-Islami</i> |
| <i>Taliban Movement (till 2001)</i> (Omar) | <i>Afghan Mujahideen Government (1992-96)</i> | <i>Da'wat-e Islami</i> |
| | <i>Northern Alliance</i> | <i>Shu'la-e-jawed</i> |

Many of these groups continued to exist after the fall of the Communist government in 1992, and some still operate as political parties or insurgent groups today.

¹ Amstutz, J.B. 1986, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation*, National Defense University Press, Washington, p.89.

2.1 Pashtun-dominated groups

See map [‘Major insurgent groups during Soviet-Afghan War’](#)

Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar) (HIH/HIG)

Alternate Names: HIH, *Hezb-e Islami* (Gulbaddin), HIG, *Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan*, *Hizb-i Islami*

Years of Operation: 1975 (Split from Rabbani’s [Jamiat-i Islami](#)) to present

Leader: Gulbuddin HEKMATYAR (Hikmatyar)

Based in: Traditionally strongest in the Ghilzai Pashtun tribal region of south-east Afghanistan, but also in Ghazni, Uruzgan, Herat and Kandahar. Nowadays active in Kunar, Laghman, Paktia and Kapisa provinces and outskirts of Kabul.

Supported by: Mainly Ghilzai Pashtuns, as well as Tajiks and Hazaras in some areas.

History: This radical Islamist party has adopted an oppositionist stance since it was formed, and has fought against all governments from 1978 to the present. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was one of the founding members of *Hezb-e Islami* in 1977. Like the Muslim Brotherhood, *Hezb-e Islami* called for the establishment of a pure Islamic state and utilizes a highly disciplined organisational structure built around a small cadre of educated elites.

Hezb-e Islami fractured in 1979 and the two groups came to be known by the name of their leaders – *Hezb-e Islami* (Hekmatyar) (referred to as HIH or HIG more recently) and *Hezb-e Islami* (Khalis) ([HIK](#)).

During the anti-Soviet period, the *Hezb-e Islami* was one of three or four major military forces which opposed the Soviet and Communist forces. Based in Peshawar during the war, Hekmatyar had strong links with Pakistan’s powerful security agency, the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and received the lion’s share of weapons from the US and the Middle East.

During the Mujahideen period (1992-96) Hekmatyar played a disruptive role, provoking a complex and destructive power struggle between the Mujahideen groups. In 1992, as the Communist government of Dr. Najibullah in Kabul was toppled, Hekmatyar refused to join the Rabbani-led government as the prime minister and waged a bloody war to capture the capital city, destroying much of the city in the process. Efforts to persuade Hekmatyar to reconcile with the Kabul government brought no results. By the end of 1992, Hekmatyar reached a deal with Uzbek leader [Abdul Rashid Dostum](#) and the Hazara [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) to form a common front against the Kabul government.

After agreeing in 1993 to join the government, in January 1994 he restarted rocket attacks on the capital from his base in Chahar-Asyab district of Kabul province. Hekmatyar’s failure to succeed against Ahmad Shah Massoud’s forces controlling Kabul led to a decline of support for him from Pakistan. The Pakistani government is reported to have abandoned Hekmatyar in 1994 and shifted support to the Taliban. After the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996, many of

the *Hezb-e Islami* commanders fighting under Hekmatyar either joined the Taliban or fled to Pakistan. HIG's training camps in Pakistan were taken over by the Taliban. Hekmatyar escaped to Iran in 1997.

After the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Iran expelled Hekmatyar and he is reported to have either returned to Afghanistan or Peshawar, Pakistan in February 2002. He declared jihad against foreign forces in December 2002 and later voiced support for the Taliban.²

Related Groups: Member of the [Peshawar Seven alliance](#) (1979-92).

Splits in *Hezb-e Islami*:

In 1979 Muhammed Yunus Khales left to form [Hezb-e Islami \(Khales\) HIK/HIA](#) .

In 1988 Deputy leader Qazi Muhammad Amin Waqad left the party and headed an alliance of six small groups, *Da 'i-ye Ittehad-e Islami-ye Mujahedin-e Afghanistan*.

In 1994 Wahidullah Sabawun, the party's head of intelligence, left and later joined the [Northern Alliance](#). In 2006, he registered his own party, *Hezb-e Muttahed-e Islami- ye Afghanistan*, or 'United Islamic Party of Afghanistan'.³

In 2004 a group, led by Muhammad Khaled Faruqi, former *Hezb* provincial commander of Paktika, claimed it had broken with Hekmatyar and his politics and publicly announced its support for Karzai's government, agreeing to work 'in the framework of the constitution' and distancing itself from violence, terrorism and drug cultivation. Now called *Hezb-e Islami* (Afghanistan) (HIA)⁴ and led by Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, HIA has contested elections and Arghandiwal is currently the Minister of Economy.

Fought against:

1978-1992 - the [Soviet and Communist forces](#)

1992-1996 - [Mujahideen government](#) – mainly [Jamiat-i-Islami](#), but also against [Ittihad](#), and [Jombesh](#) (also allied to *Jombesh* at times)

1996 - [Taliban](#)

2002-present - Karzai government and international forces

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
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Hezb-e Islami (Khales) (HIK/HIA)

² See 'Hezb-e Islami (Hekmatyar) (post 2001)' in Sec.2 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

³ See Sec.1.1 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

⁴ See Sec.1.1 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Years of Operation: 1979 (Split from [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) to 1996 (when it was defeated by the Taliban)

Leaders: Mawlawi Muhammed Yunus KHALES (or KHALIS) (Leader – died 2006); Abdul Haq (Nangahar commander – killed 2001), Jalaluddin Haqqani (Paktia commander)

Based in: Strongest in southeast Afghanistan – particularly Nangahar and Paktia/Khost, but also had groups in Kabul, Kunar, Logar, Wardak and Kandahar provinces and in northern Afghanistan.

Supported by: Mainly Ghilzai Pashtuns. Its recruits came from graduates of government schools, religious schools of the Ghilzai, Khugiangi and Jadran tribes as well as the Kabul and Kandahar regions.

History: This is an Islamist party which split from [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) in 1979. While similar to Hekmatyar's party in political and ideological outlook, it has favoured cooperation with other *Mujahideen* parties. Led by an elderly traditional theologian Mawlawi Yunis Khales, it was militarily more effective than Hekmatyar's party, largely because of the skill of its two main field commanders, Abdul Haq (Nangahar commander) and Jalaluddin Haqqani (Paktia commander). After the fall of the Communists in 1992, Khales and Haq dominated the *Shura* (council) that ruled Nangahar until it fell to the Taliban in 1996.

Many members of HIK joined the Taliban from 1994-1996 – Mulla Mohammad Omar, who led the Taliban, was formerly a HIK member in Kandahar.

Since 2001 the party has been weakened by the Taliban killing of Abdul Haq and the defection of Jalaluddin Haqqani and many fighters to the [Haqqani Network](#). HIK/Khales split into pro- and anti-government factions. The former, effectively a major part of the Nangahar province administration, almost ceased to function as an organisation. It did not apply for registration as a party but continued to participate in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)'s Political Harmonizing Committee meetings in Jalalabad. The other faction, led by Mawlawi Anwar-ul- Haq Mujahed, the son of historical party leader Mawlawi Yunus Khales (d. July 2006), declared *jihad* against the Karzai government in 2003 and 2005.

Related Groups: [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) HIK split from this party in 1979 ; [Haqqani Network](#) – HIK commanders and fighters joined the Haqqani Network after 2001. Member of [Peshawar Seven alliance](#) (1985-92).

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1979-1992);

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
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Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami (Nabi) (HII)

Other Names: Islamic Revolutionary Movement

Years of Operation: Dated from the 1960s – dissolved after rise of the Taliban in 1995-6.

Leaders: Maulawi Mohammad NABI Mohammadi (died in 2001). General Yahyah Nawroz was one of its most famous commanders.

Based in: Central and parts of northern Afghanistan. Its strength was in Ghazni, Logar and the Helmand Valley. Also Faryab, Farah, Zabul, Badghis and Samangan.

Supported by: Pashtun tribes of the south. It drew recruits from private seminaries, liberal intellectuals, and the Andar, Ghilzai, Mahmud, Hotak, and Durrani tribes.

History: The party was moderate (traditional Islamist) and primarily Pashtun. In the early 1980s, it was the largest Mujahideen movement, but in the mid 1990s, most of its supporters defected to the Taliban. From 1992 it was one of the [Peshawar Seven](#) and joined the [government](#) along with the [Jamiat](#) and [Ittehad](#) but withdrew soon after when fighting began. In 1995 leader Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi joined the [Taliban](#) as did many of his students.

Since 2001 the party has almost vanished. After the death of its leader, Maulawi Muhammad Nabi Muhammad in 2001, his son Ahmad Nabi Muhammadi took over and gave it a slight change of name as *Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami wa Melli-ye Afghanistan*, or 'Islamic and National Revolution Movement of Afghanistan'.⁵ But by this time not much was left of the *tanzim* since, in the mid-1990s, its members had defected almost entirely to the Taliban.

Related Groups: Member of [Peshawar Seven alliance](#) (1979-92)

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992)

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
- Amstutz, J.B. 1986, *Afghanistan: the first five years of Soviet occupation*, National Defense University Press, Washington, p.111.
- Saikal, A. & Maley, W. 1991, *Regime Change in Afghanistan : Foreign Intervention and the Politics of Legitimacy*, pp.58-60
- 'Anti-Soviet Mujahideen' 2011, *GlobalSecurity.org*, 7 November <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/Mujahideen.htm>> Accessed 9 November 2012
- Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper

⁵ See Sec.1.1 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Ittehad-e Islami (Sayyaf)

Other Names: Islamic Union of Afghanistan (IUA), Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, *Etehad-e Islami*

Years of Operation: 1980s-1996

Leaders: Abdul-Rassul SAYYAF (overall leader and ideologue). Other leaders included Haji Shir Alam, Zalmay Tufan, Abdullah Shah, and Mullah Taj Mohammad.

Based in: Paghman in Kabul province.

Supported by: Pashtuns, funded by *Wahabis* in Saudi Arabia

History: The faction is militant fundamentalist and anti-Shia. It is heavily influenced by the radical Islamist beliefs of its leader Abdul-Rassul Sayyaf. The IUA was heavily financed by the *Wahabi* sect out of Saudi Arabia. Sayyaf was known for recruiting motivated Arab youths for *jihad* in his organisation. This party was smaller than other Mujahideen groups and played little part in the war against the Communist government. It was allied to *Jamiat* and part of the Afghan government of 1992-96 and became known for its part in the 1993 Afshar massacre of Hazaras in Kabul. Defeated by the Taliban in 1996, the party remained part of the Northern Alliance until the fall of the Taliban. Sayyaf has been active in the current Afghan government since 2002.⁶

Related Groups: Member of [Peshawar Seven alliance](#) (1979-92). Allied to *Jamiat* and part of the [Afghan government of 1992-96](#) as well as the post-Taliban government since 2001.

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992); [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1992-96) [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) (1993-1995), [Taliban](#) (1995-2001)

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
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- Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper

⁶ See 'Dawat-i Islami (Sayyaf)' in Sec.1.1 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan (Mojadeddi)

Other names: Afghanistan National Liberation Front (ANLF), *Jabha-yi Milli Beraye Najat-i-Afghanistan*

Years of Operation: 1978-1996

Leaders: Professor Sebqhatullah MOJADEDDI (Mujaddidi)

Based in: In southern and eastern Afghanistan. Its strength was in Kunar and Paktia provinces, but also had groups in Kandahar and Zabul.

Supported by: Both Pashtu and Dari speakers

History: The ANLF was a moderate party founded by Sebqhatullah Mojadeddi. Primarily secular, it drew from the tribes, the old social order and the Sufi orders of the South. It called for a traditional Islamic state with a parliamentary democracy. Ideologically close to [Nabi](#) and [Gailani](#). It was said to be the weakest of the seven *tanzim* in the [Peshawar Seven alliance](#).

The Mojadeddi family assisted in the overthrow of the King in 1974, but were targeted by the Communists after the 1978 coup. The party fought against the Soviet/government forces from 1980. In 1992, Mojadeddi served as interim president for two months, then supported Hekmatyar in the civil war against [Rabbani](#). In 1996 he recognised the Taliban government.

The party has participated in the post 2001 elections largely as a ‘one-man show’ (according to Thomas Ruttig below).

Related Groups: Member of [Peshawar Seven alliance](#). Ideologically close to [Nabi](#) and [Gailani](#). Fought with [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) against Mujahideen government from 1992-96.

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992); [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1992-96)

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
- Amstutz, J.B. 1986, *Afghanistan: the first five years of Soviet occupation*, National Defense University Press, Washington, p.111.
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- Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan’s Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper <http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf> Accessed 11 December 2012

Mahaz-e-Melli (Gailani)

Other Names: National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA); *Mahaz-i-Milli-yi-Afghanistan*

Years of Operation: 1979 – present.

Leader: Pir Sayed Ahmad GAILANI (head of Qadira Sufi fraternity)

Based in: Strongest in south and southwest, especially in Paktia, Paktika, Ghazni and Kandahar provinces.

Supported by: primarily Pashtuns. A number of tribal leaders supported the party. The primary power base came from the Zadran, Mangal, Jaji, Ahmadzai, Tareen, Kochi, and Sulemankhel tribes.

History: This party is described as moderate, liberal, nationalist, royalist and Islamic. It attracted a number of former officers from the Afghan Army and moderate technocrats, and recruited from the landed aristocracy, the tribes and the Sufi brotherhood. Royalists also joined the party. The party fought against the Russians and the Communists and joined the 1992 government, only to leave after the war with Hekmatyar broke out. Little was heard of this party between 1994 and the fall of the Taliban government in 2001.

NIFA, led by Gailani and his sons, has participated in the post-2001 governments and general elections. NIFA, in alliance with *Afghan Millat* (led by the Pir's son-in-law, Finance Minister Ahady), managed to successfully build a pro-Karzai coalition amongst the Pashtuns including radical Islamists from *Dawat-e Islami* and the legalised domestic wing of *Hezb-e Islami*. Meanwhile, NIFA tries to present a moderate Islamic front, somewhat different from the other *tanzim*. (see [post-2001 information](#))

Related Groups: Member of [Peshawar Seven alliance](#).

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992)

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
- Amstutz, J.B. 1986, *Afghanistan: the first five years of Soviet occupation*, National Defense University Press, Washington, p.111.
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- 'Anti-Soviet Mujahideen' 2011, *GlobalSecurity.org*, 7 November <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/Mujahideen.htm>> Accessed 9 November 2012
- Ruttig, Thomas 2006, *Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and where they come from (1902-2006)*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation paper <http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9674_2.pdf> Accessed 11 December 2012

Taliban Movement (till 2001) (Omar)

Other Names: Taleban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (TIMA)

Years of Operation: 1994-present

Leaders: Mullah Mohammad OMAR (leader)

Based in: Initially in Kandahar, today in Quetta in Pakistan. Strength is in the Pashtun areas of south and southeastern Afghanistan (as well as the Pashtun areas of Pakistan) though it is present in most Afghan provinces.

Supported by: Religious students from *madrassas* (Islamic schools) in Pakistan (*talib* means student – *taliban* means students); Pashtuns, Pakistani ISI (government intelligence agency), Saudi Arabia.

History: The puritanical Islamist Taliban movement emerged in Afghanistan in 1994 in response to the violent power struggle and breakdown in law and order during the [Mujahideen Government period](#) (1992-96). Supported by Pakistan, they waged a ruthlessly effective military campaign against the Mujahideen groups, taking Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul in 1994, Ghazni and Herat in 1995 and Jalalabad and Kabul in 1996. The Taliban set up a strict Islamic government in Kandahar from where they ruled the majority of the country from 1996 to 2001. Their victory led to the draconian implementation of *sharia* (Islamic Law) and the transformation of Afghanistan into a safe haven for international terrorist organisations such as *Al-Qaeda*.⁷

The original organisation can be best described as a reactionary security force inspired by the breakdown in social order and stability, the main objectives of which were to disarm unruly commanders and their predatory militias and to impose order based on Islamic doctrine. The Taliban advocated an ‘Islamic Revolution’, proclaiming that the unity of Afghanistan should be re-established in the framework of *Sharia* (Islamic law) and without the Mujahideen.

Though there was a loose ‘proto-Taliban’ movement of religious students during the anti-Soviet war, the Taliban as an effective military/political force was formed in September 1994. It was formed in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar by a group of graduates of Pakistani Islamic colleges (*madrassas*). The members of the Taliban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (TIMA) were originally mostly Pashtuns from Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan and were led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, who had fought against the Soviets with [Hezb-e Islami \(Khales\)](#).

The core of the original Taliban movement originated from a clerical network of Islamic conservatives, made up of *madrassa*-educated Pashtun men from poor or lower class backgrounds. Most of the original Taliban leadership came from the same three southern provinces—Kandahar, Uruzgan and Helmand—and nearly all of them fought under one of the two main clerical resistance parties during the war against the Soviets: [Hezb-e Islami](#)

⁷ See ‘*Al-Qaeda*’ in Sec.2 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

([Khales](#)) and Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi's [Harakat-I Ineqelab-ye Islami](#). The Taliban fighting ranks were mostly filled with former veterans of the war against Soviet forces.

Fighting against the [Northern Alliance](#) continued in northern Afghanistan from 1996-2001 with the Taliban, assisted by *Al-Qaeda*, conquering progressively more of the country. By September 2001, all of Afghanistan except for the extreme northeast was under Taliban control (see [maps](#) at end). However, when the US began to support the Northern Alliance (following the Al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre in New York) in October 2001, the Taliban were quickly defeated militarily and driven from the country into Pakistan in December 2001. After several years the organisation regrouped and began a new insurgency.⁸

The Taliban went through considerable changes in how they presented themselves to Afghans and the world: from segmented networks within a larger guerrilla movement into a movement of their own into a government and back into an insurgent movement with elements of a shadow government. This development can be divided into four phases (according to Ruttig):

(1) 1979–1994: the ‘proto---Taliban phase’. ‘Taliban fronts’ linked to different [Mujahideen tanzim](#) emerged, but had not yet formed an integrated movement.

(2) 1994–1996: the ‘popular movement phase’. This phase went from its emergence as an integrated movement to the capture of Kabul in 1996, when major parts of the Afghan population pinned their hopes on the movement’s ability to end the factional war created by the Mujahideen (before the capture of Kabul, the Taliban also dropped initial pro--- monarchist tendencies).

(3) 1996–2001: the ‘state phase’. During this phase, its Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) ruled over most of Afghanistan’s territory.

(4) from 2001: the ‘resurgent guerrilla phase’. This phase saw the return and consolidation of the Taliban as an organised armed movement. (For more information on this period, see Sec.2 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*). Ruttig identifies three sub---phases:

- the ‘post-9/11 reprieve’ in 2002/03, with the Taliban leadership in hiding, watching events in Afghanistan and contemplating a possible political inclusion, rebuffed by the US ‘no talks with terrorists’ policy, followed by its first recruitments in Afghanistan;
- the ‘resurgence phase’ from 2003 to 2005/06, with the gradual re-emergence of the Taliban in most areas of Afghanistan and
- the ‘consolidation phase’ from 2005/06 onwards, with a consolidated presence all over Afghanistan and parallel administrative structures.⁹

Related Groups: Taliban (Quetta Shura) – post-2001; *Al-Qaeda*¹⁰

⁸ See ‘Taliban – post-2001’ in Sec.2 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

⁹ Ruttig, Thomas 2010, *How Tribal Are the Taleban?*, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 18 June, p.19 <<http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/20100624TR-HowTribalAretheTaleban-FINAL.pdf>>

¹⁰ See ‘Taliban – post-2001’ and ‘Al-Qaeda’ in Sec.2 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Fought against: Small Pashtuns warlords (1994-5), [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1994-96), [Afghan Mujahideen Government](#) (1994-96); [Northern Alliance](#) (1996-2001); Karzai government and international forces (2001-present).

Sources:

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- Ruttig, Thomas 2010, *How Tribal Are the Taleban?*, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 18 June <<http://aan-afghanistan.com/uploads/20100624TR-HowTribalAretheTaleban-FINAL.pdf>>

2.2. Tajik-dominated groups

Jamiat-i Islami (Rabbani)

Other Names: Islamic Society of Afghanistan, JIA, *Jam'iat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan*

Years of Operation: 1973 to present

Leaders: Burhanud-din RABBANI (founder and leader until assassinated in September 2011). His most famous commanders were Ahmed Shah Masood in the Panjshir valley (assassinated September 2001) and Ismail Khan in Herat Province.

Based in: Northern Afghanistan (the Panshir Valley and northeastern Afghanistan were never conquered by the Soviets or the Taliban). It also had members throughout Afghanistan and has been particularly strong in Herat, Logar, Samangan, Faryab, Farah and Nimroz provinces.

Supported by: Mainly ethnic Tajiks, but has Uzbeks and Pashtun in its ranks. Recruits came from the religious and secular government schools and northern Sunni religious schools and northern Sufi brotherhoods.

History: The *Jamiat* was founded in 1971 and led for most of its history by Burhanud-din Rabbani, a former professor of theology at Kabul University. It is Islamist or ‘moderate fundamentalist’¹¹ and promotes the founding of an Islamic state. It was one of the earliest, largest, best-organised, longest-lasting and most effective Mujahideen parties. The party is largely non-Pashtun and most members are Dari speakers. It is strongest in northern and northwestern Afghanistan, but also operated in the south. *Jamiat-i-Islami* in general did not receive significant US aid during the war with the Soviets, especially when compared to commanders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

¹¹ ‘Anti-Soviet Mujahideen’ 2011, *GlobalSecurity.org*, 7 November <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/Mujahideen.htm>>

The *Jamiat* fought effectively against the Soviets and Communists from 1978-1992, formed the largest party in the [1992-1996 Government](#) and resisted the Taliban as the major party in the [Northern Alliance](#) from 1996 to 2001. In late 2001, assisted by US forces, the Northern Alliance forces drove the Taliban from Afghanistan, enabling a new government to be established. Since 2001, *Jamiat* has participated in the government and its members have held many key positions and ministries.¹²

The party has consistently been opposed by [Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami](#) who has attacked *Jamiat* forces since the 1980s, except during the Taliban period (1996-2001).

Related Groups: Member of [Peshawar Seven alliance](#) (1979-92), from 1992-1996 was allied to [Ittehad](#). After 1996 was leader of the [Northern Alliance](#). The [Shura-e Nazar](#) was a military organisation which overlapped with *Jamiat*.

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992); [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1980s to 1996; and after 2001); from 1993-1996 fought against [Wahdat](#), [Jombesh](#) and the [Taliban](#), and from 1996-2001 against the [Taliban](#).

Sources:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
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Shura-e Nazar (Massoud)

Other Names: Supervisory Council of the North (SCN), *Shoora-i Nazar*, *Shura-i Nazar* or *Shura-yi-Nazar-i Shamali*

Years of Operation: 1984-2001

Leaders: Ahmad Shah MASSOUD (leader, chief commander); Other commanders were Mohammad Qasim Fahim (the head of Amniat-e Melli); Baba Jan; Anwar Dangar; Gadda Mohammad; Baba Jalander; Haji Almas; Gul Haider, and Bismillah Khan. Abdullah Abdullah and Yunis Qanooni, who became influential in the post-2001 government, were also members.

Based in: Northern Afghanistan, originally in the Panjshir Valley but later extending over many northern provinces

¹² For information on the party since 2001, see 'Jamiat-e Islami Afghanistan (post-2001)' in Sec.1.1 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Supported by: Tajiks from the North

History: The *Shura-e-Nazar* (SCN) was a largely-Tajik military-political organisation that operated in northern Afghanistan between 1984 and 2001. It was a separate organisation within [Jamiat](#) and the [Northern Alliance](#). [Rabbani](#)'s military commander Ahmad Shah Massoud built this sophisticated military-political organisation, which coordinated 130 *Jamiat*-affiliated commanders in about five provinces and also created region-wide forces. The SCN oversaw a regional administration from its base in Taloqan, centre of Takhar province, which Commander Massoud captured after the Soviet troops withdrew in mid-1988. The SCN included members of different political parties, ethnic groups and militias. Massoud intended to create a force which could be transformed into a unified Islamic Afghan army to stabilize and rebuild the country after a Soviet withdrawal. Beside being a military alliance, the *Shura-e Nazar* also was a political alliance which consequently organised political, health and educational structures. In the regions under his control, Massoud created an autonomous democratically structured administration. This was different from how the other commanders used to control their territory. It enabled Massoud to concentrate on the unification of all resistance forces, while the administrative system allowed the inhabitants of the different regions complete self-determination.

Ahmad Shah Massoud was assassinated in a suicide attack on 9 September 2001, two days before the World Trade Centre attacks. After Massoud's assassination, *Jamiat* and *Shura-e Nazar* forces came under the control of his senior commanders and advisors, including Mohammad Qasim Fahim (Minister of Defense after 2001), Yunis Qanooni (later a presidential candidate and a member of President Karzai's cabinet until July 2004), and Dr. Abdullah (the Foreign Minister after 2001). After the Taliban were removed from power by Northern Alliance ground forces and NATO special forces in late 2001, the SCN which more or less had already been replaced by the United Front, dissolved as an organization.

Related Groups: Allied to [Jamiat](#) and part of the [Afghan government of 1992-96](#) and the [Northern Alliance](#) as well as the post-Taliban government since 2001.

Fought against: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992); [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1992-96 and clashes in the 1980s) [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) (1993-1995), [Taliban](#) (1995-2001)

Source:

- Adamec, Ludwig 2011, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 4th Ed., Scarecrow Press, London
- Gutman, Roy 2008, *How We Missed the Story: Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan*, US Institute of Peace Press, pp.46,47 <[Google Books](#)>
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2.3 Uzbek/Turkmen-dominated groups

Jombesh-e Melli Islami (Dostum)

Other Names: National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, *Jumbesh-I Melli*, *Jombesh-e Melli Islami-ye Afghanistan*, *Jumbesh-i Milliyi Islami*

Years of Operation: 1992-present

Leader: General Abdul Rashid DOSTUM (An Uzbek from Jowzjan Province, Dostum worked for an oil firm and went to the Soviet Union for training in 1980. He then joined the Ministry of State Security under the [Communists](#) and became commander of Unit 374 in Jowzjan.)

Based in: Northern Afghanistan particularly Jowzjan, Faryab, and Sar-i Pul provinces but also Balkh and Mazar-i Sharif

Supported by: Uzbeks and Turkomans

History: While *Jombesh* is a military-political organisation like the Islamist *tanzim*, it has to be treated separately for its different background. Initially a pro-Communist government militia, *Jombesh* allied itself with the Northern Alliance in 1992. Only then was *Jombesh* officially established as a party. During the 1980s, General Dostum commanded the Jowzjani ‘Dostum Militia’ comprising some 20,000 regular and militia soldiers, most of them Uzbek, which was entrusted with guarding Jowzjan, Faryab, and Sar-i Pul provinces for the Kabul Communist government. He was awarded the distinction of ‘Hero of the Republic of Afghanistan’ and was a member of the central council of the Communist Party. In 1992, he and a number of generals turned against President Najibullah and assisted the Mujahideen in the conquest of Kabul.

Dostum’s followers then formed a party, *Jombesh*, which controlled most of Balkh, Faryab, Jowzjan, and Samangan provinces until the Taliban conquest of the area. When President Burhanuddin Rabbani was unwilling to legitimise the position of Dostum by giving him a cabinet post, Dostum joined forces with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. In May 1996, Dostum rejoined the [Northern Alliance](#) against the Taliban, but was ousted by his Uzbek rival General Abdul Malik who allied *Jombesh* for a time with the Taliban. When Malik changed sides again and attacked the Taliban in Mazar-i Sharif, Dostum returned, but was ousted by the Taliban in 1998 and left the country.

Dostum returned to Afghanistan in 2001 and supported the American air attacks on Taliban and *Al-Qaeda* forces (in exchange for payment of \$250,000 a month). He was able to regain control of portions of north-central Afghanistan. He served as deputy minister of defense in the Interim Government, a position he lost in the Transitional Government of Hamid Karzai. On 1 March 2005, Dostum was appointed chief of staff, but in February 2008 he was suspended from his position as a result of the Akbar Bai kidnapping. Dostum captured Akbar Bai and some of his followers, shooting one of his bodyguards, but when police surrounded his compound in Kabul he was forced to release them. He was suspended from his position and was forced to seek asylum in Turkey. President Hamid Karzai permitted Dostum to return on the eve of the Afghan presidential election of 2009.¹³

¹³ For recent information on the party, see entry on *Jombesh-e Melli Islami* (Dostum) in in Sec.1.1 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Allies: [Communists/Soviets](#) (1980s-1992); [Jamiat](#) (1992-3 and 1996-2001); [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) and [Wahdat](#) (1994-6); [Northern Alliance](#) (1996-2001)

Fought against: Mujahideen groups in northern Afghanistan (1980s to 1992); [Communists](#) (1992); [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1980s to 1996; and after 2001); from 1993-1996 fought against [Wahdat](#), [Jombesh](#) and the [Taliban](#), and from 1996-2001 against the [Taliban](#).

Sources:

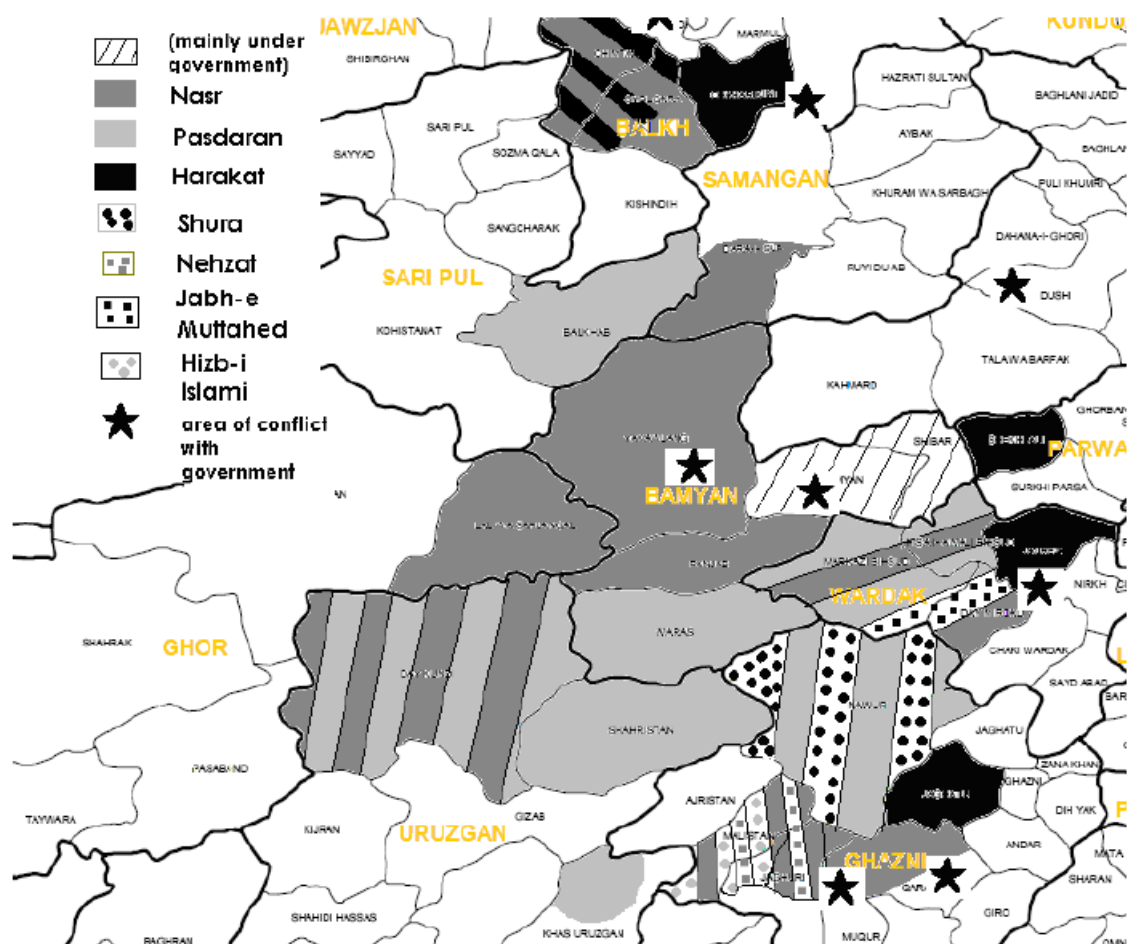
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2.4 Hazara and Shia-dominated groups

Background to Hazara Parties and Hazara Civil War of 1980s

In 1979 there were spontaneous uprisings against the Communist government throughout the Hazarajat (the Hazara populated region of Central Afghanistan) and from 1979 to the end of the Communist regime, the Hazarajat enjoyed virtual independence. At first an elected *shura* (council) of traditional leaders, headed by Sayyid Ali Beheshti, took over all the functions of the prewar Afghan government. Beheshti levied taxes, recruited men into his Mujahideen forces, and set up his own bureaucratic establishment. But his authority was soon challenged by new Islamist parties supported by Iran, and the Hazarajat descended into civil war as a number of groups fought to establish a government. Pro-Iran Islamist groups called *Nasr*, *Nahzat*, *Pasdaran* and *Jabhe Muttahed* helped each other in the fight against *Shura*, *Harakat* and later *Hezb-e Islami*. Following the defeat of *Harakat* in Qarabagh in Ghazni in 1985 at the hand of *Nasr*, the Khomeinist organisations united to contest *Hezb-e Islami*'s supremacy in the districts of Jaghori and Malistan. The infighting continued between *Nasr*, *Nahzat* and *Hezb-e Islami* until the late 1980s. This map shows the complexity of the situation in the 1980s:

Factional control over Hazarajat by the late 1980s



Map Source: Ibrahim, Niamatullah 2009, *At the Sources of Factionalism and Civil War in Hazarajat*, Crisis States Research Centre, January, p.15

Sources for information on Hazara and Shia-dominated groups:

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Hezb-e Wahdat

Other Names: *Hezb-e Wahdat* (Khalili), *Hizb-i Wahdat* , Unity Party

Years of Operation: 1989-present now called the [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Khalili\)](#)

The following offshoot parties have been formed by Hezb-e Wahdat leaders:

1994 – [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Akbari\)](#) – now *Hezb-e Wahdat Milli Islami Afghanistan*.¹⁴

2004 – *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan* (Mohaqqeq).¹⁵

2005 – *Hezb-e Wahdat-e Islami-ye Millat-e Afghanistan* (Erfani)¹⁶

Leaders: Abdul Ali MAZARI (first leader – killed by Taliban in 1995 – Nasr), Abdol Karim KHALILI (current leader and vice-President of Afghanistan – Nasr), Haji Mohammed MOHAQQEQ (Hazara leader in Northern Afghanistan/Mazar-i-Sharif – ran in recent presidential elections – Nasr); ‘Ustad’ Mohammed Akbari (Sepah leader – split from Wahdat in 1994-5)

Based in: Hazarajat, northern Afghanistan, Kabul

Supported by: Hazaras

History: *Hezb-e Wahdat*, or the ‘Unity Party’, was a coalition of Shiite resistance movements which recruited from the ethnic group of Shia Hazaras. The party formed in July 1989 by amalgamating many of the Hazara political parties which had been in conflict throughout the [Hazarajat](#) since 1978 (see [Background to Hazara Parties and Hazara Civil War of 1980s](#)). After the Soviet troops had withdrawn from Afghanistan in February 1989, Iran applied pressure to the Hazara parties to form *Hezb-e Wahdat* which would provide a Shia counterweight to the [Sunni Mujahideen parties](#) in Afghanistan. *Hezb-e Wahdat* was composed of the following eight groups:

- [Sazman-i-Nasr](#)/Organisation of Victory (radical)
- [Sepah-i Pasdaran](#) (*Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami*)/Guards of the Islamic Holy War
- [Daawat-i-Ittehad-i-Islami](#)
- [Nazhat-i-Islami](#)
- [Shura-i-Ittefaq](#)/Council of the Union (ultraconservative)
- *Jabha-i-Mutahed-i-Inqelabi-i-Islami*
- *Sazman-i-Mujahidin-i-Mustazafin/Organisation of Warriors of the Dispossessed*
- *Sazman-i-Nayro-i-Islami*

Of the eight movements which combined to produce *Hezb-e Wahdat*, [Sazman-i-Nasr](#) was the largest and most influential. Almost all *Hezb-e Wahdat*’s political and military leaders had previously belonged to *Sazman-i-Nasr*: Abdul Ali Mazari, Abdol Karim Khalili and Haji Mohammed Mohaqeq were some of these prominent members. ‘Ustad’ Mohammed Akbari , the founder of [Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami](#), was another prominent member of Hezb-e Wahdat. In addition, many ethnic Hazaras from the political Shiite movements [Harakat-i-Islami](#) (led by Ayatollah Asef Mohseni) and *Hezbollah* joined Hezb-e Wahdat in 1989. [Harakat-i-Islami](#)

¹⁴ See Sec.1.2 of RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013.

¹⁵ See Sec.1.2 of RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013.

¹⁶ See Sec.1.2 of RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013.

and *Hezbollah* never formed part of *Hezb-e Wahdat*. They continued to operate independently of it.

Hezb-e Wahdat has its home base in the town of Bamiyan in Bamiyan province. On 18 July 1989 a party agreement entitled *Meesaq-i-Wahdat* (Unity Convention) and consisting of twenty articles was concluded in Bamiyan. The new party emphasised the Hazara identity above Islamic solidarity. Furthermore, the party's main aim was to forge a unity between all warring Shiite troops and install an Islamic government based on the rules of the *Koran* and the *Sunna*. At a conference in 1991, Mazari was elected secretary-general of the party. Mohaqeq has been the *Hezb-e Wahdat*'s supreme military commander since 1992, when *Hezb-e Wahdat* started to take part in the Afghan civil war as one of the warring parties.

Though originally, part of the [1992 post-Communist government](#), fighting with Sayyaf's anti-Shia [Ittihad](#) and later [Jamiat](#) caused *Wahdat* to withdraw in December 1992 and forge an alliance with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's [Hezb-e Islami](#). *Wahdat* controlled parts of west Kabul as well as parts of Kabul University and all of the Kabul Polytechnic compound. In February 1993, *Ittehad-i-Islami*, supported by *Jamiat*, carried out a large-scale attack on the Afshar district in West Kabul, killing hundreds of Hazaras. The summer of 1994 saw Shiite groups opposing one another for the first time. *Hezb-e Wahdat* and [Harakat-i-Islami](#) fought for control of the districts and suburbs in the south west of Kabul. In that period the Taliban began their advance on Kabul from the south of Afghanistan.

In September 1994 *Hezb-e Wahdat* split into two rival factions. Akbari sided with Rabbani and entered into an alliance with the *Jamiat-i-Islami* and the *Harakat-i-Islami*. Mazari's faction, on the other hand, formed an alliance with the *Hezb-e Islami*, whereupon there were two *Hezb-e Wahdat* parties active in Afghanistan. [Akbari's faction](#) was numerically insignificant and had little influence in the civil war. Mazari's group remained the principal *Hezb-e Wahdat* faction in the areas where the Hazaras lived. However, the coalition to which Akbari belonged in the 1994-1995 period engaged in bitter fighting with Mazari's *Hezb-e Wahdat* faction. This fighting claimed many civilian casualties.

When Hekmatyar's forces were driven from Kabul in February 1995, *Jamiat* captured the territory of the weakened *Wahdat*, and Mazari made an alliance with the [Taliban](#). In accordance with the above agreement, the Taliban troops entered West Kabul at the beginning of March 1995. Contrary to the agreement, however, the Taliban began to disarm the *Hezb-e Wahdat* troops. In the end, the Taliban proved unable to fight the *Jamiat-i-Islami* troops in Kabul. In mid-March 1995 West Kabul fell to Rabbani's government troops and *Hezb-e Wahdat* was driven from Kabul, with Mazari and a number of his closest confidants being abducted by Taliban troops. They met their deaths under suspicious circumstances when they were being transported by helicopter to Kandahar. The party chose Khalili as Mazari's successor.

After the Taliban succeeded in taking Kabul in September 1996, Khalili formed an alliance with General Dostum and Commander Massoud on 10 October 1996 to resist the Taliban. In 1997 this alliance became the [Northern Alliance](#). After the capture of Kabul by the Taliban in 1996, *Hezb-e Wahdat* no longer had an official representation in Kabul. Most of its members had already left the city. After Mazar-i-Sharif was conquered by the Taliban in August 1998, Mohaqeq, the military commander, fled to the countryside in the province of Balkh. Akbari's largely uninfluential [Hezb-e Wahdat faction](#) severed its links with the *Jamiat-i-Islami* and

Harakat-i-Islami in August 1998 following the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif. Akbari sought refuge initially in Bamiyan, before joining the Taliban in November 1998. His Hazara militia was incorporated in the Taliban and was responsible for maintaining order in the Hazarajat.

On 13 September 1998 Bamiyan, the home base of Khalili's *Hezb-e Wahdat*, fell to the Taliban. *Hezb-e Wahdat* fighters recaptured the city on 21 April 1999, but the Taliban succeeded in retaking Bamiyan on 9 May 1999 and the areas in Afghanistan in which the Hazaras have traditionally lived were almost entirely in the hands of the Taliban. *Hezb-e Wahdat* (Khalili) held on to the north of the province of Uruzgan (Day Kundi), and small parts of Balkh, Jowzjan, Samanghan and Ghor. Khalili allegedly fled to Iran in May 1999, and real power within *Hezb-e Wahdat* fell to Mohaqeq and his personal assistant, Irfani.

After the defeat of the Taliban by the Northern Alliance and US forces in November 2001, *Hezb-e Wahdat* became part of the government and Khalili became vice-President of Afghanistan.¹⁷

Related Groups:

Major constituent parties: [Sazman-i-Nasr](#); [Sepah-i Pasdaran](#); [Daawat-i-Ittehad-i-Islami](#); [Nazhat-i-Islami](#)

Allies 1993-96 [Hezb-e Islami](#), [Jombesh](#), [Taliban](#)

Allies 1996-2001 [Northern Alliance](#) ([Jamiat](#); [Jombesh](#))

Fought against:

1993-96: [Jamiat](#), [Ittihad](#)

1996-2001: [Taliban](#)

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Hezb-e Wahdat (Akbari)

Other Names: *Hizb-i Wahdat*

Years of Operation: 1994-present

Leaders: Ustad Mohammed AKBARI

Based in: Hazarajat (strongest in Waras district of Bamyān)

Supported by: Some Hazaras, mainly ex-members of [Sepah-i Pasdaran](#)

History: In 1994 [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) split into two rival factions. Mazari's (*Nasr*) faction had left the [Jamiat-i-Islami](#)-led government in late 1992 and formed an alliance with the [Hezb-e Islami](#) against the Jamiat-led government. In September 1994 Mohammed Akbari (the leader of the [Sepah-i Pasdaran](#) group which joined *Hezb-e Wahdat* in 1989) and some supporters entered into an alliance with the Jamiat and the [Harakat-i-Islami](#), whereupon there were two *Hezb-e Wahdat* parties active in Afghanistan. Akbari's faction was numerically insignificant and had little influence in the civil war. Akbari's faction severed its links with the Jamiat and

¹⁷ See Sec.1.2 'Hazara-Shia parties since 2001' in *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Harakat in August 1998 following the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif. Akbari sought refuge initially in Bamiyan, before joining the Taliban in November 1998. His Hazara militia was incorporated in the [Taliban](#) and was responsible for maintaining order in Hazarajat. After 2001, Akbari's faction gained some government positions but split into two factions.¹⁸

As an ethnic Qizilbash Akbari has always stressed Shiite Islamism against the growing Hazara nationalism in the party and consistently sought external alliances to bolster his relatively weak base of support within *Wahdat*.

Related Groups: [Sepah-i Pasdaran](#) (original faction); [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) (member 1989-94), *Hezb-e Wahdat Milli Islami Afghanistan* (Akbari) (successor party)¹⁹

Fought against: [Hezb-e Islami](#); [Hezb-e Wahdat](#); [Taliban](#) (1994-96)

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)

Other Names: *Shura-i Inqilab-i Ittifaq-i Islami* (Council of the Union), *Shuray-e Ittefaq-e Enqelab-e Islami Afghanistan* (Unity Council of the Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan); *Shora-ye Enqelab*, *Shura-yi Inqilab*, *Shura-e-Itifaq*

Years of Operation: 1979-1989

Leaders: Sayed Ali BEHISHTI, Sayyids increasingly gained control of the organisation

Based in: Hazarajat, chiefly Bamiyan, Ghazni, Wardak and Balkh.

Supported by: Hazaras; traditional leaders (elders and mirs), sayyeds

History: In 1979 there were spontaneous uprisings against the Communist government throughout the Hazarajat (the Hazara populated region of Central Afghanistan) and from 1979 to the end of the Communist regime, the Hazarajat enjoyed virtual independence. The *Shura-e-Itifaq* was formed by a council of traditional leaders: [sayyeds](#), tribal chiefs, and a number of nationally prominent Hazaras, including some former parliamentary representatives. The *Shura*, headed by Sayyid Ali Beheshti, took over all the functions of the pre-war Afghan government. Beheshti levied taxes, recruited men into his Mujahideen forces, and set up his own bureaucratic establishment.

Within a short time, the leadership of *Shura-e-Itifaq* was taken over by the *sayyed* contingent. Ayatullah Behishti was elected president of the council and his deputy (Ayatullah Husayn Nasiri) and his chief military commander were also *sayyeds*. Harpviken says that the major reason for the dominance of the *sayyeds* was the general resentment against the [mirs and](#)

¹⁸ see '*Hezb-e Wahdat Milli Islami Afghanistan* (Akbari)' and '*Hezb-e Eqtedar-e Melli* (Sayed Ali Kazemi)' in Sec.1.2 'Hazara-Shia parties since 2001' of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

¹⁹ See Sec.1.2 of *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

[*maliks*](#) (the local notables appointed to represent their communities to government offices); after the Communist state ceased to contest the Hazarajat the *mirs* and *maliks* lost their leverage, which was based on privileged access to the government. At the same time the *sayyeds* had the advantage of established informal ties among themselves—through marriage, religious contacts and the like—as well as their long established eminence and influence as religious figures and (reputedly) healers and diviners among the Hazaras.²⁰

In the early 1980s the *Shura* ruled over the entire Hazarajat by establishing its own administrative apparatus, recruiting conscripts, collecting taxes, issuing identification cards and passports, and establishing offices in Quetta, Pakistan and Tehran, Iran, in an attempt to solicit foreign aid. Hazarajat was divided into 36 civilian and eight military administrative units where civilian and military units were independent of each other. One-year compulsory military service was enforced throughout the region and those unable to serve due to health or family reasons were obliged to pay a fine. In addition to regular armed forces, a volunteer militia unit was formed and Hazaras were obliged to support it by paying 20 per cent of their harvest yield. The *Shura*'s influence on the resistance movement began to decline as new political organisations espousing radical ideologies arose in the Hazarajat. Ideological differences coupled with clashes of personality among their leadership effectively prevented the formation of a single party, which could articulate a consistent political line to guide the Hazaras armed struggle. In 1983 [*Sazman-e-Nasr*](#) and [*Sepah-e-Pasdaran*](#) came into existence and succeeded in driving Sayed Ali Behishi out of his base in Waras, thereby consolidating their positions within the Hazarajat by 1984. The remnants of the *Shura* joined the [*Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)*](#) in 1989.

Related Groups: joined [*Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)*](#) in 1989

Fought against: Islamist Hazara parties in 1980s: [*Nasr*](#), [*Pasdaran*](#), [*Nahzat*](#) etc

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Sazman-i Nasr

Other Names: *Nasr* Party/Organisation, Victory Organisation

Years of Operation: 1983-89, then as leading faction of [*Hezb-e Wahdat*](#).

Leaders: Shaikh Mir Husain SADEQI (first leader), later provided the following leaders for *Hezb-e Wahdat* – Abdul Ali Mazari, Abdol Karim Khalili, Haji Mohammed Mohaqeq

Based in: Hazarajat, northern Afghanistan, Kabul.
Especially Ghor, Bamiyan, Wardak, Parwan, Ghazni, Balkh, and Kabul provinces.

Supported by: Hazaras

History: The *Nasr* Party is one of a number of pro-Iran Hazara parties in the 1980s which merged to form the [*Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)*](#) in 1989. The party was founded by Shaikh

²⁰ Harpviken, Kristian Berg; 1996, *Political mobilization among the Hazara of Afghanistan: 1978-1992*, University of Oslo, pp.64,77

Mir Husain Sadeqi after the Saur Revolt. It was radical Islamist in outlook, recruited its followers from Hazaras living in Iran and obtained some material support from Iran. It eventually succeeded in becoming a major force in the Hazarajat and allied with Nahzat, Pasdaran and Jabhe Muttahed succeeded in expelling the traditionalist [Shura](#) (headed by Sayyid Ali Beheshti) from much of the area. It fought against the *Shura*, [Harakat](#) and later [Hezb-e Islami](#) in the 1980s, and later against [Nahzat](#) in the early 1990s. After the formation of [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) in 1989, *Nasr* became the dominant faction and provided all the main leaders for the party: Mazari, Khalili, Mohaqeq and Irfani were all from *Nasr*.

Following were members of the Central Council of the *Sazman-i-Nasr*:

- Mir Hussain Sadiqi. Parwan Province
- Abdul Ali Mazari Balkh Province.
- Azizullah Shafaq Wardak Province
- Syed Hussaini Samangan Province
- Mohammad Karim Khalili. Parwan Province.
- Qurban Ali Urfani Bamyān Province
- Yusuf Waezi. Uruzgan (now Dai Kundi) Province.
- Syed Abbas Hakimi. Ghazni province.
- Mohanunad Nateqi. Bamyān Province.

Related Groups: joined [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#) in 1989

Fought against: [Shura-e-Itifaq \(Beheshti\)](#); [Harakat](#); [Hezb-e Islami](#) (1980s); [Nahzat](#) (early 1990s)

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Sepah-i Pasdaran

Other Names: *Sepah*, *Pasdaran*, *Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami*/Guardians of the Islamic Holy War. Now [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Akbari\)](#)

Years of Operation: 1983-89, then as faction of [Hezb-e Wahdat](#)

Leaders: Ustad Muhammad Akbari

Based in: Hazarajat, northern Afghanistan, Kabul. Especially Ghor, Helmand, Bamiyan, Ghazni, and Parwan Provinces

Supported by: Hazaras.

History: The *Pasdaran* (or *Sepah*) Party is one of a number of Hazara parties in the 1980s which merged to form the [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) (Unity Party) in 1989. The *Sepah-i Pasdaran* were a radical Islamist Shia group, inspired and supported by the Iranian Pasdaran (Guardians of the Iranian Revolution), which established itself in the Hazarajat in 1983. Ustad Akbari, one of its leaders, collaborated with Mir Husain Sadeqi of [Nasr](#) and by 1984 succeeded in the expulsion of the *Shura* commanded by Sayyid Ali Beheshti from most of the Hazarajat.

Akbari is from the Waras district of Bamian. He joined the political movement [Shura-i-Ittifaq](#) as a resistance fighter, in this case military commander, in 1979. Around 1980/1981 he set up, independently, but with support from Iran, the Hazara resistance movement *Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami*. Within a short time this movement managed to recruit a number of adherents and took an active part in fighting Afghanistan's Communist government.

The *Pasdaran* were recruited with Iranian support from Hazaras resident in Iran and local militants in the Hazarajat who seceded from the *Shura*. It fought against the *Shura*, *Harakat* and *Hezb-e Islami* in the 1980s, before joining [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) in 1989.

In 1994, many Sepah members joined the Akbari faction of *Hezb-e Wahdat* when Akbari left the party – see [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Akbari\)](#).

Related Groups: [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) ,[Hezb-e Wahdat \(Akbari\)](#)

Fought against: [Shura-e-Itifaq \(Beheshti\)](#); [Harakat](#); [Hezb-e Islami](#) (1980s)

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Nahzat-e Islami

Other Names: *Nahzat -i-Islami* (Islamic Resurgence), *Nahzat* (Progress), *Nehzat-I-Afghanistan* (the Islamic Force of Afghanistan) and *Nuhzat-e-Islami-e-Afghanistan* (Islamic Movement of Afghanistan)

Years of Operation: 1979-89, then as faction of [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#)

Leaders: The leaders were from Jaghori; the most notable were Shiekh Ali Yawar Iftikhari and their representative in Peshawar Aqai Ali Rahimi. The main Nahzat commander was Wasiq.

Based in: Jaghori district of Ghazni, and Herat

Supported by: Hazaras

History: The *Nahzat* Party is one of a number of Hazara parties in the 1980s which merged to form the *Hezb-e Wahdat* (Unity Party) in 1989. It was based in Jaghori district of Ghazni province and most of its leaders were from Jaghori. It fought against the [Shura-i-Ittifaq](#), [Harakat](#) and [Hezb-e Islami](#) in the 1980s, before joining [Hezb-e Wahdat](#) in 1989.

Nahzat-e Islami is a good example of military commanders refusing to unite in spite of the agreement of their leaders. Its senior leaders participated in the unification process and hosted one of the meetings in their stronghold in the Jaghouri district of Ghazni. However, Wasiq, *Nehzat*'s main military commander in the district, refused to dismantle his military structure and continued to operate under the name of *Nahzat*. This resulted in a military confrontation with the formerly *Nasr* commanders who were fighting on behalf of *Hezb-e Wahdat*. The conflict resulted in the total defeat of *Nahzat* and other smaller organisations in this district in 1993.

Related Groups: [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#)

Fought against: [Shura-i-Ittefaq](#), [Harakat](#); [Hezb-e Islami](#) (1980s) [Sazman-i-Nasr](#) (1993)

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Da'wat-e Islami

Other Names: *Hezb-e Da'wat-e Ittehad-i-Islami Afghanistan* (Party of Invitation for Islamic Unity of Afghanistan); *Daawat-i-Ittehad-i-Islami*, *Sazman-e Daawat*

Years of Operation: 1986-89, then as faction of [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#)

Leaders: Rahman Ali Mohaqeq (Angori, Jaghori, Ghazni province)

Based in: Angori in Jaghori district of Ghazni province

Supported by: Hazaras

History: A minor Hazara party that joined [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#) in 1989.

Related Groups: [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#); Followed [Sazman-i-Nasr](#) faction after unification.

Fought against: Unknown

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Harakat-i-Islami

Other Names: *Harakat-e Islami* (Islamic Movement)

Years of Operation: 1979 to present

Leaders: Ayatollah Muhammad Asef MUHSINI (MOHSENI) (leader); Sayyed Husain Anwari (split to form new party in 2003)

Based in: Ghazni, Kandahar, Wardak, Parwan, Bamyan and Samangan provinces

Supported by: Shias – both Hazara and non-Hazara

History: The *Harakat*, headed by Ayatollah Muhammad Asef Muhsini, is a Shia (though not exclusively Hazara) group that stayed outside the [Hezb-e Wahdat \(Unity Party\)](#). It allied itself with the Kabul government of Burhanuddin [Rabbani](#) and was represented in Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's cabinet by Sayyid Husain Anwari, who held the portfolio of minister of works and social affairs.

In 2003, Mousavi gave this profile of the *Harakat*:

Harakat-e Islami: is a traditionalist religious party that was formed in 1979 after the coming to power of the PDPA. It was founded by Sheikh Mohammad Asif Mohseni Qandahari (Mohseni), a Qizilbash Shi'a from Qandahar, in Qom in Iran. HI came to play a particularly destructive and divisive role in inter-Hazara fighting. Following rifts between HI leadership and the Iranian authorities, the party headquarters were moved to Peshawar in Pakistan in the late 1980s. In 1989, HI joined the 6 other main Shi'a and Hazara parties to form the WP. Soon, however, it left the coalition and took up opposition to the WP.

Since 1993 HI has been significantly weakened and many of its followers have defected to the WP. However, because of its alliance with the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani in the early 1990s, it continued to enjoy political presence, though not much popularity. Following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in 1996, HI faced a leadership struggle, as a result of which Sayed Hussain Anwari (currently Minister for Agriculture) formally challenged Mohseni's leadership and proclaimed himself leader. Mohseni, who is now an old and ailing man, continues to have a very marginal presence in the HI, and currently ranks alongside other former partyless leaders, like Rabbani and Sayyaf. HI itself has not fared much better, it currently has no effective military or political presence, or even party headquarters anywhere anymore.

In 2003, *Harakat* split into two factions, with Mohseni's wing keeping the traditional name and representing its clerical wing, and Sayyed Hossein Anwari's wing, called *Harakat-e Islami-ye Mardom-e Afghanistan*, representing its military – and more secular – component.²¹ In February 2005, Mohseni stepped down as party leader and handed over to Hojjatolislam Seyyed Muhammad Ali Jawed, a minister in Karzai's first cabinet formed in late 2001 in Bonn.

Related Groups: Allied to [Shura-i-Ittefaq](#) and [Hezb-e Islami](#) in the [Hazara civil wars of the 1980s](#). Part of [Northern Alliance](#) – ally of [Jamiat](#) in the 1990s.

Fought against: [Nasr](#), [Pasdaran](#), [Nahzat](#) in the [Hazara civil wars of the 1980s](#).

Sources: [See Hazara and Shia sources above](#)

Shula-e-Javid

Other Names: *Shula-e-Javid* (Eternal Flame); *Shola'i*; *Sazmani Demokratiki Navin-e-Afghanistan* (Neo-Democratic Organisation NDM); *Jam'iat-i Demukrati-yi Nawin* (New Democratic Party); *Shula-I-Javaid Ya Demokrateek-I-Nevin*

The following spelling variations were found for the *Shula-e-Javid*: *Shula-e-Javid*, *Shula-e-Jawid*, *Shula-i-Javid*, *Shula-i-Jawid*, *Shola-e-Javid*, *Shola-e-Jawid*, *Shola-i-Javid*, *Shola-i-Jawid*, *Shula-i-Javaid*, *Shola-i-Javaid*, *Shulay Jawid*, *Sholay Jawid*, *Shulay Javid*, *Sholay Javid*, *Shulay Javaid*, *Sholay Javaid*, *Sholay Javeyed*, *Shulay-i Jawaid*, *Sho'laye Jawid*, *Shu'la-yi Javid*, *Shula-i Jamid*, *Shulay-i Jawaid*, *Sho'la-e Javed*, *Shu'la-Yi Javid*, *Sholayi*

Years of Operation: 1968-1980s.

²¹ For information on these parties, see Sec.1.2 'Hazara-Shia parties since 2001' in *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Leaders: Dr. Rahim Mahmoodi, his brother Dr. Abdur Rehman Mahmoodi and nephew Dr. Hadi Mohamoodi (founders – Kabul); Mohammad Sadiq Yari and Mohammad Akram Yari (Jaghori)

Based in: Kabul and Jaghori district of Ghazni in particular.

Supported by: Leftist Hazaras and other leftists.

History: The *Shula-e-Javid* was a Maoist group founded in the 1960s that drew support from an odd combination of alienated intellectuals and professionals and Shia Muslims, especially Hazaras, who had suffered harsh discrimination at the hands of the majority Sunni Muslims. The group looked to China as a model for revolution. Its anti-Soviet bias reflected the intense Sino-Soviet antagonisms of the late 1960s and early 1970s and appealed to Afghans who feared the power of their northern neighbour. It had a Maoist emphasis on militant class struggle and mass mobilisation of peasants. It grew out of confrontations within [PDPA](#) which led to a split in 1967. The motivation for those who established *Shula* was as much the fear of Pashtun hegemony as differences of political ideology. The *Shula* was largely dominated by Hazara, with considerable support from other ethnic minorities as well. The party emphasised minority, rather than class discrimination, in their propaganda. *Shula* published a paper under the same name, and arranged numerous strikes in the late 1960s and 1970s. The *Shula-i Javid* had a larger membership than [Khalq](#) and [Parcham](#) combined around 1970. The Akram Yari brothers were Hazara leaders of *Shula* from Jaghori district in Ghazni, who had a large local following, based on locality and family ties. After the establishment of the pro-Soviet regime in April 1978, Akram Yari and his associates were arrested and executed.

As well as founding the movement, the Yari brothers made a great personal impact on the politicisation of many people in Jaghori and the rest of Hazarajat. As a Maoist movement, the *Shula* was condemned by the country's religious leadership, in particular the Hazara and Shi'a clergy, as a Communist movement. As a consequence, the Jaghori intelligentsia suffered great losses in the intra-Mujahideen fighting of the 1980s. There were fierce battles between leftist intellectuals and the Mujahideen in Sang-e Masha (Jaghori) during this time. At this time, Sang-e Masha was also the battle ground for infighting between other Hazara and Shi'a groups, locked in a struggle for power over the region.

The *Shula* was alleged to be a break-away group of the [Parcham](#) faction of the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan). After the Saur Revolt the party opposed the Khalqi regime and set up a Mujahedin group; it was soon destroyed, and most of its members fled abroad or were killed. Following the Communist takeover and Russian invasion, *Shula* members were involved in the fighting throughout the 1980s and fought against both the Communists and Islamists (especially the *Hezb-e-Islami*). In August of 1981 the Karmal government arrested many of its members, who allegedly numbered only in the hundreds.

One of the most successful successor groups to *Shula-e-Javid* was *Sazman-e Azadibakhsh-e Mardom-e Afghanistan (SAMA)*, or 'People's Liberation Organisation of Afghanistan', formed in the summer of 1979 by Abdul Majid Kalakani. Although generally labelled 'Maoist', it was in fact a mixture of former *Shula*, non-conformist leftists like its legendary leader, and groups of outlaws politicised by him. In January 1980, SAMA initiated a broader alliance that included some ex-*Shola'i* and ex-*Settami* groups, left-wing Pashtun nationalists, and religious leaders like the Pir of Obeh from Herat province, called *Jabha-ye Muttahed-e*

Melli-ye Afghanistan, or ‘National United Front of Afghanistan (NUFA)’, which continued to follow Kalakani’s republican ideals. SAMA soon came under military pressure from *Jam’iat* and *Hezb*. Kalakani was arrested in February 1980 and executed four months later. Some SAMA leaders negotiated a surrender with the government which led to further splits. By 1982 the SAMA organisation was limited to one band in Nimruz province and not-very-active groups in two villages in Parwan province.

Related Groups: successor group – *Sazman-e Azadibakhsh-e Mardom-e Afghanistan* (SAMA), or ‘People’s Liberation Organisation of Afghanistan’

Fought against: The [Communists](#) and Islamist Mujahideen.

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2.5 Alliances and Coalitions

Peshawar Seven (Alliance of Seven)

The Peshawar Seven was a group of Sunni Islamist groups (or *tanzim*) who were based in Peshawar during the anti-Communist war. It was formally constituted in 1985, before which it was an informal alliance. This group received all the US/Pakistani aid as nationalist and leftist resistance groups were cut off from supplies. It consisted of the following groups:

1. [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#)
2. [Hezb-e Islami \(Khales\)](#)
3. [Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami \(Nabi\)](#)
4. [Ittehad e Islami \(Sayyaf\)](#)
5. [Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan \(Mojadeddi\)](#)
6. [Mahaz-e-Melli \(Gailani\)](#)
7. [Jamiat i Islami \(Rabbani\)](#)



Picture 1: Leaders of the Peshawar Seven (minus Khales and Mojadeddi plus Shia leaders Mohseni and Khalili) in 1993.

From left to right: Asif Mohseni of *Harakat-e-Islami*, Abdul Karim Khalili of *Hezb-e Wahdat*, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi of *Harakat-e-Inqelab-e-Islami*, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of *Hezb-e Islami*, Burhanuddin Rabbani of *Jammiat Islami*, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf of *Itihad-e-Islami* and Gailani of *Mahaz-e-Mili-Islami*. They were gathered in Islamabad to sign the Islamabad Accord in March 1993.

Afghan Mujahideen Government (1992-96)

Years of Operation: 1992-1996

Leaders: Burhanuddin Rabbani of *Jammiat Islami* (President); Abdul Rasul Sayyaf of *Itihad-e-Islami*; Ahmad Shah Massoud (military commander – *Jamiat* and *Shura-e-Nazar*)

Based in: Kabul

Supported by: Some Mujahideen leaders

History: When the Communist government finally fell in April 1992, a transitional government came into being after the signing of a peace and power-sharing agreement, the Peshawar Accord, by the leaders of the major Mujahideen parties. The agreement gave positions to each of the parties, with Rabbani of *Jamiat* being the first President and Hekmatyar the first Prime Minister. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar refused to serve with Rabbani and started a bombardment campaign against the capital city Kabul which marked the beginning of this new phase in the war. Fighting continued in Kabul until 1996, as several groups changed sides in a struggle for power. The period saw widespread fighting between militias and a general breakdown of law and order in Afghanistan, a condition that facilitated the rise and success of the [Taliban movement](#). The fighting in Kabul and southern Afghanistan came to an end in September 1996, when the Taliban conquered Kabul.

Supporters: The following parties participated in the Mujahideen government:

- [Jamiat i Islami \(Rabbani\)](#) (1992-96)
- [Ittehad e Islami \(Sayyaf\)](#) (1992-96)
- [Hezb e Wahdat \(Mazari and Khalili\)](#) (supported government in 1992 but began fighting with Sayyaf's Ittehad, and later Jamiat- withdrew in Dec 92 and joined Hekmatyar)
- [Jombesh-e Melli Islami \(Dostum\)](#) (1992-93)
- [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (finally joined government in 1996 after defeated by Taliban)

Supporters who soon withdrew after fighting began in 1992:

- [Hezb-e Islami \(Khales\)](#) (1992 – supported government initially then withdrew to Jalalabad when fighting began)
- [Mahaz-e-Melli \(Gailani\)](#) (1992 – supported government initially then withdrew when fighting began)
- [Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami \(Nabi\)](#) (1992 – supported government initially then withdrew when fighting began – joined Taliban in 1995)
- [Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan \(Mojadeddi\)](#) (1992 – supported government initially then joined Hekmatyar in opposing the government)

Opponents: The following parties fought against the Mujahideen government:

- [Hezb-e Islami \(Hekmatyar\)](#) (1992-96 Hekmatyar later joined government after defeated by Taliban in 1996)
- [Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan \(Mojadeddi\)](#) (1992 – supported government initially then joined Hekmatyar in 1992)

- [Hezb e Wahdat \(Mazari and Khalili\)](#) (supported government in 1992 but began fighting with Sayyaf's Ittihad, and later Jamiat- withdrew in Dec 1992 and joined Hekmatyar)
- [Jombesh-e Melli Islami \(Dostum\)](#) (1994-96 – changed sides in Jan 1994)
- [Taliban](#) (Kabul in 1995-96 and Herat in 1995)

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Northern Alliance

Other Names: United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA)

Years of Operation: 1996-2001

Leaders: President Rabbani, Massoud was the coalition's military commander

Based in: Northern Afghanistan

Supported by: Northern Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, plus some Pashtuns.

History: The Northern Alliance was initially formed on 14 October 1996 by the former President, Burhanuddin Rabbani, commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, Karim Khalili, the leader of the *Hezb-e Wahdat* and *Jombesh* leader General Dostum (*Ittihad-i-Islami* also joined later). Massoud was confirmed as the coalition's military commander. The alliance fought against the Taliban from 1996-2001, being forced into a progressively smaller part of northeast Afghanistan (see [maps](#)). In October 2001, the alliance gained the support of the US and, aided by American air support, was able to drive the Taliban from the country by December 2001 and establish a new government.²²

Related Groups: [Jamiat](#); [Jombesh](#), [Wahdat](#), [Ittehad](#).

Fought against: [Taliban](#)

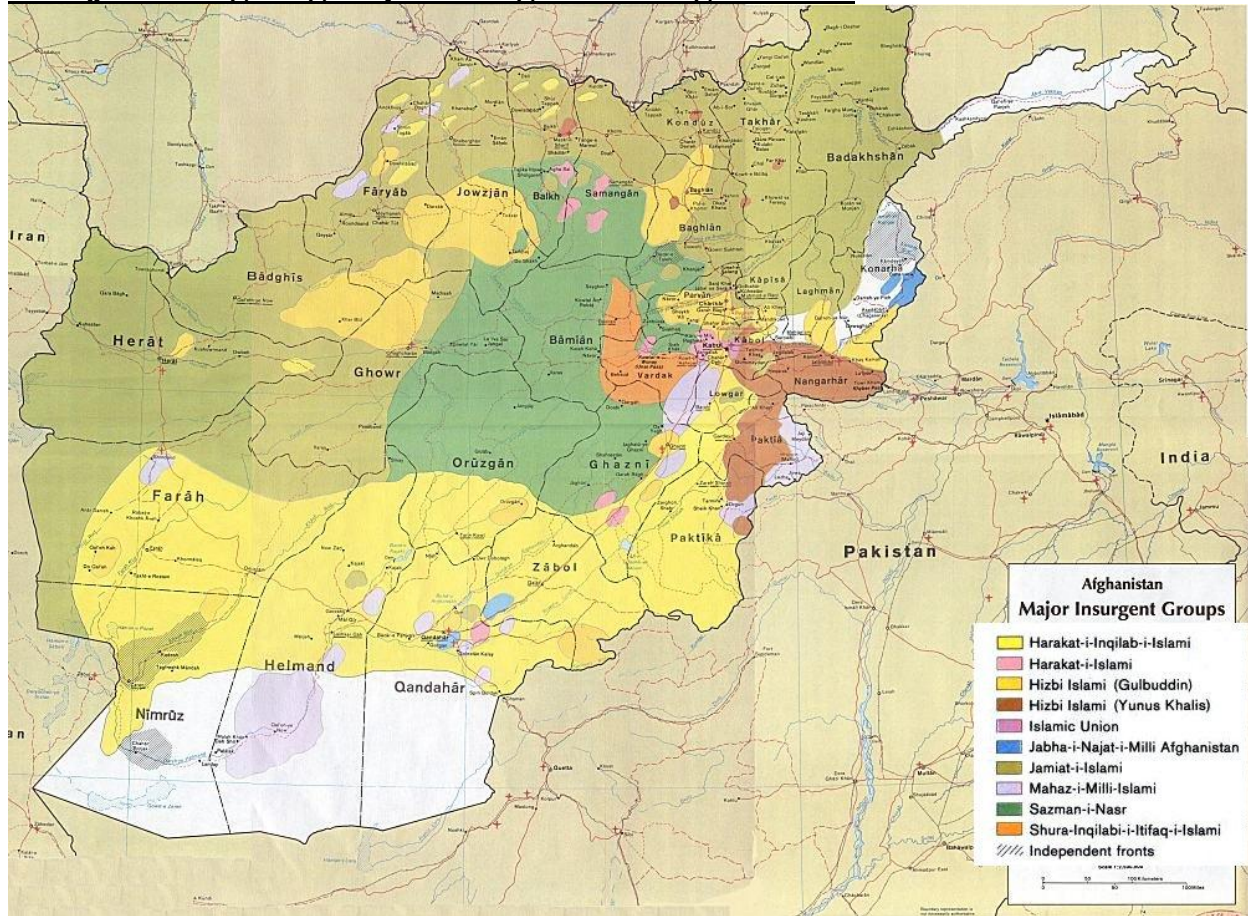
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²² For information the post-2001 government, see *RRT Background Paper: Political Parties and Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan 2001-2013*.

Maps relating to Afghan parties

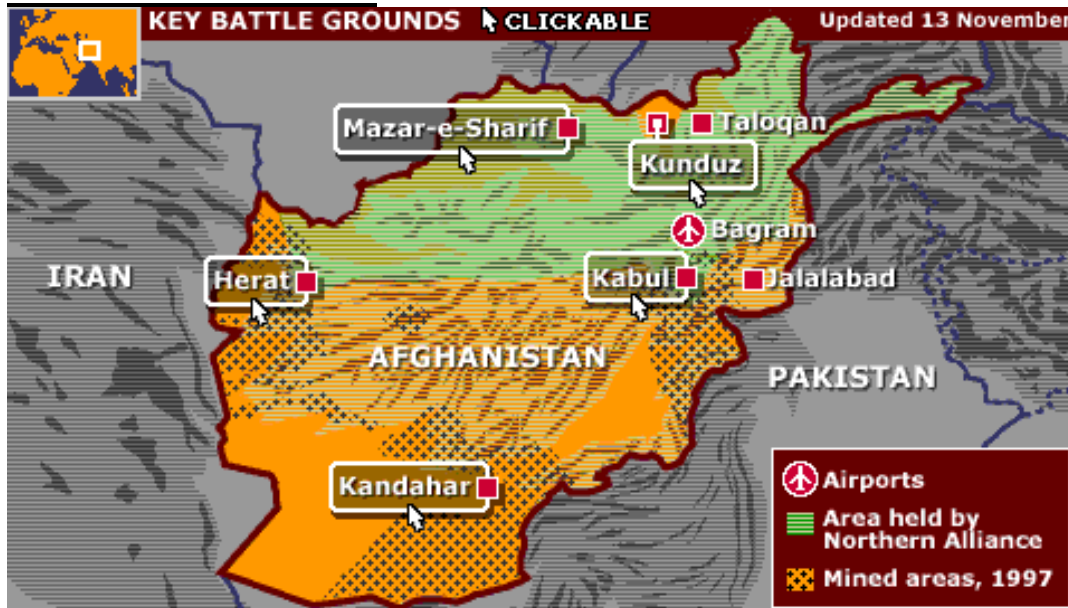
1 Major insurgent groups during Soviet-Afghan War



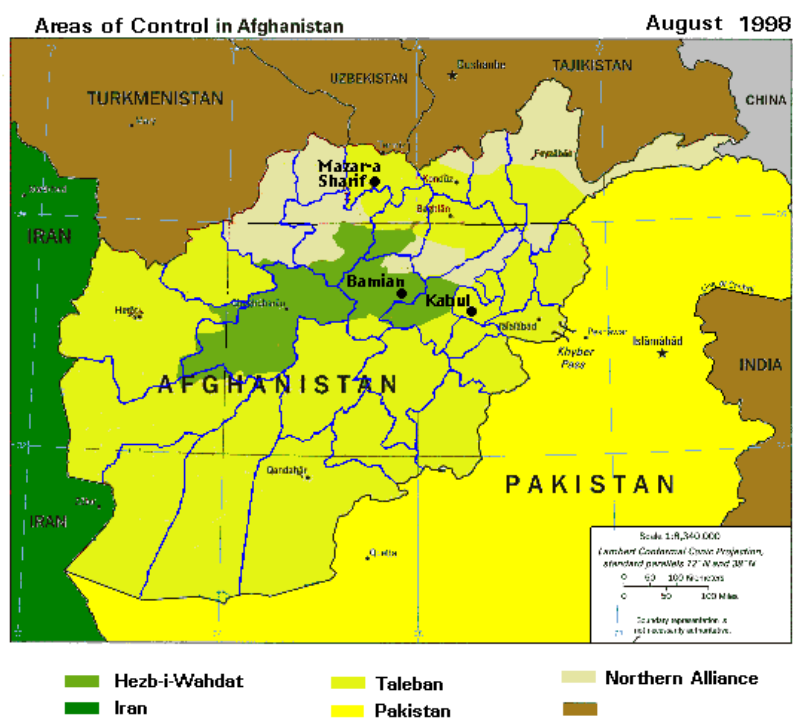
Source:

http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/images/afghan_resistance_groups_moz2.jpg Accessed 28 February 2013

2. Taliban control 1997

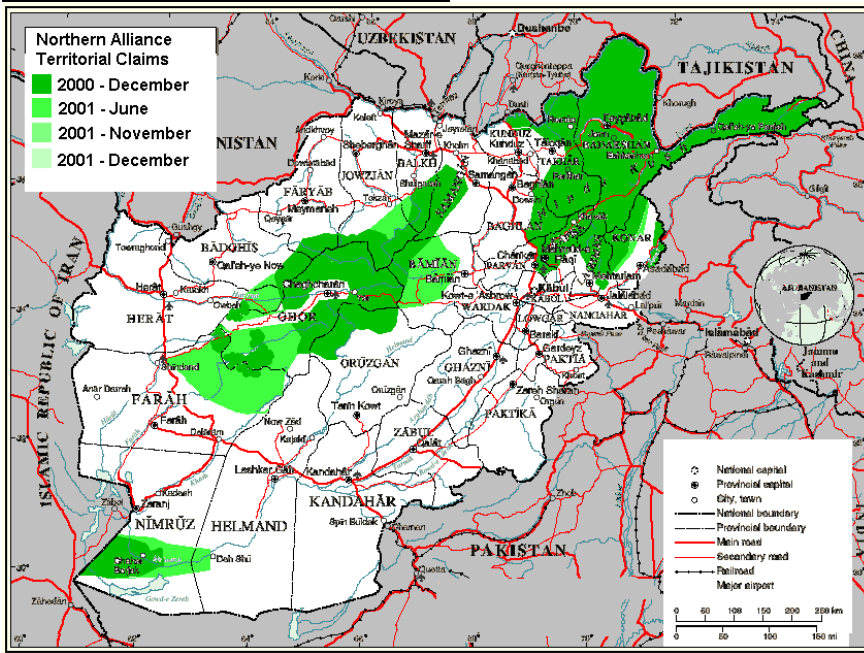


3. Taliban control 1998



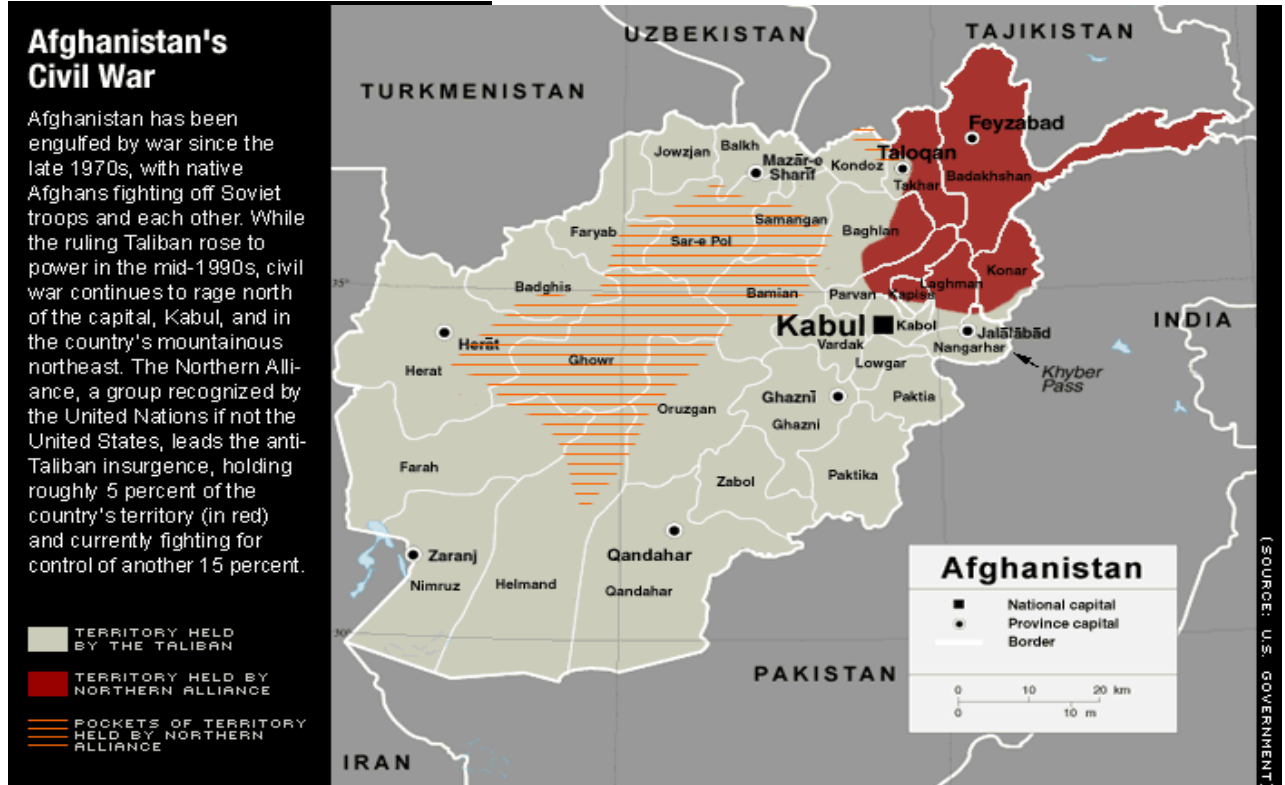
Source: <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/afghan/intro.htm>

4 Taliban control 2000-2001



Source: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/images/afghan-map_010600.gif

5 Taliban control October 2001



Source : <[http://www.afghan-info.com/Maps/Northern Alliance Map.gif](http://www.afghan-info.com/Maps/Northern_Alliance_Map.gif)> Accessed 30 October 2001 Also at CNN <<http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/trade.center/afghan.civil.html>>

Photos of Afghan leaders



March 7, 1993: A scene of the signing ceremony of 'Islamabad accord' between the 'Afghan leaders' under the eyes of their Pakistani, Iranian and Saudi 'god-fathers'.

Setting left to right: Ahmed Shah Ahmadzai (Ittehad-e-Islami), Sheikh Asif Mohseni (Harkat-e-Islamic), Gulbbudin Hekmatyar (Hezb-e-Islami), Burhanuddin Rabbani (Jamiat-e-Islami), Sibghatullah Mujjadidi (Jabha-e-Nijat-e-Milli), Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi (Harkat-e-Inqilab-e-Islami), Syed Ahmad Gaillani (Mahaz-e-Milli), Ayatullah Fazil (Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami)

Source: <http://www.rawa.org/darkdays/darkdays1.htm>



From left to right: Asif Mohseni of Harakat-e-Islami Afghanistan, Abdul Karim Khalili of Hezb-e Wahdat, Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi (died) of Harakat-e-Inqelab-e-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hezb-e Islami Afghanistan, Burhanuddin Rabbani of Jammiat Islami Afghanistan, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf of Itihad-e-Islami and Gailani of Mahaz-e-Mili-Islami. Gathered by the Pakistani government in Islamabad to sign Islamabad accord in March 1993

Source: <http://www.khyberwatch.com/forums/showthread.php?6166-Pictures-of-Famous-Taliban/page3>



May 25, 1992: Ahmad Shah Massoud (2nd from left) signing agreement with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in presence of their Pakistani and Arab sponsors.



Hamid Karzai with his vice-presidents Qaseem Fahim (left) and Karim Khalili.



Mulla Omar, Taliban Emir of Islami Afghanistan

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Index of Groups and Leaders

A

Abdol Karim KHALILI, 26
Abdul Ali MAZARI, 26
Abdul Rashid DOSTUM, 22
Abdul-Rassul SAYYAF, 14
Afghanistan National Liberation Front (ANLF), 15
Ahmad Shah MASSOUD, 20
AKBARI, Ustad Mohammed, 28
Alliance of Seven, 37
Amin, Hafizullah, 7
ANLF (Afghanistan National Liberation Front), 15
Anti-Soviet Groups, 9

B

BEHISHTI, Sayed Ali, 29
Burhanud-din RABBANI, 19

C

Communist party, 7
Council of the Union. *See* Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)

D

Da'wat-e Islami, 33
Daawat-i-Ittehad-i-Islami, 33
DOSTUM, General Abdul Rashid, 22

E

Etehad-e Islami, 14
Eternal Flame. *See* Shula-e-Javid

G

GAILANI, Pir Sayed Ahmad, 16
Guards of the Islamic Holy War, 31
Gulbuddin HEKMATYAR, 10

H

Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami (*Nabi*), 13
Harakat-i-Islami, 33
Hazara and Shia-dominated groups, 24
HEKMATYAR, Gulbuddin, 10
Hezb-e Da'wat-e Ittehad-i-Islami Afghanistan, 33
Hezb-e Dimokratik-e khalq-e Afghanistan, 7
Hezb-e Islami (Gulbuddin), 10
Hezb-e Islami (*Hekmatyar*), 10

Hezb-e Islami (*Khales*), 12
Hezb-e Wahdat, 26
Hezb-e Wahdat (*Akbari*), 28
HIG (*Hezb-e Islami* (*Hekmatyar*)), 10
HIH (*Hezb-e Islami* (*Hekmatyar*)), 10
HII (*Harakat-e-Inqilab-i-Islami*), 13
HIK (*Hezb-e Islami* (*Khales*)), 12
Hikmatyar. *See* HEKMATYAR
Hizb-i Islami. *See* *Hezb-e Islami*
Hizb-i Wahdat. *See* *Hezb-e Wahdat*
Homeland Party, 7

I

Islamic Movement (*Harakat-i-Islami*), 33
Islamic Resurgence (*Nahzat -i-Islami*), 32
Islamic Society of Afghanistan, 19
Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, 14
Islamic Union of Afghanistan (IUA), 14
Ittehad-e Islami (*Sayyaf*), 14
IUA (*Islamic Union of Afghanistan*), 14

J

Jam'iat-i-Islami-yi Afghanistan, 19
Jamiat-i-Islami (*Rabbani*), 19
Jebh-e-Nejat-i-Melli Afghanistan (*Mojadeddi*), 15
JIA (*Jamiat-i-Islami*), 19
Jombesh-e Melli Islami (*Dostum*), 22
Jumbesh-I Melli. *See* *Jombesh-e Melli Islami*
Junbesh-i Milliyyi Islami. *See* *Jombesh-e Melli Islami*

K

Karmal, Babrak, 7
KHALES, Mawlawi Muhammed Yunus, 12
KHALILI, Abdol Karim, 26
Khalq faction, 8

M

Mahaz-e-Melli (*Gailani*), 16
Mahaz-i-Milli-yi-Afghanistan, 16
MASSOUD, Ahmad Shah, 20
Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi, 13
Mawlawi Muhammed Yunus KHALES, 12
MAZARI, Abdul Ali, 26
MOHAQQEQ, Haji Mohammed, 26
MOJADEDDI, Sebqhatullah, 15
MUHSINI, Muhammad Asef, 33
Mujahideen Government (1992-96), 38

Mullah Mohammad Omar, 17

N

NABI, Mawlawi Mohammad, 13
Nahzat-e Islami, 32
Najibullah, Dr Mohammad, 7
Nasr Party, 30
National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), 16
National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, 22
Nezhat-I-Afghanistan. See Nahzat -i-Islami
Neo-Democratic Organisation NDM, 34
NIFA (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan), 16
Northern Alliance, 39
Nuhzat-e-Islami. See Nahzat -i-Islami

O

OMAR, Mullah Mohammad, 17

P

Parcham faction, 8
Pasdaran. See Sepah-i Pasdaran
Pasdaran-i-Jihad-i-Islami. See Sepah-i Pasdaran
Pashtun-dominated groups, 10
PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan), 7
People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, 7
Peshawar Seven, 37

R

RABBANI, Burhanud-din, 19

S

SADEQI, Shaikh Mir Husain, 30
SAMA (Sazman-e Azadibakhsh-e Mardom-e Afghanistan), 35
Sayid Ali BEHISHTI, 29
SAYYAF, Abdul-Rassul, 14
Sazman-e Azadibakhsh-e Mardom-e Afghanistan (SAMA), 35
Sazman-e Daawat, 33
Sazman-i Nasr, 30

SCN (Supervisory Council of the North (SCN)), 20

Sebqhatullah Mojadeddi, 15
Sepah-i Pasdaran, 31
Shola'i. See Shula-e-Javid
Shoora-i Nazar, 20
Shora-ye Enqelab. See Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)
Shula-e-Javid, 34
Shura-e Itifaq (*Beheshti*), 29
Shura-e Nazar (*Massoud*), 20
Shura-i Inqilab-i Ittifagh-i Islami. See Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)
Shura-yi Inqilab. See Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)
Shura-yi-Nazar-i Shamali, 20
Supervisory Council of the North (SCN), 20

T

Tajik-dominated groups, 19
Taleban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan (TIMA), 17
Taliban Movement (till 2001), 17
Tanzim, 9
Taraki, Nur Muhammad, 7
TIMA (Taleban Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), 17

U

UIFSA. See Northern Alliance
United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA). See Northern Alliance
Unity Council of the Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan. See Shura-e Itifaq (Beheshti)
Unity Party, 26
USSR, 7
Ustad Mohammed AKBARI, 28
Uzbek/Turkmen-dominated groups, 22

V

Victory Organisation (*Sazman-i Nasr*), 30

W

Watan Party, 7