

The Afghan Guerrilla's Dilemma: Tying up loose ends after the Soviets left

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February 1989. As the Soviet vehicles ground their way homeward over the snow-covered mountains of the Hindu Kush, the Afghan Mujahideen guerrillas were suddenly without a foreign enemy. Their focus of over nine years of combat was departing. What does a guerrilla do next? Certainly, the political heads of the various guerrilla factions all had ambitions and plans, but what does the average guerrilla, who had been fighting *jihad* against the Soviets do now? The government of Afghanistan was looking pretty shaky and soldiers and officers were deserting at a rapid rate. It shouldn't take too much to topple the government. What does the guerrilla do next?

In many cases, what the guerrilla did was to go home. The Soviet departure marked the end of *jihad* and many guerrillas could care less who was in charge in Kabul. They wanted to go home and they did. This dramatic thinning of the guerrilla ranks took pressure off the Afghan government and supplied a pool of somewhat-trained combatants who could be coaxed into joining various government-paid tribal militia forces guarding the lines of communication and cities.¹

The Elusive Capital City of Free Afghanistan and politics

Throughout the Soviet-Afghan War, a key guerrilla objective was to capture and hold a city that they could declare was the capital of Free Afghanistan. The Soviets had left but the guerrillas still did not have their city. During the first phase of the Soviet withdrawal, the Soviets evacuated Kunar and the Afghan government had been slow in occupying it. The guerrillas got into the city before the soldiers. But the Afghan soldiers evicted the guerrillas after four days of hard fighting. Shortly after the Soviet withdrawal, the guerrillas captured the border town of Torkham that stood before the famed Khyber Pass. Other guerrillas captured the southeastern border town of Spin Boldak, astride the road to Quetta.² Still, these were hardly cities.

Up north, the Hazaras took the city of Bamian. But the Hazara are adherents of Shia Islam in a Sunni Islam country. It would hardly do to have a Shia city as the capital of Free Afghanistan. The famous Tajik guerrilla commander, Ahmed Shah Masood, captured the city of Taliqan. This was an important event indeed, but the ethnic Pashtun guerrillas, who constituted the majority of guerrilla combatants, did not want to further burnish Masood's credentials by recognizing a Tajik city as Free Afghanistan's capital.³

All was not well among the guerrilla leadership. Under the aid provision plan, the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) distributed the military aid donated by the US, NATO countries and China to the various Mujahideen factions. The Pakistanis distributed the bulk of the aid to the most fundamentalist Islamic factions—with the idea that Islamic fundamentalists would be most conducive to following Pakistani direction. Saudi Arabia distributed money from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates directly to the guerrilla factions. Again, the most fundamentalist factions received the bulk of the largess. Along with the aid came recommendations for future political and military developments. Many of the Mujahideen were tired with this Pakistani and Saudi interference in their fight and began to push back against these countries running their affairs.

Who would rule Afghanistan once the communist government was gone? On 11 February 1987, Professor Sayd Bahawdin Majroh was assassinated in Peshawar, Pakistan. Professor Majroh published the Afghan Information Centre Monthly Bulletin. In a recent edition, he had published that his survey of Afghan refugees showed that 70% of the Afghan refugees would prefer the return of the Afghan king, Zahir Shah, over any Mujahideen leader to govern Afghanistan. This was bad news for the Mujahideen leaders, particularly Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who was Pakistan's choice to take over Afghanistan.⁴ Indications are that Hekmatyar arranged for the assassination and thus shot down the possibility of an interim government centered around the king.

A new “Great Game” had arisen.⁵ Iran and Saudi Arabia/Pakistan were in contention over Afghanistan. The long, bloody Iran-Iraq War was over and Iran was free to look east. This new great game had a sinister cast to it as it accentuated a religious schism. Shia Iran formed an eight-group Shia alliance in Afghanistan to confront the Sunni fundamentalism of Deobandi and Wahhabi sects from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia who were supporting Sunni Mujahideen. Pakistan formed the Seven Party Alliance—a proposed interim government that contained the Peshawar politicians of the Mujahideen factions—but no Shia. Washington DC pushed an Islamic Interim Government of Afghanistan (IIGA). Normally Washington followed Pakistan's lead and so the IIGA was heavy on Ghilzai politicians, had no Shia, Afghan government officials or former regime officials and few actual field commanders. Mujadiddi, a moderate faction leader was supposed to be the president. Sayyaf, Saudi Arabia's Sunni extremist favorite was supposed to be the Prime Minister while Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Pakistan's Sunni extremist favorite, was supposed to be Minister of Defense.⁶ The government was supposed to take power in Jalalabad, as soon as the city was captured. The IIGA never got off the ground. Hekmatyar was too controversial and frequently launched attacks on other Mujahideen groups.

As the Soviet Union was completing its withdrawal in early 1989, the world was changing. George H. W. Bush was now US president and US support was shifting away from

supporting Hekmtyar and Sayyaf, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's candidates for next ruler of Afghanistan. Eastern European satellite nations were breaking off continued membership in the Soviet bloc and Warsaw Pact.

The Siege of Jalalabad⁷

The siege of Jalalabad was the first major battle following the Soviet withdrawal. It started out badly. In April 1989, the 11th Infantry Division was guarding the eastern approach when the Mujahideen seized the commanding terrain and then attacked to capture the airfield. The division disintegrated. A regiment surrendered practically without firing a shot. General Baragzai, the 1st Army Corps Commander was killed in action. Many soldiers of the division surrendered. Only 35 members of the division staff, including its commander, evaded capture. The Jalalabad garrison reacted and was able to stop the attack and save the airfield. General Asef Delawar, the Chief of the General Staff, flew in to take command. The famous 15th Tank Brigade, with no more than 30 tanks, set out from Kabul to reinforce the garrison. They were joined by the tough 37th Commando Brigade (actually no more than 400 soldiers). The siege of Jalalabad continued for two months. During this time, the maintenance depots in Kabul were able to repair 70 tanks and personnel carriers and over 100 artillery pieces. These were used to outfit a new tank brigade and an artillery and artillery regiment. These were sent to Jalalabad along with units from Mazar-i Sharif, Herat, and other locales. The Afghan air force was flying 120 sorties a day in support.⁸ Government forces were 8,000 soldiers, 31 tanks (of which 23 were running), 20 personnel carriers, and 86 artillery pieces and mortars.⁹

The Mujahideen also reinforced the siege. A number of foreign jihadists joined the effort to seize the gateway to Afghanistan. Their estimated strength was 12,000-15,000 men, 200 rocket launchers, 280 artillery pieces and mortars and 20 armored vehicles. The Soviets believe that artillery units from Pakistan's 11th and 18th Infantry Divisions were also present and fired at night. The Soviets believe that the Mujahideen were going to launch a major offensive at the end of Ramadan.¹⁰

At 0400 on 5 June 1989, eight SCUD rocket warheads exploded on Mujahideen positions. This was followed by a heavy aviation and artillery preparation that eradicated the Mujahideen positions. The main attack was to the southwest and was led by the 15th Tank Brigade and the 37th Commando. The remaining regiments of the 11th Infantry Division joined the main attack and conducted the supporting attack in the south. By the end of the 5th of June, the 15th Tank brigade had advanced 10 kilometers. The Mujahideen defenses were overrun and the Mujahideen were in retreat.¹¹ Mujahideen casualties were heavy and major Mujahideen commanders were killed or wounded. The Mujahideen were unable to convert from a loose confederation of insurgents to a conventional force and were defeated in conventional battle by a smaller force. It was a significant victory for the Afghan government.

Trying to recover from the Jalalabad defeat

The defeat at Jalalabad was a major defeat for the Pashtun guerrillas. The northern city of Kunduz was selected as the next target city for the Mujahideen conquest. This was opposed by Hekmatyar since Kunduz is located in the region then dominated by the Tajik guerrilla commander, Ahmed Shah Masood. Masood was a threat to the Ghilzai Pashtun/Pakistanis ISI partnership. Earlier, Masood had formed the Supervisory Council of the North (SCN) and the Islamic Army. With these organizations, Masood formed a regional protostate that provided many governmental services. On 9 July 1989, one of Hekmatyar's lieutenants captured and massacred one-third of Masood's top commanders in the mouth of the Fakhar Valley. There was incontrovertible proof that Hekmatyar was involved and Masood feared a general offensive by Hekmatyar against him throughout the north.¹² Masood cancelled the capture of Kunduz and later captured those Hekmatyar lieutenants responsible for the massacre. He hanged four of them following a *ulama* trial.

Arms continued to flow into Afghanistan. Iran aided the Shia unity party. The Soviet Union aided the Najibullah government. The US continued to send arms but now insisted that moderates such as Mujadiddi, Gailani and Rabanni receive the aid. Hekmatyar and Sayyaf were still supplied by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In addition, Hekmatyar received aid from Libya's Omar Gadaffi and Iraq's Saddam Hussein.¹³

The failure at Jalalabad had demonstrated the need for a conventional Mujahideen army. Saudi Arabia paid to raise it. The *Lashkar-i Isar* [Army of Sacrifice] was based in Pakistan and had 5,000-6,000 men in an eight-battalion organization. Most of the troops belonged to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.¹⁴

Afghanistan's President Najibullah was having his own problems. Since its inception, the Afghan communist party had been split between the *khalqi* and *parchami* factions. The *khalqi* had many army and air force officers and well as officers in the state police of the Ministry of Interior. The *parchami* were well represented among the secret service (the Afghan equivalent to the KGB). Najibullah was a *parchami* and had decided to purge the military leadership of its *khalqi* adherents. In December 1989, he imprisoned or removed 171 *khalqi* generals. The Minister of Defense, Tanai, felt he was next.

In March 1990 when Minister of Defense, General Shahnawaz Tanai joined forces with Mujahideen commander Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in an attempt to overthrow the government. Tanai's aircraft bombed the presidential palace while Tanai's ground forces attempted to open a southern corridor to let Hekmatyar's Army of Sacrifice into the capital city of Kabul. The Army of Sacrifice failed to enter Kabul, neighborhoods were flattened. Bagram airbase suffered extensive damage and had to close down for several days.¹⁵ The *coup de etat* failed and Tanai

fled to Pakistan where he became commanding officer of Hekmatyar's Army of Sacrifice.¹⁶ He brought along five *khalqi* generals and hundreds of Soviet-trained *khalqi* armor, artillery and communications specialists who he integrated into the Army of Sacrifice.¹⁷ The attempt cost 136 military and 180 civilian lives, 46 aircraft, 22 tanks, 12 personnel carriers and seven artillery pieces.¹⁸ The Afghan government forces had effectively responded to this crisis. The mutiny was a naked power grab by Ghilzai and Eastern Pashtun backed by the Pakistani ISI.¹⁹ The ISI had decided that the capital of "Free Afghanistan" would be the national capital. This was an attempt to install Hekmatyar in Kabul using a Hekmatyar-*khalqi* attack to seize the country in a bold *coup de main* against both the Afghan government and the other Mujahideen factions. It was not a fight for Islam but a naked fight for power.²⁰ Pakistan wanted a compliant head of Afghanistan and to impose its own rule on its neighbor—a feat that the Soviet Union had just spent over nine years trying to impose. Following the coup, the United States finally decided to provide direct aid to Ahmed Shah Masood.²¹

Trying to recover from the power grab

The other Mujahideen factions were none-too-happy with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and wished to pursue a strategy independent of the ISI and Hekmatyar. On 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, initiating a massive response by the United States and its allies. Four days later, the Pakistani military overthrew the civilian government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and replaced it with a military government. The ISI made another attempt to refurbish Hekmatyar's tarnished image. They provided 40,000 rockets and 700 truckloads of ammunition to Hekmatyar for a shelling assault on Kabul—an attack which would kill thousands of civilians. Intervention by the US State Department managed to head that attack off.²²

Rabbani, Hekmatyar and Sayyaf supported Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and decried the alliance of Crusaders and Zionists intent on imposing sovereignty and control over Muslim lands. On 11 February 1991, the ISI permitted only 308 Mujahideen from the moderate nationalist parties of Khalis, Mojaddedi and Gailani to travel to Saudi Arabia and join the coalition.²³ The small contingent joined the French on the far left wing of the attack.

Back in Afghanistan, the Mujahideen were finally poised to seize a Pashtun city. The eastern Afghanistan city of Khost had long tempted the Mujahideen and several Mujahideen attacks on Khost were decisively defeated over the years. Khost was firmly under Afghan government control. The problem was that the terrain around Khost and the roads leading to Khost were not under Afghan government control. Khost was isolated and could only be supplied by air. This was its situation for most of the Soviet-Afghan War. The only time that Khost was supplied by ground was during the Soviet-Afghan Operation Magistral.²⁴

The government presence in Khost was always contentious. Jalaluddin Haqqani's force of Mujahideen brought supplies through the Pakistani border town of Miram Shah, maintained large depots in the caves of Zhawar and controlled the mountains and highways leading from Khost to Gardez.²⁵ The tribes surrounding Khost were also hostile. Usually, the garrison could purchase food, gasoline and diesel from the local populace. Much of this came from Pakistan. The Khost garrison could only be supplied with weapons, ammunition and certain fuels by air. The airfield runway was only long enough to accommodate the AN-26 dual-engine, turboprop transport and passenger plane. The Soviet-manufactured "CURL" has a five-man crew and can carry 40 passengers or 12,000 pounds. Designed for austere conditions, its main role was tactical transport and airborne drops. By 1989-1990, the bulk of the Afghan government AN-26s were lost or grounded for repair. The supply of Soviet cargo parachutes were in increasingly short supply. The airfield was frequently shelled during take-offs and landings, so air support for the garrison was not stationed on the airfield, but came from other bases in Afghanistan. Response time was usually one hour and 20 minutes, so artillery was the main fire support for the garrison. The regime's R-300 [SCUD] battalion also fired long-range missile strikes against areas when opposition forces assembled for attacks on Khost.²⁶

President Najibullah, Minister of Defense Tanai and Minister of the Interior Watanjar all had tribal ties to the area. Loss of Khost would be an affront to the leadership. General Farukh commanded the 25th Infantry Division. He was a graduate of a Russian military school and spoke excellent Russian. Often he would broadcast his radio reports in Russian, knowing that it would slow down the Mujahideen intercept efforts.²⁷ After the Soviet withdrawal, Farukh commanded some 4,400 personnel, 160 artillery pieces and mortars, 36 tanks (of which 26 were operable), and 20 personnel carriers. His division was at 18 percent of TO&E strength. Most of General Farukh's officers belonged to the Khalqi communist faction. A Border Guards brigade and KHAD units in Khost were at 16-20 percent of TO&E strength. The armed forces of the army, ministry of interior and ministry of internal affairs had 30 different units involved in the defense of Khost. The average strength of these units fell between 30-50 and 80-100 personnel. Their heavy armaments such as tanks, personnel carriers and artillery were worn-out and could not be replaced due to the requirement to fly them in. Thus, out of 18 122mm M-30 howitzers, four were unserviceable and the majority of the rest could not fire further than three-four kilometers due to excessive wear. [Maximum range is normally 11 kilometers].²⁸

The soldiers' situation was none too good. The garrison had to conserve scarce artillery ammunition. The opposition seemed to have ammunition to spare, particularly 107mm and 122mm rockets. There were three key rocket-firing positions that the opposition used against the airfield. Attempts to defeat rocket launchers with artillery fire usually ended with the opposition firing multiple rounds for every government round fired. Bunkers and dug-in firing positions were not strong or plentiful enough. Damaged arms and equipment could not be evacuated for repairs or fixed on site. There were no appreciable reserves when the garrison occupied its fighting positions. Once night fell, officers and soldiers often abandoned their night positions and went into the city to spend

the night. The 25th Division commander held a night-time alert and discovered that there were no officers present in many of his units as well as those of the border guards, Sarandoy and State Security.²⁹

The Fall of Khost

The 31 March 1991 attack on Khost was planned by the Pakistani ISI. The leading moderate Ahmadzai tribal chief in Paktia was Haji Naim. He was a member of the commanders' shura and the head of the Ahmadzai tribal shura. The ISI provided arms and ammunition to his followers, but assigned a supporting attack role to him. Jalaluddin Haqqani's and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces were to play the key combat role in the take down of Khost. The ISI sent about 3,000 Afghans against approximately the same amount of defenders. Pakistani Special Services Group (SSG) commandos were part of the operation and Pakistani artillery and communications specialists were attached to the Mujahideen assault groups. Other Pakistani C&C teams were positioned around Khost to coordinate artillery fire.³⁰ Pakistani artillery units, reportedly deployed earlier at the siege of Jalalabad, supposedly also provided artillery fire here.

The attack began in the morning with attacks from multiple directions. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces attacked to seize the airport. Hekmatyar's forces failed, but Haji Naim's forces then attacked and seized the airport, despite heavy casualties. The initial attack on the city was repulsed by the 59th Commando Brigade and tribal militia from the Khost region. By mid-afternoon, however, the attack resumed and the Ahmadzai tribal warriors fought their way into the city. Haqqani's Mujahideen followed the warriors into the city and captured the garrison command post. This turned the tide of the battle. Some 2,500 government soldiers surrendered. Hundreds more escaped overland to Gardez. Reportedly, some 500 government soldiers were killed and another 400 of them were wounded. A deputy defense minister and two KHAD generals were reportedly among the prisoners. Opposition losses were put at 160 KIA, 121 of which were Ahmadzai tribesmen. The ISI took control of the captured heavy weapons. There were 25 tanks (12 working) and over 50 artillery pieces.³¹ They turned these over to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The ISI-planned and sponsored loose alliance of Haqqani's and Hekmatyar's Mujahideen and Ahmadzai tribesmen fell apart after the fighting. Haqqani's push, once the Ahmadzai had gained a foothold in the city, clearly won the battle. Yet Hekmatyar's force, which failed to capture the airport and played only a minor role in the fighting, ended up with the garrison radio station and the bulk of the heavy weapons, in violation of the pre-battle agreements. The ISI prevented Haqqani from recovering this material. Subsequently, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, General Durrani of the ISI and Qazi Hussein Ahmad, leader of Pakistan's Jamiat-I Islami, made well-publicized visits to Khost, promoting the Pakistani role and support of Hekmatyar to a growingly nationalistic Afghan public.³²

The formation of a Mujahideen government in Khost in opposition to the Najibullah government in Kabul was not feasible. Pakistan had openly showed its hand as an over-reaching

neighbor in the overthrow of Khost and the Mujahideen had proven incapable of uniting to establish a new government in the garrison town. Instead the Pashtun tribesmen and Mujahideen pillaged Khost. The *jihad* [holy war] was over. Khost was the final blow to the idealism that fired the Soviet-Afghan War. The first blow was the failed siege of Jalalabad. Jalalabad broadcast the failure of the Mujahideen to unite effectively and transition from quarreling guerrilla bands to a unified conventional force dedicated to the overthrow of an atheist government. The second blow was the Tanai mutiny and his alliance with Hekmatyar. If the Khalqi communists and Hizb-i Islami Islamic fundamentalist faction could ally, but Hekmatyar could not ally with other jihadist factions, the war was now clearly just a struggle for power. Khost had fallen, but it was not a victory for religion or moral choice. Rather, it showed that the factions could not unite for the good of Afghanistan.³³

No unified government in sight

The Mujahideen had their Pashtun city but could not govern it. The rifts between the factions widened. The CIA still backed Hekmatyar while the State Department worked for a approach bringing the various factions together in an interim government under a UN-brokered settlement. The UN tried to piece together a political solution, but it did not stand a chance. Pakistan inherited a mountain of weapons and ammunition captured by US forces in the Gulf War. The ISI gave these out to Hekmatyar for another assault on Kabul. The ISI also cut off all support to Masood³⁴.

From 20 June to the end of July 1991, Ahmed Shah Masood conducted a campaign that captured the town of Khwaja Ghar, the large town of Khanabad, Zeebak on the Pakistan border and Eshkashem on the Amu Darya River across from the Soviet Union. Masood made no attempts to establish a Mujahideen government in any of these towns. Masood now controlled 300 miles of Afghanistan's border with the USSR. The Soviets requested border negotiations and Masood agreed-but insisted on bilateral negotiations that excluded the Najibullah regime. The Soviets accepted the conditions, hardly an encouraging sign of steadfast Soviet support to Najibullah despite their annual continued support of three billion dollars to his regime. During the negotiations, the Soviets accepted Masood's request that the remaining Soviet border-control post in Eshkashem, established following the 1978 Saur revolution, be moved back across the Amu Darya onto Soviet territory.³⁵

On 26 December 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to be and the Soviet Empire crumbled. Russia refused to pick up the Soviet Union's treaty obligations with Afghanistan and cancelled the supply of arms, ammunition, food and fuel. The Afghan military was very well armed and equipped with jet aircraft, helicopters, tanks, personnel carriers, artillery and mortars, but weapons systems require spare parts and ammunition. The US cut off its arms supplies to the Mujahideen. Afghanistan was truly on its own. Masood arrived at an understanding with

General Dostum, the Uzbek militia commander and entered Kabul. On 15 April 1992, President Najibullah resigned and the Mujahideen attempted to establish a government resembling the United Nations plan. Hekmatyar was the spoiler. Civil War followed and Afghanistan continued its long, bloody war.

Conclusion

Once the Soviets left, the guerrillas' main incentive to stay in the field was gone. Many went home and even joined the government militia. The government of Afghanistan was increasingly accepting of Islam in the government, so the religious *jihad* of the Mujahideen movement had less impetus. The Mujahideen motive was clearly to overthrow the government and seize power for itself. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia pushed their candidates aggressively. The United States and Pakistan, however, both had a split approach to the post-Najibullah government in Afghanistan. Both countries secret services (ISI and CIA) backed the most fundamental, anti-Western faction leader, while their foreign affairs departments pushed a power-sharing arrangement with UN supervision and backing.

The Mujahideen factions fought it out among themselves and finally captured Kabul. There was no smooth transition to a power-sharing government. Instead, open civil war erupted and the country spun further into chaos.

The quest to capture a city for symbolic purposes and international recognition had been in vain. The victors were often unable to govern effectively in individual multi-ethnic cities, let alone the country. This was not due to incompetence, but due to the fact that there was not a clear victory of one faction over all the rest. This almost happened years later as the Taliban hemmed in the Northern Alliance, but 9/11 and OEF interrupted that victory.

Today the international community is faced with the possibility of an ethnic split in Afghanistan providing the impetus for continued conflict. War weariness and the periods of relative peace in the coalition-occupied zones may prove the best hope for preventing that ethnic split.

¹ Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, Second Edition, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, 158-161.

² Rubin, 163, 247.

³ Ibid, 247. Hekmatyar was also heavily backed by the CIA. See Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers*, New York: Public Affairs, 2011, 336, 349.

⁴ Rubin, 249.

⁵ The "Great Game" originally referred to the long contest between the Russian and British Empires for control of Central Asia. Afghanistan was at the middle of the Great Game as a buffer between the contending empires.

⁶ Rubin, 249.

⁷ First three paragraphs of this section extracted from “The Soviet Withdrawal From Afghanistan: Lessons to Frame Success and Avoid Failures,” by Mr. Lester W. Grau and Mr. Thomas P. Wilhelm, FMSO-JRIC Analysts. Occasional Paper, November 2011. <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Soviet-Withdrawal-Occasional-Paper.pdf>

⁸ Makhmud Akhmetovich Gareev, *Моя последняя война* [My final war], Moscow: Insas, 1996, 237-244.

⁹ Ibid, 245.

¹⁰ Ibid, 244.

¹¹ Ibid, 250.

¹² Tomsen, 325. Ten senior SCN commanders and 20 others were massacred.

¹³ Rubin, 252-252.

¹⁴ Ibid, 253.

¹⁵ Tomsen, 363.

¹⁶ Rubin, 253.

¹⁷ Tomsen, 391.

¹⁸ Gareev, 129-149.

¹⁹ Rubin, 253.

²⁰ Tomsen, 356.364.

²¹ Rubin, 254.

²² Ibid, 253.

²³ Tomsen 419.

²⁴ For a look at Operation Magistral and a more detailed look at Khost, see Lester W. Grau, “Khost In The Rearview Mirror: First City In Afghanistan Falls To Jalaludin Haqanni, The Pakistani Isi And The Inadequacies Of Aerial Resupply”, FMSO Occasional Paper, April 2014, Most of this section is extracted from that paper.

²⁵ For an examination of the Zhawar cave complex and the major battles fought there, see Ali A. Jalali and Lester W. Grau, “The Campaign for the Caves: The Battles for Zhawar in the Soviet-Afghan War”, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Volume 14, September 2001, Number . 3.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/zhawar/zhawar.htm>

²⁶ Makhmut A. Gareev, *Моя последняя война* [My last war], Moscow: Insan, 1996, 252.

²⁷ Russian-speaking Afghans also led to press reports of Soviet forces garrisoning Jalalabad and Khost in defiance of the Soviet withdrawal treaty.

²⁸ Ibid, 253-258.

²⁹ Ibid, 258-260.

³⁰ Tomsen, 431-432.

³¹ Ibid, 432.

³² Rubin, 255.

³³ Ibid, 255-256.

³⁴ Tomsen, 424-425.

³⁵ Tomsen, 433.