

Moscow's undeclared war against Pakistan

by Konstantin George

Signalling the coming Russian expansion to the shores of the Indian Ocean, the Soviets began the New Year by loudly endorsing the dismemberment of Pakistan along ethnic-tribal lines, and, barely concealed, a call for a "Greater Afghanistan," to include the Northwest Frontier Provinces (NWFP, known for the Khyber Pass) and the Baluchistan region of Pakistan.

On Jan. 3, the Soviet military newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), ran a landmark article, proclaiming Russian support for "the just cause of the Pushtun patriots"—the Pushtun mountain tribes of the NWFP. At the beginning of December, these tribes, armed and equipped by Russia and its Afghan puppet regime, began an armed separatist insurrection. *Krasnaya Zvezda* hailed the progress of the pro-Soviet uprising, reporting that the tribal "freedom fighters" have inflicted losses of "more than 1,500" against the Pakistani Army, with "hundreds of Pakistani soldiers taken prisoner" in heavy fighting throughout December. *Krasnaya Zvezda* notes that the core tribes of the revolt, the Afridis and the Shinwaris, are "growing in strength" through the "fiery support" of the Waziri, Zalarzai, and Atmankhel tribes, while "combat units" are "now being formed" among the Momand tribe.

Hinting at another target of Soviet-inspired separatism, *Krasnaya Zvezda* also denounced the "brutal" rule of the Pakistani military in Baluchistan, a province bordering Afghanistan, Iran, and the Persian Gulf. Iranian exile sources report an influx of Iranian communists into Iranian Baluchistan, across the border.

According to public estimates by Pakistan's interior minister, in December, some 300,000 rifles and automatic weapons, plus hundreds of heavy weapons, were moved in to the Pushtun tribes by the Soviets. Over the years, Moscow has also funneled thousands of weapons and hundreds of trained agent cadres into Baluchistan, to create the infrastructure for an uprising.

The core-rebel tribes in Pushtunistan, the Afridis and the Shinwaris, are central to the production and shipment of opium and heroin from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region known as the "Golden Crescent." Pakistan began an admirable crackdown on the drug trade in the NWFP in 1985. The Kremlin exploited the situation, summoning the tribal chiefs/drug kingpins to Kabul for a series of meetings, which

led to the agreement to wage undeclared war against Pakistan.

On Jan. 6, TASS published an "Open Letter" to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by Afridi tribal chieftain Wali Khan Kukhikhel, the Moscow agent leading the mountain tribe revolt. The letter, addressed to Gandhi in his capacity as chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, calls upon him to grant the Pushtun tribesmen "necessary support" in defense of their "traditional and historical independence." TASS quotes Wali Khan:

"You know, that bands of Afghan counter-revolutionaries operate from the territory of the Free Tribes (of the NWFP), with the help of American imperialism and the Pakistani military regime, and do this in contradiction to the wishes of the population of this region. The subversive activity of the bands is directed against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and against the April [1978] Revolution, which brought the Afghan people happiness and prosperity and which enjoys the full support of the Pushtuns."

The Kremlin's publication of this letter comes at precisely a time when India and Pakistan are making strong progress towards reconciliation, with a round of ministerial meetings scheduled throughout this month, and a Rajiv Gandhi visit to Pakistan by mid-year. Moscow is trying to foster an India-Pakistan conflict, by crassly demanding that India join in the dismemberment of Pakistan.

The partition of Pakistan?

Russia's intention to dismember Pakistan, can be traced to decisions taken soon after Gorbachov's assumption of power in March 1985. In May, an expert in fomenting ethnic separatist unrest, Abdul-Rakhman Khalil oglu Vezirov, was named new ambassador to Pakistan. He is a former party official in the Muslim Trans-Caucasian Republic of Azerbaijan, and protégé of Soviet "Muslim Card" Politburo member and former KGB and party boss in Azerbaijan, Geidar Aliyev (see *EIR*, June 4, 1985).

Then in December, the Soviet media began announcing the NWFP tribal revolt, and denouncing the Pakistani Army's attempt to suppress it. In this time frame, *Izvestia* ran a 1,500-word feature on a Baluchistan tribe which fled to Afghanistan in 1983. The Soviet government paper said: "The incumbent Pakistan regime is increasingly encroaching on the Baluchis' national interests."

In mid-December, Soviet media began turning events and blame upside down Goebbels-style, accusing the Afghan guerrilla fighters of "genocide." Then, on Dec. 27, the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, *Pravda* charged Pakistan with "open genocide" against the tribes of the NWFP. On Jan. 6, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Lomeiko, in a Moscow press conference, categorically condemned Pakistan for practicing "open genocide" in the NWFP. Similar media campaigns and official charges have preceded partitions and annexations in the past. Will Pakistan become the Poland of the 1980s?