The Search For Peace In Afghanistan: From Buffer State To Failed State

Barnett R Rubin

These parties had been politically insignificant both in Afghanistan and for the Afghans in Pakistan throughout most of the 1970s. They had no military prowess and little or no territorial basis inside Afghanistan to support their claims of fighting on behalf of the Afghan population. Their membership, previously counted rather in the hundreds than in the thousands, started to increase following the PDPA’s coup in 1978, and their influence grew only after they began receiving massive outside support following the Soviet invasion. As Afghanistan emerged from one war in 1989, it risked falling into another involving the various Afghan stakeholders left to fight each other in the wake of their victory over the Soviets. The office of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General emerged as a key exponent of “quiet diplomacy,” as various emissaries shuttled across the globe working to prevent this fragile post-conflict state’s return to violent conflict. The operating environment was saturated with mistrust as a result of superpower tensions, regional agendas, ethno-religious differences, and a highly militarized land...
The state of Afghanistan took shape within its current borders as imperial powers sought to transform a turbulent dynasty into a buffer state. This externally promoted transformation inevitably entailed interactions between international and domestic politics. These arenas became more closely entwined than can easily be accounted for even by theories of interaction between separable domains. The Soviet Union’s effort to make Afghanistan a friendly buffer on its southern border required the creation of an effective state apparatus in the country.

PART THREE: Afghanistan After the Cold War:: From Regional Conflict to Failed State. 7 Cooperation Between the Superpowers. (pp. 96-111). As Afghanistan emerged from one war in 1989, it risked falling into another involving the various Afghan stakeholders left to fight each other in the wake of their victory over the Soviets. The office of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General emerged as a key exponent of “quiet diplomacy” as various emissaries shuttled across the globe working to prevent this fragile post-conflict state’s return to violent conflict. The operating environment was saturated with mistrust as a result of superpower tensions, regional agendas, ethno-religious differences, and a highly militarized land...