

AUGUST 2013

MARA TCHALAKOV

## AFGHANISTAN REPORT 10

# THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE PREPARES FOR AFGHAN ELECTIONS IN 2014



*Cover Photo: Salahuddin Rabbani (C) prays after he was introduced as the care taker to Jamiat-e Islami party during a gathering at the Kabul Intercontinental Hotel October 4, 2011. The party's leader Burhanuddin Rabbani, former Afghan president and head of the government's peace council, was killed on Sept 20, 2011. Salahuddin Rabbani, son of Burhanuddin Rabbani, was appointed as the care taker to Jamiat-e Islami party during the gathering in Kabul. REUTERS/Ahmad Masood.*

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

©2013 by the Institute for the Study of War.

Published in 2013 in the United States of America by the Institute for the Study of War.

1400 16th Street NW, Suite 515 Washington, DC 20036.

<http://www.understandingwar.org>

MARA TCHALAKOV

## **AFGHANISTAN REPORT 10**

---

THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE PREPARES  
FOR AFGHAN ELECTIONS IN 2014

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mara Tchalakov is a doctoral candidate in International Relations at the University of Oxford. She completed her undergraduate studies at Princeton University, graduating with a B.A. summa cum laude from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and her MPhil in International Relations from the University of Oxford.

She has worked for a variety of government agencies, having served on the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State and with the White House Council of Economic Advisers. Most recently, she worked for the United States Central Command, a regional combatant command of the U.S. Department of Defense, where she focused on issues related to Afghanistan and Pakistan and spent time assisting NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Kabul.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to numerous colleagues past and present for their insightful feedback, encouragement, and interest. My sincere thanks in particular to Kim Kagan, Jessica Lewis, Jeff Dressler, Aaron Reese, and our indomitable Maggie Obriwin for her help with graphics and for providing the project's professional polish. Last but not least, I am grateful to Julie Super Meyer, Catherine Padhi, and Jackson Keith for their unflagging research assistance.

## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization. ISW advances an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research, trusted analysis, and innovative education. ISW is committed to improving the nation's ability to execute military operations and respond to emerging threats in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives.

## ABOUT OUR TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

ISW believes superior strategic insight derives from a fusion of traditional social science research and innovative technological methods. ISW recognizes that the analyst of the future must be able to process a wide variety of information, ranging from personal interviews and historical artifacts to high volume structured data. ISW thanks its technology partners, Palantir Technologies and Praescient Analytics, for their support in this innovative endeavor. In particular, their technology and implementation assistance has supported creating many of the maps and graphics in this product.



Praescient Analytics is a Veteran Owned Small Business based in Alexandria, Virginia. Our aim is to revolutionize how the world understands information by empowering our customers with the latest analytic tools and methodologies. Currently, Praescient provides several critical services to our government and commercial clients: training, embedded analysis, platform integration, and product customization.



Palantir Technologies is working to radically change how groups analyze information. We currently offer a suite of software applications for integrating, visualizing and analyzing the world's information. We support many kinds of data including structured, unstructured, relational, temporal and geospatial.

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

AFGHANISTAN REPORT 10 | THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE PREPARES FOR AFGHAN ELECTIONS | TCHALAKOV | AUGUST 2013

---

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>JAMIAT FROM 1979-2001 .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>FACTIONAL SPLINTERING DURING &amp; AFTER THE SOVIET WAR.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>FROM IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS TO A CADRE OF PERSONALITIES .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>FROM THE FALL OF THE TALIBAN TO THE 2009 ELECTION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>FROM RABBANI’S ASSASSINATION TO THE 2014 ELECTION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>ATTA MOHAMMAD NOOR: FROM PROVINCIAL STRONGMAN TO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE? .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>MARSHAL MOHAMMAD QASIM FAHIM: JAMIAT’S KINGPIN.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>WHITHER JAMIAT IN 2014?.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>NOTES.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>MAPS &amp; CHARTS</b>	
<b>MAP OF AFGHANISTAN.....</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>PRINCIPAL JAMIAT FACTIONS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>JAMIAT CHRONOLOGY TO 2001.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>PRINCIPAL NORTHERN ALLIANCE ‘PARTIES’ .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>JAMIAT ELECTION TIMELINE.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHO’S WHO AMONG JAMIAT-AFFILIATED LEADERS, PART I.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>WHO’S WHO AMONG JAMIAT-AFFILIATED LEADERS, PART II.....</b>	<b>26</b>

---

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AFGHANISTAN REPORT 10 | THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE PREPARES FOR AFGHAN ELECTIONS | TCHALAKOV | AUGUST 2013

---

The Doha talks with the Taliban have diverted Washington's efforts away from the far more important negotiations among Afghanistan's political elite that will actually determine whether the country's unity and constitutional system endures past 2014. Afghanistan's history suggests that any successful political accommodation of its different ethnic factions in 2014 will be impossible without incorporating the interests of those influential leaders and commanders currently or formerly associated with Jamiat-e Islami. Jamiat remains one of Afghanistan's oldest and most influential Tajik-dominated political parties, forged as a political-military organization that eventually formed the core of the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. As negotiations with the Taliban proceed in fits and starts, U.S. policymakers would do well to remember that such negotiations hold very little appeal for the influential politicians affiliated in one form or another with Jamiat.

The political calculus of most of these former Northern Alliance leaders looking ahead to 2014 remains firmly centered upon maintaining and advancing their influence within the constellation of Kabul's ruling political class. For these individuals, the question of who will succeed President Karzai and who will comprise a successor government in a post-Karzai era is paramount. These issues are also paramount for Karzai. For all of these elites, the prospect of civil war among existing Afghan factions is more dangerous to the country's unity than the Taliban insurgency. But the establishment of a Taliban political office and political party that does not recognize the current Afghan constitution threatens all of them.

Jamiat and the other Tajik parties are not likely to pose a meaningful electoral challenge to Pashtun rule. During its years of resistance against both the Soviets and the Taliban, Jamiat never developed a centralized party structure independent of its many outsized personalities. After the fall of the Taliban regime, the party proceeded to splinter into two main camps, between the warlords who rose to prominence from the ranks of the mujahideen commanders and a group of self-styled opposition politicians. President Karzai has so far been able to co-opt the most influential Jamiat-affiliated warlords, including Marshal Fahim, Ismail Khan, and to some extent Atta Noor, through state appointments. This has successfully kept the party fragmented and marginalized his opposition. Looking ahead to 2014, it remains unclear whether Jamiat has the capability to unify behind a single candidate, and whether that candidate will run in opposition to Karzai's his choice of a successor or in support of it.

The nature of the political handover of power in 2014 will be the most significant short-term benchmark of stability for the country. The United States should work to facilitate the timely, free, and fair holding of elections in April 2014. A repeat of the tainted election of 2009, in which a run-off between President Karzai and his challenger Abdullah Abdullah was nearly held, would be disastrous for the country. President Karzai understands this. The president will therefore ensure that the entire machinery of the Afghan state apparatus is energized behind his chosen successor once he makes his preferences known. In order to sow maximum dissension within Tajik ranks, the president is unlikely to publicly anoint his political heir until he has co-opted at least one or two influential Tajik politicians. In the short-term, the engagement of key Jamiat-e Islami politicians will be critical to a smooth regime transition in Afghanistan as the country moves into a post-Karzai era.

The politics ahead of the 2014 election indicate that it will not feature a radically new set of political players. Without international support for the institutionalization of Afghan political parties, civil society groups, younger and reform-minded political players, and the professionalization of an independent civil service, the election in 2014 will represent "business as usual" for Kabul's political elite. A smooth transition of power alone will therefore not guarantee a durable political accommodation among those competing for power and influence in Afghanistan, but rather may simply delay into 2015 or 2016 a more violent struggle for control of the country.





MAP 1 | AFGHANISTAN

---

# AFGHANISTAN REPORT 10

## THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE PREPARES FOR AFGHAN ELECTIONS IN 2014

---

By Mara Tchalakov

Political transitions in Afghanistan in recent decades have underscored the country's perpetual difficulty in both institutionalizing its personality-driven politics and in unifying its national elite.<sup>1</sup> Should President Hamid Karzai abide by his promise to retire in 2014 after a second term in office, these challenges will come to the fore once more as various candidates compete to succeed him. In a speech given to the National Governors' Conference in June 2013, Marshal Mohammad Fahim, Afghanistan's first vice president and an influential former Northern Alliance commander, prognosticated that the upcoming political transition would be of even greater consequence than the security transition slated for 2014.<sup>2</sup> The two, however, are likely to go hand-in-hand.

Whether Afghan politicians will manage to prevent the kind of elite fragmentation among their different ethnic factions that has occurred in the past and preserve the current constitutional order is likely to have a disproportionate impact on their ability to prosecute the war effort and achieve a stable peace. For the influential Tajiks among Afghanistan's ruling political class, the months leading up to the 2014 election afford an opportunity for political and ethnic consolidation and a chance to hedge their loyalties should an unstable transition to a post-Karzai era mean the country is once again plunged into civil war.

As Afghanistan's second largest ethnic grouping, Tajiks are technically a minority within the country's multi-ethnic state. Nonetheless, the country's history suggests that any stable political accommodation after 2014 will be contingent upon incorporating the interests of the most influential leaders currently or formerly associated with Jamiat-e Islami.<sup>3</sup> Jamiat remains one of Afghanistan's oldest and most influential Tajik-dominated political parties, originally forged as a *tanзим* or political-military organization. The party's members formed the core of the anti-Soviet mujahideen resistance and of the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. Since its inception in the 1970s, the party's fortunes have ebbed and flowed. While Jamiat members have consistently dominated crucial Cabinet ministries since the fall of the Taliban, the party has also endured the rise of breakaway factions and

suffered sudden leadership changes. Nonetheless, many of its key players remain essential to the fragile political equilibrium President Karzai has, with varying success, maintained to the present day. Like other former *tanзимs*, Jamiat remains oriented around strong leaders rather than party institutions, with many of these leaders already jostling for influence in a post-Karzai regime. Tajik candidates have historically struggled in their ability to unite a Pashtun-dominated country; alliances with influential Pashtun candidates and the threat of opt-out, particularly over negotiations with the Taliban, will remain dominant negotiating tactics in 2014.

In tracing the decades-long trajectory of one of the most prominent Tajik-dominated political parties in Afghanistan, this report identifies the key Tajik political players in the north of the country, traces their evolving political relationships among one another and with other politicians, and delineates their present political agendas. The report examines the degree of unity within the party apparatus and how the bargaining behavior of its key members at crucial electoral inflection points suggests certain Tajik leaders might position themselves ahead of the 2014 contest. From its early years, unity within the party was largely dependent upon a state of external crisis. Even so, the Soviet invasion, the ensuing civil war, and the rise of the Taliban were not always enough to overcome fractious rivalries within the party's ranks. Jamiat has continued splintering along



two major lines. In one camp are the former warlords that rose to prominence within the commanding ranks of the mujahideen and that now form part of the government establishment, and in the other the ‘professional’ opposition politicians. President Karzai has been able to co-opt the most influential Jamiat-affiliated warlords, including Marshal Fahim, Ismail Khan, and Atta Noor, through state appointments and the resource endowments such appointments provide, while marginalizing its opposition politicians, many of whom at least claim to advocate for a parliamentary system and a devolution of power within the country. As the election of 2014 approaches, the instincts of the former group to maintain their grip on power will hinder the prospect of a genuine changing of the political guard in a post-Karzai era.

The first section of this report examines the significant patterns of behavior and lessons learned in the early decades of the party’s history, from the Soviet invasion to the rise and fall of the Taliban. The second section examines the history of Jamiat from the toppling of the Taliban to the re-election of President Karzai in 2009. At least three major inflection points are identified over the course of the past decade: in 2001, 2004-2005, and 2009. The third and final section examines the assassination of Jamiat patriarch Burhanuddin Rabbani and the party’s future prospects in advance of the 2014 elections. Although the presidential contest next year presents a very open field of possible candidates, the same set of players are likely to dominate the political space. For U.S. policymakers seeking to make sense of the political wrangling in Kabul and the implications of possible leadership changes in 2014, an intimate understanding of these individuals, their interconnected histories, and their political instincts is essential.

## JAMIAT FROM 1979-2001

Jamiat-e Islami, or “Society of Islam,” emerged as a relatively moderate Islamist movement. The group’s founders were fueled by the intellectual clash between Sunni Islamist youth and secular leftists on the campus of Kabul University in the 1960s and 1970s. Over time,

Jamiat attracted recruits from government-sponsored schools, both religious and secular, from clerics or *ulema* in the north and west, and from northern Sufi orders. The party traces its present-day origins to its longstanding leader, Ustad Burhanuddin Rabbani.<sup>4</sup> After studying Islamic law and theology at Kabul University and traveling abroad to Al-Azhar University in Cairo to develop ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, Rabbani returned to Afghanistan in 1968 and, in 1972, became the official head of the party.<sup>5</sup> An ethnic Tajik from Badakhshan province, Rabbani formed part of a circle of religious scholars on the faculty of theology at Kabul whose aims resembled those of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Known as “The Professors,” the objective of men like Rabbani, Gholam Niyazi, and other intellectuals like Sebghatullah Mojadeddi was to establish a mass movement that presented Islam as a modern antidote to both communism and to the traditionalism of the Afghan government, embodied by the regime of Daoud Khan, cousin to the king.<sup>6</sup> Rabbani derived his legitimacy as head of the party as a result of these Islamic credentials, although the party would soon shed much of its ideological character in the struggle against the Soviet Union.

During the jihad against the Soviets, Jamiat, alongside Hizb-i Islami, ranked as one of the most influential political-military networks, or *tanzim*, in the country.<sup>7</sup> Hizb-i Islami, demanding a more revolutionary Islamic approach, broke away from its Jamiati brethren and underscored the first major fault line between the different mujahideen groups.<sup>8</sup> Compared with Hizb-i Islami, Jamiat absorbed many more non-ideological or secular military leaders into its ranks.<sup>9</sup> While effective from a military perspective, this “big tent” approach had the combined effect of diluting its ideological Islamist core and, over time, strengthening its ethnic aspect.<sup>10</sup>

Although multiple ethnic groups, including Pashtuns, have comprised Jamiat at one time or another, the party retains its largest following among Tajiks in northern provinces such as Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, and Panjshir in the northeast, and from constituencies in and around Herat in the west. Despite fracturing largely

<b>PRINCIPAL JAMIAT FACTIONS, 1979-2001<sup>12</sup></b>	
<b>RABBANI FACTION</b>	Established in the 1970s by Burhanuddin Rabbani. This centrist Islamist party became the largest organization within the anti-Soviet, mujahideen movement. After the defeat of the Taliban in 2001-2002, Jamiat split, with Rabbani maintaining leadership of one of the factions.
<b>MASSOUD FACTION</b>	Established by loyalists of the late Ahmad Shah Massoud, this ‘Panjshiri’ wing of the Jamiat party represents a younger, more secular generation of Tajik leaders. While consistently maintaining a strong foothold in the key security ministries of government since 2001, internal fissures among them have split the party even further.
<b>ISMAIL KHAN FACTION</b>	A largely autonomous faction of the original Jamiat party led and directed by the former mujahideen commander, Ismail Khan. Khan had gained control over most of western Afghanistan during the Soviet war and regained his fiefdom after the fall of the Taliban while remaining largely removed from the ruling Panjshiri faction in Kabul.

along ethnic lines, both Jamiat and Hizb-i Islami proved more adept in recruiting resistance fighters and cultivating patronage networks than in articulating a well-developed political platform—one that generally did not extend beyond the notion of establishing an Islamic state governed by shari‘a law.<sup>11</sup>

**FACTIONAL SPLINTERING DURING AND AFTER THE SOVIET WAR**

Both Rabbani and the legendary warrior, Ahmad Shah Massoud, were ethnic Tajiks and Sunni Muslims, though they drew their support from different areas of the country. Massoud drew his base primarily from Panjshir, Parwan, and Takhar provinces in the northeast. There he established the Shura-e Nazar, or the Supervisory Council of the North. This council would eventually become the nucleus of the Northern Alliance of anti-Taliban commanders after the rise of the Taliban. Massoud was influenced by the political ideas of the Tajik activist Tahir Badakhshi and popularized the notion of reasserting Tajik ethnic influence in the country in connection with the party’s platform.<sup>13</sup> His military

proWess and those of other Jamiat commanders, such as Ismail Khan and Mullah Naqibullah, in establishing bases in the northeast and west of the country during the struggle against the Soviets helped to solidify the party along ethnic lines.<sup>14</sup>

Massoud, Ismail Khan, and Naqibullah were all influential anti-communist military commanders who helped galvanize Jamiat into the most formidable resistance movement of the Soviet-Afghan war. Massoud, arguably the most charismatic commander within his cohort and the leader of the Shura-e Nazar, eventually became the most powerful military leader within the party. In so doing, he helped Jamiat assume a leading role in the mujahideen government that followed the ouster of the Soviets and the Najibullah regime in 1992.<sup>15</sup>

Fissures began to emerge within Jamiat prior to its occupation of Kabul and the installation of Burhanuddin Rabbani as the next president. Although the party had styled itself strategically as a moderate, centrist Islamist party that appealed to a wide variety of local and religious notables, it had a difficult time exerting command and

control over its military leadership.<sup>16</sup> The same set of skills and ideological aspirations that enabled Jamiat commanders to build alliances and secure a foothold in the country also provided the means by which these commanders achieved a monopoly on violence and utilized the political legitimization the party provided to serve their own ends.<sup>17</sup>

Western strongman Ismail Khan was one such prominent commander who utilized his loose political affiliation with Jamiat to his advantage. The extent to which Ismail Khan subscribed to Jamiat's ideological aspirations and followed party directives was, and arguably still is, minimal.<sup>18</sup> However, because the upper echelons of the Jamiat hierarchy provided Khan with legitimacy and resources during the Soviet and civil wars—and by extension a means to gain leverage over his rivals for power—an affiliation with the party's elites in Kabul served a useful purpose. Antonio Giustozzi has carefully documented the number of local Jamiat commanders allegedly eliminated by Ismail Khan's drive for dominance and his monopolizing of resources from Kabul to do so.<sup>19</sup> Powerful regional Jamiat leaders contending with rivals benefited from developing strong ties to the party's Kabul elites to bolster their military and political leadership in a given area.<sup>20</sup>

Ismail Khan's case illuminates another fact about Jamiat in these wartime years. Certain military commanders, notably Massoud, possessed an uneasy relationship with their respective political leaders. Rabbani had spent the bulk of the war years in Pakistan, funneling internationally sponsored supplies to military leaders in the field. Along with other Islamist leaders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, and Maulavi Younas Khalis, Rabbani was one of the so-called "Peshawar Seven," a group who became the primary mujahideen clients for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). However, this meant that Rabbani inspired no particular loyalties of his own among the resistance fighters and military commanders claiming to be loyal to Jamiat. His influence was circumscribed even within his native province of Badakhshan, where Jamiat leaders found it difficult to prevent fragmentation of the

party's base. Rabbani was shrewd enough to recognize that an imposition of centralized authority during these years of jihad would have been difficult in the extreme, and that the best means of keeping local military leaders on board was through various forms of patronage.<sup>21</sup> He used the supplies and weapons he received to try to enhance his influence with Uzbek and Pashtun fighters across Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup>

However, he also used the control he possessed over his share of the ISI supply chain to curtail what he perceived as Massoud's growing power. Massoud, more than any of his contemporaries within the party, possessed that rare combination of political charisma and military acumen that made him a natural rival to Rabbani.<sup>23</sup> Afghan scholar Antonio Giustozzi describes Massoud's transcendence from his role as a military leader to one whose "rising profile had led to his appointment by the leadership of Jamiat-e Islami as the overall leader of the party in the greater north-east, despite the hostility of the Jamiat political heavyweights based in Peshawar."<sup>24</sup> Individuals that would later assume senior positions in the post-2001 Karzai government, including former Minister of Defense and current First Vice President Marshal Fahim, counted themselves among the ranks of Massoud's loyalists within his Panjshiri wing of the party. This historical tension between the titular leadership of Jamiat and military commanders loyal to Massoud, combined with a kind of reciprocal dependence between Jamiat elites and regional strongmen, would prove to be an important leitmotif running through the party's history.<sup>25</sup>

Rabbani's influence, however, waned considerably with the onset of Afghanistan's bloody civil war. The rise of the Taliban and the enmity of the other jihadi factions, particularly that of Hizb-i Islami, meant that Rabbani found himself isolated. During his Presidency, he governed over "an ever smaller rump state."<sup>26</sup> The anti-communist factions within Afghanistan, without the unifying effect catalyzed by a collective resistance to an outside force, atomized around different ethnic strongmen.

## FROM IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS TO A CADRE OF PERSONALITIES

From its early years, unity within the party was largely dependent upon a state of external crisis. And yet, the Soviet invasion, the civil war that ensued, and the rise of the Taliban were not always enough to overcome fractious rivalries within the party's ranks. Scholars have retrospectively debated Jamiat's level of cohesion during the early decades of its existence. The advent of the Soviet invasion catapulted the Islamist parties within Afghanistan to the fore of national politics, but the leadership of this resistance movement remained fragmented. The competition for territorial control between and among the Jamiat-affiliated military commanders often meant that a strong ideological platform for unified action remained unattainable.<sup>27</sup> From the outset, Jamiat's only real platform was waging jihad. As such, its elites were largely focused on resisting the opposition at any given time. The creation of a proactive political agenda, beyond a stated desire to establish an Islamic state based upon shari'a law, proved elusive.<sup>28</sup>

As with other political groupings during this time, including Hizb-i Islami, ideological fundamentalism would take a backseat to the cults of personality that were created around strong leaders and the patronage they provided. President Karzai's leadership style in the decade since the US-led invasion and the agglomeration of power within presidency has been built upon this self-same premise. French scholar Olivier Roy's observation that the development of political parties encouraged "both political affiliation and political segmentation" points to the inherent strengths and weaknesses of Jamiat as an organization that continue to influence and characterize its operation today.<sup>29</sup> Loose arrangements with other regional military commanders extended the party's influence during its years of resistance,

---

*Loose arrangements with other regional military commanders extended the party's influence during its years of resistance, but stymied centralized command and control and a unified party structure.*

---

but stymied centralized command and control and a unified party structure. Patronage from the center became the primary means of securing regional support, but such gains were often purchased at the expense of control over the rise of semi-autonomous strongmen. Strong leadership frequently trumped party organization. The fixation of radical Islamist groups in Afghanistan on strong leaders, rather than on institutions, encouraged a pattern of individual monopolization over material resources and over the means of violence. Historians have noted that this fixation reflects one of the historical weaknesses of the model of political Islam as originally promoted by the Muslim Brotherhood and as later adopted by its

Afghan brethren: its "dependence on a single charismatic leader, an amir, rather than a more democratically constituted organization to lead it."<sup>30</sup> The emphasis on strong leaders, however, predates this era of Afghanistan's history; the country's model of political Islam was as much an adaptation of pre-existing dynamics as a departure from it.<sup>31</sup>

In the case of Ismail Khan, this centrality of personal leadership diluted the original ideological impetus behind the party's founding. In the case of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami, it facilitated a dictatorship that determined the fate of the party's fortunes and that continues to this day.<sup>32</sup> Even Ahmad Shah Massoud, not usually identified as a traditional strongman, was essential to the establishment and success of the Shura-e Nazar. Because Massoud's appointment as a regional 'amir' for Jamiat was a nominal title, he "resorted to the creation of an institutional framework under his direction, which would have highlighted his leadership role by reducing personal rivalries and facilitating cooperation."<sup>33</sup> In the case of Burhanuddin Rabbani, his personal prestige stemmed from his spiritual, intellectual, and Islamist credentials, facilitating his role as the titular—if not



<b>JAMIAT CHRONOLOGY TO 2001</b>	
Mid- to late-1960s	Sunni Islamist organizations loosely modeled after the Muslim Brotherhood develop in Afghanistan in opposition to the ruling elite, primarily among students and faculty at Kabul University
1967	Jamiat-e Islami emerges under the leadership of Burhanuddin Rabbani
1973	Prominent Islamist leaders flee to Pakistan following Daoud's coup
Summer 1974	Rabbani arrives in Pakistan, builds opposition against Gulbuddin Hekmatyar
Mid-1970s	Hekmatyar leads breakaway party Hizb-i Islami
April 1978	War breaks out in Afghanistan
January 1980	At the recommendation of Jamiat, six parties, including Jamiat and Hizb-i Islami, form an alliance, the Ettehad-i Islami Baray Azadi-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Liberty of Afghanistan), though tensions remain between the two groups
1984	Massoud establishes Shura-e Nazar without the sponsorship of Jamiat leadership
1992	Abdul Rashid Dostum's Uzbek military forces unite with Jamiat forces against Hekmatyar and take control of Kabul. Civil war breaks out between Jamiat and Hizbi Islami, with continuously shifting alliances
December 1992	Rabbani elected president by a council of 1,400 members after briefly serving as an appointed president beginning in June
1994	Dostum and his Junbesh party (est. 1992) ally with Hekmatyar against Jamiat forces; reduces Jamiat's influence in northern Afghanistan
1996	Establishment of the Northern Alliance/Northern Front. Hizb-i Islami incorporated into Jamiat government, but infighting persists
September 1996	The Taliban takes control of Kabul with Pakistani support
February 1998	Despite alliance, Jamiat launches offensive against Junbesh
1998	Taliban take control of north from Jamiat
September 2001	Massoud assassinated
November 2001	Fall of Taliban; re-launch of Northern Alliance. Jamiat-e Islami re-emerges, dominates new government and sidelines Junbesh

always practical—head of Jamiat for four decades.<sup>34</sup>

That Jamiat cohered around networks of resistance more than a specific Islamist ideology or a particular political platform is critical to an understanding of the *tanzim*'s later politicization of its military power. This fact, perhaps more than any other, helps to explain why Jamiat has fragmented so often over the ensuing years and, by the same token, why later warlord-turned-politicians such as Marshal Fahim and Atta Muhammad Noor found it tactically effective to appeal to the notion of party and more broadly of 'mujahideen' solidarity. As Olivier Roy noted before the cessation of hostilities with the Soviet Union—a time when Jamiat was in the ascendance—the resistance of the mujahideen could “only hope to survive through the extension of a political organization which is not weakened by its own internal divisions.”<sup>35</sup> Massoud arguably came closest to bridging some of those internal divisions, but ultimately Jamiat never developed a proactive party platform. The party extended its recruits in large part because of Massoud's military successes, but the very need to co-opt military commanders and networks, including those which were not ethnically Tajik, meant a necessary dilution of any revolutionary Islamist framework or party platform. Whereas Islamic ideology may have served as the original element of party cohesion, it was rapidly suborned by other, more tactical priorities, such as military effectiveness and the ability to dole out patronage. Instead, a kind of “superficial politicization” developed whereby strongmen such as Ismail Khan pledged their fealty to Jamiat in exchange for unifying the otherwise fragmented political-military resistance in places like western Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup>

The case of Ismail Khan illustrates both the source of Jamiat's increasingly expansive influence and its weakness in terms of the lack of its central organization. Loose arrangements with local strongmen were necessary to achieve the political objectives of resistance, be it resistance against the communists or against the Taliban, but it tended to discourage any robust form of centralized political organization that governed party

elites as well as peripheral strongmen. This pattern has held true into the present day, with outsized political and military personalities subordinating party patronage and party loyalties in the service of their own ends. Lines of distribution for such patronage have not been broad-based, but generally narrow and deep, limited to a handful of players.<sup>37</sup>

## FROM THE FALL OF THE TALIBAN TO THE 2009 ELECTION

In the post-Taliban era, Jamiat evolved from a traditional *tanzim* to a party almost entirely based on patronage politics. As the former networks of the mujahideen refashioned themselves as “political parties,” Olivier Roy's observation in the late 1980s about the propensity of Afghan politics to veer toward continual segmentation and loose affiliation continued to hold true. The ceaseless splitting and coalescing that Jamiat experienced was largely directed at gaining seats or other forms of leverage in negotiations before a major election, rather than reflecting any sustained attempt at building a genuine party of opposition. As Thomas Ruttig has observed, “often new parties were launched without any hint of programmatic differences and by leaders who were simply not the ‘number one’ in their old parties.” The possession of armed power—or strong alliances with those who did possess such power—was the means by which such leverage was, and continues to be, secured. In that sense, the party served as a loosely organized means to attain and retain power.<sup>38</sup> Alliances often proved to be artificial political constructs utilized for short-term gain, usually in advance of an election.

### *The Panjshiri Trio: 'Next Gen' Jamiat-Affiliated Leaders*

Twin events, the death of Ahmad Shah Massoud and the attacks of September 2001 that precipitated the U.S.-led intervention, profoundly affected the party's fortunes. On the one hand, the death of Massoud left Jamiat politically leaderless and rudderless. On the other, the U.S. intervention ensured the ultimate success of the Northern Alliance—of which Jamiat and its affiliates were the prime element—against the Taliban.

Massoud's assassination at the hands of Jordanian al-Qaeda affiliates threatened to plunge morale among the Northern Alliance at a crucial time, when new fronts were being opened in the north in the battle against the Pashtun-dominated Taliban. Yet any hope of victory was far from certain. Massoud's Shura-e Nazar, or "Supervisory Council of the North," had functioned as a kind of parallel military network within Jamiat, while still ostensibly deferring to Rabbani's leadership of the party.

General Mohammad Fahim, Massoud's loyal lieutenant and a member of his Panjshiri wing of the Jamiat party, would be elected among Massoud's inner circle to serve as his successor in the U.S.-led intervention that ensued. Fahim, however, lacked Massoud's charisma or his political acumen, and he proved unable to keep Jamiat from fragmenting in the early days of the new interim Afghan administration. Nor could he effectively control the Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek warlords whose support Massoud had managed to corral against the Taliban. Many of these men were now re-claiming their old fiefdoms in the wake of victory. The fragmentation within the Northern Alliance was compounded by the actions of Burhanuddin Rabbani, the notional president of Afghanistan from 1992-1996. His former administration had proved a failure, and yet, despite his unpopularity with many Pashtun communities, expected to be reinstated in his former position of influence upon the fall of the Taliban.<sup>39</sup>

Rabbani's opposition to the formation of a broad-based government established in the UN-sponsored Bonn meetings reflected a larger fissure within Jamiat between two different generations of its leaders. The so-called "Young Turks," represented by Panjshiri loyalists of Massoud, prominent among them Yunus Qanooni, Mohammad Fahim, and Abdullah Abdullah, initially proved more willing to work with the international community and with President Karzai on the formation of a coalition government than the older guard of Jamiat. As Massoud's former spokesman, Qanooni was a deft negotiator and led the delegation on behalf of the Shura-e Nazar at the Bonn summit.

Rabbani, who was not a participant at the Bonn talks in Germany, attempted to delay the proceedings to form a new government. Among his many tactics, he insisted that any interim government reflect the percentage of Pashtuns in the Afghan population documented in the last Afghan census dating back to the 1970s, a figure potentially much lower than most contemporary estimates of the day.<sup>40</sup> As he had demonstrated in the 1990s, Rabbani was not above playing the role of national spoiler if it would serve his own interests. Karzai, however, recognized the importance of currying favor with the younger Jamiati leadership as well as Jamiat's patriarch. This was particularly crucial for Karzai with respect to Mohammad Qasim Fahim, now the de-facto military head of the Northern Alliance who had taken control of Kabul in the waning days of the Taliban regime. Despite having been arrested, interrogated, and allegedly tortured under Fahim's orders while serving in the Rabbani-led, Tajik-controlled government in the 1990s, Karzai disarmed Northern Alliance leaders by arriving in Kabul without an armed escort of Pashtun tribesmen.<sup>41</sup>

Fahim, Qanooni, and Abdullah would go on to assume three of the most crucial Cabinet posts in the new regime—Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs—with Fahim later apportioning for himself a second title, that of First Vice President.<sup>42</sup> Their willingness to reconcile with a Pashtun executive and the UN-backed administration gave them considerable influence in the construction of the interim power-sharing deals and debates over disarmament that followed.

Although widely hailed in international press as a triumvirate of younger, more modern Jamiati leaders assuming the mantle of Massoud's nationalist legacy, ethnic divisions and old suspicions persisted. None of the former Northern Alliance strongmen—Mohammad Fahim, Ismail Khan, and Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostum among them—was particularly interested in establishing a genuinely national Afghan army, one that would have required the disarmament and re-integration of their private militias.<sup>43</sup> Fahim's years as a loyal military lieutenant to Massoud had convinced him

<b>PRINCIPAL NORTHERN ALLIANCE ‘PARTIES’<sup>48</sup></b>	
<b>JAMIAT-E ISLAMI</b>	Founded by Burhanuddin Rabbani prior to the Soviet invasion; gained its primary following among Tajiks in the north and west, though it always included a minority of Pashtuns. An Islamist party created to resist secularism and communism, it gradually took a more moderate, ‘big tent’ approach. This effectively drew in new recruits but resulted in limited coordination among semi-autonomous factions.
<b>HIZB-I WAHDAT</b>	Established under Iranian pressure in 1989; result of the unification of Afghanistan’s rival Hazara factions. Hizb-i Wahdat rose to national prominence during the civil war, when it seized parts of Kabul and Mazar-e Sharif in alliance with Massoud’s Jamiat-e Islami.
<b>JUNBESH-I MILLI</b>	Party led by Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum from 1992 onwards. Emerged as a reaction to President Najibullah’s re-centralization efforts and Pashtun nationalist influence in the north. Dostum, a former Communist general, has long maintained horizontal networks with other rival factions, including Jamiat-e Islami and Ittehad-i Islami, but will remain a reliable ally only insofar as other parties don’t affect his personal influence.
<b>ITTEHAD-I ISLAMI</b>	Led by Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf, a Pashtun Islamist educated in Egypt and considered, alongside Rabbani, as one of the founders of Afghanistan’s Islamist movement. Ittehad never commanded a large following among ethnic Afghans, but managed to attract significant Saudi and Pakistani support and recruit large numbers of Arab commanders during the country’s various wars.

that control of the nation’s army was vital to the control of the country writ large and to the protection of Tajik elite interests.

In the clashes between rival powers in various northern provinces—most notably between those commanders loyal to Tajik general and Jamiati leader from Balkh province, Mohammad Atta Noor, and those to Uzbek general Abdul Dostum—Kabul-based Jamiati elites such as Qanooni and Fahim, who controlled the interior and defense ministries, were in a position to help secure

Atta’s advantage.<sup>44</sup> At the time, they were accused of openly fomenting divisions among the northern Uzbek opposition and funneling aid to Atta in the hopes of securing strongholds such as Mazar-e Sharif for their faction before the upcoming Loya Jirga to select a transitional administration.<sup>45</sup> Within the ministries themselves, leaders such as Fahim were notorious for filling senior appointments with former colleagues of a similar ethnic and geographical background.<sup>46</sup> These early dynamics established Jamiat elites as dominant within the ruling political class in Kabul. In later years



Rabbani, Qanooni, Abdullah, and Fahim would all extend their respective bases of power in different areas of the government; Qanooni and Abdullah would shift their efforts to controlling the Parliament, Fahim would solidify his control over the military, and Rabbani would eventually assume leadership over the Presidential Palace's negotiations with the Taliban.

#### *The First National Election of 2004*

Without a formal role in the early years of the transitional administration, Rabbani publicly claimed to be focused on transforming Jamiat from a militarized organization—one predominantly led by Massoud's Shura-e Nazar—to a genuine political party in advance of Afghanistan's first democratic election.<sup>47</sup> Despite the growing disenchantment with the leadership of the party and the former Northern Alliance strongmen in the new administration, Jamiat was widely expected to command a sizeable constituency in the national elections. Nevertheless, party leaders found it difficult to settle on a clear course of action in the late months of 2003 and early months of 2004.

Disgruntled by presidential and international efforts to curb their power through disarmament and monitoring efforts—particularly in the north—former mujahideen commanders, both Jamiat and non-Jamiat alike, found common cause in their complaints. Although Afghan law technically forbade the participation of armed groups in national politics, such provisos were difficult in practice to enforce. In October 2003, while President Karzai was travelling outside of the country, Northern Alliance leaders met to discuss the possibility of withdrawing their support for the president and of fielding an opposition candidate in the elections. Many of the former Northern Alliance factions would go on to register as formal political parties under the new constitution, but these older, informal mujahideen networks essentially remained intact, their leadership structure largely unchanged.

Bickering among the different factions, however, meant that no candidate at the time was selected or endorsed.<sup>49</sup> Individual leaders such as Fahim, having achieved

considerable wealth through his role as a minister in government, were quick to deny publicly that the purpose of the meetings was to call into question Karzai's authority. Although estimates vary as to the magnitude of Fahim's personal net worth at the time, with some ranging upward of a billion U.S. dollars, there is little doubt that his ability to grant patronage and appropriate government land through his position as Minister of Defense made him considerably affluent and also a target of ire and jealousy within sections of his own party.<sup>50</sup>

In the months leading up to the election, former jihadi leaders would frequently invoke the threat of forming an opposition coalition against Karzai—leaders including Rabbani, Ismail Khan, and Abdul Rashid Dostum—but their collective inability to coalesce around a single alternative candidate weakened their bargaining position. The significant authorities granted to the executive over the legislative branch of government in the new Afghan Constitution heightened their sense of unease, but this did not translate into concerted political action. The strongest leverage these warlords and former mujahideen consistently applied was the threat of revoking their support for the president and, by extension, threatening the current administration—a coalition of different ethnic factions in Afghanistan heavily dominated by the Northern Alliance—with disintegration. For the powerbrokers of the former Northern Alliance, the threat of 'opt-out' has proven an effective bargaining tactic and one that could serve them well in the lead-up to the 2014 elections, provided a semblance of unity among them prevails. As will be discussed in a later section, Atta's convening of the "Mazar Summit" of Northern leaders in January 2013 suggests an early attempt to demonstrate political strength through a show of northern solidarity.

Fears of government disintegration have never been insignificant for Karzai, who met with Northern Alliance leaders and former mujahideen commanders a few months before the vote to hear their demands, and who later insisted that the warlords were "part of the reality of this country."<sup>51</sup> Without a clear majority

of votes, the president knew he would be forced into a second round of voting and might run the risk of appearing to lose his governing mandate. Despite past transgressions, some of these leaders likewise expected prominent positions in Kabul once Karzai was re-elected. Karzai, by the same token, recognized that keeping many of these warlords closer to Kabul could prove a useful check on their authority outside of it. Ismail Khan, for example, would later be reincarnated as the next Minister for Water and Energy.

In exchange for acknowledgement of their demands for influence and for recognition, the patriarch of Jamiat, Burhanuddin Rabbani, mujahideen veterans such as Ismail Khan and Abdul Sayyaf, and younger Northern Alliance leaders such as Fahim and Qanooni publicly expressed their support for Karzai's candidacy.<sup>52</sup> Fahim was widely expected to remain in his position as one of Karzai's vice presidential running mates; the northern Tajik leader was lobbying heavily to have General Bismullah Khan, a fellow Massoud loyalist and Tajik commander, take his place at the Ministry of Defense. However, with hours to spare before the deadline to declare his candidacy, Karzai decided to drop Fahim from the ticket in favor of Ahmad Zia Massoud, a younger brother of the slain hero. Massoud was serving at the time as Afghanistan's ambassador to Moscow and, conveniently, was Burhanuddin Rabbani's son-in-law. President Karzai, under pressure from international allies to distance his administration from Northern Alliance-affiliated warlords and publicly to espouse national disarmament, opted for the potentially riskier choice of Massoud and Karim Khalili, a Hazara leader of Hizb-i Wahdat, as his two running mates.<sup>53</sup> In both candidates Karzai hoped to stave off the opposition of the former jihadis by choosing someone close to Rabbani, and to simultaneously win over the Hazara ethnic group.<sup>54</sup> The decision would have serious consequences, not only for the disarray that the choice of candidate threw the party into, but for the considerable ire that it produced between Karzai and Fahim.

In the aftermath, the Northern Alliance failed to agree on a common candidate among the twenty-three that

initially stepped forward. Qanooni, then serving as the Education Minister, claimed to have the backing of Fahim and the other Jamiati leaders in their Panjshiri wing, including foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah, as well as many former mujahideen leaders such as General Daud Khan of Kunduz province.<sup>55</sup> The move revealed a split within the younger generation of Jamiat between the "Panjshiri Trio" and Massoud's younger brother.

As is often the case in Afghan politics, neither political camp ceased speaking to the other about possible deals to be brokered throughout this uncertain and sensitive phase. Fahim and Qanooni were in regular contact with the president. Political veterans such as Rabbani and Sayyaf were also heavily involved in negotiations, but continued to withhold public support for any particular candidate.<sup>56</sup> Less than a week before the election, Rabbani announced his support for Karzai and his son-in-law, Ahmad Zia, citing the interests of the stability and security of the country. Once again, Rabbani displayed his tendency to pursue political ends that were viewed as ultimately advantageous for him and his close circle of intimates. Jamiat had always heavily recruited from the Tajik-dominated northern provinces and from the former mujahideen networks of fighters and commanders; those constituencies were now split between those claiming to support Karzai as the frontrunner candidate and those backing Qanooni.

Although Rabbani's influence was never absolute within Jamiat, his endorsement helped secure the outstanding contest in Karzai's favor.<sup>57</sup> Qanooni, who had considered himself a member of the "loyal opposition" since leaving government, had been arguing for a more decentralized and federalized system that would constrain the large powers vested in the presidency. The rift would portend a greater fissure within Jamiat in the ensuing years, between self-styled opposition politicians who sought to invest greater powers in a parliamentary system, and former mujahideen commanders, who benefited greatly from the spoils the central state apparatus could provide.<sup>58</sup>

### 2004–2008: A Fragmented Opposition

The confusion that reigned in the lead-up to and aftermath of the 2004 presidential election illustrates the paradoxical fluidity of Afghan politics at this time as well as its inherent rigidity. A plethora of opposition parties mushroomed in these years, often in the form of individual leaders founding parties or alliances around their own person, without actually jettisoning their affiliation with their mother organizations, such as Jamiat-e Islami, or their previous military networks.

Qanooni attempted to set up his own party, *Hizb-i Afghanistan Newin*, or New Afghanistan Party. At the same time, he was still officially politically affiliated with the Massoud brothers, who would then challenge his attempt to run in the election against Karzai.<sup>59</sup> In 2005, Qanooni attempted the creation of another, more robust, opposition alliance in the form of the National Understanding Front, or *Jabahi Tafahim-Millie*, made up of at least ten political parties. This, too, soon disintegrated in the face of internal squabbling. Afghan commentators were quick to note that this National Understand Front simply mimicked the composition of the former Northern Alliance (with notable exceptions such as Karim Khalili and General Dostum, both of whom were serving in government at the time). As such, it was a temporary political construct, established solely to lobby for more seats ahead of the parliamentary elections by bargaining with the government, rather than to act as a parliamentary opposition alliance.<sup>60</sup>

Qanooni would go on to reconcile not long afterwards with Rabbani, an indication of the constant ebb and flow of breakaway factions within Jamiat. He bequeathed to Rabbani leadership of the opposition in exchange for his support as a candidate for Speaker of the Lower House, or *Wolesi Jirga*.<sup>61</sup> Another formally launched “United National Front” was subsequently formed in 2007, with Rabbani at its helm and Ahmad Zia Massoud, still serving as first vice president, as a prominent member. The Front was billed as a political bloc that brought together members of the current government, former communists, and anti-communists to seek electoral changes that allowed for greater Parliamentary influence

and constraints on President Karzai’s power. Many of the members of the United Front, including Rabbani, were either legislators at the time or individuals who felt sidelined within the administration. The United Front’s members included Ahmad Zia Massoud, who cited as his motivations the ruptures with Karzai over the slow pace of reform and the president’s preference for negotiations with the Taliban while he had been serving as first vice president, and Water and Energy Minister Ismail Khan.<sup>62</sup> Massoud’s family connection to Rabbani helped ensure that the first vice president nevertheless remained politically aligned with Jamiat’s patriarch. His selection as first vice president, however, encouraged a rift with Mohammad Fahim over who would assume the mantle of Ahmad Shah Massoud’s legacy in the Panjshir and represent Tajik interests at the senior-most levels of government.

### Karzai’s Re-election in 2009

Splits within the United Front in advance of the 2009 presidential elections appeared months before the beginning of the open period for candidate registration on April 25<sup>th</sup>.<sup>63</sup> Bickering amongst the Front’s members meant that an announcement of their nominee, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, was delayed from February until April.<sup>64</sup> The coup de grace, however, came the day after the announcement, when Marshal Fahim formally voiced his opposition to Abdullah’s candidacy and threw his support to the incumbent president.<sup>65</sup> Fahim would later join President Karzai’s ticket as one of his two running mates.<sup>66</sup> The fragmentation within the Front illustrates the importance of timing within Afghan politics and for President Karzai personally. Although discussions between the two had been rumored for months, President Karzai formally co-opted Fahim to become his running mate just prior to the deadline for candidate nominations. Although Karzai benefited from the internal divisions that were already rife within the Front, the timing of Fahim’s co-option ensured maximum disarray within the opposition’s ranks, offering them little time to re-group or to renegotiate with Fahim. For this reason, President Karzai is likely to bide his time until just prior to the September candidate



**PHOTO 1 | ABDULLAH ABDULLAH SPEAKS AT A JAMIAT CONFERENCE. (SOURCE: FACEBOOK)**

registration deadline before making his preferences for the 2014 election publicly known.

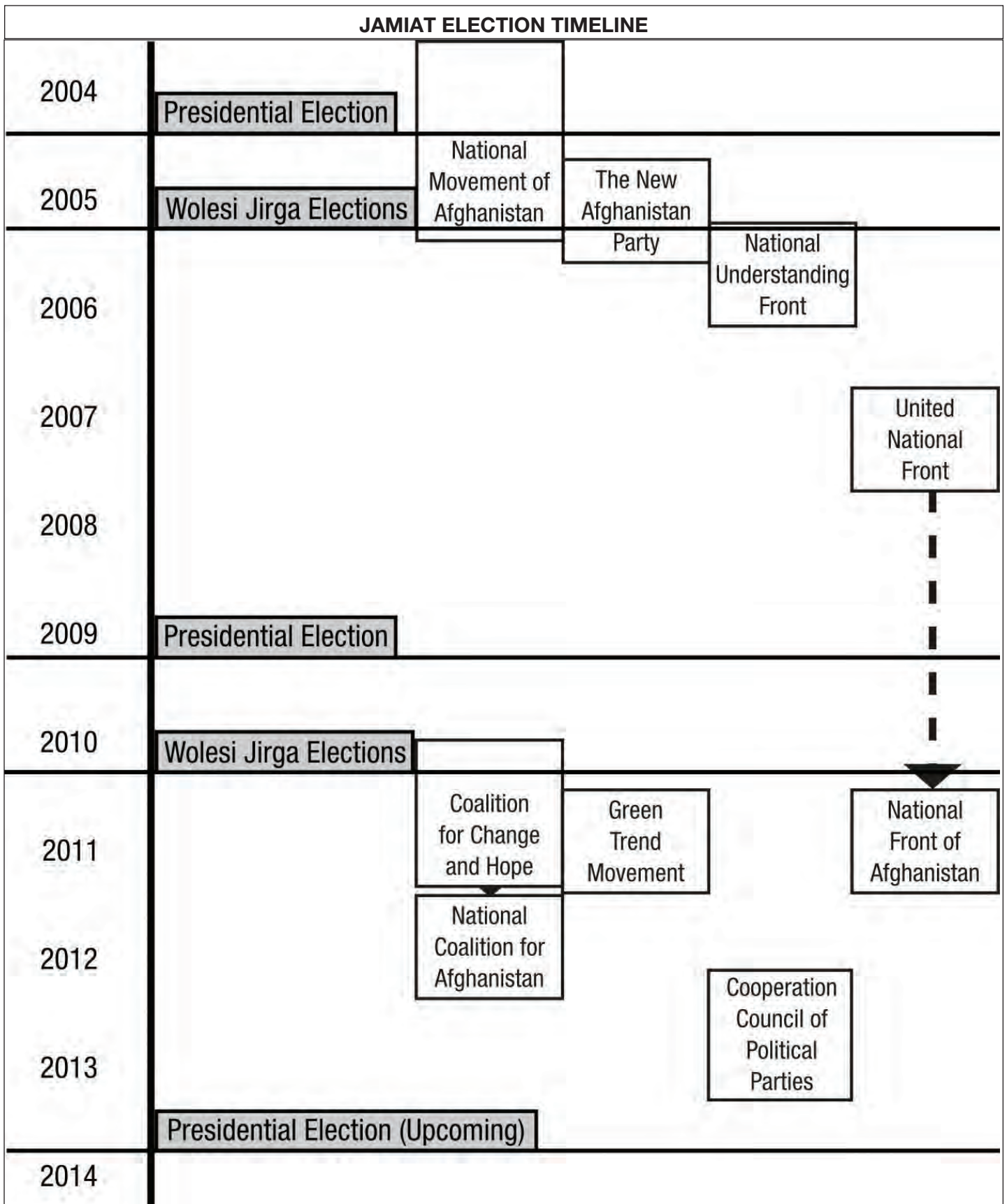
The fissures in 2009 centered around three factional divisions within Jamiat: Rabbani (who eventually supported the candidacy of former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah), Fahim (co-opted by President Karzai to become his running mate who had been opposed to Abdullah's candidacy), and Ahmad Zia Massoud (who early on had expressed an interest in pursuing his own political platform and was likewise opposed to Abdullah Abdullah).<sup>67</sup> Dr. Abdullah, the former Foreign Affairs Minister who had been Ahmad Shah Massoud's physician during the jihad and straddled the ethnic divide with his Pashtun and Tajik roots, was not himself a formal member of the United Front. In order to secure his candidacy, he was forced to join in order to be selected by the group.<sup>68</sup> At a time when Karzai was facing pressure internally and externally over the slow pace of reform and mounting civilian casualties, his choice of Fahim reflected an oft-used tactic. Karzai has frequently splintered his opposition by bringing into the fold members of Jamiat and other key ethnic groups, by luring them with ministry appointments, business deals, and other senior positions in government.

The relationship between Fahim and Karzai may have been severely strained from 2004-2009, but it was never broken.<sup>69</sup> This dynamic is typical of Afghan politics and it reflects the mutual interests that bound these two leaders together. Fahim still controlled many of the most

effective segments of the Afghan armed forces, whose commanders were loyal to him personally and not to any national institution. At the same time, Fahim's access to state patronage provided a critical means by which he continued to build his influence. Once Fahim, and other warlords such as Dostum whom Karzai lured away with promises, opted out of the United Front, the opposition coalition fell apart and lost momentum. The upshot of this episode is that co-option of influential warlords has been President Karzai's most effective antidote to the threat posed by his political opponents. Any chosen successor to Karzai, particularly a Pashtun successor, will almost certainly be influenced by the success of this model of politicking across ethnic divisions.

Nevertheless, in the course of his campaign Abdullah managed to retain the support of certain Jamiati segments, including that of the powerful Governor of Balkh, Atta Muhammed Noor, the Massoud brothers, and Burhanuddin Rabbani. That support, and the widespread allegations of corruption and vote fraud, was sufficient to create the conditions for a second round run-off between Karzai and Abdullah. The political uncertainty that resulted from the lack of an outright victory was precisely what the Karzai campaign had hoped to avoid. The months of haggling with the United Nations, the Independent Election Commission (IEC), and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) over allegations of vote fraud led to the scheduling of a run-off in November in that year. Abdullah Abdullah pulled out of the race just prior to the run-off, citing the impossibility of fair play in a second round of voting.<sup>70</sup> Speculation ran rampant as to Abdullah's motivations. Abdullah's representatives, in particular Burhanuddin Rabbani, had been negotiating with President Karzai behind closed doors over a potential power-sharing deal mere hours before Abdullah announced his withdrawal. Rabbani was rumored to have insisted that one of his sons be installed in a Cabinet post and that Atta Noor be allowed to remain as governor of Balkh. Neither side at the time was willing to confirm the precise parameters of the power-sharing deal or whether Abdullah's bowing out was a result of their failure or their success. Aides to Abdullah during this period cited the former Foreign





Minister's desire for sweeping electoral reform as the real source of the impasse between the two men. Rabbani, it seemed, proved much more willing to negotiate over tit-for-tat political spoils, which Karzai would have been far more amenable to than constitutional reform.<sup>71</sup>

The crucial lesson of the 2009 election for President Karzai was two-fold: enervate your opponents by negotiating with them from a position of strength and avoid a contested political outcome at all costs. Once a second round voting appeared likely, the Tajik opposition politicians within the Abdullah camp reverted to negotiating with the incumbent regime. However, in the course of doing so they also undermined any sense of common purpose. For those like Abdullah that claimed to have failed in this endeavor, the preferred strategy was to form a reconstituted opposition within Parliament. This shifting back and forth between the 'establishment' and the 'opposition,' and between the executive and the legislature, based on the perception of political gains or losses has proven to be a kind of "rinse and repeat" cycle among Tajik leaders during the previous decade. After stepping down from the race, and in a move reminiscent of Qanooni in 2004,

Abdullah established his own opposition alliance, *Omid Wa Taghir*, or the "Hope and Change" Party. Predictably, Rabbani's Jamiat became one of the leading parties of the alliance.<sup>72</sup>

However, Dr. Abdullah's "Hope and Change" party suffered a severe setback when President Karzai wooed one of its leading members, Burhanuddin Rabbani, back into the government fold.<sup>73</sup> After President Karzai appointed the Jamiati veteran to be the head of the Consultative Peace Jirga in 2010 and later Chairman of the High Peace Council, Hope and Change struggled to present a united opposition front. Abdullah boycotted the peace consultations in June of that year. Rabbani's leadership of the proceedings only

highlighted the coalition's fragmentation.

The 2010 Parliamentary elections in September, marred by allegations of fraud, did not result in a clear majority for either side.<sup>74</sup> Both pro-government and opposition leaders each claimed to be able to count on at least 100 supporters in the 249-seat Lower House of Parliament, but individual legislators were prone to switching sides or to simply remaining undecided.<sup>75</sup> Although Abdullah managed to bring together many of the younger, more technocratic Jamiati cohort within his Hope and Change coalition—including Ahmad Wali Massoud, Yunus Qanooni, and former National Directorate of Security (NDS) Chief Amrullah Saleh—it, too, struggled to develop an active reform agenda and to appeal to a broad-based, multi-ethnic majority.<sup>76</sup>

---

*Karzai's techniques of individual co-option and the constant infighting among Jamiati grandees meant that Jamiat-supported opposition alliances from 2002-2009 struggled to endure.*

---

Other Jamiat-affiliated heavyweights, such as Fahim and Ismail Khan, were serving in the government and were not inclined to become members. Atta Noor, at one time very vocal in his support for Abdullah, had noticeably toned down his anti-Karzai rhetoric. A series of retaliations initiated by the central government against his authority in Balkh province are rumored to have convinced him that

his material and political interests were better served by adopting a moderated stance. At a time when many provincial governors were being dismissed, he remained ensconced in his post as governor of Balkh.<sup>77</sup>

Karzai's techniques of individual co-option and the constant infighting among Jamiati grandees meant that Jamiat-supported opposition alliances from 2002-2009 struggled to endure. Jamiat's political involvement in the years since the fall of the Taliban reflected this "rinse and repeat" cycle: the prospect of elections would split the party's affiliates between pro-government and various opposition factions, largely—though not exclusively—depending upon whether one was in power in the government, or whether one's influence was

being circumscribed. The dividing line between these two groups was incredibly porous, with individuals frequently shifting their loyalties from one side to the other.

However, the constant horse-trading and defections between and among Jamiat's loose factions does not obscure the reality that the two camps were entwined by their desire for "joint economic management, shared positions of power and the will to maintain this status quo."<sup>78</sup> The pro-Karzai camp and what Qanooni labeled the "loyal opposition" have been locked in a kind of symbiotic relationship since the government's early years. At various times this relationship has experienced strain, but the mutual interest in joint gain was never severed. Thomas Barfield aptly observes that in Afghan politics "opportunism could always be counted on to undermine any other 'ism' (Islamism, nationalism, socialism, etc.)."<sup>79</sup> This basic premise has characterized the relationship between the president and most members of the Tajik-dominated party in the decade after the fall of the Taliban.<sup>80</sup>

The strength of the party's past credentials did not translate into its development into a modern political organization. As is often the case in Afghan politics, personalities dominated the landscape; little distinction was made between Jamiat 'members' and 'sympathizers.' Those, like Qanooni, Massoud, and Abdullah, who opted to create their own spin-off factions were essentially shuffling and re-shuffling the composition of their new parties amongst the same set of players. This continuity made it difficult for the party to transcend previous ethnic boundaries and the specific concerns of its mujahideen veterans; whatever nationalist aspirations Massoud may have had prior to his assassination were not effectively taken up by his successors. The legacy of the party, with respect to its anti-Soviet and anti-Taliban credentials, cemented Jamiat's distinctiveness among Afghan political factions. However, in the post-Taliban era this impeded the party's transcendence beyond parochial, regional, and ethnic concerns.

## FROM RABBANI'S ASSASSINATION TO THE 2014 ELECTION

*"The Martyr of Peace:" Rabbani's Assassination*

Ten years after the assassination of Ahmad Shah Massoud, another towering figure of the Northern Alliance was killed. A Taliban sympathizer carrying explosives in his turban and claiming to support reconciliation talks assassinated Rabbani in his home in Kabul. Much of the focus surrounding Burhanuddin Rabbani's assassination at the hands of the Taliban centered upon the event's impact on the ongoing peace negotiations and the leadership vacancy it left on the High Peace Council (HPC)—an ad hoc organization whose members were appointed by the government and charged with advancing peace negotiations with the insurgents.

However, Rabbani's death left also an important vacancy within Jamiat. Although Rabbani was never a mujahideen commander—and at times stood at odds with Ahmad Shah Massoud's Shura-e Nazar—he was one of the few veterans of both the Soviet and civil wars that maintained strong links with the presidential palace, with the ulema (largely in the north), and with former jihadi commanders.<sup>81</sup> Rabbani never regained the stature he possessed as president of the country in the 1990s, but he played an outsized role behind the scenes as both a political broker and presiding patriarch of the various centripetal forces within Jamiat. Because he had never fully allied himself with either the Karzai government or with the Jamiat-led opposition in its various incarnations, he was well positioned to act as an intermediary between the two camps.

Rabbani, however, had not made adequate preparations to select his successor at the time of his violent demise. In January 2011, the party had announced its intention to hold a party congress to select a new generation of leadership within Jamiat. However, repeated delays—and Rabbani's propensity for clinging to a position once he had laid claim to it—prevented such a conclave from coming to fruition. At the time of his assassination, his son-in-law, Ahmad Zia Massoud, was serving as

**WHO'S WHO AMONG JAMIAT-AFFILIATED LEADERS, PART I**



**ABDULLAH ABDULLAH**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Opposition Leader, National Coalition of Afghanistan  
Opposition Candidate, 2009 Presidential Election

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs (2001-2006)

**ETHNICITY:**  
Mixed Tajik and Pashtun, b. Kabul

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Advisor and physician to Ahmad Shah Massoud



**MARSHAL QASIM FAHIM**

**CURRENT POST:**  
First Vice President (2009-present)

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Minister of Defense and Vice President (2002-2004)

**ETHNICITY:**  
Tajik, b. Panjshir Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Head of Intelligence & Minister for National Security, Northern Alliance



**ISMAIL KHAN**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Minister of Water and Energy (2005-present)

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Governor of Herat Province (2002-2004)

**ETHNICITY:**  
Tajik, b. Herat Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Fled to neighboring Iran, later captured by the Taliban



**AHMED WALI MASSOUD**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Opposition Politician, National Front of Afghanistan

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Ambassador to the United Kingdom (2002-2006)

**ETHNICITY:**  
Tajik, younger brother of Ahmad Shah Massoud

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Member, Northern Alliance



**AHMAD ZIA MASSOUD**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Opposition Leader, National Front of Afghanistan

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Vice President (2004-2009)  
Ambassador to Russia (2001-2004), later extended to Moldova, Belarus, Armenia

**ETHNICITY:** Tajik, b. Ghazni Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Member, Northern Alliance



**WHO'S WHO AMONG JAMIAT-AFFILIATED LEADERS, PART II**



**ATTA MOHAMMAD NOOR**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Governor of Balkh Province (2004-present)

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Governor of Balkh Province  
Supporter of Abdullah Abdullah in 2009

**ETHNICITY:** Tajik, b. Balkh Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Commander of 7th Corps, Northern Alliance who, along with Abdul Rashid Dostum, drove the Taliban out of Mazar-i Sharif



**YUNUS QANOONI**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Minister of Parliament for Kabul (2010-present)  
Member, National Front of Afghanistan

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Minister of Education (2002-2004)  
Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament (2005-2010)  
Leader, New Afghanistan Party (now defunct)

**ETHNICITY:** Tajik, b. Panjshir Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Member, Northern Alliance



**BURHANUDDIN RABBANI**

**CURRENT POST:** Deceased

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Chairman, High Council for Peace and Reconciliation  
Leader, Jamiat-i Islami  
President, Islamic State of Afghanistan (1992-1996)

**ETHNICITY:** Tajik, b. Badakhshan Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
One of the leaders of the Northern Alliance and head of Jamiat-i Islami, worked closely with Ahmad Shah Massoud and Mohammad Fahim against the Taliban



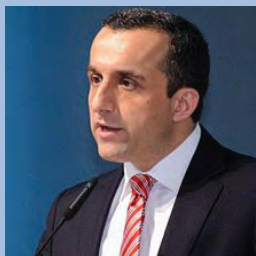
**SALAHUDDIN RABBANI**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Chairman, High Council for Peace & Reconciliation (2012-present)

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Ambassador to Turkey (2010-2012)

**ETHNICITY:** Tajik, b. Kabul

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Worked for Saudi ARAMCO in both Saudi Arabia and the UAE, later attended business school in London



**AMRULLAH SALEH**

**CURRENT POST:**  
Opposition Leader, Afghanistan Green Party

**RELEVANT POSTS:**  
Head of Intelligence, National Directorate of Security (2004-2010)

**ETHNICITY:**  
Tajik, b. Panjshir Province

**ACTIVITIES DURING THE TALIBAN ERA:**  
Appointed by Ahmad Shah Massoud to head the Northern Alliance's liaison office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

the acting head of the party, in charge of its day-to-day affairs.<sup>82</sup> Although Ahmad Zia was viewed as a likely candidate to replace Rabbani, a few weeks after Rabbani's death the Jamiat party leadership announced the selection of Salahuddin Rabbani, Rabbani's eldest son, as the interim head of the party.

Formerly Afghanistan's ambassador to Turkey, Salahuddin was widely regarded as a safe choice—one that paid homage to his father's memory and that could rally the party faithful.<sup>83</sup> In February 2012, Salahuddin announced that a new Jamiat Party Congress would soon select the next official leader. After nearly six months of political wrangling and protestations from many of its senior members, President Karzai chose to appoint Salahuddin to his father's former position as head of the High Peace Council.<sup>84</sup> At the time of publication, Rabbani's son remains in his position as interim party leader.<sup>85</sup>

#### *The Four Horsemen of The Opposition*

With Abdullah's coalition limping along and Ahmad Zia's political prospects on the wane, the announcement of yet another Jamiat-affiliated opposition front led by Ahmad Zia Massoud was not surprising. The establishment of 'new' opposition parties and alliances—typically reincarnations of previous groupings, comprised of similar sets of players—proved to be a useful tactic for both Qanooni in 2004 and Abdullah in 2009 when they faced political marginalization. Nor did the creation of these new parties demand that they sever their ties to their mother organization of Jamiat.

The creation of such opposition alliances was purposefully timed to coincide with preparations for upcoming national elections and the chance to compete for parliamentary votes. In November 2011—ahead of the president's Loya Jirga—Ahmad Zia Massoud announced the reincarnation of the National Front of Afghanistan.<sup>86</sup> This National Front echoed the opposition alliance of the same name led by Rabbani in 2007. The discussions over the formation of such an alliance had preceded Rabbani's demise, with the elder

political veteran encouraging his son-in-law to broaden the coalition's ethnic base before its formal launch. Although it struggled to secure Pashtun support, Dostum and Mohaqqueq, supportive of Karzai in the 2009 election but growing disenchanted with their respective levels of influence, signed on as members of the Front.<sup>87</sup>

Massoud's fortunes had been wavering since his replacement as vice president in favor of Fahim, a condition further exacerbated by Rabbani's death. As acting head of the party, he had been widely expected to take over the leadership of Jamiat, only to be passed over in favor of Rabbani's son, Salahuddin.<sup>88</sup> The narrower subset of parties and groupings in the new National Front in comparison with its predecessor underscores the balkanization that Jamiat continued to experience in the wake of Rabbani's death. Less than four weeks later, Abdullah Abdullah announced the transformation of Hope and Change into yet another opposition alliance, the National Coalition for Afghanistan. The National Coalition was a feeble attempt at broadening the appeal of Hope and Change by expanding its Pashtun and Uzbek membership, although it also included prominent Jamiat members such as former Speaker of Parliament Yunus Qanooni and Ahmad Wali Massoud. Although Abdullah's new coalition mirrored Zia Massoud's National Front in its claims to support a parliamentary system in Afghanistan that devolved power away from the executive, a willingness to talk to the Taliban, and demands for electoral reform, the two never merged.<sup>89</sup> Neither Abdullah nor Zia Massoud have ever possessed the kind of stature that allowed Burhanuddin Rabbani to call for unity amongst the Jamiat-affiliated opposition groups during the creation of the United Front.

Saleh, who had established his own "Green Movement," Abdullah, who had launched the National Coalition for Afghanistan, Qanooni, Fahim, and Ismail Kahn were all noticeably absent at the inauguration of Zia Massoud's National Front. Qanooni's New Afghanistan Party had, by this point, become essentially defunct. His reconciliation with Rabbani had facilitated his entrée into parliament and a return to the Jamiat fold. This

absence also extended to prominent former communists and royalists that had once allied with Rabbani in 2007.<sup>90</sup> Atta Noor, frequently dismissive of the political federalism and decentralization advocated by the Front, also remained absent. He had noticeably declined to participate in 2007 when Burhanuddin Rabbani had tried to unite the opposition.<sup>91</sup>

Nowhere was this balkanization within the party more apparent than over negotiations with the Taliban.<sup>92</sup> Burhanuddin Rabbani's acceptance of the chairmanship of the HPC had generated tensions within Jamiat's ranks. Although some members of the party favored playing an active role in the peace negotiations to influence the discussions in their favor, others were increasingly skeptical that Rabbani's appointment represented anything more than a political ploy by President Karzai to keep the northern factions on board with his peace agenda.<sup>93</sup>

Rumors circulated that Karzai had removed Amrullah Saleh, long suspicious of Pakistani influence in Afghanistan, from his position as head of the national intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), as a presidential concession to Pakistan. Out of office, as head of his new "Green Trend" movement, Saleh adopted a very public anti-Taliban stance.<sup>94</sup> Not only did Saleh's position reveal a rift with both Rabbanis on the High Peace Council, it indicated a perspective more stridently anti-negotiations than either Abdullah's National Coalition for Afghanistan or Massoud's National Front.

The latter two party leaders have remained cautiously open to talks. Zia Massoud attended discussions with the Taliban in Paris in December 2012, while Abdullah sent lower-level representatives from the National Coalition.<sup>95</sup> Saleh was critical of their participation, commenting that their presence at the table only

emboldened the Taliban and their sponsors in Pakistan: "Participation should not have been at this level," Saleh stated, "because the person who had come on behalf of the Taliban ... has never met Mullah Omar. He was sent to Paris by the ISI."<sup>96</sup> In May of 2013, representatives of the Afghan intelligence service announced they had defused a Taliban plot to assassinate Abdullah Abdullah and Ahmad Zia Massoud.<sup>97</sup> The Taliban attacker, Nazifullah, declared upon his arrest that he had received orders from the Taliban Quetta Shura in Pakistan to assassinate both northern leaders.<sup>98</sup> Later that month, both Zia Massoud and Saleh expressed strident skepticism about the unveiling of the Taliban's Doha

office in Qatar as a platform from which to begin peace talks. Saleh claimed the Doha representatives, who styled their office perch as the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," were sent by Pakistani intelligence agents and were out of touch with Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Massoud feared the opening of the office would lead to an increase in violence in the country.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, both Zia Massoud and Abdullah have subsequently expressed alarm over President Karzai's suspension of negotiations over the Bilateral Security Agreement with the

United States in reaction to perceived U.S. complicity in the manner of the opening of the office and the possibility of a "zero option" for U.S. troops after 2014. A spokesman for the National Coalition, Fazal Rahman Orya, attacked President Karzai for acting 'childishly' in his reaction to the opening of the Doha office.<sup>100</sup>

The spectrum of opinion on negotiations across the various Jamiat-led splinter groups makes it difficult, though not insurmountable, to present a unified opposition in 2014. Neither Abdullah nor Massoud has ever ruled out the possibility of joining forces. In June 2012, Massoud announced his desire to field a joint candidate in the 2014 elections with Abdullah's National

---

*"If there is a national understanding, a collective understanding by all Afghan leaders on a candidate, then I won't run. But if the President makes a decision only with his own team, then I will be a candidate."*  
 – Atta Mohammad Noor

---



PHOTO 2 | THE ATTA MAZAR SUMMIT. (SOURCE: AFGHANISTAN-TODAY.ORG)

Coalition, citing a similar zeal between the two groups to enact political reform.<sup>101</sup> Saleh, too, despite his strongly held bias against any form of negotiated deal with the Taliban, has associated himself with the National Front. Like the Northern Alliance before it, the label “National Front” has once again become synonymous with a kind of northern mujahideen political solidarity, but a solidarity that may nonetheless dissolve in the face of tempting offers by the central government. Figures such as Dostum and Mohaqqueq, both notionally tied to the National Front, have historically proven fickle allies in the face of promising offers from Kabul.<sup>102</sup> For many of these former warlords, politics continues to revolve around power rather than principle, making them less-than-reliable allies of the opposition.

As the political professionals within Jamiat continue to splinter and coalesce amongst themselves, the real influence of the party in 2014 may instead reside with two former mujahideen commanders and Jamiat heavyweights, Marshal Fahim and Atta Noor. The directions in which the political loyalties of these two individuals turn are likely to play an outsized role in determining how united Jamiat’s current and former members will be in 2014. Both men have proven capable of maintaining an alliance with the Karzai-led government at the same time that they have dabbled in opposition politics when circumstances suit them.

## ATTA MOHAMMAD NOOR: FROM PROVINCIAL STRONGMAN TO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE?

Governor Atta Mohammad Noor, the warlord-turned-governor from Afghanistan’s strategically located northern province of Balkh, has long presided as Jamiat’s regional leader in the north.<sup>103</sup> According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* report, “giant billboards” of the governor, plastered across the provincial capital Mazar-e-Sharif, far outnumber those of President Karzai.<sup>104</sup> A mujahideen veteran who fought with the Northern Alliance and who has ruled over Balkh as governor since 2004, Atta has in recent months elicited rumblings that his ambitions both within the party and on the national political stage may have grown. Atta had announced his intention to take the helm of Jamiat after Rabbani’s assassination—the same day that Salahuddin was elected as its interim leader—to prevent the party from possible rupture. “If there are other candidates,” he stated, “I will accept the job after consultations in a bid to save the party from recession.”<sup>105</sup>

Atta’s rise to power, his feuds with General Dostum for control of Mazar-e Sharif, and his reconciliation with President Karzai after Abdullah’s defeat in the 2009 election have been well documented and will not be covered in detail here.<sup>106</sup> One oft-cited reason for Karzai’s willingness to co-opt Atta rather than marginalize him as he did Abdullah and Qanooni has been the stability that the governor is perceived to provide within the province and its environs. That image of stability as conditional upon Atta’s leadership in the north is one that Atta is rumored to have actively created, including by inciting a certain degree of trouble in the province during his absences from Balkh in the wake of Abdullah’s defeat.<sup>107</sup> However, another reason may derive from the fact that Atta has been far less critical of centralized power within the Afghan state than his counterparts in the opposition, many of whom have been ardent advocates of a federalized Afghan state. This has not prevented Kabul from attempting divide-and-conquer strategies in the north to weaken the influence of regional powerbrokers, Atta among them. The truce between Karzai and Atta indicated,



however, that the relationship was fruitful enough for both of them to want to maintain the status quo.<sup>108</sup>

With the notable exception of his support for Abdullah in the 2009 campaign, Atta has avoided becoming too closely aligned with the various Jamiat-inspired opposition parties and he has not risked a permanent fall-out with Karzai. Instead, he has preferred to benefit from his notional support for the central government, while operating at a remove from the intrigues of its Kabul-based elites. This hedging capacity on Atta's part may be his greatest political strength and one that could serve him well should he run in the national elections.<sup>109</sup>

Looking ahead to 2014, Atta would have the option of positioning himself either as an opposition candidate or as one more closely aligned with President Karzai and whoever his chosen successor might be. There are indications that Atta is aware of this dynamic, and has begun positioning himself to become a—if not the—northern frontrunner for 2014. Whether Atta is strictly envisioning a run strictly for the presidency or is aiming to join a presidential ticket as a vice president as Fahim and Zia Massoud did before him remains unclear. At a press conference in November with the U.S. deputy Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Atta announced his possible candidacy for the presidential elections, citing his desire to run if the people supported him.<sup>110</sup> The governor has also publicly stated in the past that he intends to ignore any other Jamiat-affiliated candidates that might step forward.<sup>111</sup> In January of 2013, Atta affirmed that “if there is a national understanding, a collective understanding by all Afghan leaders on a candidate, then I won't run. But if the president makes a decision only with his own team, then I will be a candidate.”<sup>112</sup>

A few weeks prior to this announcement, Atta indicated his readiness to form a coalition with Hizb-i Islami, Jamiat's nemesis throughout much of the last few decades, whose militant wing of the party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar constitutes one of Afghanistan's formidable insurgent groups.<sup>113</sup> Atta had been indicating

his interest in reconciling with Hizb-i Islami since at least April of last year and reportedly met multiple times with the head of its legitimate political wing, Economy Minister Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal.<sup>114</sup> Atta's behavior suggests it may be far easier for many of these former Northern Alliance members to reconcile with Hizb-i Islami's political wing, a reconciliation that may not necessarily require insurgent leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's blessing, than with the Taliban. Atta has frequently criticized Salahuddin Rabbani's High Peace Council as ineffectual.<sup>115</sup> A few weeks after his December announcement that a coalition with Hizb-i Islami might be in the offing, Atta met with another former enemy, General Dostum, behind closed doors to discuss forming an alliance ahead of the elections. Dostum holds the largely ceremonial role of Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan Armed Forces, and he has vied with Atta for control of Balkh for much of the last decade.<sup>116</sup>

History suggests that Atta's maneuvering may be carefully planned. In 1993, during the civil war, Hekmatyar's group found an unlikely bedfellow in Dostum's Junbesh and both turned on Jamiat in the battle for Kabul.<sup>117</sup> Despite their historical enmity and his variable political fortunes, Dostum still remains one of the most important—if not the most important—strongmen in Afghanistan's northwest. And despite the aura of power and unassailability that Atta likes to project, the governor's primary influence remains largely limited to his home turf of Balkh and a few of its surrounding provinces in the north, such as Sar-i Pul and Samangan.<sup>118</sup>

Even within the ranks of Jamiat sympathizers, rival networks exist in Badakhshan, Panjshir, Parwan and other stronghold provinces. Within major areas of Badakhshan, for example, the Rabbani family network has traditionally held greatest sway, largely because of the patronage that Rabbani doled out over the years to his home district and to areas in and around Faisabad, Badakhshan's capital.<sup>119</sup> Since Daud Khan's assassination in 2011, Atta has reportedly forged ties to Ismail Khan in the west, in addition to fostering connections with local strongmen in Baghlan, Kunduz, and Takhar.<sup>120</sup>



Atta would need to rely on external alliances, as well as his own personal network within Jamiat, to help cement his national profile, as well as to hedge against any security contingencies once NATO troops have largely withdrawn.<sup>121</sup> This may to some extent explain why, in late January 2013, Atta played host to four other former Northern Alliance leaders in Balkh, each of whom pledged to support Atta's candidacy for president should the governor decide to run.<sup>122</sup> The members of this so-called "Northern Summit" or "Mazar Alliance" included Dostum, Mohaqqueq, Saleh, and Zia Massoud. Noticeably absent among them was Abdullah Abdullah. Atta's historical rivalries with Dostum and Mohaqqueq have played into previous attempts by President Karzai to manipulate factional divisions in the north to his advantage, and a display of solidarity among these three in particular could be aimed at forestalling such attempts in the run-up to the election. His publication of a political paper, entitled "Ejma-ye Milli," in February 2013, supported the idea of a greater decentralization of power, a position both Dostum and Mohaqqueq claim to support as members of the National Front, though he remained adamantly opposed to the federalization of the Afghan state.<sup>123</sup>

Conventional wisdom has often held that Afghanistan's head of state must be a Pashtun in order to maintain an ethnic balance within a government traditionally dominated by members of the Northern Alliance. Rabbani's ill-fated presidency was one of the few exceptions in recent decades to that convention. There is little doubt that if Atta decides to run on a presidential ticket, he will need to position himself carefully to garner the support of Afghanistan's Pashtun communities without alienating his northern base. Securing the allegiance of the political, if not the militant, wing of Hizb-i Islami could provide Atta with the leverage he needs to expand his appeal to various Pashtun powerbrokers and their constituencies.<sup>124</sup> The political wing of Hizb-i Islami has become a potent political force in the country. Karzai's present government includes many former and current members of Hizb-i Islami, such as Farooq Wardak, the Education Minister, and Abdul Karim Khurram,



PHOTO 2 | AHMAD ZIA MASSOUD. (SOURCE: FACEBOOK)

Karzai's Chief of Staff. Recent reporting indicates that Omar Daudzai, a former Hizb-i Islami member and current Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, may also be positioning himself to be the Pashtun frontrunner candidate.<sup>125</sup> If so, Atta's maneuvers would serve to put President Karzai on notice that he must either factor the governor and his "Northern Alliance" faction into his decision-making regarding the composition of a successor government or risk the prospect of a semi-united northern opposition bloc.

Above all, there remains the underlying question of whether a bid for the highest office of the land is enough to change Atta's calculus about surrendering the lucrative governorship of Balkh. By keeping himself at arm's length from the political wrangling in Kabul, Atta, unlike Fahim, has managed to avoid being perceived as too close to the Karzai regime, of which he has often been critical. From his perch in Mazar-e Sharif, he and the Jamiat-affiliated elites that surround him control much of the lucrative trade and investment flows into the region, as well as the major media outlets.<sup>126</sup>

Atta is unlikely to make a serious play for a larger role unless and until his interests are secure. Karzai marginalized both Qanooni and Abdullah within the central government in Kabul after he defeated their candidacies, and this is not a scenario that Atta would like to emulate. This is particularly so because the governorship in Balkh has long attracted Atta's bitter rivals, among them Dostum's Junbesh.<sup>127</sup> President Karzai's pronouncement that any candidate in the

elections should resign his current post is likely to put pressure on Atta to secure a solid consensus behind him before he acts.<sup>128</sup> On July 1, 2013, the Provisional Leadership Council of Jamiat, led by Salahuddin Rabbani, announced the party's intention to stand behind a single candidate for the elections.<sup>129</sup> At the same press conference, Atta Noor was made Executive Director of the party's Executive Council, although all positions remain temporary until Jamiat holds another, long overdue, party congress. The move suggests that Atta continues to consolidate his hold over the party and, just as importantly, that the center of gravity within Jamiat may be shifting away from the Panjshiri wing of the organization led by Fahim and the Massoud brothers. None of Fahim's close allies were appointed to the party's new interim board and Ismail Khan also appeared to have been sidelined during the proceedings.<sup>130</sup> The wedge that appears to be forming between Fahim and Ismail Khan on the one hand, and Atta Noor on the other, could serve President Karzai well if his intention is to once again split the Jamiat vote ahead of the 2014 elections.

### **MARSHAL MOHAMMAD QASIM FAHIM: JAMIAT'S KINGPIN**

No discussion of Jamiat's future prospects would be complete without a discussion of First Vice President Marshal Fahim, Ahmad Shah Massoud's second-in-command in the Shura-e Nazar and, after Rabbani's assassination, arguably the most influential leader within Jamiat. Having served as Ahmad Shah Massoud's head of intelligence and defense minister during the Transitional Administration from 2002-2004, Massoud was rumored to have harbored presidential ambitions at the peak of his power after the fall of the Taliban.<sup>131</sup> However, tensions with President Karzai never escalated into permanent rupture.

Fahim instead assisted the president in exchange for garnering a considerable degree of power and influence for himself and his allies in the new state government.<sup>132</sup> Like Atta, Fahim has supported the consolidation of a centralized state, provided such centralization does not obstruct the development of regional and factional

patronage networks in favor of his Tajik Jamiati allies. Informal mujahideen networks under strongmen like Fahim and Atta have remained intact, despite persistent efforts at disarmament over the years.<sup>133</sup>

In 2009 and 2010 Karzai began re-cementing his alliance with Fahim after dropping him from the presidential ticket in 2004. In addition to the mutual financial interests realized by both sides, reconciliation between the two provided a set of concrete political benefits for both individuals and their respective networks. Fahim was granted additional freedom to control security appointments within the Afghan National Security Forces and in the northern provinces; by the same token, his presence in the government allowed Karzai to co-opt enough influential Tajiks to continue to keep his opposition—particularly within Jamiat—divided.<sup>134</sup>

Despite external assaults on that alliance, such as the unraveling of the Kabul Bank scandal that implicated the brothers of both men, there is little reason to believe it has disintegrated. Karzai's decision to appoint Fahim loyalist Bismullah Khan Mohammadi as minister of defense suggests that at least one of Fahim's primary conditions for participating in the government—namely, that he and the Tajiks retain control over significant elements of the national security forces—is still being met.<sup>135</sup> This decision came even after parliament's impeachment of Bismullah Khan as Minister of Interior in August of 2012, and after rumors that his shift to the Interior was precipitated by Karzai's fear of a coup if Khan were left in his position as army chief-of-staff.<sup>136</sup> These rumors of Karzai's fears appear ill-founded, since the president has very deliberately kept Khan in control of the state's security apparatus.

Fahim's future political prospects remain an open question. An alliance with one or another of the opposition leaders at first blush appears unlikely. Ahmad Zia Massoud replaced Fahim on the presidential ticket in 2004, and Abdullah ran against a Karzai-Fahim ticket in 2009. Neither episode is likely to have endeared Fahim to either the National Front or to the

National Coalition. Fahim's hand-picked successor, General Daud Daud Khan, formerly police commander of the northern zone and a confidante of Ahmad Shah Massoud's, was assassinated by Taliban insurgents as part of a high-profile attack in May 2011.<sup>137</sup> The attack, and the vacuum it left, illustrates Jamiat's continuing vulnerability as a personality-dependent organization to targeted insurgent attacks of the kind that would later claim its founder, Burhanuddin Rabbani. Bismillah Khan, Fahim's loyal lieutenant, lacks the political instincts required to step into Fahim's current role. Part of the answer regarding Fahim's fortunes will hinge on the nature of the political relationship between himself and Atta in the lead-up to the elections, and the extent to which President Karzai supports the influence of one at the expense of the other.

While the relationship has not been free from tension — it is rumored that Fahim was reluctant to support Atta's candidacy to become the next leader of Jamiat out of a concern that he might grow too powerful — both men share similar backgrounds and possess complementary networks within the northern provincial strongholds of the party.<sup>138</sup> Fahim is widely assumed to have brokered the reconciliation meetings between President Karzai and Atta after the two fell out over Atta's support for Abdullah's campaign.<sup>139</sup> Much may depend on whether they decide to pool their efforts or compete for the allegiance of Jamiat's local strongmen across the north and northeast of the country.<sup>140</sup> The announcement in July 2013 that Salahuddin Rabbani, a relatively weak and anodyne political figure, would remain provisional leader of the party until after the elections suggests that the contest for influence within Jamiat remains undecided.<sup>141</sup>

Like Atta, Fahim has never appeared content to assume a secondary position in Afghan politics by fully embracing the opposition movement against Karzai. Even when Fahim was dropped from the ticket in 2004 in favor of Ahmad Zia Massoud, Karzai continued to consult with him about provincial appointments in the security services across the country's northeast where Fahim's networks are strongest.<sup>142</sup> His association with the United

Front was short-lived and ended in reconciliation with the president. In this way, both Fahim and Atta have exhibited a similar desire to operate within the central government apparatus.<sup>143</sup> Serving as a central figure in government has allowed Fahim to claim Massoud's mantle as the defender of Tajik and, more broadly, 'mujahideen' interests within the Afghan state, and to benefit from the patronage opportunities such a position provides. As such, protecting those accrued gains in the course of the political transition will be Fahim's priority as the country advances toward the 2014 elections. As of the time of this publication, Fahim is rumored to have formed a presidential ticket with former mujahideen leader Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, an ethnic Pashtun who fought with the Northern Alliance and who was one of the founders of the Afghan Islamist movement alongside Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and Mohammad Mohaqqueq, the Hazara warlord who is now a member of the National Front.<sup>144</sup> Such a ticket, if it proceeds, would aim to safeguard the interests of the subset of former mujahideen leaders and commanders in the country's political elite rather than signify a genuine changing of the guard in Afghan politics.

There appears to exist far less daylight between Fahim and Atta than between either of them and longstanding members of the opposition regarding negotiations with the Taliban. The former have tended to exhibit a reflexive suspicion over any discussions with the insurgent group, despite their notional support for peace. Rabbani's assassination in 2011 provided further impetus for the two Jamiati strongmen to assail the merits of peace talks.<sup>145</sup> The High Peace Council's unveiling to the U.S. State Department in early December 2012 of a "Peace Process Roadmap to 2015," a blueprint which could potentially confer senior government positions to the Taliban and a much larger role for Pakistan, is likely to sharpen divisions within Jamiat between presidential appointees like Salahuddin Rabbani who has been tasked with advancing peace negotiations and the party's strongmen who fought against the Taliban.

## WHITHER JAMIAT IN 2014?

Although the fissures were becoming apparent as early as 2004, Jamiat appears to have continued splintering along two major lines: between the former warlords who rose to prominence from the ranks of mujahideen commanders and who now form part of the government establishment on the one hand, and the ‘professional’ opposition politicians on the other. To date, the central government has been able to co-opt the most influential Jamiat-affiliated warlords, including Marshal Fahim, Ismail Khan, and Atta Noor, through state appointments and the resource endowments such appointments provide, while marginalizing its opposition politicians.

After leaving their government posts, this latter group of opposition politicians, most prominently Yunus Qanooni, Abdullah Abdullah, and Ahmad Zia Massoud, has focused its efforts on achieving influence through parliament and the devolution of power from the executive branch. This divide has worked to President Karzai’s advantage; his co-option of the strongmen within Jamiat who possess the military clout and political resources to instigate a coup has kept the opposition relatively weak and fragmented. However, the leaders of that opposition, among them Abdullah Abdullah and Ahmad Zia Massoud, have indicated they may combine forces in future. If these politicians are unsuccessful in the 2014 presidential contest and continue their focus on securing a competitive advantage in the legislature, this divide within Jamiat could lead to significant tensions between a new presidential administration and parliament after 2014.<sup>146</sup>

Burhanuddin Rabbani could not prevent these fissures within Jamiat from forming, but with his assassination the divide between Jamiat’s established strongmen and its opposition politicians is likely to grow even deeper. The elder Rabbani presided over, if not controlled, the centripetal forces within Jamiat and, in so doing, served as a kind of broker among them. Rabbani was both a leader of the opposition and yet remained close to the Karzai government by accepting appointments to chair the Peace Jirga and to lead the High Peace Council.<sup>147</sup>

His calls for party unity in his role as a spiritual leader harkened back to the party’s historical legacy and encouraged splinter factions such as Qanooni’s New Afghanistan Party back into the fold.<sup>148</sup>

Jamiat transformed itself from a *tanzim* into little more than a collection of personalities in the era after the fall of the Taliban. However, with the death of Rabbani and with another election on the horizon, loyalties are likely to become more, not less, oriented around specific candidates and their respective networks. These politicians will invoke the Jamiat connection as and when it suits them. The younger Salahuddin lacks anything like his father’s stature. For this reason, he may remain in place as the notional ‘head’ of Jamiat to keep the peace among the different factions, but he so far appears unlikely to successfully reign over them.

The next test for Afghanistan’s fledgling democracy will be whether participating in the elections in 2014 remains the preferred means of maintaining access to state power.<sup>149</sup> Whether and how that calculation might change as NATO forces withdraw and corresponding patronage streams begin to dwindle remains an open question. Most of the licit and illicit businesses, land grabs, and monopolies engineered by strongmen since 2001 have been directed toward securing political influence, rather than profits as such.<sup>150</sup> For now, the candidates who are lining up appear to be taking the prospect of the coming elections seriously. To date, President Karzai has managed to co-opt and manipulate the allegiances of the country’s various factions to maintain a semblance of national cohesion, prohibiting regional and parochial interests from overwhelming the central state apparatus. Should a successor follow President Karzai’s tactics in this regard, short-term political stability may be achieved in the transition to a post-Karzai era. However, in the longer-term such politicking will impede the country’s transcendence from a country governed by the politics of warlordism to a genuine democracy. Atta’s positioning of himself alongside both of his former enemies, Hekmatyar’s Hizb-i Islami and Dostum’s Junbesh, and Fahim’s possible alliance with Sayyaf are indications that



unconventional or reform-minded politicians still face a very high barrier to entry at the highest levels of Afghan politics.

In this context, whither Jamiat? The Jamiat affiliation appears to remain fairly cohesive at the provincial level in the north and northeast. This cohesion is largely the result of ethnic and historical ties binding former mujahideen fighters to individual commanders, such as Fahim in Panjshir and Atta in Balkh.<sup>151</sup> However, barring a major crisis, it remains far from certain whether Jamiat can effectively mobilize as a political party in the years to come. The individual strongmen who cemented the party's legacy in the years following the Taliban regime are likely to hamper the party's democratic transformation by delaying internal reforms and stalling the election of new leadership. At present, the political party machine serves to enhance their careers, rather than function independently of them.<sup>152</sup> By the same token, many of these Jamiat party leaders have grown soft on international contracts and foreign aid, rewarding their close circle of supporters, while neglecting a younger, increasingly disaffected, constituency. However, the offspring of many of these Afghan warlords represent a generational gulf from their fathers, reared to participate in politics but educated at liberal, Western institutions abroad. Their experience of, or direct involvement in, the bloody Soviet occupation and civil wars has often been marginal.<sup>153</sup> Greater attention by the West to the political evolution of these youths, and to other reform-minded initiatives such as the "Afghanistan 1400" movement, comprised of a number of highly educated and diverse young leaders, could help to change the nature of the political game as it is currently being played.<sup>154</sup>

Jamiat-e Islami has remained such a potent political party because of its historical role and the individuals associated with it, most notable among them Ahmad Shah Massoud, as well as the state patronage granted to it by Kabul-based party elites. As Atta's hosting of the 'Mazar' summit demonstrates, the old mujahideen affiliations are at their most potent and most cohesive when they are perceived to be under collective threat.

The uncertainty associated with the political transition of 2014 will mean that many, if not most, of these Jamiat leaders will fall back on their natural political instincts to preserve and protect their gains, rather than encourage any real reforms. Conversely, the various Jamiat-affiliated opposition figures that have expressed an interest in revising the political system have not demonstrated a particularly high level of cohesion or success to date. The newer political parties they have founded have experienced a considerable amount of churn in the ensuing years and their tactical alliances with other warlords and their respective constituencies have often represented little more than superficial constructs to advance their own political careers.

## CONCLUSION

In September 2012, twenty Afghan political parties joined together in a "Cooperation Council of Political Parties and Coalitions in Afghanistan" (CCPPCA) and produced a "Democracy Charter." The charter presses for timely elections and a greater role for Afghanistan's political parties in the decision-making processes of governance. Jamiat was represented on the Council by no less than six political organizations.<sup>155</sup> The election of 2014, however, is not shaping up to include a radically new crop of political players. The present moment offers an opportunity for U.S. and international policymakers to re-engage with Afghanistan's nascent democratic and civil society organizations to facilitate a multi-ethnic, broad-based political system.

Although much international concern centers upon the timely holding of a free and fair election next April, the real decisions about how power will be distributed and divided in any successor government are already occurring behind closed doors. This political horse-trading is focused on assembling a successor government rather than simply determining the next successful presidential ticket. President Karzai's longstanding animus against the formation and influence of political parties has suffocated opportunities for genuine reform within the Afghan electorate and perpetuated the politics of personality by which a small cadre of elites maintain power in the country. As the election of



2014 approaches, the instincts of the former group to maintain their grip on power will hinder the prospect of a genuine changing of the political guard in a post-Karzai era.

The United States should work to facilitate the timely, free, and fair holding of elections in April 2014. A repeat of the tainted election of 2009, in which a run-off between President Karzai and his challenger Abdullah Abdullah was nearly held, would be disastrous for the country. President Karzai understands this. The president will therefore ensure that the entire machinery of the Afghan state apparatus is energized behind his chosen successor. In order to sow maximum dissension within Tajik ranks, the president is unlikely to publicly anoint his political heir until he has co-opted at least one or two influential Tajik politicians. In the short-term, the engagement of key Jamiat-e Islami politicians will be critical to a smooth regime transition in Afghanistan as the country veers toward a post-Karzai era. However, the politicking already underway ahead of the 2014 election indicates that it will not feature a radically new set of political players. In the long-term, without international support for the institutionalization of Afghan political parties, the greater influence of civil society groups, encouragement of younger and reform-minded political players, and the professionalization of an independent civil service, the election next April will represent “business as usual” for Kabul’s political elite.

---

# NOTES

---

- <sup>1</sup> William Maley, "The Dynamics of Regime Transition in Afghanistan," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1997).
- <sup>2</sup> Haseeb Maudoodi, "Political Transition More Concerning Than Security Transition: Fahim," *Tolo News*, June 12, 2013.
- <sup>3</sup> Hereafter 'Jamiat.'
- <sup>4</sup> Thomas Ruttig, "Jamiat after Rabbani: The Competition for the Top Job," *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011), <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.net/index.asp?id=2181>.
- <sup>5</sup> Matthieu Aikens, "Profile: Burhanuddin Rabbani," *The Guardian*, September 20, 2011.
- <sup>6</sup> Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 70.
- <sup>7</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?: The Politics of State-Building in Post-Taleban Afghanistan," (London School of Economics: Crisis States Research Programme, 2003).
- <sup>8</sup> Kate Clark, "The Death of Rabbani," *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011), <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=2080>.
- <sup>9</sup> Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2002).
- <sup>10</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords in Afghanistan* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2009); Carl Forsberg, "The Karzai-Fahim Alliance," (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2012).
- <sup>11</sup> See Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*.
- <sup>12</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, "The Problems of Creating a New Afghan Army - and the Critical Dangers of Failure," (International Industrial Information Ltd., 2002).
- <sup>13</sup> Author interview with Dr. Antonio Giustozzi, London, October 30, 2012.
- <sup>14</sup> Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?: The Politics of State-Building in Post-Taleban Afghanistan."
- <sup>15</sup> Jon Lee Anderson, "The Assassins," *The New Yorker*, June 10, 2002.
- <sup>16</sup> Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?: The Politics of State-Building in Post-Taleban Afghanistan."
- <sup>17</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Political Elites in Afghanistan: Rentier State Building, Rentier State Wrecking," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1992).
- <sup>18</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, "Genesis of a 'Prince': The Rise of Ismail Khan in Western Afghanistan, 1979-1992," in *Crisis States Working Papers Series* (London School of Economics, 2006).
- <sup>19</sup> Giustozzi, "Genesis of a 'Prince'."
- <sup>20</sup> Author interview with Dr. Dipali Mukopadhyay, November 2, 2012.
- <sup>21</sup> Antonio Giustozzi and Dominique Orsini, "Centre—Periphery Relations in Afghanistan: Badakhshan between Patrimonialism and Institution-Building," *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2009), p. 4.
- <sup>22</sup> Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), pp. 118-124.
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 254.
- <sup>24</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords in Afghanistan*.
- <sup>25</sup> Author interview with Dipali Mukhopadhyay.
- <sup>26</sup> Clark, "The Death of Rabbani."
- <sup>27</sup> Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, p. 213.
- <sup>28</sup> Antonio Giustozzi observes, "to various degrees, the warlords, strongmen and notables who accounted for the largest part of the insurgency did not have the potential to produce an effective and united leadership of the resistance, because they were competing first and foremost with each other for territorial control and because in the absence of a strong ideological commitment they had little common ground as far as medium and long-term aims were concerned." Giustozzi, "Respectable Warlords?: The Politics of State-Building in Post-Taleban Afghanistan."
- <sup>29</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*.
- <sup>30</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 86.
- <sup>31</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*.
- <sup>32</sup> Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, p. 86.
- <sup>33</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords in Afghanistan*, p. 283.
- <sup>34</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, pp. 112-113.
- <sup>35</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, p. 206.
- <sup>36</sup> Giustozzi estimates that ideologically committed commanders during the jihad were marginal, numbering somewhere between 10-15% of the total. Giustozzi, "Genesis of a 'Prince': The Rise of Ismail Khan in Western Afghanistan, 1979-1992."
- <sup>37</sup> Author interview with Antonio Giustozzi.
- <sup>38</sup> Thomas Ruttig, "Islamists, Leftists, and a Void in the

---

# NOTES

---

Center: Afghanistan's Political Parties and Where They Come from (1992-2006)" (Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos : The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008), p. 73.

<sup>40</sup> Francois-Xavier Harispe, "Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Northern Alliance's Spoilsport," *Agence France-Presse*, December 1, 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Rashid, *Descent into Chaos : The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, pp. 105-06. Moni Basu, "Transitional Regime Taking over Challenge Put on Karzai for Peace, Order," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 21, 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Harispe, "Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Northern Alliance's Spoilsport."

<sup>43</sup> Dipali Mukhopadhyay, "Disguised Warlordism and Combatant in Balkh: The Persistence of Informal Power in the Formal Afghan State," *Conflict, Security, and Development*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (2009).

<sup>44</sup> Dipali Mukhopadhyay, "Atta Mohammad Noor, the Son of Balkh," in *Warlords, Strongman Governors and State Building in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). Cited with permission.

<sup>45</sup> Stuart Grudgings, "North Afghan Face-Off Threatens Fragile Peace," *Reuters News*, March 3, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> S. Frederick Starr and Marin Strmecki, "Time to Ditch the Northern Alliance," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 2002.

<sup>47</sup> "Ex-Afghan President Says Party to Run in 2004 Poll," *Reuters News*, January 1, 2003.

<sup>48</sup> Adapted from Forsberg, "The Karzai-Fahim Alliance." See also Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud : War and Warlords in Afghanistan*; Barfield, *Afghanistan : A Cultural and Political History*, pp. 248-54.

<sup>49</sup> Victoria Burnett, "Alliance, Afghan Leaders at Odds Former Holy Warriors Consider Withdrawing Support for President," *The Boston Globe*, October 13, 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Forsberg, "The Karzai-Fahim Alliance."

<sup>51</sup> Stephen Graham, "Karzai Talks with Afghan Warlords," *The Associated Press*, June 8, 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Karzai Shows He'll Cast Lot with a Corps of Warlords," *The New York Times*, June 8, 2004.

<sup>53</sup> "Karzai Distances Himself from Afghan Warlords as Election Nears," *Agence France-Presse*, July 27, 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Rashid, *Descent into Chaos : The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, 258.

<sup>55</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Afghan Leader, in a Surprise, Picks a New Running Mate," *The New York Times*, July 27, 2004.

<sup>56</sup> "Karzai Trying to Regain Political Backing," *The New York Times*, August 4, 2004.

<sup>57</sup> "Ex-President Says He'll Back Afghan Leader," *The New York Times*, October 4, 2004.

<sup>58</sup> "A Leading Afghan Lawmaker Quits the Opposition to Back Karzai," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Ruttig, "Islamists, Leftists, and a Void in the Center: Afghanistan's Political Parties and Where They Come from (1992-2006)."

<sup>60</sup> "Afghan Paper Says Past Records Will Haunt Newly Formed Opposition," *BBC*, April 8, 2005.

<sup>61</sup> Gall, "A Leading Afghan Lawmaker Quits the Opposition to Back Karzai."

<sup>62</sup> "Afghan Warlords Form Political Party," *Agence France-Presse*, March 14, 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Haseeb Humayoon, "The Re-Election of Hamid Karzai," (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> "Afghan Paper Says Opposition National Front Heads toward Disintegration," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, April 20, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> "Senior Opposition Figure to Back Karzai in Poll," *Reuters*, April 21, 2009.

<sup>66</sup> "Afghan Paper Says Opposition National Front Heads toward Disintegration."

<sup>67</sup> "Afghan Paper Says Opposition National Front Heads toward Disintegration."

<sup>68</sup> "Main Opposition Grouping Split on Presidential Candidate," *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, April 6, 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Forsberg, "The Karzai-Fahim Alliance."

<sup>70</sup> Humayoon, "The Re-Election of Hamid Karzai."

<sup>71</sup> Joshua Partlow, "Abdullah Camp Negotiated for Cabinet Positions," *Washington Post*, November 4, 2009.

<sup>72</sup> Kate Clark, "Peace Jirga Blog: Who's Come to Town... and Who's Staying Away," *Afghan Analysts Network* (2010).

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Ruttig, "National Coalition Versus National Front Two Opposition Alliances Put Jamiat in a Dilemma," *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012).

<sup>74</sup> Alissa J. Rubin and Rod Nordland, "Government Challenges Afghan Vote," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2010.

---

# NOTES

---

- <sup>75</sup> Rod Nordland and Alissa J. Rubin, “Afghan Opposition Claims Significant Victories after Legislative Vote,” *The New York Times*, September 21, 2010.
- <sup>76</sup> Pamela Constable, “Karzai’s Ethnic Rivals Pose Few Challenges,” *The Washington Post*, June 14, 2011.
- <sup>77</sup> Mukopadhyay, “Atta Mohammad Noor, the Son of Balkh.”
- <sup>78</sup> Thomas Ruttig, “Flash to the Past: Power Play before the 2002 Emergency Loya Jirga,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012).
- <sup>79</sup> Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*.
- <sup>80</sup> Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, p. 253.
- <sup>81</sup> Clark, “The Death of Rabbani.”
- <sup>82</sup> Thomas Ruttig, “Jamiat after Rabbani: The Competition for the Top Job,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011), <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.net/index.asp?id=2181>.
- <sup>83</sup> Thomas Ruttig, “Jamiat after Rabbani: The Competition for the Top Job.”
- <sup>84</sup> Gran Hewad, “A Second Rabbani Takes the Helm at the High Peace Council,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012).
- <sup>85</sup> Gran Hewad, “A Second Rabbani Takes the Helm at the High Peace Council.”
- <sup>86</sup> “New Afghanistan National Front Party Inaugurated,” *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, November 11, 2011.
- <sup>87</sup> Gran Hewad, “The New National Front: A Dark Horse Returns—with Three Riders,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011).
- <sup>88</sup> Hewad, “The New National Front: A Dark Horse Returns – with Three Riders.”
- <sup>89</sup> Ruttig, “National Coalition Versus National Front Two Opposition Alliances Put Jamiat in a Dilemma.”
- <sup>90</sup> Hewad, “The New National Front: A Dark Horse Returns – with Three Riders.”
- <sup>91</sup> Mukopadhyay, “Atta Mohammad Noor, the Son of Balkh.”
- <sup>92</sup> Gran Hewad and Thomas Ruttig, “The Green Trend Mobilisation and a Possible New Rift in Jamiat,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011).
- <sup>93</sup> Fabrizio Foschini, “Conservatism by Default: Badakshan’s Jamiat after Ustad Rabbani,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012).
- <sup>94</sup> Green, in this instance, implying a religious, rather than an environmental, connotation. Amrullah Saleh, “The Anti-Taliban Constituency,” *The National Review*, April 6, 2011.
- <sup>95</sup> Scott Sayare and Matthew Rosenberg, “New Scenery for Breaking the Ice with the Taliban,” *The New York Times*, December 21, 2012.
- <sup>96</sup> “Ex-Afghan Security Chief Discusses Strategy for Afghanistan,” *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, February 27, 2013.
- <sup>97</sup> Margherita Stancati, “Suspected Insurgents Trigger a Deadly Clash at Afghan Protest,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 2013.
- <sup>98</sup> “Conspiracy to Attack Dr. Abdullah Foiled,” *Bakhtar News Agency*, May 11, 2013; “Suspected Insurgents Trigger a Deadly Clash at Afghan Protest.”
- <sup>99</sup> Saleha Sadat, “Taliban Representatives in Qatar Were Sent by Pakistan: Saleh,” *Tolo News*, June 23, 2013.
- <sup>100</sup> Sohel Uddin et al., “Kerry Calls Afghanistan’s Karzai to Ease Anger over Taliban Office,” *NBC News*, June 19, 2013.
- <sup>101</sup> “Afghan Opposition Parties May Field One Presidential Candidate,” *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, June 10, 2012. Abdullah’s attendance at Saleh’s “Gathering for Justice” rally in Kabul doesn’t rule out the possibility of a Saleh-Abdullah alliance, despite earlier indications of fielding a joint candidate with the National Front, nor does it preclude an alliance among the three. See Hewad and Ruttig, “The Green Trend Mobilisation and a Possible New Rift in Jamiat.” Saleh’s ability to attract a significant youth constituency within his party reveals another set of fissures — in this case generational — within Jamiat. Abdullah and Massoud, like Qanooni and Rabbani before them, have primarily appealed to an older, ex-mujahideen cohort of the former Northern Alliance without necessarily focusing their efforts on a younger generation of potential Jamiat sympathizers.
- <sup>102</sup> Ruttig, “National Coalition Versus National Front Two Opposition Alliances Put Jamiat in a Dilemma.”
- <sup>103</sup> Dipali Mukopadhyay, “Warlords as Bureaucrats: The Afghan Experience,” in *Carnegie Papers* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009).
- <sup>104</sup> Yaroslav Trofimov, “Afghan Governor Positions for Presidency,” *The Wall Street Journal*, January 26, 2013.
- <sup>105</sup> Ruttig, “Jamiat after Rabbani: The Competition for the Top Job”.
- <sup>106</sup> See Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud: War and Warlords in Afghanistan*; Mukhopadhyay, “Disguised Warlordism and Combatanthood in Balkh: The Persistence of Informal Power in the Formal Afghan State.”
- <sup>107</sup> Interview with a former NATO official, June 28, 2013.
- <sup>108</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, “The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards,” in *Issues Paper* (Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2012).

---

# NOTES

---

- <sup>109</sup> Mukopadhyay, “Atta Mohammad Noor, the Son of Balkh; Foschini, “Conservatism by Default: Badakshan’s Jamiat after Ustad Rabbani.”
- <sup>110</sup> “Afghan Governor Raises Concern over Possible Challenges Ahead of 2014 Election,” *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, November 13, 2012.
- <sup>111</sup> “Afghan Governor Says Ready for Coalition Ahead of Poll,” *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, December 17, 2012.
- <sup>112</sup> Trofimov, “Afghan Governor Positions for Presidency.”
- <sup>113</sup> “Afghan Governor Says Ready for Coalition Ahead of Poll.”
- <sup>114</sup> Thomas Ruttig, “Ustad Atta for President? The ‘Northern Front’ Summit and Other Pre-Election Manoeuvres,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2013), <http://aan-afghanistan.com/print.asp?id=3238>.
- <sup>115</sup> Trofimov, “Afghan Governor Positions for Presidency.”
- <sup>116</sup> “Governor Atta Meets Dostum, Discuss Elections,” *Tolo News*, January 8, 2013.
- <sup>117</sup> Gran Hewad, “Another Hezb-E Islami U-Turn (with More to Follow?),” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012).
- <sup>118</sup> Giustozzi, “The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards.”
- <sup>119</sup> Foschini, “Conservatism by Default: Badakshan’s Jamiat after Ustad Rabbani”.
- <sup>120</sup> Giustozzi, “The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards.”
- <sup>121</sup> Giustozzi, “The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards.”
- <sup>122</sup> Ruttig, “Ustad Atta for President? The ‘Northern Front’ Summit and Other Pre-Election Manoeuvres.”
- <sup>123</sup> Gran Hewad, “Elections or National Consensus: Which One Wins?,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2013).
- <sup>124</sup> Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) refers to the insurgent group led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hizb-i Islami Afghanistan (HIA) refers to the registered political party of Hizb-i Islami, many of whose members are officials in the current government.
- <sup>125</sup> “Karzai’s Ex-Chief of Staff Omar Dawoodzai to Run for President,” *Khaama Press*, March 21, 2013.
- <sup>126</sup> Enayat Najafzada, “Under Atta’s Shadow: Political Life in the Afghan North,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011), <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=2190>.
- <sup>127</sup> Telephone interview with Dipali Mukopadhyay, November 2, 2012.
- <sup>128</sup> “Cabinet Members Should Step Down If Standing in Elections,” *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, February 13, 2013.
- <sup>129</sup> Ahmad Quraishi, “Jamiat Party Appoints Interim Board,” *Pajhwok*, July 1, 2013.
- <sup>130</sup> Thomas Ruttig, “Still Temporary and Exclusive: A New Leadership for Jamiat,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2013), <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/still-temporary-and-exclusive-a-new-leadership-for-jamiat>.
- <sup>131</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud : War and Warlords in Afghanistan*, pp. 89-91.
- <sup>132</sup> Giustozzi notes that it was Fahim who helped ‘smooth Karzai’s way’ through the Loya Jirgas of 2002 and 2003. Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud : War and Warlords in Afghanistan*, pp. 89-91.
- <sup>133</sup> Mukhopadhyay, “Disguised Warlordism and Combatantism in Balkh: The Persistence of Informal Power in the Formal Afghan State.”
- <sup>134</sup> Forsberg, “The Karzai-Fahim Alliance.”
- <sup>135</sup> Mara Tchalakov, “Abdul Wardak and Bismillah Khan Mohammedi: Unpacking Afghanistan’s Ministerial Shake-Up,” Institute for the Study of War (2012).
- <sup>136</sup> Giustozzi, “The Problems of Creating a New Afghan Army - and the Critical Dangers of Failure.”
- <sup>137</sup> Martin Van Biljert, “The Killing Continues: The Taloqan Attack,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2011), <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1753>.
- <sup>138</sup> Interview with Antonio Giustozzi, October 30, 2012.
- <sup>139</sup> Mukopadhyay, “Atta Mohammad Noor, the Son of Balkh.”
- <sup>140</sup> Giustozzi, “The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards.”
- <sup>141</sup> Ruttig, “Still Temporary and Exclusive: A New Leadership for Jamiat.”
- <sup>142</sup> Forsberg, “The Karzai-Fahim Alliance.”
- <sup>143</sup> Alissa J. Rubin, “Crocker Looks Back on a Decade in Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, July 28, 2002.
- <sup>144</sup> “In Ramadan Quiet, Afghans Jockey for Post-Karzai Era,” *Al-Arabiya*, July 18, 2013.
- <sup>145</sup> Jonathan S. Landay, “Afghanistan Peace Plan Would Increase Pakistan’s Role,” *McClatchy Newspapers*, December 8, 2012; Alissa J. Rubin, “Pessimism Fills Kabul as Ex-President Is Mourned “ *The New York Times*, September 22, 2011.



---

# NOTES

---

<sup>146</sup> Ann Marlowe, “An Afghan ‘Revolution’ in the Making?,” *The Daily Beast*, September 6, 2010.

<sup>147</sup> Ruttig, “National Coalition Versus National Front Two Opposition Alliances Put Jamiat in a Dilemma.”

<sup>148</sup> Ruttig, “National Coalition Versus National Front Two Opposition Alliances Put Jamiat in a Dilemma.”

<sup>149</sup> Haseeb Humayoon, “Afghanistan’s Gray Future,” *Foreign Policy* October 18, 2012.

<sup>150</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, “War and Peace Economies of Afghanistan’s Strongmen,” *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2007).

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Dipali Mukopadhyay, November 2, 2012.

<sup>152</sup> Antonio Guistozi writes that at present, “the administrative structure of Jamiat is not designed to allow the party to function independently of every particular leader, but rather to assist charismatic leaders in their political careers.” Giustozzi, “The Resilient Oligopoly: A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards,” p. 18.

<sup>153</sup> Mujib Mashal, “Afghan Princelings: Are the Children of the *Mujahedin* Ready to Rule?,” *Time*, August 13, 2012.

<sup>154</sup> For more on the Afghanistan 1400 Movement, see S Reza Kazemi, “The Afghanistan 1400 Movement: Changing Youth Politics in Afghanistan?,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012), <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/the-afghanistan-1400-movement-changing-youth-politics-in-afghanistan>.

<sup>155</sup> Thomas Ruttig, “Ambiguity Reiterated: The 20-Parties ‘Democracy Charter’,” *Afghan Analysts Network* (2012), <http://aan-afghanistan.com/print.asp?id=3011>.

