

Kremlin is in a very embarrassing situation. On the one hand, it would be great public relations for them to have the Pope in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, however, there is the danger that what happened in Poland would happen, when the Pope went there, which is that *Solidarność* was born, there was a demonstration of over a million people on the streets of Warsaw, and they all carried crosses and chanted: "*Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.*" They fear that the situation in Poland slipped out of their control and it is for this reason that they tried to kill the Pope. Now Kharchev says: "The Church has to be the one to invite the Pope," but we know what Kharchev is, he's the commissar of worship, who should give the Church the permission to invite the Pope. But would they get political advantages?

Even when the Pope wanted to go to Lithuania, in a certain sense the Soviet Union had an interest in allowing him, provided that the Pope went to Moscow. That would be like bowing to Moscow, like recognizing the occupation and the incorporation of the Baltic countries into the Soviet Union. But the Holy See does not recognize it, and so returning from Australia, the Pope said loud and clear: "I have no interest in going to Moscow, I have the intention of going to Lithuania, to make a pastoral journey." He ruled out the stopover in Moscow and also the political significance of the trip. But for Moscow the political significance is the most important thing. There is another problem. In the Soviet Union, Ukrainian Catholics of the Byzantine rite are prohibited. The Ukrainian Catholic Church does not exist officially. There is only the Patriarchate of Moscow, to which all those of Byzantine rite are supposed to be subordinated. Moscow would invite the Pope if the Holy Father recognized that the Ukrainians of the Byzantine rite are no longer Catholics, but belong to the Orthodoxy. This, the Pope will never be able to do.

**EIR:** In May 1983, the Lithuanian bishops invited the Pope to visit their country for the 500th anniversary of the death of St. Casimir. In August 1984, the Pope revealed that not only had Moscow not authorized him to go, but it had not even recognized his own representative. In June 1987, Lithuania celebrated its 600 years of Christianity, and again the desire expressed by the Pope to be able to visit his own faithful was not fulfilled. Today there is talk of a possible trip to Moscow by the Pope on the occasion of the thousand year anniversary of the Christianization of ancient Rus. Do you think this will be possible?

**Msgr. M:** Possible, yes; probable, no.

The main reason is that they fear that the coming of the Holy Father to the Ukraine and to Lithuania, and other Catholic regions would arouse an enormous enthusiasm in the population. To see the Pope would be something unimaginable for people, and would reinforce the Church in an incredible way. They cannot allow this.

The Communists will never "reform" their hatred toward Catholicism and toward Christianity.

## Afghan refugees: a danger to Pakistan

by Ramtanu Maitra

Whether the Soviet troops begin to withdraw from Afghanistan on May 15 or not, Pakistan's problems concerning Afghanistan seem far from over. Even if the direct threat of a Soviet invasion recedes, the difficulties associated with the influx of some 3 million Afghan refugees since 1979 remain, and could in fact worsen.

In the face of an overwhelming national security threat, Pakistan extended a generous hand to the Afghan refugees, despite a long history of troubled relations between the two nations. It is that troubled history, and the Pakistani government's apparent inability to surmount it, that defines Pakistan's current dilemma.

The crisis created by the presence of 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan requires Pakistan to seek a comprehensive settlement to the Afghan conflict, establishing a stable Afghan government permitting the refugees' return—an obvious condition the U.S. State Department has appeared to overlook in its zealous drive for a "regional settlement" with the Soviet Union.

### A predictable result

In contrast to Iran's strict control of its Muslim brothers fleeing from the north, the Pakistani government adopted a propitiatory attitude toward the refugees, extending special favors and granting them a free run of the country.

The size of the refugee influx into sparsely populated North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, the two provinces of Pakistan that border Afghanistan, was enough to cause demographic changes with direct political repercussions. Pakistan's total population is in any case only 85 million; in many areas of the border provinces, the refugees outnumber local inhabitants.

With an infamous irreverence for law and order, the Afghans soon enough established a base for the cash- and gun-based prosperity the situation offered. With rare exceptions, the Pakistan government turned a blind eye to these developments—a fact that has evoked bitter hostility against the government from the local inhabitants.

Compounding the problem further, the authorities allowed the refugees to travel east and south into the provinces

of Punjab and Sind, where even more volatile reactions of social-political chemistry have taken place. In Karachi, the port city in Sind which is Pakistan's largest metropolis, over the last year, the Afghan refugee crisis has erupted into intermittent bloody riots between the *nouveau riche* refugees and the Mohajirs, the post-Independence settlers from what is now called India.

Iran, by contrast, has strictly controlled the existence and movement and financing of the 2 million Afghans who have taken refuge there. They have been contained in the border area and allowed to interact with the rest of the population only with special permission—work permits, induction into the military, political training, etc.

### Internal security problem

For Pakistan, the Afghan refugee crisis has several dimensions:

First, the refugees do not disagree with the Afghans' general contention that a part of both the NWFP and Baluchistan are integral to Afghanistan. This is a demand which is based on the 1944 diplomatic negotiations with Britain, then-ruler of undivided India. None of the seven Mujahiddin leaders based in Pakistan and portrayed as the leaders of the Afghan resistance, has so much as hinted that he would forsake the 1944 claim and accept Pakistan's claim of the existing line of control, the so-called Durand Line, as the permanent border between the two nations.

Second, the refugees brought along with them the *pukhtunwali*—the Pathan code of honor—which is based upon vengeance by means of guns. These freewheeling refugees did not give up their mode of settling scores even while they languished in refugee camps, and in the process, ushered in a level of violence which has understandably made the local Pakistanis nervous.

Third, in spite of the rhetoric, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have used their guns and cash to buy real estate and trucks, and have taken over a part of the transportation and cloth-trading business in Pakistan. Their networks have been a principal medium for running heroin and hashish from the subcontinent into international markets, but not before hundreds of thousands of Pakistani addicts were created on the way. The troubles that have torn Karachi apart over the past year also resulted from this drug- and gun-trafficking.

Fourth, the activities—and not simply the presence—of these refugees have made the Pakistanis furious with their own government for allowing the situation to be perpetuated. Reports indicate that Prime Minister Junejo, who hails from Sind province, and other political leaders within the administration are deeply disturbed about these developments. Opposition leaders in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD)—an alliance of opposition parties—have also tried to cash in on the Afghan refugee issue. There is considerable support for the demand to get the refugees out—at any cost.

### The economic and political price

The economic impact of eight years of support for the refugees is not insignificant. One estimate shows that Pakistan was spending about the equivalent of \$600 million annually for the upkeep of the refugees. The five-year American aid package of \$1.6 billion which ended in 1986 was providing \$320 million a year of this. The Saudi contribution as economic assistance averaged some \$59 million annually during that period, while aid from other Gulf countries and Islamic banks was about \$40 million per year.

This brings the aggregate economic assistance from all sources except Iran to about \$420 million annually—leaving a tidy sum of some \$180 million for the Pakistani taxpayers to finance every year.

Another element in the expenditure is indirect but important. The presence of such a large number of people in ecologically delicate areas such as the NWFP and Baluchistan has caused further deforestation—because of the refugees' need for firewood—leading to increased soil erosion, flooding, and other costs in terms of lost productivity. While it is difficult to put a money value on such costs, they have considerably aggravated Pakistan's already weak financial situation.

Finally, despite the propaganda campaign by the Western media, the Afghan Mujahiddin leaders have remained a petty, quibbling lot—unable to form a government-in-exile in eight years. Even the Islamic states have declined to extend them political recognition.

By attempting to leave the refugee Afghans out of all discussions for a settlement, both Moscow and Washington have heaped the pressure on Pakistan. But as Islamabad is well aware, without the return of the Afghans to their homeland, any settlement could well lead to even greater chaos in the area—and Moscow's domination of the Afghan geopolitical corridor.

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