mits, but one should keep in mind the problem of the source's veracity. A second point is the suggestion that the description of the spontaneous generation of his hero by the Mamluk writer Ibn al-Nafis (in his work *al-Risāla al-kāmiliyya*) would somehow reflect the influence in Mamluk Egypt of ideas of Qipchaq or Mongol provenance (p. 281, n. 96). This is a questionable proposal. It seems more likely that the parallels are to be found, as Meyerhof and Schacht suggested, in Islamic philosophy and (perhaps) before.

But these are certainly quibbles. This is a profound and important book whose arguments and conclusions are on the whole convincing. This is a truly groundbreaking study and as such can be recommended to a wide audience.

BARNETT R. RUBIN, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995). Pp. 203.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT L. CANFIELD, Department of Anthropology, Washington University, St. Louis

In the past few years there has been no more authoritative voice on Afghanistan than Barnett Rubin. His *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* is one of the most important works on the country in a decade. This book is its sequel. Though less seminal, it nevertheless provides a useful summary of events during the Afghan War and, most important, a heroic attempt to untangle the dismaying series of factional realignments in the period between 1989 and early 1995. Rubin speaks with authority. He interviewed notable and informed people from the United Nations (e.g., Diego Cordovez, Benon Sevan), the U.S. State Department (Edmund McWilliams, Robert Peck, Robert Oakley, Peter Tomsen), and the USIA (Richard Hoagland), as well as Afghans who supported the resistance (Sultan Mahmud Ghazi, the former King Zaher Shah), Afghans formerly aligned with the Kabul communists (Sulaiman Laiq, M. Nabi Azimi), and notable members of the Foreign Ministry in Moscow (Mikail Konarovsky, Alexander Titov).

Basically, Rubin means to indict the hegemonic foreign powers for the breakdown of the Afghan state, because they did not cooperate to maintain it. Created by an agreement of the British and Russians in the 19th century, the country was always largely dependent on "revenue accruing directly from abroad," so the Afghan government never had to be accountable to its citizenry. The Afghan–Soviet war was merely a continuation of this dependence: Afghans on the communist side were supported by the Soviet Union; those on the resistance side, the "mujahedin," by an alliance of Pakistan, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and eventually Iran (and other states, such as China).

The outrage of many Afghans in response to the Soviet invasion inspired the resistance activities, but that outrage was given a particular shape by the outside interests who funded and armed only certain elements of the resistance. Pakistan's Interservices Intelligence (ISI), with the assistance of the CIA and the financial support of Saudi Arabia, guided the mujahedin activities during the war at least until the early 1990s. As most of the members of the ISI belonged to the radical Islamist party Jamaat-i Islami of Pakistan (JIP), they mainly prosecuted the war through the Afghan Islamists, who also generally appealed to the Saudi intelligence service and were represented to the CIA as the best fighters. Even when competing elements in the Pakistani and U.S. governments tried to back away from the most radical client of the ISI/JIP, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, they found ways to continue his support. So, it turns out, the radical Islamism attributed to the Afghan resistance movement was in fact a creation of non-Afghans.

The fragility of the anti-Soviet alliance manifested itself soon after the Soviets began to withdraw their troops in 1988. There were problems in the relations among the several nations involved. The improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union

generated a fear among the other anti-Soviet powers that they could be sidelined. And indeed, the United States began to distance itself from Pakistan over the latter's nuclear program. At the same time, the Saudi Arabians and wealthy independent Arab supporters of the mujahedin became increasingly concerned about Iran's growing involvement with the Shi$^{c}$i resistance fighters, and they stepped up their support for Hekmatyar and Abd al-Rab Rasool Sayyaf, head of a Saudi-funded party. Within Pakistan, the newly elected government of Benazir Bhutto clashed with the military establishment that had been managing the war.

Inside Afghanistan, the Pakistan–CIA–Saudi Arabia axis lost control over its clients. For many mujahedin, the Soviet withdrawal meant the end of the jihad, and the numbers of active mujahedin rapidly declined. Many commanders, no longer confronted with an alien soldiery and, in any case, benefiting from an economic revival through a marked increase in local narcotics production, had no need to depend on their external donors or even (because they controlled the weapons) to be accountable to their own local citizenry. Even the Islamist rhetoric lost its authenticity after 1990, when Gulbuddin Hekmatyar formed an alliance with the communist General Shahnawaz Tanai, whose coup attempt had failed in Kabul. Many commanders made practical deals with their opponents. A National Commanders' Shura was formed as "an attempt by internal commanders to seize the initiative from the discredited and foreign-influenced exiled [party] leaders" (p. 120) and passed resolutions that directly conflicted with ISI policies. The looting of the city of Khost by ISI/CIA sponsored mujahedin in 1991 further discredited the mujahedin leadership. In the meantime, when the Kabul regime collapsed soon after Mikhail Gorbachev's last speech in 1992, several mujahedin fighting groups fought over control of Kabul, reducing most of it to rubble.

It was because of the broad alienation of the Afghan public that an unknown new armed force known as the Taliban, which appeared as if out of nowhere in 1994, was quickly accepted. Assisted materially by certain anti-ISI elements in Pakistan and in morale by an avalanche of public support within Afghanistan, the Taliban forced the acquiescence of major mujahedin groups in the southern part of the country. But the Taliban's image of moral uprightness was tarnished by the group's shelling of civilians in Kabul and killing of the respected Shi$^{c}$i leader Abdul Ali Mazari while he was in the Taliban's custody. The group's image of invincibility was lost when it was soundly trounced by Massoud's forces. Currently, then, the most urgent problems are how to set up a broadly accepted government and what to do about the heavily armed independent warlords.

The underlying problem, says Rubin, was that the superpowers, when negotiating an end to the war, failed seriously to face the issue of how to establish an orderly society and a legitimate rulership after hostilities ceased. During the war, it was feared that premature discussions about the kind of government that should be established in Afghanistan would divide the United States from its partners and "so weaken the jihad that a military victory might prove unattainable" (p. 34). Until 1994, no plan for the ending of hostilities considered how to phase the multiplicity of well-equipped, poorly disciplined, competitive army forces into a peacetime society. Thus it was that the hegemonic powers failed to establish the conditions by which societal order could be established.

This work overlaps closely with Cordovez and Harrison's *Out of Afghanistan.* Both books correct the widely held notion that the Stinger forced the Soviets to the negotiating table: the decision to exit had been made two years before the Stinger was introduced. Both books claim that the Cordovez peace plan (in which prominence would be given to a broad cross section of Afghans, especially those not directly involved in the conflict) would have worked better than what was done, which was to try to reconcile the more prominent leaders on both sides of the Afghan War. Having the most to lose, those leaders were of course intransigent, and in any case they had little legitimacy by the time hostilities had ceased. Cordovez and Harrison provide much detail about the negotiations not included in Rubin's book. But Rubin

is more analytical. He tracks the course of events in terms of a game-theory analysis—which may interest political scientists but otherwise adds little understanding—and treats the whole episode as an instance of a "failed state." Most valuable in the book, in my opinion, are Rubin's descriptions of the conditions under which the shifts in alignment took place among the various Afghan political elements. So far, no one has described this so well.

The events of the past two decades in Afghanistan are a particular example of a rising pattern of seemingly chaotic conflicts, ethnic clashes, and "failed states," in which a proliferation of small arms, massively applied, produces even more lethal results than the nuclear weapons the world so feared only a few years ago. The case deserves the careful attention of social scientists of Rubin's caliber. I hope there will be more.

MIKHAIL VOLODARSKY, *The Soviet Union and its Southern Neighbours* (Ilford, Essex: Frank Cass, 1994). Pp. 208.

REVIEWED BY MURIEL ATKIN, Department of History, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

The work under review is based on research in former Soviet archives as well as published works in Russian and English, and a few in Persian. The author's use of documents to which access was, until recently, sharply limited raises hopes that he will offer fresh insights into subjects that have already been studied closely by others. Unfortunately, this book demonstrates how many things besides archival research are important to a historical study.

Volodarsky argues that Soviet Russia and Britain attempted to manipulate Iran and Afghanistan as pawns in a great-power rivalry, without concern for the interests of the pawns themselves. Britain had pursued such a policy for so long that it drove Iran and Afghanistan to become more willing to deal with the new Soviet regime. In the early 1920s, the Soviets followed a dual approach to these two countries: the pursuit of conventional state-to-state relations and attempts to extend Soviet power over these countries, from which Moscow hoped to combat British influence in Asia and spread revolution. Initially, Soviet Russia succeeded in persuading Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan to look toward Moscow as a benevolent mediator of disputes, but as time passed the three came increasingly to see Soviet objectives as a threat to their national security. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, Iran's and Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union had worsened considerably.

All of these ideas have been well established in English-language studies of the subject. The book under review makes no substantial addition to the discussion of these points. The bibliography includes a number of works in English that cover the same ground very well, but omits a number of other relevant works that were published years before this book. These include Vartan Gregorian's *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, volume seven of the *Cambridge History of Iran*; Walter Laqueur's *The Soviet Union and the Middle East*; X. J. Eudin and R. C. North's *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920–1927*; and Firuz Kazemzadeh's "Russia and the Middle East," in *Russian Foreign Policy*, edited by Ivo Lederer.

The book parades an abundance of detail. The numerous quotations and paraphrases of diplomatic documents impede the flow of the narrative at times. However, there is far too little explanation of the meaning of the information presented. For example, the discussion of a 1927 trade treaty depicts the Soviet Union as imposing terms on Iran, but there is no discussion of the impact of that treaty. The author states that a 1932 border agreement between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan was particularly important because of the flood of people crossing the border at the time in reaction to the Soviet collectivization drive. The reader will find no information on the effect of that treaty on the exodus from Soviet Central Asia. The author rightly points out that by the early 1930s, Tehran looked for a Western country