

STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THE AFGHAN CONFLICT:
MAXIMIZATION OF NATIONAL INTERESTS.

by
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B.A. UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, PAKISTAN 1981.

M.A. UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, PAKISTAN 1985.

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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1987

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 SOVIET MOTIVES IN AFGHANISTAN	12
CHAPTER 2 UNITED STATES' CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF SOUTH ASIA	60
CHAPTER 3 POLITICS OF AN EXPATRIATE NATION	80
CHAPTER 4 PAKISTANI IMPERATIVES	95
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION	103
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110
LIST OF FIGURES	
FIGURE 1 MODEL OF NEGOTIATIONS	8
MAP: SOUTH ASIA	72
MAP: AFGHANISTAN	84

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To My Mother

NAFIS BANO

and

To The Loving Memory of My Father

ABDUL SHAAFI KHAN BURKI (DECEASED).

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan, a land locked country with a rugged terrain about the size of Texas, had been an age old buffer between the British India and the Central Asian Empire of Russia. Being always under the traditional rule of Amirs (Kings) it made an abortive attempt to modernize itself first in the 1920s under King Amanullah and then again in the 1960s under King Zahir Shah when a faltering attempt was made to introduce democratic institutions into a backward society. This period soon ended with the coup of Sardar Mohammad Daoud against his cousin King Zahir Shah in 1973. Thus, Daoud assumed power in Afghanistan for the second time for a period of five years that was terminated by the 1978 coup. Ironically enough the clique--Abdul Qader, Aslam Watanjar, Sayed M. Gulabzoy and S.J. Mazdooryar--that brought him into power following the 1973 coup were also the principal conspirators in the 1978 coup against Daoud himself.¹

In the early years of his regime, Daoud reciprocated the support extended to him by the Parcham party² in his rise to power by appointing them to several key positions in the government. A revolutionary program of social and political reform and reinvigorated economic development was announced. The Soviet Union was too eager to support Daoud in his endeavors by increasing the assistance in military and other developmental projects. Education and land distribution reforms were introduced. The government was not only

authoritarian but also seemed inclined to the left. As a result it was out of expediency that the Parcham party staunchly supported Daoud's government during the early years.

The Khalqis on the other hand maintained their vehement opposition to Daoud government's conservative policies. It was during this period that the left through governmental machinery unleashed a systematic process of persecution of its opponents; their wrath fell on the Islamic movement. Many leaders of this movement were exterminated.

Soon Daoud came to the stark realization that he could not rule as dynamically as he had done during his previous tenure from 1953 to 1963. The reason being that in 1973 he was brought back to power by the Parchamis. Thus, in getting assistance from them in his return to power, Daoud was expected to follow the social program chalked out by the Parcham and remain a loyal ally of the Soviet Union. In his quest to reduce the power already being exercised by the leftists in the government, Daoud decided to move his regime to the right. Consequently, his approach toward his leftist collaborators shifted and he began purging his former benefactors.

In 1975, Sardar Daoud founded his own party, The National Revolutionary Party, thus making Afghanistan a one-party republic. In order to implement his one-party framework for the polity of the country, he introduced the

1977 constitution. The constitution was designed to give Daoud complete political power through a strong presidency and a weak legislature. The new constitution also called for the appointment of a new cabinet. The leftists nourished dreams of adequate representation in the new cabinet. But their dreams were shattered when Daoud decided to include in the new cabinet "friends, sons of friends, sycophants and even collateral members of the deposed royal family."³

During the precarious balance of 1977, Daoud began to rely more heavily on a selected coterie of advisors who had replaced the pro-Soviet Central Committee. In April 1978, just a few days prior to his assassination Daoud began to consider widening the advisory group to include people with varied ideological views and technical expertise. He even toyed with the idea of reviving the name Central Committee, but the decision to implement the new changes came too late.

Being too involved in the consolidation of his political power, Daoud's government ignored other aspects such as the economic and social issues. Unemployment and inflation were on the increase. Daoud's obsession to maintain total control alienated many groups with political influence. As a result of the repression unleashed by the government the Khalq and Parcham factions of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) agreed to reconcile their differences in order to divest Daoud of all power. Some scholars contend that given the nature of sworn enmity between the Khalq and

Parcham factions, a reconciliation could not have been possible without the assistance of a strong third party, namely the Soviet Union.⁴ It is also widely held belief that the Communist Party of India played an important role in the reunification of the two factions of PDPA.⁵

In the realm of foreign relations also, many notable policy changes were made by the government. In the process to disengage Afghanistan from increasing dependence on the Soviet Union, Daoud's government began to woo the neighboring countries particularly Saudia Arabia, Iran and Pakistan. Saudi Arabia offered \$0.5 billion dollar aid to Afghanistan. Iran offered to construct a railroad from Kabul to Bandr Abbas which was to serve as a transit route. Iran had also agreed to provide markets for the Afghan agricultural products and to assist Afghanistan in developmental works. "The new era of amity between Iran and Afghanistan had been heralded by Daoud's acceptance of an agreement to share the waters of the lower Helmand River basin, which is divided by their joint border."⁶

Most important of all, Iran had offered to serve as a mediator on the prolonged Pushtunistan dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It was in the best interest of Iran, that the two countries resolve their differences and reach an amicable solution to the Pushtunistan dispute; because the dismemberment of Pakistan by Afghanistan would signal a threat to the Iranian Baluch population.

Some scholars tend to magnify the role played by the Shah of Iran in seeking rapprochement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to such a great extent that they tend to assert that it was the Shah rather than Brezhnev, who incited the 1978 coup d'etat.

Among such scholars is Selig S. Harrison, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In an article published in The Washington Post he writes that it was the Shah of Iran rather than Leonid Brezhnev, who triggered the chain of events which finally led to the coup against Daoud's regime.⁷

Other scholars, however, do not concur with Selig Harrison's thesis. For example, former Ambassador Robert Neumann believes that the Shah wanted to increase Afghanistan's dependence but was cognizant of the fact that Afghanistan had to maintain its friendship with the Soviets.

Afghanistan's military equipment was Soviet, much economic aid came from Russia, all of Afghanistan's natural gas was piped to the USSR and Russia continued to be Afghanistan's chief trading partner.⁸

Daoud's persistence in following a non-aligned posture was a source of great irritation to the Soviets which induced them to reunify the PDPA in a coup against Daoud. There is ample evidence to support this thesis. "In 1982, a Soviet scholar bluntly noted that the Shah's 1975 offer of aid had the purpose of weakening Soviet-Afghan relations."⁹ In January 1977, when Daoud visited Moscow, the Soviets made no

attempts to mask their displeasure with Afghanistan's policies:

In a brief, hostile exchange Brezhnev suddenly challenged Daoud to "get rid of all those imperialist advisors in your country." Daoud replied coldly that when Afghanistan had no further need of foreign advisors, they would all be asked to leave. Naim ascribed more significance to this exchange than did Daoud, who took it as nothing more than a typical gambit designed to put him on the defensive.¹⁰

On the other hand there is some evidence which does not conform with this thesis. If the Soviets were unhappy with Daoud, they could have launched a heavy criticism of his policies. But what they did was quite to the contrary. At the Twenty-Fifth Party Congress in 1976 there was a favorable reference to Afghanistan. A highly favorable article was also published in 1977 issue of International Affairs (Moscow) highly commending Daoud's actions.¹¹

The final showdown for Daoud came in 1978, when during a series of political assassinations taking place in Kabul, a well-known Parcham ideologue Mir Akber Khyber was killed. This event triggered large scale demonstrations marking a swift decline in Daoud's power. Even though several leftist leaders were arrested, no concerted action was taken against leftist military officers and Hafizullah Amin who at that time was the main organizer of the military cadres. This error cost Daoud his life and the people of Afghanistan their independence and territorial integrity.

Daoud was replaced by Mohammad Taraki in 1978 who

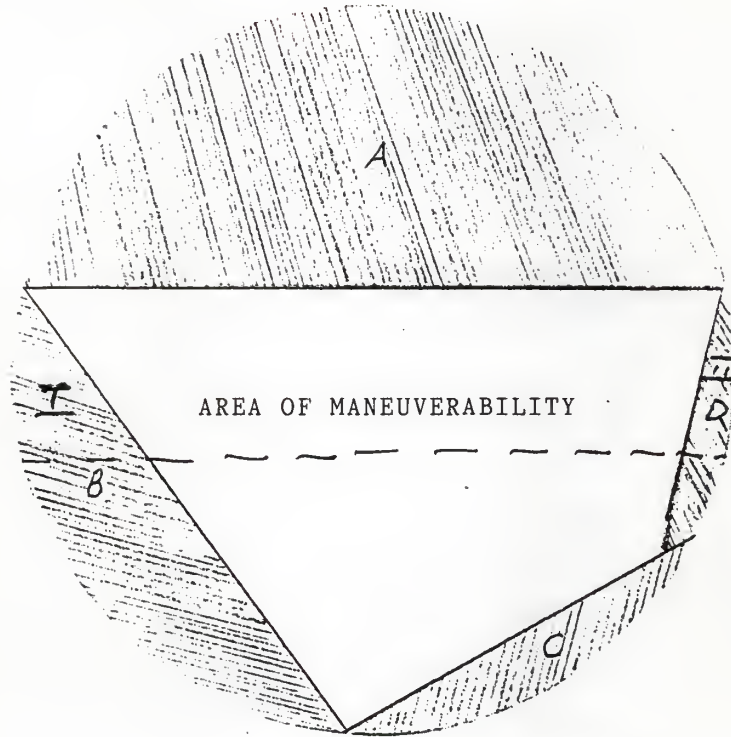
belonged to the Khalq faction of PDPA. Taraki's tenure was a short-lived one and he was soon killed in a bloody coup d'etat staged by Hafizullah Amin on September 16, 1979. It seems that Moscow did not appear happy with the domestic policies of Khalq government which were provoking alienation and strengthening indirectly the resistance movement. This finally culminated in the invasion of Afghanistan between 24-27 December, 1979 and the installation of Babrak Karmal as the new head of the government, whose policies Moscow preferred.

With this action Moscow succeeded in its long awaited objective of seeking a physical presence in Afghanistan and thereby turning it into a crisis of great magnitude.

The Afghanistan crisis now has taken the shape of a global conflict between the two superpowers. Therefore, the ramification of this particular crisis are much beyond Pakistan and Afghanistan and might further deteriorate to envelope the entire world. It is because of this reason that it is important to discuss this crisis from the perspective of several parties involved viz., The Soviet Union, The United States, The Afghan Mujahideen and Pakistan.

Figure 1

MODEL OF NEGOTIATIONS



- A. The Soviet Union interests; B. Conservative Afghans;
- C. The U.S. interests; D. Pakistan interests

In order to understand the interests of the various parties involved in the dispute and to see how a solution could be reached, it might be useful to construct a model such as the one shown in Figure 1. The model has four shaded areas, each representing the non-negotiable interests of the four parties--the Afghan mujahideen, Soviet Russia, the U.S. and Pakistan. The clear area represents the overlapping interests of these parties. It is in the interest of each party to extend the shaded area by occupying the clear ground. A viable solution can emerge only after an agreement has been reached between the four interlocutors as to how the clear area is to be shared and occupied. While the chapters that follow will provide detailed analysis of how the shaded areas of Figure 1 have come to be occupied and the concluding chapter will suggest how an equilibrium could be reached, it might be useful to provide an example here of the way this model works.

Chapter One provides a historical overview of Afghanistan-Russian relationship which resulted in the definitions of Soviet interests in Afghanistan. However, by sending its troops into Afghanistan, the Soviets sought to push their share in Afghanistan by occupying the clear area as indicated by the dotted line. The dotted line clearly affected the conservative elements in Afghanistan since a part of their non-negotiable area had been over run by the Soviets. For instance, the Soviet invasion meant de-

Islamization of Afghanistan, a situation that the conservatives could not accept. The conservatives responded by organizing themselves against the Soviets in an attempt to get area I vacated. The Pakistani area of non-negotiable interests--unwillingness to have Soviets at its borders--was also directly threatened by the Soviet invasion. By receiving the refugees and providing them with military assistance, Pakistan began the process of pushing the Soviets out of area II. While the U.S. was not directly threatened--the dotted line does not reach into area C, by occupying a portion of the clear area, the Soviets clearly posed a threat to the U.S. The U.S. responded by helping both Pakistan (the large aid program) and the mujahideen (supply of weapons). The concluding chapter will indicate as to how equilibrium could be reached by the agreed and negotiated occupation of the clear area rather than by the unilateral advance of the type indicated by the dotted line.

NOTES

- ¹Joseph J. Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: A Study in the Use of Force in Soviet Foreign Policy (Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), p. 34.
- ²One of the factions of PDPA (Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan).
- ³Louis Dupree, "Afghanistan Under the Khalq", Problems of Communism, Vol. 28, No. 4, July-August 1979, p. 39.

- ⁴Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Press Publication, 1981), p. 65.
- ⁵Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham: Duke University Press, 1983), p. 70.
- ⁶Nancy Peabody Newell and Richard S. Newell, The Struggle for Afghanistan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 49.
- ⁷Selig S. Harrison, "The Shah Not The Kremlin Touched off Afghan Coup," The Washington Post May 13, 1979.
- ⁸Thomas T. Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 40.
- ⁹Joseph J. Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: A Study in The Use of Force in Soviet Foreign Policy (Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), p. 39.
- ¹⁰Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Press Publications, 1981), p. 65.
- ¹¹Op. Cit., p. 40.

1. SOVIET MOTIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

In this chapter I intend to explore the following theme: reorientation of Russian policy towards the republics of Central Asia from de-islamization to Sovietization and finally to the promotion of global strategic interests. The experience of Soviet domination in Central Asia will be used to illustrate the Soviet perception of their interests and actions in Afghanistan. Here a look at the past history of Russian relations with the Central Asian Republics under both Tsarist and Soviet regimes is of great importance in amplifying my thesis.

DE-ISLAMIZATION: -

The Russian encroachment of Muslim Central Asia can be divided into three stages. First is the Tsardom of Moscow from 1552 - 1605. This is followed by the second period of Russian expansionism toward the West; (during which their expansionism in the East was treated as a secondary objective) it began with the days of Ivan the Terrible and was finished before Catherine II ascended the throne. The last period starts with the Russian directed expansionism towards Asia under Romanovs, that is from Catherine II to 1900.¹

These three periods are marked by the Russian conquests of Muslim lands with concomitant result of Muslim economic decadence and forced conversion of Muslims to Christianity. The presence of an overwhelming majority of Muslims in the

areas of Dar-ul-Islam (Abode of Islam) (Middle Volga, Lower Volga and Western Siberia) augmented the problem of national identity perceived by the Russians as a constant source of threat to their "Russian empire". The Russians tried to solve the nationality problem in regions where Muslims enjoyed a considerable majority such as in Crimea, Volga, Caucasus, and Kazakh steppes, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkestan. Several different approaches were applied in each of these regions which included cultural Russification, preservation of law and order in certain areas such as in the Caucasus and ruthless religious and social persecution in others. For instance:

. . . between 1738 and 1755, 418 out of 536 mosques of the Kazan gubernia disappeared; Waqf property was confiscated by the state. . . . intense missionary activity was instituted while Muslim counter measures were punishable by death; Muslims were expelled from villages where groups of converts had been formed and deported to remote districts.²

In short, the Russians resorted to the use of brute force in an effort to de-islamicize the Muslim society and subsequently solving the nationality problem. In some areas they succeeded such as in the Volga region, Azerbaijan (through indirect rule) while in others the problem simply aggravated even further. The Russians were convinced that in order to keep the Russian Empire intact, the Muslim population had to be subjugated. The end of the Tsarist Russia did not bring an end to the 'nationality problem'; it was simply transmitted on to the Soviets at the dawn of the

Bolshevik revolution.

SOVIETIZATION: -

According to the Soviets, the solution of the nationality problem lay in the scientific Marxist - Leninist doctrine. Later, when this strategy proved to be a failure, the Soviets decided to follow the pattern of their predecessors in their treatment of the Muslims. This pattern based on a systematic elimination of the Muslims carried out by genocide and expulsion or the integration of the Muslims into the Soviet society through Sovietization. Several large scale expulsions were carried out in Crimea and Meshketian region of Southern Georgia (1944); and in North Central Caucasus (mid-40s).

In the mid-20s the proposed creation of a Muslim state called the Republic of Turan, in the southern region of the Soviet Union, could not win the approval of the Soviets, who believed that as long as the Muslims remained as one nation they posed a threat to the claims of Soviet leadership. Therefore, the destruction of Muslim unity was the only way to solve the 'nationality problem'. This was done by fragmenting the Muslim nation into several small modern nations. Each nation was to have its own territorial demarcation, official language, state apparatus, economic interests, historical and cultural traditions.

This plan was most successfully carried out in the Volga-Ural district. In the North Caucasus area the Soviets

got carried away with the enforcement of their program which eventually led to the creation of micro-nationalities of tribal type. In the Central Asian region the Soviet strategy was opposed vehemently, where they created several nations and nationalities each with its own area and language.

It was during the first decade of the Soviet regime that there took place a portentous development, the emergence of Muslim National Communists, led by Sultan Galiev, a Volga Tatar. This movement was an abortive attempt to synthesize Islamic religion, nationalism, and Marxism. The adherents of the movement tried to adapt Marxism to their own convictions and using it as a tool to achieve national liberation, a Muslim way to communism and Eastern strategy, representing very seldom the proletariat, capitalism or the class struggle. Thus, as these ideas stood in conflict with Stalin's monolithic order, therefore the movement was liquidated in 1923.

The Muslims in the Soviet Union remained in a state of constant conflict for seven centuries with Muscovy, later Russia and still later the Soviet Union. Interestingly however, for the Muslims of the Soviet Union there is little difference between their old and new masters. The former rulers were Christians and the present ones are athiests both essentially belonging to the same stock--the Russians and exercising the great Russian imperialism. This imperialistic policy is most evident in a nineteenth century Russian

manifesto used in justifying the expedition against the Khan of Khiva (1839). The manifesto reads as follows:

The Rights of Russia, the security of her trade, the tranquility of her subjects, and the dignity of the state call for decisive measures . . . to make the inhabitants . . . esteem and respect the Russian name, and finally to strengthen in that part of Asia the lawful influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can insure the maintenance of peace.³

Till the later part of the 1960s, the Muslims in the Soviet Union lived in isolation from the rest of the world. It was after the Khrushchev era that the Soviet Muslims were used as a tool to cultivate links with the rest of the Muslim world. This new Soviet policy was in pursuit of three objectives:

To demonstrate to the outside world and the Third world in particular, by using Central Asia and Caucasus as a showcase of Communist economic achievements, that the Soviet experiment is more powerful and rewarding than Western capitalism. To testify to the freedom welfare, and general prosperity of Islam in the Soviet Union; and thus to demonstrate that the Soviet Union is the best friend and partner of the Islamic world.⁴

The cooperation between Soviet Islamic establishment and the Muslim world was carried out by visits and conferences in the Soviet Union; visits abroad by the Soviet muftis and propaganda broadcasts by Soviet muslim authorities. This phase was a short lived one and soon came to an end when the Muslim countries criticized the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

PROMOTION OF GLOBAL STRATEGIC INTERESTS: -

"The road to Paris and London lies through the

towns of Afghanistan, Punjab and Bengal."

- Leon Trotsky.

Afghanistan, a landlocked country with a rugged terrain about the size of Texas, was invaded by the Soviet Union in December 1979.

The history of Afghanistan is the history of a small country that has to learn to live in the shadows of great powers. What has complicated Afghanistan's situation is the constant state of flux in its geopolitical environment. A number of remarkable changes occurred in its neighborhood within a short period as the interests of those who wielded power in Moscow changed from the Russian subjugation of the Central Asian Republics (through the use of schemes that aimed to de-Islamize Central Asia) to the protection of their larger strategic interests. At the same time the departure of Britain from the South Asian subcontinent in 1947 introduced the United States into the Great Game. Balancing these changing interests called for the display of remarkable dexterity on the part of Afghan rulers. Those who succeeded in reconciling these divergent and changing interests managed to stay in power for sometime; those who failed usually paid dearly for their lack of success, usually with their lives as happened to King Habibullah in 1918, King Nadir Shah in 1933, President Daoud in 1978, and Hafizullah Amin in 1979.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the tight control exercised subsequently by Moscow over Kabul point to two conclusions important in any analysis of the

Afghan situation. First, it is difficult to impose by force or dictate a foreign ideology in a society as weak in political development and as deeply embedded in tradition as Afghanistan in the 1970s. The fracturing of the Marxist movement in Afghanistan is a manifestation of this problem. This fracturing resulted in a number of swift changes in Afghan leadership. The second important conclusion concerns Soviet motives: The Russian move into Afghanistan was not dictated by the Leninist-Marxist approach towards the spread of socialism but the Brezhnev doctrine of protecting the outer flanks of the Soviet empire. Examination of the Soviet-Afghan relationship will help us to determine the Soviet strategic interests and also identify the motives that lay behind the invasion of Afghanistan. It was in the nineteenth century that Afghanistan became the playing ground of the Great Game between the British Crown and Tsarist Russia. The term Great Game was coined by the British to refer to the activities of Russian and British intelligentsia in the area of northwestern border land of the British India.⁴ It was in 1837 that the Russians for the first time evinced an interest in Afghanistan by the siege of Herat. This gave rise to the tensions between the British and Russian Empires. But the far sighted British were quick to realize that to have a pro-British Afghanistan would be advantageous to them because such a situation would forestall the Russian threat of using Afghanistan as a springboard for further

expansionism in the direction of the Indian subcontinent.

When the British felt that they could not get the acquiescence of Dost Mohammad in order to carry out their long-range policy, the British decided to wage war against Afghanistan. The first war was fought from 1839 to 1842. During the first phase of this war they succeeded in bringing their puppet Shah Shura to the throne. This war was a rather trying experience for the British and resulted in its eventual retreat. By the autumn of 1842 Dost Mohammad was again restored to power with the help of a local rebellion. Though the British suffered heavy military defeat they succeeded in having a pro-British Afghanistan; because by then Dost Mohammad had become far more amenable toward the British.

While the British were embroiled in Afghanistan, the Russians were busy in the conquest of Central Asian republics. The tensions between the two empires were renewed when Russia invaded Khiva in 1873. The rationale behind the invasion of Khiva given by the Russians was:

The rights of Russia, the security of her trade, the tranquility of her subjects and the dignity of the state, call for decisive measures; and the Emperor has judged it to be time to send a body of troops to Khiva, to put an end to robbery and exaction, to deliver those Russians who are detained in slavery to make the inhabitants of Khiva esteem and respect the Russian name, and finally to strengthen in that part of Asia the lawful influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can insure the maintenance of peace. This is the purpose of the present expedition, and soon as it shall be attained and an order of things comfortable to the interests of Russia and the

neighboring Asiatic state shall be established on a permanent footing, the body of troops which has received orders to march on Khiva will return to the frontiers of the empire.⁶

Such a policy seriously threatened the paranoid Sher Ali, successor of Dost Mohammad, who urged the British to guarantee him assistance in case of Russian encroachments toward Afghanistan. By 1878, Russia sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul which subsequently led to the establishment of diplomatic ties with Afghanistan. In order to counterbalance the presence of Russian mission, the British dispatched their own mission to Kabul. But due to the lack of a positive response from Sher Ali, the British invaded Afghanistan. This action prompted Kabul to enter into a defense alliance with the Russians which proved quite useless since the Russian commander in Central Asia felt that it was quite "impossible in winter to send troops across Afghanistan's mountain backbone, the Hindu Kush to Kabul."⁷

In 1880 Abdur Rahman Khan commonly known as the "Iron Amir", ascended the throne after spending twelve years in exile in Russia. The British moved quickly and extended recognition to him. He was particularly unreceptive to the Russian overtures and admonished his son, "My last words to you my son and successor, are: Never trust the Russians."⁸ The Amir wanted to deter the foreign influence in the country particularly Russian and concentrate his energies on strengthening the internal self-determination. He believed that this objective could be achieved by keeping the country

backward, poor, inaccessible and unattractive to those with imperial designs.⁹ During his reign the Afghan and Russian soldiers in 1885 fought to establish control over an oasis 100 miles south of Merv. A few years later, the British forced upon the reluctant Amir the 'Durand Line' which divided the Pushtun population and was later to be a sore point in Pak-Afghan relations.

In 1901, Abdur Rahman was succeeded by his son Amir Habibullah, who followed a more liberal course than his father's hardline, conservative approach. And his son Amir Amanullah popularly known as the 'Socialist King' was even more liberal than his father; and because of his liberal approach he was forced to abdicate his throne. Amir Amanullah, who was far more complaisant than his predecessor, had ascended the throne at the time of his father's assassination in 1918.

By this time the Great Game also came to an end with the signing of St. Petersburg convention in 1917. This convention resulted in the eventual division of Persia into two spheres of influence, with Tibet serving as a neutral state.¹⁰ Afghanistan was proclaimed as a buffer state by the two empires. This buffer state under the reign of Amir Amanullah declared war on the British India in 1919. The Third Anglo-Afghan war that ensued, resulted in the military defeat of Amanullah but he emerged victorious from the peace conference. He succeeded in getting independence, by ending

the British tutelage of 40 years over Afghanistan. The World War I weary Britain was too pleased to concede to his demand and the Afghans were granted independence in the internal and external matters on August 8, 1919.

Upon getting independence from Britain, Afghanistan's Amir, King Amanullah, received a letter from Lenin extending recognition to Amanullah's accession to the throne. The contents of the letter contained revolutionary rhetoric:

His Majesty the Emir of Afghanistan at present, flourishing Afghanistan is the only independent Moslem state in the world and fate sends the Afghan people the great historic task of writing about itself, the enslaved Mohammadan peoples and leading them on the road to freedom and independence.¹¹

Later, Lenin in a response to Amanullah's proposal for diplomatic relations wrote:

The Workers and Peasants Government instructs its embassy in Afghanistan to engage in discussions with a view to the conclusion of trade and other friendly agreements . . . (and to pursue) together with Afghanistan joint struggle against the rapacious imperialistic government on earth--Great Britain. . . . The Afghan people wish to receive military aid against England from the Russian people. The Workers and Peasants Government is inclined to grant such assistance on the widest scale to the Afghan nation, and to repair the injustice done by the former government of the Russian Czars. . . . by adjusting the Soviet-Afghan frontier so as to add to the territory of Afghanistan at the expense of Russia.¹²

The promise to provide military aid to Afghanistan in case of a British onslaught never materialized because by the time this letter was written, the Third Anglo-Afghan war had ended. And since, the Moslem border region of the USSR was engaged in a revolt, the writ of the government did not even

reach the river Amu Darya.¹³

Moreover, the prospects for amicable relations with Afghanistan were clouded due to the treatment of the Muslim republics at the hands of the Soviets. Bolsheviks who prior to the revolution had pledged to grant "the right of all the nations forming part of Russia freely to secede and form independent states"¹⁴ did not honor the pledge, especially when it came to the revolt of the Uzbek and Tajik population.

Even though Amanullah was displeased with the Soviets because of their policies in Central Asia, but still he preferred them to the British as allies. As a result, the Treaty of Friendship was signed between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union in 1921. The Soviet Union pledged to abide by the terms of the treaty, which were:

To respect the independence of Bokhara and Khiva (a promise never kept) to return two districts Terek and Kerki, that had been seized by Russia in the nineteenth century, and to give Amanullah a subsidy of 1 million rubles a year (a promise that was only partly kept).¹⁵

The Soviets had also agreed to provide Afghanistan with some aircraft, five thousand rifles with ammunition and to assist Afghanistan in installing an aviation school and a gunpowder plant.¹⁶ Another important clause of the treaty was, "to refrain from entering into a military or political agreement with a third power to the detriment of the other signatory nation."¹⁷ This treaty was the first example of an international agreement that the Soviets entered into following their Bolshevik revolution.

Soviet-Afghan relations were seriously affected during 1921 to 1924 by the Basmachi revolt led by the Muslim rebels in Central Asia. The word Basmach is derived from the Turkic word Basmak meaning to fall on, attack.¹⁸ But to the Soviets it meant bandits or robbers.¹⁹ The Basmachi problem was compounded by the Soviet promise to Afghanistan under the Treaty of 1921 to honor the "independence and freedom of Khiva and Bukhara in whatever form that agreed with the wishes of the people."²⁰

By the mid 1920s, the Soviets were able to quell the Basmachi revolt through a series of military, political and economic measures, and thereby self-determination was denied. This movement had the support of Amanullah who had conjured up dreams of a single Central Asian confederation with Kabul as its capital.

From 1924 to 1929 Amanullah tried to contain the British and Soviet influence in Afghanistan. But with the outbreak of a revolt in Khost against Amanullah in 1924, Afghan-Soviet friendship was intensified as a result of Soviet assistance in putting down the revolt. The Soviets also helped him by erecting telegraph and telephone lines, built a radio station, established an airline connecting Kabul with Tashkent and Moscow, and gave him a dozen airplanes, along with the pilots and mechanics to service them.²¹

During King Amanullah's tenure the Soviet Union made two successive attempts to invade Afghanistan, one in 1925 and

the other in 1929. The first invasion of Afghanistan took place some fifty years ago in 1925 when the Soviet forces occupied a disputed Afghan island in the Amu Darya, in order to prevent some of the basmachis from using it as a base against the Soviet Union. After invading the island the Soviet authorities announced its annexation to the USSR. This announcement caused a wave of anger among the Afghan populace and the two countries momentarily harbored war designs against each other. The tension cooled off only after the Soviets decided to pull out their forces and recognize Afghan control of the island.

In 1928, Amanullah Khan undertook a trip to Europe where he met Kamal Ataturk of Turkey and having been inspired by the modernization of Turkey, he decided to introduce the same pattern of reforms in his quest to modernize Afghanistan.

The reforms introduced by him included the unveiling of women, opening coeducational schools, forcing all Afghans to wear western attire, and the introduction of a secular code of laws along with the Sharia. These radical reforms angered the conservative elements in Afghanistan who believed that he "had turned against Allah and Islam!"²² and they revolted against him. The revolt of 1928 was led by an illiterate Tajik bandit called Bacha-i-Saqao (son of water carrier) and it culminated in the dethronement of King Amanullah. A period of anarchy followed during which Bacha-i-Saqao ruled for nine months, when he too was deposed by Nadir Shah.

Amanullah however, was able to maintain a rapport with the Soviet Union despite the fact that there had been periods of tension between the two countries. And when he was forced to abdicate the throne the Soviets tried to restore him to power. According to David C. Montgomery the Soviets had two reasons for helping Amanullah to regain the lost throne: the first was to bring the Afghan ruler under obligation to the Soviet Union and thereby enhance the Soviet influence in Afghanistan; the second was to crush the Central Asian Muslims' rebellious tendencies that were brewing up in the Uzbek-speaking areas of the Soviet Union, adjacent to Afghanistan, and who were using Afghanistan as a refuge.²³

Moscow's decision to assist Amanullah had also been shaped by the influence of the four Charkhi brothers who had held important posts in the government of the deposed King: Ghulam Nabi, minister to Moscow; Ghulam Siddiq, foreign minister; Ghulam Jilani who was previously the governor of Mazar-i-Sharif, and then minister to Turkey; and Abdul Aziz, who succeeded Ghulam Jilani as governor of Mazar.²⁴ Ghulam Nabi, the minister in Moscow, persuaded the Soviet government to support Amanullah. His pleas were reinforced by his brother Ghulam Nabi (who had been sent to Moscow by Amanullah) and Ghulam Jilani from Turkey.²⁵

In order to comply with Ghulam Nabi's request the Soviets in April 1929 raised an army of 800-1000 Kirghiz soldiers led by Ghulam Nabi.²⁶ They succeeded in crossing

the Amu Darya river and capturing the northern cities of Mazar-i-Sharif and Tashkurgan after defeating the ill-equipped Afghan army. To aid Ghulam Nabi there was a former Soviet military attache in Kabul by the name of Col. K.M. Primakoff. This contingent had barely reached Kabul, when they received orders from Moscow to abandon the mission and return to the Soviet Union. The withdrawal brought an end to the second attempt of invasion by the Soviet Union. It is believed that the worldwide criticism of Soviet action had prompted the withdrawal, because the Soviet Union was still trying to establish an image for itself in the world community which it did not wish to mar.²⁷

On October 15, 1929 Nadir Shah came to power after defeating Bacha-i-Saqao. He returned the country to customary Islamic law and developed a new constitution which lasted until the 1960s. He reversed all of the laws introduced by Amanullah and remained in power until 1933.

In 1930, the Soviets looking forward to another expedition in Afghanistan, penetrated 40 miles into that country.²⁸ This invasion was launched under the pretext of dealing with Ibrahim Beg, the rebel leader, who was later caught by the Soviet forces. Nadir Shah who looked upon the policies of Amanullah with great aversion was shot in 1933, and his son Mohammad Zahir came to the throne.

During 1920 and 1930s, the Soviets were busy crushing domestic opposition at home and therefore Afghanistan did not

loom large in Soviet Union's deliberations. As J. Bruce Amstutz notes:

. . . the Soviet Union saw as its main foreign policy objective the need to obtain diplomatic recognition and international pledges of non-interference. A second priority was ideological--to spread international communism through the mechanism of the Comintern. Afghanistan figured only tangentially in both policies.²⁹

It is quite difficult to accept this reasoning at face value. Because, by analyzing the Soviet Union's aggression against Afghanistan in 1925, 1929 and 1930 it becomes quite evident that the Soviet Union was following into the policies of their predecessors: the will to use military force in Afghanistan for the implementation of their long range objectives. During the course of the Second World War, the technicians, both civil and military who had been sent to Afghanistan under Amanullah's reign, had returned to the Soviet Union. The Soviet offer to establish trade mission in 1936 had also been rejected by the Afghans. The situation however changed with the departure of the British from this region in 1947 and the coming into power of Daoud Khan in 1953.

THE SOVIET INFLUENCE INCREASES: -

"Given the demise of British India, Russian occupation of Afghanistan was inevitable and it is surprising that it took the Russians 32 years to achieve it."

Sir Olaf Caroe, scholar and
Governor of Northwest Frontier
Province (1946-47), July 1981.

The exodus of the British from South Asia in 1947

created a vacuum which provided an opportunity for the rapid increase of Soviet influence in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union, George F. Kennan argued, would press its advantage wherever the West appeared vulnerable and would seek to fill any power vacuum which appeared. According to him the Soviet Union a protagonist of a revolutionary and anti-status quo ideology would miss no opportunity to extend its physical and ideological boundaries.³⁰

The government in Moscow headed by Joseph Stalin was embroiled in the Cold war and Korean dispute and therefore it paid little attention to Afghanistan. It was only when Nikita Khrushchev came to power that the political scenario changed. Britain's withdrawal from this region was filled in by the United States, in whose policies Afghanistan did not figure prominently (this aspect will be discussed in detail in the following chapter of the U.S.).

The period from 1955 to 1978 in Soviet-Afghan relations played a very important role in determining the communist revolution of 1978. The quest for two important objectives of Afghanistan's royal family increased its dependency on the Soviet Union. The first objective was a desire to modernize the country. The other goal was winning independence of the Pushtun people living across the Durand Line in a newly created country called Pakistan.³¹ The Soviets exploited these two objectives to the fullest and signed an agreement on July 17, 1950. This agreement was to be followed by a

long chain of subsequent agreements, leading to the stage of total Afghan dependency on the Soviet Union during the Daoud era. The 1950 agreement provided for duty-free transit of Afghan goods over Soviet territory.³² It also "provided for an exchange of Afghan agricultural products in return for Soviet petroleum products, cotton cloth, sugar and other commodities. This agreement also gave the Soviets an opportunity to exercise some leverage on Afghanistan in political spheres. For example the UN sponsored oil exploration in 1952 was objected to by the Soviets because of concern for the security of its industrial complexes in Central Asia. Thus, the Afghans went to the United States for help but did not get any positive response.³³

In the early 1950s Afghanistan also requested arms aid and support for the Pushtunistan issue from the U.S. But since the U.S. was at that time courting Pakistan therefore it could not assist Afghanistan either by providing arms or by supporting its stand on the Pushtunistan issue. Taking advantage of the United States indifferent attitude, the Soviet Union in January 1954, made a loan of \$3.5 million to Afghanistan, which was payable in eight years with an interest rate of 3 percent.³⁴ This loan was the first in its kind to be given to a country outside the Soviet bloc and that too after the death of Joseph Stalin ten months earlier.³⁵ In December 1955, the Communist Party's First Secretary Khrushchev and Prime Minister Bulganin visited

Afghanistan and announced a loan of \$100 million. They also extended for ten years the 1931 treaty of friendship and nonaggression.³⁶ The projects which were carried out by the loan of \$100 million were: "(1) two airports, one military, one civilian; (2) two hydroelectric plants; (3) a road maintenance plant; (4) a road over the Hindu Kush with a tunnel which would connect northern and southern Afghanistan for the first time; (5) and three irrigation projects."³⁷ By 1979, the Soviets had funneled in so much economic assistance in Afghanistan that they boastfully claimed at the advent of the invasion:

Over the years the USSR has helped Afghanistan in some 120 industrial, agricultural and other projects of which about 70 have already been completed. . . . The USSR has aided Afghanistan in building 70 percent of its hard-surface roads. . . and three of its four international airports.³⁸

The Soviets in March 1956 signed an agreement, which gave the Soviets an opportunity to send their specialists to Afghanistan with the purpose of guiding the Afghans in the maintenance, installation and repair of various equipment being utilized in connection with the aid projects.³⁹ A few months later in July 1956, the Soviets had agreed to provide a loan of \$32 million for the purchase of Soviet weapons.⁴⁰ According to the August 1956, Soviet-Afghan agreement for military hardware worth \$25 million dollars was made available to Afghanistan. Later that year in October, eleven MIG-15 fighters were received by the Afghans. From 1953-63, the Soviets were also constructing the military airfields in

Bagram, near Kabul; Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan and at Shindad in the central part of western Afghanistan.⁴¹ The Soviets also increased their influence in the tactical expertise, especially when the Turkish military officers were replaced by Soviet instructors in 1963. At the same time about 4,000 Afghan military officers were sent to the Soviet Union for training.⁴² In the years that followed thousands of Afghan army and airforce officers received their training in the Soviet Union which was bound to prove fateful for Afghanistan in the subsequent years. As Thomas T. Hammond writes:

The decision to send officers to the Soviet Union for training may have been one of the most fateful choices ever made by the Afghan government. As a result, a majority of the officer corps spent some time in the USSR, where the Soviets could attempt to indoctrinate them with proSoviet and procommunist views or recruit them as Soviet agents.⁴³

Afghanistan and the Soviet Union came closer to each other by way of military and trade assistance during the period from 1956 to 1963. Using the total value of Afghan trade as an index from 1951-58, Afghan interaction with the socialist bloc increased from 14.7 percent in 1951 to 33.9 percent in 1958; and the dollar value of Soviet-Afghan trade also increased from \$32 million (1956) to \$46 million (1962).⁴⁴

Even though the Soviets had provided \$400 million in development assistance from 1953 to 1963, and it had also exceeded \$20 million dollars worth of military aid to

Afghanistan; but still Afghanistan did not become a client state of the Soviet Union, nor did Daoud become a Soviet protege.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Daoud's departure from the office did not seriously affect the Soviet-Afghan relations. Both military and economic assistance were continued at the same pace during King Zahir Shah's regime from 1963 to 1973. During King Zahir Shah's tenure two important developments took place: The promulgation of the Constitution of 1964 after the ratification from a Loya Jirgah⁴⁶ and the formation of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The 1964 constitution brought about many changes in the political arena. Though it promised the establishment of a popular government encompassing: "The National Assembly, the Senate, the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Committee, the Constitutional Advisory Commission, additional members to be elected from the provinces equal in number to the National Assembly and finally, members appointed at the King's discretion to insure adequate presentation of all points of view."⁴⁷ It left the government unsuccessful in solving the problems emanating from economic and social aspects of Afghan society.

THE GENESIS OF MARXISM: -

The other development was the creation of Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The creation of PDPA did not mark the beginning of Marxism in Afghanistan. The advent of Marxist movement in Afghanistan took place in 1915

with the arrival of a joint Turko-German mission. The mission comprised of some renowned personalities of the Indian National Revolutionaries, the most notable ones being: Maulana Barkatullah, Obaidullah Sindhi and Raja Mehendra Pratap. This mission "introduced the secular concepts of Marxism to Afghan intellectuals for the first time."⁴⁸

The Marxist ideals became quite popular among students who generally hailed from "families of social and political prominence."⁴⁹ The first youth organization comprising pro-Soviet elements was founded in 1947 called the Wikh-i-Zalmayan (Awakened Youth).⁵⁰ These students were given recognition by the government during 1949-52 and were elected to the nominal national parliament. They however, soon were regarded as a dangerous elite, in 1953 by the government because of their radical views. Thus, "this first generation of student reformers generally provided the foundation for the liberal changes that were attempted in 1963."⁵¹

During the constitutional period 1964-73, the Afghan society could be stratified into four ideological groups. First, conservatives or traditionalists who were interested in retaining Afghan culture under Islamic norms. Second, adapters who were seeking to merge western technology and managerial tasks with Afghan culture, and Islamic teachings. Third, those who wanted to follow western models of democratic republics were known as democratic. And last of all, were the Marxist-Leninist who were primarily interested

in establishing a communist government.⁵² Marxists accused the monarchy for being the cause of economic and social deprivation of the Afghan society and were able to propagate their views among the student community upon whom they exercised a profound influence.

The Afghan communist movement began in January 1965 with the establishment of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in Kabul. The movement was pioneered by Nur Mohammad Taraki along with his 30 comrades. The objective of the movement was "building a socialist society in Afghanistan based on . . . adapting Marxist-Leninist revolutionary principles to conditions in Afghanistan."⁵³ The two other prominent figures of PDPA besides Nur Mohammad Taraki were: Babrak Karmal and Hafizullah Amin.

Nur Mohammad Taraki, the Secretary General of PDPA was a Pushtun born in 1917, had worked in Bombay (India) as a teenager where he got acquainted with Marxist ideals from Indian Communists. Later, in 1930s he worked for the government of Afghanistan in different capacities. He served as a press attache in Washington, D.C. in 1952. During his stay in Washington he sought political asylum after ridiculing President Daoud in a press conference. On being denied political asylum, he returned to Kabul where, as his official biography reveals, he telephoned Daoud to say, "I am Nur Mohammad Taraki. I have just arrived. Shall I go home or to prison?"⁵⁴ Taraki later served as the leader of the

Khalq faction and President of Afghanistan from April 28, 1978 to September 14, 1979.

The other prominent figure was Hafizullah Amin born in late 1920s. He belonged to Ghilzai pushtun family near Paghman in Kabul province.⁵⁵ He earned a Master's degree from Columbia University in late 1950s. He went to Columbia again in 1963 on a scholarship to work for a Ph.D which he never finished. It is believed that his Marxist views were reinforced during his summer school in the University of Wisconsin.⁵⁶ He was also the President of Associated Students of Afghanistan (ASA) in the U.S.

He served as President of Afghanistan for a few months and was assassinated on December 28, 1979. After 1979 Amin was accused of being a CIA agent recruited during his student years in the U.S. seeking to destroy true Marxist leadership in the PDPA.⁵⁷

The third prominent figure was Babrak Karmal, born in 1919 at Kanary near Kabul into a Pushtun family. It is believed that his name Karmal was an acronym based on Karl Marx Lenin.⁵⁸ He received modern education and became an active participant of liberal student reform movement in early 1950s. He was a leader of the Parcham faction and a long time KGB agent.⁵⁹ Later, in December 1979 he became the President of Afghanistan.

It was in 1967, that PDPA split into several factions over organizational problems. The two most important

factions were: Khalq (masses) and Parcham (banner). The former was led by Nur Mohammad Taraki and the latter by Babrak Karmal. Earlier in 1966 the Khalq had also started publishing a newspaper called the Khalq. Because of its revolutionary rhetoric the government had to ban it and since then the "Khalq faction became more clandestine."⁶⁰ The Khalq faction comprised mainly of Pushtuns who favored "a Leninist-type party based on the working class," while Babrak Karmal's Parcham favored "a broad national-democratic front."⁶¹ Parcham was far more active than the Khalq faction. Parcham continued its publication until 1969 and was often accused by Khalq of being pro-government. Thus, the personality differences, social origins and tactics widened the gulf further, and the Parcham faction succeeded in bringing Daoud to power on July 17, 1973. It was in 1977 that the two factions united under Soviet influence to oust Daoud from power. They succeeded in their motive and Daoud was killed in a bloody coup d'etat staged by Mohammad Taraki on April 28, 1978.

ROUTE TO THE 1979 INVASION: -

Mohammad Taraki became the new President and Head of the Revolutionary Council. Hafizullah Amin and Babrak Karmal served as his deputy Prime Ministers. The cabinet was composed of eleven ministers from Khalq and ten from the Parcham faction. The new regime avoided the communist label and proclaimed Afghanistan as the Democratic Republic of

Afghanistan. By 1975, the Soviets had also succeeded in making some inroads as far as the economic dependence of Afghanistan was concerned. The economic aid to Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1975 was allocated to help in the completion of 20 major projects in agriculture, irrigation, electric power, mineral and metal processing and transportation. The total economic credits to Afghanistan by the Soviet Union were in the amount of \$437 million in 1975.⁶² Thus, with the Marxist coup in 1978, the Soviet economic influence was greatly enhanced.⁶³ Nearly 3,000 Soviet military and economic advisers were engaged in Afghanistan.⁶⁴ In the economic arena the emphasis had shifted from financial support to technical services and training. There were 2,000 Soviet economic personnel to take over managerial jobs in Afghanistan. The Taraki government signed 60 odd contracts that had been already negotiated with the predecessor government.⁶⁵ The contracts were valued at \$200 million. Among the contracts signed were agreements for:

A \$50 million rail and vehicle bridge over the Amu Darya River at Hairatan, the first direct connection between Afghanistan and the USSR.

\$30 million worth of petroleum equipment to be provided in 1979 and 1980.

Studies and designs for the \$600 million Ainak copper smelter and for a 300,000 ton fertilizer plant near the existing Soviet built plant at Mazar-i-Sharif.

A \$22 million seven-year project for mapping modern Afghanistan.

A \$5 million renovation of the Sher Khan river port, to increase its handling capacity to 2,500 tons of cargo annually.⁶⁶

On December 5, 1978 the two countries also signed a twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was later used as a justification for the Soviet invasion. According to its Article 4 which contains a security commitment:

The high contracting parties, acting in a spirit of friendship and good-neighborliness, as well as in spirit of the UN Charter, will hold consultations and, with the agreement of both parties, take appropriate measures with a view to ensuring the security, independence, aid territorial integrity of the two countries.

In the interests of strengthening the defense capability of the high contracting parties, they will continue to develop cooperation in the military field on the basis of appropriate agreements concluded between them.⁶⁷

The rule by Taraki government was replete with internal dissension. The regime envisioned an overnight modernization of Afghanistan and therefore it introduced new laws pertaining to land reforms, rural credit, marriage arrangements and education. All these radical reforms provoked a country wide resistance. The 'marriage of convenience' that had been forged between the Khalq and Parcham factions prior to the overthrow of Daoud was over. The Khalq government had by July 1978 begun to purge the Parchamites. It is estimated that about 800 people in the military belonging to the Parcham faction were purged. Babrak Karmal was sent to Czechoslovakia as an ambassador, his brother Mohammad Barialy to Pakistan, and Nur Ahmed Nur to Washington. Major General Abdul Qader and Sultan Ali Keshtmand, the minister of planning, were arrested for

conspiring against the government and were subsequently given death sentences. About 20,000 political prisoners were said to have been killed from April 1978 through December 1979.⁶⁸ The resistance movement comprising of "religious reformists, social democrats, tribal autonomists and Afghan nationalists,"⁶⁹ was accelerated when Taraki changed the color of the flag from traditional Islamic green to red. The radical policies ensued by Taraki government were not looked upon favorably by the Soviets who advocated 'go slow' policy. During this period Hafizullah Amin who had a Prime Minister portfolio emerged as a strong man and on September 16, 1979 after Taraki's futile attempt to have him killed, Amin got Taraki assassinated.

Amin, often alleged by the Soviets, to be a CIA man was interested in following an independent policy both in domestic and foreign affairs, rather than toing the Soviet line. In a question about his relationship with the Soviet government, Amin had remarked, "It is like the relationship between two equal brothers. But I have declared repeatedly that our actions are not dictated by anyone."⁷⁰ Perhaps it was this relationship of equality which the Soviets found so unpalatable and was later the cause of his ouster from the office.

As the internal insurgency mounted, Moscow grew anxious about the fate of Afghanistan and decided to send in April 1979, General Aleksei Yepishev, the head of the Soviet army

to study the growing insurrection in Afghanistan.⁷¹ By mid-August with the deterioration of the military position, the Soviets sent another mission to Afghanistan headed by General Ivan G. Paulovsky to study the rapidly deteriorating situation,⁷² whose assessment it is believed played an instrumental role in determining Moscow's decision to invade.⁷³ The Soviet stakes in Afghanistan were in a serious jeopardy. Execution and imprisonments were rampant throughout the country. Draft evasions and defection to rebel forces were widespread. Worst of all the Soviets were not in a position to influence Amin's government or sizeable presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan. In order to avoid embarrassment which would naturally follow from the collapse of the Marxist government in Kabul, the Soviets felt limited to three options: To leave Amin in office, but that was inconceivable given the chaotic state of the country. The Soviets feared that if the Marxist government fell, the Soviet investment would be lost and the West could be expected to move in, following the Soviet's departure.⁷⁴ Second, to retreat and cut their losses but that would have put anti-Afghan rebels in a position to seize power. The last option was to oust Amin and install a puppet government in Kabul. Such a scenario Soviets hoped would restore stability to the country and put the Soviet Union in a stronger position to capitalize on unpredictable events in Iran and also further the Soviet goals in the Middle East.⁷⁵

Thus on December 24, 1979 the Soviets began the airlift which brought the 105th Soviet Army Airborne Guards Division to land at Kabul airport. Similar airborne troops landed at Bagram Air Base near Kabul, and Shindand and Kandahar air bases were captured by land forces. And by the morning of Thursday, December 27, 1979 the Soviets were in full control. Finally Amin was killed in the palace and Babrak Karmal, a servile follower of the Soviet Union proclaimed himself to be the new head of the government. Thus, the Soviets had by now succeeded in launching the 'fourth invasion' of Afghanistan.

It is believed that the Soviet Union's decision-makers were divided on whether to invade Afghanistan or not. It is speculated that the decision to invade was forced upon the aging and ailing Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. Brezhnev had already staked his leadership in detente when he invited Nixon to visit Moscow in 1972. In discussing the Central Committee meeting of May 1972, which approved Nixon's visit despite the course of the war in Vietnam, Brezhnev felt that there was opposition to Nixon's visit.⁷⁶ In the final poll of the Politburo Pyotr Shelest, the Ukrainian party chief and anti-west hardliner urged that the summit be cancelled. He remained adamant in his opposition to Nixon's visit:

"I won't shake a hand bloodied in Vietnam," he reportedly said. Brezhnev turned to Vladimir Scherbitsky, a Ukrainian and junior to Shelest, "do you agree with comrade Pyotr Shelest." "No I don't agree," said Scherbitsky, "the President is welcome in the Ukraine." Now Brezhnev addressed Shelest.

"You see, you can speak for yourself comrade, but you can't speak for all Ukrainians."⁷⁷

With this statement Shelest's fate was sealed and he was removed from the Politburo. Thus, Brezhnev's prestige was so intertwined with detente that some analysts believe that the invasion of Afghanistan was a plot to discredit him.⁷⁸ While on the other hand there are analysts who do not concur with this reasoning and assert that Brezhnev was equally supportive of this invasion. According to Joseph Collins:

The Politburo member to vigorously support the invasion was Brezhnev himself on January 13.⁷⁹ He had no choice but to send troops. And events have confirmed that this was the only correct decision.⁸⁰

AN ANALYSES OF NATIONAL INTERESTS BEHIND THE INVASION: -

What were the factors which induced the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan? According to the Soviets they had been invited by the government of Afghanistan under the terms of 1978 treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, to assist the Afghans in repelling outside intervention. By 'outside intervention' the Soviet Union implied assistance to the guerrilla movement from the United States, Pakistan and China. This explanation however, cannot be accepted because there was no evidence to prove that the U.S., Pakistan and China had intervened military and in fact by that time the Soviets themselves had entered Kabul.⁸¹

Besides this some other factors worth consideration are: the United States, Peoples Republic of China, Warm water ports, the Gulf Oil, the Islamic Threat and the Russian

Soviet Imperialistic tendencies.

UNITED STATES - the credibility gap:

Although the United States credibility as a dominant power had considerably eroded as a result of its bitter involvement in Vietnam, the U.S. policies were seriously endangered during the latter part of the 1970s, not in Southeast Asia but rather in the South, Southwest Asian region with the makings of the Iranian Islamic revolution and subsequent hostage crisis in Iran in November 1979. During this crisis the Soviet Union speculated that the United States might resort to military retaliation to seek the release of American hostages in Iran. Such a maneuver could establish the U.S. military presence in Iran which would have obvious consequences for the Soviet border concerns and its own expansionist policies in the Gulf region. The Soviets manipulated this situation in their own favor by launching a propaganda campaign on American military preparations in Iran by prolonging the hostage crisis. Their motive was to divert world attention from Afghanistan "while Soviet decision makers finalized contingency invasion plans."⁸² As Andrei Sakharov remarked, "The Soviet leaders chose this movement to act because, with the U.S. preoccupied with Iran and other problems, they judged the correlation of military and political forces to be in their favor."⁸³

Afghanistan was gained by the Soviet Union as a result of the failing deterrence by America. The Soviet Union felt

confident that there would be no retaliation from the U.S. and its allies, ". . . such is America's weakness of will and of strategic direction these days it (the USSR) would get away with its act of contempt."⁸⁴ Occupation of Afghanistan was the result when appeals of American Ambassadors in Kabul were signed by Congressional Committees and a Vietnam-defensive administration.⁸⁵

UNITED STATES The failing detente:

By 1979 the U.S.-Soviet relations had considerably deteriorated. This deterioration began in 1978 "with the NATO countries decision for 3 percent real growth in their defense budgets and continued through the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force."⁸⁶ In addition the Salt II agreement was being opposed by some hardliners in the U.S. government. According to V. Fedin first deputy of International Information Department of the Central committee, "Carter has done everything to sabotage the agreement."⁸⁷ Since the detente had been seriously damaged, the Soviets came to believe that as they had nothing more to lose as for the relations with the adversary (the U.S.) were concerned, therefore, the time was most appropriate to launch an invasion of Afghanistan.

PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA:

Sino-Soviet relations had begun to deteriorate with China's invasion of Vietnam. With the post-Mao government in China, Soviet Union made several attempts for approachment

but there seemed no change in Peking's anti-Soviet attitude. Peking was believed "to have rebuffed both public and private Soviet initiatives for relaxing tensions to the Soviet Union across the fortified border."⁸⁸ This threat was intensified further as a result of China's continued cooperation with Pakistan for the construction of the Karakoram Highway. The relations were further exacerbated when the Peoples Republic of China in April 1979, made the announcement of not renewing the 1959 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship Alliance.⁸⁹ Also because of the growing Chinese influence in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Soviets decided to put an end to this for once and for all.

Thus, the Soviet Union, by intervening in Afghanistan before China could avail the opportunity to contemplate any long term policies to increase its role in Afghanistan, succeeded in eliminating the Chinese influence from Afghanistan completely.

WARM WATER PORTS:

Another national interest which may have figured prominently in the Soviet policy deliberations to invade Afghanistan was the age old desire of Russians and Soviets to have an access to warm water ports of the Arabian Sea.

The Arabian Seaport towns of Chah-Bahar in Iran and Gwadar in Pakistan lie about 300 miles south of the Afghan border, in a region dominated by Baluchi tribesmen disaffected from both Tehran and Islamabad. Baluchistan, convulsed by a breaking rebellion from 1973 to 1977, has always been a tempting target for a Soviet gateway to the sea.⁹⁰

The invasion of Afghanistan, has thus, provided the Soviet Union with the corridor to reach warm water ports of the Indian Ocean, a goal that has previously eluded the Soviets for a long time.

THE PERSIAN GULF:

"The area south of Bahin and Baku, in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is . . . the Center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union."⁹¹

This statement made approximately four decades prior to 1979 by V.M. Molotov in 1940, is a true reflection of the policies the Soviet Union had in mind. For the implementation of those policies, the time had to be right but with the invasion of Afghanistan the Soviets had been granted with right time. Moscow's long awaited goal: control of the oil flow could be possible now.

But I do not intend to imply here that the Persian Gulf oil factor was the only primary objective of the Soviet Union that lay behind the invasion. But it certainly has provided the Soviets an opportunity to be in close proximity with the Strait of Hormuz and who knows when they might take advantage of it. The control of the gulf oil could place Western Europe, Japan, the U.S. and many other countries in vulnerable positions vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

AFGHANISTAN'S OIL, GAS AND MINERAL RESOURCES:

Afghanistan's rich deposits of oil, gas and mineral resources deserve some attention as possible incentives for the Soviets to decide in favor of the 1979 invasion. During

the period 1974-76 oil deposits were discovered in Jarqudog, Augoot, Sai-i-Pul of Joozjan province and Aligul of Oraysar Faryab province.⁹² Not only was Afghanistan rich in oil but it also had natural gas resources which too like oil were exploited by the Soviets. It is believed that prior to the official export of gas to the Soviet Union in 1968, 25 million cubic meters worth of natural gas had already been exported to the Soviet Union in the year 1967 alone.⁹³ Later, pipelines were also constructed by the Soviet Union for the export of gas from Afghanistan to the USSR. Besides oil and gas huge deposits of minerals like copper, bauxite, beryl, iron ore, fluorspar, coal and chrome were found by the Soviet experts years ago in Afghanistan.⁹⁴ In June 1977, an agreement was signed by the Soviet Union and Afghanistan for the technical and economic survey of a copper melting plant which was to cost 1.5 million rubles. But this agreement was never materialized.⁹⁵

Thus, Afghanistan rich in natural resources was the most attractive prey for the Soviets to devour.

ISLAMIC THREAT:

Afghanistan lies in close proximity with three Soviet Central Asian republics Uzbekistan, Turkmenia and Tadzhikstan with which it shares a border of 800 miles. These three republics are not only predominately muslim but also have a high rate of growth and share overlapping ethnic ties with Afghanistan.⁹⁶ Given such a demographic and ethnic trend the

fundamentalist Islamic revival in Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and Pakistan was obviously a matter of concern to the Soviets. For instance the 1978, a Tajik uprising against Russians in Dushanbe was the kind of crisis the Soviets wanted to avoid in the future. The Soviets were cognizant of the fact that the Islamic revivalism in Afghanistan might have a spill over effect in Central Asian Republics, which share ethnic and linguistic bonds with Afghanistan. Such a scenario could trigger off a chain reaction of separatist impulses among the 50 million Soviet muslims, a situation the Soviets would do anything to avoid. Since the Shiite Muslim revivalism in Iran after the fall of the Shah had already created great concerns for the Muslim population in Turkmenistan, the Soviets did not want to see Afghanistan too, being lost to Islamic revivalism.

Some scholars tend to believe that concern for the Islamic threat did not loom large in the Soviet's decision to invade Afghanistan. I however do not concur with their analyses because throughout the long course of USSR's history the muslims and non-muslim Russians have always been at odds with each other. While one advancing and forcefully annexing Muslim territories, the other trying to check these advances. Thus, both the Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Russia invariably succeeded in breaking up the Muslim community and creating new nations out of the debris of the Muslim Ummah.

To sum up, the Russian move in Afghanistan was

determined by all the aforementioned factors. These factors were designed to strengthen and promote the security of the Soviet frontiers and strategic goals. This objective was to be achieved only through the neutralization of this region i.e., denial of political and strategic accessibility in this region to other powers. And control of Afghanistan by the Soviets is an important determinant in this scheme leading to their eventual hegemony over this region.

The Soviet Union is interested to have a compliant Afghan regime. The continuation of a 1978 treaty establishing a Finland-style security relationship between Moscow and Kabul remains a non-negotiable Soviet demand. The Soviet Union envisages to withdraw its forces but because of its heavy military investment in Afghanistan, it would like to leave in place the Soviet sponsored Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).

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2. UNITED STATES' CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF SOUTH ASIA

In this chapter I intend to examine the U.S. strategic perspectives in South/Southwest Asia, especially in the wake of the Afghanistan crisis so that the area of negotiation could be discerned. After examining the U.S. shift from Europe as an area of focus to South Asia, this chapter will attempt to answer a few of the important questions being asked in the wake of the Afghanistan crisis. Those questions are as follows:

- (1) Why United States has become again interested in the policy which it allegedly ignored at the start of the 1960s?
- (2) Why Pakistan has suddenly emerged as an important nation to secure the national interest of United States?

The U.S. policies toward South Asia were characterized by a certain degree of inconsistency, especially towards two important regional countries, namely, Pakistan and India. Quite often one gained importance in the eyes of the U.S. policymakers at the expense of the other. This inconsistency, in turn, was determined by the changing U.S. perceptions of its interests in the Gulf Oil region and Indo-China. No independent policy was formulated for South Asia, a region in which United States had only a marginal interest; but its location was accentuated by its close proximity to two areas of U.S. vital interests: Southwest Asia and

Southeast Asia. The U.S. South Asian policy always remained a component of the greater U.S. policy designed to contain communism. The advent of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 signaled a change in United States South Asian policies. And once again this region, especially Pakistan, began to loom large in United States foreign policy deliberations. It is this theme that I will expand upon by the use of several anecdotes for the illustration of my main points.

While the U.S. was embroiled in the cold war with the U.S. in Europe, it paid little attention to South Asia. Consequently, South Asia was put on a back burner as far as the long list of U.S. priorities and policies were concerned.

It was in 1947 that India gained independence from British rule and was partitioned to create Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan soon after their independence became embroiled in the Kashmir dispute, with each seeking to establish its suzerainty over the disputed territory. By 1949 a momentous development took place in Asia: the defeat of Chiang Kai-Shek and the subsequent communist take over of the government in China. This development soon shifted United States focus from Europe to South Asia, and the U.S. began to make overtures to India with the objective of formulating an alliance to contain China. The U.S. wanted to present India as a counterpoise to China. With this end in mind the Truman administration extended an invitation to

Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, to visit the U.S. Nehru's charismatic personality even prior to his visit had made a profound impact on the American public, who eagerly awaited his arrival. The announcement of the invitation to Nehru caused a deep concern in Karachi¹, since no similar invitation had been extended to the Pakistani Premier Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan.

Nehru's visit to the U.S. did not reap the results that were anticipated by Washington. Nehru maintained his nonaligned stance and refused to take sides in the cold war. Thus, his visit was a disappointment to the U.S. leaders who had hoped that he might endorse their policy against China. After having been convinced that no cooperation could be expected from the Indian Prime Minister, the U.S. turned to Pakistan. Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to the U.S. in 1950 marked the beginning of an alliance relationship between the two countries; and Pakistan came to be known as the most allied ally of the U.S. in the years that followed.

Pakistan's meager resources and its dire need for an immediate buildup of its dilapidated military to counter hostile neighbors India (Kashmir dispute) and Afghanistan (Durand Line) persuaded it to seek a security alliance. There were many reasons why Pakistan turned to the U.S. and not to the Soviet Union. First, the Soviet Union's Marxist ideology was inimical to Pakistan's Islamic orientation. Second, the bureaucracy or the decision making body in

Pakistan was Western oriented, eager to steer Pakistan's foreign policy in the direction of the U.S. Some of the notable personalities that constituted this group were Sir Zafarullah Khan, Ghulam Mohammad, Iskander Mirza, Mohammad Ali Bogra and Ayub Khan. The third factor was United States technological advancement in the post-World War II era; it had emerged as scientifically the most advanced country in the new international system. Pakistan decided to procure technical assistance from the U.S. because of Pakistan's skepticism about the Soviet ability to provide both material and technical aid.² Finally, the Kashmir dispute also paved the way for a closer relationship with the U.S. Since the Kashmir dispute was pending in the UN, Pakistan was quick to realize that it was important to enlist the support of the Western bloc that enjoyed a far greater majority in the UN than the Soviet bloc.³

With the outbreak of the Korean war and Indo-China war and as a result of British promptings, the U.S. came to realize Pakistan's strategic position. Pakistan with its western wing in close proximity to the Muslim world and the eastern wing adjacent to Southeast Asia began to figure prominently in the U.S. foreign policy. For the U.S. policymakers Pakistan was intrinsically linked to the defense of the middle east, the oil resources which were of crucial importance to the U.S. Therefore, the National Security Council had begun to formulate plans for the Western

organized defense of the Middle East at the behest of George McGhee, the Assistant Secretary of State, who had emphasized the role Pakistan could play in this defense strategy:

Pakistan wants to play a role in the Middle East . . . They would do almost anything if the Kashmir problem could be settled. Liaquat is strongly on our side . . . Pakistanis are good fighters and they can raise almost any number of men. Again . . . there is an equipment problem to be solved. With Pakistan the Middle East could be defended; without Pakistan, I don't see any way to defend the Middle East.⁴

By 1953, Karachi, Moscow and Washington were being led by new leaders viz., Mohammad Ali Bogra, Khrushchev and Eisenhower. It was as a member of the Eisenhower Administration that John Foster Dulles began to give shape to the U.S. foreign policy. He belonged to the generation of Dean Acheson, Dean Rusk and George F. Kennan, who viewed communism to be an evil force and therefore a growing menace, the containment of which was important. Dulles had always been considered to have engineered alliances and pacts between the U.S. and other states. But the fact of the matter is that the foundation of forming alliances had been laid by the Truman administration,⁵ in pursuit of the doctrine of containment. Nevertheless, Dulles played an important role in the consummation of the 1954 pact with Pakistan. He developed the idea of northern tier which proposed an alliance to be formed of the front line states of the Middle East particularly those lying in close proximity to the Soviet Union.⁶ He pointed to Pakistan's and Turkey's

positions on the map while testifying before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry and declared that these two countries could be the two very strong bulwarks to thwart Soviet communism's extension.⁷

The proposal for the 'northern tier', collective security was suggested as an alternative to the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) by the Eisenhower administration especially after having realized that the Middle Eastern threat perception did not converge with those of Washington. These countries were so embroiled in "their quarrels with Israel or Great Britain or France that they" paid, "little heed to the menace of Soviet communism."⁸ As a result of differing perceptions, the U.S. government decided to endorse the northern tier security concept proposed by Dulles who was convinced that the large coalitions in the form of collective security could defeat the forces of evil, as they had done during the two Great Wars.⁹

An innovation was made by the Eisenhower administration in the northern tier concept which was to later have profound implications for Pakistan in her relations with India and the Soviet Union. This new policy spelled out United States desire to acquire overseas bases which could be used against the USSR and be important in the conduct of United States military operations on the European continent in case of general war.¹⁰

So far Pakistan had proven to be an avowed supporter of

the West, as had been quite evident by the zealous support given to the U.S. in the Korean War and the Japanese Peace Treaty. After having been convinced of Pakistan's future support in thwarting the communist ambitions the U.S. decided to enter into a US-Pak Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement in 1954. Under the terms of this agreement the United States was to give military equipment and training to the Pakistani armed forces.¹¹ This agreement, it was decided, would not be viewed as a military alliance nor any military bases in Pakistan would be made available to the U.S.¹² But this policy was soon repudiated by the U.S. when they initiated a search for base facilities in the adjoining or neighboring countries of the Soviet Union. These base facilities were to accomplish for the U.S. regular aerial surveillance of the Soviet Union. The country selected for this purpose was Pakistan. The old ceiling of \$171 million dollars under the Mutual Defense Agreement being provided to Pakistan was scrapped¹³ in favor of enhanced assistance so that Pakistan would easily acquiesce to the U.S. demand for bases. It was in 1959 that the U.S. and Pakistan entered into a Bilateral Agreement of Cooperation, under which Pakistan agreed to provide base facilities to the U.S.¹⁴

The granting of base near Peshawar proved fateful to Pakistan when in 1960 a U.S. reconnaissance plane (U-2) crossed the Soviet territory and was shot down by a rocket. This incident exasperated the Soviets to such an extent that

Khrushchev was provoked to threaten Pakistan when he said that if such an incident was repeated, Peshawar would be wiped out from the face of the earth. Grant of base facilities to the United States did not only incur the wrath of the Soviets but also adversely affected Indo-Pak relations. For India continued to suspect that the military arsenal being procured by Pakistan would be used against India.

The notion of collective defense expounded by John Foster Dulles led to the formation of SEATO (1954) and CENTO (1955) with the sole motive of containing the two communist giants: the Soviet Union and China. Pakistan became a member of both SEATO and CENTO and thus Dulles's prediction came true: as Turkey a member of NATO and CENTO soon formed one end of a chain and Pakistan, (a CENTO member) along with the other Southeast Asian members of SEATO, formed the other end thus successfully encircling the two communist countries with India as a notable gap in the chain. Pakistan joined these alliances with certain expectations which did not yield the anticipated results. At the very outset of these alliances United States had, on a number of several occasions, unambiguously informed Pakistan that the military assistance under these alliances would be forthcoming only in case of communist aggression. Pakistan had been categorically informed that no assistance would be extended in case of its war with India. This seemed unpalatable to Pakistani decision makers who perceived threat from India

rather than the Communist world, whereas it was the other way around for the U.S. The United States had no wish to become involved in the conflicts between the two South Asian states because it was quite engrossed in containing the USSR and China and felt no desire to win the hostility of India too. Therefore, the United States quite prudently did not extend the term aggression to include Indian aggression too, much to the dismay of Pakistan.

Two significant events marked a shift in the U.S. policies towards Pakistan. First was the death of John Foster Dulles in 1959, the founder of northern tier concept; with him gone, the whole idea of northern tier came under review by the Eisenhower administration. The second was the change of leadership in the White House. Under the administration of President John F. Kennedy, the whole U.S. policy toward South Asia was revised. Now their focus was on India rather than on Pakistan. India was perceived as "the pre-eminent South Asian state stable, democratic and a logical ally",¹⁵ of the U.S. in containing the People's Republic of China who by involvement in the Korean and Vietnam war had been projected to the U.S. as an expansionist state.

The first test of Pak-U.S. relations came in 1965 during the Indo-Pak war, when the U.S. decided to terminate the supply of arms to both India and Pakistan. This policy hurt Pakistan more than it did India, because for Pakistan the

only donor of arms was the United States whereas India was not only receiving arms from the U.S. and the USSR but was also manufacturing certain types of arms.¹⁶

The nadir of U.S. policy toward South Asia was reached in the late 60s early 70s. This happened when South Asia began to slide away from the U.S. list of priorities as is evident by the degree of economic and military assistance proffered by the United States to the countries of the region. The military assistance was substantially reduced and so was the economic assistance under the assumption that the underdeveloped countries could not progress at a rate regarded as satisfactory.¹⁷ Another assumption was that India and Pakistan are less important than once considered and capable enough to fight communist aggression.¹⁸ Still another factor which might have influenced Washington in playing a reduced role is the thawing of relations with China. After this rapprochement, the U.S. felt it had been relieved of one source of tension in this region and could quite competently tackle the other source--the Soviet Union.

The lowest ebb in Pak-U.S. relations was reached during the Carter administration when the U.S. embassy and cultural centers were burned by the mob, protesting the attack on Kabah (the muslims holy place in Mecca). The attack was made by the dissident Saudis on the fourteen hundredth anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad's death and rumors circulated in Pakistan that the United States was involved in this attack:

Carter administration's policy was akin to that of Kennedy's in giving India priority over Pakistan and expecting India to play the role of a regional policeman, thus relieving U.S. from its arduous task of maintaining stability in the region. This policy was most unequivocally spelled out by Professor Thomas Thornton who was then the member of National Security Council staff in the Carter administration. In his comments on Mrs. Gandhis' expected visit to Washington, he remarked:

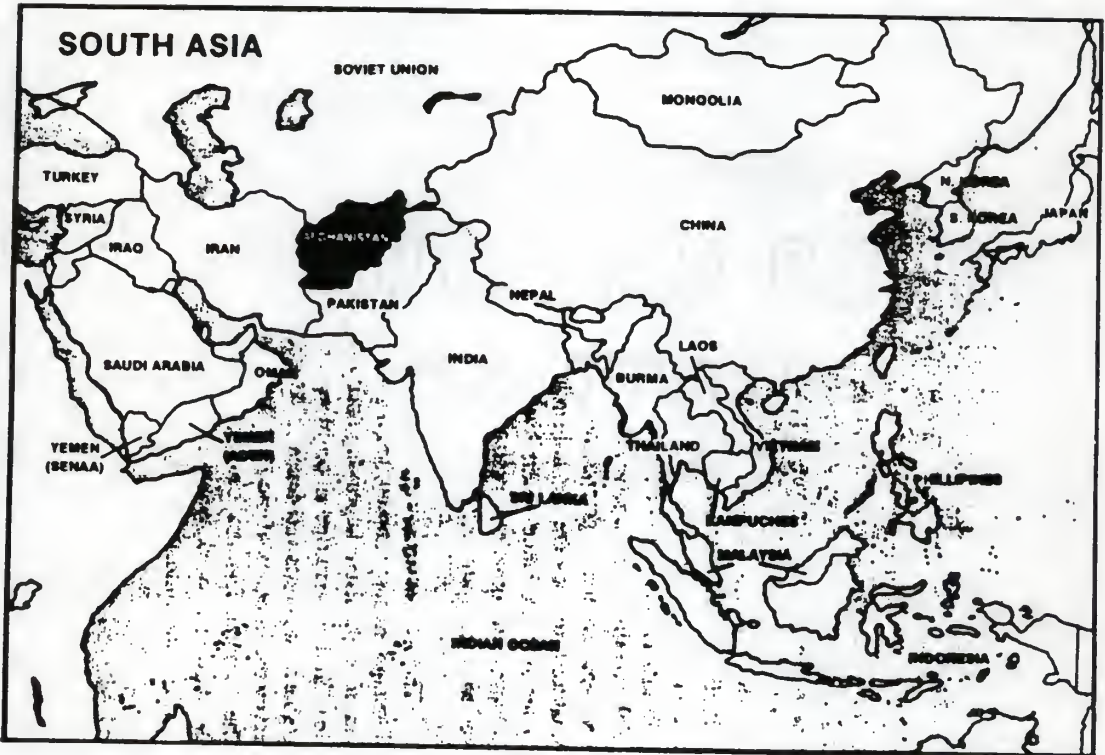
A strong India, playing a responsible regional role, would relieve U.S. of the need to do so and even have some stabilizing effect on the neighboring Southeast Asia and Persian Gulf regions. It is sobering to consider the problems we would face if India were weak and divided or aligned with the Soviet Union.¹⁹

Thus the Democratic party that came to power in 1977 recognized India as a growing power and expected it to play a hegemonic role in South/Southwest Asia. They had already declared in their party platform: "India has now achieved a considerable degree of hegemony over the sub-continent . . . future American policy should accept this fact."²⁰ The American tilt towards India under the Carter Administration greatly shifted the balance of power to India's advantage.

Respect for Human Rights and the Nuclear Non-proliferation issues were the two dominant themes of the Carter era. Pakistan on several occasions was urged by the U.S. for the restoration of full civil liberties and democracy in the country. The Human Rights constituted an important element in the overall U.S. foreign policy which

determined its relations with the countries of the globe. But the U.S. policy makers did not strictly adhere to it as a criterion for setting standards of friendship because had that been the case it is very unlikely that the relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan, no matter how lukewarm, would have ever existed. As Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance remarked that from the human rights perspective, the entire range of countries in South and Southwest Asia would have to be written off, for if the United States bases its relations with other states on the existence of human rights in those states, then not a single country in the region would qualify.²¹

During the Carter era, the issue of Nuclear Non-Proliferation formed the cornerstone of the U.S. policy toward the South/Southwest Asian region. The Carter Administration followed a biased approach on the issue of nuclear technology. While cracking down on Pakistan's efforts to acquire nuclear technology, the U.S. provided India with the nuclear fuel for its atomic reactor at Tarapur. Pakistan's persistence in acquiring nuclear technology proved fatal to its economic development. It not only terminated the U.S. economic aid to Pakistan but the Carter administration also succeeded in influencing the financial houses like the IBRD (World Bank) and IMF to follow suit. Furthermore, the United States government also succeeded in dissuading the French government from providing



Source: J. Bruce Amstutz, Afghanistan: First Five Years
(Washington D.C.: National Defense University, 1986), p.
XVIII

the much desired reprocessing plant to Pakistan. Moreover, the former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is reported to have remarked that if Premier Bhutto was to pursue acquiring nuclear technology the U.S. would make a horrible example of him.²²

Thus, this was the nature of the relationship, if any, between Pakistan and the United States at the advent of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The U.S. policies in this region since the post world war II era had greatly fluctuated--from a region that occupied highest to the lowest set of U.S. priorities. South Asia was regarded as a link between Southwest and Southeast Asia, the two regions where the U.S. had major strategic interests. Throughout the course of its South Asian policy United States made a concerted effort to refrain from entanglements in the regional conflicts between the two major powers of the region, thus indirectly seeking to encourage India to exercise considerable leverage over Pakistan.

The United States however changed its pattern of behavior in South Asia after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; and this region once again occupied top priority in the U.S. foreign policy making agenda. The question arises, what induced the U.S. to revert to the policies of the 50s that had been so brusquely abandoned in the 60s? The answer to this can be found in President Jimmy Carter's State of the Union address of January 1980 in which

he expressed his concern about the threat the invasion of Afghanistan entailed to the United States 'vital interests' (which later came to be known as the Carter Doctrine). "An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. And such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary including military force."²³ It was the safeguard of the vital interests of the U.S. which provided the framework on which the U.S. policy began to take shape in the subsequent years.

Before getting into a great detail about how the United States perceives the security of its vital interests it is important to identify and explain the terminology 'vital interests' from the U.S. perspective. The areas of vital interest lie in the Southwest Asian region, the most important being the security of the state of Israel and the Gulf. United States realizes that the Soviet access to the Indian Ocean would tighten the Soviet control over the Gulf oil and also deprive it (the U.S.) of potential future influence in the Middle East conflict. The oil embargo of 1973 highlighted the intensity of Western economic dependence on the Middle East oil, after which it was realized that the protection of the Gulf Oil region is vital for the economies of Japan and Western states which are solely dependent on Mideast oil. ". . . Japan is entirely dependent on imported oil, 75 percent of which is purchased in the Gulf; and the

U.S. is some 45 percent dependent on imported oil, about 30 percent of which is purchased from the Gulf."²⁴ The United States is not solely dependent on the Gulf oil; other exporters of oil to United States are Mexico and Nigeria.

Reduced oil reserves or denial of access to oil by either the Soviet Union or by the Middle Eastern states to Japan and Western countries poses a threat to the U.S. Such a scenario will place the United States in a tough competition with other recipients for oil supplies. Therefore, the United States considers the security of the Gulf to be of paramount importance and to be taken seriously.

The other important concern of vital interest to United States within Southwest Asia is to ensure the security of the State of Israel. In order to promote and maintain its influence in the Middle East, the United States is dependent on Israel, the continued existence of which can help the United States achieve its objective. One of the reasons the United States has assigned this role to Israel rather than the Arab states is because the latter are quite vulnerable to increased radicalization in the region, a situation which would greatly threaten U.S. interests. The United States feels certain that the State of Israel is the only country which can safeguard U.S. strategic interests in the region.

Keeping the vital interests of the U.S. in mind, it is easy to understand the importance of renewed relationship with Pakistan. The first U.S. attempt to renew closer ties

with Pakistan was made in late 1979, after the invasion of Afghanistan. In order to strengthen Pakistan as a bulwark against the Soviet Union's expansionism, the Carter Administration made a modest offer (\$400 million) of assistance²⁵ to Pakistan, which was rejected by President Zia-ul-Haq, who referred to it as an offer of 'peanuts'. Later, another offer of assistance to Pakistan in the amount of \$3.2 billion was made by the Reagan Administration, which was accepted by Zia's government; again the package was half ESF. This was a multi-year package of economic assistance and arms sale which also included the sale of forty F-16 fighter bombers. In the wake of Afghan crisis, United States considered it most pragmatic to turn to Pakistan in search of allies in this region. The existence of strong regional allies is important for the promotion of United States interests because it would otherwise be difficult for it to intervene militarily. The need to have Pakistan as its proxy became even more urgent especially after United States had lost Iran²⁶, an avowed supporter of its strategic interests.

Thus, the U.S. policy towards South Asia has been steered by the United States' changing perceptions of its global geopolitical and strategic goals. These changing perceptions have in turn affected the importance of this region, which has been fluctuating from a low priority area to an area of great relevance to U.S. 'vital interests'.

NOTES

- ¹Karachi - Pakistan's former capital.
- ²S.M. Burke, Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 100.
- ³Ibid, p. 101.
- ⁴Anita Inder Singh, "The Superpower Global Complex in South Asia," in Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi's South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 210.
- ⁵Op. Cit., p. 155.
- ⁶Devin T. Hagerty, "The Development of American Defense Policy Toward Pakistan, 1947-1954", Fletcher Forum Vol. 10, Summer 1986, p. 239.
- ⁷Secretary Dulles's Statements: Wheat For Pakistan, Hearings on S.2112 before the Senate Committee on Agriculture & Forestry, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, 12 June 1953, pp. 4-5.
- ⁸Department of State Bulletin, February 8, 1954, p. 214.
- ⁹Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's statement, Mutual Security Act of 1958: Hearings Before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 85th Congress, 2nd Session, March 24, 1958, p. 145.
- ¹⁰"Statement of Policy by the National Security Council on Basic National Security Policy", National Security Council Oct 30, 1953.

- ¹¹S.M. Burke, Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 164.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³M.S. Venkataramani, The American Role in Pakistan, (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1982), p. 334.
- ¹⁴Shirin Tahir-Kheli, The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of an Influence Relationship, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 7.
- ¹⁵Shahram Chubin, "The Place of India in U.S. Foreign Policy," in Zalmay Khalilzad, Timothy George, Robert Litwak and Shahram Chubin's, Security in Southern Asia, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 159.
- ¹⁶Mohammad Ahsen Chaudary, "U.S. Relations--The Historical Perspective", quoted in Rais Ahmed Khan Ed., Pakistan-United States Relations, (Islamabad: Area Study Centre Quaid-i-Azam University, 1983), p. 13.
- ¹⁷William J. Barnds, India, Pakistan and the Great Powers, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), p. 261.
- ¹⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁹Dawn, July 2, 1982.
- ²⁰Norman D. Palmer, "The United States and South Asia", Current History, Vol. 76, No. 446, April 1979, p. 146.
- ²¹Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Proxies and Allies: The Case of Iran and Pakistan", Orbis, Summer 1980, p. 349.

²²Shirin Tahir-Kheli, The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of an Influence Relationship (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), p. 126.

²³President Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, Congressional Quarterly, January 23, 1980.

²⁴Zalmay Khalilzad, "The Great Powers and the Security of South Asia", Security in Southern Asia (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 176.

²⁵\$200M in arms sales; \$200M in economic assistance.

²⁶The Shah of Iran in whom the United States depended as a regional policeman was forced out of the country in 1979 and fifty Americans were taken as hostages.

3. POLITICS OF AN EXPATRIATE NATION

The migration of Afghan refugees had begun with the 1978 coup and had increased after the post 1978 coup civil war began. But when the Soviets entered Afghanistan it totally disturbed the political equilibrium and precluded any possibility of restoration of equilibrium. About more than 3.2 million refugees came to Pakistan; a million went to Iran and created an expatriate force outside the country. Expatriate populations have become an important factor, influencing political development in many parts of the world.

There are two important features of the politics of the expatriate population which will be discussed in this chapter. One is that they have always been created when some sympathy exists for them and for the cause which renders them homeless in the first place. For example, the Afghan refugees fled to Pakistan because people of the same ethnic stock lived in Pakistan. Second, the expatriate populations tend to be much more conservative in the sense of wanting the restoration of the status quo ante. There are instances of these kinds of expatriates all over the world, for example Cubans and Nicaraguans in Miami, Sikhs in Canada, Bangladeshis in West Bengal, Ethiopians in Somalia, Tamils in South India. Wherever such pools of expatriates have been created they have tended to make settlement of disputes more difficult because of their more conservative approach toward the settlement of disputes. For instance, expatriate Sikhs

are said to be the main stumbling block for the moderate members of their own community in India in the latter's stand for a solution to their problem. This is also the case with Afghan resistance groups, bedeviled by their internal feuds have complicated the settlement issue. By identifying different resistance groups and the nature of their differences this important impediment to the resolution of the Afghan crisis can be explored. This approach has not been previously adopted.

Before we proceed with the classification of different ethnic groups it is important to briefly discuss Afghanistan's ethnic and linguistic fragmentation. This ethnic fragmentation would help us to discern the ethnic propensities of various groups and also explain why it has been difficult for them to unify and adopt a common approach.

Ethnically, the people of Afghanistan primarily belong to two different groups: Indo-Europeans of a Mediterranean type (the Pushtuns, Tajiks, Nuristanis and Baluchis) and Turco-Mongolians (the Hazaras, Turkoman, Uzbek, Aimeq and Kirghiz groups). A third group, the Dravidian Brahuis, form a very small part of the population.¹

Although different ethnic groups in Afghanistan differ from one another in terms of language, culture and physical characteristics; they share a great deal in common. Nearly all the Afghan ethnic groups have the same lifestyles and occupational patterns.² Very few of its ethnic groups are

indigenous. Pushtuns for example, are not all Afghans; there is a large number who live in the adjoining areas of Pakistan.

The Pushtuns have been the most dominant group in Afghanistan. They numbered about 6,500,000 in 1979.³ Until 1979, the Pushtuns were fully in control of modern Afghanistan's political institutions; they (the Durrani clan) constituted the royal family. Other important political and bureaucratic positions were filled in by the Pushtuns, which resulted in resentment against them by other ethnic groups. These tribal people are Sunni Muslims and speak Pushto.

The second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan is made up of the Tajiks, who speak Dari. A great majority of them have been sedentary cultivators or townsmen. They have continuously been overrun by the intruders including Pushtuns.

Nuristanis are said to be the descendants of Alexander the Great's soldiers. They live in the mountainous areas north of Kabul. They were converted to Islam from polytheism in the late nineteenth century. Nuristanis have had a long history of friction with the Pushtuns because of the latter's control over provincial and central government. Nuristanis speak Dari and are Sunni Muslims.

The Baluchis live in the southwestern desert region and speak a language related to Persian. These Sunni nomads are also found in Pakistan and Iran.

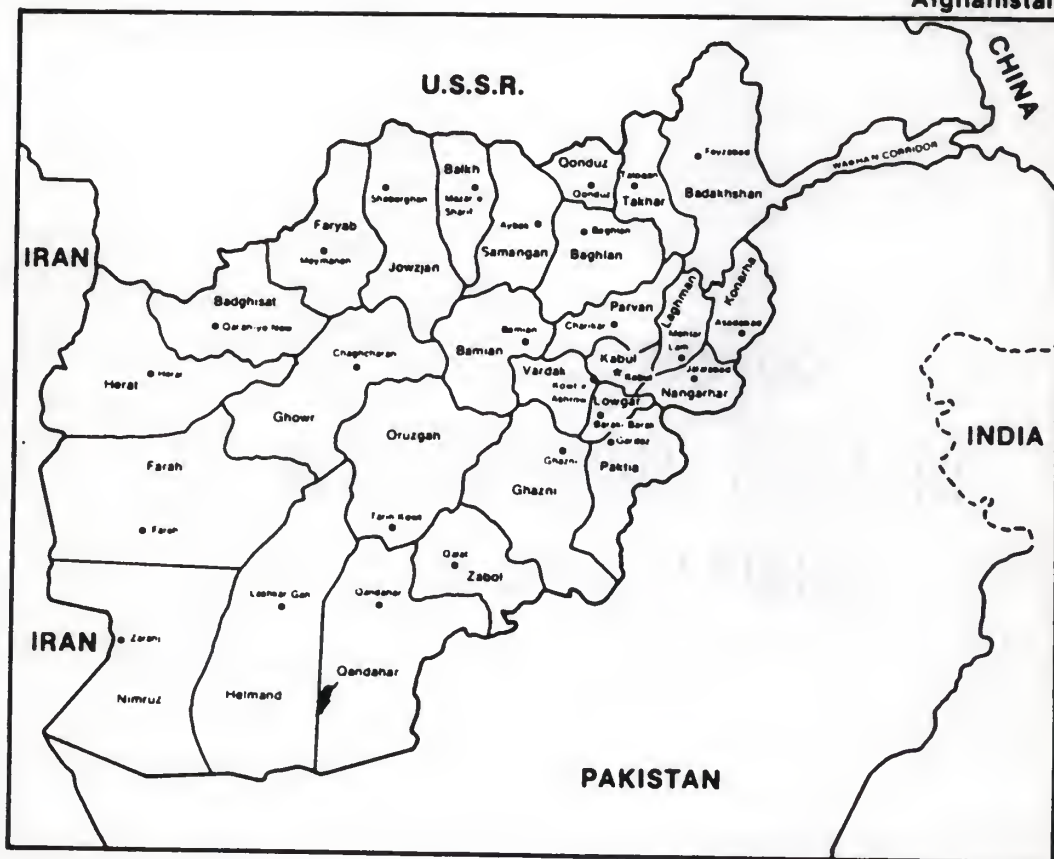
Among the Turco-Mongolians are Hazaras. They are Shiite Muslims who live in the Hindu Kush; they speak Hazarigi, a language similar to Dari. Turkomen live in the northwestern steppes of Afghanistan and speak a language related to Turkish. They come from Soviet Turkomen.

Another important group is the Uzbeks who are spread across the northern plain from Kunduz to Maimana as farmers and seminomads. Their major urban center is the Mazari-i-Sharif. Aimeqs are Sunni muslims who speak Dari and are found in the west of Hazarajat province. Finally, Kirghiz are the refugees from Soviet Russia.

Whenever two or more political systems contiguous to one another exist, they often share a common ethnic group which is linguistically, religiously or culturally identifiable. In such situations, in the country or countries in which the ethnic is a minority, the group is conscious of its cultural affinities with the brethren in the adjoining country, as is the case with Afghan refugees. Since tribes of the same ethnic group have lived on both sides of the Durand line, there has existed for centuries relatively unrestricted movement of these people back and forth across the frontier.⁴

About ninety percent of the Afghan refugees who have come to Pakistan are Pushtun and belong to the provinces of Kunar, Nangrahar, Pakia, Ghazni, Badakhashan, Logar and Kandahar⁵. These areas are geographically contiguous to Pakistan. The reason they have been successful in fleeing to

Afghanistan



Source: J. Bruce Amstutz, Afghanistan: The First Five Years (Washington, D.C. National Defense University, 1986) p. 91.

Pakistan is because the rugged terrain has made it difficult for the Soviets to prevent their exodus and for the Pakistani authorities to seal off the frontier effectively. Thus the tribal affinities between the Pathans/Pushtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan provided the Afghan refugees with a strong incentive to seek refuge in Pakistan. This could have been difficult, if the Pakistani Pushtuns had not empathized with their (the refugees) plight. This migration of refugees to Pakistan led to the reinforcement of expatriate politics with the help of the influence of their Pakistani Pushtun brethren. This has created a kind of an inter-relationship between the expatriate population and population of the ethnic stock. Migrating to Pakistan has meant that some of their own predilections have been reinforced. For instance, Pakistan's Islamic stance has reinforced the Islamic disposition of certain groups such as Jamiat-i-Islami and Hezb-i-Islami. The idea of emphasis of the creed of Pathans was also reinforced.

Even though there are a large number of Afghan resistance groups operating in Peshawar (Pakistan), intractable ideological and personality differences have foiled all attempts to unify them. Therefore, in the summer of 1981, there emerged two separate coalitions. The Fundamentalists and Moderates.

The Fundamentalists (a coalition of seven parties) are conservative in outlook and seek a radical restructuring of

the Afghan society strictly on Islamic principles. This group has vehemently opposed the Afghan regimes since the ouster of King Zahir Shah in 1973. The principal parties forming the coalition are: Jamiat-i-Islami of Prof: Burhanuddin Rabbani, Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Hezb-i-Islami of Yunis Khalis, Itihad-i-Islami Baraye Azadi Afghanistan of Abd-i-Rab Rasul Sayaf, Harakat-i-Enqilab Islami of Rafiullah Al-Mansuri and the Islamic Front or National Liberation Front of Muhammad Mir. The following is a brief overview of these groups.

JAMIAT-I-ISLAMI: - (led by Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani). This group enjoys the support of Tajiks and even though it is interested in establishing a government based on Islamic law, it would still "permit an openly competitive political system in which modernists could participate."⁶ This group exercises influence over the guerrilla bands operating in the northern belt of Afghanistan which extends from Badakhashan province in the northeast to Herat province in the northwest.⁷ Most importantly, this group enjoys the support of Pakistan's Jamiat-i-Islami. With General Zia-ul-Haq's close links to the Jamiat-i-Islami of Pakistan, this group has gained in influence. The leader of this group is considered far more cooperative than Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

HEZB-I-ISLAMI: - (led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar). This group was founded in 1968 by traditionalist Muslim students in Kabul to oppose modernist and leftist trends. It was the

first important group to oppose Taraki's government.⁸ This party has ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia which in 1980, sought to establish an orthodox Moslem government in Afghanistan.⁹ It persistently seeks to keep itself away from the other Afghan emigre groups and is considered very well organized with a large following. Its leader is the most controversial figure; he is an avowed supporter of a radical moslem revolution and an antagonist of the west.

HEZB-I-ISLAMI: - (led by Yunis Khalis). The leader of this party belongs to the class of ulema (religious scholars) who had during the constitutional period formed their own fundamentalist group. The principal areas in which this group is operating are Nangrahar and Kabul provinces.¹⁰

THE ISLAMIC FRONT OR NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT: - (led by Mohammad Mir). The leader of this group defected from Jabha-i-Milli Nijat of Sibghatullah Al-Majadeddi and had no affiliated guerrilla bonds operating in Afghanistan.

ITIHAD-I-ISLAMI BARAYE AZADI AFGHANISTAN: - (led by Abd-i-Rab Rasoul Sayaf). Like Hezb-i-Islami's Gulbuddin the leader of this party is anti west and strongly advocates the establishment of an Iranian-type of revolutionary islamic government in Afghanistan.

HARAKAT-I-ENQILAB ISLAMI: - (led by Nasrullah Mansour). This party has two affiliated groups in northern Afghanistan. It originally broke away from Nabi Muhammadi's Harakat organization in 1981.

HARAKAT-I-ENQILAB ISLAMI: - (led by Rafiullah Al-Mousin). This is also a splinter group of Nabi Mohammadi's Harakat and does not have a large following.

The Moderates (a coalition of three parties) concentrate their energies on liberating Afghanistan from the domination of Soviet invaders and communist atheism, are striving for the establishment of the Islamic system and an elected Islamic government. The three parties that form this coalition are Mahaz-i-Milli Islami of Sayed Ahmad Gailani, Harakat-i-Enqilab-i-Islami of Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi and Jablia-i-Milli Nijat of Sibghatullah Al-Majadeddi. The support base of moderates can be found in the conservative religious elite, Pirs, Sufis, tribal chiefs and belong to the dominant classes of Afghanistan.

MAHAZ-I-MILLI ISLAMI: - (led by Sayed Ahmad Gailani). Gailani comes from a respected Pushtun family and enjoys the support of Pushtun tribes of the Paktia region. He began to inspire and guide his tribal followers after establishing resistance headquarters in the tribal area of Pakistan adjoining Paktia.¹¹ But due to poor organizational structure his influence began to decline by 1983. This group has made extensive tours of the Western countries with the objective of promoting their cause.

HARAKAT-I-ENQILAB-I-ISLAMI: - (led by Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi). Politically this is the most flexible party and has the largest number of affiliated guerrilla bands in

Afghanistan. This party is poorly organized and was severely weakened by the defection of Nasrullah Mansour and Rafiullah Mousin, who joined the fundamentalist coalition. It comprises middle and lower middle class mullahs who exercise a profound influence over the rural population.¹²

JABHA-I-MILLI NIJAT: - (led by Sibghatullah Al-Mogadeddi). This party was founded after the 1978 coup with the support of intellectuals from Saudi Arabia and other states of the Persian Gulf. This party is not very well organized; it has the support of Pushtuns and very few guerrilla bands associate with it. The leader of this party is a member of the Hazrat Sahib Shor Bazaar family of the Naqshbandi order, which is a traditionally influential religious family.

A DISUNITED RESISTANCE: - Both the fundamentalists and moderates differ from one another in terms of their divergent ideologies, social backgrounds, leadership styles and perceptions of the future. The fundamentalists come from the educated middle and lower middle class. They hold King Zahir Shah responsible for the plight of the Afghans and seek to establish a theocratic state. The moderates on the other hand belong to the elite strata of the Afghan society; they are less critical of King Zahir Shah and are striving to maintain the status quo ante. These two factions also differ in their perceptions of the role of Islam in Afghanistan. The fundamentalists believe that Islam should play a pivotal role in all spheres of governmental and social affairs.

While the moderates assert that Islam should be the private business of an individual. As a result of these disparate perceptions, all attempts aimed at unification of these two factions have either failed or have yielded little results.

As in some other societies, linguistic, religious and ethnic ties have created cleavages in Afghan society as well. These divisions are very pronounced, which makes unification attempts infeasible. Linguistic differences have surfaced between those who speak dari and those who speak pushto (Hazaris, Tajiks speak Dari and Pushtuns and Nuristanis speak Pushto). In the religious sphere the resistance group like Shura-i-Engelab-i-Ettefaq-i-Islami Afghanistan follow the Shiite Muslim faith; whereas the other groups are predominately sunni muslims. The different ethnic groups are highly suspicious of Pushtuns whom they charge with the oppression of non-Pushtuns by depriving them of their legitimate rights. The animosity of the different ethnic groups towards Pushtuns is most aptly summed up in a Tajik proverb, "trust a snake before a harlot and a harlot before a Pathan."¹³

Another factor which impedes all attempts towards an effective unification is the lack of a strategy and an organizational plan among the Afghan emigre groups to counter Soviet aggression. The resistance groups have little knowledge about enemy positions and therefore they cannot effectively put a stop to the Soviet encroachments. Their

efforts to compete with each other for foreign support complicates the resistance even further.

Thus, ideological, religious, ethnic and strategic disparities hamper any concerted drive of the Afghan groups against the Soviet control. Here a parallel can be drawn with the Basmachi revolt of 1920s which failed primarily because of the same differences which are found among Afghan resistance groups.

The principal weakness of the basmachi movement was its lack of unity. The various detachments operated independently of each other under the leadership of ambitious and jealous chieftains, who refused to coordinate their activities . . . It represented essentially a number of unconnected tribal revolts and exhibited all the shortcomings of such forms of resistance. It never attained its ultimate purpose--the overthrow of Russian rule in Turkestan--because the Russians were infinitely better organized, controlled the cities and the lines of communications, and had at their disposal a more numerous and more experienced armed forces.¹⁴

The Soviets have learnt some obvious lessons from the Basmachi incident but the resistance groups, although well aware of this rebellion have not been able to apply its lessons to their own conduct.

THE GOALS OF AFGHAN RESISTANCE GROUPS: -

Although the Afghan emigre groups differ in perceptions, yet there is a general consensus among them as far as the achievement of their goals is concerned. First of all they are interested in a total and an unconditional withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Second, they are interested in eliminating the leftist influence from the

country and wish to establish an Islamic state (they are however, divided on the nature of this theocratic state). Third, they seek to end the age old Pushtun domination by granting greater autonomy to the various ethnic groups. The leaders of the Hazara, Tajik and Nuristani freedom fighters are particularly interested in bringing an end to their subjugation at the hands of the Pushtuns. Fourth, the various Afghan emigre organizations are interested in seeing Afghanistan pursue a nonaligned policy and total independence in the conduct of its relations. Finally, they would like to see the restoration of the tribal system which is an important institution of the Afghan society. With the exception of Tajiks, all other ethnic groups are traditional tribal societies. These tribes are led by the tribal chiefs known as Khans, some of whom enjoy complete control of tribal wealth and treat ordinary tribesmen as serfs or tenant farmers. They also have complete power in determining the social and judicial policies of their tribes. This is an important institution which the Afghan expatriates would like to restore, because this gives them the power not only to retain group identity but also to perpetuate tribal prerogatives.

Thus, as a result of the fragmentation among the Mujahideen it has become difficult for them to speak with a common voice and therefore they are weakened in terms of their negotiating process. So far the Afghan Mujahideen have

played a peripheral role in the whole negotiating process. Since the two factions the fundamentalists and the modernists are heavily radicalized they cannot contribute much to the negotiated peace. They can certainly contribute to prolonging the turmoil.

NOTES

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- ¹³John C. Griffiths, Afghanistan Key to a Continent (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), p. 200.
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4. PAKISTANI IMPERATIVES.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979 changed the geopolitical picture for Pakistan. Afghanistan, which had served as an age old buffer between the Russian Empire and The British Indian Empire was now under the occupation of the Soviet Union and had ceased to exist as a buffer state for Pakistan. The elimination of this buffer state posed a threat to Pakistan which began to be referred to as the front-line state.

Under the present situation, Pakistan is endeavoring to achieve some tangible results by seeking a political solution to the Afghanistan crisis. The goals being pursued by Pakistan are the following. First, perpetuation of a buffer state between themselves and the Soviets. Second, is to bring about the return of over 3.2 million refugees. Third, to see Afghanistan emerge as an Islamic state, after the ouster of Soviet forces. Fourth, find an appealing solution to Afghanistan quagmire for the expatriate population. Finally, the crisis provides the military accessibility to advanced weapons being proffered by the U.S. These are some of the objectives which Pakistan is most zealously trying to achieve. These objectives constitute this chapter in turn.

Before we proceed further with an in depth analysis of the four objectives listed above, it is important to provide a brief overview of Pak-Afghan relations since 1947. Pak-Afghan relations have been inherently unstable from the very

outset. The main cause of estranged relations between the two countries was the Pushtunistan issue. It was the demand on behalf of the Afghan government for the incorporation of Pushto speaking areas into Afghanistan or their incorporation as an independent state to be called Pushtunistan. This state of Pushtunistan was to include Pakistani territories of Chitral, Hazara, Kohistan, Swat, Dir, Buner, Peshawar, Tirah, Bajaur, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Waziristan, Khyber, Pezu, Gomal, Bolan, and Malakand.¹ The Pakistani government rejected this demand and felt that the issue had been settled long ago in 1893 by the British India. The British drew the Durand Line, which the Afghan government accepted under duress but reserved an irredentist claim to the Pushto speaking regions lying in Pakistan. Thus, this remained as a constant irritant between the two countries and was also the cause of major border clashes between the two countries in 1950, 1955 and 1961. Later, during late Premier Z.A. Bhutto's tenure an attempt was made to bring about a rapproachment in Pak-Afghan relations. Later, both President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan and Nur Mohammad Taraki of Afghanistan met in Kabul and agreed to develop friendly relations and resolve their differences through friendship. This was the nature of relationship between the two countries when the Soviets stepped into Afghanistan. Since then Pakistan is striving to play a major role in seeking a political solution to the Afghan dilemma.

The first objective that the Pakistani government wants to achieve is to create a buffer zone between themselves and the Soviets. It is always difficult for a country to be sitting next to a super power. There are always problems associated if a weak country is located close to a super power because it becomes difficult for a weaker state to live under the shadow of a super power. Pakistanis have therefore inherited the Great Game, that is perpetuation of a buffer state between themselves and the Soviets. It is the threat emanating from the Soviet presence in Afghanistan that induces Pakistan to seek a buffer state in the form of Afghanistan.

Pakistan has vehemently opposed the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and has led several international condemnations of the Soviet act. Pakistan managed to rally the support of several non-aligned and OECD members of the UN in condemning the Soviet policy towards Afghanistan.²

The Soviets assert that one sixth of the Afghan refugees who have fled to Pakistan for safe haven are involved in insurgency tactics against the Soviets in Afghanistan.³ Soviets accuse Pakistan for aiding the insurgents and have admonished Pakistan time and again of dire consequences if it continued to toe the U.S. line and served as a conduit of arms to the Mujahideen (freedom fighters). For example, the former Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko once remarked that if Pakistan continues to serve as a puppet of

imperialism in the future, it will jeopardize its existence and integrity as an independent state.⁴ President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan was also warned by Gorbachev at Konstantin Chernenko's funeral, who remarked that unless Pakistan stops its aggressive actions against Afghanistan the Soviet Union would treat the Zia government in the same manner as the Sandinistas are treated by the Reagan administration.⁵

As a result of the geographical proximity with Afghanistan now under the Soviet forces, Pakistan is interested to see Afghanistan emerge as a buffer between the Soviet Union and itself. The immediate threat facing Pakistan is that the Soviet forces in Afghanistan and their Afghan surrogates might seek to foment trouble in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier province of Pakistan. These two politically volatile provinces are of great importance to the Soviets, particularly Baluchistan which has a natural deep warm-water harbor, called Gwadar. With the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union is closer than ever to see the implementation of its long awaited goal of reaching the warm water ports, a goal that has thus far eluded the Soviets and their predecessors. The Soviets access to Gwadar would enable them to control the Persian Gulf and the strategic Strait of Hormuz which is about 400 miles to the west of Gwadar. The anxiety over Gwadar is rekindled by Soviet threats to teach Pakistan a lesson for its pro Washington stance by arming Baluch insurgents,⁶ because Baluchistan in

the past has been a hot bed of separatist tendencies. Such a situation would not only deflect attention from Afghanistan but would also escalate disaffection in Baluchistan culminating in civil strife and political instability of Pakistan.

With the annexation of Wakhan Valley a 150-mile strip of land (which was given to Kabul in the nineteenth century to keep the Russian Empire from expanding in the direction of the British Empire) Pakistan's northern borders stand vulnerable to the Soviet attack. Such a situation provides the Soviet Union with an opportunity to break Pakistan's link with its ally in the north, namely, China which has been an arch rival of the Soviets. It also gives India an incentive to wrest Kashmir from Pakistan with the acquiescence of the Soviets.

The second major objective of Pakistan is to bring about the return of over 3,000,000 refugees. The growing influx of the Afghan refugees has placed a staggering strain on Pakistan's limited resources and has also precipitated tension between the refugees and the local residents of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). The reason for the anti refugee sentiments is that disputes pertaining to land, water rights and deforestation have surfaced in some 282 refugee villages. These disputes have quite often led to violent clashes between the Afghan refugees and local residents.⁷ In order to avoid destabilization of the two provinces it is

important that Afghanistan's old status of a buffer state be restored and refugees return to their homeland.

Third, Pakistan is also interested to see Afghanistan emerge as an Islamic state followed after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces. In this age of Muslim revivalism, an Islamic Afghanistan would not only reinforce Pakistan Islamic stance but would also give impetus to other Muslim countries to seek unity of the Muslim Ummah (community).

Fourth, objective of Pakistan is to find a solution to the Afghan crisis which would be readily acceptable to the expatriate population thus facilitating their safe return to Afghanistan. The longer the Afghan refugees reside in Pakistan more precarious would be the internal situation in Pakistan. A majority of the refugees are Pakhtuns who belong to the same ethnic stock as the Pakistani Pakhtuns. For decades the National Democratic Party of Abdul Wali Khan had been clamoring for secession or creation of an independent state; but now because of the clashes with the local residents their demand for Pushtunistan has been put on a backburner. This situation could however change once the Soviets have pulled out from Afghanistan and the refugees refuse to go back to their homeland. Such a situation might create renewed agitation within Pakistan itself and lead to the destabilization of the country.

Finally, the ongoing Afghan crisis has provided the Pakistani military an easy access to weapons for bolstering

its defense vis-a-vis Afghanistan and India. United States is the principal donor of arms to Pakistan. The invasion of Afghanistan compelled United States to change its erstwhile policy of arms embargo on Pakistan. The \$3.2 billion aid package from United States to Pakistan greatly strengthened the military government's position in Pakistan. It also provided the Zia government an opportunity to deflect domestic political pressures stemming from within Pakistan, on the pretext that any domestic political agitation would severely hamper the government's efforts to deal with any counter insurgency efforts on part of the Kabul-Moscow government.

To conclude, from the preceding Pakistani imperatives it can be inferred that Pakistan as one of the four parties involved in the negotiating process would like to arrive at a viable solution to the Afghan crisis which would not overlook the following Pakistani objectives: First to see Afghanistan emerge as a buffer state between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. Second, to facilitate a safe return of the Afghan refugees back to their homeland. Third, to see Afghanistan emerge as an Islamic state. Fourth, find a solution to the Afghan crisis which would be readily acceptable to the Afghan refugees. Thus these then remain the non-negotiable objectives of Pakistan.

NOTES

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- ⁵Munawar I. Noorani, "Afghanistan Negotiations: Implications for the U.S. of an Impasse," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. IX, No. 3, Spring 1986, p. 15.
- ⁶Selig S. Harrison, "Cut A Regional Deal," Foreign Policy, Vol. 62, Spring 1986, p. 141.
- ⁷William Claiborne, "Tensions Arise Between Afghan Refugees and Hosts in Pakistan," The Washington Post September 24, 1982.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction a model was laid out which specified the areas of negotiations so that the interested parties could resolve the dispute and arrive at a mutually acceptable settlement. Then in each of the subsequent chapters the negotiable areas were discussed at length, agreement on which would facilitate withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan. The trick for the various parties is to create an equilibrium so that the boundaries in the system can be established. The question arises what should the four parties do to arrive at a viable political equilibrium.

THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS: -

The Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan, meeting under the auspices of the United Nations have so far had had eight rounds of indirect talks which began in April 1982. These talks have been made possible with the assistance of the UN Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs, Diego Cordovez. Pakistan has so far refused to hold direct talks with the Soviet installed government in Kabul because holding direct talks would tantamount to legitimizing the Kabul puppet government. Cordovez has been engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Islamabad and Kabul trying to negotiate the position of each while keeping Iranians officially abreast of the discussions and unofficially informing the Soviets of the developments at the proximity talks. In June 1985, the UN announced that the four involved

parties had agreed on three out of the four proposed principles. The principles agreed by the concerned parties were: (1) Non-interference in Afghanistan's domestic affairs, (2) International guarantees of a settlement (3) Voluntary return of Afghan refugees.

Agreement on the fourth principle regarding troop withdrawal was the major stumbling block. The Soviet Union contended that it would withdraw the troops when U.S. sponsored aid to the Mujahideen through Pakistan is halted. By 1983, the Soviets had decided to establish a time table for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, something which had evaded the earlier two sessions at Geneva.¹

In December 1985, the Soviet Union and the U.S. were working behind-the-scenes deal that would facilitate Soviet withdrawal. Under the Soviet plan the U.S. and its allies, particularly Pakistan, were to abstain from providing arms to the Mujahideen before time table for the troop withdrawal could be decided upon. Under this joint U.S.-Soviet deal Afghanistan and Pakistan were to remain independent and sovereign. In effect, "Afghanistan will become an Islamic Finland and Pakistan an Islamic Austria. . . . Both countries would become politically neutral but Afghanistan would stay in the Soviet sphere of influence while Pakistan a western ally."² In July 1986, the Soviet Union had formally offered to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan over a four-year period which was not acceptable to Pakistan, because it

believed that a withdrawal could take place in four months or less.³ However, the seventh round of the Geneva parleys between Pakistan and Kabul ended in a deadlock in August over a mutually acceptable time table for the Soviet pull out from Afghanistan. Finally the eighth round of proximity talks resumed in February-March, 1987. This round of talks halted when differences over a time-table for withdrawal could not be resolved. While Moscow had considerably shortened the time span of a possible troop withdrawal, its position, as presented by Afghan negotiators in Geneva, still falls short of anything that would be acceptable to Pakistan or the U.S. Pakistani negotiators have been reluctant to accept a long withdrawal time frame, since this would give Soviets a free hand to move against the Mujahideen, who would be stripped of their safe bases and logistical support.⁴ Another issue that was discussed at this meeting was the type of government that would be left in Afghanistan once the Soviets withdrew. According to one western diplomat familiar with the issue remarked that a broad-based government with some Mujahideen participation would be most suitable, he added that the problem was that the Soviets and the Mujahideen were bitterly opposed to each other for any viable solution to be arrived at.⁵ It was suggested at the conference that the former Afghan King Mohammad Zahir Shah could be a unifying force in Afghanistan. Quite recently Mikhail S. Gorbachev hinted in an interview that the Soviet Union would accept the former

King Mohammad Zahir Shah, as part of a coalition government to hold power after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.⁶

To sum up, even though the name of the king has been suggested as a figurehead in the coalition government it is not quite clear if he would be acceptable to the Mujahideen. Since they are split on the acceptability of the king even as an interim leader, they might not accept him. The success of the UN shuttle diplomacy depends on securing two goals--first a short and an acceptable time-table for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan. Second, a mutual consensus of the four interlocuters on the type of government there should be in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal.

The areas of non-negotiability of each of the parties involved are as follows: The Soviet Union would never like Afghanistan to leave its sphere of influence. The continuation of a 1978 treaty establishing a Finland-style security relationship between Moscow and Kabul remains a non-negotiable Soviet demand. The Soviet Union would like to withdraw its forces but because of its heavy military investment in Afghanistan, it would like to have a compliant Afghan regime. The Soviet Union would also like to secure their hold over the Central Asian Republics, so that these republics are not affected by Afghanistan. The United States is interested to see the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, so that the United States preeminence in the

Persian Gulf and the warm water port (areas of 'vital interests') is not threatened by the Soviet advance southwards.

Any agreement which ignores a safe return of the Afghan refugees to their homeland and creation of Afghanistan as a buffer state between Pakistan and the Soviet Union is not acceptable to Pakistan. Pakistan would also like to see an Islamic system evolve in Afghanistan so that it bolsters Pakistan's own Islamic stance.

To arrive at a viable solution to the Afghan dilemma, it is important that the Mujahideen be invited to participate in the negotiation process. Any settlement which does not include their participation would preclude the chances of resolving the dispute. The expatriate population would like to have a significant presence in the government, they would neither like to have a Marxist nor a secular state to be established in Afghanistan. These then are the non-negotiable areas within the restraints of these it is possible to find a viable solution.

In the negotiating process there are four central issues which are: outside interference, return of the refugees, non-aligned status and the Soviet withdrawal. For a settlement to be arrived at, all outside interference (U.S. and Pakistan) in Afghanistan needs to be stopped provided the Soviets agree on a short time frame for a withdrawal. A safe return of the refugees is another important issue which has

been discussed at several Geneva proximity talks by Pakistan the host to over 3.2 million refugees. Another central issue to the negotiating process is the restoration of Afghanistan's non-aligned status. But for the Soviet Union interpretation of the non-aligned status is the Soviet Union's continued influence over Afghanistan.

Finally, the issue of the Soviet withdrawal is dependent upon the issue which was not originally in the four issues, that is the form of government. The Soviets and Mujahideen have to arrive at some sort of a compromise as far as the formation of government is concerned. The Soviets have shown a seeming flexibility on the form of government. But is it possible to establish a system that is sufficiently Islamic to satisfy the Mujahideen but sufficiently non-threatening to satisfy the Soviets. Thus, to conclude outside interference, return of the refugees, non-aligned status, Soviet withdrawal and form of government are the remaining problems which remain the major puzzles of the Afghan conflict.

NOTES

¹Munawar I. Noorani, "Afghanistan Negotiations: Implications for the U.S. of an Impasse," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. IX, No. 3, Spring 1986, p. 9.

²Louis Wiznitzer, "U.S. USSR Negotiate Afghan Pullout," The Christian Science Monitor, February 14, 1986.

³The New York Times, July 17, 1986.

⁴The Washington Post, March 19, 1987.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The New York Times, May 20, 1987.

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STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THE AFGHAN CONFLICT:
MAXIMIZATION OF NATIONAL INTERESTS.

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

On the eve of Christmas in 1979, the Soviet Union began the invasion of Afghanistan and precipitated a crisis that has continued now for eight years. The Afghanistan crisis affected the entire geopolitical situation in the Southwest Asian region and also hampered the process of detente between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. It rendered close to four million Afghan refugees homeless who ended up seeking political asylum in the neighboring country of Pakistan in order to avoid persecution in their own homeland.

So far the solution to the Afghanistan crisis has remained elusive. The four parties involved the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, the United States, Pakistan and the Afghan expatriate population have tried to find a viable solution which would be readily acceptable to all, but efforts in this direction have been less than successful. Each party seeks to safeguard its own interest thus leaving very little to be negotiated in order to find a viable solution to the problem. The Soviet Union wants to keep Afghanistan under its sphere of influence and on this condition they are ready to withdraw provided there is no outside interference from the U.S. and Pakistan. The United States wants the Soviet Union to pull out from Afghanistan so that the U.S.S.R.'s expansion southward to the Persian Gulf region can be contained. Pakistan is hoping that the Soviets would withdraw and facilitate a safe return of the refugees

to Afghanistan. The Afghan expatriate population would like to see Afghanistan free of the Soviets and surface once again as an Islamic country. Several factions of the Afghan expatriate population are divided on the system of government that would evolve in Afghanistan. Thus, these remain the non-negotiable areas of each of the party involved in this dispute.

Thus far, the eight rounds of proximity talks at Geneva have yielded fewer results. The major stumbling block to the solution of the crisis remains the time frame for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces and the form of government that would be instituted in Afghanistan.