

US Afghan Relations: A Historical Perspective of Events of 9/11

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ABSTRACT

Before the World War II, the US policy was a compound of cooperation and isolation towards the world affairs and the US has no direct link in Southwest Asia and this area was under British influence. The main reason was lack of American commercial interests in Afghanistan and the role of Britain as guardian of Afghan foreign affairs, which obviated an early meaningful relationship between the two countries. So the history of US-Afghan relations is not very long and the efforts of the Afghan government for establishing relationship were not cherished up until 1934 and formal diplomatic relations were established in 1942. Afghanistan continued its traditional and preferred role as a buffer state, which prevented it from going into the orbit of any superpower or joining any military alliance. However, the Soviet influence increased and the Soviets provided military training and arms supply to Afghan army. The US adopted flexible approach in its relations with the Soviets, which resulted in increasing influence of communism and ultimately, Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, which totally altered the geo-strategic situation. Pakistan became a frontline state and the US made arrangements to supply military assistance to resistance groups without its direct involvement. In 1981, President Reagan took power with his tough anti-communist stance and made Moscow pay a high military and political price for the intervention in Afghanistan. The Soviet left Afghanistan after signing Geneva Accords in February 1989. In the absence of a central government, a civil war erupted which brought the Taliban in power. The paper will explore historical events which led to the events of 9/11 and war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

KEY WORDS : US, World War II, US-Afghan Relations, Soviet Union, Cold War, Boundary Issue, , SEATO, CENTO, RCD, SALT I, SALT II, PDPA, CIA, ISI, UN, Geneva Accords, MI24, MI25, NSDD 166, Al Qaeda

Introduction

The foreign policy of the United State is largely shaped by its geographical and historical considerations. Its political and social systems as well as economic and military powers determine its position in the world politics. The policies of other states and international environment are influenced by its power. Before the World War II, the US policy was a compound of cooperation and isolation. The lack of American commercial interests in Afghanistan and the role of Britain as guardian of Afghan foreign affairs obviated an early meaningful relationship between the two countries. So the history of US-Afghan relations is not very long, though both states gained their independence in the same period, nearly two hundred years ago. The paper shall analyze the historical perspective of those events which appeared in the form of 9/11.

The United States extended recognition to Afghanistan in 1934 but formal diplomatic relations were established in 1942. George Washington, the first president of the United States, advised his nation to avert “entangling alliances” while delivering his farewell address and the US adopted this policy (Parker, 1955: 110). The United States changed its policy of isolation in the beginning of the twentieth century as the address of President William McKinley showed the new role of America that “God and men have linked nations together, no nation can longer be indifferent to any other” (Ruggie, 1997: 89-90). The next half-century passed in planning for seeking American political engagement in world affairs to promote a stable international order favorable for the US interests.

As for as the US interests are concerned, Afghanistan had never been important for it. So, the efforts of the Afghan government for establishing relationship were not cherished. However, the former King Amanullah of Afghanistan (1919-29) made rapid efforts in this direction and sent personal emissary to explore the possibility of establishing friendly relations with the US.

In July 1921, another Afghan mission visited the United States to provide ample opportunities for American businessmen to invest in Afghanistan but Charles.E.Hughes, the US Secretary of State, rejected this offer because he considered Afghanistan under the British sphere of influence (Gregorian, 1969: 69-70)¹. The other reason was friendly relations of Afghanistan with Germany. This country fought against America in the World War I, so it did not look with favour on Afghan-German activities.

Afghan Efforts for Recognition in Zahir Shah's Era

The US reluctance to establish diplomatic relations with Afghanistan was evident from a letter of the State Department in 1933: "We have been naturally conservative on the subject of establishing relations with Afghanistan owing to the primitive conditions in the country, the lack of capability or the guarantees to the safety of foreigners and the absence of any important American interests" (Ma'arof, 1990: 137).

After the downfall of Amanullah, the process for recognition between Afghanistan and the United States suffered a set back. In 1933, King Zahir Shah became the ruler of Afghanistan who gave a new turn to the foreign policy and made special efforts to get economic assistance and recognition for his country from the US. He sent a letter to the US President Roosevelt expressing his desire for political and economic relations with America. Replying this letter, Roosevelt assured the King of friendly relations and accorded the recognition to Afghanistan (Ibid: 138).

The US recognition of Afghanistan led to the signing of a formal agreement in 1937, which marked the beginning of the economic cooperation between Kabul and Washington. Relations of Afghanistan with the Soviet Union and the Great Britain suffered a lot due to Afghan-German friendship. So, it was quite natural for Afghan government to develop cordial relations with the United States and for this purpose it offered concessions for American companies to explore oil resources. The Afghan government granted its first concession to the American Inland Exploration Company by offering a 75 years option for the exploration of oil resources. However, the company abandoned its work in 1938 after a year, as it was not economically feasible (Emadi, 1997: 52). The other reason was the attitude of the Soviet Union that tried to disrupt the supply of American material through the Soviet rail tracks. Moscow regarded Afghanistan under its sphere of influence and hence it disliked a third country to become its rival.

World War II and Its Effects

The outbreak of the World War II adversely affected the economy of Afghanistan, which was already in the worst condition. Afghanistan remained neutral during the war, despite having strong relations with Germany, Italy and Japan. But its exports to these countries were almost stopped as western markets were badly affected due to war and America became the market of Karakul skins and fruits. Afghanistan began to

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export skins and fruits to American markets, which continued till late 1950s when the Karakul skins became outdated (Ma'arof, 1990: 140).

After the World War II, the United States changed its 1930s policy of isolationism and started framing its political role in the world affairs through the policy of interventionism. The American diplomatic mission was inaugurated in Kabul on June 6, 1942. W.H. Van Engert was appointed as the first American ambassador and Muhammad Naim was sent to the United States to present his credentials as Afghan ambassador in Washington (Hornibrook, 1990: 47).

In December 1942, the State Department made a proposal of constructing a motorable road passing through India, Afghanistan and Soviet Union to reach China. The US officials reached in the region to explore the possibility of project, but the Soviet Union refused to allow entry of any American national on its territory and Afghans were also reluctant to join the scheme and so the plan was abandoned (Ma'arof, 1990: 139). The United States continued its economic assistance in the other projects and American-engineers were sent to Kabul to assist in irrigation plans. The American government urged Afghanistan to use opium only in medicine and other scientific purposes. Afghanistan was a big opium producer and American drug-lords had contacts with Afghan drug-dealers for supply of opium, which was against the US policy of banning drugs. The Afghan government acceded to the American request and banned the production of opium (Ibid: 142).

After the World War II, the era of good feeling lingered and the United States became ideal substitute of the Great Britain for Afghanistan. Afghanistan welcomed the new American role for world's peace and democracy. These feelings were conveyed to the State Department through Afghan Prime Minister, Shah Mahmood Khan. In return the State Department admitted that Afghanistan "is also strategically important for the United State's policy in the Middle East" (Emadi, 1997: 52).

Cold War Policy of US

The Cold War policy of the US was primarily to face and stem the advance of Soviet Union into Europe. The Soviet Union was extending its influence in Europe and Asia. Afghanistan being at the border of Soviet Union was not strategically significant for the US. But it continued economic assistance to Afghanistan.

An American company Morrison Khundson signed a contract with the government of Afghanistan worth \$17 million for repairing dams, construction of reserves, canals and power plants in the Helmond Valley of

Southern Afghanistan. It was a multipurpose project and Japanese engineers made its initial survey. The project fell short of foreign exchange and assistance. Afghan foreign minister Zabuli visited Washington for the loan of \$118 million but the US Export Import Bank (Exim) sanctioned only a loan of \$21 million, which was not sufficient to meet the need of the project. Zabuli recommended his government to decline the loan. But Afghan officials overruled him, as they wanted to establish close economic ties with the US. The project failed due to bad quality of soil and lack of funds (Ibid: 53). However, the Cold War increased importance of Afghanistan in the eyes of the US. Like the British, during the Great Game of 19th century, the United States also feared that ambitious and expansionist Soviet Union might gain predominant influence in Afghanistan and then press southwards to warm waters of the Arabian Sea. But the United States was not in favor of arming Afghanistan. Despite frequent requests of Kabul who wanted American weapons to modernize its armed forces in the wake of possible Soviet danger and took plea that US-backed Afghanistan would defend Western interests against Soviet threat. But these requests were unheeded and in 1949, disappointed Afghan officials were forced to say that “unless US gave Afghanistan more assistance Afghanistan might turn to USSR” (Ma’arroof, 1990: 144).

At this point, the US embassy in Kabul recommended its government for the sale of weapons to Afghanistan to exclude Soviet influence. Other reason was the settlement of Pak-Afghan disputes. Washington was much concerned with strategic significance of Pakistan, while it considered Afghanistan a remote, small, poor and unimportant country with a few natural resources (Hammond, 1984: 26). So, Washington misgauged the strategic importance of Afghanistan. It was wrongly assessed that “Afghanistan’s little assets had no worth for the Kremlin, who could easily take Afghanistan to its broader objectives” (Ma’arroof, 1990: 45) So the initial American worry about Afghanistan had not arisen from any action of the Soviet Union, but from the Pushtunistan issue because Afghan government wanted an independent Pathan State by challenging the Durand line (Dupree, 1978)². Pakistan was in a strong geopolitical position to exert pressure on Kabul. The landlocked Afghanistan depended on transit route through Pakistan for the bulk of its trade with rest of the world.

Pak-Afghan Boundary Issue and US Response

The Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian affairs, George McGhee visited Kabul in March 1951 and discussed military assistance and Pushtunistan issue with Muhammad Daoud, the minister of war, but easy

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solution to the problem could not be pursued. McGhee feared that recourse to the United Nations for Pak-Afghan boundary dispute would invite the Soviet involvement. McGhee had warned that this problem, as all other problems, must be considered in the light of expansionist policy of the Soviet Union, which had no hesitation in taking advantage of the power vacuums in Asia as well as in Europe. He also doubted the value of bilateral talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Kux, 1996: 10). Increasing American involvement in this region revived the Soviet Union's interest that assumed Afghanistan in its sphere of influence as both countries had a long history of relations since old days. So Nikita Khrushchev said that "It was clear that America was courting Afghanistan. The Americans were undertaking all kinds of projects at their own expenses." He further remarked: "In my opinion the capital we have invested in Afghanistan has not been wasted. We have earned the Afghan trust and it has not fallen to American trap" (Hammond, 1984: 23).

The American anxiety increased after outbreak of the Korean War and fears of a more aggressive Soviet posture increased in Asia. The US offered both the countries to solve the Pushtunistan issue. It is proposed that Kabul and Karachi must cease propaganda attacks and seek to avoid tribal tension and resolve these problems through diplomatic channels. But Afghanistan's attitude was unreasonable and the US did not find any justification for the Afghan position on Pushtunistan issue. This was the basic reason that Afghanistan was not successful in getting American weapons. The other was the inability of Afghanistan as the State Department offered weapons on cash payment. Afghanistan called it a political refusal (Ma'arof, 1990: 144).

Washington was worried about chronic friction between Pakistan and Afghanistan over their differences. In 1952, the US made many efforts to solve the issue through dialogue but Afghanistan was not willing to improve relations with Pakistan. The US withdrew its support for settling the boundary issue on the assessment of American embassy in Moscow. The Soviet Union was dissatisfied with the present situation. It was unlikely to develop a more active US policy in the country under present circumstances where Soviet objective was sufficiently served by the existing isolation and backwardness of the country (Hammond, 1984: 27).

In 1952, Washington dropped both Afghanistan and Pakistan from its foreign policy agenda due to unsettled issue of Pushtunistan and economic aid. But the Soviet Union began to grow its influence in Afghanistan and helped in oil exploration. Afghan government made a plan to construct the modern roads. For this project, it requested the United States to provide \$1 million worth of economic aid but the State Department did not take it seriously. After disappointment from the United States, the Afghan

government turned to the Soviet Union who was already “within gate” (Ma’arroof. 1990: 145).

The available evidence showed that Washington had not taken seriously the involvement of the Soviet Union and expressed only moral support for Afghanistan. It did not apprehend any danger of Afghanistan’s falling into Soviet camp.

Dulles Policies: Ignoring Afghanistan

In the year of 1953, John Foster Dulles had taken over the charge of Secretary of State and Sardar Muhammad Daoud became the prime minister of Afghanistan in the same year. Dulles gave a new impetus to the Cold War policies by establishing defense alliances with active American supporters (Gupta, 1986: 9). The United States wanted to stem the expansion of Communism in the world and particularly in South Asian regions. So it developed diplomatic relations with those countries that were geographically linked with the Soviet Union and China.

Under new policies of 1954, the US began to provide massive economic and military assistance to Pakistan, which made Afghan government quite uneasy. The Afghan ambassador in Washington expressed his fears to Secretary Dulles as well as to Henry Byroade, the successor of McGhee, that American arms would make Pakistan intransigent and create a military imbalance in the region. He urged Americans to provide arms to Afghanistan as well (Kux, 1996: 173). In the later years, Afghan foreign minister, Prince Naim visited Washington and communicated his country’s interest in American arms by expressing deep anxiety over Soviet intervention. He also showed interest in joining the Northern Tier security arrangement that was taking shape among Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Iraq in the form of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Baghdad pact. The response of the State Department was negative due to its concern about the Soviets as well as Pakistani reaction. Washington doubted that whether it would be wise to include Kabul in any alliance or to provide it American weapons. Pakistan became the member of both alliances.

In 1955, Washington’s concerns grew again when Afghanistan reacted against the decision of Pakistan for establishing ‘One Unit’ by eliminating its four western provinces. In reaction, agitated Afghan mob attacked Pakistani embassy in Kabul and its Consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad. In return, Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan and imposed embargo on Afghan goods, which caused anxiety in Washington that the “embargo might drive Afghanistan into Soviet arms” (Hammond, 1984:

24). Diplomacy worked and normal relations resumed between Karachi and Kabul.

But this trouble developed Soviet interests in the region and its leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin visited Afghanistan in December 1955 and offered \$100 million economic assistance on a low interest rate along with military aid. The Soviet Union announced its aid due to Afghan position on Pushtunistan issue. At this, American ambassador in Kabul concluded that Afghanistan had become a complete economic satellite of the Soviet Union (Kux, 1996: 14). In this way, the Soviet Union tried to check flourishing American interest through RCD and CENTO in South Asia.

The Eisenhower administration was not ready to give up its interest in Afghanistan and it pressurized Pakistan to talk with Afghanistan. The US wanted to prevent Afghanistan from going under Soviet control, which had received major arms consignment after economic assistance.

Daoud played a vital role for increasing Soviet influence. He announced that transit question was a secondary issue and it would not be resolved until the settlement of political question of Pushtunistan (Gupta, 1986: 19). But in the end, he agreed to explore the American proposals and received economic aid to improve the roads and warehouses inside Afghanistan.

Pakistan and United States repeatedly made attempts to improve relations with Kabul. They wanted to draw Afghanistan away from the Soviet Union to bring it towards the free world. But the tension over Pushtunistan remained a stumbling block in the way of friendly relations with Pakistan and the United States.

Dulles, the Secretary of State, was not in favor of Daoud and was obsessed with his downfall. He considered him pro-Soviet and suggested that American government should pressurize Afghan King to dismiss Daoud (Ma'arof, 1990: 171). This image of Daoud was due to American Ambassador Ward who had been taken as a hostage by some Chinese, when he was a Consul-General. Ward had suspected the hidden hand of Daoud in this incident and he played dubious role by sending such assessment, which influenced the State Department in adopting hostile attitude and personal grudge towards Daoud. Later Ward had to change his opinion about Daoud when the latter cleared his position regarding his captivity. Ward tried to convince the State Department but it was too late to alter the thinking of it (Ibid: 173-74). American policy makers thought that economic aid, arms deal and the visit of Soviet leaders to Afghanistan are evidence enough to prove that Afghanistan had become a Soviet Satellite. Though Afghan leaders clarified the situation and declared that

Afghanistan would never accept 'satellite' status. It became true in the later years.

In 1956, when the American National Security Council was discussing Afghanistan, President Eisenhower observed: "one sentiment of today world is nationalism which is significant for Afghanistan who are losing their national identity." So, the US used the cards of nationalism and Muslim religion because it was unable to compete with the Soviet Union through economic aid to Afghanistan. Kabul welcomed the Eisenhower Doctrine (Kux, 1996: 15). Under this Doctrine, the US adopted the policy of global containment of Communism. Afghanistan welcomed the policy but kept its traditional policy of neutrality. At the same time Afghanistan remained hopeful for further strengthening of Afghan-US relations.

Inclination towards Soviet Union

Afghanistan resumed its traditional and preferred role as a buffer state, which prevented it from going into the orbit of any power or joining any military alliance. The Cold War enabled Kabul to get more than \$1 billion of economic aid from both super powers. Both Soviets and Americans built modern roads connecting the major cities of Afghanistan. The Soviets also constructed grain soils and supplied arms and provided military training to Afghan army. Thousands of military officers attended military colleges in the Soviet Union while hundreds got training in America (Rubin, 1996: 71)³. The US focused its attention on the improvement of agriculture, bureaucracy and education in Afghanistan and took a little interest in the regional politics due to its policy of 'brinkmanship.' This policy is evident from a State Department's report in which it advised that "Afghans to be wise in action or statements against Soviets, as it was impractical for the United States to meet Afghanistan's requirements for security and economic aid" (Hammond, 1984: 32). This shift in policy occurred in the late 1950s, when the US began to assume a more flexible approach in its relations with the Soviet Union, neutral nations and other allied countries. In June 1958, Daoud paid an official visit to America and expressed his desire to maintain cordial relations between the two countries. In December 1959, President Eisenhower stopped over Kabul, during his trip to South Asia, where he was received warmly. This visit was important in the sense that Afghanistan was not a member of the US-sponsored military alliances. The president provided financial and technical assistance of \$10 million as a loan for construction of Kabul Airport (Ma'arouf, 1990: 190). At that time American position on Afghanistan was to maintain its independence and kept it away from the danger of growing Soviet

influence. Recent published documents have evidences that Afghanistan strove earnestly for American aid but the US remained reluctant to accede to Afghanistan's request for the supply of weapons. The US policy was mainly dominated by Pakistan factor that was the member of CENTO and SEATO. Moreover, Pushtunistan issue deteriorated the situation and America never complied with the request. The other reason was Washington's fear that sending military equipments to Afghanistan would alarm the Soviet Union.

By the 1960s, two Cold War rivals continued their economic assistance to Afghanistan. The country appeared to be well on road towards becoming a Central Asian Finland, a non-Communist state but important to the security concerns of its Communist neighbour.

During the Kennedy administration, friction and differences continued between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan closed its borders with Pakistan. At that time Afghan Foreign Minister Muhammad Naim, who was in America, requested for the grant of loan for the construction of overland route through Iran to avoid dependence upon Moscow. President Kennedy not only rejected his request but also insisted on resolving disputes with Pakistan. However, Shah of Iran, who was a close friend of Washington, settled this dispute. Kennedy's personal intervention also paved the way to resolve the tension as he asked King Zahir Shah "to soften their stance and resume trade" (Hammond, 1984: 39-40).

In 1964, Sardar Daoud was ousted from the government as the new Afghan constitution of 1964 banished royal family from power. However, during this period, the Soviets were gradually gaining influence in Afghanistan through its multipurpose aid. Political freedom also permitted the emergence of small Communist political parties in Afghanistan. The US who had been advocating democracy and freedom all the time, did not encourage or provide any support for the democratic reforms of king Zahir Shah.

In the 1970s, Washington and Moscow adopted the policy of détente⁴, which reduced tension between the super-powers. America decreased its assistance to the region. The United States went back to its pre-1955 policy, which was assessed in 1972 by a report of the US ambassador, Neuman who served Afghanistan from 1967 to 73. He summed up: "For the United States, Afghanistan has at present a limited direct interest; it is not an important trade partner. There are no treaty ties or defence commitment" (Ibid: 26). The strategic location of Afghanistan was important for the US due to its neighbouring states of Central Asia and Indian sub-continent.

End of Monarchy in Afghanistan

The US policy was responsible to turn Afghanistan to the Soviet Union who provided \$552 million between 1955-65, while the US aid of the same period was \$350 million and it made no special efforts to give assistance from 1965 to 73 (Emadi, 1997: 57). The Soviet aid program increased its influence and changed thinking of Afghan people who were being impressed by Communism. These pro-Soviet people formed a Communist organization with the name of the People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDDPA) in 1965 and Noor Muhammad Taraki; a Communist Afghan leader became its first Secretary General.

This party played a vital role in bringing Daoud into power and ousted Zahir Shah through a military coup in 1973. Daoud became president and abolished monarchy by declaring Afghanistan a republic. Returning of Daoud to power renewed trouble between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Kabul resurrected the Pushtunistan issue and supported the insurgency in Balochistan by providing money and arms. In return, Z.A.Bhutto, the prime minister of Pakistan, gave shelter and training to anti-Daoud commandos. An Afghan cell was created for support of Islamic movement, which later fought with Soviet troops.

The American reaction to coup was not very harsh due to its policy of détente. President Nixon avoided involving in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Other reason was the US interest in the Middle East where he wanted to improve the situation. He tried to relax tension through Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT 1). The purpose of these talks was to check the atomic arms race (Anwar, 1988: 33).

Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State, visited Afghanistan in 1974 and discussed with Daoud a wide range of issues including South Asian region, détente and mutual affairs for peaceful and stable world. Henry Kissinger also stressed upon Daoud to adopt the traditional policy of neutrality and non-alignment to improve friendly relations with the United States and other Western countries. Henry Kissinger also convinced the Middle East countries to provide aid to Afghanistan. Shah of Iran also supported the American efforts to keep Daoud away from the Soviet Union through massive financial aid (Ibid: 34-35).

This pattern of friendship continued in the Carter era too. However private sector was reluctant to invest in Afghanistan due to its primitive position and distant location. The other reason was visible presence of the Soviets. Daoud accepted this policy, as he was an autocratic nationalist rather than a leftist. During the last year of his government he made a noticeable shift in policy to reduce security dependence on Moscow and tried to diminish the political influence of Communists and leftists by

excluding them from government agencies. He also accepted the American invitation to visit Washington in the summer of 1978 but this dream could not be fulfilled.

Brezhnev, the secretary general of Communist party of the Soviet Union, called Daoud to Moscow to explain his position and asked him to reduce imperial influence by expelling his pro-American advisers. But Daoud rejected this proposal and declared that people of Afghanistan were “master of their own houses and no foreign country could tell them how to run their affairs” (Kakar, 1978: 212-214). No doubt, Moscow was disappointed as Daoud realized that Soviet embrace would turn into a bear hug. Both factions of PDPA, which were divided in 1976, now reunited against Daoud for his pro-western policies. The murder of a leading ideologue, Mir Akbar Khyber, worsened the situation. At his funeral, large-scale anti-US demonstrations were staged. Daoud arrested all prominent political leaders but committed a great blunder by sparing Communist army officers and leaders, who later played a key role in ousting him from power. The US policy towards Afghanistan remained remarkably consistent, under both King Zahir Shah and President Daoud. Annual policy review sent from the American Embassy in Kabul to the State Department contained a few modifications in the recommendations due to its geographic and strategic location (Hammond, 1984: 27). The policy remained basically unchanged until Communist coup in April 1978.

Soviet Invasion and Its Consequences

On April 27, 1978 Daoud was gunned down along with his family in a bloody coup, that brought the Communists to power and Afghanistan was proclaimed republic with Noor Muhammad Taraki as a new president.

The US did not show any reaction and ignored Communist activity in this bloody drama. Washington’s indifference and negligence was evident from a report of the State Department, which was issued on March 26, 1978. The report said that “The political situation is stable in Afghanistan and President Daoud remains very much in control and faces no significant opposition” (Ibid: 63).

After the coup, Washington reacted mildly. This was due to its defeat in Vietnam and humiliation in Watergate scandal. The Carter administration regarded the change in Kabul, just like another Middle East style coup rather than a Communist takeover. The American Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance found no evidence of Soviet complicity in the coup despite there were sufficient reasons for doubts. The Soviets denied their

involvement and Brezhnev told President Carter that the Soviets first heard of the coup on Radio Kabul and had not instigated it (Vance, 1983: 385).

The new Afghan government claimed to be non-aligned and non-communist and Washington accepted this claim. American Ambassador in Kabul and the State Department assessed the new regime in Kabul as more nationalist rather than Communist. The State Department instructed its embassy in Kabul that one option would be to phase out American activities in Afghanistan, but this would be unsettling for Afghanistan and its neighbours and incompatible with their policies. The new regime had accepted the US policies for maintaining its interest and presence (Emadi, 1997: 110).

All Americans were not satisfied with government's attitude and its explanation about Afghanistan. They opposed the continued aid to the Communist regime. The former Ambassador Neumann told the State Department that he had known the new leaders for years and they were Communists and would follow order from Moscow. He differed with the viewpoint of other officers considering it a wrong perception of the Communist regime (Hammond, 1984: 63).

The moderate policy of the US gave free hand to the Soviet Union who was intending to reduce American and Western influence in this region. Later on, the State Department admitted this fault and began to support Afghan Islamic groups, living in Pakistan. The US admitted that it was not in American interest to "give such a blank cheque signed to Moscow" (Emadi, 1997: 110).

Moscow availed itself of the opportunity and Soviet experts occupied all fields including security and intelligence services. On the contrary, the United States continued its economic aid, which was provided till the death of American Ambassador Adolph Dubs in February 1979. Dubs was an expert in Soviet affairs and was appointed with the hope to support anti-communist forces. He was kidnapped by an anti-government group and was killed by police during rescue action. Police did not accept the opinion of American diplomats, who were present at the scene to make a deal with captors. During the rescue mission, captors were also killed. The American government protested against the methods applied by police and particularly the presence of Soviet advisors (Misra, 1981: 54).

Outraged President Jimmy Carter suspended the economic aid to Afghan government and increased financial support to Pakistan-based Islamic groups through the military regime of Pakistan. The American Central Intelligence Agency collaborated with Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence supported Afghan resistance groups, which emerged in Afghanistan in reaction to highly unpopular policies of the Communist regime.

Taraki broke the country's long tradition of neutrality in favour of direct alliance with the Soviet Union. On domestic level, the government planned to introduce a social revolution based on massive land reforms by reducing rural debt. Instead of favor, the reforms met with suspicion and resistance by the public. The government responded with force and fighting broke out. Communist party PDPA divided between two factions of Khalqi and Parcham. Hafizullah Amin led Khalqi while Taraki headed Parcham.

At the first anniversary of "Saur Revolution", an uprising erupted in Herat and the government suppressed it brutally. Agitation against the government spread in many provinces. In this resistance, US-sponsored Islamic and traditional groups joined demonstrators. Taraki requested the Soviet Union for help but it refused on the plea that "This would play into hands of enemies, yours and ours" (Hammond, 1984: 74). The Soviets avoided direct involvement as it could provide opportunity to the US to blame it for its expansionist policy.

Other reason was distrust of Moscow in Hafizullah Amin who reduced Taraki to the status of figurehead. Taraki tried to kill him but could not succeed. In return, Amin imprisoned Taraki. Later on, Taraki was assassinated. Taraki's death infuriated the Soviet leaders particularly Brezhnev who burst into tears when he was told about Taraki's murder. He uttered that "he had been given a slap in face to which he had to respond" (Bradsher, 1999: 60). The response came in the form of Soviet invasion of December 1979.

Amin seized political powers but the United States did not trust him and refused to provide any political support or economic assistance. Though Amin tried to assure American leaders of his loyalty and tried to resolve the complicated situation without Communist involvement. The reason for his incredibility and unpopularity with Americans was his cold and insulting behaviour on the death of Dubs. He did not sign the book of condolence and avoided to appear at the airport ceremony for sending the dead body. Soviet KGB and other intelligence agencies blamed Amin for deteriorating Afghan-Soviet relations and pleasing Washington with his pro-western policies. But American diplomats considered them "routine" (Hammond, 1984: 27). The United States also ignored the collection of Soviet troops and military equipments along the Afghan border. Reports about the possible invasion were also received by American intelligence but officers in Washington did not agreed with these reports.

Disappointed with America, the president Amin made efforts to get support from Iran and Pakistan but it was too late and Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, which totally altered the geo-strategic situation. Soviet troops murdered Amin and installed a Parcham leader Babrak Karmal. The invasion was the first direct use of Soviet

troops outside the Iron Curtain to occupy a formal non-aligned state since the World War II. Invasion was an implication of Brezhnev Doctrine, which declared that a country that had entered the socialist bloc could not be allowed to leave whatever the justification might be. This affair entered the center stage of world politics.

The United States, which had earlier ignored the rise of Communist regime in Afghanistan, suddenly woke up to the danger. To compete the Soviet invasion, President Carter outlined the “Carter Doctrine” in his state of the Union address. In this he viewed South West Asia as “third strategic zone for Western security”. He called the invasion “the most serious threat to peace since World War II.” In his warning to the Soviet Union, he announced: “An attempt by outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States and such an assault will be repelled by all means necessary, including military force.” Carter warned Brezhnev to withdraw his forces from Afghanistan or face serious consequences (Ritchie, 1985: 124)⁵.

Carter proclaimed a boycott of the Moscow Olympics and suspended SALT II with the Soviet Union. He had imposed an embargo on sale of grain and modern technology to the Soviets. Fishing in American waters was curtailed for the Soviets. Diplomatic relations were postponed and Ambassador Thomas Watson was called back from Moscow. The Carter administration took every possible step against the Soviets, except direct military attack (Hammond, 1984: 124).

Western media and American public, who were celebrating Christmas festivities, were shocked and raised questions about negligence and inability of their intelligence agencies. The State Department, President Carter or any other top official did not indicate such a situation as they all were favouring détente and strove to serve it, which proved a failed attempt. Contrary to it, the Soviets undermined all agreements and hopes. They tried to prove them as a dominant power in the globe.

Another reason was difference of opinion between Carter’s advisers of foreign affairs Vance and Brezezinski about the Soviet Union. Both provided different information and opinions, which made President unable to decide which of his two advisors was right as both were experts and competent in foreign affairs. Brezezinski was right in his judgment but Vance, the Secretary of State was reluctant to disturb Soviet-American relations without enough proofs (Cordovez & Harrison, 1995: 33).

Asian countries also denounced the intervention and feared that the Soviet Union was on the march of seeking warm-water ports and threatening the Persian Gulf oilfield. Islamic world and non-aligned countries condemned the invasion. The United Nations passed a resolution, against the Soviet Union, which was vetoed by the Soviet Union in

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Security Council. At this General Assembly adopted the resolution on January 14, 1980 by the votes of 104 in favour and 18 against. The resolution called for immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops in order to enable its people to determine their own form of government (Khan, 1993: 18-20).

The most critical situation was inside Afghanistan. The arrival of foreign troops to protect the PDPA regime transformed the resistance into a popular Jihad. In this changed situation, civil war between competing Afghan groups became national liberation against the Communist power. Kabul itself became center of hostile activities including strikes, protests, sabotage, and assassination and bombing. One third of Afghanistan's population had to seek shelter outside the country mostly in Iran and Pakistan.

The Resistance Groups and US Covert Aid

Pakistan became a frontline state and the US made arrangements to supply military assistance to resistance groups without its direct involvement. President Carter announced an offer of \$ 400 million aid for Pakistan but President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan rejected this offer as "peanuts." Other reason was American refusal to provide guarantee for protection of its frontiers, which was more important in the event of Soviet invasion.

In 1981, President Reagan took power with his tough anti-communist stance. Opposition to the Soviets was the central focus of his foreign policy. He thought that Soviet military superiority was the result of détente and arms control agreement in general and SALT II in particular. He argued that the Soviets had cheated on all these agreements. He wanted to make Moscow pay a high military and political price for the intervention in Afghanistan. To meet Soviet threat, Reagan persuaded Congress to authorize \$ 3.2 billion for a five-year military aid program in 1981 for Pakistan (Kux, 1996: 18). In addition to aid, the US officials sought to use Pakistan as a pipeline for funneling military and financial aid to the Mujahideen. President Zia agreed to the US proposal despite some apprehensions that such assistance might make Pakistan a target of the Soviet retaliation. However, Pakistan accepted this role for its own political interests. The ISI took responsibility for porting the military equipments among different factions who were fighting the Soviets. The CIA using American and Saudi funds provided military equipments.

The Reagan administration had to choose Pakistan as it had little choice. Pakistan was the only feasible conduit for aid to resistance, as it had lengthy border with Afghanistan. Iran had also long border with

Afghanistan but it was bitterly hostile to the US. Both countries had no military partnership after the 1979 revolution that brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power.

The American aid against the Communist regime began to flow to Afghan resistance groups. These Islamist groups gained public support due to their call for Islamic unity and Jihad. These fighters became known as Mujahideen or holy warriors. These Pakistan-based Islamic groups had the connections with the outside world particularly Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries that provided massive aid in billions for their resistance. There were seven recognized parties backed by the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which had their base in Peshawar. These seven groups were divided into three moderate and four fundamentalist parties, two fundamentalist groups were more active and prominent, namely Jamat-i-Islami of Burhanuddin Rabbani and Hizb-i-Islami of Hikmatyar. The US and Pakistan refused to provide aid to any independent group fighting inside Afghanistan due to its non-alliance to Peshawar-based parties. These independent groups resented the policy of partiality by the CIA and the ISI. The protest of these groups seemed justified because of their direct combat with Red Army on one hand and Communist regime on the other. It was a common belief that bulk of military hardware and money were going to Peshawar factions particularly Hikmatyar, who received almost fifty percent of aid provided by the US and other countries. In the beginning, Washington had no objection at this distribution but in the later years, it showed resentment by calling Hikmatyar an opportunist. The US avoided direct confrontation with the Soviets and adopted the policy of covert aid to the resistance. In this connection, a study mission supported by Pentagon visited Pakistan and recommended supply of large number of weapons including missiles and landmines to the Mujahidin. But the State Department was not in favour of this recommendation because of its policy of "plausible deniability"⁶. The Reagan administration continued to reiterate its claim that the Mujahidin were using weapons captured from Soviet soldiers. It was true to some extent but the most of weapons to Mujahidin were being supplied through the CIA and ISI, some Soviet weapons were captured while other were purchased from black market and Soviet-backed countries. Egypt was also major supplier, as these weapons were manufactured in its ordinance factories on demand of the US.

In 1982, heavy casualties of Soviet troops inside Afghanistan infuriated Red Army who intensified its land and air attacks. These attacks resulted into a large number of casualties of resistant fighter. The resistance being an irregular force could not estimate the exact number of its casualties and the State Department also ignored the heavy loss of Afghan lives and kept its emphasis on the infliction of more damage to

Soviet troops. In the light of above fact General Zia said that “it (State Department) does not care what happened to the Afghans afterwards” (Cordovez & Harrison, 1995: 259; The Nation, 1988, February 19).

UN Efforts and Road to Geneva Accords

The UN made considerable efforts for peace and settlement and its Secretary General paid first visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1981 and response was encouraging. He also met Brezhnev in Moscow, who complained that Pakistan refused to hold bilateral talks with Afghanistan under the pressure of the United States and China. He showed his willingness for political solution (Ibid: 75-77).

Diego Cordovez, a dedicated and energetic diplomat was appointed Under Secretary General of the UN in August 1981. He made efforts to settle the controversial matters and took a number of initiatives. This consultation of 1981-82 made the outline of what later became the Geneva Accords.

First separate discussion on Afghanistan between the Super powers held at Moscow in July 1982 (Khan, n.d.: 121; Matinuddin, 1991: 192). The Soviets expected that Reagan would work towards Detente as this policy gave them equal status with the US. Moscow was hopeful about Reagan, as Carter adopted tough policies in 1980. But all expectations regarding the lenient policy of Reagan ended in fiasco and he adopted harder attitude towards “evil empire” than his predecessor (Bradsher, 1999: 217-218). Brezhnev died in 1982 without an agreement with Reagan on Afghanistan or any other issue.

Yuri Andropov, who succeeded Brezhnev, was aware of Reagan’s intransigence and saw little possibility of change in Reagan’s attitude towards the Soviet expansionist policy in the Third World, particularly in Afghanistan. Andropov had opposed the Soviet invasion of 1979 and said, “The invasion was a mistake and he would bring the boys back home if only the West would cooperate” (Khan, 1993: 107). This attitude was due to the worst results of invasion and its strain on Soviet economy. The invasion brought the setback to de`tente and loss of Soviet prestige in the world. Despite his changed thinking, he was unfortunate enough to preside over the worst year in Soviet-American relations since the Cuban-Missile crises of 1962.

Under the UN efforts, talks began in Geneva in June 1982. Cordovez tried to remove controversy over the past differences among all parties by proposing different arrangements. First proposal was for non-interference and non-intervention between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Second, was on

voluntary return of refugees. Third, arrangement was of obtaining a Soviet commitment for withdrawal of its forces. To satisfy the Soviets demand for American commitment to non-interference, Cordovez proposed the idea of guarantees to be provided by both superpowers (Cordovez & Harrison, 1995: 389-91). Any change in the status of Afghan regime was not mentioned. Both superpowers did not take negotiation very seriously. The Soviets were confident of their mighty forces equipped with the latest weapons. It misjudged the power of Mujahidin who were being supported by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United States. The US was sure of military victory and did not take interest in the political solution of Afghan crisis. The State Department officials made disparaging remarks about Cordovez's mission (Rubin, 1995: 78-79).

Andropov agreed to withdraw his forces under the auspices of the UN despite opposition from the armed forces and orthodox Communist leaders of Politburo. However, Pakistan and the United States were not ready to bargain with Andropov. As the Cold War was at its peak, so Washington deeply distrusted Soviet motives in the UN negotiations. The US adopted a hard policy towards the Soviet Union but Andropov gradually concluded that progress on Afghanistan would improve the relations between the super-powers. To ease the tension, he wrote to Reagan to talk on the subject of his choice: "disarmament" (Bradsher, 1999: 53). Reagan replied positively but his advisors objected the draft. The reason of this hostile policy was attitude of William Casey, the director of the CIA within the Reagan administration who developed an aggressive attitude towards Afghan issue. The American Senate remarked that the administration was providing such quantity of aid to the Afghans, with which they "can fight and die but not enough for them to win." The State Department criticized this hostile policy of the CIA (Mackenzie, 1999: 22-23). In the later years, the US changed this policy and supplied heavy weapons to Mujahidin for military victory.

Cordovez continued his efforts and paid visits to Kabul, Islamabad, Moscow and Washington where he held meeting to discuss the detail of draft for settlement of peace in Afghanistan. Pakistan avoided holding direct talks with Afghan regime, as it would give recognition to the regime and might affect the cause of resistance. The United States categorically expressed its willingness to cooperate in the process if there was a real commitment on the part of the Soviet Union to reach a settlement.

In Geneva round of April 1983, a progress was made regarding timetable for withdrawal of troops. The Soviet Union promised "gradual withdrawal and timeframe for it". Cordovez announced that the agreement was ninety percent completed (Cordovez & Harrison, 1995: 362).

Ailing Andropov died in February 1984 and was succeeded by aged and conservative Konstantin Chernenko. He refused to abandon the Kabul regime and continued Soviet support by increasing Soviet military operations. A large number of Soviet soldiers lost their lives that were the highest number of deaths during the conflict. In return, the US also pursued an aggressive strategy and increased the military aid to the Mujahidin to inflict more damage to the Soviets. Chernenko undermined the Geneva talks by rebuffing the United States and Pakistan. He not only refused to give a timetable for withdrawal but also rejected any commitment of such type in the future. He refused to send an advisor with Afghan delegate to Geneva. The Geneva round stalled and Afghanistan entered the deepest freeze of the Cold War. He rejected Reagan's offer of the arms control talks and no change occurred in Soviet-American relations until the change of leadership (Ibid: 175).

In the year of 1984, Cordovez indicated sharp differences of policy between Pakistan and the US on one hand, and the Soviet Union and the Kabul regime on the other. The US showed resentment to Pakistan for acceptance of bilateral arrangement with Afghanistan on non-interference without consultation of Washington. However, the US continued to provide covert aid to Mujahidin, as the Washington Post indicated that aid to Afghan resistance had mushroomed into the largest US covert operation since the Vietnam War (Bradsher, 1999: 218). The Americans criticized the supply of aid and accused Islamabad and Afghan exiles for siphoning off many of the weapons. These allegations could affect the UN peace process. Such was the atmosphere, which surrounded the Geneva process (Cooley, 1999: 13-15).

In 1984, Reagan once again won the presidential election and continued his efforts to improve relations with the Soviet Union but he became successful when Gorbachev succeeded Chernenko in March 1985. He was destined to become one of the most important political figures of the 20th century. He was one of those who had opposed the politburo's decision of intervention in Afghanistan. He had declared in 1983 while visiting Canada that invasion was a mistake (Bradsher, 1999: 272). He objected the burden of war at the cost of domestic economic needs of the Soviet Union. Gorbachov began to seek a way out and kept withdrawal from Afghanistan at the top policy agenda. But first two years of Gorbachev's regime were paralleled by equal bitter conflicts in Washington. American policy makers wanted to upgrade the level of US aid to keep Soviet forces pinned down as long as possible. The State Department adopted an aggressive policy against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and President Reagan signed a secret directive NSDD 166, in March 1985 "for arming Mujahidin to defeat the Soviets by all means

available” (Rubin, 1995: 64). American analysts gave opinion for increasing more military pressure along with the diplomatic initiatives to gauge the real intentions of the new Soviet leadership. Objections were raised not only on the supply of aid but also on the way in which it was being distributed by CIA and ISI. But the main target of the US was to inflict enough military damage and force the Soviets to leave Afghanistan. So, CIA gave importance to those parties whom it considered militarily effective. In this regard, Hikmatyar’s party was given priority but the question remained in Washington about his effectiveness. The resistance leaders sent a delegation to the next round of Geneva talks in 1986, led by Burhanuddin Rabbani. They also paid a visit to the White House to meet Reagan (Khan, 1993: 159).

The Geneva negotiation, which had been moribund since 1983, got a new turn in the next rounds of 1985 and 1986. In these talks, Gorbachev agreed to join the US as a guarantor that was earlier refused by the Kremlin. While in Washington, the debate over the guarantee remained controversial. The US was not willing to talk about guarantee unless a schedule for the Soviets to walkout of Afghanistan was given. The widespread assessment in Washington was that there was no prospect or chance of Soviet withdrawal. The CIA analyzed in 1986 that “general belief is that settlement is not going anywhere.” To gain a military victory it further suggested of equipping the Mujahideen with the Stingers missiles. The CIA wanted this weapon to counter the Soviet deployment of “MI24” and “MI25” assault helicopters in Afghanistan (Rubin, 1995: 65). The decision to supply Stingers was controversial and US army was afraid that Stingers were not enough for its own need. Some officials worried about Stingers falling into hands of Soviet terrorists while others did not want to lose “plausible deniability” and urged that introduction of such high tech American weaponry against Soviet forces could provoke a dangerous Soviet response against Pakistan (Bradsher, 1999: 225). But the ISI insisted on the CIA to supply Stingers, which were necessary to attack the main target effectively. The ISI was right in its demand of Stingers, as this weapon reduced the Soviet air superiority in the battlefield and proved ideal for Afghan environment.

Aid program under the Reagan Doctrine, the supply of Stingers and the implement of NSDD 166, all were part of that American policy under which Reagan raised the cost of war for the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, whereas Gorbachev reviewed the Soviet policy in accordance with his “new thinking” and said that counter revolution and imperialism had turned Afghanistan into a bleeding wound (Ibid: 276). He changed the policy due to cost of intervention in Afghanistan, which was more than \$1 billion per

year. He also suggested the change of leadership in Kabul, as the present leader was unable to tackle the situation.

First Summit meeting on Afghan issue between Reagan and Gorbachev was held in Geneva in November 1985. Reagan reiterated his demand of withdrawal to improve the relations. Gorbachev responded positively but he also complained of the State Department's uncooperative attitude during the Geneva talks, which rejected the proposed agenda for agreements as calling it pre-mature (Shultz, 1993: 870).

Actually the State Department was not taking Gorbachev's offer very seriously due to previous policy of the Soviet Union. To test Gorbachev's intention about withdrawal, the Secretary of State George Shultz asked the task force to devise a way. The task force recommended "a high price for guarantee to the Soviets" and demanded the Soviets to respond by setting a date for withdrawal of troops". However, the State Department accepted the role of guarantor if the central issue of withdrawal and its relationship with other matters of settlement should be addressed and resolved properly (Rubin, 1995: 83). In settlement terms a guarantee means an aid cutoff, when withdrawal would begin. The US accepted this offer, as it foresaw no possibility of Soviet withdrawal. It further demanded that Gorbachev should demonstrate his sincerity about withdrawal in next Geneva talks by announcing timeframe for departure of his troops (Ibid: 87).

The End Game and Emergence of Taliban

All issues were settled in next Geneva talks of 1986 except timeframe and interim government. Gorbachev informed Najibullah, who succeeded Karmal that Soviets would not interfere in Afghanistan. So, Najibullah offered Mujahideen leaders to make a coalition government but all leaders rejected the proposal unanimously.

Cordovez gave proposal for the establishment of a coalition government, comprising Afghan Mujahidin, refugees, selected Afghan personalities, PDPA and exiled Afghan leaders but this proposal was rejected by Washington, Islamabad and Mujahidin and they ruled out any dialogue with PDPA or any role for former King Zahir Shah (Yousaf & Adkin, 1992: 218). The United States wanted to build up the Peshawar-based alliance as a shadow government that could take over after the withdrawal. This policy was designed in 1987, as Washington hoped that Communist regime would fall soon after the withdrawal of Soviet troops. This assumption was adopted on reports of the CIA.

Gorbachev sent a message to the State Department that next Geneva talks would be final about withdrawal and further assured of it the peace

conference at Washington in 1987 and said that during the withdrawal period, Soviets would not engage in combat. Washington demanded to de-link the question of withdrawal from internal settlement of Afghanistan and Gorbachev acceded.

Reagan and Gorbachev held a meeting in December 1987 to settle the controversial issues but Reagan turned the Geneva end game into an American political issue. He refused to attach supply of aid to Mujahideen with withdrawal, as he did not want to “leave them prey to Kabul regime” (Rubin, 1995: 72-73). This situation was created as the result of a misunderstanding of the US commitment to Cordovez in December 1985, when the UN and the Soviet Union both mistook meaning of guarantee as halt of aid to Mujahideen when the withdrawal would start. The official of the National Security Council who approved this decision had died soon after and Reagan did not bother to see details and contents of the accord. So, he refused to accept the draft of 1985, regarding the halt of aid (Cordovez & Harrison, 1995: 193).

Washington had more bargaining leverage in the newly revealed position. It forced the Soviet Union to accept American demand that resistance and Kabul regime would receive symmetry of treatment: aid to Mujahideen would not stop unless aid to Kabul regime ended. It also made Soviets to drop linkage between withdrawal timetable and of coalition government. Gorbachev was prepared to accept Washington’s demand, as his intention was evident from his dialogue with Cordovez when he said that Russians were very upset with their Afghans friends who would not let them to pullout the troops but Soviets would not take care of them.

When the Soviet threat declined, the divergence of interests reduced the leverage of Pakistan on the United States and Washington ignored Islamabad’s demand of an interim government of Mujahideen. Zia suspected that superpowers had made deal behind his back (Rubin, 1995: 86). The US gave Moscow at the bargaining table, which it had failed to achieve on the battlefield. The main interest of the US was the withdrawal of Soviet troops and it had no direct interest in the region. So, it did not bother about the post-war consequences.

Washington welcomed the announcement of Gorbachev of February 15, 1988 regarding withdrawal, which was to begin from May 15, 1988 and last for ten months. Washington’s desire for short timetable and a “certain date” for withdrawal were also fulfilled. At last both superpowers were ready to sign the final round of Geneva Accords and talks began on March 2, 1988 but proceeded slowly. The Soviet Union agreed to withdraw within nine months. The formation of interim government was not discussed. Cordovez promised by a vague statement to provide his good office to form a broad-based Afghan government (Khan, 1993: 271).

Both superpowers agreed to accept “positive symmetry”: if Soviets would continue arming Kabul, the US would also continue aid to Mujahideen. Washington wanted more from Moscow without giving anything in return. Moscow accepted proposals of Washington about timeframe of withdrawal and aid to Kabul regime.

The United States accepted the role of guarantor on its own terms and conditions. The Soviets were infuriated at American’s supremacy but Gorbachev was determined to withdraw and even he did not insist on a cease-fire as a condition for withdrawal, but he declared that his troops had right to retaliate if attacks were made during the process of withdrawal.

The US policy towards the Third World has always been serving its own interests with a touch of domination. Reagan asked Zia-ul-Haq that “how Pakistani leaders would handle their commitment to violated the agreement” (Rubin, 1995: 89). His question was due to previous role of Pakistan in which it had been serving as a conduit for supply of America aid to Mujahideen. Zia replied that they would just lie about it, as they had been denying their activities since eight years. According to Shultz, Zia told Reagan that Muslims have the right to lie in a good cause (Shultz, 1993: 1091).

After setting all the issues, the Geneva Accords were signed on April 14, 1988 by the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union and the Secretary of State of the US. Pakistan and the United States declared on this occasion that their signatures would not imply recognition to the Kabul regime. The US said that “the obligations undertaken by guarantors are symmetrical” and it had the right to provide military aid to the Mujahideen (Khan, 1993: 270). The accords forbade both Afghanistan and Pakistan from intervening and interfering in the internal affairs. Boundary issue would be solved by a neutral phrase: “both states should refrain from the threat or use of force so as not to violate the boundaries of each other” (Ibid: 270-72). As guarantors, both superpowers agreed to refrain from any form of interference and intervention. An official role was given to the UN for return of refugees. Under these accords, first time the Soviet Union withdrew from a ‘fraternal’ state. A Soviet Journal blamed that decision of a few politburo members headed by Brezhnev had humiliated the Soviets (Bradsher, 1999: 372). The United State took revenge of Vietnam and Soviets lost a huge number of lives and weapons like Americans in Vietnam they got nothing from Afghanistan except disgrace in the country and world.

The US interest in the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan was limited to expression of its concern for the establishment and support of a stable government. The main aim of the US was to weaken the Soviet Union. So, it supported the resistance through Pakistan and funneled aid to

the Mujahideen. Pakistan saw the possibility of achieving some 'strategic depth' by implementing a friendly Islamic regime. Both Washington and Islamabad thought that Gorbachev had withdrawn his troops due to fear of military defeat. After withdrawal, the involvement of the US began to evaporate. The country, which has become a reference for the victory over Communism, suffered a lot after the departure of Red Army. Afghanistan caught up in the post-war fighting among various factions who had been struggling against the expansion of Communist rule with covert and overt support of the US and other countries. These groups turned against each other in the absence of a common threat. These factions did not agree on a durable power-sharing arrangement. Their lust for power brought further destruction and sufferings to the Afghans and caused great instability to this war-ravaged country. All the Afghans suffered adversely in this struggle to recover freedom. A large portion of population was deprived of their lives and limbs by all kinds of mines, booby traps and other deadly contraptions. These explosive devices were scattered in the area to reduce the mobility of foot soldiers of both sides. But the main victims were the helpless civilians and innocent children. Nearly a million were perished and some six million Afghans had to take refuge in other countries. Its entire infrastructure suffered a dreadful damage.

The end of the Cold War and inability of the Mujahideen to form their government in Afghanistan changed the situation for American policy makers, who began to pursue a cooperative relationship with the Soviets. Both super-powers tried to seek resolution of regional conflicts.

Policies of Gorbachev reduced the east-west rivalry, which relaxed tension between hard-liner Soviets and Americans. Gorbachev abandoned the policy of military confrontation with the US in order to restructure of Soviet economy, which led to the signing of Geneva Accords in April 1988.

From April 1992 to 1994, more than twenty thousand lives were lost due to fratricidal struggle of the Afghans. The US stressed the UN to bring peace in Afghanistan, but it refused to play the role of a mediator. The US was of the view that fighting in Afghanistan could not end until there was external involvement by the neighboring states. America, itself was the biggest supplier of arms and funds in fueling the proxy war in the unfortunate land now began to criticize the interference and involvement of external world in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Disappearance of the USSR from the globe enabled the US to disengage from the area, which had no longer strategic value for it. Cooperation between superpowers on Afghanistan became a far cry. Its cries were just to keep it away from the Afghan quagmire in the absence of its own interests. But the emergence of

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the new force, the Taliban revived the US interest in Afghanistan once again.

Washington wanted political stability in Afghanistan, so it made efforts for peace and tried to end conflict through a solution that could be suitable for all the factions. The US government also saw the Taliban as a source of stability in Central Asia that would enable the construction of an oil pipeline across Central Asia. This project was dropped only when the Taliban refused to accept the US conditions, this energy security changed into military one. The US alleged Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi exile and hero of Afghan Jihad for bombing the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998 killing 224 people and wounding 4500. The US alleged the Taliban for harboring the terrorists and installing their camps in Afghanistan and claimed to have strong evidence against Osama bin Laden and his organization, Al-Qaeda for involvement in embassies bombing. In retaliation, the US launched the cruise missile on alleged bin Laden's camps in eastern Afghanistan. The US government demanded that the Taliban should hand over bin Laden, when they refused, the US made the UN to impose the economic sanctions against the Taliban. They were also warned against human rights violation and promotion of drug trafficking.

The Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001

During all these years the US increased its pressure on the Taliban by reiterating its demand for handing over bin Laden or facing the consequences. Imposition of sanctions was part of this strategy. The US targeted the Taliban on different occasion and tried to replace them by using different cards, the ethnic, the former king, the southern alliance and the ultimate burnt came in the form of a military attack on Afghanistan as the US hold the Taliban responsible for terrorist attacks.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on NewYork and Washington drastically changed the whole scenario and the US once again reviewed its policy towards Afghanistan and launched a war against terrorism. These attacks caused 3000 casualties and numerous missing. To retaliate it, the US led international coalition, an anti-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. Rapid and drastic changes occurred as the US was fully aware about the poor capacity of the Taliban, so it achieved its goal of toppling the Taliban regain and destruction of their apparent political and military might without wasting any time.

The US began its military operation in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 after the failure of the political and diplomatic efforts for solving the US

Taliban stand off over the question of handing over bin Laden to the US government. After dismantling the Taliban regime, the US did not abandon its search operation in Afghanistan, as it wanted to kill or capture Osama bin Laden and destroy the Al-Qaeda network, which is still going on in one or other form.

As far as the objective of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan is concerned, the US has achieved its goal to some extent. It has destroyed some known Al-Qaeda bases and network in Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban regime. What is the degree of the US achievement in this war cannot yet be determined but the US has vowed to fight terrorism in any part of the world. According to the US, Al-Qaeda network is not confined to a single state and terrorism is multifaceted phenomenon. In other words, being the superpower, the US can strike any country, group and individual, anywhere in the world for so-called terrorist activities.

It is generally viewed that the US moves for the strengthening its relations with Afghanistan are for expanding its influence beyond the Afghan frontiers into Central Asia, and vis-à-vis China. However, whatever the goals of the US in the region, it is difficult to predict anything. Events are in a rapid transformed and all the major actors in the region are weighing their respective courses of action.

The Afghan government cannot restore peace and security without the strong support of America and international community. There is no strong military and police system at its disposal, so the US should provide funds to the UN programs of rehabilitation for Afghanistan. This demand seems justified in the light of the US previous role in Afghanistan when it turned its back after the Soviet withdrawal. This time the US has realized its mistake and is on the path of helping Afghanistan and has fulfilled its commitment by providing financial support for rebuilding of this devastated country. One report indicates that the US has to spend about one and half billion dollars on the asymmetrical war and the US should spend many times more on developing the new infrastructure to win over the majority of Afghan people. The US assistance would enable the people to form a new social sector to operate for providing the relief to war-torn country. It is expected that long-suffering neighbours may be the beneficiaries of this reconstruction of the country and the US would not play the second Great Game, whose actors are already supporting its policies. This war against terrorism has also determined a new line of policy for links among the nations, which are now determined by the common interest of security and economic demands. The new political set up in Afghanistan cannot be made successful if the US-led coalition and other regional as well as local powers avoid to work for a 'single ethnic' group which brings nothing except anarchy and violence. In the past,

Washington policy had no consistent approach towards Afghanistan and was often based on adhocism, determined by short time interests rather than principle.

Conclusion

The United States as super power has tended to have multiple goals in a single engagement, such goals often being contradictory to each other. A prime example of such situation is the US policy towards the Taliban in Afghanistan. Before this, Afghan policy was of getting the Soviet Union out during the 1980, the US had flooded the region with mass of weapons. The arm culture led to the emergence of a large number of warring factions who failed the international efforts to bring peace to the region. Apparently, there is peace but the western strategists need to ask either the new regime is capable of managing the country. The future of peace and security in the region is obscure because the vacuum left by the Taliban is being filled by megalomaniac warlords, local bandits, drug barons and opportunistic crooks. Moreover, "Bush Doctrine" has not offered any solution for this situation as it was only for war against terrorism. American government and opinion makers are denouncing terrorism everywhere ignoring the civilian deaths and rehabilitation of the Afghans.

The horrible combination of annihilating air attack and the push on the ground destroyed the military power of the Taliban, as they were not equipped with modern weapons and there was not a single state or group ready to favour them except Osama and his organization Al Qaeda. While on the other side the US and its allies were determined to continue the bombing till the elimination of the Taliban. For Americans, the campaign could not be considered successful till the two men are captured or killed, particularly Osama Bin Laden. Speculations are made about their presence that had left the US and its allies embroiled on two fronts manhunt, one for Mullah Omar and other for his guest, Osama. Mullah Omar welcomed Osama because he had plied his host with money, gifts and other favours and ignored his role for using Afghanistan as a kind of organized breeding ground for militants. It is believed that as many as 70,000 Muslims from dozens of countries have passed through Afghan camps. Hundreds of militants are at large, who were involved in international terrorist operations. They can raise their money by themselves even if Al Qaeda's funds are blocked. American investigators have failed to track down key middlemen responsible for backing and funding.

No doubt, Washington wasted no time in thinking and zeroing the Taliban. This action was also successful in terms of threatening and

alarming the states that were providing shelter to these so-called terrorists. Terrorism is a phenomenon, which is not confined in the boundaries of any particular state or country. By killing a few guys at a time, do not end those who are still at work. Terrorists have no country or permanent settlement. They launch their activities from country to country just like the multi-nationals. Million of dollars are not sufficient to eradicate this phenomenon. But it can be checked to some extent by providing civil liberties to ethnic and religious minorities of the world. Huge amounts of money should divert from defense industry to human welfare. What has been given to world by this war against terrorism? Bush and Bin Laden, engaged in terrifying and killing the innocent civilians. Death toll in Afghanistan has already exceeded than that of the World Trade Center in New York.

Notes

1. Before formal relations, some American missionaries tried to establish contacts with Afghanistan. They formed a mission at Ludhiana (India), where several prominent refugees including the former Amir Zaman Shah and Shah Shuja were staying but American missionaries were failed to establish relations with exiled Afghan leaders. King Amanullah sent his personal emissary to explore the possibilities of establishing friendly relations and Afghan mission visited the United States for this purpose. The mission met with Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes.
2. Durand Line was marked by British India in 1893. After 1947, Afghanistan demanded the abolition of the Durand Line. It asked Pakistan to return the Pashtun and Baluch areas annexed by the British in 19th century. In 1947, these areas were included in Pakistan when it was created. Afghanistan demanded to establish a separate state or to hand over these areas to it.
3. The Soviet trained officers of Afghanistan played a leading role in the ouster of Daoud in 1978, which led the country to political turmoil and chaos and Communist regime was established. The 'Sour Revolution' of 1978 was the ultimate result of all these developments, which brought destruction and bloodshed.
4. Détente was policy of cooperating among the super powers. In pursing of this policy, the United State avoided to involve in Afghanistan for possibility of improving relations in the Middle East. American delegates were holding talks with Soviet delegates for Strategic Arm Limitation Talks (SALT) to half the atomic arms race between the two super powers under this policy.
5. "Report on The Congress and National Security affairs," *National Security Record*, Washington, February 1980.
6. The US adopted the policy of covert aid to Afghan resistance and avoided direct confrontation with the Soviet Union. The State Department adopted such

recommendations, which were designed to ensure plausible deniability. This policy was adopted by the Reagan administration in order to show that the weapons used by the Mujahidin were those, which were captured by them from Soviet soldiers. Pakistan funneled this aid to the Mujahidin.

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