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**SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN**

**(1919-1988)**

**By**

**Douglas A. Borer**

**B.A., Ripon College, 1985**

**Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements**

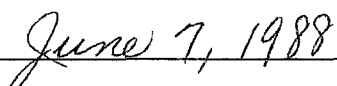
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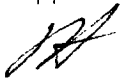
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Soviet Foreign Policy Toward  
Afghanistan 1919-1988 (140 pp.)

Director: Louis D. Hayes 

The Soviet Union and Afghanistan share a long history of international relations. Afghanistan was the first nation to officially recognize the Soviet regime in 1919 and the two nations have actively interacted ever since. In 1978 a military coup took place which installed a communist regime in Afghanistan. Less than a year later Soviet troops invaded the country in order to suppress the rising tide of anti-government protest and rebellion. It is assumed that the Soviet decision to invade was primarily motivated by three factors: 1) Historic Soviet border xenophobia magnified by instability in Iran and Afghanistan. 2) Ideological commitments prescribed within the Brezhnev Doctrine and international treaties. 3) Fear of Islamic-nationalism in Iran and Afghanistan spreading to Moslem regions of the USSR.

Following the Soviet invasion, many political analysts interpreted the move as the latest step in the age-old process of Russian imperialism. The validity of this viewpoint has been analyzed in this project by investigating diplomatic, economic and military relations from 1919 to 1988. Evaluation of these factors reveals the extent to which Soviet policies were directed toward the eventual assimilation of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere of domination.

Prior to the 1979 invasion, the Soviet Union pursued policies in Afghanistan which indicate that they sought to maintain Afghanistan's traditional role as a buffer state between itself and Western interests. The Soviet Union dominated Afghanistan's economy, was the sole provider of military equipment, and was Afghanistan's primary foreign aid and development benefactor. However, there is no substantial evidence to indicate that the Soviets were planning to annex Afghanistan into the Soviet empire. The 1978 coup in Afghanistan was not instigated, planned, or carried out by the Soviet Union.

After invading Afghanistan the Soviet Union suffered from a lack of effective policies which would bring a end to the Afghan civil war. For its part, the Afghan populace has once again exhibited the same intolerance of foreign intervention which drove the British from Afghanistan in the nineteenth century. The Soviet decision to invade was based on political considerations. The decision to withdraw in 1988 reflected changes in the political leadership under General Secretary Gorbachev and new political goals.

Withdrawal of Soviet troops from an allied Socialist country marks a significant shift in traditional Soviet foreign policy. The future ramifications of this action are unknown, but apparently the Gorbachev regime is prepared to link changes in foreign policy to changes in domestic policy. Future Soviet-Afghan relations will hinge upon the new Afghan leadership's ability to regain its historic role as a neutral buffer state. Afghans may never again trust the Russians, but close geographic proximity, and economic necessity will force continued interaction between the two nations.

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## Chapter I

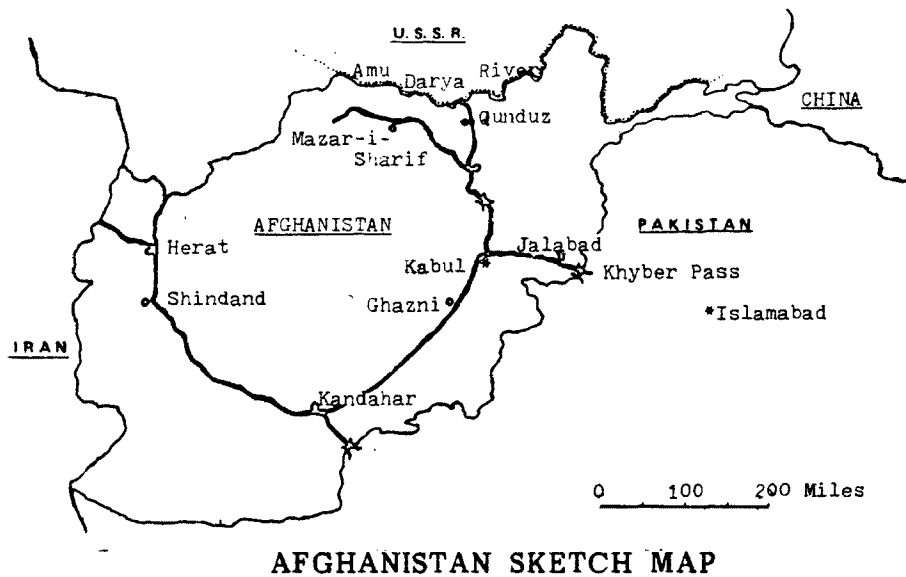
### INTRODUCTION

The Russian and Afghan peoples have a long history of international relations. Among others, tsars, emirs, kings, presidents, premiers and bandits have all left their mark on a colorful history of political interaction. In the wake of the 1979 Soviet invasion numerous books and articles have been written which attempt to analyze and explain the Soviet's future intentions toward Afghanistan. In my opinion, many of these works have failed to investigate adequately the evolution of Soviet foreign policy toward Afghanistan and are biased by pre-conceived notions regarding the history of Soviet-Afghan relations. This project, therefore, investigates Soviet foreign policy toward Afghanistan over the last 70 years. The first goal of this project is to identify long-term Soviet policy toward Afghanistan and assess the 1979 invasion within the context of this policy. The second goal is to assess and analyze the foreign policy ramifications of declared Soviet intentions to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan in 1988.

#### Method, Scope, and Subject Matter

This paper is a descriptive, historical account of Soviet-Afghan interaction from 1919 to 1988. Research has been conducted within two broad time frames: Soviet-Afghan relations before the 1979 invasion, and Soviet-Afghan relations after the invasion. The years 1919, 1979 and 1988 mark significant events in both Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. In 1919 Amanullah Khan seized control of the Afghan government,

and the consolidation of the old Tsarist empire continued under the new Bolshevik leadership in Russia. King Amanullah was the first head-of-state to recognize the new Soviet regime, and the first Afghan leader to tilt Afghanistan in favor of the Soviet Union. In 1979 the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and have to this date been involved in the most protracted military conflict in Soviet history. The year 1988 has witnessed the first signs of an end to the war with the signing of agreements which pave the way for a Soviet withdrawal of forces beginning on May 15, 1988.



The analysis and conclusions of the material presented in this paper focus on the following questions: 1) From the beginnings of formal Soviet-Afghan relations in 1919 to the invasion of 1979, is there any evidence to support the proposition that Soviet policy toward Afghanistan, culminating in the 1979 invasion, was designed to place Afghanistan directly under Soviet control? 2) Was Soviet military intervention consistent with previous foreign policies toward Afghan

governments? 3) What have the Soviets been trying to accomplish in Afghanistan following the invasion, and how have they gone about it? 4) Do the Soviets actually have a consistent and cohesive foreign policy toward Afghanistan? This project is divided into eight chapters which provide a framework for the analysis and resolution of these questions.

Following this introductory chapter, chapter two reviews Afghan history up through 1919 and provides the historical context for this project. Chapters three and four investigate officially declared Soviet foreign policy pertaining to Afghanistan from 1919 to 1979. Chapter three investigates relations in the period from 1919 to 1945, and chapter four from 1946 to 1979. These chapters begin by providing the theoretical basis of Soviet foreign policy within Marxist ideology. Major Soviet pronouncements, treaties and agreements pertaining to Afghanistan, and important Afghan political dynamics having an effect on Soviet-Afghan relations also are included. These chapters, within which similar lines of analysis are pursued, focus on identical topics and can be conceptually considered as a single chapter. They have been divided for two reasons. First, chapters three and four investigate the longest period of history and produce the greatest volume of research material, and second, from a historical perspective, World War II can be seen as the major watershed in world politics which thrust the Soviet Union to the forefront of international relations. Reviewing Soviet foreign policy before and after World War II will help to determine the level of consistency Soviet policy toward Afghanistan has exhibited over the years.

Chapter five reviews economic and military relations from 1919 to 1979. This chapter briefly looks at the levels and types of trade, and

major trade agreements. Foreign aid is the primary subject of this chapter. The rationale behind Soviet foreign aid, as well as the levels, types, and control over Soviet foreign aid to Afghanistan, is investigated. In regard to military relations, chapter five reviews the role of the military in Soviet foreign policy and Afghanistan's place in Soviet military doctrine. The military ramifications of "non-military" Soviet aid projects (such as railroads, bridges and airports) are mentioned. Basic characteristics of Soviet military aid to Afghanistan, including levels, types of training, and equipment, are provided.

Chapter six researches the evolution and political fortunes of Marxist organizations in Afghanistan. This chapter investigates the role of the COMINTERN in Soviet foreign policy, and its success in Afghanistan. The origins, organization, leaders, and structure of the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) are included. The PDPA's role in the internal political dynamics of Afghanistan in the period 1965-1979 and Soviet control over PDPA operations and policies are described in detail.

Chapter seven analyzes the period of relations from 1979 to 1988. Research in this chapter focuses upon the invasion and subsequent nine years of Soviet occupation. Chapter seven looks at the multiple aspects of Soviet foreign policy in Afghanistan as covered in chapters 3-6, in addition to new policy developments. The major focal points of this chapter include: official Soviet statements explaining and justifying their actions; Soviet-Afghan pronouncements, agreements and treaties; Soviet economic and military aid; Soviet military policies; PDPA policies and changes of leadership; new Soviet-Afghan policies intending to gain popular support (such as political indoctrination of Afghan youth in the

Soviet Union); the evolution of the Geneva peace talks; the proposed Soviet withdrawal, and the future of Soviet-Afghan relations. This project closes with an overall analysis of the material, answers to the operational questions, and conclusions in chapter eight.

### Basic Assumptions

This project does not attempt to prove or disprove all of the various theories which speculate about why the Soviets decided to invade Afghanistan. Much of this speculation, though interesting, is usually determined by the ideological orientation and/or pre-conceived notions embodied within the personality of individual commentators. Insofar as academicians attempt to remain non-biased in their analysis of social science phenomena, it is my view that purely objective analysis can never be obtained. I have designed this project with the intent of calling into question the dominant underlying assumption upon which the majority of political writers base their investigations and analyses of the Soviet invasion. This assumption views the Soviet invasion as just the latest step in the centuries-old process of Russian imperialistic expansion. Thomas Hammond, professor of History at the University of Virginia and expert on Soviet foreign policy, sums up this viewpoint in his book, Red Flag Over Afghanistan: "The surprising thing about the 1979 invasion, therefore, is not that the Soviets did it, but that they had not staged a major invasion of Afghanistan earlier."<sup>1</sup> This viewpoint pre-supposes the concept that the Soviet Union has planned, and is planning, to invade and eventually conquer all of its neighbors. The fact remains that the Soviet Union did not invade Afghanistan earlier; thus, the analysis of

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Hammond, Red Flag over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 137.

Soviet-Afghan relations prior to 1979 presents an ideal case to investigate the validity of this viewpoint.

It is suggested that in reviewing the history of Soviet-Afghan relations only three basic assumptions concerning Soviet motives can be adequately supported. The first assumption regards Soviet perceptions of increased U.S. economic and military involvement with Iran as being counter to the national interest of the U.S.S.R. For many years the Soviets promoted the concept of "capitalistic encirclement,"<sup>2</sup> as the justification for any actions deemed necessary to insure security. Following World War II, the Soviet concept of capitalistic encirclement was officially adopted as the foundation of U.S. foreign policy under the tutelage of George F. Kennan's famous theory of "containment."<sup>3</sup> The manifestation of this policy in Iran was of particular importance to the Soviet Union during the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations. The Soviet Union shares a 1250-mile border with Iran. In 1972 the U.S. substantially increased the number of military advisors and technicians in Iran and provided the Shah with access to some of the most sophisticated technology in the U.S. military arsenal. Military assistance and sales increased from approximately 1.8 billion dollars in the two decades from 1950-1970, to over 12.1 billion dollars in the following six years.<sup>4</sup> Military sales continued virtually unabated under the Carter administration until the Shah's overthrow in the 1979 Islamic revolution. Soviet policy makers were concerned with the massive Iranian

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<sup>2</sup>Alvin Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 11-14.

<sup>3</sup>George F. Kennan, "X," Foreign Affairs, 54 (July 1947): 566-582.

<sup>4</sup>Barry Rubin, Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 128.

military build-up on their southern frontier, and more importantly with the strategic role which Iran held for the United States in the East-West power struggle. Iran had made numerous policy overtures toward Afghanistan in the 1970s which, if implemented, could have changed the balance of power in the region by aligning Afghanistan with the pro-Western Shah.

The second major assumption stresses the importance of ideological commitments as prescribed under the Brezhnev Doctrine. This doctrine, which will be thoroughly discussed in chapter four, was formulated following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. It prescribes the principle that once a communist regime is in power it must remain in power, and it is the duty of the Soviet Union to preserve the existence of any communist regime which is threatened. When the communists seized power in Afghanistan in April of 1978, Afghanistan automatically came under the protective umbrella of the Brezhnev Doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

The third major assumption is based upon historic Soviet border xenophobia. Border xenophobia was enhanced by the Islamic revolution in Iran and its potential for expanding into Afghanistan as well as Muslim regions in the Soviet Central Asia. Russian history is a history of invasions - invasion by Russia into neighboring regions, and invasions of Russia by its enemies. The Soviets have inherited the Russian tradition of border paranoia, and view instability on their borders as a threat to Soviet security. Internal disorders in Iran were seen as the major source of instability in 1979. When the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979 Soviet border xenophobia manifested itself in two forms: First, there was the possibility that the United States would intervene on

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<sup>5</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 135

behalf of the Shah, and the Soviet Union would have an additional U.S. military presence on its southern border to counter. Second, the possible spread of Islamic nationalism into Central Asia. The Afghan rebels attempting to overthrow the fledgling communist regime in Kabul viewed the Soviets as the major cause of their problems. If the Moslems in Afghanistan were able to follow Khomeini's lead in Iran, the danger of Islamic unrest spreading to the Soviet Union was a potential problem to internal Soviet security.<sup>6</sup>

The Soviet Union is presently undergoing major demographic changes which include a growth rate in the Moslem population 2.5 times that of the national average. If present trends continue, it is projected that by the year 2000 Moslems will constitute 25% of all Soviet citizens, compared to 17% at the present time. In view of the fact that the six Soviet Republics along the U.S.S.R.'s southern tier bordering Iran, Afghanistan and China are presently home to over 45 million Moslems,<sup>7</sup> Soviet planners could not ignore the potential threat to internal Soviet security posed by an additional revolution-oriented, anti-Soviet, Islamic theocracy on its frontier.

Soviets and Afghans have maintained basically stable relations over the years. The review of how these relations have progressed, and what policies the Soviet Union has pursued in Afghanistan should reveal the magnitude of Soviet plans aimed at the assimilation of Afghanistan into its contiguous sphere of domination. We can never really know the absolute truth about why the Soviets decided to invade Afghanistan, but a

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>7</sup>Rosemarie Crisostomo, "Muslims of the Soviet Union" Current History, 81 (October 1982): 327.



review of history should help to deliniate those theories which are based in fact from those based in rhetoric.

## Chapter II

### Afghanistan in World Affairs Through 1919

Prior to the eighteenth century, Afghanistan did not exist as a definable nation. Political consolidation into a viable nation-state occurred, into what we now know as "Afghanistan," with the advent of British, and Russian imperialism. Afghanistan has been periodically subjected to numerous invasions, migrations and shifts in political control. These events added to the variety of communities and cultures, in the form of various tribal groups, but rarely did the region experience political, economic or cultural unity.<sup>1</sup>

The list of invaders and conquerors who have influenced Afghanistan's past reads like a "Who's Who in the History of Asian Aggression." The Indo-Aryans are the first recorded people to have invaded the area, probably before the sixteenth century B.C. They were followed by the Persians, Greeks, Kushans, Huns, Turks,<sup>2</sup> Mongols, again the Turks, again the Persians, and finally the British and Russians.<sup>3</sup>

Until the nineteenth century Afghanistan was of little concern to the major political powers in the Western world. When British rule

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<sup>1</sup>Richard S. Newell, The Politics of Afghanistan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>The Turks are primarily responsible for introducing Islam into the region. Their most significant accomplishment was the creation of the Muslim state of Ghazni in 961 A.D. Under the leadership of the Sultan Mahumud, Ghazni became the center of an empire which dominated most of central and western Asia and northern India for the next 300 years.

<sup>3</sup>Newell, The Politics of Afghanistan, pp. 35-38.

expanded northward through India, the East India Company, acting as Britain's representative in Asia, signed the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1809 with Shah Shuja, the "King of Caubul."<sup>4</sup> However, Shah Shuja's control of fghanistan was limited and over the next two decades political anarchy reigned in Afghanistan. Warring tribal factions, dominated by the Sikhs of northern India, struggled for control in the early 1800s. Shah Shuja fled to Lahore in 1813 and remained under British protection until Dost Mohammad Khan consolidated Afghan tribal power in 1836. Dost Mohammad sought British approval of his new position as Amir and appealed for British aid against Persia.<sup>5</sup>

The British denied the request on the grounds that Dost Mohammad had previously sought aid from the Russians. The British were wary of the independent-minded Afghan Amir and went so far as to replace him by force of arms with the exiled Shah Shuja. British occupation aroused a country-wide tribal revolt which became known as the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838-1842).<sup>6</sup> Shah Shuja was eventually driven from the throne and the British expedition which placed him there was defeated entirely by Dost Muhammad's forces.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Donald N. Wilber, Afghanistan (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1962), p. 175.

<sup>5</sup>Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 367-369.

<sup>6</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup>This War is one of the most humiliating defeats in British military history. Most accounts by European historians report that of over 4500 fighting men and 12,000 camp followers who started the expedition, **ONE** person (the lowly but lucky assistant surgeon Dr. William Brydon) made it back to British controlled territory alive. These accounts are only partially correct. Actually, 86 British officers and over 2000 camp followers remained in Afghanistan as hostages, prisoners of war, or refugees, and were later liberated by the British punitive expedition in September 1842. Nonetheless, Dr. Brydon was the only European to survive the entire length of the original expedition, and the magnitude of the

In the autumn of 1842 a British punitive expedition entered and destroyed Kabul and laid waste to other cities upon leaving the country, but Afghanistan remained under Dost Muhammad's control and the fiasco of the war caused the fall of Lord Melbourne's government in England.<sup>8</sup> Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia and Europe increased, and Afghanistan was the key geographic playing field of what has since become commonly known of as "The Great Game." The main concern of Afghan leaders over the next half-century was to prevent their country from being swallowed up either by the Russian Bear or the British Lion.

During the nineteenth century the zenith of imperial expansion occurred for Tsarist Russia. Russia's foreign policy at this time focused on the subjugation and annexation of vast reaches of territory in the East and South. As the British pursued their colonial endeavours in India, the Russians slowly moved south toward Afghanistan through Central Asia. The Russians viewed the British invasion of Afghanistan (1838-1842) as a direct threat to their interests. In response, the Russians continued to conquer and occupy the independent Asian Khanates, or reduce them to political and economic control through treaties and trade. By 1870, Russian influence extended to the banks of the Amu Darya river.<sup>9</sup>

The British and the Russians attempted to settle their differences over Afghanistan by diplomatic means. The result was a number of treaties and agreements which are worthy of note. The first such agreement was the Granville-Gorchakoff Agreement of 1873. This agreement

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British defeat remains unscathed.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph J. Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: A Study in the Use of Force in Soviet Foreign Policy (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1986), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 404.

established the Amu Darya river as the southern boundary of the Russian sphere of influence. Afghanistan was to be regarded as a de facto neutral zone between the British and Russian empires. Lord Granville and Prince Gorchakoff reached agreement without the input or support of the Afghan Amir Sher Ali, a factor adding to the general confusion, distrust, and lack of communication which eventually resulted in Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880).<sup>10</sup>

Sher Ali eyed the southern-moving Russian forces with suspicion and apprehension. In 1873 he asked for a definite British commitment to aid Afghanistan in case of Russian aggression. In July, an Afghan delegation met with British representatives who advised the Afghans not to worry about Russian maneuvering because the Russians had agreed to honor the Amu Darya as the northern boundary of Afghanistan. Sher Ali viewed the British position with distrust, and Anglo-Afghan relations became strained.<sup>11</sup>

In 1874, Benjamin Disraeli became Prime Minister of Great Britain. Disraeli changed the character of British foreign policy toward Russia. He implemented what had been known as the "Forward Policy." This policy actively sought to blunt Russian expansionism toward India with a hands-on approach to Afghan affairs.<sup>12</sup> British fears of Russian encroachment in South Asia were often fueled by newspaper articles which did little to

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<sup>10</sup>William Habberton, "Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan (1837-1907)," University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, 21 (1937): 32-34.

<sup>11</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 408.

<sup>12</sup>W.K. Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan: A Study of Political Developments in Central and South Asia, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 137-139.

allay their suspicion. An article appearing in the Moscow Gazette of July 19, 1878, reflects the Russian attitude at the time:

The time has arrived for Russia to establish her influence over the whole of Central Asia, and this is all the more easy as the Ruler of Afghanistan is not on good terms with England - our foe in Central Asia. The concentration of our influence on the frontiers of the territory of the Empress of India would be a natural answer to the English seizure of Cyprus and all the approaches to India....In Asia there are two political Powers confronting each other, and they must inevitably come into collision...<sup>13</sup>

In the summer of 1878 an event occurred which instigated the Second Anglo-Afghan War. The Russians sent a diplomatic mission to Kabul without receiving prior permission from Sher Ali. The British demanded an explanation and in return sent their own delegation which was denied permission to enter Afghanistan. The British considered Sher Ali's action as a national insult and decided to invade Afghanistan. Thus began the Second Anglo-Afghan War. Sher Ali died of illness in early 1879, and his son Yaqub Khan was forced to sign the Treaty of Gandamak with the British. The major feature of this treaty handed control of Afghan foreign policy over to the British and subjected Afghanistan to internal British supervision.<sup>14</sup> The Afghans soon revolted in protest over British intervention and murdered the British envoy, Sir Louis Cavagnari, in July 1879. The British withdrew from Afghanistan, and in the shadow of the First Anglo-Afghan war, lost a sizable force during their retreat.<sup>15</sup> In retrospect, it is clear that in both wars the Russians never posed a significant threat to India, but that the suspicion and intrigue which characterized Great-Game relations magnified

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<sup>13</sup>Cited in Habberton, "Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan," pp. 42-43.

<sup>14</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, pp. 408-409.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid

British fears of Russian motives and resulted in the deaths of thousands of British and tens of thousands of Afghans.<sup>16</sup>

To the north, the Russians continued their policy of expansion into Central Asia. In 1881 Khiva was annexed, in 1884 Merv, and in 1885 Afghan and Russian troops fought over control of an oasis 100 miles south of Merv in what is known as the "Panjdeh Incident". The British, fearing that the ultimate Russian goal was to seize the Afghan city of Herat, mobilized its forces in India. Only a successful arbitration by Denmark prevented war and, in 1887, the Anglo-Russian Agreement of St. Petersburg was signed.<sup>17</sup> The Russians agreed to make no further territorial advances southward, and additional Anglo-Russian conflict was avoided until 1895 when a similar agreement was signed which further defined Afghan borders.<sup>18</sup>

The most significant diplomatic event affecting the long-term fortunes of Afghanistan was the agreement affixing the Durand Line as the border between Afghanistan and the northern territory of British India.<sup>19</sup> The problem with the Durand Line is typical of many such demarcations, which were created during the British colonial period and continue to plague former British colonies around the world. The border was drawn for reasons of administrative convenience and was based on a "market-

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<sup>16</sup>Arnold Fletcher, Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 141.

<sup>17</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, pp. 176-177.

<sup>19</sup> This agreement is worthy of some detailed explanation considering the numerous disputes it has caused throughout the years including Afghan-Pakistan tension resulting in Afghanistan's alignment with the U.S.S.R in 1953. It remains one of the major stumbling blocks at the Geneva Peace talks regarding the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and is problem which will not disappear even if the Soviets depart.

watershed." Those people trading to the north at the time of Durand's survey were regarded as under Afghan control, those trading south would be under British jurisdiction. Subsequently, the indigenous tribal groups which populated the region were divided by the arbitrary decision of British surveyors.

In 1893, the British coerced the Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman into agreeing to the Durand line which has served as the border ever since. It has been debated whether or not the final agreement stipulates actual boundary demarcations, or merely defines the respective spheres of influence of the British government and the Afghan Amir. The Durand Line was designed to bring political stability to the frontier region but in fact has proven to be politically destabilizing as well as geographically and strategically unstable.<sup>20</sup> This agreement is still hotly debated by Afghans and Pakistanis in the 1980s and remains one of the major points of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The latter part of the nineteenth century saw the end of the Great-Game between Great Britain and Russia. Both the British and the Russians feared a reinvigorated Germany and turned their attentions away from Afghanistan. Russia was subdued after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and occupied internally with the 1905 Revolution. In 1905, the new Afghan Amir, Habibullah, offered the British control over Afghan foreign relations in return for a subsidy of 18 lakhs of rupees a year (160,000 British pounds) and access to military supplies through India.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, pp. 426-428.

<sup>21</sup>Fraser-Tytler, Afghanistan, p. 179.



The final major agreement of the Great-Game period was the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. This agreement had four important provisions:

1. Persia was divided into two zones of influence: Russian in the north and British in the east and south, thus protecting the western frontier of Afghanistan from Russian penetration.
2. Britain and Russia recognized China's control of Tibet and agreed not to interfere in this area.
3. Russia agreed that Afghanistan was outside the Russian sphere of influence and agreed to confer directly with the British on matters relating to Afghan-Russian affairs.
4. Britain was not to occupy or annex any part of Afghanistan, nor interfere in any way in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup>

A final article stated that the Afghan Amir must agree to the Convention in order to make it legal and binding. Habibullah, who was not consulted during deliberations, declared the Convention illegal. The Amir, bolstered by the Russian defeat at the hands of the Japanese, wanted the British to join him in an attack on Russian Turkestan to recover lands lost to the Russians in the 1880s. The British refused, along with the Russians, in ignoring Habibullah's protests, and declared the Convention legal.<sup>23</sup>

In early 1912, Russian activities precipitated a war scare in Afghanistan when it was reported that attempts were being made to build a bridge across the Amu Darya River. The Russians were reportedly frustrated by the minor benefits resulting from the 1907 Convention and blamed the British for influencing the Afghan Amir to regard Russian overtures as untrustworthy. Russia also requested British aid in extracting Russians held in Afghan prisons, basing their request on

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<sup>22</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 433.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 434-435.

Article III of the Convention. The British were reluctant to help foster any sort of Afghan-Russian reproachment and refused to pressure the Amir. Secret negotiations between Russia and Britain took place in which the Russians were willing to make concessions in regional matters, such as disputes over Tibet, in return for more influence in Afghanistan. These negotiations continued until the outbreak of World War I, at which time they were terminated.<sup>24</sup>

During World War I, Afghanistan declared and maintained a strict neutrality, despite German and Turkish attempts to draw it to their side and to use Afghanistan as an instrument to undermine Russian and British influence in the region. Afghanistan nonetheless signed a treaty of friendship with Germany in January, 1916. This treaty did not alter Afghanistan's position of neutrality, but it marked the end of the country's policy of isolationism and the beginning of a permanent presence of German traders, diplomats and military personnel in Afghanistan. Moreover, it fueled the fervor of Afghan nationalist-modernists who were convinced that Afghanistan would have to sever its ties with Great Britain before any modernization programs could take hold.<sup>25</sup> Habibullah refused to be swayed from his policy of neutrality and pursued the "usual Afghan game of positive neutrality - waiting to see which side would win, and be prepared for any outcome."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ludwig W. Adamec, Afghanistan, 1900-1923: A Diplomatic History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 82.

<sup>25</sup>Alfred L. Monks, The Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1981), p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 434.

At the war's end, Habibullah tried to parlay his policy of neutrality into international recognition of Afghanistan's independent status at the Paris Peace Conference. Britain and India refused, granting only an increase in the Amir's annual subsidy. On February 20, 1919, an unknown assailant killed the Amir, bringing to power his son Amanullah, whose first task was to restore the independence of Afghanistan - a task which would bring him into close contact with the newly victorious Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia.<sup>27</sup> Amanullah, in an attempt to consolidate his own position and gain Afghanistan's independence, launched the Third Anglo-Afghan War in May, 1919. This short-lived affair was successful for the Afghans, and in August 1919 the Treaty of Rawalpindi was signed between the war-weary British and the Afghan Amir. This treaty left Afghanistan free to conduct its own foreign affairs, and marks the date of Afghan independence from British political control.<sup>28</sup>

In reviewing Afghan history through 1919, three important themes emerge in regard to foreign affairs. The first theme stresses the importance of Afghanistan geopolitically. Throughout history Afghanistan has been at the crossroads of all the major invasion routes in Asia and the sub-continent. The prime concern of Afghan leaders in relations with foreign powers has been to keep them at arm's length, preventing any country from becoming too influential in Afghan affairs, and to play them against each other to its own advantage.<sup>29</sup> To a certain extent, the Afghans were successful in the nineteenth century despite the overwhelming power of both the British and Russian Empires. The British

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<sup>27</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, pp. 7-8.

<sup>28</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 443; Adamec, Afghanistan, 1900-1923, p. 135.

<sup>29</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, p. 174.

and Russians would have liked to see Afghanistan remain as a neutral buffer-state separating their respective spheres of influence, but as a result of continued distrust of each other's motives, both continued to interfere with Afghan affairs. This factor leads to the second important theme - the nature of British and Russian imperialistic expansionism and "Great-Game" politics.

British and Russian imperialism, by their very nature, attempted to control and exploit as much territory as possible. The British expanded into areas of the globe where they could project naval dominance and extend political control. The Russians were not equipped to challenge the Royal Navy dominance and concentrated their expansion into contiguous land areas. Both the British and Russians had no regard for the wishes of Afghanistan's rulers, thus Afghanistan was one of many unwilling pawns caught in the Anglo-Russian power struggle. The many Anglo-Russian diplomatic agreements regarding Afghanistan clearly show that the most important factors influencing Afghan affairs were external events taking place in London and Moscow.

The third, and possibly most important factor, is the tenacity and will of Afghans to resist foreign intervention. Although British and Russian diplomats in the eighteenth century continually haggled over who would control Afghanistan, the question remains as to what degree these discussions and decisions actually related to realities within Afghanistan. The Afghans continually negotiated out of respect for British power or fear of Russian domination, but when the Afghans decided to resist, the British were forced to pay a high price. On three occasions the British and Afghans fought wars, and on all three occasions strong arguments can be made that the Afghans emerged victorious. The

British were able to control Afghanistan only if they did so from the safety of India. Once the troops were sent in, the Afghans showed little respect for the power of the British Empire, and were more than willing to fight, rather than be intimidated or subdued.

For their part, the Russians have exhibited great interest in the political fortunes of Afghanistan. Despite numerous perceived threats to Afghanistan's territorial integrity by Russian aggression, and Russian expansionism into Central Asia, the fact remains that Tsarist Russia did not break its promise to regard Afghanistan as outside of its sphere of influence. In general, Russia's involvement in Afghanistan resulted more from Anglo-Russian competition in other regions of the world than from direct Russian involvement south of the Amu Darya River. The Russians were willing to consolidate their empire without attempting to annex Afghanistan. Why they chose to make this decision is a matter of speculation.

### Chapter III

#### Soviet Foreign Policy Pronouncements, Treaties, and Diplomatic Relations with Afghanistan (1919-1945)

##### Ideological Foundations

Soviet policy makers generally attempt to present new policies as logical by-products of the adaptation of Marxist-Leninist thought to contemporary circumstances. Failure to base soundly policies within Marxist ideology produces criticism and dismissal when such policies result in failure. The theoretical basis of Soviet foreign policy can be traced back to the early works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The first major document in any evaluation of Soviet ideology is usually the Communist Manifesto. A careful reading of the Communist Manifesto reveals the fact that Marx and Engels expected revolutions to take place in advanced industrial countries as a consequence of the internal breakdown of the economic and political system. As to the specific foreign policies a socialist country might pursue, Marx and Engels have little to say.<sup>1</sup> However, this lack of specifics does not detract from the influence that the Communist Manifesto had on early Soviet foreign policy.

Marx viewed history as passing through successive epochs of social development: primitive-communist, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist. The Communist Manifesto was targeted to influence the

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<sup>1</sup>Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-67 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 13.

working-class during the capitalist phase of development. Marx and Engels were anxious to see the development of capitalism and the establishment of a bourgeois society in order for a socialist revolution to occur. The Manifesto was a document which called for revolution by the proletariat in all countries. "In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things...**WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**"<sup>2</sup>

Marx and Engels called for revolution in all countries, but were restricted by their belief that societies must pass through each successive phase of development before reaching the stage of communist utopia. The legacy which they left to their followers was that of revolution. Karl Marx provided many of the fundamental principles of Soviet ideology, but it was Lenin who adapted Marxist thought to the international arena and gave Marxist theory contemporary validity.<sup>3</sup> Lenin insisted that "Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action," and that it must be adapted to changing conditions.<sup>4</sup> Thus, he was able to explain how semi-feudalistic Russia, which had developed only the rudimentary characteristics of capitalism, was able to undergo a proletarian revolution. The Bolsheviks would simply skip the tedious and painful stage of capitalism and create a socialistic society. Lenin's foreign policy exhibited the influence of the Communist Manifesto in that it called for world-wide revolution. Lenin focused his foreign policy on

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<sup>2</sup>Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto (New York: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 120-121.

<sup>3</sup>Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, pp. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup>R. N. Carew Hunt, The Theory and Practice of Communism: An Introduction (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 7.

the battle against imperialism, and promoted uprisings in all nations which were dominated by capitalistic colonial powers. One of his most important works, first published in 1916, was entitled "Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism." In this work Lenin attempts to extend the concept of the class struggle to the international arena, and to show that World War I was a result of the greed characterizing capitalistic financial competition. The most important element in this work regarding foreign policy hinges upon Lenin's view of colonialism and the "inevitability" of war:

The epoch of modern capitalism shows us that certain relations are established among combines of capitalists based on the economic division of the world; parallel with these relations, and in connection with them, certain relations are established among political alliances, among states, on the basis of the territorial division of the world, of struggle for colonies, and of the struggle for economic territory...

The more capitalism develops, the stronger the need for raw materials is felt, the more bitter competition and the hunt for raw materials become throughout the world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies becomes...

Under capitalism, there can be no other conceivable basis for partition of spheres of influence, of interests, of colonies, etc., than a calculation of the strength of participants....Therefore, "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, given the realities of capitalism... no matter what form they take, whether of one imperialist coalition against another or of a general alliance embracing all the imperialist powers, are inevitably only "breathing spells" between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; one is the condition of the other, giving rise to alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on one and the same basis, namely, that of imperialist connections and relations between world economics and world politics.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>V.I. Lenin, "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism," Sochinenia, 2nd. ed. (Moscow: State Publishing House, 1929) vol. 19, pp. 120-175, cited by Alvin Z. Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 17-21 (emphasis mine).



This document is important in that it established the Soviet view that imperialism is the major evil to be contended with in the world. Capitalism, as a social system, must be defeated because by its very nature it leads to wars of competition. Thus, the appeal of socialism is made stronger by the message that only through socialism can world peace be obtained. The major focus of the revolutionary struggle would attack imperialism at its weakest link - in the colonies. The capitalists relied on their overseas possessions to survive, and Marxist ideology was most appealing to the down-trodden masses in these countries. The best way to create havoc in Great Britain, for instance, was to destabilize the British rule in India.

Following the successful October Revolution of 1917, which brought them to power in Russia, Bolshevik policies were centered around three issues: the Civil War, foreign intervention and the attempt to export revolution. The years 1918-1921 were known as the period of "War Communism."<sup>6</sup> The first foreign policy pronouncement of the new government was entitled the "Decree of Peace" which declared the Bolsheviks' intentions to take Russia out of World War I. Shortly thereafter the Soviets and Germans concluded the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which officially removed Russia from the war. The allies (France, Great Britain, United States, Japan) responded with intervention on behalf of the White Russian armies which were contesting the Bolshevik's claim to power following the ouster of the short lived Provisional Government.<sup>7</sup> Soviet foreign policy during the period of "War Communism" is best described by the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Georgi Chicherin:

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<sup>6</sup>Rubinstien, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, p. 51.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-43.

During the period following the conclusion of the Brest treaty, Russia's foreign policy has gone along different line from those followed in the first months after the October Revolution. At the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918 the basic feature of our foreign policy was the revolutionary offensive... its strongly agitational offensives were calculated to stir up the revolutionary proletariat of all countries to an international revolutionary struggle against imperialism, against the capitalist system.

When the failure of any immediate support from the proletariat of other countries led to the defeat of the revolutionary Russian forces...the setting of Soviet Russia's foreign policy changed radically. For the last four months it has been compelled to pursue the aim of pushing off and postponing the dangers threatening it from all sides, trying to gain as much time as possible, both in order to gain more time for the new forms of political and social relationships established by the Soviet Government to take root among the popular masses of Russia, and to tie them more closely to the Soviet programme.

...(T)he revolutionary proletarian movement, which is growing everywhere, has not yet reached the point of explosion, and therefore the report we have to give is a grave report, a report on our retreats, a report of great sacrifices made in order to give Russia the opportunity of recuperating, or organizing its forces, and awaiting the moment when the proletariat of other countries will help us to complete the socialist revolution we began in October...<sup>8</sup>

By November, 1920 the last of the White Russian armies and foreign forces had been defeated. Lenin outlined the essentials of Soviet policy in two speeches presented in December 1920. He reaffirmed his belief in the inevitability of world revolution and the triumph of communism, but proposed a period of accommodation with the capitalist world in order to rebuild the Russian economy and implement internal reforms. Soviet foreign policy would focus on preservation of the Soviet Union, the improvement of international connections, and the spread of communism through the activities of the COMINTERN (discussed in chapter 6).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>"Report on Soviet Foreign Policy to the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets," Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1917-1924, ed. Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 83-85.

<sup>9</sup>Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, pp. 54-55.

### Early Soviet-Afghan Relations

The most important Soviet policies affecting early relations with Afghanistan centered upon the Bolshevik attitude toward the Moslems of Central Asia. The Bolshevik Revolution had released a number of internal nationalistic forces in Central Asia that had been repressed under the Tzarist regime. While attempting to consolidate power in Russia, the Bolsheviks faced the urgent demands and aspirations of Moslems, who formed an important sector of the former Tzarist empire. At the time of the 1917 revolution the entire fringe of the Russian empire, from Outer Mongolia to Crimea, was peopled by approximately thirty million Moslems, a number which constituted about 14% of the Russian population.<sup>10</sup> Most of these areas had been annexed by the Great Russians, and resentment ran deep among Moslem subjects.

Bolshevik policy was designed to pacify Moslems with promises of independence or autonomy until the Soviets were able to finish dealing with other problems involved with the civil war. Moslem nationalistic separatism would then be crushed by a combination of diplomatic maneuvering and outright force. Lenin was aware of the potential for using the nationality issue in helping to consolidate the Bolshevik position, as well as the need to pacify Moslem nationalists with promises of autonomy. The Soviets organized a Commissariat for Nationalities headed by Joseph Stalin. In December, 1917 Lenin and Stalin issued a joint letter entitled "To All the Toiling Moslems of Russia and the East," which was used to gain Muslim sympathy to the Bolshevik cause:

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<sup>10</sup>Leon B. Poullada, Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 223-224.

Comrades! Brothers!

Great events are taking place in Russia! An end is drawing near to the murderous war, started by the bargaining of the foreign powers. The rule of the plunderers who exploit the peoples of the world is tottering... Revolutionary councils of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies are scattered over the whole of Russia. Power in the country is in the hands of the people...

The empire of capitalist plunder and violence is falling in ruins. The ground is slipping from under the feet of the imperialist robbers...In the face of these great events, we turn to you, toiling and disinherited Moslems of Russia and the East...**Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable!** Build your national life freely and without hinderance. It is your right. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the revolution, by the Councils of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasant' Deputies...

Moslems of Russia!

Moslems of the East!

We look to you for sympathy and support in work of regenerating the world.<sup>11</sup>

This document leaves little doubt regarding the Bolshevik attempt to incite revolution in the Moslem populated areas of Russia, the East, and India. Active interest in the East faltered under the impact of more pressing concerns during the period of "War Communism," but the knowledge of the importance of these areas did not. Of all the Bolshevik leaders, only Stalin remained continually involved in Asian affairs.

Stalin managed to nullify the influence of the greater part of the Moslem leadership. He did so by gathering liberal intellectuals under his bureaucratic control in Moscow. These leaders were promised power over all policies regarding Soviet Moslems. Most of these Moslem leaders were members of a group which sought to modernize Moslem communities and saw an alliance with communism as compatible with liberal Islamic

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<sup>11</sup>"Appeal of the Council of People's Commissars to the Moslems of Russian and the East." Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1917-1924, pp. 15-17 (emphasis mine).

thought. They had emerged largely from the reform movement known as **Jadists**.<sup>12</sup>

In the end, none of the promised freedoms was granted, and all attempts to gain autonomy were forcefully repressed. Gradual Russification in Moslem areas was implemented until the strong cries of Islamic nationalism faded into the past.

Despite reports of Soviet mistreatment of Moslems in Soviet Central Asia, the Afghan King, Amanullah Khan, established relations with the new Soviet government shortly after gaining the Afghan throne in 1919. Amanullah was impressed by the revolutionary nature of the Soviet regime and was encouraged by Soviet promises of Moslem autonomy.

#### **Amanullah's Foreign Relations**

As discussed in chapter two, Amanullah came into power following the assassination of his father Habibullah in February, 1919. After some initial confusion and indecision, Amanullah's foreign policy followed three distinct paths: he established diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, gradually normalized Afghanistan's relations with Britain, and strove for solidarity within the Moslem world. More importantly, Afghanistan's new freedom, resulting from the recent upheavals in Russia and the British retreat from Afghanistan following the Third Anglo-Afghan War, allowed him to check both great powers by playing one against the other.<sup>13</sup>

Even before Afghanistan had gained its independence, Amanullah had communicated his desire to establish with Russia "permanent and friendly

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<sup>12</sup>Poullada, Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan 1919-1929, pp. 224-225.

<sup>13</sup>Vartan Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 231.

relations." On April 17, 1919, two letters were sent to Moscow. Amanullah stressed the fact that Afghanistan was free and independent, and pointed out that the Afghan "psychology had always contained in it ideas of equality, humanity and liberty."<sup>14</sup>

Lenin replied on May 27, 1919, congratulating the King and the Afghan people for their heroic defence of liberty, and accepting the proposal to establish diplomatic relations. The Soviets saw great possibilities in an alliance with Afghanistan against Great Britain, especially in view of Afghanistan's strategic position as the crossroad to Asia and the possibilities of using Afghanistan as a base for fomenting revolution in India. Lenin encouraged Amanullah to continue pursuing Pan-Islamism as a goal. In a letter to the Afghan ruler dated November 27, 1919, Lenin wrote that Afghanistan was the only independent Muslim state in the world, and that fate had set before the Afghan people the great historic task of leading all the Mohammendan peoples to freedom.<sup>15</sup>

The two countries finalized a treaty of friendship in 1921. This treaty called for the establishment of regular diplomatic relations and respect for each other's independence (Article I). The Afghans were given free and untaxed transit through Soviet territory of all goods

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 232. It is worthy to note this letter contains direct contradictions with Lenin's statements directed toward the 2nd Congress of Communist International in 1920. In the third point, of part 11, of his speech regarding the role of the COMINTERN in more backward states and nations, Lenin states, "...it is necessary to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with the strengthening of the positions of the Khans, the landlords, the mullahs, etc." Cited in "Preliminary Draft Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions," V.I. Lenin Selected Works, 12 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1943) 10: 236 (emphasis mine).

(Article 6), and were promised financial and material aid (Article 10). The disputed areas of Bukhara and Khiva in Soviet Central Asia were recognized as independent and autonomous regions (Article 8). This provision was a concession to the Afghans and greatly enhanced Amanullah's position as a champion of Islamic solidarity (despite this agreement both regions remained under Soviet control). For their part, the Afghans agreed not to enter into military or political agreements that might be construed as contrary to the interest of either party (Article 3), and gave the Russians permission to open five consulates in Afghanistan in exchange for permission to open seven consulates in the Soviet Union (Article 4).<sup>16</sup> The treaty placed Afghanistan in a much stronger bargaining position in its relations with Great Britain. The Afghans would no longer be forced to rely on British India as its sole conduit for trade.

#### **Amanullah's Internal Problems and Soviet Military Intervention**

Amanullah considered himself a revolutionary, and was one of many leaders who attempted to modernize Afghan society through extensive reform measures. Amanullah faced his first internal problems in 1924. Afghans opposed to his reform policies rose up in rebellion. The Soviets came to Amanullah's rescue with warplanes, which bombarded the rebels into submission. The Soviets also provided Amanullah with military aid and established telephone and telegraph lines connecting Kabul with Moscow.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>"Treaty Between the RSFSR and Afghanistan Signed in Moscow," Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1917-1924, pp. 233-235.

<sup>17</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 451.

In August, 1926 the Soviets and Afghans signed a treaty of neutrality and non-aggression. The most important element of this treaty, which was later cited by the Soviets as justification for their demand that Afghanistan expel all German nationals from Afghan soil, was Article II:

Each of the contracting parties undertakes to refrain from any attack on the other, and on its own territories it will take no steps which might inflict political or military injury on the other contracting party. In particular, each of the contracting parties undertakes not to take part in any alliances or agreements of a military or political character with another or several third Powers which might be directed against the other contracting party, or in any boycott or blockade of a financial or economic character directed against the other contracting party. Furthermore, should the conduct of a third Power or of third Powers toward one of the contracting parties be of inimical character, the other contracting party undertakes not only to refrain from supporting such conduct, but is bound on its own territory to oppose it and the hostile designs arising therefrom.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to the Soviet invasion of 1979, Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan on three separate occasions. The first and third Soviet "invasions" were small-scale military incursions which occurred in 1925 and 1930. Both of these operations were directed against Afghan tribal insurgents who made repeated raids across the border into Soviet territory, and then fled to the safety of Afghan territory. On both occasions the Soviets withdrew their forces after pressure from the Afghan and British governments.<sup>19</sup> The second Soviet invasion presented the Soviets with a dilemma which pitted national interest against ideological consistency.

In response to Amanullah's social reform programs, a growing body of revolutionaries, consisting of Islamic fundamentalists and anti-

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<sup>18</sup>"Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression Between the USSR and Afghanistan, and Final Protocol," Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1925-1932, ed. Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 131.

<sup>19</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 12-18.



government tribal groups, took form in Afghanistan. In January, 1929, Amanullah was forced to flee Kabul as rebels, led by the bandit Bacha-i-Saquo ("Son of the Water Carrier"), invaded and took control of the city. The Soviets were forced into choosing between the pro-Soviet autocratic king and the "poor, oppressed masses." The Soviets, doubting that a peasant revolution could hold power for very long in a country that had been traditionally ruled by monarchs of the Pushtun tribe, decided it was in their best national interest to support the King.<sup>20</sup>

Ghulam Nabi, Amanullah's ambassador to the Soviet Union, had convinced the Soviet government to aid Amanullah's cause by permitting him to raise a force in Russia equipped with Russian arms and aided by Soviet advisors and Soviet Moslems. The theory was that such a move would bring about a spontaneous rising in northern Afghanistan in support of Amanullah and Bacha would be overthrown. In other words, the Soviets were persuaded to support a Bay of Pigs type operation. It was no more successful.<sup>21</sup>

Amanullah had apparently lost the stomach for revolution. He abdicated the throne and fled to India. The Soviets withdrew their army in order to appease the British, who at that time were considering the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> After a series of tribal battles one of King Amanullah's relatives, Nadir Khan,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-18.

<sup>21</sup>Poullada, Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929, pp. 184-185.

<sup>22</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 13-14.

defeated Bacha and regained the throne with British aid in October, 1929.<sup>23</sup>

Despite British alarmists, who had regarded Amanullah's relations with the Soviets negatively, Afghanistan's foreign policy remained largely independent of Russian influence. The Afghan Amir had insisted throughout his reign that all Russian arms sent to Afghanistan for eventual use in a national liberation movement in India be transported by the Afghan government, and that all Indian revolutionaries be disarmed upon entering Afghan territory. According to Indian communist M.N. Roy, the Afghans made it clear that they had no intention of permitting any Soviet force to enter their territory to conduct operations against India.<sup>24</sup> For their part, the Soviet's decision to aid Amanullah in 1929 can be compared with earlier actions in Turkey and Iran. In all three countries the communist movements were either weak or nonexistent, and the prospects for communist revolutions were correspondingly poor. All three of these countries were ruled by men who wished to reduce British influence in the region, an aim shared by the Bolsheviks. The Soviets postponed the goal of communizing their neighbors and made peace with the existing regimes. The cause of world revolution was subordinated to the national interests of the Russian state.<sup>25</sup> Soviet policy during the early years of the regime was conditioned not by any sincere regard for the welfare or independence of Afghanistan but by the need to suppress the nationalistic aspirations of Soviet Moslems and intentions of using

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<sup>23</sup>Poullada, Reform and Rebellion in Afghanistan, 1919-1929, pp. 194-195.

<sup>24</sup>Gregorian, The Emergence of a Modern Afghanistan, p. 238.

<sup>25</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 15-18.

Afghanistan as a bargaining chip in the Anglo-Soviet power struggle. Adherence to Marxist-Leninist ideology in foreign affairs would be postponed until after World War II.

### **Nadir Khan and Quiet Neutrality**

Following his accession to the Afghan throne, Nadir Khan pursued a policy of diplomatic neutrality and minimal internal reforms. The government, he said, should not impose upon the Afghan people new ideas and institutions. He also thought that new programs ought to develop naturally, and he was careful to avoid conflict with the Islamic community and urged all Afghans to be good Moslems.<sup>26</sup>

As Nadir pursued a cautious modernization program at home, he followed an equally delicate foreign policy based upon traditional Afghan attitudes toward Britain and Russia. His most difficult task was to make Afghan neutrality a reality and to convince all elements, including the Soviets and Moslem nationalist-modernists, that he was not a tool of British imperialism. Unlike Amanullah, he adhered to a policy of non-involvement in India and Soviet Central Asia. He saw "positive-neutralism" as the best means of survival. Such a policy made it essential for him to remain on friendly terms with both the Soviets and the British.<sup>27</sup> The Soviets reacted in a positive manner to Nadir's newly won position as Amir and recognized his government on October 19, 1929.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization 1880-1946, p. 293.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 322.

<sup>28</sup>"Reply from Karakhan to the Afghan Foreign Minister on the Formation of the New Afghan Government," Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1925-1932, pp. 400-401.

In 1931 the two nations signed a new Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression which basically restated the 1926 accord. The Afghan government, in an effort to demonstrate its good will, showed a marked sympathy for the Soviet viewpoint at the Disarmament Conference in 1932. More importantly, from the Soviet point of view, the Nadir administration not only prevented any anti-Soviet activities, but also expelled the last insurgents which had caused the first and third small-scale Soviet invasions into Afghan territory.<sup>29</sup> On September 13, 1932, the Afghans agreed to a Soviet proposal which called for appointing a number of border control officers to help prevent such incidents from reoccurring. These officers would be responsible for patrolling their own sides of the frontier, but any incidents would be investigated jointly.<sup>30</sup>

Soviet influence was by and large eliminated in Afghanistan by 1933 as Stalinist Russia turned toward "building socialism in one country."<sup>31</sup> Efforts to instigate revolutions in other nations were given low priority as the Soviets struggled with the initial Five Year Plans. Maintenance of the status quo was in the Soviet Union's national interest. Karl Radek, editor of Izvestiia, and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, sums up the Soviet view in 1934:

The attempt to represent the foreign policy of the Soviet Union as a continuation of Tsarist policy is ridiculous. Bourgeois writers who do so have not grasped even the purely external manifestations of this policy. It is used to be an axiom of Tsarist policy that it should strive by every available means to gain possession of the Dardenelles and

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<sup>29</sup>Gregorian, The Emergence of a Modern Afghanistan, p. 332.

<sup>30</sup>"Note From Stark, Soviet Envoy to Afghanistan, to the Afghan Foreign Minister, on the Appointment of Frontier Commissioners to Settle Frontier Incidents," Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1925-1932, pp. 535-541.

<sup>31</sup>Jan F. Triska, and David D. Finley, Soviet Foreign Policy (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1968), p. 3.

of an ice-free port on the Pacific. Not only have the Soviets not attempted to seize the Dardanelles, but from a very beginning they have tried to establish the most friendly relations with Turkey...

The Soviet Union takes no part in the struggle for the re-distribution of the world.

The words of Stalin at the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union - "We do not want a single bit of foreign land; but at the same time not an inch of our land shall ever be yielded to anyone else" - these words are the exact expression of the policy of the Soviet Union...<sup>32</sup>

Despite its neutral proclamations, the Soviet regime had demonstrated, nonetheless, that it was willing to use military force to back its interests in Afghanistan. At the same time, the Soviets also had exhibited a large degree of restraint in dealing with Afghan border raiders, and had attempted to prevent future problems through diplomatic means instead of military force.

#### The World War II Period

Prior to the outbreak of World War II many small nations fell victim to the imperialistic appetites of their stronger neighbors. Following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, and increased tension in the South Asia region as a whole, Afghanistan became apprehensive about a similar Soviet takeover of its territory. In order to help strengthen its position the Afghans saw merit in gaining security through participation in international organizations such as the League of Nations. However, the Soviet Union was not yet a member of the League, and the advantages of joining such an organization were limited. Moscow could well have regarded Afghanistan's application for membership as a hostile gesture. The issue was settled when both the Soviet Union and

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<sup>32</sup>Karl Radek, "The Bases of Soviet Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, 12, (January 1934), pp. 193-206.

Afghanistan joined the League of Nations in 1934.<sup>33</sup> The Afghans sought to maintain their neutrality in a delicate situation.

Nadir Khan was assassinated on November 8, 1933, while attending a soccer game in Kabul. He was replaced by his son, Mohammed Zahir. The Soviets reacted with indifference to Nadir's death and accepted the change in government without incident. Within Afghanistan at this time anti-British sentiment was at a peak, as was fear of Russian imperialism. Therefore, the Afghans approached Germany to provide foreign assistance. From the Afghan point of view Germans were welcome foreigners. Germany had no history of imperialism in the region and was on unfriendly terms with both the Soviet Union and Great Britain.<sup>34</sup> By the mid-1930s Germany was the third most powerful foreign influence inside Afghanistan.

Japan's development into a major military and commercial power also made an impact on Afghanistan. Japanese commercial interests in Afghanistan were powerful factors in influencing the Afghan strategy of diluting British and Soviet power. In 1934 the Afghan Foreign Minister, Faiz Muhammad, privately stated that the usefulness of Japan to Afghanistan lay in the fact that Japan was the natural enemy of Russia.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, the Afghans sought avoid provoking the Soviets. In Moscow the Afghan Foreign Minister signed a ten-year extension of the Soviet-Afghan Non-Aggression Pact of 1931. Also in Moscow, the preliminary talks for the 1937 Saadabad Non-Aggression Pact among Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq and Iran took place. This Pact (later signed

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<sup>33</sup>Cyriac Maprayil, Britain and Afghanistan in Historical Perspective (London: Cosmic Press, 1983), pp. 71-73.

<sup>34</sup>Arnold Fletcher, Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 233-236.

<sup>35</sup>Maprayil, Britain and Afghanistan in Historical Perspective, p. 74.

in 1937) represented a small but decisive step towards the resurgence of Islam in regional politics in general, and the consolidation of Islamic policy along the southern borders of the Soviet Union in particular.<sup>36</sup>

When relations between Germany, the Soviet Union, and the British grew increasingly hostile, Afghanistan became concerned that co-operation with Germany might draw the country into international conflicts. In an effort to avoid possible violations of Afghan territory by either the British or the Russians, King Zahir issued a decree on September 6, 1939, officially proclaiming Afghan neutrality. The decree also restricted the activities of belligerent powers on Afghan soil.<sup>37</sup>

Soviet-Afghan relations were tense during the summer of 1940. Large numbers of Soviet troops were stationed along sections of the Afghan border. In the autumn of 1941 the Soviet and British Governments sent requests to the Afghan government for the expulsion of all Axis nationals except those on diplomatic missions. The Soviet Minister in Kabul justified the demand on the basis of the Afghan-Soviet Treaty of 1926.

The Afghans were angry at the joint Anglo-Soviet request. They knew they had in fact maintained strict neutrality, and that neutrality tended to favor the Allies. The Afghans felt that the rough treatment they were receiving was undeserved, and, being independent by nature, did not appreciate being told what to do by their neighbors regardless of how powerful they might be. However, the Afghan Prime Minister knew his country was in no position to challenge the British and Russians. He

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-75.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

decided that Afghanistan had no choice but to comply with the requests, no matter what the eventual outcome of the war in Europe might be.<sup>38</sup>

By the closing months of 1943, it became evident that the Allies were slowly gaining an upper hand against the Axis powers. The Afghans, never ones to back a losing side in a political fight, began to regard the Soviet Union, Britain and India in a more favorable light.

Afghanistan became increasingly dependent on India which, at considerable cost to its own limited resources, did everything possible to provide Afghanistan with supplies during the war. Britain thus managed to keep Afghanistan neutral and out of the war.<sup>39</sup> Afghan neutrality during the war served the purpose of both the Allies and the Afghans. In retrospect, there was little that the Afghans could have accomplished in supporting the Axis powers and much could have been lost by confronting the British and Russians.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 82-83.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-85.



## Chapter IV

### Soviet Foreign Policy Pronouncements, Treaties, and Diplomatic Relations with Afghanistan (1945-1979)

#### Ideological Foundations

In the period 1945-1979, Soviet foreign policy can be broken down into two major categories. These categories are defined as Stalinist (1945-1953) and post-Stalinist (1953-1979). During the Stalinist years the Soviet Union was distracted from pursuing relations with Afghanistan by more important world issues, such as the Cold War in Europe, the Korean War, and postwar reconstruction of the Soviet Union. Soviet foreign policy was based on the continued battle against imperialism. Soviet writers focused their attention upon the huge numbers of newly independent nations in Asia and Africa, and stressed their continued opposition to any form of colonialism.

In the early years following the war (1945-1947), before U.S.-Soviet relations had entered the Cold War phase, local communist parties were instructed to infiltrate national-liberation movements and support any anti-colonial forces. These policies reaffirmed orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideology which called for cooperation between communist forces and other groups in early stages of anti-colonial liberation movements. The Soviet press widely proclaimed these policies. An article by E. Zhukov, a leading Soviet authority on underdeveloped areas, typifies the official Soviet line:

The Soviet Union on the colonial question differs radically from the capitalist countries. The Soviet Union was always the implacable enemy of all forms and appearances of colonial suppression. Soviet

democracy, as the most advanced form, does not accept any kind of racial or national suppression...<sup>1</sup>

Soviet policy was modified following a speech in September, 1947 by Stalin's chief aide, Andrei Zhdanov. At this point Soviet foreign policy adopted the "two-camp" thesis. This policy divided the the world into two antagonistic camps - one of "peace, socialism and democracy" and the other of "capitalism, imperialism, and war."<sup>2</sup> The Soviet leadership viewed the newly independent states of Asia and the Middle East as victims of neo-colonialism. Under Stalin there was no room for non-aligned states, and countries were either pro-East or pro-West. The past policy of cooperating with indigenous bourgeoisie in order to rid a nation of colonial subjugation, before progressing onward to socialism, was replaced by a program of armed insurrection. In Stalin's view, only a revolutionary movement founded on the broad base of the masses could ever attain real independence.

The post-Stalin era is marked by significant changes in Soviet foreign policy. In speeches to the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU (1956), the new Soviet premier, Nikita Khrushchev, formulated a number of categorical shifts in various areas of Soviet foreign policy. After reaffirming the Leninist theory of peaceful coexistence, Khrushchev breaks new ground when discussing the possibility of preventing war. He states:

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<sup>1</sup>E. Zhukov, "The Colonial Question After the Second World War," Pravda, 7 August 1947, cited by Alvin Z. Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, pp. 398-399.

<sup>2</sup>Andrei Zhdanov, "The International Situation (Report to a Meeting of the Cominform), September 1947," For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy, November 10, 1947, p. 2, cited by Roger E. Kanet, The Soviet Union and Developing Nations (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p.16

Millions of people all over the world are asking whether another war is really inevitable, whether mankind which has already experienced two devastating world wars must still go through a third one? Marxists must answer this question taking into consideration the epoch-making changes of the last decades.

There is, of course, a Marxist-Leninist precept that wars are inevitable as long as imperialism exists. This precept was evolved at a time when (1) imperialism was an all-embracing world system, and (2) the social and political forces which did not want war were weak, poorly organized, and hence unable to compel the imperialist to renounce war...

In that period this precept was absolutely correct. At the present time, however, the situation has changed radically. Now there is a world camp of socialism, which has become a mighty force. In this camp the peace forces find not only the moral, but also the material means to prevent aggression...

In these circumstances certainly the Leninist precept that so long as imperialism exists, the economic basis giving rise to wars will also be preserved remains in force. That is why we must display the greatest vigilance...**But war is not fatalistically inevitable.**<sup>3</sup>

In the age of nuclear weapons this policy indicated a significant alteration of the Soviet view of warfare and acknowledged the possibility that both socialism and capitalism could be defeated by the destructive power of the new technology. In this speech Khrushchev also reintroduced the Leninist concept that different nations could reach socialism through different means. Khrushchev continued to stress the idea that radical changes had occurred in the world since Lenin's time and that non-violent social revolutions were also indeed possible.

In regard to developing areas, it also became apparent that Soviet policies were undergoing significant changes. In a different speech at the Twentieth Congress, Khrushchev emphasized the importance of the uncommitted, developing nations. This policy was in direct contrast to

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<sup>3</sup>N.S. Khrushchev, "Some Fundamental Questions of Present-Day International Development-Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Twentieth Party Congress," cited in Readings in Russian Foreign Policy, ed. Robert Goldwin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 439 (emphasis mine).

Stalinist hostility toward non-aligned nations as explained earlier in the "two-camp" theory. Khrushchev states:

...The forces of peace have been considerably augmented by the emergence in the world arena of a group of peace-loving European and Asian states which have proclaimed non-participation in blocs as a principle of their foreign policy. The leading political circles of these states rightly hold that to participate in closed military imperialist alignments would merely increase the danger to their countries of becoming involved in the aggressive forces' military gamble and being drawn into the ruinous maelstrom of the arms race...As a result, a vast "peace zone," including both socialist and non-socialist peace-loving states in Europe and Asia, has emerged in the world arena. This zone embraces tremendous expanses of the globe, inhabited by nearly 1.5 billion people — that is, the majority of the population of our planet...International relations have spread beyond the bounds of relations between the countries inhabited chiefly by peoples of the white race and are beginning to acquire the character of genuinely world-wide relations.<sup>4</sup>

As will be seen in chapter five, Afghanistan was one of the primary beneficiaries of new Soviet policies which followed the Twentieth Party Congress, and Soviet relations with Afghanistan would be used as a model for new Soviet policies toward the Third World.

A significant component of Soviet ideological writing in the period from 1945 to 1979 having an affect on Soviet-Afghan relations is the Brezhnev Doctrine. "The Brezhnev Doctrine," as it was later labeled in the Western press, was a statement appearing in Pravda on September 26, 1968. This statement was written by an unknown author, S. Kolalev, and represented the Soviet response to Western outrage over the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Kolalev justifies Soviet intervention in the following manner:

In connection with the events in Czechoslovakia the question of the relationship and interconnection between the socialist countries'

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<sup>4</sup>N.S. Khrushchev, "The Disintegration of the Imperialistic Colonial System." Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Twentieth Party Congress (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), cited by Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, pp. 404-406.

national interests and their internationalist obligations has assumed particular urgency and sharpness. The measures taken jointly by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to defend the socialist gains of the Czechoslovak people are of enormous significance for strengthening the socialist commonwealth, which is the main achievement of the international working class...

There is no doubt that the peoples of the socialist countries and the Communist Parties have and must have freedom to determine their country's path of development. However, any decision of theirs must damage neither socialism in their own country, nor the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries, nor the worldwide workers' movement, which is waging a struggle for socialism. **This means that every Communist Party is responsible not only for its own people but also to all the socialist countries and to the entire communist movement...**

Kolalev continues by utilizing Leninist doctrine:

Just as, in V.I. Lenin's words, someone living in a society cannot be free of that society, so a socialist state that is in a system of other states constituting a socialist commonwealth cannot be free of the common interests of that commonwealth...

World socialism as a social system is the common achievement of the working people of all countries, **it is indivisible...**<sup>5</sup>

Communist Party Secretary Brezhnev would personally elaborate on this policy seven weeks later:

It is quite clear that an action such as military assistance to a fraternal country to end a threat to the socialist system is an extraordinary measure, dictated by necessity; it can be called forth only by the overt actions of enemies of socialism within a country and beyond its boundaries, actions that create a threat to the common interest of the socialist camp.<sup>6</sup>

The Brezhnev Doctrine would later be used to justify Soviet

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<sup>5</sup>S. Kovalev, "Sovereignty and the Internationalist Obligations of Socialist Countries," Pravda, 26 September 1968, pp. 1-2, Cited in Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 39 (October 1968): 10-12. Hereafter cited as CDSP (emphasis mine).

<sup>6</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, "Brezhnev Discusses Czechoslovakia at Polish Congress," Pravda 13 November 1968, pp. 1-2, cited in CDSP, 46 (December): 3-5.

intervention on behalf of the faltering communist regime in Afghanistan and has become a significant component of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>7</sup>

#### Soviet-Afghan Relations 1945-1979

Relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan were inconsistent with Soviet policies toward other developing countries both during and shortly after the war. The Soviets made no territorial demands on the Afghan government, nor did Soviet troops attempt to occupy any part of the country. In general, Soviet-Afghan relations in the late Forties were very cordial. Minor boundary differences regarding disputed islands in the channel of the Amu Darya River were solved by a Soviet-Afghan boundary commission in 1948.<sup>8</sup> The bulk of relations following World War II centered upon trade, foreign aid and military relations, and will be covered in chapter five. Remaining Soviet-Afghan interactions were closely tied to Afghanistan's foreign affairs and the internal dynamics of the Afghan government.

#### **The Issue of Pushtunistan**

The Pushtunistan issue has caused many problems for Afghanistan since its genesis at the demarkation of the Durand Line (see Chapter One). The Pushtuns are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, and many Pushtuns inhabit the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan. The Pushtuns are pastoral, nomadic tribesmen who move across the border in seasonal migrations. They have been a perpetual source of unrest and political instability since the days of British rule. Afghanistan has laid claim

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted how all Soviet theorists, including Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev constantly utilize Lenin's works to justify what would appear at times to be contradictory policies.

<sup>8</sup> Roger E. Kanet, The Soviet Union and the Developing Nations (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 26.

to Pushtan regions on the basis of historic and cultural ties, and there have also been calls for a completely autonomous Pushtunistan. Ever since the formation of Pakistan in 1947, the issue has repeatedly poisoned relations between the two countries.<sup>9</sup>

Soviet involvement in Afghanistan increased in the 1950s because of their support for Afghanistan in regard to Pushtunistan. In 1950, when Pakistan denied Afghanistan transit rights for goods entering and exiting the country, the USSR offered free transit rights and started supplying the Afghans with essential items under embargo by Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> The Soviet position was further enhanced by the United States' rejection of Afghan arms requests in 1948, 1951 and 1954. In all three instances the U.S. supported the position of Pakistan in regard to the Pushtunistan issue as the basis for rejecting Afghan arms requests.<sup>11</sup>

Another flare-up of the Pushtunistan problem in 1955 led to a closing of the Pakistan border. The Soviets again provided essential imports such as gasoline and construction materials. In December, 1955, Khrushchev and Soviet Premier Bulganin stopped in Kabul on their tour of Asia. The Soviet leaders publicly supported Afghanistan for the first time. "We sympathize with Afghanistan's policy on the question of Pushtunistan," said Bulganin. "The Soviet Union stands for an equitable solution of this problem, which cannot be settled correctly without taking into account the vital interests of the people

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<sup>9</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, pp. 182-185., and Hammond, Red Flag over Afghanistan, pp. 24-25.

<sup>10</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup>Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983), pp. 19-20.

inhabiting Pushtunistan."<sup>12</sup> On this visit the two governments signed a ten-year extension of the 1931 Afghan-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression.<sup>13</sup>

Internal events in Afghanistan, which would later give rise to the formation of Afghan communist organizations and increased Soviet involvement, also affected relations. Afghanistan pursued its first democratic reforms in 1950. A free press was allowed, and three newspapers critical to governmental policies appeared. A leftist-oriented student union was formed, and student criticism of the government began in earnest. In 1951, the government closed the student union, and in 1952 shut down the last opposition newspaper. In 1953, Prince Daoud was appointed Prime Minister by King Zahir. Daoud governed effectively through a relatively loyal, well-paid army. Daoud's willingness to exercise authority also enabled him to enforce reforms which would have been beyond the power of any progressive movement at that time. Daoud's close relations with the Soviet Union earned him the nickname "the Red-Premier." In 1959 Daoud's reforms included the enforcement of the tax laws and the encouragement of women to abandon the Moslem tradition of veiling their faces in public. In typical fashion, Afghans protested against these non-traditional practices. Daoud terminated any objections with jail terms, and the more zealous protesters were simply shot.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>N.A. Bulganin, and N.S. Khrushchev, Speeches During Sojourn in India, Burma and Afghanistan, November-December 1955 (New Delhi: 1956), p. 175, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, p. 185.

<sup>14</sup>John C. Griffiths, Afghanistan: Key to a Continent (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 159-161.



In the 1950s and 1960s Afghan and Soviet representatives exchanged a series of visits. In 1958 Marshal K.Y. Voroshilov visited Kabul and in 1960 Khrushchev followed up his 1955 visit by returning to Afghanistan. King Zahir Shah travelled to Moscow in 1957, Prime Minister Daoud and Foreign Minister Naim made separate visits to the Soviet Union in 1959, and Daoud was back in Moscow in 1960 and 1961. During each visit Soviet leaders reiterated their support for Afghanistan's struggle over the Pushtunistan region.<sup>15</sup>

Afghanistan's second effort with democracy began in 1963. Prince Daoud was forced to resign by King Zahir, who feared his nephew was gaining too much control over Afghan affairs. King Zahir then deliberately abandoned two hundred years of autocratic dynastic rule with the implementation of the 1965 Afghan constitution. This constitution shrewdly barred the most of the royal family (Daoud in particular) from both politics and government. The constitution set up a representative system which included a parliament consisting of both directly elected and appointed members. The King, however, retained extensive reserve powers which severely limited the scope and power of the democratic reforms. Among the King's prerogatives were the dissolution and summoning of parliament, the appointment of the Prime Minister and other cabinet members, and the naming of the chief justice and senior civil and military officials.<sup>16</sup>

Problems arose immediately with the new parliament. In the true spirit of democracy, it rejected the King's appointment for Prime Minister, Dr. Yussuf, and accused him and many other government

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<sup>15</sup>Wilber, Afghanistan, p. 185.

<sup>16</sup>Griffiths, Afghanistan: Key to a Continent, pp. 162-163.

officials of bribery and corruption.<sup>17</sup> Certain left-wing members led by Nur Mohammed Taraki continued to protest, and riots ensued in which three people were killed. Yussuf was forced to resign to quell the disturbances.<sup>18</sup> In 1968, after much delay and fierce debate, a bill legalizing political parties (but not the non-Islamic, atheistic, Communist Party) was passed by parliament. The King refused to sign the bill, and the elections of 1969 passed without legal political parties. These elections were slightly rigged in favor of pro-government candidates. The leftist faction in parliament was reduced from five to three. Among the leftists was a new member, Haffizullah Amin, who, along with Nur Mohammed Taraki and Babrak Karmal, formed the leadership nucleus of Afghanistan's first communist party - the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).<sup>19</sup>

Although the Soviets lost a valuable asset when Daoud was removed in 1963, relations between the two countries remained unchanged. High-level visits continued to facilitate neighborly relations. In 1963 Brezhnev visited Kabul, and in 1965 King Zahir was in Moscow. In 1966 and 1967 Prime Minister Maiwandwal and Soviet President Podgorny exchanged visits. Other exchanges continued through 1973 and both sides praised the quality of bilateral relations. The Afghans voiced support for the Soviet position on disarmament, the progress of decolonialism, the Vietnam war, and the Arab-Israeli dispute.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Yu. V. Gankovsky et al., A History of Afghanistan, trans. Vitaly Bashakov (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), pp. 267-268.

<sup>18</sup>Griffiths, Afghanistan: Key to a Continent, p. 166.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 168-170.

<sup>20</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, pp. 34-35.

### Daoud's Return

The numerous failed or unwanted reforms policies instituted by King Zahir gave rise to various opposition forces in Afghanistan. The leftist activities continued to increase and so did the concern of the nationalistic and religious circles in Afghan politics.<sup>21</sup> Having run the country for ten years, former Prime Minister Prince Daoud probably found it frustrating to sit on the sidelines and watch the monarchy's power usurped by commoners. Daoud discussed rebellion for more than a year with various opposition elements, but he concentrated his plans among leftist military officers.

The military was by far the most important revolutionary element, and it supported Daoud for a number of reasons. He had obtained large quantities of modern arms from the Soviet Union. Daoud brought about closer ties to the USSR, which appealed to many Soviet-trained officers in the Afghan officer corps. Daoud was a former army officer and had obtained the rank of lieutenant-general. In addition, progressive Afghans had been antagonized by the King's on-again, off-again reform program. Having been promised change, many politically active Afghans were determined to have it.<sup>22</sup>

Daoud, with the aid of military officers, took control of the government virtually without resistance in a near-bloodless coup on July 17, 1973. The King was conveniently out of the country at the time, and loyalist resistance was thus minimized. Daoud went on radio and announced that the monarchy was being replaced by a republican

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<sup>21</sup>Syed S. Hussain, Afghanistan Under Soviet Occupation (Islamabad: World Affairs Publications, 1980), p. 95.

<sup>22</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 35-36.

system of government. Daoud became founder, president, and Prime Minister of the new Republic of Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

It was Daoud's choice of "friends" which led to speculation that the July coup in Kabul was pro-Soviet, communist-directed or even planned from the Soviet embassy. Daoud's close relations with the Soviet Union as Prime Minister in 1953-1963 added to this speculation. In actuality the coup had been executed primarily by junior army officers trained in the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup>

On July 19, 1973, the Soviet Union became the first nation to recognize the new Afghan republic. Identical texts in Pravda and Izvestiia on July 21st read: "Guided by its unchanging feeling of friendship for the Afghan people, the Soviet government has officially recognized the Republic of Afghanistan."<sup>25</sup>

Many of Daoud's several hundred backers were members of, or associated with, Afghanistan's fledgling communist organization - the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan. A number of Daoud's cabinet ministers were members of the Parcham faction of the PDPA (see chapter six), yet the nature of the new republican regime was neither communist nor exclusively pro-Soviet. If the Soviets had aided Daoud in his coup, he soon demonstrated that gratitude did not limit his independence.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Anthony Hyman, Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination 1964-1981 (New York: St. Martins Press, 1982), p. 64.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>25</sup>"Protocol Signed," Pravda, 21 July 1973, p. 1, cited in CDSP, 29 (August, 1973): 25.

<sup>26</sup>Hyman, Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination 1964-1981, p. 64.

Before long Daoud began to reduce the power of the leftists in the government and to move his regime somewhat to the right. Leftist officials, one by one, were either dismissed outright or assigned to harmless diplomatic posts abroad. The left-wing minister of the interior was replaced by a rightist, and Daoud was even reported to have threatened some of the leftists with castration! However, He refrained from publicly taking an anti-communist stance. Daoud also disappointed the leftists by changing Afghan foreign policy. He lessened somewhat his dependence on the Soviet Union and strengthened ties with other countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran.<sup>27</sup>

Depending on the situation, Daoud's conduct in foreign affairs served both to please and disturb the Soviet Union. Since its inception in 1968, Moscow's proposed formation of a collective security system in Asia had been received coolly by Soviet allies in the region. In 1974 Daoud pleased the Soviets by giving a qualified endorsement of the plan, but he also re-affirmed Afghanistan's policy of non-alignment and neutrality.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, however, Daoud increased his involvement with other Arab states and reduced tensions with Pakistan over the Pushtunistan issue. The most troublesome aspect of Afghan foreign policy, from the Soviet perspective, was Daoud's increased contacts with Iran.

The Shah of Iran attempted to lure Daoud away from his close contacts with the Soviet Union by offering large sums of foreign aid. In October, 1974 the Shah promised to provide \$2 billion in economic

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<sup>27</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 38.

<sup>28</sup>"In a Friendly Atmosphere," Pravda, 6 June 1974, p. 4, cited in CDSP, 23 (July, 1974): 11-14.

aid over a period of ten years.<sup>29</sup> This huge sum was roughly equal to all foreign assistance received by Afghanistan since 1953. Very little of this aid was ever received (approx. \$10 million), due to the Shah's own economic problems.<sup>30</sup> In addition to attempting to replace the Soviet Union as Afghanistan's primary benefactor, the Shah's proposal included plans for the construction of a railroad from Kabul to Iran, which would eventually decrease Afghan dependence on Soviet trade. The Soviets could only view the Shah's proposal as a threat to their economic and political ties with Afghanistan, and any policies put forth by the Shah were interpreted as an extension of U.S. meddling in the region.

Under a new constitution in 1977, Daoud appointed a cabinet comprised of personal supporters and known anti-communists. The communists, along with other leftists, had been passed over in choosing the new government. Daoud had apparently abandoned earlier attempts to reform the Afghan government and was systematically reducing all potential sources of opposition to his rule. He removed Soviet military advisors from the lower levels of the Afghan military and cut their number slightly. He sent men to train on Soviet military equipment in India and Egypt to remove them from Soviet influence. All of these actions followed Daoud's visit to Moscow in April, 1977. The official record of the visit, however, shows no sign of discord between the Soviets and Afghans.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 39.

<sup>30</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p.38.

<sup>31</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, p. 65.

The level of Soviet annoyance with Daoud is unclear. His independent actions would logically make them annoyed, but Soviet-Afghan relations were satisfactory, and Daoud was far from even indicating that he did not look to the Soviet Union as his primary ally in the region. One account of Daoud's April visit to Moscow indicates serious problems did in fact exist. A widely held story reports that Brezhnev addressed Daoud in a rude manner and presented him with a long list of complaints about Daoud's foreign and domestic policies. Daoud reportedly rose to his feet and replied: "I want to remind you that you are speaking to the President of an independent country, not one of your Eastern European satellites. You are trying to interfere with the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and this I will not permit." Whereupon Daoud and his entourage marched out of the room. One associate said to Daoud, "Did you see the look on Brezhnev's face when you said that? Mr. President you are a dead man."<sup>32</sup>

Despite reports of friction between Daoud and Brezhnev, there is no evidence to suggest that official Soviet-Afghan relations were under strain. From 1975 to 1978 no criticisms of Daoud appeared in the Soviet media, nor was there any reduction in trade, aid or military assistance. At the Twenty-Fifth Party Congress in 1976, the familiar favorable reference to Afghanistan was repeated and in 1976 and 1977 a number of positive articles on Soviet-Afghan relations, which included personal praise of Daoud, were published in International Affairs (Moscow).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 42.

<sup>33</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, pp. 39-40.

On the home front Daoud received less positive reviews. His heavy-handed polices had alienated many of his closest supporters. By 1978 Daoud's policies had played into the hands of rebellious forces. He had incurred not only the displeasure of the leftists but also of Moslem fundamentalists. Daoud had firmly suppressed any dissident Islamic groups, such as the Muslim League, that objected to the degree of his involvement with the Soviet Union.<sup>34</sup> He had also alienated students, intellectuals, army officers, and some members of the middle and upper classes. There were also serious economic problems; unemployment was high, and several hundred thousand Afghans were forced to find jobs in Iran and other gulf states. Daoud had trouble making payments on the many loans he had made with foreign countries. Meanwhile, dissent spread as a result of severe food shortages and increased taxes.<sup>35</sup>

On April 27, 1978, Daoud was killed in a military coup. There has been a wide variety of speculation regarding the Soviet role in the coup, and of Soviet control of the Afghan communists who came to power following the incident. The Soviet role will be investigated in greater detail in chapter six. At this point, it is safe to say that claims of direct Soviet involvement are purely speculative, and it is likely that the truth will never be known.

The Soviet Union was the first country to recognize the new regime in Kabul on May 1, 1978. Relations between the two countries soon exhibited "fraternal" characteristics. On May 2, Brezhnev sent his

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<sup>34</sup>Griffiths, Afghanistan: Key to a Continent, p. 180.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 182.



personal greetings to the new Afghan leader Nur Mohammed Taraki.<sup>36</sup> The Soviet press explained the reasons for Daoud's downfall as resulting from the fact that, "...contradictory tendencies of Afghanistan's political development in recent years...left hopes for radical changes unfulfilled by Daoud."<sup>37</sup> Daoud quickly became the villain in the Soviet analysis of the coup.

The most significant diplomatic agreement between the Soviets and the new regime was the "Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Co-Operation" signed in Moscow on December 5, 1978. Although there are few specifics in the treaty, it contains an implicit security commitment which would be used in 1979 to justify the legality of Soviet intervention:

**Article 4** The high contracting parties, acting in the spirit of the traditions of friendship and good-neighborliness, as well as the UN Charter, shall consult each other and take by agreement appropriate measures to ensure security, independence, and territorial integrity of the two countries. In the interests of strengthening the defence capacity of the high contracting parties they shall continue to develop co-operation on the military field on the basis of appropriate agreements concluded between them.

The treaty further enhances the Soviet proposal for establishing a South Asian security alliance:

**Article 8** The high contracting parties shall facilitate the development of co-operation among Asian states and the establishment of relations of peace and good-neighborliness and mutual confidence among them and the creation of an effective security system in Asia on the basis of joint efforts by all countries on the continent.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, pp. 52-53.

<sup>37</sup>"Revolution's First Days," Pravda, 6 May 1978, cited in CDSP, 18 (June, 1979): 20.

<sup>38</sup> "Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Co-Operation," December 5, 1978. Translated by Cyriac Maprayil, The Soviets and Afghanistan (New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House, 1986), pp. 100-101.

Taraki again visited Moscow on his way home from a non-aligned movement conference in Cuba. He met with Foreign Minister Gromyko and Brezhnev on September 10 in a "cordial, comradely atmosphere," complete with front-page photos in both the Kabul and Moscow news media. Much to the chagrin of the Soviets, Taraki was overthrown in a coup on September 14 by his Defense/Prime Minister Haffizullah Amin.<sup>39</sup>

The Soviet reaction to Taraki's ouster remains unclear. Publicly, relations between the new Afghan leader and the Soviets displayed no overt differences from earlier policies, and the Soviets congratulated Amin on his new position. Privately, it would appear as if relations were under severe strain resulting from Soviet embarrassment over Taraki's abrupt removal from office (Chapter 6 will cover these relationships in more detail). Despite personality conflicts among Afghan and Soviet leaders, relations remained friendly. The new Afghan regime had actively pursued a pro-Soviet alignment, and increasingly called for greater Soviet involvement in Afghan affairs. As the tempo of Soviet involvement increased, the new regime also faced steadily increasing internal turmoil and rebellion. By late in 1979, it became clear that the Amin regime would soon be overthrown by forces opposing Marxist rule. As late as December 23, 1979, the Soviet news media was denying Western claims that Soviet troops were mobilized for an invasion of Afghanistan. Pravda referred to these claims as "pure fabrications," and quoted Hafizullah Amin as saying, "The Soviet Union has never infringed on our sovereignty...is not doing so, and never

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<sup>39</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 66.

will."<sup>40</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, it would seem that these statements were used as a deception in an attempt to deflect attention away from Soviet military activities close to the Afghan border. On Christmas Eve 1979, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan.

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<sup>40</sup>Pravda, 23 December 1979, p.5, cited in CDSP, 51 (January, 1980): 4.

## Chapter V

### Soviet-Afghan Economic and Military Relations 1919-1979

This chapter marks a break in the linear historical review of Soviet-Afghan diplomatic relations which has characterized chapters three and four. This chapter returns to 1919 and follows the evolution of economic and military relations up through the year 1979. The analysis of economic and military interaction between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union enhances the ability to determine the overall character of Soviet foreign policy and provides specific examples of how the two nations interact in the "real world." Economics are the foundations of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and decisions regarding trade and foreign aid can be viewed as integral components of Soviet foreign policy. The manipulation of economic interactions and military relations are two significant indicators which will aid in determining whether or not the Soviets had planned to take control of Afghanistan prior to the 1979 invasion.

#### Early Relations

As stated in Louis Dupree's landmark book, Afghanistan, "Contrary to popular belief, Soviet aid to Afghanistan did not begin in 1950, but with several subsidies, in 1919."<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in chapter three, in 1924 the Soviets sent Amanullah a gift of thirteen airplanes, pilots, mechanics, transportation technicians, and telegraph operators.<sup>2</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, p. 451.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

1925, the first Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan occurred. Soviet troops occupied the island of Urta Tagai in the Amu Darya River. Control of this territory was disputed by Kabul and Moscow, but the apparent reason for the Soviet maneuver was to disrupt raids into Soviet territory by tribesmen inhabiting the island. The action was taken by local military commanders without the approval of authorities in Moscow, and Soviet troops were withdrawn in 1926 when the two sides signed an agreement recognizing Afghan ownership of the disputed area.<sup>3</sup>

In November 1927, the two governments signed an agreement which established air service between Tashkent and Kabul.<sup>4</sup> This agreement marks the first of many mutually beneficial commercial ventures between the Soviets and Afghans, but only one of very few such agreements before World War II.

As mentioned in chapter three, Soviet troops "invaded" Afghanistan on two more occasions in 1929 and 1930. The 1929 invasion in support of Amanullah was apparently a fairly serious affair, even though the degree of Soviet involvement remains disputable. Estimates of troop strength range from 800 to 6000, but most experts agree that the Soviets were at least (or perhaps at most) responsible for supplying weapons for the venture. In any event, the troops were withdrawn before the year's end in 1929, and the second Soviet "invasion" had come to a close. The 1930 "invasion" occurred when Soviet troops crossed the Amu Darya "in hot pursuit" of the bandit leader Ibrahim Beg, following his repeated raids into Soviet territory. Afghan forces shortly thereafter drove the

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<sup>3</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup>"Agreement with Afghanistan on the Kabul-Tashkent Air Line," Soviet Documents of Foreign Policy, 1917-1924, pp. 283-286.

bandits back across the border where they were destroyed by the Soviet Army.<sup>5</sup>

In the area of trade, Soviet-Afghan relations were steadily strengthened. A variety of Soviet-manufactured goods found their way into Afghanistan in return for livestock, wool and cotton - goods often quite unobtainable on the Russian home market. Soviet-Afghan trade was facilitated by the fact that the Soviet railway touched the Afghan frontier at two points.<sup>6</sup> The situation within Afghanistan was not conducive to large-scale foreign investment capital by the Soviet Union or, for that matter, anyone else. Even in the 1980s Afghanistan remains one of the most technologically primitive nations on earth, and in the early part of the twentieth century it lacked the most basic infrastructure characteristics such as roads and bridges, communications systems, banks, and trade legislation necessary to attract foreign investment. Amanullah was also wary of foreign control of his economy and forbade any large-scale foreign investment.<sup>7</sup> Neither the Afghans nor the Soviets closely regulated trade in among the tribes which migrated across the border, therefore, no complete and accurate statistics are available for the volume of trade in years prior to World War II. The following figures provide a rough picture of Soviet-Afghan trade in the period from 1928 to 1938.

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<sup>5</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 16-18.

<sup>6</sup>Max Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia 1929-1941 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 208-210.

<sup>7</sup>Gregorian, The Emergence of a Modern Afghanistan, p. 254.

AFGHAN TRADE WITH SOVIETS<sup>8</sup>  
(in millions of rubles)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Exports to Afghanistan</u>	<u>Imports from Afghanistan</u>
1928	7.0	11.7
1929	7.3	10.3
1930	7.8	9.2
1931	11.5	11.6
1932	14.6	11.8
1933	7.1	5.6
1934	3.1	2.8
1935	3.5	3.9
1936	3.7	5.0
1937	3.8	3.8
1938	3.4	3.1

The drop in these figures in 1933 can be attributed in large part to Nadir Khan's policy of isolationism, combined with the Soviet policy of "building socialism in one country." From time to time Nadir accepted some technical advice and help from the Soviets and British, but the activities of the old rivals were sharply curtailed within Afghanistan's borders. Nadir insisted that all Soviet personnel be withdrawn from the Afghan air force. Nadir permitted a Soviet trade exhibition in Kabul in 1933, but he refused to allow the Russians to establish commercial missions in various regions of Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup>

During the term of King Zahir, the Soviets and Afghans completed a commercial agreement in 1936. This agreement provided for a two-way exchange of goods to the value of 38.5 million rubles.<sup>10</sup> Under this agreement the Afghans seem to have assured the Soviets that in the economic development of cotton in northern Afghanistan the Kabul

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 323.

<sup>10</sup>Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, p. 210.

government would utilize Soviet technology and expertise. To achieve this end, the Afghans purchased various types of Soviet cotton processing equipment. However, both sides apparently were leary of each others motives. In an attempt to allay mutual fears of interference in each other's internal affairs, both sides agreed to close their respective consulates in the cities of Tashkent and Mazar-i-Sharif.<sup>11</sup>

The early period of Soviet-Afghan trade relations is characterized by small-scale interaction and limited involvement in each others economies. Goods exchanged were limited to raw materials, agricultural commodities and rudimentary manufactured items. Economic relations reflected the lack of overall diplomatic activity between the two countries. Major changes in relations would come after World War II.

#### **Post-War Relations 1945-1979**

Soviet involvement in Afghanistan following World War II was directly related to the East-West power struggle. The United States initiated competition over Afghanistan by providing aid in 1945 for the construction of an extensive water management system in what was known as the Hilmand Valley Project.<sup>12</sup> Other U.S. projects were begun on a wide-scale after the war. Peter Franck, director of the National Planning Association's analysis of Afghanistan, describes the situation:

In the wake of Western involvement in Afghanistan through growing aid programs, normalcy in Afghan-Russian relations did not prevail long. To the Soviet Union, economic commitments in Afghanistan and elsewhere had political overtones as well. Certainly, in Soviet eyes, the rebuilding in 1947 by an American contractor of a modern high-speed road

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<sup>11</sup>Gregorian, The Emergence of a Modern Afghanistan, p. 376. The consulates had been opened in 1921.

<sup>12</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, pp. 482-485.



from the Pakistan border to the second-most-important business center of its neighbors had strategic importance.<sup>13</sup>

Franck's analysis of the motivation behind Soviet aid to Afghanistan was confirmed by the major architect of post-war Soviet policies toward the Third World following the death of Stalin. In his memoirs, Nikita Khrushchev provides the most complete statement of foreign policy goals in Afghanistan and leaves little doubt regarding Soviet motives:

The Americans also put pressure on another neighbor to the South. They started pouring material and technological assistance into Afghanistan, giving credits, building roads, and undertaking all kinds of projects at their own expense.

In its desire to encircle us with military bases, America threw itself all over a country like Afghanistan...

The Afghans asked us to help build several hundred kilometers of road near the Iranian border. It cost us a hefty sum since we had to tunnel through the mountains. However, because Afghanistan didn't have railroads, such a highway would be a main artery, carrying the economic lifeblood of the country. **The road also had great strategic significance because it would have allowed us to transport troops and supplies in event of war with Pakistan or Iran...**

Some people of limited vision may say there's no point in getting gas and oil from Afghanistan since we have these same resources in our own country. My reply to that is: if we don't assist our neighbors, they'll remain in abject poverty and, sooner or later, turn against us. Besides, American capitalists would be only too glad to take our place if we didn't assist the Afghans...**The amount of money we spent on gratuitous assistance to Afghanistan is a drop in the ocean compared to the price we would have had to pay in order to counter the threat of an American military base on Afghan territory...**<sup>14</sup>

Khrushchev's statement typifies the Soviet position regarding the most important factors in foreign policy considerations. The three major factors of any decision regarding the Third World are politics, economics and military power. The correlation of these forces is very important to Soviet theorists, and military power, although important, is not regarded

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<sup>13</sup>Peter Franck, Afghanistan Between East and West (Washington D.C.: National Planning Association, 1960), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), pp. 298-300 (emphasis mine).

as more significant than the political or economic deminsions. Thus, military victory is not possible without political support and economic stability.<sup>15</sup> The Soviet policy in Afghanistan would seek to enhance the "correlation of forces." Soviet aid would seek to strengthen political, economic and military interaction.

### **Economic Relations**

Even before the death of Stalin and the advent of new policies toward the Third World under Khrushchev, the Soviets and Afghans were moving ahead on economic relations. In July 1950, they signed a four-year barter agreement under which the Afghans agreed to exchange raw cotton and wool, for Soviet petroleum, cloth, sugar and other commodities. The Soviets also guaranteed a much higher rate of exchange than any Western nation. The 1950 agreement was augmented by an offer to construct several large gasoline storage tanks, and to take over oil explorations in northern Afghanistan from a Swedish company. By 1952, Afghan-Soviet trade had doubled, and for the first time the Afghans permitted the Soviets to establish a trade office in Kabul.<sup>16</sup>

In 1953 the Soviets advanced Afghanistan a \$3.5 million credit for the construction of two grain silos, a flour mill and a bakery under generous terms bearing a three percent interest rate.<sup>17</sup> This effort was followed in July 1954 with a technical aid and credit agreement of \$1.2 million for construction of a gasoline pipeline across the Amu Darya from

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<sup>15</sup>Rajan Menon, Soviet Power and the Third World (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 22-23.

<sup>16</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, pp. 493-494.

<sup>17</sup>Franck, Afghanistan Between East and West, p. 37.

the U.S.S.R. Both of these projects had clear ramifications on Afghanistan's ability to sustain itself (with Soviet assistance) in the event of future discord with Pakistan over Pushtuistan. In August, 1954, the Soviets increased their popularity among the Afghan populace by agreeing to finance the paving of Kabul's streets. This project had previously been rejected twice by the U.S. Import-Export Bank.<sup>18</sup>

Following the Khrushchev/Bulganin visit in May, 1955, Soviet-Afghan relations entered a fundamental new phase of increased diplomatic, economic and military relations. The Soviets announced the gift of a 100-bed hospital, an Il-14 transport plane for King Zahir and a loan for the enormous sum of \$100 million - with low interest and a thirty-year repayment schedule. This loan produced one military and one civilian airport, two hydroelectric plants, a road maintenance plant, a road over the Hindu Kush with a tunnel which would connect northern and Southern Afghanistan for the first time, and three irrigation projects. By 1956 there were over 460 Soviet technicians in the country.<sup>19</sup>

A sampling of the more important aid projects should be noted. One of the Soviet's most innovative and successful programs in Afghanistan is the joint-production of raw materials. After Soviet geologists discovered rich natural gas deposits in Afghanistan, an agreement was signed in 1965 for aid in extracting the gas and construction of a pipeline to the Soviet border. In May 1967, just before the pipeline was

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<sup>18</sup>Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective, 2nd ed., (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), p. 34.

<sup>19</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 21.

opened, Afghanistan agreed to supply the U.S.S.R. with gas through 1985 in exchange for debts incurred in this venture.<sup>20</sup>

Following the return of Daoud in 1973, Soviet aid to Afghanistan steadily increased from \$120 million in 1972 to \$150 million in 1974. This aid, when coupled with a Soviet moratorium on debt repayments and increased earnings from exports, provided for favorable economic conditions in Afghanistan through the first four years of Daoud's regime.<sup>21</sup> Despite Daoud's independent foreign policy and the huge sums promised by the Shah of Iran mentioned in the last chapter, Soviet aid to Daoud's regime increased every year until its overthrow in 1978. In 1975 the Soviets gave Afghanistan \$425 million for Daoud's Seven-Year Plan (1976-1983), and in 1977 a twelve-year agreement on economic cooperation was signed.<sup>22</sup>

A review of Daoud's Seven Year Plan provides some interesting insights regarding the amount of aid the Afghans expected to receive from the Shah. Official Afghan documents list the sources of expected monies for specific new projects. The Soviet Union is listed as the source for over 60 projects, in comparison to less than 20 for Iran. However, the

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<sup>20</sup>Elizabeth Kridl Valkner, "Soviet Economic Relations with the Developing Nations," in The Soviet Union and Developing Nations, ed. Roger Kanet (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 222. It is interesting to note that this agreement is not mentioned by those scholars who claim that one of the reasons for the Soviet invasion in 1979 was to exploit Afghanistan's rich resources. This agreement would indicate that the Soviets and Afghans were working together to develop Afghanistan's fledgling petroleum industry, and any gas flowing to the Soviet Union through 1985 was legally justified by trade agreements decided 12 years before the Soviet intervention.

<sup>21</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup>*ibid.*, p. 41.

combined Iranian sources of aid amounted to approximately \$634 million.<sup>23</sup>

It is apparent from these documents that the Afghans had great faith in the Shah's ability to pay, a belief which would soon be dispelled. The vast majority of the Shah's money was designated for the construction of over 1800 kilometers of railroads linking Herat and Kabul to Iran. The stated purpose of the railroad was to:

...link important agricultural and industrial regions of the country and make it possible to exploit coal and other mineral deposits....Futhermore, construction of important transport infrastructure will considerably facilitate the transit trade with neighboring and other countries..<sup>24</sup>

The plan for this railroad concerned the Soviets for two reasons. First, it would lessen the Afghan's dependency on the USSR as a market for their goods. It has been the case in Afghanistan for many years that if the Russians did not buy Afghan goods, they would not be purchased at all. For decades the Soviets have continued to purchase Afghan goods at very favorable prices (to themselves) and would look upon the possibility of competition with Iran, a state with vast amounts of petro-dollars, with great disfavor.

The trade problem, however, was the least of the Soviet's concerns. The real problem was the strategic influence a Iran-Afghanistan railroad may have had on Soviet-Afghan relations, and on the balance of power in the South Asian region as a whole. Iran was closely aligned with the United States prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in that country. Any large-scale Iranian involvement in Afghanistan was viewed by the Soviets

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<sup>23</sup>Government of the Republic of Afghanistan: First Seven Year Economic and Social Development Plan 1355-1361, vol. II annex (Kabul: Ministrv of Planning, 1355), pp. 39-140.

<sup>24</sup>Government of the Republic of Afghanistan: First Seven Year Economic and Social Development Plan 1355-1361, vol. I text (Kabul: Ministry of Planning, 1355), p. 195.

as having implications on the overall world strategic balance in the region. A shift in Afghanistan's alignment in favor of the Iranians, and the construction of a significant infra-structure component in the form of a railroad, were seen as threats to the Soviet Union.

After increasing its ties in the 1950s, the Soviet's position as Afghanistan's major economic benefactor was never challenged seriously, despite the Shah's proposals. By the time of the communist coup which overthrew President Daoud in 1978, a total of \$1,265,000,000 in Soviet economic aid had been extended to Afghanistan. An additional \$110 million had been provided through East European countries as part of a coordinated Soviet Bloc program. In addition to aid, some 5,000 Afghan students had been trained in Soviet academic institutions and 1,600 in technical institutions by 1979.<sup>25</sup>

#### **Military Relations**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the military has an important role in Soviet foreign policy. In addition to solidifying economic and political ties to Afghanistan, the Soviets completed the third prong of the "correlation of forces" by entering into military relations with the Afghans. Shortly following World War II, the Soviet bloc became Afghanistan's sole supplier of military hardware and training.

Military assistance, mainly in the form of arms transfers, advisory support, and training were begun in 1955 with an agreement between Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia for \$3 million. The first direct Soviet-Afghan arms agreement was signed in 1956. This agreement provided for

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<sup>25</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1979 and 1954-1979," (Washington D.C., 1980), p. 17. Cited by, Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, pp. 24-25.

the sale of \$25 million worth of military equipment, including MiG-15 jets. By 1965, the value of military equipment stood at approximately \$275 million, under repayment terms which required only 50% reimbursement by the Afghans. This military equipment included 100 tanks and 100 airplanes. Over 200 Afghan military cadets had been sent to the Soviet Union for training by 1962, and during the period 1953-1963 the Soviets had built or were building military airfields in Bagram, near Kabul; Mazar-i-Sharif in Northern Afghanistan; and at Shindand in the central part of western Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup>

In 1969, the Soviet military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) reported on the visit of Soviet Marshal Grechko to an Afghan military academy. This report reflects upon the Soviet training of Afghan officers: "In most cases the officers teaching the classes reported to Marshal A.A. Grechko in Russian: many of them having studied in Soviet military schools."<sup>27</sup> Opinions regarding the effects of this training on Afghan officers are mixed. Many post-invasion analysts have regarded the training period as evidence of Soviet indoctrination and subversion of Afghan military personnel. They point to the fact that Soviet-trained military officers would later engineer the 1979 coup. Many of these analysts overlook the point that some of these same officers also aided in bringing Daoud to power in 1973. Thus, the degree of Soviet control is truly speculative. Louis Dupree, one of the most highly respected Western authorities on Afghanistan, addressed this point in his classic book, Afghanistan, in 1973:

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<sup>26</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup>Krasnaya Zvezda, 28 December 1969, p. 1, cited in CDSP, 52 (January, 1980): 25.

Many Western observers worried about the political orientation of Afghan officers trained in the U.S.S.R. and the fact that Soviet personnel served as advisors to Afghan military schools. The Afghan government however, maintained its bi-tarafi ("without-sides") pattern and dispatched some officers to the U.S.A. for training... Afghan officers, trained in Russia and U.S., often compare their experiences and find them reasonably similar...

Neither the U.S.A. nor the U.S.S.R. turned out to be the paradises painted by their respective propaganda... The end result of Soviet (and American) military training tends to make the military even more pro-Afghan than pro-Soviet...<sup>28</sup>

Thus, Dupree sees the training in foreign countries as having a positive effect on the nationalistic sentiments of the Afghan military officers. After travelling to the Soviet Union, most officers returned home with a clearer view of the realities of life in Russia, and were glad to be citizens of their own nation. In any event, the penetration and control of the Afghan officer corps by the Soviets remains debatable.

Military relations continued in consistent fashion following the return of Daoud in 1973. Arms transfers from the Soviet Bloc increased from \$66 million in the period 1971-1972 to \$137 million in 1973-1974. These arms transfers included such relatively modern equipment as armored personnel carriers, modern artillery, T-62 main battle tanks, and MiG-21 aircraft.<sup>29</sup> From 1975 to 1977, during the years of increased flexibility in Afghanistan's foreign relations, Soviet arms transfers continued unabated with record deliveries of 127 million dollars worth of equipment in 1977.<sup>30</sup>

Soviet military and economic aid policies in Afghanistan served mutually beneficial needs through 1979. As mentioned earlier Afghanistan's requirements for defensive weapons had been rejected by the

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<sup>28</sup>Dupree, Afghanistan, pp. 525-526.

<sup>29</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 36.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.



United States after repeated requests for aid in the 1950s. Afghanistan's hostility toward Pakistan and its perception of a Pakistani threat (whether real or imagined) served the Soviet interests as well. Since 1954 Pakistan had been part of SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization), and had joined CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) a year later.<sup>31</sup> These two alliance systems are known as the "northern tier" in the U.S. defence plan to contain communism. Afghanistan and India, both Soviet allies, are the major breaks in the chain of U.S. allies on the Soviet southern border. The Soviets served the Afghans' needs by providing aid and weapons used to deter Pakistan. The Afghans served Soviet needs by providing a buffer between Pakistan and Soviet Central Asia.

#### **Economic and Military Relations 1978-1979**

Many Afghan experts maintain that significant signs of Soviet complicity are evident in the April 1978 communist coup. These analysts have pointed to the high number of economic and aid agreements signed in 1978 as evidence of prior Soviet planning. One analyst, David Chaffetz states:

The scale on which they have backed Daoud's leftist successors speaks volumes. Immediately twenty-five agreements with Comecon countries were signed by the new regime; an unusual burst of diplomacy on the part of a government scarcely secure in its own capital. While street fighting went on in Kabul, the government began contracting for Bulgarian television and East German printing equipment, together with an additional \$22 million from the Soviet Union to exploit natural gas...<sup>32</sup>

This description is only true on a superficial level. Chaffetz fails to point out that almost all of the 60 post-1978 agreements had

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<sup>31</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective, p. 35.

<sup>32</sup>David Chaffetz, "Afghanistan in Turmoil," International Affairs (London), (January 1980), p. 20.

been negotiated with the Daoud regime, and approximately sixty-five percent of the funding for these projects came from pre-1978 credits. There is no truth to the statement that agreements were signed while fighting continued in the streets of Kabul.<sup>33</sup>

Included in these 60 agreements with the new regime was one to build a bridge over the Amu Darya River, and new loans from East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Later in 1979, Afghanistan signed a trade agreement with the Comecon (the Soviet bloc equivalent of the European Economic Community). The Soviets also announced a 10-year moratorium on Afghanistan's substantial debt. In exchange for these agreements, the Soviets received a steady supply of high-grade cement and nearly 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas at about one-quarter of the world price. Also, by the end of 1978 the Soviets had more than doubled their pre-coup 350-man military advisory contingent.<sup>34</sup>

The new regime was soon faced by country wide opposition to its drastic reform policies (these policies will be outlined and discussed in chapter six). As the rebellion spread, the communist regime was progressively less able to suppress it, and the Soviets increased their supportive role. By the middle of 1979 there were approximately 4,500 military advisors in the country, and Soviet pilots began flying helicopter gunships and jet fighters in attacks on the rebels. The Soviets also sent a special unit of airborne troops to assume control of Bagram airfield, the major military base north of Kabul.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 52.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>35</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 75.

In a Soviet history of Afghanistan published in 1981, the historian, Ghulam Muradov, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies, justifies the increase in troops:

The real danger that loomed over the April revolution and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was fully realized by M.N. Taraki and H. Amin. That is why first N.M. Taraki and then H. Amin, proceeding from the Soviet-Afghan Treaty of Friendship, Good-neighborliness and Cooperation of December 5, 1978, as well as Article 51 of the UN Charter, asked the USSR several times in 1979 to send units of the Soviet Army to Afghanistan. After numerous requests of the Afghan government, a limited contingent of Soviet troops was sent to Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup>

Later in the year, Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev would echo these sentiments following the invasion.

### Invasion Plans

The Politburo may have begun to consider the possibility of military intervention as early as the spring of 1979. General Ivan G. Pavlovski, a specialist on intervention, visited Afghanistan and surveyed the situation from August to October 1979. He had made a trip to Czechoslovakia in 1968 prior to the Soviet invasion of that country and had commanded the invading Eastern-bloc troops. Personnel and equipment began to accumulate in Soviet Central Asia. Reserve units were mobilized, and additional troops were transferred from the western USSR.<sup>37</sup>

Statements appearing in Soviet military journals in early 1979 indicate that Soviet military theorists were considering the viability of war as a tool of state policy. They may may have been intentionally writing a pre-invasion justification for Soviet intervention within

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<sup>36</sup>Ghulam Muradov, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan: Second Stage of the April Revolution," Afghanistan: Past and Present, (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1981), p. 185.

<sup>37</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 97.

contemporary military doctrine. Colonel V. Vorobiev reported in Red Star:

Force can be employed because it is derived from the ruling class, and based on the higher principles of Socialism, on order and organization. Such force can be justified only if it overcomes the **resistance of reactionary forces and promotes the progressive developments of society.**<sup>38</sup>

In another article Colonel K. Vorobiev stated:

Experience shows that only by using armed force can one defend the revolutionary conquests **from the attacks of imperialist interventionists, surprise the attacks of the enemies of social progress, and assure the development of a country proceeding along a socialist path.**<sup>39</sup>

According to the Soviet perception, the above course of events was occurring in Afghanistan, and the Soviets may have wanted a military doctrine based in Leninist principles to justify their actions. Articles in the Soviet press spoke of increased infiltration by counter-revolutionary forces and warned that the U.S.S.R. could not remain indifferent to Pakistani and Chinese cooperation directed against Afghanistan.<sup>40</sup> Soviet journalist Lenoid Teplinsky would later write:

By the end of 1979 the situation in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan had sharply aggravated. The imperialists and their henchmen had virtually started an undeclared war against the revolutionary Afghan people. Thousands upon thousand of rebels armed and trained abroad, whole armed units were sent over to Afghan territory. In 1979 alone,

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<sup>38</sup>Colonel V. Vorobiev, Krasnaya Zvezda, Sept. 6, 1979, cited by, Alfred L. Monks, The Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan, p. 42 (emphasis mine).

<sup>39</sup>Colonel K. Vorobiev, "The Incarnation of Leninist Ideas on the Armed Defense of Socialism," Kommunist Voorushennykh Sil, 1 (January 1980): 22, cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>A. Petrov, Pravda, 1 June 1979, p. 5, cited in CDSP, 21 (July, 1979): 20.

about 15,000<sup>41</sup> mercenaries were trained at 70 special centers in Pakistan...

As mentioned earlier, following the downfall of Taraki as PDPA chairman, relations between the Soviets and the new PDPA Chairman Hafizullah Amin were strained. Despite personal animosity between Amin and the Soviets, the rapidly deteriorating internal situation in Afghanistan forced the two sides to work together for a short time. Brezhnev and Kosygin publicly offered Amin their support. They offered Amin an additional \$6.7 million in military equipment as well as KGB experts to help him improve the efficiency of the Afghan secret police. Officially economic relations continued much the same as before. For example, the first session of a new Afghan-Soviet Economic Commission was held in Moscow on October 27, and similar meetings between officials of the two countries continued throughout the last days of Amin's rule.<sup>42</sup>

Economic and military relations between the two countries prior to the communist coup of 1978 are summarized well by Richard Newell:

The Soviet Union's military role and its domination of many fields of economic development have inspired alarm that Afghanistan was about to lose its independence either to direct Russian dictation or through internal manipulation of its political system. The USSR accounts for more than one-half of Afghanistan's imports and exports and an even larger share of the countries overland trade. In fact, however, the Russians have not used their military or economic leverage to interfere more than peripherally with Afghan affairs. This forbearance probably stems from the realization that the benefits to the Russians from control over Afghanistan would be outweighed by the costs of pacification and international resentment, especially among other Muslim countries with which the Russians desire to have close relations.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Lenoid Teplinsky, "Soviet-Afghan Cooperation: Lenin's Behest Implemented," Afghanistan: Past and Present, (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1981), p. 218.

<sup>42</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 88-89.

<sup>43</sup>Richard Newell, "Foreign Relations," in Afghanistan in the 1970s, ed. Louis Dupree and Linette Albert (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 85.

Newell's analysis of the history of Soviet-Afghan relations is true to a great extent because the Afghans' ability to deal with their own internal difficulties without asking for outside assistance. Each successive Afghan ruler was able to maintain Afghanistan's independence, and at the same time utilize the USSR and other countries for aid. The Afghan communists under Taraki and Amin destroyed this tenuous balance by directly aligning themselves with the USSR. Asking for increased Russian assistance and direct involvement by Soviet military personnel in 1978-1979 fundamentally shifted the basis of relations from one of friendship and cooperation under Daoud, to alliance under the PDPA.

## Chapter VI

### The Evolution of Marxism in Afghanistan

Capitalism will not perish of itself; it will be overthrown by the victorious proletarian revolution. For the leadership of this revolution there are needed Bolshevist parties which know how to place themselves at the head of the working masses and to win for their struggle the sympathy and support of the broad masses of the peasantry, the urban bourgeoisie, and the oppressed colonial peoples.

- On the Task of the Communist Parties  
Pravda, April 24, 1931

#### The Communist International - Comintern

One of the most important elements in early Soviet foreign policy was the Communist International - the Comintern. The Comintern was organized to function as the operational spearhead for the spread of world-wide revolution. Revolution was to be instigated by local communist parties in various nations under the guidance of the Soviet Union. Soviet policy utilized the Comintern for two basic purposes: to exploit antagonisms within the capitalist world in order to breed dissent among the working class, and, to safeguard the security of the Soviet Union by keeping capitalistic nations off balance in suppressing their own internal disorders.<sup>1</sup>

The "Manifesto of the Communist International," written by Leon Trotsky in 1919, reflected the optimism of Lenin and the rest of the Bolshevik leaders. The concept that the nations dominated by imperialism could be transformed directly from the pre-capitalist stage of development to socialism was an integral part of early Comintern

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<sup>1</sup>Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, pp. 51-52.

philosophy. This transformation in South Asia would take place within the context of a European social revolution in which the once dominant colonial powers would aid the newly independent former colonies. Trotsky writes:

The emancipation of the colonies is possible only in conjunction with the emancipation of the metropolitan working class. The workers and peasants of Annam, Algiers, and Bengal, and also of Persia and Armenia, will gain their opportunity for independent existence only when the workers of England have taken state power in their own hands...If capitalist Europe forcibly dragged the backward section of the world into the capitalist whirlpool, a socialist Europe will come to the aid of liberated colonies with its technology, its organization, its spiritual forces, in order to facilitate their transition to a planned organized socialist economy.<sup>2</sup>

The only manifestation of the early Comintern policies relating to Afghanistan was the "First Congress of the Peoples of the East," held in Baku in 1920. Following the 1921 peace treaty between the Soviets and Amanullah, and similar agreements with the leaders of Turkey and Persia, the Comintern's activities in the East were primarily focused on China, and the Arab states were left to their own devices.<sup>3</sup> By the late 1920s all foreign Communist Parties were under control of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and accepted the leadership role of the Soviets. Thus, the Comintern became a instrument of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Comintern in Afghanistan**

The presence of communist organizers in Afghanistan date back to King Amanullah's reign. The Comintern had made some futile attempts in 1919 to generate revolutionary cadres in the country. Afghanistan had

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<sup>2</sup>Leon Trotsky, "Manifesto of the Communist International," The Communist International, 1919-1943, ed. Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 42-43.

<sup>3</sup>Richard L. Levensgood, "The Soviet Doctrine of National Self-Determination in Theory and Practice," (M.A. dissertation, Montana State University, 1964), p. 97.

<sup>4</sup>Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, p. 53.



been one of the targets of a general propaganda campaign that the Comintern had launched from Germany. As part of that effort, lithographed pamphlets written in native languages and calling for national and social liberation movements had been widely distributed in Asia. An Afghan representative had attended an Eastern Communist Central Committee meeting held in Berlin in 1919, and Afghans had participated as well in the Comintern-sponsored Congress of Eastern Peoples in Baku in 1920. Some reports also indicate that a few communist agitators were active in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif, one of the sites chosen by the Comintern Executive Committee in the 1920s as a propaganda center. However, there were few, if any, Marxists in Afghanistan before the formation of the PDPA in 1965. Historically, Afghan governments energetically resisted the dissemination of Bolshevik propaganda on Afghan soil, even as they sought to maintain friendly diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

#### The PDPA

On January 1, 1965 the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was formed.<sup>6</sup> PDPA members were identified as "comrade," following Soviet organization and style. A seven member central committee, which included Taraki and Karmal, was chosen and Taraki was elected as general secretary. This body officially adopted orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideology, and its organizational structure strictly imitated of the Soviet model.<sup>7</sup>

The largest problem facing the PDPA leadership was (and is) the lack of popular support drawn from the working class in Afghanistan.

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<sup>5</sup>Gregorian, The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan, pp. 237-238.

<sup>6</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup>Gankovsky, A History of Afghanistan, pp. 273-274.

Approximately 20,000 people, (only .07% of the population), could be considered industrial workers in the mid-1960s.<sup>8</sup> A Soviet writer would later comment on similar problems facing the revolutionary movement in 1978:

The backwardness of pre-revolutionary Afghanistan was also manifested in:

- the unequal development of the various regions of the country.
- the presence of numerous groups of the rural and urban population closely connected with precapitalist economic structures, and which retained many features of a traditional social organisation <sic>.
- the small number and weakness of the modern industrial proletariat, which hardly reached 50,000.
- ...traditions of communal and patriarchal (tribal) organisation <sic>, especially among the Pushtuns and Baluchis living in the southern regions of Afghanistan, and the considerable influence of the so-called traditional leaders (Khans, maliks and sardars of tribes and Moslem dignitaries) on the local population.<sup>9</sup>

The original PDPA leadership included doctors, administrators, students, and writers, but no workers or peasants. The task of expanding the original membership was difficult, but the communists found Kabul University to be the most fertile ground for recruitment.<sup>10</sup>

Early activities of the PDPA appear to have been limited to leading the aforementioned student demonstration in protest of the appointment of Dr. Yussuf as Prime Minister in 1965, as well as publishing Marxist propaganda attacks against the government. Taking advantage of the freedom of the press that King Zahir had granted as part of his "New Democracy," the PDPA started a newspaper called Khalq (meaning "masses"). Six issues were published during April and May, 1966. Some readers who

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<sup>8</sup>Henry S. Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union (Durham: Duke University Press, 1983), p. 44.

<sup>9</sup>Muradov, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan: The Second Stage of the April Revolution," p. 179.

<sup>10</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, pp.45-46.

studied the papers in detail found the format and phraseology untypical of usual Kabul writings and more like materials from Soviet Tajikistan. The government soon thereafter closed Khalq under provisions of the press law for protecting public security. The extent of Soviet involvement in the publication is unclear, but some degree of aid is probable.<sup>11</sup>

In 1967 the PDPA split into several factions, the two largest being Khalq, headed by Taraki, and Parcham (meaning "banner"), headed by Karmal. Taraki favored a Leninist-type party based on the working class, while Karmal wanted to form a broad based national-democratic front. Much to the annoyance of the Khalq faction, Karmal was able to publish the newspaper Parcham for more than a year following the governments closure of Khalq. The split between the communist leaders was caused more by bitter personality conflicts than by ideological differences.<sup>12</sup>

The two other leftist factions were more Maoist than Marxist in character. Shu'la-i-Jawed (Eternal Flame) was a Parcham splinter group which accused Karmal of revisionist views. It was known as "chup-i-chup" in Kabul, meaning "left-of-left". Setem-i-Meli ("against national oppression") was an outspoken Maoist organization which promoted the interest of all non-Pushtun ethnic minorities, and worked to organize the peasant population.<sup>13</sup>

The early breakdown of the PDPA is evidence of its weakness as a viable political organization. During this moment in Afghan history, Marxist-Leninist ideology appears to have been little more than an appealing anti-government platform for a small number of disgruntled

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>12</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup>Hyman, Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination, 1964-81, p. 59.

urban intellectuals to rally behind. Marxist affiliation and understanding was infantile at best.

Apparently the Russians maintained ties with both major factions, keeping its options open, and waiting to see how events would unfold. They did not regard either faction as a full-fledged communist party. For over five decades prior to the 1978 revolution, no Afghan delegate was invited to any international communist conference, nor were statements by Afghan communists ever published or announced outside of Afghanistan. Perhaps the Kremlin did not take the PDPA seriously, and the Soviet's perceived best interests lay with the more traditional powers in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Afghan communists looked to the USSR as their mentor, model and friend.<sup>14</sup> Despite the early internal conflicts faced by the communist organization, the PDPA managed to survive and remained actively involved in stirring up anti-government sentiment over the next decade.

#### The Communists Seize Power

After years of bitter rivalry, the two communist factions finally agreed to unite in 1978. This merger is believed to have resulted from Soviet pressure. This pressure was exerted through other communist parties in the region, including the Communist Party of India.<sup>15</sup> Although Parcham had closer ties to Moscow, Taraki was chosen as leader of the unified party because the Khalqis had more supporters in the military at that time. It is unknown whether the Soviets intended the PDPA to seize power, or only to put more pressure on Daoud to modify his

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33.

<sup>15</sup>Fred Halliday, "Revolution in Afghanistan," New Left Review, 112 (November/December 1978): 31.

increasingly independent foreign policies. The best Soviet efforts, however, were not able to do more than paper over the differences between the rival PDPA factions for a short time.<sup>16</sup>

Apparently neither the communists nor anyone else expected Daoud's government to crumble as quickly as it actually did. The sequence of events leading up to the communist coup began on April 17, 1978. On this date Mir Akbar Khyber, a former leader of Parcham, was assassinated. The killer was never discovered, although the CIA, KGB, and PDPA itself, came under suspicion. Khyber's death made him a martyr for the communist cause. A crowd estimated between 15,000-30,000 people turned out for the funeral on April 19, which evolved into a PDPA orchestrated anti-American rally. Taraki and Karmal both made strong speeches aimed at the American embassy. Daoud was alarmed at the unusually large crowd, and he ordered the arrest of PDPA leaders.<sup>17</sup> The following week Daoud's security police made a midnight raid that netted seven ranking PDPA Central Committee members, including Taraki, Karmal, and Amin. All were jailed immediately with the exception of Amin who was loosely held under house arrest.<sup>18</sup>

The actual coup began on April 27. Experts have disputed who actually organized the coup. The official version holds that Amin was able to direct the coup while under house arrest. Others speculate that pro-PDPA military officers, namely Major Waranjar and Colonel Quadir - the same commanders that aided Daoud in the 1973 overthrow of King Zahir, planned the coup. Waranjar and Quadir knew that the combination of their

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<sup>16</sup>Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism: Parcham and Khalq (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), p. 56.

<sup>17</sup>Bradsher, The Soviets and Afghanistan, p. 73.

<sup>18</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism, p. 57.

roles in overthrowing the old regime, their falling out with Daoud over his failure to implement reforms, and their connections with the illegal PDPA put them at risk of being purged from the military and government. They decided to move first. The general consensus of Afghan observers is that a combination of PDPA activists and dissatisfied junior military personnel were mutually responsible for the planning and execution of the coup.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike the 1973 affair, the 1978 coup was far from being bloodless. A combination of daring, improvisation and sheer luck on the side of the rebel officers won the day against formidable odds. Far from having mass support in the army and air force (as the post-coup propaganda claimed), the PDPA only controlled a few hundred members in the officer corps. They were well placed, however, to be brought into action. Also on the PDPA side was the general lack of commitment to the Daoud government which served to paralyse senior military officers when they were called on to bring their troops to support Daoud. Inertia on the part of almost the entire Afghan military eventually allowed the rebel troops to overcome those few Daoud loyalists who chose to fight. Daoud and almost twenty of his relatives were killed after refusing to surrender.<sup>20</sup>

Analysis of the coup, even by most of the hard-line anti-Soviet writers, points to limited Soviet involvement at best. If the Soviets gave the PDPA orders or suggestions that they overthrow Daoud, they did not choose April 27 as the particular date. Little prior consultation with the Soviets could have occurred while the PDPA leadership was under arrest. It is possible, however, that the Kremlin had told PDPA earlier

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<sup>19</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, p. 75.

<sup>20</sup>Hyman, Afghanistan Under Soviet Domination 1964-1981, pp. 76-77.

to take power whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself. The Soviets most likely knew something about the coup and approved it in advance, but their prior notice was probably minimal. At the time there were 3000 Soviet advisors in Afghanistan, and the KGB and GRU had extensive contacts in the Afghan military. The arrest of PDPA leaders, and not Soviet pressure, caused the wary military commanders to initiate the coup.<sup>21</sup> When the coup erupted, the Soviet embassy acted as surprised as other embassies. Soviet Ambassador Aleksander M. Puzanov was off trout fishing in the Hindu Kush - hardly the most strategic position from which to direct a rebellion.<sup>22</sup>

### The New Regime

Once they had ousted Daoud, the revolutionaries immediately established a new government and started ruling by decree. Taraki was named both President and Prime Minister, and he retained the post of PDPA Secretary General. The cabinet consisted of eleven members of Khalq and ten Parchamis. Amin was named the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and Karmal was named Vice-President. The military men, Waranjar and Quadir, were promoted and also given cabinet posts. Afghanistan's new leaders insisted they were non-aligned and repeatedly denied to the foreign press that the PDPA was even Marxist.<sup>23</sup>

The actions and statements of the new regime clearly defined its Marxist orientation. Afghanistan could only be considered non-aligned in the same sense as Castro's Cuba. Taraki drew Afghanistan even closer to the Soviet Union. As previously mentioned, on December 5, 1978, a

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<sup>21</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, p. 83.

<sup>23</sup>New York Times, 30 April 1981, p. 10.

twenty-year treaty of friendship and cooperation was signed in Moscow (similar to the one Moscow had concluded with Vietnam the previous month), which called on Afghan communists to increase their contacts with the Soviets.

The new regime began a series of purges, imprisonments and executions. Thousands of Daoud's civil servants, diplomats, governors, police, professors, and the like were tossed into jail, and their positions were filled with party faithfuls who possessed little experience in government.<sup>24</sup> The honeymoon also ended between Parcham and Khalq. Most of the Parchamis were purged from the cabinet by Taraki in July, 1978. Some of these Parchamis were demoted and assigned to diplomatic posts abroad. Karmal was one of Taraki's victims. Following his ordered recall as ambassador to Prague, Karmal refused to return to Kabul. Apparently the Soviets kept him safe in Moscow in case he should ever be needed. Lesser members of Parcham, including hundreds of military officers, were also purged from important positions.<sup>25</sup>

Along with the political purge, Taraki pursued an ambitious plan of rapid social and economic reforms. These reforms were pressed forward with revolutionary zeal. The first months of the PDPA regime appear to have gone relatively well. The mass of the rural population seemed to be adopting a cautious position toward the new policies of spreading educational and health opportunities and granting cultural rights to nationalities.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Halliday, "Revolution in Afghanistan," pp. 37-38.

<sup>25</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 68.

<sup>26</sup>Fred Halliday, "War in Afghanistan," New Left Review, 3 (Jan-Feb 1980): 32.



Keeping with tradition, the Afghans soon became weary of government officials interfering in their lives. The majority of the new PDPA reforms were seen as anti-traditional and thus were very unpopular. As in other communist-led nations, the attempt to impose rapid and arbitrary change by brute force, against the wishes of the people, produced not progress but chaos, bloodshed and civil war. Programs addressing land reform, marriage laws and other social issues threatened the foundations of traditional Afghan social behavior, and were implemented so quickly that even the Soviets later criticized them. Although the failed reform policies had been introduced under Taraki, for political reasons the Soviets would later place the majority of blame on Amin:

Great harm to the revolution has been done by Hafizullah Amin who wormed his way to power by intrigues and deceit. H. Amin used impermissible methods in implementing such major transformations as the agrarian reforms and the liquidation of adult illiteracy, which distorted their progressive essence. People's traditions and religious convictions were ignored, there were crude violations of revolutionary legality, arrests and executions, without trial or investigation, of innocent people, including honest members of the PDPA.<sup>27</sup>

The single factor that probably did the most to create antagonism toward the communist regime was its lack of Islamic religious credentials and apparent adherence to atheism. To make matters worse, the Moslem green was replaced by the communist red in the Afghan flag. In a country consisting of virtually 100% devout Moslems, atheistic communistic leaders were bound to command very little respect. It almost appears that the Taraki regime systematically planned to alienate every segment of the Afghan populace by implementing radical policies in a society bound by tradition.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Muradov, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan: Second Stage of the April Revolution," p. 183.

<sup>28</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 69-72.

As a result of this endless string of blunders by the new regime, the Afghans rebelled. By the fall of 1978 the uprisings had spread to all 29 provinces. The revolt cut across almost every segment of Afghan society. The opposition included not only religious leaders and landlords, but also virtually all classes and occupations within the general population. In March 1979, Afghan soldiers in the city of Herat joined in the rebellion. In the bloodbath that followed, many government officials as well as a number of Soviet advisors and their families were beheaded. Their heads were stuck on poles and paraded around the city in triumph. Soldiers also mutinied in Kabul, and in all these instances brutal countermeasures were used by the government forces.

As the rebellion grew and the communist government showed itself less able to suppress it, the Soviets were forced to increase their role in the conflict. By November, 1979 there were more than 4500 military advisers in the country. As mentioned in chapter five, increased supplies of modern military equipment were sent into Afghanistan, and Soviet pilots in helicopter gunships and jet aircraft began to fly combat missions against rebel positions. The Soviets sent troops to assume control of strategic airfields, roads, and bridges. Step by step, Moscow was moving toward massive intervention.<sup>29</sup>

The Soviets were clearly worried about the country holding together under PDPA leadership. In addition to offering weapons and ideological advice, Moscow attempted to strengthen the PDPA government among the people. The main agent for this policy was Vasily S. Safronchuk, who arrived in Kabul a few weeks after the Herat uprising. Safronchuk was a career diplomat who had been the Soviet ambassador to Ghana and the

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<sup>29</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 75.

deputy permanent representative to the United Nations from 1971 to 1976. Taraki and Amin were shown attending prayer services and were pressed to patch up relations with the remaining Parcham leaders. The Khalq leaders, however, rejected the Soviet sponsored-proposal for another reunion. Safronchuk urged Taraki to broaden the government's base by including some non-communists, a suggestion which was as ineffective in generating popular support as were the majority of Safronchuk's suggestions, which were ignored by the Afghan leaders.<sup>30</sup>

The Soviets focused their displeasure with the upstart Afghans on Amin, who was the real mover of Afghan policy. Apparently Taraki had taken more of a figurehead role while Amin actually controlled the government. The Soviets attempted to undermine Amin from within. Amin was somehow able to thwart all Soviet attempts to remove him. Taraki, after returning from a trip to Cuba, stopped in Moscow for informal talks with Brezhnev. He was instructed to maneuver Amin out of the Afghan government. Shortly after his return to Kabul a gun battle occurred at the presidential palace in which the target, Amin, escaped unharmed. Taraki, however, was not so lucky; he became the first communist leader to be added to the long list of Afghan leaders who experienced violent death in office. Amin was immediately proclaimed President and took over all of Taraki's duties.<sup>31</sup>

The Soviets had been caught by surprise again. The man they wished removed was now in charge. Amin in turn did not trust the Soviets and went so far as to accuse publicly the Soviet ambassador of helping to plot against him. The Soviets were asked to replace Ambassador Puzanov,

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<sup>30</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, pp. 103-104.

<sup>31</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, pp. 109-113.

and were further insulted by Amin's absence from a reception in celebration of the Great October Revolution at the Soviet embassy in Kabul.<sup>32</sup> Amin had embarrassed the Soviets by ousting the man so recently seen with Brezhnev. The Soviets decided, for the time being, to work with Amin. Amin pacified the Soviets somewhat by carrying out one of the main policies that Moscow had been advocating: broadening the base of popular support. Amin also made efforts to pacify his Moslem subjects by promising them religious freedom, repairing mosques and referring to passages in the Koran in his speeches. Most Afghans paid no attention to these feeble attempts by Amin to convince them he was a good Moslem and the representative of Allah. Amin's efforts were too little too late, and his 100 days of rule were soon to be abruptly terminated.<sup>33</sup>

The Politburo sent a Soviet general of the KGB to Afghanistan to take over the direction of the secret police. This officer, General Victor Paputin, disappeared under strange circumstances and was believed to have committed suicide after failing in his real mission of assassinating Amin. Paputin was never seen again after a mysterious shooting incident at the presidential palace in mid-December 1979.<sup>34</sup>

#### **The Soviet Invasion**

There are no clear and consistent accounts of what actually occurred in the last days of December 1979. Western analysts were skeptical of Soviet claims that Amin called for Russian assistance. However, it would appear as if this may actually have been the case. What seems to have caused the confusion is the widely held Western view that 100,000 Soviet

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<sup>32</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 68.

<sup>33</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 88-90.

<sup>34</sup>New York Times, 3 February 1981, p. 10.

troops invaded the country all at once, killed Amin, and began the occupation. Actually, Soviet forces intervened in two phases, the first of which may have been with Amin's approval. It was these first troops which paved the way for the massive infusion of Soviet forces which followed their arrival, and these troops were responsible for Amin's demise.

Available evidence suggests that Amin did issue some kind of request for a limited contingent of Soviet military forces to be used in small-scale engagements and detached from the Soviet army chain of command. The Soviets apparently would not agree to put their forces under Afghan command or even some sort of joint Afghan-Soviet staff. For their part the Soviets allegedly offered to provide 5,000 troops if Amin would agree to let them build their own bases and function autonomously from Afghan control, an offer Amin rejected. As late as December 26, Amin is supposed to have told an Arab journalist that the Soviet Union respected Afghan independence and that Soviet forces were coming to help him put down the rebellion.<sup>35</sup>

From December 24-26, approximately 5,000 Soviet airborne troops landed in a steady stream of transport aircraft at the Bagram military airbase north of Kabul. There was no reaction by Afghan ground forces which would indicate that the Soviet troops were unexpected arrivals. The Afghan forces did not oppose the Soviet forces and apparently had received approval of the Soviet landing in advance. The actual fighting began on the evening of December 27. Western reports describe an explosion at the Kabul Ministry of Communication as the signal for Soviet troops to move into action. Soviet forces apparently quickly seized all

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<sup>35</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism, p. 96.

strategic points in the city, and Soviet special forces units attacked and killed Amin and his small contingent of personal supporters.<sup>36</sup>

In the early morning hours following Amin's death, Kabul Radio broadcast a message from Babrak Karmal which announced the formation of a new government under his leadership. On this date, 27 December 1979, he officially asked the Soviet Union for assistance:

Because of the continuation and expansion of aggression, intervention, and provocations by the foreign enemies of Afghanistan and for the purpose of defending the gains of the Saur Revolution, territorial integrity, national independence and preservation of peace and security, **and on the basis of the treaty of friendship, good-neighborliness and cooperation date 5 December 1978, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan earnestly demands that the USSR render urgently political, moral, and economic assistance, including military aid, to Afghanistan.** The government of the USSR has accepted the proposal of the Afghan side.<sup>37</sup>

Western sources claim this message was broadcast from a powerful transmitter inside the Soviet Union operating on the Kabul radio frequency. Karmal would later claim that he had returned before the Soviet troops entered the country and had directed the coup against Amin.

Soviet sources present the coup against Amin as an internal Afghan affair which did not involve Soviet troops. Soviet historian Ghulam Muradov tersely summarizes what occurred:

The situation that was taking shape in Afghanistan at the end of 1978 and in 1979 caused the alarm and indignation on the part of many leaders and rank-and-file members of the PDPA, as well as among non-party patriots in all the sections of Afghan society. Discontent caused by the activities of Hafizullah Amin and the mass repressions carried out on his orders were spreading. More and more people became convinced that only the liquidation of the Amin regime and rectification of his mistakes and crimes could open the road to realizing the ideals of the April revolution and improve the situation in the party and country as a whole. H. Amin lost support in the party, among the people and by the end of 1979 found himself completely isolated. On December 27, 1979, the

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<sup>36</sup>Bradsher, The Soviets and Afghanistan, p. 179-181.

<sup>37</sup>Kabul Radio, 27 December 1979, cited by Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, p. 181 (emphasis mine).

patriotically-minded majority of the PDPA, the Revolutionary Council and the armed forces of the DRA overthrew the criminal regime of H. Amin.<sup>38</sup>

The Soviet account presents the coup as strictly a PDPA affair and does not acknowledge the involvement, or even the presence, of Russian troops. Soviet troops were claimed to have only entered Afghanistan in large numbers after Karmal's request, and Soviet forces already in Kabul had not taken part in the fighting until after Amin's death. The truth of the matter will probably never be known. The only confirmed fact is that the Afghan government was under the leadership of the Parchamis faction of the PDPA, and that Babrak Karmal was fully supported by the firepower of the Red Army. The history of Soviet-Afghan relations had entered a fundamentally new phase.

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<sup>38</sup>Muradov, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan: Second Stage of the April Revolution," p. 185.

## Chapter VII

### Soviet-Afghan Relations 1979-1988

Soviet assistance to Afghanistan has just one objective: to stop the armed intervention against the Afghan revolution and all forms of imperialist interference in Afghanistan.

- L.I. Brezhnev  
Pravda, 17 October, 1980

#### Soviet Justification

Within one hour of the Kabul Radio report announcing the new Afghan government on December 28, 1979, the Soviet news agency TASS reported that Brezhnev had sent Karmal a congratulatory message on his new position as Afghanistan's leader:

I heartily congratulate you on being elected as general secretary of the central committee...and to the senior state positions of Afghanistan.... I am sure that in the present conditions the Afghan people will succeed in defending the gains of the April Revolution, the sovereignty, independence and national dignity of the new Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>

Brezhnev would shortly thereafter present the official Soviet line on the Afghan situation. He would justify the Soviet action by two sources of international law: first, Article 51 of the U.N. Charter which guarantees all nations the right to individual or collective self defense when threatened by outside aggression (in this case the Afghan communists accused the United States, Pakistan, and China); and second, Article 4 of the Soviet-Afghan treaty of 1978 which called for military co-operation to ensure security and territorial integrity (see pp. 65-66). In a statement on January 13, 1980, in Pravda, Brezhnev spoke of

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<sup>1</sup>Cited by Bradsher, The Soviets and Afghanistan, p. 185.



the "forced nature" of the Soviet military aid to Afghanistan and its temporary character.<sup>2</sup> His statements remained as the basic Soviet view of the situation during the course of the Brezhnev regime, and were left unchanged by the short-lived Andropov and Chernenko governments.

Brezhnev states:

It was no simple decision for us to send Soviet military contingents to Afghanistan...But the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Soviet Government acted in full awareness of their responsibility and took into account all the relevant circumstances. The sole task of the Soviet contingent is to assist the Afghans in repulsing the aggression from without. They will be fully withdrawn from Afghanistan once the reasons for the Afghan leadership's request for them disappear.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviets also attempted to further separate themselves from any connection with the ouster of Amin. They went so far as to claim that the introduction of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, and Amin's death, were mutually exclusive events:

The fact that the removal of Amin took place concurrently with the beginning of the introduction of the Soviet contingent **is a pure coincidence in time and there is no causal relationship between the two events.** The Soviet troops had nothing to do with the removal of Amin and his accomplices. That was the doing of the Afghans themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the Soviet position was established and would remain unchanged until the election of Mikhail Gorbachev following Chernenko's death. The Soviets perceived their action as a legitimate response to an ally's call for help. They were under treaty obligations to do so, and were further justified by the charter of the United Nations. Whether or not the Soviet claims are valid is a matter of debate and speculation. What is of real interest, however, is the evolution of events within

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<sup>2</sup>Teplinsky, "Soviet-Afghan Cooperation: Lenin's Behest Implemented," p. 219.

<sup>3</sup>Pravda, January 13, 1980, cited in Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>New Times (Moscow), 17 (April, 1980): 18, cited by Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 100 (emphasis mine).

Afghanistan and the USSR which have apparently led to a fundamental change in how the Soviets view their role in Afghan affairs.

### **The Karmal Regime**

The new Afghan regime under Babrak Karmal immediately began to change the outward appearance of the PDPA in accordance to Safronchuk's pacification policies. He sought to lessen the Marxist character of the regime in order to appeal to the greater masses of traditional Afghan society. Karmal emphasized moderation in the goal of socializing Afghanistan, and attempted to establish a broad based national front which included non-communist elements in his government. Karmal paid special attention to eradicating the perceived atheistic character of his government. The following list includes some of the official political and social goals of the new administration:

- The strengthening of unity of all - big and small - peoples and tribes of Afghanistan; complete elimination of all discrimination of Afghan citizens connected with their nationality, language, race, tribe, sect, origin, education, sex, way of life, property status;
- the provision of all Afghan Moslems with the necessary conditions, complete freedom and reliable protection in performing the religious rites required by Islam; the rendering of assistance to the ulema (Moslem theologians) in discharging their duties;
- the development and consolidation of democracy on the principles of collective leadership and democratic centralism.
- strict adherence to the principles of peaceful coexistence, non-alignment, positive neutrality and international solidarity and cooperation with the Soviet Union, other socialist countries and revolutionary forces of our time.<sup>5</sup>

Karmal's greatest effort was to convince the people that he was a devout Moslem. His speeches opened with the traditional incantation, "In the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful." Mullahs were brought to Kabul for conferences and were sent on free tours of Soviet Central

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<sup>5</sup>Muradov, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan: Second Stage of the April Revolution," p. 187-188.

Asia to convince them that the USSR was not suppressing Islam.<sup>6</sup> Karmal also announced a "total amnesty for all those political prisoners who have survived the bloody Amin regime."<sup>7</sup> Many of the prisoners were Parcham officials who had been jailed following Amin's rise to power and would take part in the new government. The government announced it had released 15,000 prisoners by July, 1980.<sup>8</sup>

In spite of these efforts to put a new face on the communist regime, and the fact that his programs were more moderate than those of his predecessors, Karmal had little success in winning "the hearts and minds" of the Afghan populace. Karmal was looked upon as a weak tool of the Russians, a greater sin than either Taraki or Amin had committed. They were hated for their policies and atheism, but they at least, were Afghans who had risen to power through their own devices. Karmal was viewed as a mere puppet of the Soviet invaders.<sup>9</sup>

#### The PDPA

One part of the Soviet plan to strengthen Karmal's regime was to end the bloody split between the Khalq and Parcham factions of the PDPA. Babrak Karmal was supposed to engineer this reunion, but was only minimally successful in some areas, and was a complete failure in others. Along with Amin, the Khalqi leadership was all but wiped out under the new regime, but Khalqis still outnumbered Parchamis by a considerable number in the lower echelons of the party, especially among the various

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<sup>6</sup>Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 149.

<sup>7</sup>Kabul Radio, 1 January 1980, cited in Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. p. 186.

<sup>8</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, pp. 187-188.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

branches of the armed forces. Remaining Khalqis resented Karmal's use of Soviet military strength which allowed Parcham to return to power.

Neither had the Parchamis forgotten their persecution by the Khalqis, nor were they inclined to forgive and forget.<sup>10</sup>

In June, July and October of 1980 three military rebellions occurred when Khalqi commanders were replaced by Parchami officers. These rebellions were suppressed by force. The Parcham faction attempted to increase its size through recruitment, and, by PDPA accounts, more than 40,000 new members were added. Despite numerous changes in offices by Khalq and Parcham members, strife between the two factions continued. The greatest divisions lie among the various branches of the military, secret police (KHAD) and security police (Sardandoy). The military had the lowest number of party members as a percentage of its ranks, most of whom were split equally along factional lines. Sardandoy is dominated by Khalqis, and KHAD is made up of Parchamis.<sup>11</sup> In 1983, a firefight broke out between Khalqi policemen and Parchami Army officers in Herat which resulted in over one hundred dead.<sup>12</sup>

The only PDPA policy that has been marginally successful is the formation of the National Fatherland Front (NFF). The NFF was designed to appeal to the nationalistic sentiments of the Afghan populace, and to supplement the PDPA organization for those people leery of communism. This was one of many attempts to broaden the base of popular support under the Karmal regime. By mid-1983 the official claim stated NFF membership at 600,000 in 410 committees. A later news release may have

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<sup>10</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism, p. 112.

<sup>11</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism, p. 104

<sup>12</sup>New York Times, 7 September, 1983, p. 1-4.

mistakenly given the correct membership when it claimed 55,000 members in over 1000 committees.<sup>13</sup> Despite the continued efforts of the new regime to heal its internal rift and appear less Marxist in character, these policies had little effect on the progress of the civil war. Although the Soviets dictated PDPA policy and completely controlled Babrak Karmal, even they could not force an end to the factional blood-feud within the PDPA.

#### Soviet Policies

Ever since the invasion troops landed in Kabul on Christmas Eve 1979, the only real source of policy in Afghanistan has been the Soviet Union. Although the Karmal regime has attempted to make gains on the political front at the urging of its Soviet advisors, it soon became apparent from the complete lack of cooperation by the vast majority of the Afghan populace, and the fierce resistance put up by the Afghan freedom fighters (Mujahideen), that military solutions would need to be employed on a vast scale.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of the first week of January 1980, over 50,000 Soviet troops were in Afghanistan. By the end of March, six full divisions, totaling 85,000 personnel, were in various positions around the country. By 1984, this number had steadily increased to approximately 115,000 where it has remained constant through 1988.<sup>15</sup> As the Soviet forces increased in size, there was a corresponding decrease in Afghan forces.

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<sup>13</sup>"Facts and Figures," Kabul New Times, 25 April 1984, cited in Arnold, Afghanistan's Two Party Communism, p. 105.

<sup>14</sup>Soviet military policies and statistics have been taken solely from estimates by western sources. The Soviet Union has released no data on the Afghan War.

<sup>15</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan, p. 98.

Because of a small number of deaths, and a huge number of desertions which at times included entire divisions, the Afghan army has shrunk from an estimated 100,000 troops in 1978 to 30,000 in 1981. Mutinous Afghan units have been credited as one of the best sources of rebel weapons in the early months of the war.<sup>16</sup>

Soviet forces in Afghanistan include approximately 80,000 ground troops, 30-40,000 support personnel and 10,000 air force personnel. These forces are supported by 50,000 ground and air force personnel in the southern USSR. Troops are deployed geographically with about one-third of ground forces in the Kabul area with other major deployments at Mazar-i-Sharif and Qunduz in the north, Herat and Farah in the east, Kandahar in the south, and Jalalabad in the east. Major air bases are located in Jalalabad, Bagram, Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Shindand, and Farah.<sup>17</sup>

To date, Soviet strategy has focused upon holding the major centers of communication and transportation, while carrying out a war of attrition against the Mujahideen. The Soviets have sought to inflict as much damage as possible on rebel forces at minimum cost to their own troops. They have used their superior tactical mobility and firepower to make up for an insufficient number of troops and to hold casualties to a minimum. Control over territory has remained more or less constant over the last eight years. The Soviets have day time control over the major cities and strategic garrisons, while the rebels have night-time control over virtually the entire country. The Soviets have attempted to reduce rebel controlled areas by pursuing a combined "scorched-earth," and

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<sup>16</sup>Bradsher, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, p. 206.

<sup>17</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 144.

"migratory-genocide" policy. Migratory-genocide is a plan to depopulate rebel-held territory and thus remove the Mujahideen's base of support. The Soviets have forced huge numbers of people in the countryside to flee to Iran and Pakistan by deliberately burning crops. They have used high level carpet bombing and a "free-fire" zone approach in rebel infested areas where all people are considered targets.<sup>18</sup>

The Soviets have also utilized small anti-personnel mines in the form of watches, ballpoint pens, books and dolls. These devices have reportedly caused enormous damage among the civilian population, and many women and children have lost feet or hands as a consequence.<sup>19</sup> There have also been reports by the U.S. State Department that the Soviets have used chemical weapons in at least fifteen provinces of Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> The Soviets have categorically denied all such claims.

The immediate physical and human costs to the Soviets have been considerable. As of 1984, casualties were estimated conservatively at 30,000 killed and wounded. Over \$12 billion had been spent, and over 3500 vehicles, including tanks, armored personnel carriers and trucks had been destroyed. Also, over 600 aircraft were estimated to have been shot down.<sup>21</sup> These numbers have proportionately risen over the last four years as the Mujahideen received greater numbers of increasingly more effective anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>20</sup>U.S. Department of State, Chemical Warfare in South Asian and Afghanistan, p. 23, cited in Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan, p. 100.

### Economic and Political Policies

In addition to attempting to increase membership in the PDPA and the NFF, the Soviets have promoted increased economic and trade ties, as well as new policies with socio-political ramifications. All of these measures have been instigated to help the Afghan communists remain in power, and attempt to build long-term economic, political and social ties between the Afghans and Soviets.

The economy in Afghanistan has been devastated by the civil war. In 1984 crop production was estimated to be at one-fifth of pre-1978 levels. The Soviets have been forced to import massive amounts of food, and rationing has been implemented in Afghan cities.<sup>22</sup> Soviet involvement in the Afghan economy has also increased. More than 140 industrial facilities are being built (or repaired from war damage) with Soviet assistance, and it is estimated that the value of Soviet aid since 1978 has more than doubled. Total trade figures between the two nations have also doubled since 1977, and the Soviets are responsible for more than 80 percent of Afghan trade. The Soviets claim to have trained over 60,000 Afghan workers of all vocations, and there are more than 9,000 Afghan college students in Soviet schools.<sup>23</sup>

The Soviets have also been accused of exploiting Afghanistan's rich mineral and natural gas resources. An estimated one percent of Soviet natural gas consumption is being met through deliveries of Afghan gas. The Soviets pay for the gas at approximately one-half of the world price, a point on which some analysts accuse the Soviets of outright robbery of Afghan resources. However, two facts should be pointed out in this case.

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<sup>22</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan, pp. 109-110.

<sup>23</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 141.



First of all, as discussed earlier in chapter five, the gas produced through 1985 was earmarked for sale to the Soviet Union under the Daoud regime, and was not part of any new policies by the Afghan communists. Second, as Peter Franck pointed out in his 1960 Afghan survey for the National Planning Association, "geographic proximity involving the saving of internal transportation cost to the northern border represents a net gain."<sup>24</sup> In other words, there is nobody else who can buy the Afghan gas. It would be too expensive to ship it south, there is no pipeline network to do so, and the last thing Iran needs is more natural gas. If the Soviets did not provide a market for Afghan gas, there would be none. Soviet geologists have also conducted surveys of Afghan minerals, but because of the continued fighting, little work has been done to develop these resources.

A more subtle and possibly much more important policy with long-range effects, is the education of school age children. There are presently over 20,000 young Afghans who are being raised and educated in the Soviet Union. After returning to Afghanistan, these students potentially will form the nucleus of a new military and party elite with extremely strong ties to the Soviet Union.<sup>25</sup> Special Russian-language courses have been developed within the Afghanistan school system which has been expanded to reach rural areas. However, the success of these programs has been blunted by rebel attacks on government schools, and the long-range consequences of this policy remain to be seen.

On the political front the most important changes which have occurred focus upon the political leadership of Afghanistan, and the rise

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<sup>24</sup>Franck, Afghanistan: Between East and West, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup>Collins, p. 146.

to power of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU. Following the death of Konstantine Chernenko on March 10, 1985, Gorbachev was selected as the new Soviet leader. By the spring of 1986, rumors suggesting that Gorbachev was serious about withdrawing Soviet forces from Afghanistan were alive in diplomatic circles. Apparently the Soviet Union was preparing to partake in a number of drastic domestic policy adjustments which would require a change in the Afghan situation.

#### **The Peace Process in Afghanistan (1980-1988)**

Since February, 1980 the Soviets have been seeking a diplomatic way to extract themselves from Afghanistan. The Soviets have suffered from world-wide condemnation for their action, and relations with Third World countries, as well as Superpower relations, rapidly deteriorated following the invasion. In each of six separate United Nations votes the Soviet Union has received a total number of negative votes ranging from 104 to 123 in number.<sup>26</sup> Despite their inability to defeat decisively the Mujahideen on the battlefield, and failures to find an internal political solution, the Soviets did not exhibit much flexibility in their position through the first six years of occupation.<sup>27</sup>

The Soviet peace position began to emerge in Brezhnev's speech of February 23, 1980, at the Russian Republic Supreme Soviet election. Brezhnev accused the Chinese and U.S. of causing Soviet intervention and said that "the need for Soviet forces would no longer exist" when outside

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<sup>26</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan, p. 110.

<sup>27</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 147.

interference ended.<sup>28</sup> Brezhnev's ideas were broadened by Karmal's "May fourteenth Proposals." Karmal outlined the following five proposals:

- 1) Separate bilateral talks between Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.
- 2) The immediate cessation of armed interference during these talks.
- 3) The return of refugees and granting of amnesty.
- 4) U.S. and Soviet guarantees to bilateral agreements.
- 5) The withdrawal of Soviet troops, depending "on the resolution of the question of effective guarantees for bilateral accords."<sup>29</sup>

Early peace proposals put forth by the United States, France and the European Community in the summer of 1981 were rejected because they failed to include the Afghan government in early discussions. They did include direct representation by rebel forces, and they spoke of "neutralization," which the Soviets viewed as an unacceptable alteration of Afghanistan's non-aligned status.<sup>30</sup> These proposals would have called for the end of the Karmal regime, and they violated Brezhnev's pledge that the gains of revolution were permanent. Brezhnev stated at the Twenty-sixth Party Congress in 1981:

We do not object to the questions connected with Afghanistan being discussed together with the questions of Persian Gulf security. Naturally, this applies only to the international aspects of the Afghan problem, and not to internal Afghan affairs. Afghanistan's sovereignty, like its nonaligned status, must be fully protected.<sup>31</sup>

The United Nations, in accordance with a General Assembly resolution in November 1980, began negotiations with Pakistan and Afghanistan. These negotiations were known as "proximity talks" which were held through U.N. mediators. The two sides would not correspond directly,

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<sup>28</sup>Pravda, 23 February 1980, p. 1, cited in CDSP, 8 (March, 1980): 1-4.

<sup>29</sup>Pravda, 2 July 1980, p. 4, cited in CDSP, 26 (August, 1980): 6.

<sup>30</sup>Pravda, 5 August 1981, p. 4, cited in CDSP, 31 (September 1981): 5-6.

<sup>31</sup>Pravda, 24 February 1981, pp. 2-9, cited in CDSP, 8 (March, 1981): 13.

thus relieving the Pakistanis of the need to recognize officially the Karmal regime, or admitting to the Soviet charge of outside interference. The Pakistani position was clear. It wanted a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces, a restoration of Afghanistan's nonaligned and independent status, freedom from outside interference, and the safe return of the Afghan refugees.<sup>32</sup> The refugee problem is of special concern for Pakistan which has been forced to provide for over three million Afghans since 1982.<sup>33</sup>

When Brezhnev died in November 1982, there was hope that Andropov, who was rumored to have been against the invasion, would move to end the war. President Zia of Pakistan noted that there was "a hint of flexibility" in the Soviet attitude toward Afghanistan.<sup>34</sup> The chief editor of Pravda, Victor Afanasyev, a Central Committee member, told a Japanese newspaper that a political settlement was desired which did not require an Afghan government to "be a Soviet-type socialist government."<sup>35</sup> The Soviet press soon denied Afanasyev's statements and retorted that the USSR's position remained unchanged. Andropov personally laid to rest any rumors of change in the Soviet view:

Our plans for a political settlement of the Afghan problem are no secret....We consider that as soon as outside interference in the affairs of Afghanistan has been terminated and non-resumption of such interference guaranteed, we shall withdraw our troops. Our troops are staying in that country and are there at the request of the lawful Afghan government...headed by Babrak Karmal....It is, however, far from being a

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<sup>32</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, pp. 157.

<sup>33</sup>New York Times, 22 November 1982, p. A5.

<sup>34</sup>New York Times, 10 December 1982, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup>Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 157.

matter of indifference to us what is happening directly on our southern border.<sup>36</sup>

Overall, Soviet efforts to resolve the Afghan problem remained unchanged from 1979 to 1986. The Soviets were willing to bear the brunt of fighting, the cost in money, lives and equipment to support the Karmal regime, and the international diplomatic damage caused by intervention. Under the Gorbachev regime the USSR began to modify its position in an attempt to extract itself from the conflict.

### **The Period of "New Thinking"**

Shortly following the selection of Mikhail Gorbachev as the General Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985, real changes began to occur in the Soviet position toward Afghanistan. On the battlefield things remained unchanged, but at the diplomatic table major changes began to take place. The shift in the Soviet position can be directly linked to Gorbachev's domestic policies which were attempting the "restructuring" of the Soviet economy. Gorbachev's plan, known as "perestroika," calls for major changes in the Soviet economy as well as increased political freedoms.

In the realm of Gorbachev's foreign policy, statements regarding development in the Third World are worthy of note. Although the Soviet view of Western imperialism remains an important part of their criticism of Western nations, Gorbachev softens the revolutionary aspect of Soviet policy:

I have explained on many occasions that we do not pursue goals inimical to Western interests. We know how important the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, other Third World regions and also South Africa are for American and Western European economies, in particular as raw material sources.

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<sup>36</sup>Tass, 24 April 1983, cited in Collins, The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, p. 158.

To cut these links is the last thing we want to do, and we have no desire to provoke ruptures in historically formed, mutual economic interests.<sup>37</sup>

In regard to political freedom Gorbachev states:

Every nation is entitled to choose its own way of development, to dispose of its fate, its territory, and its human and natural resources. International relations cannot be normalized if this is not understood in all countries. For ideological and social differences, and differences in political systems are the result of the choice made by the people. A national choice should not be used in international relations in such a way as to cause trends and events that can trigger conflicts and military confrontation....it is high time to recognize that the Third World nations have the right to be their own bosses.<sup>38</sup>

Gorbachev's policy can be interpreted as a rebuttal to the Brezhnev Doctrine's policy of "once socialist, always socialist." If a nation were to decide a new form of government, even if it meant changing from a socialist government to some other form, it would appear as if the Soviets would be prepared to accept the change.

#### **"New Thinking" on the Afghan Question**

The new Soviet policies were soon reflected in the Soviet relationship with Afghanistan. Three days after returning from a trip to Moscow, Babrak Karmal was peacefully replaced by Dr. Najibullah, the head of the Afghan secret police (KHAD). Karmal's replacement coincided with a new round of indirect U.N.-sponsored peace talks in Geneva between Afghan and Pakistani negotiators. Karmal's removal brought about demonstrations in Kabul on his behalf which caused the Soviets to surround key government buildings and army barracks with tanks. Karmal did retain his membership in the Afghan Politburo, and the ceremonial post as president, but his tenure as Afghanistan's leader was over.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987). p. 178 (emphasis mine).

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 177-178 (emphasis mine).

<sup>39</sup>"Afghanistan: Bad to Worse ?", Newsweek, May 19, 1986, p. 50.

In July, 1986 the Soviets announced its intention to remove six regiments of troops by December of that year. Although these troops consisted mainly of anti-aircraft personnel, and were useless in fighting the Mujahideen, when completed it was the first instance of a Soviet reduction in forces. On the battlefield the Soviets began to suffer substantial losses in aircraft due to the steady supply of sophisticated, U.S.-made **Stinger** anti-aircraft missiles reaching the rebels. The Soviet dominance of the air was reduced considerably, and rebel forces were able to consolidate their hold on many areas which had previously been subjected to Soviet aerial bombardment.<sup>40</sup>

In December, 1987, one week prior to the U.S.-Soviet Summit in Washington D.C., Najibullah announced the Afghan version of "new thinking." The policy was called "National Reconciliation." This program offered amnesty to all rebels, and called for a coalition government made up of all elements of Afghan society. For the first time, the Mujahideen were recognized as legitimate groups within Afghanistan.<sup>41</sup> One week later, at the summit meeting with President Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev would announce in regard to the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that, "The political decision has been taken. We've named the time limit - 12 months, maybe less."<sup>42</sup>

Following Gorbachev's announcement, high level talks between the Soviet Foreign Minister Edvard Shevardnadze and General Secretary Najibullah soon produced results. Shevardnadze explained that the Soviet decision to withdraw its forces was based on the Afghan version of "new

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<sup>40</sup>Wall Street Journal, 16 February 1988, p. 18.

<sup>41</sup>"Show 'em a Way to go Home," Time, 14 December 1987, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup>U.S. News and World Report, 21 December 1987, p. 25.

thinking." The Soviet press reported on the Afghan-Soviet talks of January 7, 1988:

Weapons in hand, Afghan patriots have been wholeheartedly defending the gains of the April revolution. Soviet internationalist fighting men have been at their side....But the new political thinking has persistently sought ways and means that rule out a military solution to the problem. This is how the draft political settlement around Afghanistan and the policy of national reconciliation came into being....When the outside interference has ended, we will leave Afghanistan with a clear conscience and with the awareness that our duty has been fulfilled.<sup>43</sup>

Although it would appear that the Soviet position regarding the cessation of outside interference was unchanged, in fact, it had changed tremendously. The Afghan policy of "National Reconciliation" changed the official view of the Mujahideen from being imperialist "bandits" into "internal opposition forces." Therefore, what was considered before by the Soviets as "outside interference," could now be interpreted as an internal Afghan problem which would be dealt with by the Afghan government. Thus, the need for Soviet troops no longer existed.

#### **The Soviet Withdrawal**

On February 8, 1988, Gorbachev announced that the Soviets would begin removing their forces from Afghanistan on May 15, if an agreement was signed in Geneva by March 15. He proposed that all Soviet troops would be withdrawn within ten months after an agreement was signed.<sup>44</sup> Following a Soviet announcement on March 17 that they would withdraw troops even if no agreements were reached,<sup>45</sup> the Geneva peace talks, which had been stalled by demands from both sides, soon ironed out the numerous technical difficulties that were delaying an agreement.

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<sup>43</sup>Pravda, 7 January 1988, p. 14, cited in CDSP, 1 (February, 1988): 13 (emphasis mine).

<sup>44</sup>New York Times, 9 February 1988, p. 1, 7.

<sup>45</sup>New York Times, 18 March 1988, p. 7.



Apparently the Western interests decided it was better to bend a small degree to accomodate Soviet demands than to have no agreement at all.

On March 31, Najibullah's government announced the creation of a new northern province on the Afghan-Soviet border. The new province was formed by splitting off the mountainous portions of two other provinces into the new province called Sari Pull. This new province is geographically formed to provide easy defense and is speculated to be a possible future stronghold for the Afghan communists in the event of a retreat from Kabul. This new province could help insulate the Moslem areas of Soviet Central Asia from Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan. In recent months the northern provinces of Afghanistan have been displaying signs of independence, and new Soviet-Afghan cultural and economic agreements have been signed.<sup>46</sup> It is unknown what the significance of this new province will hold for the future, and no explanations have been put forward by the Afghans or Soviets.

On April 6, Gorbachev and Najibullah met in the Soviet Central Asian city of Tashkent. In a joint statement issued the next day, both sides agreed, "that the last obstacles to concluding the agreements have now been removed thanks to the constructive cooperation of all who are involved in the settlement, and favor their immediate signing."<sup>47</sup> On April 14, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Soviet Union and the United States signed agreements providing for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and the restoration of a nonaligned Afghan state.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>New York Times, 1 April 1988, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup>New York Times, 8 April 1988, p. 1, 4.

<sup>48</sup>New York Times, 15 April 1988, p. 1

The Geneva agreement stipulates the following four conditions regarding the Soviet withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan:

- 1) The Afghans and Pakistanis will refrain from any form of interference in each others affairs.
- 2) All refugees will be allowed to return safely to Afghanistan.
- 3) The U.S. and U.S.S.R. guarantee Afghanistan's future non-aligned status.
- 4) The Soviet troop withdrawal will begin on May 15, and be concluded by November 15, 1988.<sup>49</sup>

An analysis of this document reveals that contains only the most general of details. There is no plan for the return of refugees, nor is it apparent that the Afghans or the Pakistanis, both backed-up by their Superpower patrons, will refrain from interfering in each others affairs. The Mujahideen continue to be armed in camps inside the Pakistan border, and Soviet/Afghan agents have been accused of destroying supply depots in Pakistan. There is no agreement on the supply of arms to either the Kabul government by the Soviets, or to the rebels by the United States. Apparently all that has been accomplished in this agreement is to officially confirm the Soviet's decision to remove their troops. The future of Afghanistan is now in the hands of the Afghan communists and the Mujahideen.

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<sup>49</sup>The Spokesman-Review, 15 April 1988, p. 1.

## Chapter VIII

### Analysis and Conclusion

My spirit will remain in Afghanistan, though my soul will go to God. My last words to you my son and successor, are: **Never trust the Russians.**

Rahaman Khan, Amir of  
Afghanistan (1880-1901)

### Answers to Project Questions

As stated in the introduction, this study has set out to accomplish two goals. The first goal is to identify important aspects of Soviet foreign policy toward Afghanistan prior to the 1979 invasion and to analyze the invasion within the historic context of these policies. Four operational questions were presented to provide for the basis of this analysis. The first goal can now be reached by providing answers these questions.

### A Case of Russian Imperialism ?

Although the exact motives behind the Soviet decision to invade Afghanistan may never be known, one widely held interpretation views the Soviet action the latest stage in the age-old process of Russian imperialism. This project has investigated Soviet foreign policy over the last 80 years in order to assess the validity of this view.

The Russians have always been interested in Afghanistan. They are concerned with the political fortunes of that nation in much the same way as the United States keeps watch on Mexico. The Soviets showed that, in their foreign relations with Afghanistan prior to World War II, ideological purity was of secondary importance to national

interest. In the early period of relations, when the Bolsheviks actively promoted world-wide revolution, they chose to establish normal diplomatic contacts with the Afghan monarchy. The Soviets did not promote revolution in Afghanistan, and went so far as to aid King Amanullah when he faced internal rebellion.

From the Soviet viewpoint, it was preferable to have a stable Afghanistan, controlled by a tribal monarch who actively promoted good relations, than an unstable nation whose alignment was uncertain. Prior to the end of World War II the Soviet Union sought to maintain Afghanistan's historic role as a buffer state between Russia and Great Britain. Diplomatic, economic, trade and military relations were all kept to a minimal level as the Soviets maintained only sporadic contact with its southern neighbor.

Perhaps the best example of the Soviet desire to uphold the status-quo is its reaction to the peasant rebellion in 1929. Bacha-i-Saquo, the peasant leader, was the perfect, ideologically-correct rebel as prescribed within Leninist revolutionary theory. Instead of supporting a leader of the peasant masses, the Soviets chose to support the King, apparently viewing Bacha as an ally whose time had not arrived in tradition-bound Afghanistan. The Soviets decided that their national interest was best served by helping to perpetuate the Afghan monarchy. If the Soviets were planning to annex Afghanistan in the 1920s and 1930s, this situation had presented them with an ideal opportunity. Their decision not to support the peasant revolt refutes any early claims of Soviet imperialism toward Afghanistan.

Other examples of Soviet behavior also support this anti-territorial interpretation. Although the Soviets did send troops into

Afghanistan on two occasions in pursuit of border-raiders, they also chose to engage diplomatic solutions to prevent future incidents. If Soviet intentions were purely based on territorial gain, they could have used these border incidents as an excuse to stage a large scale invasion. In all border incidents, the Soviets withdrew their troops at the request of the Afghan government. Eventually, the Soviets destroyed the bandits through a joint Afghan-Soviet venture which required a high degree of cooperation and coordination between the two nations.

Following World War II the level of Soviet-Afghan interaction increased slowly until Khrushchev's rise to power, commencing in 1953. Despite the massive amount of Soviet economic and military aid to Afghanistan in the following years, it cannot be said that the Soviets controlled internal or external Afghan affairs. The Soviet Union was Afghanistan's largest source of aid, but many other nations, including the United States, independently pursued aid projects in Afghanistan. In many cases the Afghans were able to arrange for cooperation between the Superpowers, even in the depths of the Cold War. The Afghans were also adept at the old game of "positive-neutrality" and played upon U.S.-Soviet competition in order to receive a proportionally larger amount of aid than other nations.

Many analysts have pointed to the type of aid which the Soviets provided Afghanistan as "proof" of long-held plans which finally came to pass in the 1979 invasion. Construction projects, such as bridges strong enough to support tanks, hardened roads and tunnels through mountain passes which could later be used to facilitate the logistical support of troops, and civilian and military airports to be used by airborne elements of an invasion are all cited as overt military components of

Soviet aid.<sup>1</sup> Khrushchev's memoirs plainly express the strategic dimensions which these projects held for the Soviet Union, yet, for a number of reasons, even these factors only weakly support accusations of a territorial intent lurking behind Soviet aid projects.

The first reason points to the fact that the United States was building similar roads and bridges in Afghanistan. If the Soviet roads are to be interpreted as strategic devices for implementing territorial expansion, so must the American roads. In regard to bridges being built strong enough to support tanks, we must also look at the supply of arms to the Afghans.

The Afghan government asked the U.S. for arms in the late 1940s and early 1950s and were repeatedly turned down. The Afghans then turned to the Russians. The Soviets supplied the requested weapons, which included tanks and heavy transport vehicles. It would do the Afghans little good to have heavy Soviet tanks falling through weak bridges built by both the Soviets and Americans. Thus, the Soviet construction projects cannot be viewed solely as strategic elements in a Soviet master-plan because they also are important to Afghan security interests. Also, these bridges were used on a daily basis in the mundane function of facilitating trade, communications, and economic development within Afghanistan. If the bridges, roads and airports had been built, and the Afghans were not also provided tanks, trucks and airplanes, then a definite case for ulterior Soviet motives could be made. However, this was not the case in Afghanistan and proponents of this argument present a weak case.

In regard to trade and economic relations, there is no doubt that the Soviets were Afghanistan's primary partner and benefactor. The

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see Thomas Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, p. 25

Soviets completely dominated trade with Afghanistan and were the major market for Afghan goods. The Soviets were also primarily responsible for helping to develop Afghanistan's primitive economy. Soviet economic dominance would have continued even if PDPA had fallen, and it is likely that economic relations will continue even if the Mujahideen come to power. The simple fact remains that the USSR is the only economically feasible trading partner to which the Afghans have access. After hostilities die down, business relations will most likely return to normal.

Soviet involvement in Afghan military matters was necessarily extensive in light of the need to train Afghan personnel in the use and maintenance of sophisticated Soviet equipment. Many of Afghanistan's officers were pro-Soviet and had been trained in the USSR. Some of these officers supported or aided in the communist coup, were members of the PDPA, and actively supported the policies of the new regime in 1978. However, their lack of support for the Soviet Union was revealed in the complete breakdown of the Afghan armed forces following the Soviet invasion. If the number of desertions, mutinies and outright attacks on Soviet personnel by Afghan troops is any reflection of Soviet control over the Afghan military, then it is apparent that the Soviets inspire only negligible amounts of loyalty among Afghan forces.

The communist movement in Afghanistan was no doubt influenced by the Soviets, but there is no evidence to suggest that the Soviets wished to destabilize historically friendly relations by instigating a communist take-over. When the PDPA took control, they did so without Soviet aid. The PDPA and its various factions had not been considered as serious threats to the Daoud regime and when they managed to take power, the

Soviets were as uninformed about their leaders as were other governments. Increased Soviet support of the PDPA helped lead to their intervention in 1979, but intervention was not overtly planned prior to the PDPA coup.

Two points of international law and an element of Soviet foreign policy were used to justify the invasion. They cannot, however, be interpreted as part of a **premeditated** Soviet plan for invading Afghanistan. Article 51 of the U.N. Charter has been used by many nations in previous efforts to support allies - legitimate or otherwise. The 1978 Treaty of Friendship was signed before it became apparent that the communist regime was in real danger of falling. This treaty was part of the proposed Soviet South Asia Security System which had been formulated in the 1960s to counter CENTO and SEATO. The Brezhnev Doctrine became important because it applied to Afghanistan, but only after Afghanistan became socialist in 1978.

Therefore, it is clear that the underlying cause of the 1979 invasion was not simply a matter of traditional Russian territorial expansion. The Soviet Union did not have a long-standing master plan for the domination of Afghanistan which was fulfilled by the 1979 invasion. Diplomatic, economic, trade and military relations between the two countries steadily increased from 1919 to 1979, and the Soviets played an important role in Afghan affairs. Yet, there is no hard evidence to indicate that Soviet policies in Afghanistan were anything more than the normal exchange of relations between two friendly nation-states.

#### The Question of Military Intervention

The Soviet Union and Afghanistan have engaged in approximately 80 years of international relations. Both countries have undergone multiple changes in leadership and policies. The question arises whether the 1979



invasion is consistent with previous Soviet foreign policies toward Afghanistan, or should the invasion be viewed as a fundamentally new phase in relations?

According to Leninist theory, war is a viable tool in state policy. Wars are inherently political acts which are pursued for political purposes. The following quote from the text, Soviet Military Policy, provides a description of the Soviet view of war:

The fundamental communist view maintains that all wars are by definition political acts because they are waged by the belligerents to achieve specific aims. Lenin wrote: 'The ruling class also determines policy in war. War is in its entirety politics; it is the continuation by this class of the pursuit of the same aims by other means.'<sup>2</sup> Consequently, 'the warring states formulate the political aims of the war. The nature of the political aims decisively influences the conduct of the war,' that is the scale and intensity of the war.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the use of military power is a political act which is used to gain political ends. We should therefore view the Soviet invasion, and withdrawal, as actions taken to achieve political goals. The Soviet use of military power is seen as one element in their policy of "correlation of forces." Military, economic and political elements are all viewed as equally important. Apparently the Soviets miscalculated in regard to these components when they decided to invade Afghanistan.

Some commentators claim that the Soviet decision to send troops into Afghanistan was consistent with similar decisions in 1925, 1929 and

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<sup>2</sup>V.I. Lenin, *Sochineniia*, Vol. 25, p. 19. Cited by V.D. Sokolovskii, ed., Soviet Military Strategy trans. by Herbert S. Dinerstein, Leon Goure, and Thomas W. Wolfe (Englewoods Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 109. Originally published by the Military Publishing House of the Ministry of Defence of the USSR.

<sup>3</sup>Colonel G.A. Fedorov, "The Nature of Wars and Their Causes," in *Marksizm-Leninizm o voine i armii* [Marxism-Leninism on War and the Army], Voenizdat Ministerstva Oborony Soiuza SSR, Moscow, 1961, p. 43. Cited in *Ibid.*

1930.<sup>4</sup> This is far from the truth. The 1925 and 1930 "invasions" were unplanned pursuit actions directed against bandits, and both incidents were settled diplomatically shortly thereafter with terms which consented to Afghan wishes. The level of Soviet involvement in the 1929 invasion remains unclear. This "invasion" went completely counter to ideological writings, and troops were withdrawn when Ammanullah fled to India. Thus, Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan prior to 1979 was minimal, and cannot be interpreted as setting a historic precedent for the 1979 invasion.

Previous to 1979, the Soviets were confronted with numerous changes in the Afghan government. Amanullah, the pro-Soviet king, was replaced by Bacha-i-saquo, the peasant-bandit-Islamic fundamentalist. Bacha was ousted by Nadir Shah who lessened Soviet influence and normalized relations with Britain. Nadir was succeeded by his son Zahir who remained neutral. Zahir handed power to Daoud who intensified Afghan-Soviet interaction. Daoud was removed by Zahir when he became too influential, and then Zahir turned the monarchy in to a constitutional monarchy which remained pro-Soviet. Daoud replaced Zahir in a coup, changed Afghanistan into a republic, and again intensified ties with the Soviet Union. Daoud was replaced by the leader of the Afghan communists, Taraki, who was deposed by his fellow-communist Amin. These governments represented a wide variety of different leaders who attempted to instigate substantial changes in the Afghan system.

In all of these instances of change in Afghan governments, the Soviets reacted in similar fashion. They supported the new Afghan leaders because Soviet interests were maintained. The break with

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<sup>4</sup>See Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan, pp. 9-19.

historical Soviet policy toward Afghanistan occurred with the interjection of ideology into the equation. Instead of letting the PDPA government fall to the country-wide opposition, and working with the new Afghan leaders (as they had in the past), the Soviets were ideologically bound under the Brezhnev Doctrine to support any communist government which was threatened.

Soviet involvement in internal Afghan affairs was never overly necessary because the Afghan leaders, whoever they might be, had generally looked toward the Soviet Union in a favorable, if not friendly, fashion. The Afghan leadership changed many times throughout the 20th century, and the Soviets seemed willing to work with anyone, as long as they remained pro-Soviet. Soviet strategic interests were continually served by each successive Afghan ruler. Before 1978, when the PDPA entered the scene, the respective ideologies of the various Afghan rulers had played an insignificant role in the Soviet view of Afghanistan.

Therefore, the question of consistency must be answered in the negative. The Soviet decision to intervene militarily was not consistent with previous Soviet policies toward Afghanistan. These inconsistencies are most clearly reflected in the increased degree with which the PDPA government relied on the Soviet Union to remain in power, the willingness of the Russians to extend such aid, and the introduction of ideology into the foreign policy equation.

#### Post-Invasion Goals and Methods

The Soviets invaded Afghanistan in order to nullify those factors which they perceived as threatening: the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism, instability on their southern border, and the possibility of collapse of an allied Socialist government. In order to achieve

these goals the Russians instigated military, economic and political solutions. The Soviets initially hoped that a massive show of military force would intimidate the internal Afghan opposition for a long enough period which would allow new economic and social policies to take place and be accepted. The Soviets attempted to garner popular support by changing the character of the PDPA government to appear both traditional and Islamic, and by moderating the radical reform policies which had driven the people to rebellion. Thus far, all policies have failed. They have failed for one simple reason: the Afghan populace hates the Russians and wants them to leave.

What is equally important in the analysis of post-invasion policies is a brief review of some potential policies which were not pursued by the Soviets in Afghanistan. Even though 120,000 troops is a very large number, it soon became obvious that a much larger force would be needed to dominate Afghanistan militarily. The fact that the Soviets have not increased the size of their forces to a point where they completely controlled Afghanistan, indicates that they did not plan to subjugate the country by military means.

Neither have the Soviets taken any action which would indicate they were planning to stay in Afghanistan permanently. The fabled "never ending Russian quest for a warm water port," as postulated by many geopolitical strategists, has not been supported by Soviet policies in Afghanistan. The Soviets have not attempted to increase Afghanistan's strategic capabilities by extending Soviet railroads into Afghanistan. These railroads have bordered northern Afghanistan since the early 1900s and the Soviets have never attempted to extend them into Afghanistan. Such a plan would be the most logical strategic approach to eventually

gaining a warm-water port in the Indian Ocean. The simple fact that the Soviets would risk a direct confrontation with the United States by moving troops into Iran or Pakistan seems to discount Afghanistan as a legitimate pathway to such a goal.

And last, but not least, the simple fact that the Soviet Union has decided to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan severely damages the validity of geopolitical theories which view Soviet foreign policy as expansionary in nature. In the case of Afghanistan it would now appear to be a moot point.<sup>5</sup>

#### What is the Basis of Policy Toward Afghanistan ?

Soviet foreign policies are based in Marxist-Leninist writing. Foreign policies are modified as each new Soviet leader provides his own interpretations of Marx and Lenin and adds to the ever growing body of communist thought. In the West communist ideology is often perceived as a dogmatic, non-changing philosophy which was defined by Engels, Marx and Lenin. This view is simply false. As leadership changes occur in the Soviet Union, so do Soviet policies.

Despite the numerous Soviet leaders who have maintained relations with Afghanistan, and many changes in the character of Soviet foreign policy over the years, relations between the two countries exhibited a remarkable amount of stability from 1919 to 1979. However, two important elements of Soviet ideology have had far-reaching effects on Soviet-Afghan relations. These are the Brezhnev Doctrine and perestroika.

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<sup>5</sup>It would appear as of this date, (May 10, 1988), that the Soviets will begin their official withdrawal five days hence as outlined in the Geneva Treaty. There has been sporadic reports that troops have already begun to leave Afghanistan and there are no indication that the Soviets plan to reverse their decision.

In one respect both of these elements of Soviet policy are remarkably similar. They are both political statements which provide a basis for interpreting the political situation in foreign countries. Under the Brezhnev Doctrine, opposition in Afghanistan was defined as outside aggression. Under perestroika the very same opposition is viewed as an internal Afghan problem. It would appear as if perestroika has replaced the Brezhnev Doctrine as the ideological basis for the Soviet interpretation of the Afghan situation.

Thus, Brezhnev's original claim, that Soviet troops would come home when they no longer are needed, has not been reversed. It has been fulfilled by Gorbachev's decision to view the Afghan problem in a completely different light. It was a political decision to invade Afghanistan, and a political decision to pull out. If interpreted in this way, Soviet foreign policy has remained consistent toward Afghanistan because it has remained within its ideological constraints.

Looking at Soviet policies from a non-ideological perspective reveals some inconsistencies. The two most obvious inconsistent policies are the decision to invade in 1979 and the reversal of that decision in 1988. The Soviets attempted to implement many changes in Afghanistan and explored many policy initiatives, but they were never able to confront the Mujahideen with any policy that was effective in threatening their popular support among the Afghan populace. From this perspective it would appear that the Soviets did not have a consistent policy toward Afghanistan. In fact, they apparently suffered from a complete lack of consistent, effective policies which could adequately address and correct the situation in Afghanistan.

### Future Ramifications

The second goal of this project was to speculate upon the future ramifications which the Soviet withdrawal will have on relations with Afghanistan and Soviet foreign policy in general. Obviously Soviet-Afghan relations will be under tremendous strain after the Soviets withdraw. In my opinion, the Afghan communists will be defeated within a year after the Soviet pullout. The next Afghan government will no doubt attempt to cease all activities with the USSR. Although hatred for the Soviet Union will run deep among Afghans for many years, (possibly centuries - the Afghans still hate the British), it is most likely that they will be forced to interact with the Russians soon after a new government is formed. The fact remains that Afghanistan is a primitive country. Its small industries and agricultural production are all reliant on the Soviet Union for survival. The Afghans will need a market for their goods, and the only substantial market which exists is that provided by the Soviet Union.

It would be foolish for the Afghans to actively solicit large amounts of foreign assistance from other nations. It was just this sort of "outside interference," and perceived threat to Soviet security which led to the Russian invasion in the first place. There is nothing to keep the Russians from again invading if they feel threatened. Afghanistan remains in the Soviet sphere of influence, and despite Afghan hostility toward the Russians, the two nations will continue to interact even after the war is over.

In regard to Soviet foreign policy in general, the withdrawal may have a number of effects. It would appear as if the Soviet Union will become more tolerant of changes in allied Socialist governments. The

realization that the Soviet Union is not all-powerful, even in its own sphere of influence, has become apparent. This does not mean that the Soviets will give up their dominant position in Eastern Europe. If some internal political changes do occur they will be tolerated, but open rebellion would not be acceptable.

Before getting involved in future intervention, the Soviets are likely to investigate the costs and possibilities of success very closely. Following defeat in Vietnam, the U.S. has been hesitant to commit its forces to combat. Americans have realized that military dominance does not necessarily mean political victory. The Russians have learned a similar lesson in Afghanistan. Without popular consent, a revolutionary government has little chance of success. The Soviets have always realized this fact, but, in the case of Afghanistan, they refused to adhere to their own revolutionary theories.

The Soviets may also begin to realize that all anti-Soviet movements are not necessarily inspired by the Chinese or the United States. The U.S. may have learned this lesson in Iran, and the Soviets have similarly discovered the revolutionary power of Islam in Afghanistan. Instead of the Americans looking for a Red under every bed, and the Russians seeing a CIA operative on every corner, both nations are starting to realize that there are more players in the game of world politics.

The greatest challenge which the Soviet Union may face in the immediate future is not one of outside aggression, but rather the continuing dilemmas raised by competing internal forces. Changes in the economy, new political freedoms, and the increasingly vocal supporters of various nationality groups (including Moslems) will test the survivability of new Soviet leadership to the utmost degree.



Conclusion: The Soviet/Afghan War - A Lesson in Living History

"I am in a difficulty to know what to do with the country now we have got it."

**-General Sir Donald Steward, brigade commander during the British punitive expedition. 2nd Anglo/Afghan War, 1879.<sup>6</sup>**

There exists a familiar adage which states "Those who refuse to study history are doomed to repeat it." Quite often this statement is used inappropriately to compare a contemporary situation with an event in history. It would appear, however, that in the case of Soviet involvement in Afghan affairs during the 1980s, the lessons learned by the British in the three Anglo-Afghan Wars of the nineteenth century were lost on the Russians. Although there are many differences between British and Russian involvement in Afghan affairs, the similarities are remarkable.

As seen in chapter two, the First Anglo-Afghan War was started when the Afghan leader Dost Mohammed incurred the wrath of the British by partaking in a small degree of independent behavior. The British overreacted, sent in the troops, and installed their own puppet - Shah Shuja. Although they possessed complete dominance in military firepower, and had all of the resources of the British Empire to back them, the British were unable to defeat the incredibly resolute and dogged persistence of the Afghans. Eventually the British withdrew after suffering terrible losses. The Afghans, though not completely victorious, provided ample warning of their tenacity and complete intolerance of foreign invaders - no matter what the odds. The British

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<sup>6</sup>Arnold, Afghanistan, p. 75.

suffered similar defeats in the 2nd and 3rd Anglo-Afghan Wars after unwisely choosing to again intervene in Afghan affairs.

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1988 is a modern version of the same story. The Soviets were the dominant economic, political and military force having influence over Afghan affairs. They remained dominant only when they exerted influence from within their own borders. The Soviet's ability to manipulate events within Afghanistan ceased as soon as they became directly involved in Afghan internal affairs. The Afghans always postpone fighting among themselves when a common enemy enters the scene. As soon as the Russians depart, the Afghan civil war, which began as a fight among Afghans in 1978, will resume until one faction gains the upper hand. The Afghans reacted in a traditionally predictable fashion, and it is more than likely that they will rebel in the future if ever confronted with similar foreign intervention in their country.

With the advantage of hindsight, it would appear that the Soviets' major error came in their failure to control their over-zealous southern comrades in the early stages of the new communist regime. If they had exerted more control over PDPA policies, and instituted social changes at a extremely graduated pace, the civil war may never have erupted. It became obvious that the level of control the Soviets maintained was limited both before and after the 1979 invasion. The Afghan communists were as independent as their fellow countrymen in rejecting too much foreign influence.

Afghanistan is a land-locked nation with a small population, scant resources, primitive economic and political systems, and a intransigent desire to remain that way. Any country which forgets this basic

assessment and attempts to interfere with Afghanistan's unique traditions is bound to learn the same painful lessons inflicted upon the British and Russians.

- End -

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