CHAPTER III

GROWING US AND USSR ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN:
THE INITIAL YEARS

This chapter makes an endeavour to analyse the role played by the United States and the Soviet Union from the period immediately succeeding the Second World War till the beginning of 1963. The pattern of Afghan-Soviet relations prior to the Second World War has been analysed in the second chapter. However the Afghan-US relations prior to the Second World War have not been critically appraised so far. Thus the present chapter will also briefly assess the Afghan-US relations prior to the Second World War and during the post-war period until 1963.

The conclusion of the Second World War envisaged the emergence of cold war between the two Super Powers - the United States and the Soviet Union and the breaking up of the colonial system and emergence of new states. Cold war is defined as "a state of tension between countries in which each side adopts policies designed to strengthen itself and weaken the other side, but falling short of actual hot war." 1 The alliance during the Second World War between the United States, United Kingdom (U.K.) and Soviet Union presented a unique example of International

cooperation. However, immediately after the conclusion of the war, the contemporary developments found the Soviet Union and the United States as main adversaries of power struggle in the global context. The United States and other Western countries started looking upon the USSR with suspicion and contempt. The then Prime Minister of UK, Winston Churchill, in his speech at Fulton said "from Stelus in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the continent". The British Prime Minister even went to the extent of saying "our safety was seen to rest as the sombre balancing power of the Atom Bomb". Churchill's implied threat of using atom bomb against the Soviet Union provided a fillip to the process of cold war.

While the cold war was gaining momentum, the process of decolonization had also been initiated immediately after the conclusion of the Second World War. The colonized and underdeveloped countries of Asia witnessed the advent of strong anti-colonial movement striving for national independence. The wave of independence


sweeping Asia, Africa and Latin America leading to the decline of European colonial powers, served to change the world's political scene beyond recognition. Another remarkable development of that period was the founding of the United Nations with the hope that it could help reduce the tension in the world and bring peace and prosperity throughout.

The decline of the Kuomintang Government and rise of the Communist Party to power in the mainland China in 1949 further brought the cold war on the doorsteps of South Asian countries including Afghanistan. In Pursuance of the Truman doctrine, the United States declared the global containment of communism as the major objective of its foreign policy. On 12 March 1947 the then US President, Henry S. Truman, said “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting all implied subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” This came to be known as Truman doctrine. Thus during the later half of 1940s, on the one hand nationalist upsurge was gaining ground mainly in Asia, while, on the


other hand, the nations of the world were divided into two power-blocs under the aegis of the United States and the Soviet Union. The traditions and experiences of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa found it difficult to identify themselves with either of the power blocs. Leo Mates observes that the US and the Soviet Union had emerged as the main contenders for the arms race which commenced after the war. He further contended that the two Super powers were primarily the former allies and it was their differences from the time of Second World War, rather their cooperation, which affected the course of international affairs in the succeeding years.  

The newly independent countries of Asia had developed a basic distrust towards Western countries which mainly emanated from the imperial character of the latter. The contention of the United States and other Western countries that they were trying to preserve democracy against totalitarian communism failed to evoke

encouraging responses from the newly independent countries of Asia. Though the United States was more or less free from charges of direct colonialism unlike other Western powers like UK and France, the US policy in the Philippines and in Latin America had given rise to misgivings and doubts.\(^7\)

At the same time, the newly independent countries were also averse to any alignment with the Soviet bloc. The newly independent countries tended to view the big powers' politics with suspicion and kept themselves aloof from it. These countries were determined to preserve their hard won political independence by following an independent foreign policy based on the principles of nonalignment.

As described in the previous chapter, Afghanistan had pursued the policy of strict and positive neutrality. The ruling elite of Afghanistan was aware of the fact that Iran was occupied by the Allied powers during the war and only by staying neutral during that period, Afghanistan could maintain its independence and territorial integrity.

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7. For details see, Melvin Gurtov, *The United States Against the Third World* (New York, 1974).
In early 1946, Hashim Khan was replaced by Shah Mahmud Khan as Prime Minister of Afghanistan. In May 1946, Shah Mahmud declared that establishing friendly relations with all countries, especially the neighbours, constituted the cornerstone of Afghan foreign policy. He also declared his government's support for strengthening the forces of peace. Again on 21 July 1946, while addressing the Loya Jirgah, King Zahir said that there was a dire need of envisaging reforms in the country. The King also said that it was for the first time in Afghan history that the possibilities of great powers using the strategic location of Afghanistan for augmenting their sphere of influence had been rendered remote.

AFGHAN - US RELATIONS

The diplomatic relations between Kabul and Washington were established in 1940s and efforts in this regard were initiated during King Amanullah's time. However, one may go back in history to add that it was

8- Islah (Kabul), 15 May 1946.
9. Ibid., 22 July 1946.
during the middle of nineteenth century that some American missionaries tried to establish contacts with Afghanistan. The American Presbyterian missionaries made a pioneering attempt to establish direct contact with the Afghans.\textsuperscript{10} They established a mission at Ludhiana, where several prominent Afghan refugees, including the former Amir Zaman Shah and Shah Shuja, were staying.\textsuperscript{11} However the American missionaries failed to establish contacts among the "exiled Afghan leaders or their retinues".\textsuperscript{12}

Until the advent of the regime of King Amanullah in 1919, there was no contact between Kabul and Washington. King Amanullah provided a new direction to Afghan foreign policy by seeking to establish friendly relations with all countries. Having established diplomatic relations with Soviet Union, U.K. and Turkey, Amanullah sent his personal emissary to explore the establishment of friendly relations with other European countries and the United States.

\textsuperscript{10} Vartan Gregorian, \textit{The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan} (Stanford, 1969), p. 69.


\textsuperscript{12} Gregorian, n. 10, p. 69.
In July 1921, an Afghan mission headed by Mohammad Wali Khan visited the United States. On his arrival in New York on 11 July 1921, Mohammad Wali Khan said that he had come to explore the possibilities of establishing diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and the United States. Prior to his meeting with the US Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, Wali Khan told the press on 17 July 1921 that the establishment of relations between Kabul and Washington would provide ample opportunities for American businessmen to invest in Kabul. However despite all these optimistic pronouncements Wali Khan was not sure about the success of his mission. Wali Khan met some officials of the State Department prior to his meeting with the US Secretary of State. However, the New York Times commented that the welcome accorded to the Afghan Mission by the United States could not be interpreted as latter's recognition of King Amanullah's government in Kabul.

14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 18 July 1921.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 20 July 1921.
US Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes wrote to the US President on 18 July 1921: "Apparently we have hitherto had no relations with Afghanistan directly, as formerly our dealings with that country were through Great Britain. In 1919 Great Britain recognized the independence of Afghanistan". However the UK did not like Afghan policy of forging relations with other European powers. Hughes in his letter to President conveyed the British feelings about Afghan Mission that "the British Government did not look with favour on its (Afghan Mission's) activities or its endeavours to conclude agreements with other Governments, as Afghanistan, although ostensibly independent, was still within the British 'sphere of political influence'."

However the US Secretary of State expressed the view that there was no way of having relations with Afghanistan "at that time unless they had asked directly and there is nothing in the British position which precluded our reception of the Mission." The United States was aware of Afghanistan's Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union signed in Moscow on 28th February, 1921 and ratified by Afghanistan in August, 1921.


19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.
Hughes had opined that Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union did not prevent the US to foster closer relations with Kabul. He wrote to President Harding: "the Soviet Government has dealings with other powers with which we are in relation and I do believe that the Soviet Treaty with Afghanistan furnishes a reason for precluding ourselves from the opportunity which otherwise might be open in that country". 21 Thus Hughes advised the President to receive the Afghan Mission and expressed the opinion that he did not think "however that pending further inquiries it is necessary or advisable to go beyond their courteous reception". 22

Accordingly, the Afghan Mission was received by the Secretary of State on 20 July 1921, Hughes in another communication to President Harding on 21 July 1921 informed the latter that Afghan Mission was keen to meet the US President. He further wrote that the Afghan Mission was in the United States "to press the request for the establishment of diplomatic relations". 23

There did not exist formal or informal diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and the United States. In view of the fact that Britain had "relinquished her protectorate" 24 over Afghanistan, the United States

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 259.
23. The Secretary of State to President Harding, 21 July 1921, Ibid., pp. 259-60.
could establish direct relations with it. However, the then US Secretary of State did not favour the immediate establishment of diplomatic relations between Kabul and Washington. He advised the President: "nothing further should be said at this time and that the matter will be taken under careful consideration".  

The Afghan Mission met President Harding on 26 July 1921. The leader of the Mission, Wali Khan handed over a personal letter from the Afghan King, Amir Amanullah to President Harding. Amir Amanullah wrote: "As I used to have the sincere wish to establish permanent friendly relations between Afghanistan and the high Government of the United States, I expected that Your Excellency's High Government may be satisfied with the keeping of that friendly relations too".  

President Harding in his reply to Amanullah's letter wrote:

It is my wish that the relations between the United States and Afghanistan may always be of a friendly character, and I shall be happy to cooperate with your Majesty to this end. I am constrained, however, to confirm to Your Majesty, what was stated orally to G. Mohammad Wali Khan, that with respect to the United States the question of the creation of a Diplomatic Mission and of the appropriate action to that end by the Congress of the United States must be reserved for further consideration.

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25 Ibid

26 Amir Amanullah's letter to President Harding (no date), ibid., p.260.

27 President Harding to Amir Amanullah Khan, 29 July 1921, ibid., p.261.
Thus it is clear that the US administration had deferred the Afghan request of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. The fact that the US did not recognize Amanullah's regime in 1921 could not be interpreted as the negation of US interests in Afghanistan.

For over four years there was no discernible effort on either side to resume negotiations on establishing diplomatic ties between the two countries. In October 1925, the Afghan Ambassador to France, Nadir Khan, contacted the US Ambassador in France, Merrick, in that regard. Nadir Khan wrote a letter to Merrick on 30 October 1925 urging the latter to resume negotiations in that regard. The Afghan Ambassador in his letter had also attached a draft proposal for a treaty to be concluded between the two countries which incorporated provisions for Ambassador level relations and increased economic cooperation between the two countries.

The US Ambassador in France, Merrick, forwarded Afghan Ambassador's letter along with the proposed draft treaty to the US State Department. The US Secretary

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28 Merrick to Secretary of State, 4 November 1925. Ibid., 1926, Vol.1, p.557
30 Ibid.
of State, Frank B. Kellogg, informed Merrick to convey to the Afghan Ambassador the US Government's appreciation of friendly sentiments towards the United States and also enclosed a draft reply purported to be sent to Afghan Ambassador. The proposed note, a copy of which was handed over to Nadir Khan on 20 February 1926 in Paris conveyed the appreciation of US Government towards Afghanistan's friendly sentiments and assured that "careful consideration will be accorded to the draft treaty which you have presented." In 1927 and 1928, the exchange of communication between Kabul and Washington used to be through either French Ambassador in Kabul or their respective missions in Paris.

Following the downfall of Amanullah in April 1929, the process of negotiations between Afghanistan and the United States suffered a setback. King Amanullah was succeeded by Nadir Shah who remained in power from the end of 1929 to 1933. The Government of King Nadir Shah also made efforts to establish direct relations with Washington. In 1931, the Afghan Ambassador in

32 Draft Note from Ambassador Merrick to the Afghan Ambassador in France (no date), ibid., p. 560.
33 Gregorian, n. 10, p. 266.
London made endeavours to contact US Ambassador in London. Consequently the American Ambassador in London apprised the State Department about it and solicited further instructions. 34 However, there was no positive response from the State Department to the Afghan proposal. The Secretary of State directed the US Ambassador in London that if Afghan Ambassador raised the question of recognition: "You should state that you are not authorized to discuss the matter with him". 35

In September 1931, US Ambassador in Italy, Kirk, informed the Department of State that Afghan Government believed that the US Government might be inclined to establish official relations with Afghanistan. 36 The Afghan Ambassador in Rome had contacted Ambassador Kirk and conveyed to the latter his government's desire to "establish relations with the United States Government and was prepared to negotiate a treaty". 37 The Afghan Ambassador had further informed that in case the US Government gave due weightage to the Afghan proposal, his

34. Dawes to the Secretary of State, 15 April 1931, n. 18, vol. I, 1931, p. 825.
35. The Secretary of State to Dawes, 16 April 1931, Ibid.
37. Ibid.
government would undoubtedly empower him to undertake preliminary negotiations in Rome. The US Ambassador urged the States Department for instructions in this regard. The Secretary of State in his reply to Kirk wrote that the Afghan Ambassador could be informed that "no recent consideration has been given by his Government to the question of the establishment of official relations with the Afghan Government and the present moment is not considered to be opportune to negotiate a treaty". The State Department regarded the question of establishing official relations with Afghanistan at that time as premature "since the present regime in Afghanistan has not yet been recognized by this Government".

Following the death of King Nadir Shah in 1933, Zahir Shah succeeded him as the new King of Afghanistan. The Government of Zahir Shah adopted measures of improve Afghanistan's relations with Japan, Italy, France and Czechoslovakia and tried to get economic assistance from these countries. The Soviet Union recognized Zahir

38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., p. 826.
40. Secretary of State to Ambassador Kirk, 24 September 1931, ibid., p. 826.
41. Ibid.
Shah’s regime in November 1933. In September 1934, Afghanistan joined the League of Nations which enhanced former’s international status.

In June 1934, King Zahir Shah sent a letter to the US President through Afghan Ambassador in Paris expressing his desire to strengthen the political and economic relations between Afghanistan and the United States.\(^43\) The then US Acting Secretary of State, William Phillips, wrote to the US President, Roosevelt, that although the US had never entered into direct diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, President Harding in 1921 received an official mission from that country by which it was generally accepted that "recognition had been accorded to the regime of King Amanullah who was then in power".\(^44\) The US reluctance to establish direct diplomatic relations with Afghanistan was expressed by the Acting Secretary of State: "We have been naturally conservative on the subject of establishing relations with Afghanistan owing to the primitive conditions of that country, the lack of capability or other guarantees

\(^{43}\) Ambassador Marriner to the Secretary of State 30 June 1934, n. 18, vol. 2, 1934, p. 747.

\(^{44}\) Acting Secretary of State to President, 21 August 1934, ibid., p. 749.
to the safety of foreigners and the absence of any important American interest". However the Acting Secretary of State further wrote that he could see no reasons "why we should withhold recognition of Afghanistan". President Roosevelt in his reply sent to King Zahir Shah wrote: "I cordially reciprocate the sentiments which you express and, in extending recognition to Your Majesty's Government, take this opportunity of assuring you of my hope that friendly relations will always exist between the United States and Afghanistan". Thus it was for the first time the US accorded recognition to Afghanistan.

In October 1934, Afghanistan proposed a friendship treaty between Afghanistan and the United States. The Secretary of State in his reply to Ambassador Straus wrote that although the United States was not averse to "concluding a treaty of friendship and commerce with the Government of Afghanistan, it considers that the purpose which the two Governments have in mind might be accomplished

45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. President Roosevelt to Zahir Shah, 21 August 1934, ibid., p. 750.
more expeditiously and satisfactorily by the conclusion of a less formal agreement. Subsequently a draft proposal of the agreement containing proposed US amendments to the Afghan draft treaty was sent to Afghanistan. The proposed agreement consisting of seven articles envisaged political and economic relations between the two countries. The resultant impact of these negotiations was that on 26 March 1936, the agreement was signed between Kabul and Washington at Paris. Thus by March 1936 Afghan Government had been recognized by the United States and both countries had signed a formal agreement.

On 4 May 1936, Hornybroek presented his credentials to the Afghan Government as the first US Ambassador in Afghanistan with his headquarters at Teheran. In early 1936, a provisional agreement containing clauses on friendship and diplomatic representation was concluded between Afghanistan and the United States. Even by January 1941 the US had not established any diplomatic mission in Kabul. Murray, the Chief of the

49. Secretary of State to Ambassador Straus in France, 2 January 1935, ibid., p. 556.
50. For full text of the Agreement see ibid., pp. 557-59.
State Department's Near Eastern Affairs Section had observed that as long as US interests continued to be slight, there was no possibility of the United States establishing diplomatic mission in Kabul.\textsuperscript{53}

It was only in December 1941 that the US initiated a move to establish a diplomatic mission in Kabul and it was on 6 June 1942 that the US diplomatic mission was inaugurated in Kabul.\textsuperscript{54} While addressing the Loya Jirgah on 15 June 1942, King Zahir Shah, welcomed the opening of US mission in Kabul and expressed the hope of better economic and political relations between Kabul and Washington.\textsuperscript{55} On 25 July 1942, Cornelius H. Van Engert presented his credentials as US Ambassador in Kabul to King Zahir Shah. Ambassador Engert and King Zahir Shah exchanged views on mutual cooperation and world peace.\textsuperscript{56}

At a time when the Afghan-US diplomatic relations were established, the Second World War was at its zenith. In July 1942 Ambassador Engert assured the Afghan

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Murray to US Ambassador in Tehran, 28 January 1941, n. 18, vol. 3, 1941, pp. 255-58.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} Thyes to the Secretary of State, 6 June 1942, ibid., p. 50.
  \item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 17 June 1942, p. 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{56} Engert to Secretary of State, 25 July 1942, ibid., pp. 51-52.
\end{itemize}
Government that the US, UK and other allied powers were fighting against the Axis powers. He further assured that there was no danger to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{57} In the wake of the outbreak of the Second World War, Afghan King, Zahir Shah, had issued a farman on 17 August 1940, proclaiming the continuance of the policy of neutrality.\textsuperscript{58} However, Afghan policy of neutrality came under strain in the late 1941 when Britain and Soviet Union asked the Afghan Government in October 1941, to expel all non-diplomatic Axis personnel.\textsuperscript{59} The Government of Afghanistan while pursuing a policy of strict neutrality ordered all non-diplomatic citizens of Axis Powers to leave Afghanistan. Of the 180 Germans in Afghanistan, only 10 remained behind as part of the German diplomatic personnel.\textsuperscript{60} During the Second World War, the US was involved in the war and Afghanistan pursued strict neutral attitude during the war.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 30 July 1942, pp. 52-53.

\textsuperscript{58} Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (New Jersey, 1973), p. 480.


\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 252.
The post-war period was succeeded by the onset of cold war. In May 1946, Shah Mahmud Khan, Prime Minister of Afghanistan said:

... America's championship of the small nations guarantees my country's security against aggression. America's attitude is our salvation. For the first time in our history, we are free of the threat of great powers' using our mountain passes as pathways to empire. Now we can concentrate our talents and resources on the better living conditions of our people. (61)

When Afghanistan applied for the membership of the United Nations (UN) in 1946, the US supported it. (62) By November 1948, both countries had promoted their respective diplomatic chancellories to the ambassador level. Sardar Mohammed Naim Khan was appointed as Afghan Ambassador in Washington and Ely E. Palme was posted as US Ambassador in Kabul. (63)

In the wake of cold war gathering momentum and the British withdrawal from Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan felt the need of modernizing its armed forces. On

61. Islah (Kabul), 7 May 1946.
63. Ibid., 12 December 1948.
10 June 1947, the then Afghan War Minister told the British military attache in Kabul that the only potential enemy was the Soviet Union and he feared more pressure from Moscow than its already insisting on a veto over foreigners movements in northern Afghanistan near the Soviet border. Consequently, Afghanistan turned to the United States for economic and arms assistance. Washington had ignored an arms request during Second World War, but in late 1948 fresh request was made by Afghanistan. In late 1948, a goodwill Afghan mission under the leadership of Abdul Majid Khan Zabuli visited Washington and sought economic aid worth $118 million and he also asked for American weapons to maintain internal security. When Zabuli made request for American weapons, the Soviet threat to Afghanistan was implied in it:

..... the reason for seeking US weapons was to make a positive contribution in the event there is war with the Soviets. Properly armed, and convinced of US backing, Afghanistan could manage a delaying action in the passes of the Hindu Kush which would be a


contribution to the success of the armed forces of the West and might enable them to utilize bases which Pakistan and India might provide... when war came Afghanistan would of course be over-run and occupied. But the Russians would be unable to pacify the country. Afghanistan could and would pursue guerrilla tactics for the indefinite period. (66)

However the Truman administration paid little attention to Afghan request for arms. Similarly, the Afghan request for $113 million was reduced to $21 million. Seeing that Afghan expectations were not being met by the US, Zabuli recommended refusing the loan but "his Afghan superiors overruled him because they wanted to establish close economic relations with the United States for political reasons". 67 The Afghan Government tended to think of the loan "as of political as well as of economic importance, possibly increasingly so in the light of manifestations of Soviet interest and offers of assistance to Afghanistan". 68 The partial fulfilment of Afghan


request for loan by the United States, was though in a way contrary to Afghan expectations but it did help in improving the relations between the two countries.

On 7 February 1951 both countries signed an agreement for technical cooperation. Under the terms of this agreement, the US was to provide two mining engineers to Afghanistan to aid and advise the Afghan Government in the exploration of coal and other mineral resources. Apparently Kabul was interested in improving its relations with the United States but it could not afford to join any American sponsored military pact or alliance. On 22 January 1951, Hariman, in a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives, wrote that the US technical and economic assistance to five countries including Afghanistan was being stopped. This measure was being undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Mutual Security Act, signatories to which had to pledge their commitment and steadfastness to the United States. Hariman was of the view that if the


70. Ibid.
proposed negotiations for the Mutual Security Act failed to yield fruitful results, the aid might be resumed.

Afghan-US Relations During Daud Period (1953-63)

The year 1953 witnessed changes in Kabul and Washington. On 6 August 1953 Afghan Premier, Shah Mahmud Khan resigned on health grounds and Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan became the new Prime Minister of Afghanistan. In the United States, there was change of administration. President Eisenhower had assumed the charge of administration in Washington and John Foster Dulles had been appointed as the Secretary of State. The Eisenhower administration in pursuance of the Truman Doctrine also made efforts of seeking new allies around the world, especially those geographically proximate to the Soviet Union.

The emergence of Afghanistan in August 1947 as an independent sovereign country in the aftermath of the partition of Indian sub-continent had made Afghanistan to have strained relations with newly created Pakistan on the issue of Pakhtoonistan. The detailed analysis of Pakhtoon issue would be taken up in Chapter V.
John Foster Dulles during his visit to Pakistan in May 1953, assured the Pakistani leaders of economic and military aid. 71 In 1953, the US Vice-President Richard Nixon visited the Northern Tier countries including Pakistan and Afghanistan. During his visit to Afghanistan, Nixon tried to impress upon the Afghan ruling elite the need of forging an alliance between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Nixon gave the impression as if he disliked the nonaligned policy of Afghanistan and regarded the prevailing controversy between Afghanistan and Pakistan as less important. 72

In 1953, the US preferred Pakistan to Afghanistan for the supply of arms. The policy makers in Washington perhaps under-estimated the strategic significance of Afghanistan for US foreign policy. In 1953, a secret study by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff observed that:

Afghanistan is of little or no strategic importance to the United States. Its geographic location, coupled with the realization by Afghan leaders of Soviet capabilities, presages Soviet control of the country whenever the situation so dictates. It would be desirable for Afghanistan to remain neutral

71. The Times (London), 28 May 1953.
because otherwise it might be overrun as an avenue to the Indian subcontinent. Such neutrality will remain a stronger possibility if there is Western-sponsored opposition to communism in Afghanistan, which opposition in itself might precipitate Soviet moves to take control of the country.\textsuperscript{(73)}

Similar position was adopted by the National Security Council:

The Kremlin apparently does not consider Afghanistan's relatively meagre assets to be worthy of serious attention and probably believes that it can take Afghanistan easily whenever its broader objectives would be served. There is little doubt that Afghanistan could be conquered regardless of its will to resist. In the event of an invasion it is possible that certain elements, particularly the Afghan tribesmen, would continue to resist.\textsuperscript{(74)}

These assessments show that the top officials of the US Government were "being advised that Afghanistan could be written off without a struggle, because it had no value to American security interests".\textsuperscript{75}

Afghanistan expressed its concern over the increasing US arms assistance to Pakistan. The Afghan ambassador in Washington met the US Secretary of State

\textsuperscript{73} Index of Declassified Documents (Arlington, 1979), no. 33A.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 1978, no. 377A.
\textsuperscript{75} Poullada, n. 67, p. 240.
in January 1954 urging the latter to maintain economic and military equilibrium in the region. While explaining his country's reaction over the US arms aid to Pakistan, the Afghan ambassador further expressed the hope that his Government expected the US to maintain existing balance in the region. The US arms aid to Pakistan and latter's joining of South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) did envisage some strains on Afghan-US relations. These developments did help Soviet Union to win the Afghan sympathy by providing some token help. The visit of Soviet leaders to Burma, India and Afghanistan in the later months of 1955 proved instrumental in prompting the US policy-makers to think afresh about US Policy towards South Asia, especially Afghanistan. The New York Times expressed the view that Soviet Union had challenged the US policy towards Afghanistan. Hamilton F. Armstrong while strongly pleading for more US economic and military aid to Afghanistan wrote:

... Afghans are a tough and resilient lot and it is possible that even the subtle programme on which the Soviet Union seems to be embarked for disarming them economically and financially

76. The Times (London), 5 January 1954.
will fail. Nothing that we can do can guarantee that result. But we can encourage the Afghan leaders to feel that they are not alone, we can continue our aid in moderate amounts, giving them time to get their bearings; we can perhaps be of service to them politically, and we can warn against further steps which will end almost end automatically in delivering their country to foreign hands even if seeing that result as imminent they belatedly revolt against it.(77)

The increased Soviet economic and military assistance to Afghanistan had given a little jolt to Washington. The Secretary of State, Dulles, said that the success of Soviet aid and resultant increase in its influence was discernible from the pace of developmental programmes being carried out in Kabul.78 While acknowledging that Soviet package-aid deal had great impact on the developing countries of South Asia especially Afghanistan, Washington declared that if had not lost its interest in Afghanistan. 79

In June 1956, the US provided air-travel facilities to over 1000 Afghans for Haj pilgrimage.80

80. Ibid., 2 July 1956.
During this period, Afghanistan was faced with food shortage and it urged the US for help.\textsuperscript{81} The International Cooperation Administration of United States declared on 17 November 1956 that Afghan Government had accepted the aid worth $100,000 for the reconstruction of a part of Habibia College and the \textbf{Department of State Bulletin} called it an expression of US friendship towards the people of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{82} During 1956, Washington also helped in developing the airport facilities at Kabul.\textsuperscript{83} William M. Routry, a senior official of the State Department told the Committee on Foreign Relations that the US investments in Afghanistan in 1956 were to the tune of $15.6 million with a view to develop air transport facilities in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{84} In 1957, the US agreed to provide Afghanistan technical aid worth $14.4 million for developmental purposes.\textsuperscript{85}

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\textsuperscript{82.} Department of State Bulletin, 3 December 1956.
\textsuperscript{85.} Ibid.
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Afghanistan and Eisenhower Doctrine

The US President Eisenhower in a message to the Congress on 5 January 1957 said that the countries of Middle East were facing the threat of communism. The United States in its policy of global containment of communism, desired to provide increased economic and military assistance to the countries of the Middle East with a view to prevent the growing Soviet influence. This came to be known as Eisenhower Doctrine.86

James P. Richards visited Afghanistan in early 1957 as a part of his tour to the Middle East and South Asian countries with a view to explain the purposes of the Eisenhower Doctrine and its significance in safeguarding the independence of these countries.87 Richards tried to convince the Afghan rulers of benefits of joining the American alliances under the Eisenhower doctrine. However Richards' mission was contrary to Afghanistan's policy of traditional non-alignment. Though the avowed aim of the visit of James P. Richards was to wean Afghanistan away from Soviet influence, however Afghanistan fell a prey neither to Soviet nor US influence.

but continued to follow the policy of nonalignment.

**Sardar Daud's Visit to the United States**

Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan, Prime Minister of Afghanistan reached Washington on 24 June 1958 on a fortnight's visit. In his speech at the airport, Daud expressed the hope that his visit would be helpful in further strengthening the relations between the two countries.  

Throughout the discussions between the Afghan Prime Minister and US officials, there was emphasis on the cordiality and genuine friendship which characterized Afghan-US relations. Afghanistan was assured of the continued readiness of the United States to be of assistance to it in its high objectives of developing the resources of the country for the welfare of the people. A cultural agreement was signed between the two countries on 26 June 1958 which symbolized the warm relations between the two countries. Both countries expressed their desire to further strengthen their mutual relations. Daud's visit to the United States was successful.

89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
Eisenhower's Visit to Afghanistan

The US President Eisenhower paid an official visit to Afghanistan in December 1959. The news of the US president's visit created a great enthusiasm in the Afghan media. Anis and Islah wrote that President Eisenhower was a great world statesman and President of a great nation who was visiting Afghanistan.92 Anis expressed the view that the proposed visit of President Eisenhower was significant on two counts. Firstly, because the countries of the region had differences on political and regional issues; and secondly the visit would help in ascertaining the US viewpoint on important issues.93 The newspaper further observed that President Eisenhower's visit to Afghanistan was more significant because it was not a member of any US sponsored military alliance.94

However, President Eisenhower's visit to Kabul was very short, just for five hours. On 9 December 1959 the US President reached Kabul. Welcoming the US President, the Afghan King Zahir Shah hoped that the

93. Ibid., p. 7.
94. Ibid.
visit would help in strengthening the relations between
the two countries. In his reply, President Eisenhower hoped that his short visit would help in understanding
the great country of Afghanistan. The joint communique
issued after Eisenhower's visit noted the common concern
of both countries for disarmament, world peace and
security.

However, inspite of the ostensibly cordial
relations between the two countries, there were major
ebbs and tides in relations during Daud's premiership.
The US made serious efforts to overthrow Daud because of
his hard stand on Pakistan.

AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

During the Second World War, Soviet Union had
close relations with the United States, and other Allied
powers. However, the end of war witnessed USSR and
the United States as the main adversaries in the wake

96 Ibid.
the cold war, as described in the preceding pages. We have seen in Chapter II that Afghan-Soviet relations had various ups and downs for centuries.

On 13 June 1946, Kabul and Moscow signed an agreement to define the Amu River border, thus settling the ownership of some 1,192 islands. Russians had always claimed without justification that the Amu River's boundary lay on the southern bank on Soviet side. The conclusion of this agreement indicated a relatively benign post-war Soviet attitude to Afghanistan which was because "Afghanistan seemed too unimportant, too threatening to be worth the trouble and outcry of a territorial grab". The Pakhtoon factor in Afghan-Soviet relations will be analysed in Chapter VI.

The Soviet moves of winning over Afghanistan to its side in the post-war period sparked with economic aid programmes. In July 1950, Moscow and Kabul signed a

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four year trade agreement which envisaged Soviet petroleum products, cotton cloth, sugar and other commodities in exchange for Afghan goods - wool, fur, raw cotton, fruits and nuts at a higher currency exchange rates and duty free exchange. 100 A Soviet publication hinted in 1951, a Russian plan under which perhaps Afghanistan were to take over Pushtun areas of Pakistan and Russia would take over the Tazik, Uzbek and Turkman areas of Afghanistan. 101 However, Moscow never took up this plan officially with Kabul. 102

Pakistan's joining of US sponsored military alliances - South East Asia Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in 1955 had further heightened Afghan apprehensions of Pakistan's military might with whom it had strained relations over Pakhtoonistan. The US reluctance to provide military assistance to Afghanistan in October 1954 made Kabul feel dejected. In the meanwhile, Sardar Mohammad Daud became the Prime Minister of Afghanistan in 1953 who wanted to make Afghanistan a strong and prosperous country.

100 Louis Dupree, "Afghanistan's Big Gamble, Part II - Economic and Strategic Aspects of Soviet Aid", vol.4, no. 4, May 1960, p.3.


102 Bradsher, n. 99, p. 22.
Afghanistan and Soviet Union signed a major agreement in January 1954 under which Moscow lent $3.5 million for the construction of grain elevators at Kabul and Pul-i-Khumri and a flour mill and bakery at Kabul.\textsuperscript{103} Until Stalin's death in March 1953, Moscow had not favoured the policy of establishing close relations with the Third World countries. When Khrushchev succeeded Stalin, the Russian policy towards Third World started registering change. As Rubinstein has opined that Moscow began to represent itself abroad as the champion of developing countries, helping the latter to establish economic as well as political independence.\textsuperscript{104} In 1953, Khrushchev had reportedly said that the Soviet Union "value trade least for economic and most for political reasons".\textsuperscript{105}

Thus it becomes evident that after 1953, Moscow adopted the strategy of using economic aid as a bait to hoodwink the developing countries into its orbit of influence. In pursuance of this policy, the Soviet Union increased its economic assistance to Kabul. In July 1954, an agreement worth $1.2 million was signed between the two countries for the construction of a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{104} Alvin Z. Rubinstein, \textit{The Foreign Policy of Soviet Union} (New York, 1960), pp. 395-97.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 383.
\end{itemize}
gas line pipeline across the Amu River. In August 1954, another agreement worth $2 million was signed between the two countries for road building equipment. Again in October 1954, Moscow advanced another loan worth $2.1 million which provided for an asphalt factory and equipment. According to Bradsher: "These were early examples of a Soviet talent for getting maximum propaganda value from aid projects." On 28 June 1955, Afghanistan negotiated a new agreement on duty-free transit of Afghan goods through Soviet territory based on Article 6 of the 1921 Afghan Soviet treaty.

**Khrushchev's Visit to Afghanistan**

On 15 December 1955, the First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev and the then Prime Minister, N.A. Bulganin paid an official visit to Kabul. The Soviet leaders were given a warm welcome at the Kabul airport by King Zahir Shah and Prime Minister,

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106 Goldman, n. 103, p. 115.
107 Franck, n. 103, p. 55.
108 Ibid.
Sardar Mohammad Daud. While thanking the Afghan people, Bulganian hoped that their visit would help in forging closer relations between the two countries.

The Afghan Prime Minister, Sardar Mohammad Daud in his welcome address said that Afghanistan was the staunch supporter of the principles of non-alignment: "Afghanistan will accept economic assistance with gratitude but it should not be linked with political strings". The Soviet leaders also announced the gift of 100-bed hospital to be built in Kabul with Russian aid. It was further promised that Soviet Union would give a credit worth $100 million repayable in thirty years at two percent interest. The Soviet leaders also visited the military training school at Kabul and thereafter Bulganin said that his country fully appreciated the Afghan desire for modernizing their armed forces. After paying a five day visit to Afghanistan, the Soviet leaders returned to Moscow. While recalling the Soviet thinking

111 *Islah*, 16 December 1955.
113 *Islah*, 17 December 1955.
114 Goldman, n. 103, p. 115.
during that period on Afghanistan, Khrushchev later wrote in his memoirs:

America was courting Afghanistan, appearing to give that country economic aid but actually being much more interested in currying political favour.... At the time of our visit it was clear to us that Americans were penetrating Afghanistan with the obvious purpose of setting up military base... The capital which we've invested in Afghanistan has not been wasted. We have earned the Afghans' trust and friendship and it hasn't fallen into the American trap... The amount of money we spent in gratuitous assistance to Afghanistan is a drop in the ocean compared to the price we should have had to pay in order to counter the threat of an American military base of Afghan territory. (116).

The visiting Soviet leaders extended an invitation to the Afghan leaders to visit Soviet Union and Prime Minister Daud accepted the invitation. 117

On 18 December 1955 Moscow and Kabul concluded a treaty under which the provision of the Treaty of June 1931 ensuring the neutrality and nonaggression was amended and the treaty was extended for further ten years. It also contained a provision that the either side could

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117 Islah, 19 December 1965.
abrogate the treaty by giving an advance notice of six months. The visit of Soviet leaders to Afghanistan resulted in the increased interest of the Kremlin in Afghan affairs. In March, 1956, the projects selected by a joint Afghan-Soviet survey team, though excluded railroads, were linked to a large extent with creating and modernizing other transportation facilities. These included two airport projects, one major highway linking Kabul with the strategic Soviet border, one river port facility, construction of a bridge, auto repair workshops etc. Another agreement was signed between the two countries in March 1956 providing for the regular flights between Tashkent and Kabul.

The Article VI of this agreement provided a curious fact of Soviet strategic concerns in Afghanistan: "Each side has the right to refuse or amend flight permission to the other side if it does have proof that the majority ownership or actual control of that enterprise is being realized by citizens or organs of that country".

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118 For text of the treaty see, Bulganin and Khrushchev, n.112, pp. 188-92.
119 Franck, n. 103, p. 57.
121 Ibid.
This provision makes it evident that Moscow did not want any other country to challenge the Soviet monopoly in Afghanistan. During that period, 49 per cent of the Ariana Afghan Airlines, the only airlines of Afghanistan, with which the Soviets had concluded the said agreement, was owned by one Peter Baldwin, an American businessman who had started that airlines in April 1955. At this juncture, the inclusion of such a provision in the agreement insisted by Moscow aimed at alienating the American influence. However, in 1957 the Pan-American Airways bought Baldwin's share in the Ariana Airways for $400 thousand and actively helped the Ariana with its operations and maintenance problems for more than two decades thereafter.

During March 1956 another agreement was signed between Kabul and Moscow under which the Soviet specialists were to be stationed in Afghanistan for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and training the Afghan personnel regarding various projects to be jointly set up.


123 Franck, n. 103, p. 461.

124 Arnold, n. 110, p. 38.
The Soviet experts were also supposed to oversee the Afghan construction activities according to the approved project plans. The Soviet Vice President, A. Mikoyan paid a visit to Afghanistan in January 1956 and the earlier mentioned agreement worth ₤ 100 million credit was signed between the two countries. In February 1956 the Soviet leaders sent messages of greetings to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Soviet-Afghan Friendship treaty of 1931. Soviet media tried to project a rosy picture of "friendly relations between Moscow and Kabul and emphasized that the Soviet economic assistance to Afghanistan was without any "political strings". 

Prime Minister Daud's Visit to Russia

On 17 October 1956, Sardar Mohammad Daud reached Moscow on an official visit. He was given a warm welcome on his arrival. The leading Soviet daily Pravda in its issue of 18 October 1956 while welcoming the visit of Afghan Prime Minister commented that Afghan-Soviet

125 Islah, 29 January 1956.
126 Moscow News (Moscow), 29 February 1956.
128 Islah, 18 October 1956.
friendship had stood the test of time.  

Concluding his fortnight's visit to the Soviet Union, the Afghan Prime Minister said that his visit had been very fruitful because there had been a frank exchange of views between the leaders of the two countries. However Sardar Mohammad Daud remained very cautious about his views on global issues. He stressed emphasis on Afghanistan's traditional policy of neutrality.

King Zahir Shah's Visit to Soviet Union

In July 1957, the King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Naim and other ministers visited Soviet Union. They were given warm welcome on their arrival in Moscow. In his welcome address the Soviet President Varashil of said that the visit of Afghan King was of tremendous significance because it was symbolic of the growing friendship between the two countries professing different political systems.

130 Ibid., 30 October 1956.
131 Pravda (Moscow), 18 July 1957, cited in New Times (Moscow), July 1957.
132 Ibid.
In his reply the Afghan King referred to the growing friendly relations between the two countries. On 30 July 1957, at the conclusion of the visit of King Zahir Shah, a joint communique was issued. Both the countries expressed their faith in the principles of peaceful coexistence and Afghanistan was praised for pursuing the policy of strict neutrality.\(^{133}\) According to a report published in Pravada of 31 July 1957, the Foreign Ministers of both countries agreed in principle to conclude an agreement regarding the demarcation of border areas between the two countries.\(^{134}\) The Soviet Union attached great importance to this visit because since King Amanullah's visit, it was the second visit by any Afghan King to the Soviet Union. Moscow promised Kabul to advance a credit worth $15 Million for the development of natural gas exports to the Soviet Union.\(^{135}\)

**Augmentation of Soviet Military Influence**

The beginning of 1950s had witnessed the inauguration of the penetration of Soviet military influence in Afghanistan. According to Bradsher, Afghanistan was first in the Third World countries to

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 31 July 1957.

\(^{134}\) Ibid.

\(^{135}\) Franck, n.103, p. 57.
receive Soviet economic aid and second to receive military aid. In August 1955, Afghanistan negotiated a cash deal worth $3 million for Czechoslovak weapons. According to Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan signed an agreement with the Soviet Union in August, 1956 on re-equipping Afghanistan's armed forces with Soviet materials. Of necessity, given the complexity of modern armaments, this agreement involved the training of Afghan officers in Soviet military bases. Recruitment and training of Afghan military officers at home had been under the strict control of the Afghan Government and the Soviet experts could not influence it.

In the wake of these developments, many observers on Afghanistan apprehended that Daud was pushing his country into Soviet vassalage. Others perceived his actions as a high-risk gamble to improve his country's lot by playing off the great powers against each other. However, Louis Dupree was optimistic of Daud's policies during 1950s. According to him Afghanistan

136 Bradsher, n.99, p.27.
138 Arnold., n. 110, p.38.
139 Ibid.
had become an "economic Korea where the competition between the East and the West benefited a local population without endangering its independence". During 1956-58, Afghanistan got substantial economic assistance from Moscow as well as Washington. Between 1950 to 1959, the US assistance to Afghanistan totalled to $143 million, while the Soviet assistance amounted to $246.2 million. The bulk of the US assistance comprised in the form of outright grants, the Soviet provided long-term loans. The US objective in augmenting its Afghan share of aid aimed at securing "maximum internal political stability, promoting friendly economic relations with her [Afghanistan's] Free World neighbours; and minimizing any possibility that Afghanistan might either be a victim of, or a pathway for, Soviet domination in South Asia." 

However, a close analysis of the Soviet strategy of extending economic assistance and trade facilities to Afghanistan reveals that between 1950 and 1960, Kabul's

140 Dupree, n.58, pp. 515-16.
142 Franck, n.103, p. 72.
dependence on Moscow for arms had become almost hundred per cent, for petroleum products up to 90 per cent and in case of foreign trade increasing from 17 per cent to almost 50 per cent. 143

Under the cover of providing economic assistance for transportation and road construction, the Soviet Union was also concentrating on strategic areas. The Soviet highway project that ran from the Soviet border at Kushka to Herat and Kandahar, linked up there with the other highway to Kabul being constructed by the US assistance. Thus the Kremlin was building up strategic highways linking its border with important parts of Afghanistan which it could use one day for exerting its control over that country, as happened in December 1979. Moscow had stipulated such clauses in its agreements with Kabul which it could exploit at short notice. Article 21 of the border agreement between the two countries signed on 18 January 1958 envisaged that at 48-hour notice either side could examine those parts of international bridges linking the two countries that were situated on the other side's territory. 144

143. Dupre, n. 100, p. 3.
144. Vinogradov, et al., p. 156, as cited in Arnold, n. 110, p. 39.
In May 1959, Moscow and Kabul signed another agreement on building the Kushka-Kandhar road. In July 1959 both countries signed another agreement regarding the construction of three new bridges across the Besud, Kameh and Asmar Rivers. The construction of the bridges was to be carried out by the Afghan workers under the supervision of Soviet experts.145

Khrushchev's Visit to Kabul

On 2 March 1960, the Soviet Premier N. Khrushchev visited Afghanistan. King Zaher Shah while welcoming the visit of Soviet Prime Minister, hoped that the relations between the two countries would improve further.146 Khrushchev lauded Afghan foreign policy of non-alignment, international peace and economic development. He also referred to the growing political, economic and cultural relations between Soviet Union and Afghanistan.147

145. Ibid., pp. 179-82.
147. Ibid., pp. 266-67.
Just a couple of months ago, prior to Khrushchev's visit to Afghanistan, Soviet Union and Afghanistan had signed an agreement in January 1960 in which Moscow promised to give economic assistance worth $22.4 million for the five-year development plan for 1960-65.\textsuperscript{148} Even during his visit in March 1960, Khrushchev offered to finance the entire Afghan five-year plan for 1960-65 on the condition that Soviet advisers be placed at the highest levels in all Afghan ministeries. But Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Daud, was cautiously sceptical and he reportedly turned down the Soviet offer.\textsuperscript{149}

The visiting Soviet Premier visited various projects launched with the Soviet help. In a dinner hosted by Soviet leader Khrushchev in favour of Afghan Prime Minister, Mohammad Daud on 4 March 1960, the Soviet Premier repeatedly emphasized the fact that it was Soviet leader, Lenin, who first recognized the independence of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{148} \textit{New York Times}, 21 January 1960.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Dupree, no. 92, p.8.
\item \textsuperscript{150} Khrushchev's Visits, n. 146, pp. 283-90.
\end{itemize}
Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Daud, in his reply, said that Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin recognized independence of Afghanistan and the latter also took no time in according recognition to the new Government which assumed power after the October Revolution.\textsuperscript{151} This was characteristic of Daud to tell the Soviets that Afghanistan did not lag behind in repaying the gratitude it owed to others.

On 4 March 1960, both countries signed a cultural agreement to promote and cooperate in the fields of science, art and culture.\textsuperscript{152} The joint communiqué issued on 5 March 1960 at the conclusion of Soviet premier's visit to Kabul, reiterated the desire of both countries to further improve their relations.\textsuperscript{153}

The above analysis makes it evident that Afghan leadership while accepting Soviet economic and technical assistance, did not compromise the foreign policy of Afghanistan but rather secured Soviet endorsement of Afghanistan's independent and non-aligned policy. In early 1963, Sardar Daud Khan resigned as Prime Minister

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p. 291.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., pp. 293-96.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., pp. 302-3.
of Afghanistan. Some Western experts on Afghanistan are of the view that Sardar Daud during his premiership (1953-63) allowed Soviet influence to increase in Afghanistan unhindered. According to Leon B. Poullada, during Daud's rule of a decade "the USSR had established a firm base of operation in Afghanistan". 154

However Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Daud until 1963 had remained cautiously sceptical about the Soviet motives in Afghanistan. In reply to a question about Soviet subversion in 1956, Daud had, while referring to the 1948 Communist takeover in that country, replied: "Does anyone think we have not heard of Czechoslovakia?" 155

Poullada cites another example to prove his dictum that Daud dismissed in 1956 a warning from an American Ambassador that Soviet economic aid was laying logistical infrastructure for invasion and the Soviet training of Afghan military officers could create a fifth column in the armed forces. 156 Such misgivings

155. Quoted in Bradsher, n. 99, p. 27.
about Daud's foreign policy might have been prompted in the light of the fact that he ignored such "warnings" or "advices".

Despite heavy US arms and economic assistance to Pakistan during 1953-63, with which Afghanistan had strained relations over the issue of Pakistan, Daud neither criticised the United States nor sought massive arms aid from the Soviet Union; rather he pursued a policy of genuine non-alignment. Daud had declared in 1960 that "Our whole life, our whole existence, revolves around one single focal point - freedom. Should we ever get the feeling that our freedom is in the slightest danger, from whatever quarter, then we should prefer to live on dry bread, or even starve, sooner than accept help that would restrict our freedom."157 By the early 1960s, the people of Afghanistan had realized that:

... Soviet actions were always motivated by their own interests and by those alone. But (the Afghans) reasoned assuming Soviet planners to be reasonable men, those interests could only be served by an attack on Afghanistan. The country would be an economic liability to the USSR, to control it would be difficult and costly; and most important, any such aggression would have disastrous repercussions among the neutralist nations in Asia and Africa.(158)


Thus on the basis of above analysis, it is clear that though during the period 1953-63, Soviet Union did render considerable economic assistance to woo Afghanistan to its fold, the latter did not fall prey to Soviet overtures and pursued an independent and genuinely non-aligned foreign policy.