CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE SUPER-POWER ROLE

This chapter purports to analyse the rise of democratic movements in Afghanistan from 1963 when Sardar Mohammed Daud resigned as the Prime Minister and constitutional monarchy was introduced in 1964 till April 1978 when the government of Sardar Mohammad Daud was overthrown and People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) assumed power by staging a coup.

The year 1963 is generally termed as envisaging the advent of democratic movements in Afghanistan. Following the resignation of Sardar Mohammad Daud, the king of Afghanistan Mohammed Zahir Shah, appointed Mohammed Yousuf as the new Prime Minister pending the drafting of a new constitution. While announcing the appointment of Mohammed Yousuf as Prime Minister, who was not related to the royal family, the King also declared that in the future the royal family could "lay down the burden of a generation and let the Afghan educated class run the country".1 This royal announcement was

incorporated in Article 24 of the new constitution which was introduced in 1964. The fifth paragraph of the said Article envisaged: "Members of the Royal House shall not hold the following offices — Prime Minister or Minister, Member of Parliament, Justice of the "Supreme Court".  

The drafting of new constitution of 1964 took about eighteen months to reach its final shape. During that period, the Prime Minister Yousuf pursued the traditional policy domestically and reiterated Afghan's "traditional policies of non-alignment and independence".  

The draft constitution having been ratified and signed by the King on 1 October 1964 became a sacred document which envisaged the ground work for a parliamentary monarchy which includes some traditional western democratic practices like separation of powers and election by secret ballot etc. The new constitution did "provide an apparently stable base on which a democratic state could have been built". The principles incorporated

3. Ibid., p. 562.  
in the constitution came to be known as "Democracy-i-nau" or new democracy, "a fragile plant which needed careful tending if it was to thrive in such stony soil, and its exotic nature in Afghan society was betrayed by the use of the western term instead numerous Arabic or Persian synonyms".  

The new constitution contained provisions for women's rights and the Loya Jirgah itself had four women participants. The laws pertaining to the establishment of political parties in Afghanistan were supposed to be developed in the first freely elected parliament.

Anthony Arnold has classified four categories of the people who had adopted ideological positions in the wake of the introduction of the new constitution. There were traditionalists, adaptors, democrats and Marxist-Leninists. The traditionalists were determined to retain Afghan culture under firm, traditional Islamic principles. The adaptors wanted a blend of western science and technology with Afghan culture and Islamic

7. Arnold, n.4, pp. 46-47.
teachings. The democrats looked forward to a democratic republic and wanted to adopt western political models more directly. The Marxist-Leninists were committed in theory to an eventual revolutionary overthrow of a non-communist government. But for the Marxist-Leninist group the other aforementioned three groups had long political roots dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Mashruta-Khwahan group, also known as the constitutionalists, was the first to raise demand for representative government during the closing years of the nineteenth century. Amir Habibullah had taken stern measures in 1909 which resulted in the execution and imprisonment of the supporters of Mashruta Khwahan. During the reign of Habibullah, the constitutionalists had to adopt a low profile. However, when Amir Amanullah became the king of Afghanistan, the constitutionalists regrouped themselves but could not make any headway. The constitutionalists had to go underground when Nadir Shah became the king of Afghanistan after Amir Amanullah.

8. Ibid., p. 46.
10. Dupree, n.6, p. 592.
During this period 1933-47, the movement was suppressed, it envisaged a resurgence with the political liberalisation coinciding with the emergence of Pakistan. Emerging as a secret movement, its foundings are not yet ascertained.11

By the beginning of 1950s, various other groups with prominent political overtones had emerged along with Wikh Zalmayan. One group was Watan (Homeland). Another group was Khalg (masses) a non-communist whose main leader was Dr. Abdur Rahman Mahmudi. In 1950, Sardar Mohammed Daud formed a political group, the Cloop-i-Melli (National Club). All these rival groups provided an intellectual boost to the political activity in Afghanistan.

The growth of these political groups could not escape the attention of conservative ruling royal family. Consequently in 1952, Dr. Abdur Rahman Mahmudi, the Khalg leader along with sixteen of his followers was arrested. Following the induction of Sardar Mohammed Daud as Prime Minister in 1953, the political groups of different shades had to lie in low key until 1963 when

11. Arnold, n. 4, p. 47.
Daud resigned as Prime Minister. The Khalq's leader Dr. Mahmudi was released in 1963 but died after few months. In accordance with the new constitution, elections were held in September 1965 for the two houses of Parliament - Wolesi Jirga (House of the People) having 216 members and Meshrano Jirga (Upper House) with 84 members. The elections were held without any incident. However about 10 per cent of the rural electorate cast their votes and the participation of women voters was even less. Even in Kabul only some 40 per cent of possible votes were cast. The Wolesi Jirga had some independent-minded members and four women were also elected. According to Hasan Kakar, the average MP, either a local leader or a former bureaucrat was:

Concerned mainly with recovering their lost money, rather than deliberating over problems of the country. A situation was created in which the backward-looking traditional elements of the old order, rather than the forward looking elements of the middle class, came into the forefront of national politics.(14)

12. Dupree, n.6, p. 497.
Though the new constitution, did in theory, allow the political parties to function but the King never allowed to implement such legislation, that would legitimize the functioning of political parties. The resultant impact was that many unofficial parties emerged on the scene. It was during this period that People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came into the offing which staged a coup in April 1978. Thus it deems appropriate to briefly analyse the founding and subsequent growth of the PDPA before proceeding further.

Foundation of the PDPA

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was formally launched on 1 January 1965, when a small group of Marxists met at Noor Mohammed Taraki's house. According to Henry S. Bradsher, who claims to have procured a copy of the secret history of the PDPA circulated in July 1976, the meeting of 1 January 1965 held at Taraki's house chose a Central Committee of seven full members and four alternate members.

16. The seven full members of the Central Committee were - Noor Mohammed Taraki, Babrak Karmal, Ghulam Dastagir Panjshiri, Dr. Saleh Mohammad Ziray, Shahrollah Shahpar, Sultan Ali Kesmatmand, and Taher Badakhshi, see Ibid.
17. The four alternate members were: Dr. Shah Wali, Karim Misag, Dr. Mohammed Zaher and Abdul Wahab Safi, see Ibid.
This meeting elected Taraki as the Secretary General of the PDPA. Similar factual information is available in the official biography of Taraki issued in 1978 at Kabul which inter alia states:

... About 30 youngmen representing all patriotic, progressive and revolutionary youth gathered at Comrade Noor Mohammed Taraki's humble residence at Sher Shah Mina, Kabul (on 1 January 1965).... This Congress unanimously chose comrade Noor Mohammed Taraki as member of the Central Committee and Secretary General of the PDPA.(18)

The immediate impetus for the formation of the PDPA was provided by the new constitution of 1964. Following the death of Abdur Rahman Mahmudi in 1963, Taraki had started negotiating with other leftist minded people to form a new political party.

The ideological orientation of the PDPA, however, was evident from the very beginning. As Fred Halliday, noted: "Its (PDPA's) programme was an orthodox communist one for the period, reflecting analyses associated with Khrushchev or Brezhnev. The organisational and functional structure of the PDPA was modelled on the communist party of Soviet Union", public identification with

Marxism or its Soviet version was avoided, however, and the relatively neutral name of People's Democratic Party chosen instead of Communist.\textsuperscript{20}

When election to the Afghan Parliament were held in September 1965, Taraki and Mohammed Amin who contested the elections were defeated. Other members of the PDPA were arrested during the canvassing period.\textsuperscript{21} Only a small left wing group comprising Babrak Karmal, M. Siddiq Farhang, Nur Ahmed Nur, and Dr. Anahita Ratebzad, a woman member from Kabul, could make their way to Parliament. Thus the PDPA could not make much headway in the initial years.

After the elections, the king asked Prime Minister Yousuf to form a new government. The Council of Ministers was subjected to severe criticism by some members of the Parliament, especially by Karmal and Anahita who also led student demonstrations against Prime Minister. Finally, Prime Minister Yousuf declared that his new cabinet would be subjected to a vote of confidence in three days time.\textsuperscript{22} The period of three

\begin{itemize}
\item 20. Bradsher, n. 15, p. 44.
\item 21. Hyman, n. 5, p. 55.
\item 22. Dupree, n. 6, pp. 591-2.
\end{itemize}
days was utilized by leftists specially Babrak Karmal faction to mobilize support against the Yousuf government on 24-25 October 1965, a demonstration of students outside the Parliament tried to disrupt the ongoing proceedings. The law and order enforcement machinery opened fire resulting in the death of three demonstrators and wounding over one hundred. This incident initiated "an era of open agitation which ultimately led to the failure of the constitutional system". 23

These developments led to the resignation of Yousuf government and on 24 October 1965, Mohammed Hashim Maiwandwal was elected as Prime Minister of Afghanistan. According to Anthony Arnold these roots were "a development that set back the cause of democracy in Afghanistan perhaps more than any other single event in the 1960s". 24

Although political parties were still banned, but the enactment of press Law in July 1965 encouraged the various political groups maintaining low profile to voice ideological differences. Its result was that by the beginning of 1966, some thirty newspapers,

mostly weeklies were started. The PDPA also started publication of Khalq. The PDPA's mouthpiece toed the Soviet line both in ideological terms as "the main issue of contemporary times and the central class struggle in a worldwide basis in the struggle between international socialism and international imperialism, which began with the Great October Revolution" and even on such specific Soviet dogmas as the demand for socialist realism in art.

The PDPA's activities as manifested through the Khalq could not escape the attention of Afghan Government which led to the closure of the paper on 16 May 1966 after the appearance of six issues only.

During 1966, Taraki and Karmal had developed differences which led to the split in the PDPA in July 1967 into two factions "Khalq" led by Noor Mohammed Taraki and the "Parcham" led by Babrak Karmal. The break between the two was not on ideological grounds, both Taraki and Karmal reaffirmed loyalty to the Soviet Union and their

26. Ibid.
difference was mainly as to tactics. The Khalq laid stress on class warfare, while the Parchamites espoused for a United Democratic Front that was supposed to work within the framework of existing order.

Karmal's faction, started its own newspaper Parcham, which could continue its publication for more than a year from March 1968 to July 1969. The Khalq faction was disgruntled because its paper had been banned. Consequently Khalq accused Parcham of having secret links with the King and even referred to Parcham as the "Royal Communist Party". This rivalry continued between Khalq and Parcham until 1977 when seeming reconciliation was facilitated by the CPSU from outside.

Other Leftist Parties

Besides Khalq and Parcham, the other Leftist parties were Shu'la-i-Jawed and Setem-i-Meli, the Shu'lu-i-Jawed (Eternal Flame) had its newspaper with the


29. Fred Halliday, n. 19, p. 25.

similar name which was edited by Dr. Rahim Mahmudi and
Dr. Hadi Mahmudi. It started its publication on 4
April 1968.31 Bradsher claims that Shu'la-i-Jawed was
openly inspired by the Cultural Revolution then underway in China.32 Hyman has opined that though Shu'la
was labelled as pro-Beijing as a Maoist but its leaders
were fierce and uncompromising critics of imperialism
"but not so closely aligned to Peking (Beijing) as to
deserve such a simplistic description".33 However,
Shu'la was the bitter rival of Parcham.

The Stem-i-Meli (Against National Oppression)
was more overtly Maoist in character and inspiration.
It was led by Taher Badakhshi from the original PDPA
central committee who came to represent regional resentment to Pashtun domination, especially Tajiki opposition
to it.34 It exhorted the Afghan minorities "oppressed"
by Pashtuns to launch armed struggle to achieve their
rights.35 Unlike Shu'la-i-Jawed which appealed to the
ultra-left, stem-i-meli was far more practical, working
underground for revolution in Afghanistan.

31. Male, n. 27, p. 47.
32. Bradsher, n. 15, p. 50.
34. Louis Dupree, "Red Play over Hindu Kush, Part I,
Leftists Movements in Afghanistan", AUFSR, No.44
35. Hyman, n.5, p. 59.
The Sino-Soviet Schism which reached its zenith in 1968-69, when these leftists parties made their appearance on the political horizon of Afghanistan, had tremendous impact on the latter. China supported Pakistan which was opposed to Afghan demand on Pakhtoistan while Soviet Union supported Afghan stand on Pakhtoistan. 36 During the student unrest of 1969 in Afghanistan an anti-Parcham alliance had come to the fore. As Louis Dupree has described in detail one of the major demonstrations: "Shu'la-i-Jawed" forces raised a large banner with the red-lettered word Khalq (the masses). This new gambit plus the shouting of another slogan (Long live the democratic movement of the Khalq between the two factions". 37 However this alliance could not last long. In 1971, Khalq sources blamed the Shu'la-i-Jawed for the death of one of their members during the Sham-i-Agrab (The Night of Agrab) demonstrations in Herat and Khalqis called the supporters of Shu'la as "leftist opportunists". 38 Khalq's rivalry with Parcham had disillusioned the former with the Soviet Union and it looked upon Shu'la-i-Jawed as a natural ally and channel

36. Male, n. 27, p. 47.


38. Male, n. 27, p. 47.
of communication with China. As the later events proved, the Schism between Khalq and Parcham was temporary and in 1971 the CPSU made efforts to persuade the two to patch up their differences.

Apart from these leftist parties, another influential political party was the Afghan social democrats, affiliated to the Socialist International. It had a large following for its broad national outlook. The party's slogan "we want a united, free and democratic Afghanistan" and "we want Greater Afghanistan to come into existence" had attracted considerable young Afghan intellectuals to its fold. Another political party, Progressive Democratic Party headed by Mohammed Hashim Maiwandwal remained influential only in moderate socialist circles.

The above analysis shows that, in the wake of explicit ban on the function of political parties, all political parties operated secretly. However, these political groups availed the opportunity afforded by the


liberal press laws of July 1965 and mobilized Afghan public opinion by publishing their newspapers. It can safely be argued that no single political party could dominate the Afghan political scene from 1963 till 1973. However the leftist groups, especially Khalq and Parcham, though having limited membership, continued their political activity.

DAUD'S REPUBLIC (JULY 1973 - APRIL 1978)

The "New Democracy" introduced by King Zahir- Shah although allowed greater freedom than before but it promised more than what it delivered. After 1965, another elections was held in 1969 to Afghan Parliament in which only 10 percent of the electorate had participated. The Parliament of 1969 was least represented by non-Pushtun ethnic groups. Even a famous leader and former Prime Minister, Mainwandwal was prevented from winning the election, of the leftist only Babrak Karmal and Hafijullah Amin could win. The independent-minded intellectuals (Vakils) members of Parliament "failed to act responsibly, and one government succeeded another in quick succession". Though the constitution of 1964

41. Hyman, n. 5, p. 62.
42. Ibid.
did not limit the powers of the King in any way but he was rather lazy, let the things drift and spent most of his time abroad. Another serious mistake committed by the Afghan King was to withhold approval of Bills of political parties (legalising the formation of political parties), the municipalities Bill and provincial councils Bill, which had been passed by the Afghan Parliament. During the period of less than a decade, five Prime Ministers had been changed and all failed to check the growing resentment among the masses. According to Leon B. Poullada: "The new and inexperienced parliament, instead of concentrating on legislation, quickly degenerated into a forum for irresponsible criticism of the government and the royal family". Robert G. Neumann, the then US Ambassador in Kabul, while describing the King's situation in June 1972 wrote:

For the King and leadership group, survival is the first objective with all other goals considered secondary. The result is an excessively cautious governing style which

44. Hymen, n.5, p. 62.
45. These were: Mohammad Yousuf, Mohammad Hashmi Malwadwal, Nur Ahmad Etemadi, Dr. Abdul Zahir and Moosa Shafiq.
invariably seeks to balance off external and internal forces perceived as threatening the regime's power. Domestically new power groups increasingly press for progress"... Barring progressive decisions or very good luck, the survival of the present government for more than another year a problematical. (47)

It was in the wake of these developments that on 17 July 1973, while King Zahir Shah was away in Italy, Sardar Mohammad Daud with the support of army staged a bloodless coup by overthrowing the four decades old monarchy of King Zahir Shah and assumed the powers unto himself. (48)

After assuming power, Daud announced on the Kabul Radio about the replacement of monarchy by a republican system consistent with the true system of Islam. He promised to introduce basic reforms designed to achieve "a real democracy to serve a majority of the people". (49) The constitution of 1964 was abrogated and all civil liberties suspended. Thus, "the end of democracy in Afghanistan came on 17 July 1973." (50)


50. Arnold, n. 4, p. 54.
According to Hammond's analysis Daud, having been debarred under the constitution of 1964 to join the Government, especially after having run the country for a decade (1953-63), "found it frustrating to sit on the sidelines... plotted to seize power, particularly since he knew that he had the support of many army and air force officers". 51 After the coup, Daud said that, "for more than a year, the subject was being considered by some friends and various plans discussed." 52 Only when anarchy and the anti-national attitude of the regime reached its peak was the decision for taking action made". 52

On 18 July 1973, the Kabul Radio announced that a "Central Committee" of supporters had named Daud as founder President and Prime Minister of Republic of Afghanistan with personal control of the defence and foreign ministries. 54

51. Hammond, n. 47, p. 36.
52. Hasan Kakar, n. 14, p. 213.
53. Ibid., p. 214.
54. Dupree, n. 6, p. 753. Also see Foreign Broadcasts Information Service (hereafter FBIS), FBIS/USSR, 19 July 1973, p. 132.
Many supporters of the Parcham group in Afghan armed forces had helped Sardar Mohammad Daud in his July 1973 coup. Louis Dupree has claimed that some Parchamites were central to the planning of the coup.55 Some Parchamites were appointed to the "Revolutionary Council" and others became Ministers - Major Faiz Mohammad was Minister of the Interior; Pacha Gul Wafadar (a Khalqi) became Minister of Frontier Affairs; Major Abdul Qadir, believed to be close to Parcham, became Vice-Commander of the Air Force; while Major Zia Mohammadzai, a Parcham sympathizer belonging to the royal family, became chief of the Republican Guard.56 According to Louis Dupree, some 160 leftists were appointed to bureaucratic posts in the provinces.57 The then US Ambassador in Kabul, Eliot, reported to the US State Department in 1975 that the Parchamites wielded greater power:

56. Halliday, n. 19, p. 29.
57. Dupree, n. 55, p. 7.
In the first few months following the coup, there were reports that Babrak Karmal his principal lieutenants formed a kind of the subcommittee of the Government of Afghanistan's central committee which passed on all the senior appointments in the Government. (58)

However president Daud made it clear that he was not adopting a leftist attitude or accepting the claims of any ideological group. He said on 28 February 1974 "we have no connection with any group, and linking up to any group or movement is a sin". 59

It appears that by the middle of 1974, President Daud had started replacing the leftists from the key posts. The left wing, Faiz Mohammad, the Minister of Interior was replaced and Major Qader was relieved of his command. 61 Pacha Gul was made ambassador to Bulgalwa while replacing the leftists, President Daud was cautious enough not to mention ideological or political factional links of those dismissed. Louis Dupree has opined that by 1975 the Parcham was a beaten force, its ideology uncertain, its claim to point the way to the future


59. Ibid.

60. Bradsher, n. 15, p. 57.

61. Halliday, n. 19, p. 29.
discredited.62

In 1975, President Daud established his own political party the National Revolutionary Party, and persuaded all political elements to join his Party.63 This proved to be a final blow to the leftists who were still hoping to wield influence on Daud. The armed force's leadership was also purged. On 30 January 1977, the loya jirgah approved a new constitution that established a presidential one-party system.64 Daud named a new Cabinet and inducted his old friends. The new cabinet lacked dynamism and the vested interests of the new ministers prohibited a meaningful implementation of socio-economic reforms.65

In early summer of 1977, the Khalq and Parcham factions being threatened by Daud's one-party system were made to patch up their differences by the CPSU and


thus a united PDPA was formed. In 1977 some political assassinations started taking place leading to the assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber, a prominent Parcham leader on 17 April, 1978. The PDPA mobilized public opinion against the Daud Government and organized demonstration. The analysis of these developments leading to the overthrow of Daud government and advent of Saur Revolution in the end of April 1978 would be described in Chapter VI.

**AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS (1963 - April 1978)**

As we have seen in the preceding pages, the period between 1963-1973 was marked with political instability. The pattern of Afghanistan-Soviet relations between 1963-73 had remained friendly. There was no major point of departure in the traditionally friendly relations between the two countries. Between 1967-70, the value of Russian assistance approximated 10 percent of the total aid received by Afghanistan from all sources.

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66. Louis Dupree, n. 34, p. 11.
On 6 February 1968, both Kabul and Moscow signed an agreement for economic and technical assistance. Under this new agreement and earlier similar agreements, Afghanistan was bound to export 2.5 billion cubic metres of natural gas on an average to the Soviet Union up to the year 1985. Though under the agreement of 1968, it was provided that the prices of the natural gas would be "determined by the two sides", but in practice Moscow unilaterally decided the price it would pay and controlled all information regarding the quantum of gas it imported. "In fact, the Soviet Union never paid Afghanistan more than twenty percent of the going world market price for natural gas".

Brezhnev Doctrine

Following the increasing schism between Moscow and Beijing in the late 1960s, Kremlin sought to isolate China from the world communist movement, especially in Asia. In late May 1969, the then Soviet Prime Minister, Alexi Kosygin, during his visit to


69. Ibid., p. 256.
Afghanistan mooted the idea of forging regional economic cooperation among Afghanistan, Pakistan and India as a step toward creating peaceful environment in the region.\textsuperscript{70}

On 7 June 1969, the Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev while addressing the International Conference of Communist and worker's parties held in Moscow, declared "We are of the opinion that the course of events is putting on the agenda, the task of creat upon a system of collective security in Asia".\textsuperscript{71} This concept of collective security in Asia came to be known as Brezhnev Doctrine. Until the beginning of 1972, the Brezhnev doctrine had not been elaborated. However, it was on 30 March 1972 that Brezhnev stated:

Collective security in Asia must, in our view, be based on such principles as renunciation of use of force, in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of borders, non-interference in internal affairs and the broad development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of full equality and mutual development. (72)


\textsuperscript{71.} \textit{New York Times}, 8 June 1969.

In pursuance of the Brezhnev Doctrine, Moscow tried to woo Kabul for the endorsement of the proposal for Asian Collective Security. However, Afghanistan kept cool towards their proposal and reaffirmed its commitment to the policy of independent and non-aligned foreign policy.

In May 1973, the Soviet President Podgorny visited Kabul. The joint communique issued after the visit of Soviet President spoke of the great significance which the Soviet Union attached to "Afghanistan's policy of positive neutrality and non-alignment". The communique further noted:

Considering that observance of the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with differing social and political systems is an effective way toward establishing lasting peace both in Asia and other parts of the world, the USSR and Afghanistan declare that in order to guarantee security in Asia, it is essential for all countries of the area to make joint efforts in that direction. (73)

However this could not be interpreted as Afghan endorsement of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

During the first week of June 1974, Sardar Mohammad Daud, who only a year back seized the power in Kabul, by overthrowing the monarchy visited the Soviet

Union and accepted the Soviet drafted language in a joint communique endorsing the Brezhnev Doctrine". 74 The joint communique issued after Daud's Soviet visit noted: "The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan are deeply interested in ensuring peace and cooperation in Asia and consider that the creation of a security system by the collective effort of all the states of Asia would correspond to the interests of the Asian peoples". 75 Thus the Soviets proved themselves clever enough to process Afghan endorsement of Brezhnev Doctrine without doing any favour. Both Moscow Radio and Tass the leading Soviet news agency released an edited version of Sardar Daud's speech at Kremlin by omitting references to Pakistan. 76 After having private talks with Prime Minister Daud, the Soviet President publicly declared that Afghanistan's "great and complex tasks (of) renovating political, economic and cultural life... can be solved successfully, when the course charted is pursued firmly, when broad popular masses are drawn into the work of building a new life and when the forces which

75. FBIS/USSR, 10 June 1974, p. 4.
76. See Ibid., 4-12 June 1974.
are sincerely interested in strengthening the new system and vigorously and in close unity". 77

The reference to "popular masses" was a direct suggestion by the Soviets to work closely with the Afghan leftists. This point is also substantiated by Henry S. Bradsher with a view to appease Afghanistan, Moscow also granted an interest free ten-year moratorium on a $100 million debt and promised another $248 million in development aid to Afghanistan. 79

In December 1975, the Soviet President, Podgorny again visited Afghanistan. Unlike earlier visits, this visit of the Soviet leader evoked a cool response both in Kabul as well as in Moscow. The official Soviet reports spoke coolly of Podgorny's visit to Afghanistan and referred to Soviet Afghan relations without any fanfare. 80 The joint communique issued after the visit of President Podgorny made only an oblique reference to a security proposal, without any reference to Afghan :sment. 81

See Bradsher, n. 15, p. 64.
FBIS/USSR, 10 December 1975.
As described in the preceding pages, this coolness was perhaps due to the Soviet disenchantment of Daud's domestic policies in which he had purged the pro-Moscow Parchamites from his cabinet and the armed forces. Besides, Sardar Daud, had long ago realized that the growing Soviet influence was contrary to Afghanistan's traditional policy of genuine nonalignment. Thus with a view to alleviate Afghan economic dependence on Moscow and keeping the consonance with the tenets of nonalignment, President Daud took positive measures to improve Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan, Iran, India and other nonaligned and Islamic countries. In October 1974, Iran promised Afghanistan to provide $2 billion in economic aid over a period of ten years and a part of this aid was to be spent on the construction of a railroad from Kabul to Iran, which would have eventually provided Afghanistan with a trade route through Iranian ports, thereby decreasing Kabul's dependence on Soviet trade.82 Thus President Daud was trying to follow an independent and nonaligned policy by developing close relations with the nonaligned and Islamic countries.

In the wake of these developments, President Daud again paid a visit to Moscow from 12 to 15 April 1977. Prior to his Moscow visit, President Daud had ordered the removal of Soviet military advisers from various levels of Afghan armed forces and started sending military officers to India for training. In Moscow Leonid Brezhnev had become the President of the Soviet Union after the removal of Podgorny.

An analytical assessment of the statements of Afghan and Soviet leaders made in Moscow did not reveal any marked deterioration in Afghan-Soviet relations. However, the Soviet leader, Brezhnev did ask his Afghan counterpart about the need for a "concerned effort of all the people". The Afghan President was more frank when he said that good relations "stand on the firm foundations of good neighbourliness, frankness, sincerity and worthwhile cooperation". While reiterating his government's determination to promote economic development of Afghanistan, President Daud said that his country

83. Bradsher, n. 15, p. 65.
84. FBIS/USSR, 13 April 1977, pp. J. 3-5.
85. Ibid., pp. J. 5-9.
was "creating premise for rapid socio-economic and political development.... (that) demand all round efforts from the people and government of Afghanistan. Cooperation and disinterested aid from friendly states will play a valuable part in this undertaking". The communique issued at the end of Daud's Moscow visit stated that the talks took place in an atmosphere of "friendship, trust and understanding and there was a circumstantial exchange of opinion on urgent world problems". On his return to Kabul, President Daud expressed his confidence that the relations between Afghanistan and Soviet Union were based on "good neighbourliness, mutual respect and non-interference in domestic affairs." However Bradsher claims that "Daud's proclaimed confidence was more diplomatic than real". Majority of the scholars on Afghanistan support the contention that there had been a hot exchange of views between President Daud and Soviet leaders. Thomas T. Hammond has quoted an incident which is based on his interviews

86. Ibid.
89. Bradsher, n. 15, p. 65.
with close contacts within Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{90} According to this account during President Daud's Moscow visit, the Soviet leader Brezhnev addressed the Afghan President rudely and also objected to certain policies of President Daud. The Afghan President is reported to have told Brezhnev: "I want to remind you that you are speaking to the President of an independent country, not one of your East European satellites. You are trying to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and this I will not permit".\textsuperscript{91} If this account is true, the President Daud might have realized the real Soviet motives and he plainly told them that he was not going to abandon the traditional policy of genuine nonalignment. From this period until the overthrow of President Daud in April 1978, the Afghan-Soviet relations had reached a "cool off" stage.

\textbf{Afghan-US Relations (1963-April 1978)}

As we have seen in Chapter III, the relation between Afghanistan and the United States had been friendly even prior to 1963. By 30 April 1963, about 614 US personnel were engaged in administering the US

\begin{footnotes}
\item[90] Hammond, n. 47, p. 93. Bradsher has also quoted it basing on his own sources, See Bradsher, n. 15, pp. 65-66.
\item[91] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
aid programme in Afghanistan. These personnel were imparting technical and educational training to Afghans. 21 American technicians were engaged in providing technical assistance to the agricultural department of Afghanistan and Helmand valley Administration. Twelve American technicians were advising the various Afghan ministries in coal-mines, hydro-electric projects, engineering and construction work. Over 225 US specialists were engaged in guiding the construction of roads, health, transport planning and other activities in Afghanistan.

King Zahir Shah's Visit to the US

King of Afghanistan, Zaheer Shah, visited the United States from 4 to 16 September 1963. He was accompanied by Royal family members and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Abdullah Malikyar. During the course of his visit the Afghan King had an exchange of views with the then US President John F. Kennedy, on matters of mutual interests to Afghanistan and the United States and the contemporary world situation.


93. Ibid., pp. 157-59.
The joint communique issued after the King's visit noted that the US had followed with interest and sympathy the efforts being made by Afghanistan under the leadership of King Zahir Shah to achieve economic development and social progress. The US President assured the visiting Afghan King of the "continuing desire of the US to cooperate with Afghanistan in economic and technical fields by so doing to contribute to the success of the efforts which Afghanistan is making to provide a better life for its people." 

The communique further noted that in the realm of international relations both countries were dedicated to the furtherance of the cause of world peace and to bring about the reduction of tensions between nations. Both countries expressed their conviction of the indispensable role of the United Nations in advancing the cause of peace and the necessity of supporting its efforts directed to that end. It was further observed that "Afghanistan's traditional policy is the safeguarding of its national independence through nonalignment, 

94. Department of State Bulletin (Washington), 7 October 1963
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
friendship and cooperation with all countries. The US for its part places great importance on Afghanistan's continued independence and national integrity. Both sides agreed that the visit of Afghan king had contribution to better understanding between the two countries.

On July 19, 1967 both countries signed an agreement for the sales of agricultural commodities under the title of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. This agreement was signed in Kabul on 30 July 1967 and the US - Afghan Agreement of 30 June 1953 on technical cooperation was further extended.

On 25 May 1969, the then US Secretary of State, William Rogers had a brief stop over in Kabul, on his way to Paris to attend the sixteenth Plenary Session on Vietnam. Prior to his visit to Kabul, the US Secretary of State had said on 9 May 1969: "I am also very pleased to be stopping in Kabul where I will be the first US Secretary of State ever to visit Afghanistan. The visit will give me an occasion to express our friendship for that country."

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98. Ibid.
100. Ibid., 26 June 1969.
101. Ibid.
From December 1969 to January 1970, the US Vice-President, Spiro Agnew, visited various countries of Asia and reached Afghanistan on 6 January 1970. In reply to a toast at a reception hosted by the then Afghan Prime Minister, Nur Ahmed Etemadi, the US Vice President said that many Americans having known Afghanistan had "made us eager to see this beautiful and spirited land and to meet, at first hand, its proud people with their strong traditions of freedom and jealously guarded independence." 102 Making a reference to the geographical distance between Kabul and Washington, the Vice-President further added: "We share kindred spirit and many of the same aspiration... no vexing problems divide us nor diminish the respect we hold for each other, nor lessen our ability to work together." 103 While making a reference to the striking similarities in the national character and outlook of the people of the two countries Spiro Agnew said that both the US and Afghanistan shared common aspirations of deep traditional devotion to freedom and national independence while praising Afghanistan for having longer history of maintaining such traditions.

103. Ibid.
he further observed:

... We Americans are proud of our association with Afghans over the years in working toward a brighter future for Afghanistan. We feel confident that Afghanistan will continue its drive to utilise its resources to build new and better institutions, to improve its agriculture, to broaden its industrial base and create more educational and employment opportunities for its people. As Afghans persevere in their efforts, we look forward to assisting in any way we can. (104)

The visit of the US Vice-President, Spiro Agnew to Afghanistan had thus proved instrumental in further commenting the bonds of friendship between the two countries.

In 1970, the United States sold 56,000 tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan. (105) The United State's assistance to Afghanistan reached a nadir in 1970 with $26.9 million but maintained a steady level of about $20 million since it plateaued again in 1973. (106) From 1974 onwards, the US sponsored projects, in theory, sought to meet the congressional guidelines envisaged for foreign assistance programme. The pace of US aid to

104. Ibid.
106. Dupree, n. 82, p. 7.
Afghanistan which had been on decline for years received an initial boost under the new guidelines.

The following table shows the US economic assistance to Afghanistan between 1967 to 1970.107

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above figures that during 1969-70, there was a substantial increase in US economic assistance to Afghanistan.

On 9 February 1974, USAID agreed to grant $3 million to the Kabul University and Facilities of Agriculture, Engineering and Education, $650,000 a year to include scholarships for 21 Afghan students and finance the exchange of nine American professors with the five Afghan professors in the above facilities.108 In June 1974, Afghanistan signed another agreement for $7.5 million US loan to implement construction of the electric transmission lines


from Kaja Kai Dam on the Helmand River to Lashkar Gah and Kandhar city. In July 1974, the United States agreed to finance several additional projects pertaining to rural development.\textsuperscript{109}

\textbf{Henry Kissinger's Visit}

On 1 November 1974, the then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger paid an official visit to Afghanistan. He had various rounds of talks with the Afghan leaders. The joint communique issued at the end of Kissinger's visit noted that both countries conducted frank discussions on a wide range of issues in the friendly atmosphere that "characterizes US-Afghan relations".\textsuperscript{110} Both sides held talks on wide ranging issues which included bilateral relations, developments in the Near East and South Asian region, progress in international detente and mutual interests of both nations at securing a peaceful, stable and cooperative world.\textsuperscript{111} The Afghan leaders acquainted the US Secretary of State about Afghan view on regional and global issues. Both countries agreed that "the way to find lasting, durable and peaceful solutions to existing

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, 25 November 1974.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
problems and differences between states is through constructive and thorough discussions among all sides concerned. Both Kabul and Washington laid stress on the importance of international cooperation in the field of economic and technical development and its major role in strengthening international stability and peace. Afghanistan expressed its "pleasure at the contribution towards this end being made by the United States in Afghanistan through bilateral economic, technical and educational cooperation". On his part, Henry Kissinger reiterated his Government's continuing desire to "cooperate with the Republic of Afghanistan in achieving its economic development goals".

In 1975, the US assistance for Helmand Valley was resumed for improving and expanding the irrigation and drainage systems. It also granted $174,000 for a soil and water survey of the Central Helmand basin in order to establish base line soil classifications and collect hydraulic data. The US grants for Afghanistan in 1975

112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid.
totalled $679,000; in 1976 $464,000 and in 1977 $1.3 million. By the end of 1977, a $10 million phase II loan was under consideration.

Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, again visited Afghanistan on 8 August 1976 and held discussions with the Afghan President, Sardar Mohammad Daud. Both leaders held talks in the warm and friendly atmosphere. The two sides had fruitful exchange of views on major international questions of mutual interest, especially the situation in South Asia and the Middle East. Matters relating to bilateral relations and cooperation in different spheres were also discussed. The two sides noted the identity of the "views and purposes of Afghan and American leaders and peoples regarding national independence and integrity". The Afghan side emphasized that its traditional policy based on positive neutrality, nonalignment and friendship and cooperation with all peace loving countries, was guarantor of Afghan independence. The visiting US Secretary of State said that his Government fully understood and appreciated

117. Dupree, n. 82, p. 7.
118. Ibid.
119. Department of State Bulletin, 6 September 1976
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.
Afghan position.\textsuperscript{122} Henry Kissinger also held discussions with other Afghan leaders on bilateral cooperation. He expressed his country's keen desire to participate in Afghanistan's economic and social development and expressed satisfaction over the ongoing development programmes.\textsuperscript{123} On this occasion, an agreement was signed between the two countries for the sale of edible oil to Afghanistan on concessional terms.\textsuperscript{124}

During 1977 and till April 1978 when Saur revolution occurred there was no significant exchange of visits between the two countries. The advent of Saur Revolution and subsequent Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan and the US response to these developments would be analysed in sixth chapter.

The foregoing analysis reveals that the democratic movements which got impetus in the wake of introduction of new constitution in 1964 could not make much headway despite two elections held in 1965 and 1969. The ban on political parties resulted in the clandestine growth of political groups whose influence remained confined to

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{124}
mainly elite groups in towns. Only 10 percent of the electorate participating in the elections reflected people's cool response to the "Democratic Experiment". This spell continued only for a decade (1963 - July 1977) and the seizure of power by Sardar Mohammad Daud in July 1973 led to the suspension of the Constitution and civil liberties. From July 1973 till his overthrow in April 1978, Sardar Daud remained busy with tackling domestic problems and consolidating his position. Thus the "democratic experiment" had a brief spell during which it failed to make any heady way.

Besides, during the period under review, Soviet Union gained considerable influence in Afghanistan. The PDPA and its subsequent factions, Khalq and Parcham, proved as leverages in Afghan policy towards Soviet Union. During 1963 to 1973, the Soviet Union extended substantial economic aid to Afghanistan but failed to get Afghan endorsement of its policy of collective Asian security. Sardar Daud's accession to power in 1973, although provided an opportunity for the Soviets to influence Afghanistan but could not effect its domestic and external policies. For initial two years Moscow succeeded in getting Afghan tactical endorsement of Brezhnev Doctrine in 1974 and pro-Moscow Parchamies had been in the key posts in Daud's cabinet and armed forces.
In view of his limited options, Sardar Daud allowed the things reach that point as he needed them for consolidating his grip over the power. By 1976, Daud purged the leftists from the Government as well from the armed forces. With a view to reduce Afghans dependence on Soviet Union, he forged close relations with Pakistan, Iran, Egypt and other nonaligned and Islamic countries. During the last couple of years of Daud's rule, there had emerged a decline in Afghan-Soviet relations.

The pattern of Afghan - US relations during 1963-78 remained steady with gradual augmentation in US economic and technical assistance to Afghanistan. The US perhaps was aware of the geo-political compulsions of Afghanistan and realized that it could not become anti-Soviet and pro-West. However an independent and nonaligned Afghanistan was more useful for the United States. During the course of exchange of visits of the leaders of both countries, the United States always appreciated the Afghan policy of positive neutrality and genuine nonalignment.

Though the democratic experiment failed in Afghanistan, but it continued to follow an independent and nonaligned policy despite external pressures.