CHAPTER - III

SOVIET-U.S. PLACEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN
U.S. RESPONSE TO SOVIET INTERVENTION

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, was the single-most decisive factor that influenced the radical shift in the U.S. strategic perception of Pakistan in the 1980s. The direct Russian involvement in Afghanistan was the final tug at the tenuous strings that held detente together. This development once again polarised the world ushering in a new Cold War. The situation was that within “the space of a month, [of the Afghan crisis] ‘detente’ had been laid low and a new Cold War was in the making.”¹ It immediately conjured in Washington the visions of an "aggressive" Soviet Union which would embrace virtually any step to pursue its emboldened foreign policy with the aid of its rapidly strengthened military might to implement the long-cherished desire dating as far back as Peter the Great, for an access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean.² It was increasingly felt that the Soviets were "pursuing a policy of tactical opportunism."³

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³ Statement of Mr. Joseph J. Sisco, Chancellor, The American University and former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, in: Hearings, n.2, p.44.
This first ever direct military intervention outside the Warsaw Pact area of Eastern Europe brought about a shrill public outcry in Western capitals. To the United States, the Soviet intervention constituted a "dramatic and decided departure from previous Soviet Policy." The era of detente died a sudden death and was buried in the revived acrimonious "jockeying" for power in a manner and style reminiscent of the earlier Cold War, but, with more ferocity and animosity than what was witnessed hitherto. To the United States the intervention in Afghanistan gave the impression that Moscow's policies were like the "maraudings of the Russian bear."

Jimmy Carter had hoped to preside over the ushering in of an era of peace characterised more by dialogues and support for democratic movements and less by militaristic approach. In the light of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the President lost his credibility to handle foreign policy and became vulnerable to scathing criticism. The Carter Administration was faulted with a "serious history" of a "misreading of Soviet intentions." With the American presidential elections fast approaching, both Democratic and Republican presidential rivals openly

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4 President Carter's Special emissary to India, Clark Clifford, quoted in Washington Post, 1 February 1980.

5 Houston Post, 15 January 1980.

criticised Carter's "whole foreign policy as a failure." The Press too did not spare the soft spoken Georgian. Soon after the outbreak of the crisis in Afghanistan, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, in an article in *The Washington Post* made an unrestrained attack on Carter. They commented that "Tough talk followed by empty threats has characterized his [Carter's] foreign policy for three years, a fact well known by every country exposed to Soviet power." Similarly, in an article titled, "Carter's Shattered Foreign Policy", Kenneth H. Bacon wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that "the Administration's preference for talk rather than action opened too many opportunities for Soviet expansion."

The effect of the Soviet intervention was such that it galvanised almost all sections of the American Society into a new anti-Communist consensus. The situation was that the "Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had modified American thinking, across party and ideological lines, about its interest in Southwestern Asia." The Vietnam era that had induced an isolationist course, soon gave way to a hardening of American feelings against communism. Whatever hopes were entertained by the advocates

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of pacifism soon gave way to a public outcry for "taking on" the Soviet Union in a way more than in the height of the Cold War. This was particularly spawned by the overwhelming sense of insecurity accompanying the change as the "Americans felt that they had been cheated by the Russians."\textsuperscript{11}

Faced with a Congress in a belligerent mood, a politico-military establishment and an equally critical Press, Carter had no option but to signal to all sections of the American society that he is after all a "tough" leader who can stand up to and would not succumb to Soviet tactical manoeuvres. Carter, for the first time in his presidency, was confronted with a situation where he had little option but to steer a course that would portray him as a tough leader who could deal with the Soviets in strong terms. In the face of the shrill criticism, he quickly made a turn around and dumped his "idealistic" approach to international relations. President Carter's 1980 State of the Union message represented this change. It unmistakably reversed the "complacent approach adopted by the Carter Administration at the outset that we [U.S] need not be as preoccupied with the U.S.S.R. as in the past, elevating human rights and relations with the third world, in the definition of the United States."\textsuperscript{12}


\textsuperscript{12} Statement of Mr. Joseph J. Sisco, in: Hearings, n.2, p.48.
The growing domestic criticism of his foreign policy, swept Carter off his "soft" feet by the avalanche of anti-Soviet sentiments pervading the U.S. On 4 January, Carter in a special address to the nation, almost wholly devoted to the U.S. response to the Afghan crisis, attempted to discard his dovish image which was haunting him since the beginning of his Presidency. Commenting that "one such lesson learned by the world at great cost is that aggression unopposed becomes a contagious disease", Carter in his address, underlined the following main measures that the U.S. would take against the Soviet Union.

Along with other countries we will provide military equipment, food, and other assistance to help Pakistan defend its independence and its national security against the seriously increased threat it faces from the North. The United States also stands ready to help other nations in the region in similar ways.

However, because of the Soviet aggression, I have asked the United States Senate to defer further consideration of the SALT-II Treaty so that the Congress and I can assess Soviet actions...

We will delay opening of any new American or Soviet Consular facilities, and most of the cultural and economic exchanges currently under consideration will be deferred. Trade with the Soviet Union will be severely restricted.

I have directed that no sales of high technology or other strategic items will be licensed for sale to the Soviet Union until further notice, while we revise our licensing policy.

Fishing privileges for the Soviet Union in United States Waters will be severely curtailed.

The 17 million tons of Grain ordered by the Soviet Union in excess of that amount which we are committed to sell will not be delivered.\textsuperscript{14}

An embattled and highly criticised President went on to add that an "attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf Region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."\textsuperscript{15} Soon thereafter, on 8 January, the President while briefing members of the Congress on the situation in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the White House, echoed in the strongest possible language that the "Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is the greatest threat to peace since the second World War. It's a sharp escalation in the aggressive history of the Soviet Union."\textsuperscript{16}

The cooperation of other nations to deal with the situation was also given added importance. As a part of this effort, the United States moved to muster world opinion to isolate the Soviet Union. Carter despatched Defence Secretary Brown to China to discuss the developments.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. A-B.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., vol. 80, no.2036, March 1980, p.35.

Simultaneously it moved the United Nations to condemn Soviet action in Afghanistan. On 14 January 1980, the Western countries succeeded in getting passed a resolution which said that the U.N. "strongly deplores" the intervention in Afghanistan. The U.N. General Assembly passed by a margin of 104 in favour, 18 against and 18 abstaining the resolution which further called for the "immediate, unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan."\textsuperscript{17}

The customary state of the union message delivered to the Congress on 21 January, also contained the basic elements of an emerging American strategy to contain the Soviet Union. In its perception of Soviet goals and the U.S. response to it, the 1980 message was different in tone, content and substance than the two earlier messages Carter delivered as the President. In this penultimate, message, Carter reiterated some of the steps announced during the special address to the nation on 2 January 1980. Besides, the President indicated the strategy which he had drawn to thwart the "advancing" Soviets. The strategy, in the words of the President, had the following ingredients.

In this new situation, we are proposing to the Congress a military and economic assistance program to enable Pakistan to buttress its defenses.

We are also working with other friends of Pakistan to

increase the resources available for Pakistan's development and security.

We are also pursuing the possibility of gaining access to military facilities in the region in time of trouble.

We are prepared to work closely with our friends in the region, on a cooperative basis, to do whatever is required to ensure that aggressions would bear heavy costs so that further aggression is deterred.  

In the meantime, two discernible schools of thought emerged in Washington, each attributing different reasons for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The first school, described Soviet action as an attempt by Moscow to safeguard its interest in Afghanistan and to forestall the possibility of the Islamic revivalism affecting its bordering Republics. The Second, was less magnanimous in its views and consisted of hardliners who attributed the Soviet intervention as a part of Moscow's alleged grand master-strategy to extend its influence to the Persian Gulf - the oil well of the world.

The adherents to the first school argued that from the Soviet perspective, that the instability that was sweeping Afghanistan at that time raised genuine security concerns in Moscow. Since the mid-1950s, the Soviet investment in Afghanistan was growing substantially. But, the

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18 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, n.16, pp. 171-72.

19 For a variety of view points representing the different schools, please see: Hearings, n.2.
political events taking place in Kabul in the 1970s threatened to destroy the Soviet position in Afghanistan. In April 1978, a coup ousted President Mohammed Daoud and two weeks later a new Republic was established with Nur Mohammad Taraki as the Prime Minister. Since then, as a backlash to the policies of Taraki, a strong rebellion spread to 23 of the 25 provinces in Afghanistan. In March 1979, Taraki was replaced by the Khalq leader Hafizulla Amin. The country which was already facing a growing rebellion had now become weaker and the possibility of yet another change in leadership, but this time with an anti-Moscow regime seizing power seemed to loom large.

The Soviet Union had always assigned crucial importance to the happenings in its immediate neighbourhood. The nations adjoining the Soviet Union were of "core" interests to Moscow. The March 1979 change in leadership in Kabul made the Soviet Union view Afghanistan as a nation that was degenerating into chaos. In view of this development, it was felt that in Afghanistan, the "Socialist regime no longer in control of events, one which had moreover been initiated into the fraternal association of Socialist States, and one which at least contained within it the real possibility of spreading infection into the Soviet Union

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20 Hearings, n.2, p.20.
itself by Islamic disaffection"21 threatened Moscow's security interests. In such an eventuality, they argued that there was the possibility of the Soviet Union loosing its large investment. More alarmingly, Moscow feared the danger of the Islamic revivalism sweeping across the region in Iran and other countries spreading and engulfing the approximately 50 million Muslim inhabitants of the Central Asian Republics of the Soviet Union. "It is also on record that the Soviets have also traditionally been fearful of the pan-Islamic movements and their influence on their population."22 Faced with these potential dangers, the Soviet Union had little choice but to intervene in order to protect its boundaries from "dangerous influence."

The advocates of the second school were the protagonists of the "Stepping stone" theory. They painted a very aggressive picture of the Soviet Union and attributed the Soviet intervention to the revivalism of the "Tsarist ambitions" for a warm water port in the Indian Ocean. What had gained currency in Washington had been the kind of opinion expressed by Benson Lee Grayson, a former U.S. Foreign Service Officer, that "Moscow's ambition to expand into the Middle East is as old as the Russian State itself" and that the Soviet Union sought to exercise complete


control over the region.\textsuperscript{23}

In addition, the protagonists of this school argued that the move into Afghanistan signalled the beginning of the Soviet attempt to capitalise on the general instability sweeping the region and Pakistan's weakness, to make permanent inroads into the region. Several influential foreign policy experts were of the opinion that the Soviet Union would become a net importer of oil in the next 5 to 10 years. It was also argued that Moscow would work towards the establishment of "a powerful political-military influence in that region to assure the Soviet Union an adequate supply of oil at the prices that the Soviets can afford" and that this is a "strategy that the Soviets would wish to pursue over the next several years."\textsuperscript{24} In addition, the CIA Director, Stansfield Turner, testified that a "vicious struggle" among nations may occur due to a world-wide decline in oil production. He also attributed a decline in Soviet oil production as one of the reasons for the Soviet move into Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{25} It was also argued that once the Soviets are able to establish a foothold in the region, then the oil-rich Persian Gulf, from where 40 percent of the oil which the non-Communist world depended on, would be threatened.


\textsuperscript{24} Hearings, n.2, p.139.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, p.348.
During several hearings of the U.S. Congress, it was concluded that the U.S. dependency on Gulf oil was bound to rise thereby indicating that the Persian Gulf would only become more important for the U.S. in future.

Strategists in Washington had already begun advocating a hardline approach ever since the Angolan crisis in 1975. Since then they felt that Moscow had been adopting a policy of expanding its influence in the third world nations. In the prevailing mood, the arguments of the liberal school of thought did not have many subscribers and their views were drowned in the ensuing din. On the other hand, the advocates of a drastic change in U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union, who had become progressively vocal since the establishment of the leftist regime of Nur Muhammed Taraki in 1978, suddenly received a powerful shot in the arm because of the direct Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979.

Radical Measures

The Carter Administration which was attempting to resist the pressures to revert U.S. policies to the Dulles era of unmitigated anti-Soviet postures lost its verve. The Administration soon succumbed to the changing climate. Whatever little support the liberal school had in the Administration dissipated and the official pronouncements bore a striking resemblance to the vitriolic anti-Soviet remarks made by U.S. leaders in
the early 1950s. The new policy of the Carter Administration was made abundantly clear by Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance when he spoke before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 27, 1980. He said:

Some have argued that a strong response to Soviet military growth and aggression is over reaction. But to disregard the growth of Soviet military programs and budgets or to explain away aggression as a defensive maneuver is to take refuge in illusion.26

Simultaneously the U.S. strengthened its military presence in the vicinity of West Asia. It included the following:

- On January 9, the U.S. undertook joint exercises with Egypt. Two AWACS were also deployed in Egypt.
- On January 14, U.S. naval strength in the Indian Ocean was enhanced to 25 ships. This included 3 aircraft carriers. President Carter reviewed options of a naval study detailing mining or blockade of the Persian Gulf.
- On January 22, U.S. and West Germany discussed the possibility of moving certain U.S. equipment and troops from Germany to South West Asia.
- In February, a Department of Defense study concluded that U.S. should consider using tactical nuclear weapons in case of Soviet thrust into Northern Iran.

Pentagon prepared a "trip wire" strategy for the Persian Gulf. It included the rushing of troops and nuclear weapons that would discourage any possible Soviet intervention. It also identified the rapid-reaction elements that would include battalions of airforce squadrons to be despatched from the nearest points.

- On February 11, Oman, Kenya, and Somalia agreed to allow the U.S. air and naval forces increased access to the facilities.

- On February 18, a task force of 1800 marines was moved from Hawaii to Subic bay. Four amphibious ships including one helicopter carrier were prepared to be deployed in the Arabian Sea with tanks, artillery, anti-tank missiles, and helicopters. Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown ordered the Rapid Deployment Force to begin operating on March 1. This included land, sea, and air units chosen to move in an emergency in areas such as the Persian Gulf.

- On February 27, it was announced that an Australian Task Force along with ships from New Zealand would be deployed to bolster Western pressure in the Indian Ocean.
On March 5, it was announced that seven cargo ships loaded with arms and supplies will be deployed in the Indian Ocean in June to bolster and support a combat force of 10,000 marines for two weeks.

On March 7, the two AWACS deployed in Egypt would conduct an exercise with U.S. fleet in the Indian Ocean region.

On March 8, B-52 bombers were flown to Indian Ocean for the fourth time in a "show the flag" mission.

The new Cold War had evidently begun and Pakistan once again became the cynosure of American hawks. Respected and influential pundits of American policy called for the resumption of aid to Pakistan immediately with a "long term commitment for military and economic assistance" in addition to the strengthening of Naval and other military facilities for use by U.S. armed forces.²⁷

*Enlisting Pakistani Support*

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was a rude shock to the American defense planners. The motivations behind Soviet intervention in

²⁷ Hearings, n.2, p.48.
Afghanistan continued to be an enigma to many Americans. A consensus soon emerged that the Soviet Union was seeking an access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and that the United States should stop this advance. According to American perception, the Soviet "occupation" of Afghanistan, a nation situated only 300 miles from the Persian Gulf, had brought Moscow perilously close to American vital interests. In his address to the Nation on 4 January, Carter had echoed the same opinion and stated that "A Soviet occupied Afghanistan threatens both Iran and Pakistan and is a stepping stone to possible control over much of the world's oil supplies." 28

Pakistan's geographical proximity to the Gulf region was constantly highlighted in almost all of the several hearings the Congress held to assess the impact of the Afghan crisis and to reformulate U.S. policy towards Pakistan. The majority line of thinking was that "this country [Pakistan] in a geographical sense is a pivot between the States of the Indian subcontinent and the oil-rich States of Western Asia" 29 making it a nation of great strategic importance for the United States. It was also felt by the influential Senators and Congressmen that Pakistan's cooperation

28 Department of State Bulletin, n.13, p. A.

should be enlisted to prevent the Soviet Union from making any further moves that could bring it closer to the Persian Gulf. The President himself stated that the nations in the region would see a "possible repetition of this kind of invasive action unless the Soviets are cautioned against moving further and castigated and condemned because of their previous actions."³⁰

The President's address to the nation and the Union Message together contained the basic threads of the evolving American strategy and thinking. Pakistan had been severely affected by a change in U.S. policy after the election of Jimmy Carter. This nation was sidelined because of its nuclear programme, military dictatorship, narcotics cultivation, human rights violations and to a certain extent because of the countervailing effect of the dominant presence of the largest democracy in the world, India. Despite the Carter Administration's low perception of Pakistan, there were indications, since the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, that the U.S. would not be able to continue assigning Pakistan this low priority. The series of developments in Africa and West Asia, such as the Soviet intervention in Angola in 1975, the Ethiopian problem in 1977 and the overthrow of the pro-U.S. President of North Yemen in 1978, increased the strategic importance of Pakistan for the United States. It had also

³⁰ Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter, n.16, p.329.
been said that after the "fall of the Shah of Iran in Jan. 1979, Pakistan became the most important U.S. friend in South Asia." Though this may be an extreme view, it nevertheless was an indication of events to follow.

Once the Afghan crisis erupted, Pakistan once again suddenly found itself catapulted to a pivotal position in U.S. security schemes. It was identified as the kingpin in the new Cold War and was perceived to be in a position several times more important than the role it played as an ally in the 1950s and early 60s. There was also another difference -- then the Pakistani role was limited to South Asia. In contrast, now the repercussions of a further Soviet thrust towards the South were considered analogous to the consequences that would have befallen the U.S. had, West Germany slipped out of Western orbit in 1949. The situation was that unlike in the first Cold War, the theatre of conflict shifted from the frontiers of Europe and Far East to South Asia. In Washington's perception, if West Germany were the frontline State in the old Cold War, Pakistan qualified to be the one in the new.

Pakistan's cooperation and assistance therefore became an essential and integral element of the new strategy evolved to "contain" Moscow. Out of the five basic planks of the U.S. strategy, three of them -- the

identification and the declaration of a "trip wire"; the adoption of strong measures to prevent the Soviet from emerging from "this invasion with impunity" and to make the Soviets "suffer the consequences" of the intervention in Afghanistan, and the enhancement of the United States military strength to intervene could not be achieved without both the support, assistance and active cooperation of Pakistan. The situation was such that Pakistan's role was considered paramount for, in the words of Defense Secretary, Harold Brown, "extracting a real price from the Soviets for this specific case of outright aggression." As the Soviet news agency, Tass, had reported, this implied that the supply of arms to the Afghan rebels was an important reason why President Carter called for the renewal of defense supplies to Pakistan. Pakistan was deemed to not only border Afghanistan but also strategically located on the Eastern approaches to the oil-laden Gulf region. The other two planks of the strategy could be implemented without the active support of Pakistan. In reality they were something in which Pakistan had little if not no role to play.

For the overall success of the new strategy of the United States,

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the concept of regional security was also emphasised. This Strategy was elaborated in a statement by the Secretary of State Cyrus Vance before the Senate Appropriations Committee on 1 February 1980. As propounded it contained five critical elements.35

The first element constituted the enhancement of the defense capabilities of the nations in the region. In the immediate area of the crisis, the United States identified Pakistan as the nation which needed to be strengthened militarily as it borders Afghanistan. The Soviet intervention in the words of Jimmy Carter "posed a new challenge to this region, and particularly to neighbouring Pakistan."36 As a part of the broader strategy, the need to increase the military power of the nations in the Gulf region specially Israel and Egypt was also identified.

The second element of the strategy was the U.S. plan to prevent conflagration of local disputes. Washington’s objective was clear. It wanted to prevent the regional differences between nations from escalating into conflicts that could draw the superpowers. This effort was in other words manifestly directed towards the prevention of situations which would enhance the influence of the Soviet Union in the region. Though this objective was not spelled out, it was clear that it was the underlying

35 See: Department of State Bulletin, n.15, p.35-37.
motive behind the increased urgency of Washington to bring about peace between Arabs and the Israelis and decrease tensions between India and Pakistan. It was evidently reckoned by Washington that any local conflict would only provide Moscow with an additional opportunity to take sides in such a conflict leading to increased Soviet influence in the region.

The third element of the strategy was the emphasis on the improvement of U.S. bilateral relations with the nations in the region. This aim was closely linked with the second and it particularly implied that Washington would seek to establish friendly relations with the nations of the region to obviate the chances of the Soviet Union establishing unacceptable levels of influence on them. The implication of this part of the strategy was that the U.S. would endeavour to impress upon India that the arms aid that the U.S. was intending to give Pakistan was aimed at Moscow and not against India. This was done with a view to allaying New Delhi’s fears about what a militarily strengthened Pakistan could do. The basic strategy was to "shore up Pakistan without pushing India toward the Soviet Union." 37

The fourth element reveals U.S. effort to seek cooperation of its allies to support and promote Western interests in the region especially through the re-armament of Pakistan. It also implied that the "assistance

to Pakistan will be an integral part of a broad international effort."\textsuperscript{38} In the message to the Congress, Carter, underlined the criticality of arming Pakistan calling it the "most urgent concern."\textsuperscript{39} Through this strategy, the United States sought to seek the cooperation of its allies and close friends to come to the aid of nations that were perceived to be threatened by Moscow. Washington's efforts were aimed at securing the cooperation of its European allies, Japan, Australia, Saudi Arabia and other nations. One critical element of this strategy was the close cooperation that was sought to be forged between China and the United States to deal with the Afghan situation. Thus, within days of the Soviet intervention, U.S. Defense Secretary, Harold Brown, undertook on an eight day tour to China.

The visit was evidently aimed at improving Sino-U.S. relations and to seek "complementary actions" on the basis of the "shared interests" of both the nations to counter the Soviets.\textsuperscript{40} The emphasis was on forging "security cooperation with China as a way to contain Soviet expansion."\textsuperscript{41}

The Defense Secretary held extensive talks with senior Chinese leaders including its Defense Minister, Xu Xiangquian. Though most of the

\textsuperscript{38} Department of State Bulletin, n.15, p.36.

\textsuperscript{39} London Times, 22 January 1980.

\textsuperscript{40} New York Times, January 21, 1980.

\textsuperscript{41} Wall Street Journal, 8 January 1980.
deliberations were held in closed door sessions, from the various speeches and pronouncements of the leaders of both the U.S. and China, it can be inferred that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was the main focus of the discussions.

From the reports reaching the press, it was evident that the need to reach a strategic consensus between China and the U.S. dominated the larger part of the deliberations. The singular objective was to counterbalance the Soviet strategic influence in Asia, as reported by the Soviet official newspaper, Izvestia. In this effort to thwart the growing Soviet influence, Pakistan’s role was also underlined. China offered to increase the flow of arms to rebels in Afghanistan. Simultaneously, China and the U.S. evolved a joint strategy to bolster Pakistani defences. Therefore, at the end of the visit it became apparent that what was emerging was a Sino-Pak-U.S. axis to counter the Soviet influence and power in Asia. This close cooperation would become apparent in the largest ever covert aid extended to the rebel forces fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

Close on the heels of U.S. Defense Secretary Brown’s visit to Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Huang Hua, arrived in Pakistan on 18 January, on a four-day visit. During this visit, Hua is reported to

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43 Ibid.
have held detailed discussions with Pakistan officials and declared Chinese support to Islamabad to counter the Soviet intervention.\textsuperscript{44} The visit of the Chinese leader was the precursor to the Sino-Pak-U.S. strategy evolved during the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary, Brown, to China, steering the largest opposition to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. This policy was later augmented by the succeeding Reagan administration which underlined the need to seek the assistance of friendly nations to also economically strengthen Pakistan. This became apparent in 1980 when the CIA Director, William Casey, undertook a visit to Japan and met the Japanese Prime Minister and exhorted him to increase economic aid to Pakistan because of its new-found status as a front line state.\textsuperscript{45}

An analysis of the U.S strategy to seek the cooperation of other nations to frustrate the perceived moves of Moscow in Afghanistan would reveal that what U.S. had in mind was the creation of a kind of loose collective security scheme such as SEATO. Though the U.S. plan did not envisage the formalisation of the cooperation into a treaty, its objectives were more or less the same.

The fifth element was more locale specific. It sought to portray the United States as a friend of Islamic countries and as a nation that

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., January 21, 1980.

\textsuperscript{45} Mushahid Hussain, \textit{Pakistan and the Changing Regional Scenario: Reflections of a Journalist} (Lahore, 1988), p.16.
respected and has a great understanding of Islam. This strategy was aimed at removing any fear that the Islamic countries may have entertained that closer relations with Washington could only be at the expense of the promotion of Islam. The United States went on to reassure that its difference of opinion with Iran was "in no sense a confrontation with the Islamic faith or Islamic traditions." At the same time, it painted a picture that portrayed the Soviet Union as a nation that had resolved to crush Islam. The strategy was an obvious attempt on the part of Washington to befriend the Islamic nations making it appear that it was the only superpower which tolerated and respected Islam. The thrust of the campaign was aimed at depicting Soviet Union as a nation that was intent on destroying Islam. The Secretary of State went on to add that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was "an attempt to crush an Islamic resistance and to impose external rule over an Islamic nation."’

Taken together, the five ingredients of the American strategy revealed a "containment" plan similar to the one that was enunciated during the height of the first Cold War. It was unmistakably an attempt on the part of the United States to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining influence in a region that was "vital" for the United States. For this

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46 *Department of State Bulletin*, n.15, p.36.

47 Ibid.
purpose Washington was at least publicly willing to be seen as a nation prepared to countenance the growth of Islam as an ideology. This, however, stood in stark contrast to the earlier attempts by the United States to fight the spread of Islamic fundamentalism.

**U.S. AID OFFER**

For the success of the overall strategy of the United States, Pakistan’s cooperation therefore became a *sine quo non*. U.S. policy which had tilted away from Pakistan and towards India after Carter assumed office in 1977, now swung back in a sharp reversal. Pakistan became a frontline nation for the United States.

Within hours of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, President Carter himself spoke to President Zia-ul-Haq over telephone and expressed grave concern over the situation in Afghanistan and promised full American support.\(^{48}\) It was reported that two days later, the National security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, said in a T.V. programme that he had been authorised to reaffirm the 1959 U.S.-Pak bilateral agreement which included

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the provision to use armed forces in case Pakistan were attacked.\textsuperscript{49} To make it appear that Carter meant business, he quickly followed it up with an announcement on 5 January 1980, that he would immediately initiate action to resume arms supply to Pakistan after a nine-month old cut off.\textsuperscript{50} In the next week itself, a Pakistani team headed by Agha Shahi, Foreign Affairs Adviser to Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq and consisting of Lieutenant General Jilani, Secretary General to the Ministry of Defense, Major General Aref, Chief of Staff to President Zia, and other senior Pakistani officials, arrived in Washington to work out the prospects of Pak-U.S. collaboration in the light of the Afghan crisis. The team held talks with the U.S. President Carter, Secretary of State Vance, Dr. Brzezinski, Deputy secretary of Defense Graham Claytor, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Arthur Hummel, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Agency David Aaron and Thomas Thornton of the National Security Council.\textsuperscript{51}

The basic writ of the Pakistani delegation was to impress upon the leadership in Washington that Pakistan was prepared to play a role in


\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Washington Post}, 6 January 1980.

\textsuperscript{51} Public Papers of the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, n.16, p.67-68.
furthering American interests, but for a price. Before entering the State Department for the more than four hours of meeting with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the Pakistani adviser told reporters that Pakistan would, "indicate what we [Pakistan] need to strengthen our [Pakistan] defence" and as to "what guarantees of security would be forthcoming" for the role Pakistan was prepared to play.\(^{52}\) These two remarks to the reporters revealed the Pakistani intentions and made it evident that the U.S. would have to shelve its non-security considerations in determining the assistance to be provided to Pakistan. Islamabad was obviously dictating its price and indicating that it would only be available to play a role in U.S. strategic schemes if Washington provided it with the quantum of aid that Pakistan assessed would be required to strengthen its armed forces.

The second inference from the remarks of Shahi was that Pakistan was determined to drive home its requests to seek U.S. guarantee for its territorial integrity. This desire of Pakistan had been nothing new and if analysed in the historical context of U.S.-Pak security relations, it would be clear that Pakistan was utilising the opportunity presented by the Afghan crisis to bargain for a guarantee that they had earlier sought in the halcyon days of their 1950 alliances but was denied.

After the conclusion of the meeting, it had become evident that the U.S. would be willing to succumb to Pakistani pressure. The written

communique issued by Vance after the meeting, reaffirmed U.S. commitment to the territorial integrity and security of Pakistan and indicated that Pakistan could bargain and win this time. It had also become abundantly manifest that the United States would not any more consider Pakistan's refusal to allow international inspection of a nuclear research programme, believed to be a weapon producing facility, as an impediment to the resumption of U.S. arms aid to Pakistan.

While the Carter Administration was drawing up the initial strategy with Pakistan to prevent Soviet Union from gaining any more influence in the region, Washington was grappling with the hostage crisis in Iran. The U.S. helplessness in the face of a belligerent and aggressive regime in Iran also contributed to Pakistan's increasing importance for the United States. When Carter was fighting for his second term, the urgency to resolve the hostage crisis was weighing heavily on the Administration. For the first time, Carter Administration actively considered the resort military options. The Pentagon drew up contingency plans to blockade portions of the Persian Gulf or mine the waters in an effort to give Carter the option of using military teeth to compel Tehran to relent and reach a settlement. The U.S. Navy in a "crash effort" even started hunting for retired navy personnel adept in the "tricky art" of laying mines and even readied letters asking such retired specialists to report for

53 Ibid.
active duty. All these efforts were aimed at stifling the life line of Iran for food and other supplies.

Simultaneously, the United States moved the Security Council to impose economic sanctions against Iran. But though the revolution had an easy passage of 10-2 in favour of the U.S. sponsored move, the resolution was killed by a Soviet veto. The impotency of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf underlined by the U.S. inability to solve the Iranian crisis even in the face of Iran's unbridled and provocative actions made Pakistan stand out as a nation that Washington could depend on in an area of decreasing U.S. influence. Devoid of friends and allies in the region, a Muslim nation as militarily powerful as Pakistan -- situated close to the Gulf -- was viewed very important in the context. Faced with this predicament, the Carter Administration announced that it was resuming aid to Pakistan and indicated that it had tentatively approved $400 million in military and economic assistance to Islamabad. The package sought by Pakistan had three integral components. The first was the reaffirmation of the 1959 U.S. commitments to assist Pakistan against any 'Communist' aggression; the second was military aid and the third was economic assistance.

The military component of the aid was to consist of $200 million

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55 Facts on File, 18 January 1980, p.27.
spread over a period of two fiscal years for the purchase of anti-aircraft, anti-tank and other defensive equipment, primarily suited for the defense of Pakistan’s northern borders with Afghanistan. The economic aid also was to spread over a similar period. This was to be utilised in the fertilizer sector and other areas which would have a quick impact on the Pakistani economy. Despite the urgency with which the Carter Administration was processing the arms aid programme to Pakistan, it was made clear by Washington that the weapons would be primarily defensive in nature and would not possess the offensive capability which would strengthen it vis-a-vis India. Jimmy Carter was still very sensitive about India's concerns and therefore in deference to India's concern about arming Pakistan, the possibility of including aircraft in the list was ruled out. Islamabad was, on the other hand, particularly angered by the efforts of the Carter Administration to accommodate New Delhi's views. Pakistan therefore informed the U.S. that it had rejected the aid offer because of its inadequacy and the onerous conditions attached to the aid. Agha Shahi, the Pakistani President's foreign affairs adviser is reported to have said that Islamabad could not "ignore the fact that United States' sensitivity to Indian reactions appeared to be determining the size and nature of the aid package" and that the aid was "wrapped up in onerous conditions which would detract from, rather than enhance, Pakistan's

security.\textsuperscript{57}  

To implement the aid package to Pakistan, the Carter Administration was prepared to shelve its nonproliferation priorities which were pursued with added vigour since 1977 -- the year Carter adorned the mantle of the presidency. In April 1979, upon evidence that Pakistan had covertly acquired uranium enrichment technology, the Carter Administration had suspended aid to Pakistan under the Symington Amendment or section 669 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. But, now in the face of the Afghan crisis, the Carter Administration was prepared to go to the Congress and ask for an exception to the anti-proliferation laws. Even so, it may be interesting to note that Carter was not prepared to certify that Pakistan had neither developed nor was developing uranium enrichment capability and was willing to adopt the more difficult course of seeking Congressional action. (This stood in sharp contrast to the contradiction in U.S. policies, if not apparent violation of spirit of the Congressional restriction by President Reagan later in 1987 when he found it appropriate to provide a similar certificate to allow the continuation of U.S. aid to Pakistan). In addition, the U.S. also announced that it would continue its food aid which was not affected by the 1979 aid embargo and also gave notice that Washington was considering assisting Pakistan ease its debt burden by rescheduling the repayment as also enhancing U.S. contribution

\textsuperscript{57} London Times, 6 March 1980.
to a United Nations programme for Afghan refugees.\footnote{58}

\textit{India Ignored}

No sooner had it been announced that Washington was renewing its military ties with Pakistan, than New Delhi began to react strongly against the American move and Indian leaders expressed the fear that a renewal of the arms aid would exacerbate tensions in the region leading to a new arms race in the subcontinent. India's Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi, took strong exception to the reported arms sales to Pakistan and reiterated the Indian viewpoint that "Pakistani arms may be used against India, because the situation within Pakistan is so unstable."\footnote{59}

But, Washington apparently ignored India's protestation. The mood in the U.S. was so virulently anti-Soviet that virtually any effort to contain Moscow had automatic acceptance. Hence there was little chance for India's criticism of the U.S. move to have any meaningful effect on Washington. Washington moved ahead with its declared objective of strengthening Pakistan. Nevertheless, the Carter Administration was keen to undertake a damage-limitation-exercise with India.

Washington was not prepared to totally disregard India's concerns.

\footnote{58}{Washington Post, 15 January 1980.} \\
\footnote{59}{Indian Prime Minister quoted in Ibid., 6 January 1980.}
Though the United States was moving towards the arming of Pakistan, Carter did not find it appropriate to allow U.S. security concerns to completely over-ride the Indian opposition to a renewed arms aid to Islamabad. While attempting to strengthen Pakistan, the Carter Administration was making a serious effort to reassure India that "its actions would not upset the existing balance of power on the subcontinent." On 16 January, President Carter also communicated to the Indian Prime Minister through the American Ambassador to India, Robert Goheen, that U.S. military aid to Pakistan would serve to improve the security of both India and Pakistan and that Washington's assistance to Islamabad would not pose a threat to India.

India and the Soviet Union shared very friendly relations and in the American perception, India was viewed as a nation that helped promote Soviet interests in the region. Carter did not want to antagonise India further and create yet another opportunity for the Soviet Union to increase its influence in the region. Therefore, to mollify India, President Carter planned to release two shipments of enriched uranium in the Summer of 1980 for the nuclear reactor at Tarapur, which was under consideration

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61 Facts on File, 18 January 1980, p.27.
for some months.\textsuperscript{62} It was also a clear attempt to avoid rupture in U.S.-India relations. The issue of the supply of enriched uranium had attained significance as a symbol of U.S. concern for India as it had declared it as a test case to ascertain if the U.S. would stand by its contractual commitments. In another related move, President Carter despatched Clark Clifford a respected American lawyer\textsuperscript{63} to New Delhi to explain to the Indian Government the situation created by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Though the emissary did not record much success in view of India's resistance to accept the American argument regarding Moscow's suspected motives, the arrival of a respected representative of President Carter to India on the eve of the visit of the President's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, testified to the importance Carter attached to a balanced policy in South Asia.

\textit{Pakistan Rejects U.S. Offer}

The Afghan crisis presented Pakistan with an unique opportunity to exploit the susceptibilities of Washington spawned by the fear psychosis which gripped the United States following the crisis in South Asia. In


\textsuperscript{63} Clark Clifford was a Special Counsel to the U.S. President during 1946-50 and Secretary of Defense during 1968-69 in the Nixon Administration.
more three decades never had such pivotal importance been thrust upon it, nor was it in a position to bargain with such an elated feeling of confidence and definite hope that a superpower that the U.S. was, would succumb to Pakistan's demands. In fact, it was indeed a very rare in international relations that a small power like Pakistan was able to manipulate with artful finesse the diplomacy of a great power. The opportunity was seized very astutely by the Pakistani leadership. They manipulated and homed in on the American fears with the deadly accuracy of a modern technological marvel to compel the United States to come to terms with its demands. Throughout, Pakistan was engaged in a well orchestrated plan to obtain U.S. arms and economic assistance.

Soon after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan on 27 December, 1979, Pakistan started a campaign that sought to impress upon the world that the Soviet Union was implementing a well planned strategy to dominate the oil rich nations of the Gulf. Simultaneously, it also moved to signal to the West that Pakistan was the only nation placed in the "crucible of crisis" to protect the interests of the Western nations in the region.

Pakistan was undoubtedly capitalising on the situation to quench its desire for large-scale U.S. military and economic aid which had nearly ended after the Indo-Pak war of 1965 and which was totally cut off in the April of 1979. If in the past, Pakistan had faced several occasions
where the United States did not find it important to accede to its repeated requests for arms and economic aid, with the outbreak of the Afghan crisis, Islamabad was confident that it could alter the situation. The confidence of the Pakistani leaders was evident in the statements of President Zia. On 15 January, he said that he hoped that the U.S. assistance would be "without strings" and further added that the U.S. aid should not be linked to any requirements about Islamabad's internal policies or its nuclear programmes.\footnote{Facts on File, 18 January, 1980, p.27.}

An analysis of Pakistan's strategy in the immediate aftermath of the Afghan crisis starkly demonstrated its success in using the Communist bogey to strengthen itself vis-a-vis India in a manner it had never succeeded in the past. Pakistan in contrast to its policies of the 1950s, eschewed the option to rush to U.S. seeking aid and instead played a difficult-to-get game compelling the United States to up the ante. Pakistan was clearly taking advantage of being in a "position to protect the West against Soviet expansion toward the Gulf."\footnote{Washington Post, 14 January 1980.}

Soon after Jimmy Carter spoke to Zia-ul-Haq on the morning of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and the consensus in Washington suspecting Soviet intentions and the strong anti-Soviet public sentiments sweeping the United States, the Pakistani leadership shrewdly calculated that
the United States would assign Pakistan the role of a bulwark against Soviet "expansionism." Their views were in fact buttressed by President Carter's own statements. In a Question-And-Answer Session with John Chancellor of NBC News on January 7, Carter left no doubts in the minds of Pakistani leaders about the future role Washington had envisaged for Islamabad when he said that:

We have already assured President Zia, who's the leader of Pakistan, directly with a telephone communication from me the day, very shortly after the invasion, and since then through emissaries, that we're willing to join other nations in giving necessary protection to Pakistan and meet their legitimate defensive military needs.66

Once Pakistan was convinced that the United States had identified it as the linchpin in the wake of the Afghan crisis, President Zia started playing the difficult-to-get game. The Pakistani President, hinted through various pronouncements that his nation was willing to play a strategic role, but for a higher price tag than what Washington had indicated. To achieve this objective, he went about making noises that Islamabad was not interested in U.S. arms. He told a group of Pakistani newspaper editors on January 3, that Pakistan had "bitter experiences" with U.S. aid in the past.67 He also quickly added that his country's response to Washington's aid offers would be predicated on the kind of military aid

66 Public papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, n.16, p.6-7.
and the terms under which it would be supplied cautioning at the same
time, that a limited U.S. aid was meaningless as China could provide
small assistance.68 Pakistan this time very shrewdly huffed and puffed
at the U.S. aid offer.

Islamabad's Strategy

By 1980, Pakistan had established excellent relations with the
Muslim nations of the Gulf and Zia was not willing to barter any
complications in its relations with Iran for only token aid from the U.S.
Islamabad had already begun "courting" Iran and Ayatollah Ruhollah
Khomeini had become a cult Figure in Pakistan.69 In addition, anti-
American sentiments ran high among the Muslims of Pakistan for it to
invite additional problems without commensurate benefits in return. Within
hardly three months of the attack on U.S. embassy which left two
Americans dead, Zia did not evidently want to be seen publicly accepting
aid from the "Satan." Zia was in fact even reluctant to send troops to
stop the rioters for the fear of turning it into an anti-government riot.

But, at the same time, Pakistan did not want to convey the

68 Ibid.
69 Pakistan Times, 1 January 1980.
impression that it had slammed its doors on Washington's offer. Pakistani government mouthpiece, Pakistan Times, exhorted through an editorial that Pakistan should "accept the offer of military aid from the United States despite its wholehearted identity with Iran."\(^70\) In all probability, it must have been a government-sponsored item to convey the message that Pakistan would be available for U.S. security schemes. It would be difficult to reach any other conclusion as Zia was himself exercising complete control in Pakistan as the military dictator. The item must have been included in the newspaper with government concurrence, if not under its instructions. The utterances of Zia and this item in the newspaper must have in all probability been designed to convey to the U.S. that Pakistan would be willing to join alliances and bear the attending problems, if the price was right. Pakistan Times also brought out a series of articles exhorting people that in "national emergencies", no one should stand on ceremonies in accepting the "hand of help from one who has either been unfair to you in the past or who does not currently happen to be on the same wave length with a friend of yours."\(^71\)

The timing of the series of statements from the Pakistani President also revealed a systematic effort on the part of Zia to extract the maximum from the Americans. In the second week of January, a high

\(^70\) Pakistan Times, 1 January 1980.

\(^71\) London Times, 8 January 1980.
powered delegation was slated to visit Washington for talks on U.S.-Pak security relations. Zia was apparently spelling out Pakistan's conditions and putting Washington on notice that it will only accept aid if the U.S. were willing to come to terms with Islamabad's demands. Further, the Pakistan President was "basically juggling with the goodwill of the two superpowers, using China as a go between with the United States and a threat to the Soviet Union." 72

Further, soon after it was announced in Washington, on January 13, that President Carter had approved tentatively a sum of $400 million in U.S. aid to Pakistan, President Zia once again reiterated Pakistan's importance and its reluctance to accept U.S. aid on Washington's terms. On the same day of the announcement in Washington, Zia said in Peshawar that U.S. military aid would have to be accompanied by economic assistance also. He repeated his complaint that the U.S. was an undependable ally and referred to the U.S. policy towards it during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. He went on to categorically add that Washington would have to prove its "credibility and durability" as an ally before Pakistan will accept U.S. aid. The Pakistani President's intentions were made clear when he said that "I hope these two words make my position clear." 73 This was obviously an attempt to communicate to the

72 Ibid., 19 January 1980.
73 Ibid.
U.S. that token aid to Pakistan would not secure Pakistani cooperation. At the same time, this was also an obvious attempt to generate domestic support in Pakistan for any future attempts to move closer to the U.S.

    In a similar effort, most undoubtedly aimed at putting the pressure on Washington which had resolved to "impose a serious and sustained price for the aggression that is being committed against Afghanistan,"74 Zia added at a meeting with the tribal chiefs that Pakistan would not aid the Afghan rebels as it was not time for the holy war against Moscow.75 Jimmy Carter had unequivocally emphasised in the 4th January address to the nation and on various occasions thereafter, that it would make the burden of the Soviet Union unbearable. But the Administration did not publicly acknowledge as yet that the U.S. was involved in the effort to send aid to Afghan rebels. But later the U.S. began to reluctantly acknowledge that the strengthening of the resistance groups was one of the most important hinges on which the U.S. response to prevent the Soviet Union from making any further advance into the Persian Gulf region rested. Under these circumstances, the statement of President Zia must have sent tremors through Washington, as Pakistan was perceived as the nation without whose support arms could not be supplied

74 Quoted from the Statement of U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 27 March 1980, in Department of State Bulletin, n.26, p.17.
to the rebels. Given this perception of the United States, the statement of Zia must have conveyed to the U.S. that the sole bridge-head to frustrate the perceived moves of the Soviet Union would not be available just for the asking.

Along with his threat that Pakistan's strategic cooperation would only be forthcoming if the U.S. acceded to its demands, President Zia also started playing the Moscow card. He warned that the Soviet Union was after all its neighbour and that it would be ill-advised to blindly adopt an anti-Soviet posture. At a news conference held on 15 January, Zia also admitted that Pakistan had been holding secret meetings with the Soviets. Zia was obviously putting the U.S. on notice that if the circumstances arose, it would be beneficial for Pakistan to seek closer relations with Moscow. He made this evident when he said that "The Soviet Union is on our door-step, and the United States of America is 10,000 miles away" and that Pakistan "ought to view the situation very pragmatically. You can't live in the sea and create enmity with whales. You have to be friendly with them."  

At the same time, Zia sought to convey to Washington that Moscow was not a bad friend to have and implied that it had the option of reaching out to other friends too if the contingency arose. He openly

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76 Ibid., 16 January 1980.
77 Ibid.
declared in Lahore that he preferred the acceptance of the non-aligned status and valued its friendship with the Islamic Community from whom he expected substantial aid to buy arms (of the 42 countries in the non-aligned community, only Turkey was aligned). Referring to Soviet Union, he praised Moscow for building Pakistan's first steel plant outside Karachi. Zia continuously reiterated the need to keep an "open door policy" and said: "We want to be neither in someone's bag, nor to become the protege of some other power." Zia revealed his mind more explicitly, when he declared that without large-scale aid and assurances of a quick response in the event of an attack from the Soviet Union, Pakistan would be left with no other option but to befriend Moscow. All these statements of the Pakistani President were evidently calibrated to influence Washington. Zia was "continuing to try to keep on good terms with the Soviet Union so that the United States will feel the need to give guarantees on the firmer basis than it might wish to."

Apparently, having sensed that Pakistan would not be willing to accept nothing less than a substantive American aid programme, Washington Post reported that although U.S. officials were talking about a $400

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79 Ibid.
million aid package, Washington had considered offering $ one billion in aid. It may also be interesting to note that Zia had held two conferences in three days to explain Pakistan's response to the American offer in an obvious and transparent attempt to wring from the U.S. the maximum concessions possible. When analysed deeper, it may not be exactly unreasonable to infer that it was not a mere coincidence that these statements from the highest quarters in Pakistan came at a time when the Pakistani delegation headed by Agha Shahi had just returned after parleys with American officials in Washington. The Pakistani President had in his conference refused to divulge any details regarding the talks except stating that the talks were "preliminary" in nature.

The talks were held in close door and the details of the meetings are as yet unavailable. But, from the non-classified documents available, it could be concluded that the delegation was not successful in inducing the United States to increase the quantum of aid to Pakistan's expectation. At the same time, it can also be inferred that the U.S. had not taken a categorical stand regarding the quantum of aid it was willing to offer and this prompted Zia to characterize the talks as only preliminary and make appropriate noises that it may even be wiser for Pakistan to turn to the Soviet Union. Pakistani authorities conveyed to the United States

83 Ibid.
that Pakistan would not this time be anybody's lackey and in a press conference, Pakistani President rejected as "peanuts" the reported U.S. offer of $400 million in aid and termed it "terribly disappointing." Simultaneously, a leading Pakistani newspaper, The Muslim, hinted that Pakistan would consider offer of aid of $1 billion as a good start, but in the same breath opined that it would at least take $4 billion to update Pakistan's armed forces. According to well placed sources quoted in the Washington Post, what Pakistan had desired was a three-tiered aid programme. The first consisting of the immediate shipment of planes and tanks. The second should be in the form of technical know-how to repair and improve the equipment -- in effect a policy to deny the U.S. the option of withholding from Pakistan spare parts in case such a need arose. The third was economic aid and it included the write off of certain debts. This opinion must have reflected the government's viewpoint, for soon thereafter, Agha Shahi echoed the same opinion and said: "we don't say the United States should here and now give the whole amount. But as a beginning what they have offered is far too little."

Despite the reluctance of Pakistan to accept the aid offered by the

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84 Ibid., 18 January 1980.
86 Ibid., 15 January 1980.
87 Ibid., 23 January 1980.
U.S., there was a constant dialogue between the two nations. To demonstrate that the U.S. recognised Pakistan's strategic importance, Carter's adviser Brzezinski and Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, arrived in Islamabad accompanied by other senior officials for a four day visit beginning 1 February 1980. The decision to send this team according to available sources indicated that it was taken to assuage Pakistani fears and to re-assure Islamabad that the United States was serious about its commitments to Pakistan. Washington wanted to also assure Zia-ul-Haq, whose pronouncements after Carter's address to the nation on January 4, had become highly critical of the United States, that he need not harbour any apprehensions regarding the seriousness of the American support for Pakistan's territorial integrity. The National Security Adviser, to lend more weight to U.S. assurances, was reported to have told Pakistani leaders that the "U.S. was prepared to go to war to protect this [Pakistan] nation from a large-scale Soviet invasion." To add credibility to the assurances, Brzezinski also handed over a letter from Jimmy Carter to Zia-ul-Haq which reiterated U.S. commitment to the 1959 U.S.-Pakistan Mutual Security Agreement. But, biding time.

During the talks in Islamabad, Pakistan was nevertheless keen to come to some sort of an agreement regarding the quantum of aid that

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89 Ibid.
would be available to Pakistan. The minutes of the meetings are classified and hence specific details are unavailable. Yet it can be concluded from the statement of Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher that the meeting "produced a large measure of agreement on the nature of the security relationship" between Pakistan and the U.S.\textsuperscript{90}

Zia-ul-Haq was a constant fixture throughout the talks. It was indeed extremely strange that a Head of State should have attended the talks represented on the American side by officials less than the rank of the Secretary of State. According to the protocol, Pakistan should have been represented by an official no higher than the Adviser to the President. The presence of Zia throughout the discussions could only reveal the anxiety of the Pakistani side not to lose the opportunity presented by the Afghan crisis. In this effort, Pakistan also lost no opportunity in explaining that if there was any country which could protect American interest in the Middle East, it was Pakistan. One Pakistani government official was quoted in the \textit{Washington Post} as saying that "if we can hold the Russians at the Khyber Pass", "we can protect the Middle East."\textsuperscript{91}

Faced with the Pakistani rejection of U.S. aid, the Carter Administration embarked on a damage-limitation exercise. The American

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, n.13, p.65.

claim that Pakistan was satisfied with the assurances from Washington sounded incredulous. The pronouncements of Pakistani leaders throughout January that the United States should take concrete steps to prove Washington's "credibility" after having been "betrayed" in the 1965 and 1971 war was ample testimony of Pakistan's dissatisfaction. Given the Pakistani list of grievances against the U.S., it was indeed a tall claim that Islamabad could have been satisfied with simple verbal assurances from the American delegation. As later utterances by Pakistani leaders were to reveal, Pakistan was unwilling to settle for $400 million in U.S. aid when it was convinced about its unassailable bargaining strength. To drive home the point, soon after the Brzezinski mission, Pakistan wriggled out of an American offer to send a military team to study Islamabad's Air requirements stating that the time was inconvenient and further, did not even reply to another American offer to send a team to study the repair of M48 tanks.92

Pakistan was apparently piqued at the quantum of aid which was offered by the United States. An analysis of the daily announcements in Washington and Islamabad reveal that the U.S. proposal was made even before there was any conclusive consultation with the Pakistani authorities. Presumably, during the January visit of the Pakistani delegation to the U.S. led by Agha Shahi, the Pakistani officials had discussed as to what

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92 Ibid., 29 February 1980.
kind of aid would be forthcoming from the U.S. Agha Shahi had made this clear while speaking to reporters before the meeting that Pakistan’s cooperation would depend on U.S. offers. Though no primary documents were available as the proceedings of the meetings were classified, it may be safe to conclude from the available material that the quantum of aid that may be made available would have been a crucial item on the agenda for discussion. But, even the communique released at the end of the meeting did not indicate any agreement on the probable size of the aid to Pakistan. In these circumstances, it could be concluded that the matter may have been deferred for a future time.

This being the situation, it is surprising that the quantum of aid which the U.S. was willing to offer to Pakistan appeared in the press even before Pakistan was officially communicated the offer.\(^93\) The timing of the leak was such that it may not be unreasonable to conclude that it must have been a deliberate attempt to pre-empt Pakistan from asking for more. This argument is further buttressed by whatever information is available of the meeting which Brzezinski had in Pakistan during the visit of the American delegation to Islamabad from 1-4 February. During the meeting, the U.S. National Security Adviser told Zia that the U.S. was not willing to increase the proposed offer despite the Pakistani President’s, continued demand and hope that the U.S. would ultimately

\(^{93}\) Ibid., 8 March 1980.
offer a larger aid-package. Zia was reported to have said during the meeting that "the acceptance of the U.S. offer of aid, unless substantially modified, will have detracted from rather than enhanced our security."94 As soon as the meeting was over, Agha Shahi, Zia's Foreign Affairs Adviser, said on 5 March, that "We could not ignore the fact that the United State's sensitivity to Indian reactions appeared to be determining the size and nature of the aid package, denuding it of relevance to our defensive capacity."95 But, despite all the sudden public exhibition of an independent and non-aligned policy by the Pakistani President, the true situation was as one Pakistani diplomat said: "Zia can be bought", "but not for $400 million."96

The reality was that "Pakistan, which just a few months ago appeared to be willing to take what it could get from the United States"97 was not any more willing to be purchased for "peanuts." The visit by Carter's emissary, Brzezinski, to Pakistan in February 1980, therefore, too did not achieve anything substantial other than a joint statement which was issued on 3 February, 1980. Speaking to reporters at the end of his two day talks with Zia, U.S. officials hinted that the

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94 Ibid., 6 March 1980.
95 London Times, 6 March 1980.
96 Ibid., 17 March 1980.
97 Ibid., 15 January 1980.
Carter Administration may delay asking Congress for the $400 million adding that Pakistan was already re-assured about U.S. intentions and therefore there was no need to rush through with the steps to secure congressional approval for the aid package which was meant to primarily be a re-assurance for Pakistan. The request from the Administration which was to go to the Congress in the first week of February was therefore shelved.

The Rejection and its Aftermath

The rejection of the U.S. aid by Pakistan was a rude shock to the Americans. Although Pakistan had continuously sent out signals indicating that it would not be prepared to accept any small-scale aid from the U.S., Washington privately entertained the belief that Pakistan would be willing to accept the U.S. aid offer. Thus, when the rejection came, it "stunned American diplomats" who were unable to comprehend the import of the rejection. The rejection of the aid offer as "inadequate and politically unacceptable" took the American policy makers who had "launched themselves on their highly publicized cause of rushing to

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Pakistan's rescue" by surprise.\textsuperscript{100}

Nevertheless, Pakistan retained its interest in the economic aid and the re-affirmation of the commitments under the 1959 U.S.-Pak agreement. This was made clear when the U.S. Ambassador to Islamabad, called on Agha Shahi, the Adviser to Pakistan President, and on S.Shah Nawaz, the Foreign Secretary. This opinion of the Pakistani side was conveyed to Brzezinski during his talks in Islamabad. But during this meeting of the American Ambassador, the Pakistani side was willing to accept only a congressional reaffirmation of the 1959 agreement instead of the earlier demand for its conversion into a full fledged treaty.\textsuperscript{101} On the other hand, the U.S. was apparently not interested in pushing through a truncated version of the aid package and for all practical purposes, the aid proposal to Pakistan was withdrawn. It was worthwhile to note that the Pakistani rejection of the aid had "embarrassed" the Carter Administration. But it was interesting that in an apparent unconnected development in Washington, diplomats began to talk about how dogmatic Pakistan had been in its pursuit of its nuclear programme. Simultaneously, U.S. intelligence data began to reveal that Pakistan continued to produce weapons grade enriched uranium.\textsuperscript{102} It was well

\textsuperscript{100} London Times, 10 March 1980.

\textsuperscript{101} Washington Post, 17 March 1980.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
known in Islamabad that the American Congress was extremely keen to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons and that despite all the strategic importance Pakistan had for the U.S., any further evidence of Pakistan trying to produce nuclear weapons would totally kill the passage of any aid bill in the Congress. Whether U.S. intelligence agencies started releasing their findings to put the "screw on" because of Pakistan's insistence that Washington agree to its terms for aid could not be concluded and might only be known to future scholars.

After having been found that the United States was unwilling to accede to Pakistan's request, again in an apparent move aimed at putting the pressure on Washington, Islamabad started wooing Moscow. On 6 March, addressing the elected representatives of Pakistan, Zia stated that Pakistan was neither arming nor sending weapons to Afghan rebels and that Pakistan was providing only humanitarian aid. Agha Shahi went on to add that he would even permit inspection of the camps to prove his claim. In an attempt to reassure Moscow that Islamabad considered Pak-Soviet relations important, Shahi added that the Soviet Union by virtue of its huge resources, was in a position to make a "positive contribution towards the prosperity and well-being of the people of Pakistan." Pakistan was obviously warning the United States that Washington would

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103 Ibid., 7 March 1980.
104 Ibid.
have to substantially increase the quantum of aid to Pakistan to prove its sincerity. This was made the touch stone of America’s commitment to Islamabad. The import of the Pakistani pronouncements was that in case the U.S. was unwilling to accede to Pakistan’s demand for increased aid, then it would not only be prudent for Islamabad to edge closer to the Soviet Union, but also that it would be the only viable option for it.

Despite all the noises Pakistani leaders were making in the wake of the U.S. refusal to increase its aid offer, it might be reasonable to conclude that the U.S. had not unduly been perturbed. Even if Islamabad genuinely felt the need to move towards the Soviet Union, it would have been stoutly opposed by China whom Pakistan considered to be its trusted ally. Further, it was very unlikely, that Moscow would have accepted the "olive branch" extended by Pakistan for the fear of jeopardising its longstanding relationship with Pakistan’s traditional enemy, India.

Moreover, there would have been absolutely no manner in which the close Arab and Muslim allies of Pakistan in the Gulf region, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan’s bankers, could have countenanced such a shift in Pakistan’s policy. The U.S. would have been clearly aware of this inherent limitation circumscribing the flexibility of Pakistan’s foreign policy. Hence, Washington was not unduly disturbed at the attempted dalliance of Pakistan with the Soviet Union. As one U.S. official after the end of the Brzezinski mission commented on the rejection of the American aid
offer in a lighter vein; "we just saved the U.S. Treasury $400 million."\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 17 March 1980.