INTRODUCTION
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Afghanistan is a land-locked country located at the crossroads of Central, South and West-Asia and is close to the crisis-prone zones like the Indian Ocean and Middle East. Its geopolitical importance is also due to its contiguity with U.S.S.R., China, Iran, Pakistan and the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Afghanistan assumed the status of a "buffer" between the Tsarist Russian and the British Indian empires. After the conclusion of the Second World War, the strategic importance of Afghanistan assumed added dimensions especially during the cold war. Even though Afghanistan steered clear of the cold-war politics between the United States and the U.S.S.R., it endeavoured to maintain good relations with both the super powers, without jeopardizing its non-aligned character.

Soon after gaining independence of British domination in August 1919, King Amanullah of Afghanistan tried to form a new politico-economic structure for the modernization of his country which required the expansion of its foreign relations. He pursued two main objectives in his foreign relations, viz. (a) to end the political isolation of Afghanistan and (b) to remove economic backwardness which had neither railways nor roads. Accordingly, Amanullah
deputed an official mission under the leadership of Mohammad Wali to a number of countries seeking diplomatic recognition of his newly independent state. Whereas Soviet Union and many other countries gave diplomatic recognition to Afghanistan, the U.S. response to the Afghan delegation was cold and President Harding deliberately conveyed an ambiguous reply to the request for recognition, thereby offending the Afghans.

By 1924, Afghanistan had established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Belgium, Turkey, Egypt and Iran. In order to further expand Afghanistan's foreign relations and bolster its international prestige, King Amanullah accompanied by some of his ministers and advisers, set out on an extended tour abroad. He visited India, Egypt, Italy, France, Germany, Britain, the Soviet Union, Turkey and Iran. The Afghan King made another friendly gesture to the United States by offering to extend his European tour to include Washington. But the U.S. Government made it clear that an official visit by the Afghan ruler would not be welcomed. Thus, Amanullah's attempts to forge diplomatic relations with U.S.A. were rebuffed by the U.S. administration.

When Amanullah was replaced by the pro-British Nadir Shah in 1929, the new regime declared a policy of neutrality and equitable relations with all countries, which was later
registered in the 1931 constitution. Nadir Shah developed good relations with the Soviet Union, Turkey and Iran and made attempts to develop ties with Germany and France with a view to harness their economic potential. He also made an attempt to attract the U.S. capital into Afghanistan and for this purpose an Afghan mission was sent to the United States. But the U.S. industrialists, who were pre-occupied with their own economic difficulties at that time, evinced no interest in Afghanistan.

King Zahir Shah who ascended the throne in 1933, followed a pro-West policy and expanded his relations with Germany and its allies. Considering Afghanistan's proximity to the Soviet Union, Germany and other "Axis" countries sought to expand their influence in Afghanistan in the late 1930s. To that end, wide use was made of Germany's economic contacts with Afghanistan. Germany also provided Afghanistan with military equipments. While expanding relations with Germany and its allies, the regime of Zahir Shah assumed no military-political obligations, and in September 1939, soon after the start of the Second World War, Afghanistan officially announced its neutrality. But when Germany attacked USSR in June 1941 and the German and Italian agents intensified their activities in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union and other Allied powers brought pressure on Afghanistan to expel the "Axis" nationals. Simultaneously,
the U.S. became alive to the strategic importance of Afghanistan and opened an American legation in Kabul in June 1942.

In international relations, the post-Second World War was marked by the breaking up of the old colonial system — the United States and the U.S.S.R. The main objectives of the U.S. foreign policy were to contain communism all over the world and to fill the power vacuum left by the former colonial powers. The U.S. strategic interest in Afghanistan also stemmed from its desire to check the further spread of communism, (as its borders touched U.S.S.R. and China) and filling the power vacuum after the departure of the British from the Indian sub-continent. At this stage, Afghanistan also sought U.S. assistance to overcome its economic difficulties and to strengthen its internal security. So far as the modernization of economy was concerned, United States gave a modest economic aid and employed Mornisen Kundsen construction Company to help in an ambitious development scheme in the Helmund Valley. But the United States disappointed the Afghans by refusing to help militarily in view of former’s close relations with Pakistan.

The year 1953 proved to be a turning point in the Afghan-U.S. relations. The year not only witnessed the change of governments in Afghanistan and U.S.A., but also an
alteration in their foreign relations. The United States now began organizing a "Northern Tier" system of alliances CENTO and SEATO to contain the Soviet power. Whereas America forged military pacts with Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, Afghanistan did not join the "Northern Tier" system and pursued an independent and non-aligned policy. At the same time some of the basic policies of Daoud viz., (i) rapid economic modernization (ii) aggressive pursuit of Pashtunistan, and, (iii) creation of a strong Afghan military force, presented challenges to American diplomacy. At this juncture in the wake of the cold war, the U.S. neither responded positively to the economic and military demands of the Afghan ruler nor supported him on the Pashtunistan issue. U.S.A. gave more importance to its relations with Pakistan, which had joined U.S. sponsored military alliances-CENTO and SEATO.

This attitude of the Untied States brought Afghans closer to the U.S.S.R., which openly supported the Afghans on all internal and external issues and gave substantial economic and military help to Afghanistan. Thus, the period 1953-63, when Daoud held the reigns of power in Afghanistan, witnessed a steady deterioration in Afghan-U.S. relations and simultaneous consolidation of the Afghan-Soviet ties.
The last chance for American diplomacy to recapture the lost ground in Afghanistan occurred during the pro-western rule of King Zahir Shah, who deposed Daoud in 1963. The decade of 1963-73 ushered in an era of experimentation in "new democracy" in Afghan politics and greater liberalization within the society. The government was largely in the hands of American educated Afghans. But this experiment was doomed from the very beginning because of two reasons - (i) unpopularity of the Zahir Shah Government and (ii) lack of American support to the new government. On the one hand the Zahir Shah government proved unpopular in its internal as well as external policies, on the other American diplomacy failed to rise to the occasion. American aid declined every year of the democratic experiment. No special effort was made to give strong support to the series of Prime Ministers between 1963 and 1973. This period witnessed deepening economic crisis in Afghanistan and also sharp conflicts among different social groups of the Afghan society.

It was under these circumstances that Daoud returned to power in July 1973 with the support of the Afghan communist after deposing his cousin, King Zahir Shah. He declared Afghanistan to be a republic. The United States promptly recognized the government of Daoud and gave much stronger support to him than it had done earlier. The course of Afghan foreign policy during 1973 to March 1978,
remained steady with firm commitment to the principles of non-alignment. At the same time Daoud tried to diversify his resources of aid from the wealthy Arab Oil States. He attempted to improve his relations with Pakistan and U.S.A. through the medium of Shah of Iran. The Shah responded generously with offers of economic aid and political support and also offered to help in improving relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. During 1977-78, Daoud accelerated his shift to the right in both domestic and foreign affairs. He visited Egypt and India to arrange for expansion of military training programmes. Daoud was also scheduled to meet President Carter in September 1978. Daoud's open alignment with U.S.A. and pro-American Islamic countries precipitated a confrontation between him and the Communist party. The Soviet Union reacted to Daoud's efforts to disengage from her by secretly strengthening the Afghan communists. It was in July 1977 that the long sought reconciliation between the bitterly opposed Parcham and Khaliz factions was achieved.

Under such circumstances the United People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan established close links with the Afghan armed forces and developed contingency plans with the military for the overthrow of Daoud. In early 1978 the political situation in Afghanistan grew explosive after Daoud regime launched repressive measures against the
leftists. Finally, on 27 April 1978, Daoud was overthrown and the pro-Soviet leftist government head by Noor Mohammed Taraki was installed in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was now declared to be the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union was the first country to recognize it. This change of government and the installation of the leftist government in Afghanistan is known as the Saur Revolution. The Saur Revolution and the subsequent developments in Afghanistan alarmed the western powers especially the United States. Pentagon viewed the installation of the communist government in Afghanistan as a threat to the U.S. strategic interest in the region.

Even then the United States recognized the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in May 1978 and a new Ambassador A.S. Dubbs a top expert on Soviet Affairs, was sent to Kabul to deal with the new communist regime. Though the United States did not discontinue its economic assistance to Afghanistan, the relations between the two countries worsened particularly after the murder of Dubbs in early 1979. Thus we may say that historical forces in Afghanistan were moving in such a direction that favoured closer ties with the Soviet Union and the beginnings of anti-American feeling. For, the fact is Washington showed sufficient interest in Afghanistan only after the Soviet intervention in December 1979. Throughout the period as we have seen the United States' relations with Afghanistan were characterized
by a lack of commitment and interest in the distant Afghanistan whose strategic importance they realized occasionally whenever there was a crisis in Central Asia.

This dissertation deals with the above mentioned themes: Afghan-U.S. relations, specific themes of each Chapter may be summarized as follows:

Chapter-I deals with the developments in the Afghan-U.S. relations during the period 1919-53. In this chapter the focus is on the determinants of the foreign policies of both the countries, which have implications to subsequent developments. What were the reasons for the United States' refusal to give diplomatic recognition to Kabul in 1919 and why did the U.S. administration withhold it till 1934? Why did the U.S. industrialists not take an interest in making investment in Afghanistan? Why the U.S. took interest in Afghanistan during the Second World War, particularly after the Russian attack of Nazi Germany, when it gave economic assistance to the war-affected economy of this land-locked state and opened diplomatic legation in Kabul? Why did Afghanistan not get priority in the American Middle East policy even after the conclusion of the War? This chapter also deals with the U.S. policies towards South Asia in general and Afghanistan in particular. It also examines the situation prevalent on the eve of 1953 when drastic changes came about in the bilateral relations.
Chapter-II deals with the Afghan-U.S. relations during the first regime of Daoud i.e. 1953 to 1963 and how the Cold-War affects this relationship. This chapter also examines how the arrival of Mohammad Daoud on the Afghan scene with his policies of militarization and modernization of Afghanistan and his firm stand on the Pashtunistan issue affected the bilateral relations and brought Afghanistan closer to the Soviet Union. What were the U.S. responses to the Soviet moves in Afghanistan which she considered to be a saga of buying land for communism by paying money, arms and subtle political brainwashing. The most important development during this period was its opening to the Soviet Union and how it introduced an element of cold war superpower rivalry in the remote region.

The Afghan-U.S. relations between 1963-73 in the light of the constitutional experiment in Afghanistan is the main focus of attention in Chapter-III. This period witnessed drastic domestic developments in Afghanistan. Daoud was overthrown and a constitutional monarchy was introduced. The monarchy pursued generally a pro-Western policy which should have provided the U.S.A. with a good opportunity to reassert its presence in Afghanistan, which was on decline during the Daoud regime. But Washington did not take much interest in Afghanistan because of its preoccupation with Iran and Pakistan. This period remains a
missed opportunity for the U.S. policy initiatives. An attempt has been made to examine in this chapter as to why this was so.

Chapter-IV discusses Daoud's return to power and the country's relations with the U.S. during his regime. The period 1973-78 witnessed Daoud's return to power with the support of Afghan Communist and his policy of disengagement from the Soviet Union. Afghanistan was declared a Republic, but its policies were neither pro-Russian nor pro-West. Instead the new regime turned towards the Arab world especially Iran. The Shah of Iran tried to mediate on the Pashtunistan dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan and rendered considerable economic assistance. What the period illustrates is the lack of great power interest in Afghanistan when strategic issues aren't alive and Kabul's lack of power and resources to stand on its own.

The last Chapter suggest certain general propositions regarding foreign policy of a poor land-locked country in relation to the two Super Powers in particular. It suggests that Afghanistan has to depend on external powers for its attempts at modernization. This in turn brings external influence and involvement in the internal affairs of the country. This is to a large extent how the cold-war came to Afghanistan. Another important factor affecting Afghanistan's foreign policy is the domestic instability which
constrains any meaningful and lasting policy goals and objectives. Such issues as these have been analyzed and some generalization having a bearing on Afghan-U.S. relations during the period under study have been made.

The present study on Afghan-U.S. relations has been approached from the perspective of Afghan and U.S. foreign policies. In doing so the researcher has looked at those aspects of geo-strategic goals that made both the countries to take interest in each other. While evaluating both economic and political ties the researcher has analysed the Afghan-U.S. relations with particular reference to Afghanistan’s security concern emanating from her geo-strategic location and the U.S. policy of containment of communism during the cold-war.

The study being a historical research on relationship between the two countries, historical research methodology has been employed to investigate and inquire into Afghan-U.S. relations. Therefore, authentification, verification, and interpretation have been done through external and internal criticism. Also since the subject deals with international politics the researcher has judiciously used such international relations concepts relevant to his enquiry.
AFGHANISTAN IN ITS REGIONAL SETTING