CHAPTER - II

HOW COLD WAR ENTERS AFGHANISTAN
In the post World War II era of Afghan-American relationship, the year 1953 is crucial not merely for the change of governments in Kabul and Washington, but also because of change in the dynamics of the Cold War. Daoud's policy of rapid economic modernization and extreme nationalism and Dulles' policy of "pactomania"\(^1\) coupled with the disappearance of Stalin from the Soviet scene and shift in the arena of Cold War from Europe to Asia brought to the fore new challenges in bilateral ties of Afghanistan and the United States.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, the change of power came on September 6, 1953 with the resignation of Prime Minister Shah Mahmamed Khan Ghazi on the grounds of "indisposition and bad health."\(^2\) On the invitation of the King, his cousin General Mohammad Daoud Khan, assumed the reins of power on September 20 and announced his new government. Although the health grounds were given for Shah Mahmud's resignation, it was actually the basic change in leadership from 'Older conservatives to aggressive youth'. Shah Mahmud and his supporters were heartily in favour of progress, and strongly nationalistic ... but their policies

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were conditioned by their experiences, and in particular by the remembered chaos of 1929 and the many years of imperialistic probing and pressure to which Afghanistan had been subjected.³

Mohammad Daoud Khan, the new Prime Minister was an ardent nationalist and powerful dictator and led a younger group of royal family "to whom this cautious approach had grown intolerable. These men not only chafed at the snail-like pace of Afghan economic development but were determined to devote their efforts to the Pushtoon question, whatever the dangers and difficulties inherent in such a policy.⁴ Few months prior to the change of guards in Afghanistan a new government came to power in the United States too. In January 1953, General Eisenhower became the President of the United States and placed the direction of American foreign policy in the hands of John Foster Dulles.⁵

The new Secretary of State John Foster Dulles transformed Truman's Point Four Doctrine of combating communism through economic assistance to poor countries into the

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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
Kennan/Dulles doctrine of containment and Cold War.\textsuperscript{6} With a view to contain communism in the Middle East, Dulles began organizing a "Northern Tier" system of alliances along the Southern flank of the Soviet Union from Turkey to Pakistan. This led to American military pacts with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{7} As the U.S. sponsored military alliances had the distinction of being anti-Soviet, Afghanistan on account of contiguity to the Soviet Union and her historical policy of \textit{bitarafi} (without sides or neutrality) refused to join this security system.\textsuperscript{8}

Another very significant development near to the Afghan borders which was to have profound impact on the international relations came in the form of the death of Joseph Stalin in Moscow in March 1953. The Stalinist Soviet Union had been indifferent to the new and underdeveloped nations to her south especially after suffering reverses in Iran and Turkey in 1945 and 1946.\textsuperscript{9} However, his death in

\begin{enumerate}
\item Louis Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan}, (New Jersey, 1973)), p.511.
\item Arnold Fletcher, no.3, p.258.
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1953 ushered in an era of more flexible and sophisticated Soviet foreign policy in relation to its Asian neighbours.\(^\text{10}\) In fact the new Soviet government under Khrushchev was prepared to make use of economic and military assistance to win friends among the Third World Afro-Asian nations.\(^\text{11}\) This change in Soviet foreign policy goals coinciding with the American policy of containment gave new dimensions to the Super Power rivalry and shifted the focus of Cold War from Europe to Asia. Like some other nations of the region, it presented new challenges for the land-locked Afghanistan.

The new Afghan government under the leadership of Premier Mohammad Daoud, soon after the assumption of power in Kabul, launched the domestic and foreign policies which were radically different from any of the past.\(^\text{12}\) It tried in real sense to break a century old imposed isolation of the land locked country from the outside world, led the country towards development and rectifying the politico-territorial excesses committed by the European imperialists.


\(^{11}\) Stalin had neither time nor prepared to divert and devote Soviet resources in Third World Countries. He was preoccupied in consolidating Soviet gains in Eastern Europe, rebuilding the Soviet industrial system, and preparing for the inevitable war with the capitalist world.

\(^{12}\) Arnold Fletcher, no.3, p.260.
However, before setting its socio-politico-economic agenda the new government knew well the resource limitations of the land-locked country and the role and importance of outside help in it. Hence, the Daoud government gave emphasis on three basic issues in formulating its foreign policy, i.e., rapid economic modernization, aggressive pursuit of Pashtunistan, and creation of a strong Afghan military force.\(^{13}\)

So far as the economic agenda was concerned the government wanted huge outside aid to complete the ongoing projects (more specifically the Helmand Valley Project under the auspices of the American company Morrison-Knudsen whose sluggishness and reports of maladministration, graft and corruption had become a permanent source of worry for the Afghan and American governments)\(^{14}\) and start more developmental projects of various sizes to fulfill its set objective of economic modernization and keep pace with other nations of the region. The other vital foreign policy goal of the Daoud government - pursuit of Pashtunistan - was enthrno-territorial in nature and had its roots in European

\(^{13}\) Leon B. Poullada, no.7, p.183.

\(^{14}\) Louis Dupree, no.1, pp.499-506.
rivalry of the previous century in the region. The new administration was determined to actively take up with Pakistan the issue of Pashtuns living east of Durand Line, with Pakistan actively and to court outside political support in its favour to bring it to a definite conclusion. Another related but important constituent of Afghan foreign policy was the procurement of arms and other equipments for creation of a strong military force. If the central government had to maintain internal security which remained generally fragile because of frequent infightings among the fractions of Pushtan tribes, and take up the issue of Pashtunistan effectively with Pakistan, it needed a strong military force at its disposal.

Critical years in Afghan-U.S. Relations: 1953-56

At a time when the Daoud government was formulating radical policies aimed at keeping up the country's

15. The British in 1893 demarcated the Durand Line, (Boundary between Afghan and British India's territories) without caring for Afghan feelings. The Afghan Government asked for the right of self-determination to the Pashtun people living east of Durand Line, when the British left the Indian sub-continent. But the Pakistan Government which succeeded the British in the area refused to entertain the Afghan demand.

pace with the outside world and rewrite the distorted ethno-territorial history of Afghanistan, Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles was giving final shape to his policy of containment of communism all over the world. As part of this policy to block Soviet influence and expansion into the Middle East the Department of State sponsored a system of 'Collective Security' supported by massive military assistance and approached the countries of this region to join her. While Iraq, Iran and Pakistan showed willingness to join this 'Northern Tier' defence belt along the southern flank of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan on account of its geographical contiguity to the Soviet Union and historical policy of 'bitarafi' (neutrality) preferred to stay away from the politics of power block. This Afghan stand did not go without making an effect on the American Secretary of State, who looked at non-alignment with suspicion and generally linked aid with membership in regional organizations aimed at 'containment of communism. During his tour of the Middle East to discuss the 'Collective Security', Dulles also visited Pakistan (at whom he looked with favour) but kept Afghanistan out of his

17. Arnold Fletcher, no.3, p.257.
itinerary because of the latter's cold shouldering his plan. 19

Thus, the U.S. policy provided a challenge to the incumbent Kabul government, since it had to take the maximum mileage economic aid programme while keeping itself out of the U.S. policy of containment of communism. On the other hand Daoud government's policies of rapid economic modernization aggressive pursuit of Pashtunistan and creation of a strong Afghan military force posed a challenge for the American policy makers. In fact, this shift in Afghan foreign policy put the United States in a precarious situation because during this period of intense cold war, her relations with Pakistan and the perceived need to involve that country in one or more Pacts aimed at containing the USSR gained precedence over other considerations in the region. 20 Regardless of urgency and legitimacy of basic issues of Afghan policies, the United States could not afford to antagonize its newly won friend Pakistan by supporting (Daoud's) call for an independent Pashtunistan and related issue of modernizing Afghan army. Moreover,

19. On May 9, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Director for Mutual Security Herold E. Stassin Embarked on a 20-day trip to the Near East and South Asia. They visited India and Pakistan in South Asia but did not visit Afghanistan.

opinion towards Afghanistan at the top levels of the American government, as Leon B. Poullada describes was strongly conditioned by erroneous assessments of embassy staff at Kabul and lack of interest and expertise on Afghanistan among the academic community in the United States.21 It is evident from the fact that as late as 1953 a secret study by the Joint chiefs of staff concluded that:

Afghanistan is of little or no strategic importance to the United States. Its geographic location, coupled with the realization by Afghan leaders of Soviet capabilities, presages Soviet control of the country whenever the situation so dictates. It would be desirable for Afghanistan to remain neutral because otherwise it might be overrun as an avenue to the Indian subcontinent. Such neutrality will remain a stronger possibility if there is no western sponsored opposition to communism in Afghanistan, which opposition in itself might precipitate Soviet moves to take control of the country.22

U.S. Aid in Afghan Development: A priority Area

While the debate was going on in the higher American government circles as to how to adjust to the new Afghan policies keeping in view the general U.S. interests in the region, the Daoud government as part of its policy of economic modernization approached Washington in November 1953,

22. Ibid., p.240.
for a $36 million loan from the Export-Import Bank to assist in financing the purchase of equipment, materials, and services required to continue its development program in the Helmand River valley. Part of this loan was to pave the streets of Kabul. On April 29, 1954, the bank agreed to loan the Afghans $18.5 million to be used only for the Helmand project and rejected the request for permission to use part of the loan to pave the streets of Kabul. The loan had an amortization period of 18 years and an interest rate of 4 percent. The Afghans were disappointed with the small size of the loan and its high interest rate. The greater volume of grants and loans given to Pakistan, Iran and India usually on easier terms made the Afghans realize that the United States was not yet prepared to go all out in providing them with aid for their rapid economic development and hence they had to search for alternative avenues.

Richard Nixon's visit to Kabul

At a time when too much American attention and aid was given to Pakistan to involve that country in the


'collective security' arrangements, Afghanistan was feeling ignored. Not only was Kabul was forgotten by the visiting American dignitaries like Dulles to the region especially Pakistan, but her genuine economic needs were also not taken seriously by the U.S. government. Though on June 30, 1953, an agreement for Technical Cooperation was concluded between the U.S. and Afghanistan whereby America agreed to provide technical assistance to Afghanistan "to facilitate the development of Afghan economy".25 There was vast difference in US aid to Pakistan and Afghanistan. In contrast to the $500 million of U.S. aid to Pakistan, the Afghans received less than $5 million of U.S. economic aid.26 However, the Department of State was not completely unaware of the growing resentment in the Afghan psyche. It was with this consideration in mind that Kabul was included in the schedule of Vice-President Richard Nixon's tour of Asian countries. Nixon arrived in Kabul on December 5, 1953 for a two day visit and held a series of meetings with Afghan leaders.27

During his stay in Kabul, Nixon made an aerial survey of the construction work in the Helmand Valley and promised

25. V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., pp.86-87, for details see Appendix 5.


U.S. economic assistance to Afghanistan. As far as the Pashtunistan issue and probable Afghan request for American arms were concerned, he completely shattered the Afghan aspirations. He gave the impression as though he disliked the non-aligned policy of Afghanistan and regarded the prevailing controversy between Afghanistan and Pakistan (over Pashtunistan issue) as less important.\(^{28}\)

Moreover, he impressed upon the Afghan leadership to find the solution for national security in regional security mechanism and emphasized the need for an Afghan-Iran and Pakistan alliance.\(^{29}\) He urged the Afghan leadership to abandon the Pashtunistan issue, which was the source of irritation in Afghan-Pakistan relationship. The Afghans were greatly displeased by Nixon's "lack of consideration for the depth of Afghan feelings and his superficial knowledge of a matter that constituted one of the underlying factors of their foreign policy".\(^{30}\) In view of the chilly atmosphere of the talks, the Afghans did not raise the important issue of US military assistance to Afghanistan.\(^{31}\)

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29. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
Though Nixon's visit to Kabul was a good step in the direction of improvement of Afghan-US relations it could not produce any big momentum or warmth. If it is seen in the background of United States interests and efforts in Pakistan and Iran, Nixon's visit could not prove much more than a diplomatic formality. During his stay he made no major commitment either in the economic field or otherwise. Rather his attitude on the Pashtunistan issue irritated the Afghans. It was with these developments in mind that even during Nixon's stay Premier Daoud in an interview on December 6, 1953 lodged a strong protest against probable establishment of an American military base in Pakistan and said that by this act, Pakistan will become extremely powerful. Thus, the visit of Nixon to Kabul could not create the desired atmosphere of goodwill in Afghan American relations and "the first high level contact between Daoud's new Afghan government and the new Eisenhower administration ended in disappointment".

Soviet Foreign Aid Diplomacy in Afghanistan:

Soon after Nixon's visit to the region the U.S. President Eisenhower gave clearance to U.S. military

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32. V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.88.
33. Ibid.
34. A.S. Ghaus, no.30, p.80.
assistance to Pakistan. 35 The Afghan Ambassador to Washington Mohammad Kabir Ludin lodged a strong protest over the issue with the Secretary of State Dulles and requested to maintain economic and military equilibrium. 36 However, at this stage the Afghans were not ready to be satisfied by mere U.S. assurances of help, when her hostile neighbour was actually being provided massive economic and military supplies by Washington. Hence the government in Kabul decided to open a new option to carry forward its policies and approached the Soviets for economic assistance. Soon an agreement was concluded in Kabul on January 27, 1954 by the Afghan Finance Minister and the Soviet Ambassador under which the Soviet Union granted Afghanistan a loan of $3,500,000 bearing 3.5 per cent interest to be used for the construction of two grain mills and two large silos. The USSR also undertook to provide technicians whilst Afghanistan agreed to export to the Soviet Union specified quantities of cotton wool, and sheep skins. 37

Soon, in June 1954 the Soviets gave $1.2 million to Afghanistan in technical aid for the construction of a sixty mile gasoline pipeline from Ternuz in the Uzbek-Soviet

35. Cited in V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.88.
Socialist Republic to the Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif across the Amu Darya River. These initial economic commitments were followed by another Soviet loan of $2 million to finance the building of an asphalt factory & the paving of Kabul streets, a project that had been rejected earlier by the U.S. Export-Import Bank.

The year 1955 proved to be a turning point not only in U.S.-U.S.S.R. aid rivalry in Afghanistan and consequent acceleration of Afghan economic development, but also in determining Afghanistan's relations vis-a-vis superpowers. The massive western economic and military aid to Pakistan affected Pakistan-Afghan relations, and activated the Soviets to counter the western moves in the region. Emboldened by large scale U.S. military and economic aid, the Pakistan government in March 1955, announced the consolidation of all provinces of West Pakistan including the Pashtun - Baluch areas into a "One Unit", system. The Afghan government strongly opposed the Pakistani move. Soon, in the wake of spontaneous tension and consequent violent incidents - "flag

incident" - in both the countries against each other, Pakistan imposed a blockade on Afghan transit trade.

As a result, land locked Afghanistan found herself cut off from the outside world for her necessary exports and imports. Hence, the Afghan leadership in order to prevent a complete breakdown of their economy turned to the Soviet Union, which for her own interests, stepped in to rescue Afghanistan with offers of transit facilities, political support and military aid. On June 21, 1955, the Afghans negotiated an agreement on duty free transit of Afghan goods across Soviet territory. Moreover, on August 27, 1955, a new Afghan-Russian barter protocol on commodity exchange guaranteed petroleum imports, building materials (especially cement), ... in exchange for Afghan wool, raw cotton, and hides."

The continued Pakistan-Afghan blockade gradually reduced the American presence and influence in Afghanistan; it also brought the Afghans closer to the Soviets.


41. Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, no.1, p.507.

42. Ibid., pp.507-8.

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Though, through mediation of friendly Muslim countries Pakistan-Afghan border was reopened by November 1955, the way had been prepared for a quantum jump in Afghan-Soviet relations.\textsuperscript{43} In December 1955, at the end of a tour of Southeast Asia, Nikita Khrushchev & Nikolay Bulganin, leaders of the Soviet party and the Soviet state, respectively, stopped in Kabul. During their visit, the Soviet leaders granted a $100 million long-term development loan to Afghanistan to be repaid over a thirty year period at 2\% interest.\textsuperscript{44} Several projects that were to be financed with this loan were announced in March 1956, including the construction and improvement of hydroelectric plants, automotive maintenance and repair shops, a road from Qizil Qala (Sher Khan Bandar on the Amu Daria) to Kabul including the three-kilometer salang tunnel, airports, irrigation dams with canal systems, and a bridge.\textsuperscript{45} Also in March 1956, the Afghans launched their first Five-Year Plan (March 1956 to September 1961).\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43} Anthony Arnold, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective*, no.10, p.36.
\textsuperscript{44} Louis Dupree, no.1, p.508.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp.508-9.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
When the Soviets were trying to increase their influence and forge close political and economic relations with Afghanistan, the U.S. too, was not indifferent to these developments. Besides, the Export-Import Bank loan of $18.5 million for the Helmand Valley Project, the U.S. loaned Afghanistan $1.5 million for wheat and provided $8,000,000 in grants in 1953. In the following year the U.S. sold Afghanistan a little more than $1 million worth wheat for local currency. In addition, the U.S. Government Committed $2.5 million grants to Afghanistan in 1954. In the year 1955 too, the U.S. continued her nominal aid to Afghanistan in order to prevent that country from slipping completely into the Soviet-bloc and despite a more than five-month long Pakistan-Afghan blockade she provided $2.0 million grants to the Afghan government.


51. Ibid.
With the increase of Soviet activities in Afghanistan in the wake of Pakistan-Afghan blockade of 1955, Washington also considered to stepping up assistance beyond the limited aid it already made available to Afghanistan.\(^{52}\) Initially, granting of $100 million Soviet development loan to Afghanistan in December 1955, put the U.S. South Asia strategists in a fix, but soon they evolved a way to counter the East bloc moves in the region. As a part of this 'aid diplomacy' the U.S. increased the volume of her economic commitment in Afghanistan to around ten times in 1956 compared to the previous year.

Besides, the mode of U.S. aid to Afghanistan too was changed in the year 1956. "From this date official American assistance, largely based upon grants, supplemented the earlier loans for the Helmand Valley Project."\(^{53}\) First in the series of U.S. counter measures came the U.S.-Afghan technical cooperation agreement worth $2.5 million on February 18, 1956.\(^{54}\) It was followed by International Cooperation Administration's decision of commissioning the Tudor


Engineering Company to investigate and report on the development of the Helmand valley.\textsuperscript{55} Besides, Washington agreed to sell 50,000 tons of wheat to Kabul Government.\textsuperscript{56} In all the U.S. committed \$18.3 million to Afghanistan consisting \$5.0 million in loans and \$13.3 million in grants, during 1956.\textsuperscript{57}

Whereas, the total Soviet commitments to Afghanistan prior to the first Afghan Five-Year Plan (1957-61) amounted to around \$147 million, the U.S. loaned Afghans \$80 million including \$39.5 million Export-Import Bank loans to Helmand Valley Project\textsuperscript{58}, and made grants worth more than 19 million dollars.\textsuperscript{59}

Arms aid Controversy in Afghan-U.S. Relations

Besides the economic development, the Afghan leadership in the post world war II era was seriously concerned about their ill-equipped and poorly organized armed forces. The emergence of Pakistan in August 1947, in the wake of British departure from the region and subsequent serious


\textsuperscript{56} New York Times, August 23, 1956.


\textsuperscript{58} New York Times, September 1, 1957.

tension with the former over the issue of Pashtun-Baluch areas, necessitated the Afghan leadership to reequip their army and air force. As in the case of the economic field, the Afghans approached the American government for arms in the post-war era. But the Truman administration, on one pretext or the other turned down the repeated Afghan requests for U.S. arms.

However, in 1953 the new nationalist government of Prime Minister General Daoud, committed to rapid development of the country, put the modernization of armed forces on priority list, particularly in view of the introduction of the cold war into the region and increased western attempts to involve Pakistan and Iran in U.S. sponsored regional pacts aimed at 'containment of communism.' Massive Western economic and arms supplies to hostile Pakistan and Iran necessitated the new Afghan leadership to give serious thought to their defences. It was in this perspective that the Daoud Government approached the Eisenhower Administration in 1953-54 through available channels - the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, the Afghan Embassy in Washington and Foreign Minister Naim's visit to Washington - to procure American Arms.

Accordingly, the Daoud Government, within months of assumption of power, approached the U.S. state Department through the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and the Afghan Embassy in
Washington to explore the possibility of U.S. arms procurement at a future date. The U.S. Ambassador to Kabul Angus Ward reported to the state department on January 7, 1954 that "foreign Minister Naim had requested him to inquire what the attitude of the Department would be should Afghanistan request military aid from the United States."60 The Afghan Ambassador to Washington, Kabir Ludin, too, approached the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs, on January 15, 1954 to know the U.S. attitude towards a future Afghan arms request.61 Again on July 27, 1954, Ambassador Ludin called on Byroade to ascertain the U.S. attitude toward a possible Afghan request for military assistance.62 During the course of discussion this time Ambassador Ludin made it clear to Byroade that his government would only be willing "to consider U.S. Military assistance on a bilateral basis, without reference to a regional organization, with the avowed purpose of bolstering its internal strength and of improving its capacity to resist aggression from whatever direction it should come."63

61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., pp.1479-80.
63. Ibid.
However, Byroade told the Afghan Ambassador that "conclusion of a U.S. - Afghan military aid programme might provoke a very strong Soviet reaction ... it would serve Afghanistan's interest to receive military assistance at some future date within an established regional organization which would command the respect of the U.S.S.R." On the same day, the Afghan Ambassador met the Secretary of State Dulles also who during the course of conversation told the former that "Afghanistan should proceed slowly in this matter." Further he noted that "some of the more immediate imponderables in considering military aid for Afghanistan were the nature of the aid programme for the coming year, and the character of our(U.S.) current commitments." Thus, the state Department considered the question of U.S. arm aid to Afghanistan in relation to various regional commitments. Moreover, it wanted to commit any arms aid at a future date only when Afghanistan was to join a regional military organization, obviously against Soviet Union.

In his final attempt to ask for U.S. military assistance, Prime Minister, Mohammed Daoud, sent his brother, foreign Minister Mohammed Naim to Washington on

64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.

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8 October 1954 to make a personal appeal to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for U.S. military assistance.67 The Secretary of State on December 28, 1954 informed the Afghan leadership, "after careful consideration, extending military aid to Afghanistan would create problems not offset by the strength it would generate. Instead of asking for arms, Afghanistan should settle the Pushtunistan dispute with Pakistan."68 Thus, the Afghans were not only denied U.S. arms assistance, but they were also advised to abandon the Pashtunistan issue. Even more frustrating for the Afghans was the sending of a copy of the same notification to their rival, the Pakistan government. The Afghans were outraged by this flagrant breach of diplomatic practice.69

At a time when Afghanistan was denied arms supply to meet its genuine security needs, the U.S. government was arming her enemy Pakistan heavily. In accordance with Secretary of State, Dulles' "Northern Tier Plan," Pakistan (under direct U.S. initiative and encouragement) signed an


69. Ibid.
agreement of mutual cooperation with Turkey & Iran on 2 April, 1954. The Turko-Pakistani Pact was followed by the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement between the U.S. and Pakistan on 19 May, 1954. This agreement placed Pakistan on a priority list so that "special consideration" would be given to Pakistan in providing military assistance, including grants."70 Soon Pakistan joined U.S. sponsored South-east Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September 1954. Thus, by 1955, Pakistan was associated with the U.S. through not one, but four mutual security arrangements. It came to be looked upon as "America's most allied ally in Asia."71

The U.S. military aid to Pakistan prompted both the Afghans and the Soviets to react against the pacts but for different concerns. Since the beginning of western attempts to arm Pakistan, Afghans opposed the move. Even during Richard Nixon's visit to Kabul in December 1953 Prime Minister Daoud protested against reported U.S. plans to give military assistance to Pakistan,72 and described it as "a

71. Ibid., p.145.
grave danger to the security and peace of Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{73} In March 1954, Soviet Foreign Minister, V.M. Molotov too, expressed concern about Afghanistan's security and reportedly said that "U.S. military aid to Pakistan made it necessary to think about our neighbor Afghanistan's defense and make sure we (the Soviet Union) are safe."\textsuperscript{74}

In the meanwhile, two events took place which not only compelled the Afghan government to explore alternate sources for the procurement of arms but also made it critical of the United States. The first of these considerations was the U.S. refusal to entertain the final Afghan request for American arms, while arming Pakistan heavily. The second was the Pakistani government's decision to consolidate all West Pakistan's provinces including the Pashtun-Baluch areas into a "one Unit" system. While the U.S. rejection of Afghan arms request disappointed the Afghans the implementation of the "One Unit" system by Pakistan in March, 1955 caused Pakistan-Afghan border closure and led the two countries virtually to war. It was in this backdrop that the Afghan government sounded to procure arms from other sources. The Afghan Ambassador to Cairo,  

\textsuperscript{73} Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1954, no.37, p.13463.

\textsuperscript{74} New York Times, June 7, 1954
Salaheddin Salgooky, declared on November 1, 1955, that his country would seek Soviet arms if the West failed to supply them. He said "we have applied to buy arms from both Britain and the United States, but if our applications are turned down we will buy arms from Russia. We are free to buy arms from any country to defend ourselves, particularly in view of the fact that our neighbour, Pakistan, constantly threatens us." 75

The Daoud Government had already made up its mind to obtain Soviet arms but before making a formal request for that purpose, it decided to call a meeting of Loya Jirgah (Grand National Assembly) for a consensus decision. On the eve of Bulganin Khruschev's visit to Afghanistan the Jirgah was held on November 13, 1955 in Kabul. 76 Speaking on the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the irresponsible measures of Pakistan government and military and economic assistance of the U.S. to Pakistan, Mohammad Daoud said: "The military and economic assistance to Pakistan has disturbed the balance of power in this part of


Asia. For instance, the U.S. military assistance has given this opportunity to Pakistan to trample down the rights of the people of Pashtunistan." 77 In view of the prevalent circumstances, Daoud asked the Loya Jirgah to decide on the issue of raising the defence power of Afghanistan. Anyway, after three days of discussions, 371 members of the Jirgah decided that "Afghanistan was duty-bound to defend the rights of self-determination of the people of Pashtunistan and to raise its defence power for safeguarding its own independence and territorial integrity." 78

Having secured the mandate of the highest decision making body of the country, the Daoud Government approached the Soviet Union for military assistance. 79 Though Afghanistan had already received $3 million worth of Czechoslovak weapons in October 1955, 80 it needed much more arms if a modern army was to be established. Hence, in August 1956 Afghanistan "contracted for $25 million in arms (T-34 tanks,

77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Abdul Samad Ghaus, no.30, p.83.
MIG 17s, Ilyushin-28 jet bombers, helicopters, (small arms) from the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and East Germany. Speaking about the conclusion of the military agreement, Prime Minister Daoud, on August 25, 1956, said that "the arms deal had no political strings and had been made to strengthen the country's defenses."

Pashtunistan Question in Afghan-U.S. Relations

The Pashtunistan issue was another factor in the post-World War II era which dominated Afghan foreign policy in general and Afghan-U.S. relations in particular. Though the new government in Kabul headed by Daoud already knew the American position on the issue, it wanted to convince the United States about the legitimacy of the Afghan case in dispute with Pakistan. The U.S., which posed being neutral on the 'Pashtunistan issue until 1956, considered the "controversy ... primarily political in nature rather than legal." On the legality of the Afghan case Washington, was guided by the view that "the legal position of the Afghans on Pashtunistan (was) extremely

81. Louis Dupree, no.1, p.522.
83. Louis Dupree, no.1, p.538.
Thus, despite claiming to adopt a neutral position on the Pashtunistan question, the U.S. passed judgment quite early in the favor of its ally Pakistan. Even the talk of neutrality (basically to support the status quo) by the U.S. on the issue was nearer to the Pakistani position rather than on the Afghan case.

The Afghan government, certainly against the status quo position, considered the Durand Line as an European legacy and did not recognize it as the international boundary, and championed the right of self-determination for the Pashtuns east of Durand Line on ethno-territorial grounds. Thus, there were obvious differences in Afghan and U.S. positions on the vital question of Pashtunistan, when the change of guards came in Kabul. Still, the new government in Kabul desired a U.S. role in the dispute without requesting and expecting Washington's outright political support in its favor. Leon B. Poullada, rightly says that "Afghanistan did not request nor expect American political support for their Pashtun policy but they did hope for an objective examination of the problem...".

However, the Afghans were soon disappointed by Washington's lack of consideration for their cause, when the

85. Ibid., p.1399.
86. Leon B. Poullada, "Afghanistan and the United States: The Crucial Years" no.7, p.188.
visiting American Vice-President, Richard Nixon hinted at his government's disfavour of raising the Afghan-Pakistan border dispute in the form of Pashtunistan. Moreover, he urged the Afghan leadership to abandon the Pashtunistan issue, which was the source of irritation between Afghan-Pakistan relations. Besides, Washington's apathy to Afghan position in the Pashtunistan dispute, the supply of U.S. arms to Pakistan not only disappointed the Afghan government but also complicated the controversial issue. Expressing the Afghan concern over U.S. military assistance to Pakistan, the Afghan Government communicated to the State Department that "if the question of Pashtunistan is not solved, and Pakistan continues to be strengthened economically and militarily ... the balance of power in this part of the world will be upset ... and this would work adversely against a solution of Afghan-Pakistan differences." 

True to Afghan fears the Pakistan government emboldened by its entry into U.S. sponsored military pacts and subsequent massive economic and military supplies from

87. Louis Dupree, "The Mountains Go to Mohammad Zahir", South Asia Series American University Field Staff Reports, vol. iv, no. 6, 1960, p3.
Washington, adopted an even more irreconcilable attitude with regard to Pashtunistan question and in November 1954, announced integration of all of West Pakistan's provinces and states into a "single unit." 90 The Afghan government decried the Pakistani decision and termed it "a severe blow to the hopes of the people of the North West Frontier Province and the tribal areas for a just determination of their political rights." 91 The Prime Minister Daoud, at a Press Conference in Kabul on November 29 1954, told the journalists that Pakistan government's decision at enforcing integration of West Pakistan's areas into 'one unit' was against the rights of Pashtunistan people. 92

At this stage the Afghan government approached Washington hoping that "a word from the U.S. would greatly influence Pakistan." 93 The Afghan Ambassador Ludin conveyed to the Secretary of State, Dulles that Afghan's believed U.S. military and economic assistance has increased Pakistan's rigidity with regard to the Pashtun issue. 94 Refer

92. Ibid., p.1434.
93. Ibid., p.1443.
94. Ibid.
ring to the Pakistani decision at a fusion of all West Pakistan's areas into 'single unit', Ambassador Ludin declared that "this would further deprive the Pathans of any opportunity for the autonomy they desired and that zonal federation represented a device for assuring Punjabi dominance over Bengalis, Sindhis and Pathans alike." 95

However, the State Department did nothing concrete in response to Afghan expectations except clarifying its position on arms supply to Pakistan and interpreting Pakistan government's resolution of the 'One Unit System', to U.S. satisfaction. Soothing the Afghan opposition to U.S. arms supply to Pakistan, the Secretary of State told the Afghan envoy that "we would be displeased if we felt our aid to Pakistan made it less reasonable in its dealings with Afghanistan and that we did not believe this was the case." 96

On the Pakistani decision of zonal federation in West Pakistan, Dulles told that "the concept of zonal federation in West Pakistan had sprung from attempts at resolution of Pakistan's other difficult internal problems rather than

95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
being directly connected with the situation of the Pathans."97

While the Afghan government was making futile efforts to put across its position on the Pakistani government's 'One Unit Plan' and resultant impact on the Pashtunistan question, the government in Karachi promulgated an 'Emergency Powers Ordinance' on March 27, 1955, which enabled the implementation of zonal federation in West Pakistan.98 Reacting to enforcement of the 'One Unit System' in West Pakistan, the Afghan Premier, Daoud in a nation-wide broadcast on March 29 denounced Pakistan's action as a denial of the aspirations of the Pashtuns and promised the support of his government to its Pashtun brethren in Pakistan.99 Following Daoud's speech, passions rose high in Afghanistan and on March 30, 1955, a mob attacked and damaged the Pakistani embassy in Kabul, burnt the Pakistani flag and hoisted a Pashtunistan flag instead.100 In reaction to the "flag-incident", Afghan consulates in Peshawar and Quetta were

97. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
attacked by "government-inspired mobs," and Afghan flags were also burnt. Soon, the Pakistan government "imposed a blockade on Afghan transit trade" with a view to exert pressure on the Daoud government.

At this stage of Pakistan-Afghanistan deadlock, the government of Afghanistan once again approached the U.S. for mediation. However, the Secretary of State informed the Afghan government that the U.S. considered the Pashtun question an internal matter of Pakistan "in which U.S. or other foreign government could not appropriately intervene (U.S.) therefore consider (she) cannot accede to the Afghan government's request for ... mediation." The Afghans were disappointed by this response of the U.S. whereby it not only refused to mediate in the "Pashtunistan dispute" but considered it as an internal matter of Pakistan in place of Afghan-Pakistan bilateral dispute. The Afghan foreign minister during his visit to Washington in June 1955 expressed his country's displeasure at the shift of U.S.

103. Ibid., p. 179.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., p. 185.
position on the Pashtunistan issue from the earlier neutral stand to the recent recognition of Pashtun question as an internal Pakistani matter. Neither Naim's displeasure on the U.S. position with regard to Pashtun question nor King Zahir Shah's letter to President Eisenhower could persuade the U.S. government for mediating in the Pashtunistan dispute.106

Frustrated by the U.S. indifference to their point of view in the Pashtunistan dispute, the Afghans as in the issue of the procurement of arms, turned to the Soviet Union for political support on the Pashtunistan issue. The Soviet Union soon supported the Afghan position on the Pashtunistan issue. The visiting Soviet leaders to Kabul, Bulganin and Khruschev in December, 1955, openly supported the Afghan stand on the issue - "We sympathize with Afghanistan's policy on the question of Pashtunistan. The Soviet Union stands for an equitable solution of Pashtunistan problem which cannot be settled without taking into account the vital interests of the people of Pashtunistan."107

106. In October 1955 King Zahir Shah sent a message for President Eisenhower, requesting him not to "Withhold" efforts for the creation of ways and means of understanding" between Afghanistan & Pakistan. On November 19, 1955 the King received President's reply to suggest the way in which the President could be of assistance.

107. N.A. Bulganin and N.S. Khruschev, Visit to Burma and Afghanistan, p.34.
The Soviet position on the issue was reaffirmed again by Bulganin in his report to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, on December 29, 1955. He urged:

to give the population of bordering Pashtunistan an opportunity of freely expressing their will are justified ... The people of the region have the same right to national self-determination as any other people. There can be no justification for the stand of those who do not want to reckon and disregard the lawful national interests of the people of Pashtunistan.108

Thus, so far as the question of Pashtunistan was concerned, the Afghans had succeeded in drawing a superpower to their side.

The open Soviet support of the Afghan position on the Pashtunistan issue, along with massive economic and military assistance, prompted the Pakistani leadership to seek U.S. and other Western allies open support in its favour. Accordingly, Pakistan raised the question of Pashtunistan along with issue of Soviet economic and arms supplies to Afghanistan, at Southeast Asian Treaty Organization's (SEATO) Karachi session in March 1956.109 Pakistan told her allies that the Soviet Union's "Economic development loan to

108. Ibid., p.23.
Afghanistan was largely a screen for supplying Communist arms to the Afghan army. On the question of the border dispute with Afghanistan (Pashtunistan issue) Pakistani delegation told the SEATO members that "since the Durand Line had been originally agreed between the British Government as the frontier between the Indian Empire and Afghanistan, Pakistan, as one of the successor states to the Empire, is entitled to have the same frontier." At last the SEATO Conference agreed with the Pakistani position on the issue and in its final communique on March 8, 1956 recognized the Durand Line, as an international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan... The United States of America being a member nation of SEATO, obviously became a party to that recognition and owed a responsibility to maintain and preserve the status quo in the region.

Soon the government of Afghanistan decried the SEATO communique reference to Durand Line and on April 2, 1956 the Afghan envoy to Washington, Kabir Ludin submitted a five-page protest note to the U.S. State Department. However,

110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., p.219.
112. Ibid., p.227.
113. Ibid., p.221.
114. Ibid., p.230.
the Department of State, much to the disliking of Afghans, communicated the Kabul government that

the government of the United States has always regarded the Durand Line as the legal boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan. By its participation in the SEATO communique, the government of the United States has reëfereed its position, with which the government is familiar.115

Shift in U.S. Policy Towards Afghanistan, 1957-60

The years 1956-57 mark the beginning of a new phase in U.S. foreign policy towards Afghanistan. In the wake of massive Soviet economic commitments, political support and military aid to Afghanistan, the State Department became alive to the strategic value of Afghanistan and started formulating policies to meet the new Soviet challenge in the land-locked country. In fact by now, Afghanistan became extremely important to both the United States and the Soviet Union in the world struggle, "A pro-Western Afghanistan would strengthen the chain of alliances on Russia's southern flank from the Balkans to Pakistan. A pro-Soviet Afghanistan would jeopardize the chain and give the Russians a land bridge to the Moslem and Asian worlds."

115. Ibid.

However, at this juncture of countering the Soviet moves in Afghanistan, the U.S. State Department establishment was divided into two groups. One school argued that the United States cannot afford to give up Afghanistan, while the other felt that Washington should let the Russians have Afghanistan and consider itself well out of a bad bargain. The first school favouring for trying to hold on to Afghanistan argued that the main cause of the close Soviet-Afghan relations is the tense Afghan-Pakistani dispute over "Pashtunistan" issue. In such circumstances, if the U.S. could patch up Pakistani-Afghan relations the Soviet influence in Afghanistan could be limited. Moreover, this school argued that to pull out of Afghanistan would be a disaster politically and militarily. On the political side, they say it would leave even the pro-western Afghans with no choice but to cling to the Soviet Union. It would believe that Washington had declared war on neutrality. And it would encourage Moscow to try to maneuver other countries into a position where the United States would pullout. Militarily, they say, to leave Afghanistan into Soviet hands would create a constant hazard for its neighbours, Pakistan and Iran, which are members of the Baghdad Pact and has become a prime target of Soviet strategy. On these

117. Ibid., December 22, 1955.
118. Ibid.
grounds this school argued that if the U.S. wanted to maintain its reputation and keep intact its security system, it should try to hold on to Afghanistan at any cost.

The other school favouring American withdrawal from Afghanistan argued that the U.S. cannot compete with the Soviets in Afghanistan on account of its proximity to the latter. Moreover, by its very nature the form of government dictatorship, in Moscow, could make dramatic offers and conclude deals that the United States could not go into. They further argued that if the U.S. tried to outbid the Soviet Union it would be submitting to a form of political blackmail that will completely change the character and purpose of U.S. economic aid. If the United States pulled out of Afghanistan it would serve as a strong demonstration to other Asian countries, especially India, that even neutrals must pay a price for dangerous flirtations with one side. Besides they believed that the U.S. would be defeating its own purpose by putting more money behind Premier Mohammed Daoud, a hard-fisted ruler of a police state, who will become even stronger by the U.S. aid and politically unreliable to boot. These people also opined that in the days of the cavalry, Afghanistan was important as a buffer but that in the days of long-range planes and atomic bombs she is not worth much militarily. They did not relish the idea that some day Soviet bomber bases may be built in
Afghanistan. But they thought the Afghans would resist that and, anyway, there were Soviet bases only a few hours away.119 Citing these points in their favour, this school advocated that the U.S. should pull out of Afghanistan.

Besides these two schools there was a third group which pleaded that the U.S. should follow a middle path - to continue with small amounts of aid to Afghanistan. This would allow the United States to let the Afghans see if they can get away with trying to outwit the Russians, and provide an escape for Kabul in case things do not turn out as well as the Afghan bargainers think.120

During the course of the debate in the State Department as how to adjust with the new realities in Afghanistan, the U.S. government started taking steps to counter the Soviet moves in Afghanistan. In order to counter the Soviet-economic offensive in the land-locked country the U.S. increased its aid substantially, while to counter Soviet political support to Kabul on the Pashtunistan issue, the State Department attempted to promote Afghan-Pakistani rapprochement. Besides, with a view to draw Kabul closer to

119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
Washington the U.S. encouraged exchange of state visits between the two countries.

As a part of her policy to compete with the Soviets economically, the United States in 1956 itself increased her total assistance to Afghanistan worth $18.3 million, $5 million in loans and $13.3 million in grants, which was more than nine times of the $2 million aid provided in the previous year. This increased economic assistance to Afghanistan was mainly geared toward long-term educational improvements, rural schools, text books, university education for Afghan students in the United States and later construction of Kabul University facilities, building hard-surface roads, continuation of the Helmand Valley Project, and improvement of agricultural and civil aviation sectors.

In view of her strategic interests and long term calculations, the United States selected the development of Afghan transportation particularly and civil aviation in the region as priority area, besides her earlier involvement in the irrigation and education fields. Working on this

line the U.S. International Cooperation Administration (ICA), subsequently the Agency for International Development (AID), agreed in June 1956 to put up $14,500,000 - $9,500,000 in grant and 5,000,000 in loan, for the development of Afghan civil aviation.123 The civil aviation development program included construction of a new international airport in Kandhar, and the improvement of three other airfields at Herat Pul-i-Khumri and Jalalabad.124 Under the same program Pan American World Airways bought 48% of the Afghan national airline, Ariana Afghan Airlines, organized it into a modern carrier, trained its personnel and helped expand its services (the remaining 51% of the stock remained in Afghan hands).125 Besides civil aviation, the U.S., attempted to improve Afghan overland transportation links with Pakistan in order to maintain western supplies and influence in Afghanistan.126

In 1957, the re-elected Eisenhower administration demonstrated increased interest in Afghanistan and raised the level of its aid substantially. In that year the United

124. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
States provided $21 million in economic assistance to Afghanistan which included $6.6 million worth of PL-480 commodities.\textsuperscript{127} This consistent increase in the U.S. aid to Afghanistan naturally resulted in better relations between the two countries. It was in this context that the Afghans agreed for the Kabul visit of Special Presidential Assistant, James P. Richards, who made a tour of Middle East to explain the Eisenhower Doctrine.\textsuperscript{128} James P. Richards made a 3-day visit - March 31 to April 3, 1957, to Kabul to explain the Eisenhower Doctrine to the Afghan leadership.\textsuperscript{129}

In the joint communique issued at the end of the Richard's Mission, whereas Afghanistan welcomed Eisenhower Doctrine, the United States confirmed its support for Afghanistan’s continued independence and neutrality.\textsuperscript{130} Although the final communique did not specifically indicate whether or not Afghanistan was protected by the Eisenhower Doctrine, the mere facts that Richards had come to Kabul and


\textsuperscript{128} Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, no.8, p.511.

\textsuperscript{129} New York Times, April 2, 1957.

\textsuperscript{130} Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan the Soviet Invasion in Perspective, no.10, p.40; New York Times, April 4, 1957.
the United States had publicly expressed its support for Afghanistan's independence and neutrality were of considerable political importance.131

Besides increasing economic aid to Afghanistan, the Department of State, with a view to draw Afghanistan closer to the West particularly the United States, encouraged the exchange of high level State visits between Kabul and Washington. Accordingly, the United States government invited the Afghan Premier Mohammad Daoud on an official visit to Washington.

The Afghan Prime Minister Daoud visited the U.S. in June 1958 on the invitation of the American government. He reached Washington on June 24, 1958 and remained there until June 27 after which he began a 12-day coast-to-coast tour of the country.132 At the airport, the Afghan premier was received by the Vice-President Richard Nixon and the U.S. Secretary of State, John F. Dulles. Daoud expressed happiness at his arrival and (expressed) the hope that his visit

131. A.S. Ghaus, no.30, p.87.
132. The United States and Afghanistan, Department of State Bulletin, vol.82, no.2060, March 1980, p.9; Facts on File, 1958, p.213
would be helpful in further strengthening the relations between the two countries.133

U.S. President Eisenhower hosted a banquet (lunch) in the honour of the Afghan premier on the first day of his Washington visit. The U.S. President described the objectives of U.S. foreign policy and Premier Daoud similarly explained the attitude of his government in the field of international affairs including its traditional policy of neutrality and independence.134 Later on, Premier Daoud held discussions with the Secretary of State, John F. Dulles on international, regional and political issues. He assured Dulles that Afghanistan in no way does want to harm Western interests in the region. When Dulles asked for his assurance in writing that Afghanistan would not have any objection if the majority of Pushtuns east of Durand line decide to vote for Pakistan in the future plebiscite, he did so.135

Addressing the National Press Club, Premier Daoud appealed to the Press of all countries to understand Afghan

134. Ibid.
135. V.P. Vaidik, op.cit. p.146.
neutrality. \textsuperscript{136} In response to questions relating to Soviet and U.S. Aid, he made it clear "that in reconstruction and development, Afghanistan had in the past and would in the future use Soviet as well as United States aid." \textsuperscript{137} Afterwards, on the same day, the Afghan Premier signed a Cultural Exchange Agreement with Dulles, as a symbol of warm relations between the two nations to base their relations on mutual understanding. \textsuperscript{138}

At the conclusion of Daoud's official visit a joint statement was issued on 27 June 1958, wherein, the U.S. endorsed the Afghan "traditional policy of neutrality and independence." \textsuperscript{139} Daoud was assured of the continuing readiness of the United States to be of assistance to Afghanistan in its objective of developing the resources of the country for the welfare of the people. \textsuperscript{140} To this end, the United States pledged continuing support for the Helmand Valley project, the development of Afghan civil aviation, surface transportation projects, and the Afghan education system. \textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, March 1980, p.8
After his three day official visit Daoud began a 12-day coast to coast tour of the United States visiting important industrial, military, educational and tourist places. On the eve of his departure speaking at the dinner hosted by Far East American Council of Commerce and Industry, he "invited American businessmen ... to invest in Afghanistan."

Daoud's visit to Washington was a success in itself and proved to be an important landmark in the bilateral relations. Firstly, it gave a chance to the top leadership of both the countries to meet and understand each other. Secondly, it created a new interest in the U.S. to understand Afghanistan & made them feel the necessity of investing in Afghanistan for its development. Moreover, it helped in making Dulles understand the Afghan policy of neutrality and removing American fears about Daoud's leftist leanings.

The U.S. government lost no time in reciprocating Daoud's gestures. On December 9, 1959, the U.S. President

144. V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., pp.149.
Dwight Eisenhower made a short official visit to Afghanistan just for 6-hour during his 3-week, 12 nation "peace and friendship in freedom" tour.\(^\text{145}\) His visit had been eagerly solicited by the Daoud government, which gave prominent publicity to the first visit by an American Chief of State to Afghanistan.\(^\text{146}\) The papers \textit{Anis} and \textit{Islah} wrote that President Eisenhower was a great world statesman and President of a great nation who was due to visit Afghanistan.\(^\text{147}\) The paper \textit{Anis} expressed the view that Eisenhower\'s visit to neutral Afghanistan was more significant because it was not a member of any U.S. sponsored military alliance.\(^\text{148}\)

President Eisenhower was enthusiastically received at the airport by King Zahir Shah, Prime Minister Daoud and all the leading members of the Afghan Government. Welcoming the U.S. President, King Zahir Shah hoped that the former\'s visit would help in strengthening the relations between the


\(^{146}\) The United States and Afghanistan, \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, vol.82, November 2060, March 1980, p.9.

\(^{147}\) Quoted in Louis Dupree, "The Mountains go to Mohammed Zaheer", \textit{American University Field Staff Reports} (AUFSR), (New York, 1960), vol.4, no.6, pp.6-7.

\(^{148}\) Ibid.
two countries. The Afghan King explained to the American President, Afghanistan's policy of independence and neutrality.

Speaking at a banquet given in his honour by the King, President Eisenhower praised the valiant Afghans, and assured the Afghans of continued American interest in assisting Afghanistan in its task of social and economic development. The Americans and the Afghans agreed that the President's visit had further strengthened the warm & friendly relations between the two countries.

As far as the net result of President Eisenhower's visit was concerned, no major commitment was made or agreement was concluded except for expressing goodwill and gestures of friendship to each other. This visit in no way proved to be a serious attempt to offset or reduce the Soviet influence in Afghanistan, because he did not make any political or economic proposal to Afghanistan. If this visit is compared with the 1955 visit of Soviet leaders who brought huge economic proposals, goodwill, it was merely a

152. Ibid.
153. V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.154.
goodwill visit. But for the Afghan pride it was important that at least American President, even for 6 hours, was coming to their country.154

On the question of Pashtunistan, though the United States supported the Pakistani position at SEATO's Karachi session in March 1956, she kept on working, basically in her own interest, to find a peaceful resolution of the dispute by means of Pakistan-Afghan mutual dialogue. It was with this understanding that the State Department encouraged high level state visits between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a result of American efforts, Pakistan's President Major General Iskander Mirza, visited Afghanistan from August 7 to 11, 1956.155 Soon, Afghan Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud reciprocated by visiting Karachi from November 24 to December 1, 1956 as the guest of the Pakistani government.156 At the conclusion of Daoud's visit a joint communique stated that the discussions between the two Prime Ministers "have substantially contributed to a better appreciation of the respective views held in regard to the question of Pashtunistan. It is the intention of the two governments to continue

154. Ibid.


their efforts to remove all differences between the two countries through friendly discussions.\textsuperscript{157} It was also stated that the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Suhrawardy had accepted an invitation from Prince Daoud Khan to visit Afghanistan.

As a matter of fact the exchange of visits between the leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1956, at the instance of Washington reduced the mutual tensions and produced a lull in Afghan-Pakistan confrontation until late 1958.\textsuperscript{158} During this period of relative calm, the two countries concluded an Air Agreement and a Transit Trade Agreement, besides establishing direct radio-telephone links.\textsuperscript{159} However, the relations between the two countries deteriorated with the advent of General Mohammed Ayub Khan's rise to power in Pakistan in October 1958. The Ayub Government adopted an even more uncompromising position on the question of Pashtunistan than its predecessors and accused Afghanistan of putting Pakistan and the region in danger by accepting Soviet help.\textsuperscript{160}

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\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{158} A.S. Ghaus, no.30, p.89.
\textsuperscript{159} V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.156.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
Despite the irreconcilable attitude of Ayub Khan, the Afghan government at the instance of Eisenhower who visited Kabul in 1959, sent foreign minister, Mohammed Naim for talks to Pakistan in January 1960. However, the new Pakistani leader, instead of listening to the Afghan views, lectured Naim about Pakistan’s military might and its ability to take Kabul within a few hours. In such an atmosphere Naim’s visit could not bring any positive result and soon the differences between the two countries again began to become more noticeable.162

Deterioration in Afghan-Pakistan Relations 1961-63

The Afghan-U.S. relations had improved substantially during the period 1957-60, as a result of increased American assistance to Kabul and exchange of visits of leaders between the two countries. Washington committed $180 million in economic assistance for the development of Afghanistan by the end of Eisenhower’s second term of Presidency. Based on an estimated population of 12,000,000 Afghanistan became one of the biggest per capita recipient of American aid during this phase.163 In the aftermath of

Eisenhower's visit to Kabul in 1959, the U.S. spending in Afghanistan ran at $25,000,000 a year which amounted to half of the $50 million to $60 million annual Soviet expenditures to that country. Increased U.S. assistance resulted in better relations between Kabul and Washington.

The new Kennedy administration too, after assumption of power in January 1961, showed keen interest in Afghanistan and responded favourably to Kabul's overtures for more American aid to launch the second Five-Year Plan (1961-66). In the year 1961, the United States provided $31.5 million in assistance, a record annual American commitment to Afghanistan till that date. However, this increased American assistance to Kabul and the process of improvement in the bilateral relations soon came to be affected by the renewed Afghan-Pakistan confrontation over Pashtunistan.

In the wake of failure of Afghan Foreign Minister Naim's visit to Pakistan in January 1960, the relations between Kabul and Karachi once again began deteriorating. Once again the process of rapprochement gave way to mutual

hostility. In this surcharged atmosphere, hostile propaganda increased, as did tribal incursions by both sides into the territories of the other.167 This time Bajaur area (east of Durand Line and North-West of Peshawar) became the epicenter of Pushtun resistance against Pakistan's attempts at tribal integration. In September 1960 and again in May 1961, Afghan irregulars and "army troops dressed as tribesmen"168 crossed into Bajaur area to assist pro-Pashtunistan elements resisting Pakistani pressures.169 The Afghans did not fare well, in both of the Bajaur incursions, particularly in the second one, mainly because of intensive Pakistani air attacks carried out by American-built Pakistani-piloted F-86 jet fighter bombers.170 Soon in the face of tribal resistance even Pakistan had to withdraw its forces from the Pushtun areas. However, the Bajaur incidents plunged Afghan-Pakistan relations to new depths and once again serious interruptions occurred in Afghan transit trade through Pakistan.

On August 22, 1961 Pakistan announced the closure of its consulates in Jalalabad and Kandhar and, in a Note handed over to the Afghan Charge 'd' Affairs, asked

167. Abdul Samad Ghaus, no.30, p.90.
168. Ibid.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid.
Afghanistan to close its Consulates and trade offices in Pakistan (Peshawar, Quetta, Parachinar and Chaman) within a fortnight.\textsuperscript{171} The reason given by the Pakistani authorities for the decision was the hostility of the Afghan people toward Consular officials and Pakistani nationals.\textsuperscript{172} Although, the Pakistani officials and citizens had not been popular in Afghanistan ever since the emergence of Pakistan, the actual motive behind Pakistan's breaking off of diplomatic relations with Afghanistan was Pakistan's irritation over the continued Afghan support to the tribesmen in fighting for the attainment of Pashtunistan.\textsuperscript{173}

Since land-locked Afghanistan depended for its trade and commerce and contact with the outside world through Pakistan, the latter's decision to close the Afghan consulates was a shattering blow to Afghanistan. In retaliation to the Pakistani decision, the Afghan Government on August 30, announced that

if the Pakistan Government insists on its decision and does not take any step to improve the situation, this action of Pakistan will leave no ground for the existence of diplomatic relations between the two

\textsuperscript{171} The Statesman (Calcutta), 30 August, 1961.
\textsuperscript{172} Times of India, October 8, 1961.
\textsuperscript{173} Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1961, pp.18330.
countries. Consequently, the Afghanistan Government will be compelled to consider diplomatic relations with Pakistan as broken with in one week's period after handing over this letter. The Afghan Government will consider this decision as a direct result of the Pakistan Government's policy.

The fluid situation arising out of Pakistani decision to close the Afghan Consulates and Trade Agencies and the latter's threat to retaliate with the closure of border between the two countries, galvanized the U.S. into action. Washington tried to bring about a rapprochement between the two countries since its interest in the region was paramount in the sense that the closure of Afghan-Pakistani border would have jeopardized the shipments of equipments and other aid materials from the U.S. for Afghan development projects. The U.S. through its embassies in Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively, tried to impress upon the two governments to reconsider their decisions. But pride prevailed upon persuasion.

The Afghan Government on September 6, 1961 severed the diplomatic relations with Pakistan and closed the border between the two countries due to the non-compliance of the Afghan demand by the Ayub Khan government. The Pakistanis decried the unilateral closure of the border to commerce,

insisting that they intended to honor the 1958 transit agreement and that the flow in-transit trade to and from Afghanistan could be maintained without the physical presence of trade agencies in Pakistan. The Afghan government took the position that, so long as the trade agencies were not allowed to function, it was impossible for Afghan in-transit trade through Pakistan to move freely and expeditiously to and from Afghanistan. 175

The border closure threatened Afghan merchants and fruit growers with loss of 1961's fruit crop 176 and its supplies to India, traditionally Afghanistan's most important customer for fresh and dried fruits and nuts. 177 In fact, there were fears of the collapse of the Afghan economy if the fruit crop rotted along Afghan roads. The importance of fresh and dried fruit and nuts cannot be underestimated, because these two items account for the bulk of Afghan exports abroad. 178

The closure of the only traditional outlet for Afghan

175. A.S. Ghaus, The Fall of Afghanistan, no.30, pp.91.
176. Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, no.1, pp.545.
177. Ibid., pp.547.
178. Ibid., pp.546.
in-transit trade put the land locked country into commercial isolation, as most of the Afghan trade was carried by the Pakistani route. During this time more than $50,000,000 worth of imports and exports used to pass through Pakistan annually to and from land-locked Afghanistan. As a result of closure, millions of dollars worth of goods destined for Kabul lay stuck at Karachi, Peshawar, Chaman and Parachinar. Moreover, the closure heavily affected the several developmental projects undergoing in Afghanistan under the supervision and cooperation of western countries, more specifically the United States of America.

Hence, due to the closure of Afghan-Pakistani border the situation became so serious for Afghanistan that either she had to turn for trade routes through Iran or Soviet Union or its national economy would have collapsed. It was with this consideration in mind that Mohammed Nairn, the Afghan-foreign minister went to Moscow on September 16 to discuss the situation which arose on account of the Pakistan-Afghan border closure. Naim's Moscow visit

180. Ibid.
resulted in an airlift of the fruit crop and a new Afghan-Soviet agreement signed in November, which called for a major increase of transit facilities through the Soviet Union." 182

After the break-up of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, Sardar Daoud, in an interview with a West German journalist told - "The border will remain closed until the Pashtunistan issue is settled." 183 In the same interview the Afghan Premier made it clear that the whole Afghan trade will be diverted through Iran and Soviet Union. He warned that as long as the Afghan-in-transit trade with the direct involvement of Afghan transit agencies was not allowed through Pakistan, Afghans would not allow any aid material into their boundaries. He accused America for not trying to bring Pakistan on the right track." 184

The Afghan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mohammed Naim, on September 27, in an interview to a correspondent of The Times of India ruled out any resumption of trade across Pakistan unless the consulates and trade agencies reopened. 185 He also said that if the United

182. Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, no. 1, pp.545.
184. Indian Express (Bombay), September 23, 1961.
185. Times of India, 28 September 1962.
States insisted on routing its aid through Pakistan, it would amount to imposition of a condition that Kabul would not accept.\textsuperscript{186} In the same interview he told that "If the Americans want to help, thy will find a way like our other friends. The West Germans, the U.N.O., and others will send goods through the Russian transit route."\textsuperscript{187}

Soon after the break-up of diplomatic relations and closure of border between Afghanistan and Pakistan the United States found herself in a very difficult position due to several constraints. First, the closure jeopardized $200,000,000 U.S. economic aid programme in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{188} Secondly, it threatened to stall or terminate several important heavy engineering construction projects, including the long delayed Kabul-Kandhar road, the spin Baldak-Kandhar road, and improvements in the Helmand Valley Project.\textsuperscript{189} Thirdly, the closure adversely affected the renewed booming U.S. assistance programmes to Afghanistan. Immutable lay 2,000 tons of goods at Karachi, 4000 tons at Peshawar, Chaman and Quetta and 364 railroad cars were held up at Peshawar and Chaman. About 20,000 tons of goods bound for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{188} \textit{New York Times}, September 29, 1961.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Louis Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan}, no.1, p.550.
\end{itemize}
Afghanistan were due to arrive in Karachi soon. Fourthly, it created a situation when Kabul once again began moving "dangerously close to the communist bloc and in the long run depending even in matters of trade and transition on the Soviet Union." 191

With these considerations in mind, the U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent a letter through a personal emissary to the Afghan king, to offer the good offices of the U.S. to ease the border dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan and to revise Afghanistan's decision not to use the transit facilities in Pakistan for the movement of Afghan goods, 192 (basically the American aid material to Afghanistan).

King Zahir Shah replied favourably to President Kennedy's offer of good offices of the United States to ease the border dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan but he reiterated Afghanistan's stand on the issue, that it would not use Pakistan's transit facilities unless Pakistan agreed to the reopening of Afghan Trade Agencies and Consulates. 193

192. Times of India, October 1, 1961.
On October 17, President Kennedy named Mr. Livingston T. Merchant (U.S. ambassador to Canada) as his personal representative to try solve the Pakistan-Afghan border dispute and restore trade between the two countries.

Whereas the Pakistani press and leadership waxed unenthusiastically about Mr. Kennedy's proposal to send an emissary to Pakistan and Afghanistan to discuss the possibilities of re-establishing diplomatic relations, the Afghans greeted the proposal in glowing terms.

Livingston T. Merchant, began his efforts at rapprochement on October 19 and continued till November 7, 1961 shuttling between Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Kabul, holding talks with the Pakistani and Afghan leaders. However, his mission failed to convince either party to compromise. The Afghans maintained that, before tackling the dispute itself, the border had to be reopened and this could not be done unless the Pakistanis were agreed to the re-establishment of Afghan trade agencies. The Pakistanis were not ready to accept this Afghan demand. Though the Afghan government was well aware of the rigid stand of its opponent, it expected

that the Kennedy administration, having assumed the responsibility of reconciling the two countries, would apply pressure on Ayub Khan to allow the reopening of the trade agencies. 197

Thus, on account of the rigid attitude of both the involved actors, the Merchant Mission could not succeed in breaking the Afghan-Pakistani deadlock. On his way back to Washington Merchant said "My departure does not signify that the good offices of the President of the United States have ended. These good offices will continue to be exercised through diplomatic channels and the friendly interest of the U.S. Government remains constant." 198

While the U.S. efforts at mediation in the continued Afghan-Pakistani stalemate could not bring any desired result and rather put her in a very difficult position, the Soviet Union made definite and successful moves in the dispute and strengthened her relations with Afghanistan. Within a fortnight of border closure, the Soviet Union promised the visiting Afghan foreign minister Mohammed Naim in Moscow to airlift Afghanistan's perishable fruit harvest. Accordingly, from early October to early November about 13

197. Ibid.
Soviet aircraft took off each day from Kabul airport, airlifting 100 to 150 tons of grapes to the USSR.\textsuperscript{199} Little later, the USSR again reportedly offered Afghanistan loans and credits totaling $450 million for their second Five Year Plan, to be started on October 16, 1961. This was virtually the entire amount needed.\textsuperscript{200} Though the Afghan government turned down the Soviet offer because of the reported conditionalities attached with it, she concluded a separate agreement with Moscow for economic and technical assistance during the Second Five Year Plan. The agreement also made provision to send Afghan citizens to the higher educational institutions of the Soviet Union, which was a big challenge to the American monopoly in the field of education.\textsuperscript{201} Moreover, Moscow sent Soviet Marshal Vassiliy Danilovich Sokolovskiy to Kabul in October 1961, the specific purposes of which were never made public, probably to know about the conditions of Afghan soldiers and military equipments.\textsuperscript{202}

\textsuperscript{199} Louis Dupree, \textit{Afghanistan}, no.1, p.546.
\textsuperscript{200} Louis Dupree, "Pashtunistan" - The Problem and Its Larger Implications \textit{AUFSR, South Asia series}, vol.5, no.1, October 1961, LD-1-63
\textsuperscript{201} V.P. Vaidik, \textit{Afghanistan in Soviet-Americi Pratis-pardha}, p.178.
\textsuperscript{202} Louis Depree, "Pashtunistan", LD-1-61, p.10.
\textsuperscript{203} V.P. Vaidik, Ibid., p.179.
All these developments, i.e., the failure of Merchant Mission, continuity of Afghan-Pakistani blockage amidst propaganda and counter propaganda, and increased Soviet activities and influence in Afghanistan created an unprecedented crisis in the higher American government circles. New York Times, on November 13, 1961 wrote that the recent breaking up of Afghan-Pakistani diplomatic relations could result in an end of the middle-position of Afghanistan in the politics of Power-Blocs.204

At this juncture, though the circumstances in Afghanistan were not favourable to the United States, it did not want to leave the field open to the Soviet Union. However, the Department of State officials knew it well that the only way to make American presence felt in Afghanistan was to re-start supply of U.S. aid material to the nearly collapsing Afghan economy. Hence, the U.S. kept on working for the early supply of its aid material to Afghanistan even if resolution of its conflict with Pakistan was not possible in the short run. At last, the constant U.S. diplomatic efforts paid off and Afghanistan, on its own opened up its boundaries on 29 January, 1962 for the next eight weeks only in order to bring the aid material lying at

Karachi and Peshawar.\(^{205}\) The most interesting aspect of this Afghan gesture is that it was meant only for the American aid material to bring inside the country.\(^{206}\)

The Afghan government decision to reopen its border on its own was strange but a definite success of American diplomacy.\(^{207}\) Was it their gesture or American political pressure, is still not clear. However, at the end of an 8 week period, the Afghan-Pakistani border was again closed. In the meanwhile, 26,000 tons of American aid material was brought in to Afghanistan through Pakistani routes.\(^{208}\)

In the meanwhile, the Afghans sought U.S. assistance to create a new transit route through Iran to the Persian Gulf as an alternative to transit through Pakistan.\(^{209}\) The U.S. which had little interest in financing the construction of an extensive new road system and the additional port facilities which would be required, accepted


\(^{206}\) Ibid.

\(^{207}\) V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.181.


the Afghan plea as she was desperate to send its aid material to Afghanistan in order to keep that country away from complete Soviet domination. Soon, the U.S. approached Iran regarding this matter.

In an understanding with the U.S. an Afghan Government delegation went to Teheran in March 1962 and concluded a five-year transit agreement with Iran making provisions for the transit of Afghan export and import goods through Iran. Iran also agreed to provide warehouse and transport facilities for all types of goods arriving at Iran's Persian Gulf ports for shipment to Afghanistan. Although this route was arduous and long and Khurramshahr's port facilities were not really adequate to handle the increase in traffic, the U.S. began dispatching all its assistance to Afghanistan through Iran. The U.S. had to spend $1 million to transport 7,500 tons of her aid material to

210. Ibid.
212. Ibid., May 27, 1962.
Afghanistan through new Iranian route."214 This exceptional gesture for the continuation of U.S. aid proved beneficial to create harmony in the Afghan-American relationship.

In February 1962, during his world tour as the special envoy of President Kennedy, Chester Bowles visited Afghanistan.215 At the completion of the tour, while expressing his deep concern on the Afghan situation he opined that mere good wishes (of the Americans) would not suffice and (the U.S.) should face the bitter truth that existence of Afghanistan as an independent and neutral state depends on American economic aid, political backing and moral props."216

Afghan-Pakistan border dispute lasted for such a long time (i.e. from September 1961) that all the efforts at resolving it became lax. The U.S. transported major part of


its aid material to Afghanistan through Pakistan during the eight weeks reopening of the border in early 1962 and later through the new alternate Iranian in-transit route.

As a matter of fact, the primary U.S. objective in her long term policy of "competitive-co-existence" with Soviet Union in Afghanistan was to keep her economic aid presence intact in the land-locked country. But the situation emerged as a result of continued Pakistan-Afghan closure in the early 1960s presented a challenge to the U.S. policies in Afghanistan. However, the newly created alternate transit route for U.S. supplies to Afghanistan relieved the American policy makers at least for the time being. As far as the real issue of dispute (Pashtunistan issue) was concerned, the U.S. was not in a position to play any significant role, as it was not able to convince either of the disputants.

Besides the direct U.S. efforts, the Shah of Iran at the behest of the United States also tried to mediate in the Pakistan-Afghan dispute. Both sides welcomed his initiative. The Shah visited Kabul on July 26, 1962 and held extensive talks with the King Zahir Shah for five days on the issue.217 Later he flew to Rawalpindi on July 31 to

inform Pakistani President Ayub Khan about progress in talks at Kabul and on the same day returned to Kabul for further talks.\textsuperscript{218} However, the steadfastness of both the disputants dissuaded Shah Reza of Iran from making any headway at reconciliation. This led the Shah to postpone his efforts to mediate to a future date. A communique issued on August 1, 1962 said that the Shah would continue his efforts for the restoration of normal relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{219}

Despite the U.S. and Iranian mediation to bring about a rapprochement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the border closure continued. However, both the Afghan and the Pakistani economies took the brunt of the prolonged closure. Pakistan was losing 160 million rupees per-year in customs duties and closure was a sort of curse to the trading community in Quetta and Peshawar.\textsuperscript{220} In the case of Afghanistan, the border closure had its impact in various ways. First, it literally blocked the western aid, more specifically the U.S. assistance to Afghanistan. The newly found Iranian in-transit route could not replace the Pakistani route as far as its utility was concerned. Secondly, it changed the

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., August 1, 1962.
\textsuperscript{219} Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1963, p.19490.
\textsuperscript{220} V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.187.
traditional pattern of the Afghan trade, i.e., from southward to northward and made the land-locked country more dependent on the Soviet Union. Thirdly, by the beginning of 1963, Afghanistan incurred loss in earnings from her exports of fruits to India and USSR. In 1962-63, Afghan fresh fruit airlift to India increased to 2,797 tons from 1,500 tons in 1961-62. The Soviet fresh fruit airlift also increased (from 7,250 tons in 1961-62 to about 11,000 tons in 1962-63), but the Soviets gave the Afghans less credit per ton this time. So, contrary to the situation in 1961-62, when the Afghans gained a $1,468,000 credit from the Soviet Union, only $1,430,000 resulted during the 1962-63 airlift for more tonnage."221 Fourthly, at the domestic front the sky high inflation heavily increased the prices for consumer goods and made the life of common people very difficult.

Moreover, the Jewish and Hindu trading community of Kabul, which did not identify itself with the Pashtunistan dispute, was reluctant to face losses for a long time and started exerting pressure upon the government through King Zahir Shah and Shah Wali Khan."222 Moreover, some

221. Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, no.1, p.552.
222. V.P. Vaidik, op.cit., p.187.
educated non-Pashtun and the intelligentsia assumed that the Pashtunistan issue was being given more than necessary importance.

At this stage when no solution of the Afghan-Pakistani dispute seemed imminent" the Afghan economists, intelligentsia and power elite analyzed the gravity of the situation in view of the cold economic facts and realized the necessity of rapprochement with Pakistan more than ever.

At last, the leadership reached the consensus that tensions created by the Pashtunistan issue were damaging and that a more serene atmosphere would perhaps be helpful in finding an acceptable solution. The first step in reversing the Afghan-Pakistani confrontation would naturally be the resumption of diplomatic relations and the reopening of the Afghan-Pakistani border, an urgent necessity. Mohammed Daoud subscribed to this view and offered to resign to give a new government a needed latitude for a change of attitude toward Pakistan. King Zahir Shah accepted Daoud's resignation which was made public on March 9, 1963.224

Radio Afghanistan announced on March 9, 1963:

"Sardar Mohammed Daoud, the Prime Minister of Afghanistan, after nine and one-half years discharging the

223. A.S. Ghaus, The Fall of Afghanistan, no.30, p.94.
224. Ibid.
heavy responsibilities of the office, submitted his resignation to His Majesty the King on March 3, which received royal acceptance. The King gratefully acknowledged the past services of the Prime Minister and requested Sardar Mohammed Daoud to continue to serve until the formation of a new government. His Excellency, Dr. Mohammed Yousuf, the Minister of Mines and Industries has been asked to form a new government."225

225. Quoted by Louis Dupree, Afghanistan, no.1, p.554.