Chapter III

PATTERN OF INTERVENTION
The beginning of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan can be traced to the rise of the communist movement in that country. In fact it is through the communist party of Afghanistan that the Soviets initially began to exert indirect influence into the internal affairs of that country.

The left party in Afghanistan came to power with the April 1978 coup which overthrew the regime of President Mohammed Daoud. Initially Daoud was supported by the Parchamite wing of the communist party of Afghanistan. His government had four Parchamites and most of the government functionaries close to Parcham held very important positions.

The alliance of the leftists with the Daoud regime was very brief. Within a few months, Daoud began to revert back to his old style and began to depend more on trusted friends.

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1 The two Marxist factions which cooperated to overthrow Daoud were Khalq (Masses) and Parcham (Banner). Both groups grew from a common organization founded in early 1965. While Khalq is based among Pashtuns, the Parcham is based among Tajiks who share their nationality with the Tajiks of the Soviet Union. Parcham was stronger among students and the military officers while Khalq had more rural support, see Hannah Negaran, "The Afghan Coup of April 1978: Revolution and International Security", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.23, no.1, Spring 1979, p.101.

2 The prominent officers were Major Abdul Qader a Tajik Air force officer who played a key role in both the 1973 and '78 coups. He was appointed as Vice-Commander of the Air force, and Major Zia Mohammed Zia, a Parcham associate from the dynastic clan became head of the Republican guard.
and rightist elements. Gradually he began to rid his govern-
ment of the communist elements. These policies of Daoud
led to a repeat of the political stasis characteristic of
the final phase of the monarchy. It also had a predictable
impact on the two factions of the Peoples Democratic Party
of Afghanistan (PDPA), the Khalq and Parcham which drew
corrective lessons from the turn of events. Parcham reali-
zed that the Daoud regime would not fulfill even the national
democratic role allotted to it and by 1975 it had abandoned
any hope of influencing Daoud. It was pushed in some measure
towards the harder line long advocated by Khalq. Parcham
also lost much of the support it once had in the armed forces
as officers like Abdul Qader, disappointed by the illusions
it had fostered, switched their allegiances to Khalq. For
its part Khalq drew the lessons of the success which Parcham
enjoyed in the armed forces and abandoned its previous
reluctance to work in the armed forces. It built up a
military network under Hafizullah Amin. However, the two
sections united to form a joint front to resist Daoud.

3 In 1975, Daoud purged the Parcham elements from the
government for details see, Richard S.Newell and
Nancy P.Newell, The Struggle for Afghanistan (London,

4 The monarchy in Afghanistan came to an end when Daoud
overthrew Zahir Shah in 1973, the year when Daoud
began his term as ruler of the Republic of Afghanistan.

5 Fred Halliday, "Revolution in Afghanistan", New Left

6 After about two years of negotiations which started
in 1975, the two units reunited in July 1977. This
unity was very fragile. Ibid., p.31.
It is not fully clear why the events of April 1978 occurred when they did. Indeed the PDPA leaders admit that matters moved more rapidly than expected. It was obvious that a major social and political explosion was imminent. The spark that lit the explosion came on 18 April 1978 when the police killed Mir Akbar Khyber a University Professor and former editor of paper Parcham who was also responsible for re-uniting the two wings of the PDPA. News of his killing led to protest by the people. The subsequent arrest of the leftist leaders by Daoud, triggered off the military action engineered by Amin and ultimately Daoud was deposed and the Mohammadzai rule came to an end.

The April 1978 coup was the outcome of the simmering discontent among the leftist forces against Daoud's policies, the armed forces also played a major role. Though there is no direct evidence of the Soviet involvement, one cannot discount the fact that the Soviets did have a fore-knowledge of the coup. As in 1973, there can be little

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7 The suspicion that the Soviets had fore-knowledge of the April 1978 coup is heightened by the fact that Soviet recognition came on Sunday 30 April in the middle of the long week-end celebrations for May Day. Interestingly the announcement came first from Kabul and was still unconfirmed in Moscow on 1 May. See International Herald Tribune (Paris), 2 May 1978.

The scale on which the Soviets backed Daoud's leftist successors speaks volumes of the indirect involvement. Immediately twenty five agreements with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) member countries, were signed by the new
doubt that the Soviet Union was at least aware of the same individuals who had brought Daoud to power. However, the fact that it was Amin the Khalqi and not Babrak Karmal the Parchamite, who organized the coup, strongly suggests that the Soviet role, if any was only secondary. With the existent Soviet antipathy towards Amin, it was unlikely that a Soviet orchestrated coup would have been staged

(previous f/n.cont.....)

regime. An unusual burst of diplomacy on the part of the government scarcely secure in its own capital. While street fights went on in Kabul the government began contracting for Bulgarian Television and East German printing equipment, together with $22 million from the Soviet Union to exploit natural gas. Fidel Castro of Cuba visited the country shortly after the coup perhaps to assume the new government that it was possible to run a small country entirely on Soviet aid for several years, see Kabul Times 2 May 1978.


9 Babrak Karmal - is a native of Kabul province and the son of an army general. Karmal received a modern education in Kabul and was involved in the liberal student reform movement of the early 1950's. Jailed for several years by Daoud's first regime, Karmal emerged in the 1960's as the outspoken leader in the Parcham faction of the communist party of Afghanistan. An eloquent orator, Karmal assumed the leadership of those radicals mostly identified with the Dari language and having pro-Soviet leanings. Karmal's mentor was Khyber, the Parcham theoretician who had been among the leaders of the reform movement in the late 1940's, see Newell and Newell, n.3, pp. 62, 113.

10 Amin who earned his Doctorate from Colombia and had ties with the US embassy was always suspect in the eyes of the Soviets. They were apprehensive of his leadership and style of functioning. For details see Louis Dupree, Red Flag Over the Hindu Kush, Part II, Accidental Coup or Taraki in Blunderland*, American Universities Field Staff Reports, Asia Series (Hanover, New Hampshire) (Hereinafter AUS3 Reports), vol.3, No. 45, p.3. Also see Newell and Newell, n.3, p.113.
under his leadership. Nevertheless one cannot preclude that once the leftists had taken matters into their hands, the Soviets were not involved. At least the security agency the KGB must have operated with its contacts in the army. Colonel Qader, a Soviet-trained Parchamite air force officer played a major role in the air operations of 27 April 1978. 

Whatever the extent of Moscow's role, most observers agree that the coup was a hastily improvised, eleventh hour affair and this did not represent a deliberate Soviet gambit in the global strategic chess game. Moscow did not take the Afghan communists seriously until 1976 and did not try to patch together even a semblance of a unified communist party till mid 1977. While there is no absolute proof of Soviet involvement in the rapprochement, the intensity of the Khalq-Parcham rivalry was such that it was hard to conceive that the two parties had reached an agreement without pressure. Though such temporary accommodation between the rival factions


13 In the summer of 1977, Khalq and Parcham factions of the old PDPA were officially reconciled and a new PDPA was formed. See Louis Dupree, "Red Flag Over the Hindu Kush Part I: Leftist Movements in Afghanistan", AUPJ Reports, vol. 2, No. 44, February, 1979, p. 11.
is not unusual in the West, the Afghan tradition of sworn enmity is one of the strongest in the whole culture. Only the application of some over-riding force could submerge personal animosities existing between Karmal and Taraki. "The implication is that the Soviet Union stepped in to heal the breach and that serious, detailed plotting for the coup - with or without immediate Soviet guidance - can be dated from that event". 14

Since the destruction of the monarchy, Moscow began to perceive unprecedented political opportunities and dangers in Kabul specially because of the resultant political vacuum. Rather than risk others filling this vacuum in a neighbouring country of such strategic importance the Soviet strategists concluded that a communist takeover was necessary for the Soviet security and began to prepare for this eventuality. Accordingly, they gave their blessings to the Afghan communist coup of 1978, even when it occurred prematurely under unexpected leadership. 15 Being confronted


15 Amin, the architect of the April 1978 coup was born in Paghman, an ethnically mixed area 12 miles west, north-west of Kabul. Amin, a Ghilzai Pashtun was an educationist, who earned his Masters degree from Colombia University in the late 1950's. He returned and worked till 1962 in the education department of the government in Afghanistan. In 1962 he went to Colombia University teachers college for his Doctorate. Radicalized while attending study work camps at Wisconsin University, he was associated with the PDPA since 1965. Because of his US education and ties with the Americans, he was always suspect in the Soviet eyes, see Dupree, n.10, p.5.
with a fait-accompli, the Soviets made an expedient decision to embrace the coup as a triumph of Marxism/Leninism.\textsuperscript{16} They were confident that the new regime would be totally dependent on them and its warring leaders could be kept together and controlled under their aegis.\textsuperscript{17}

In ideological terms, the die was cast for the Soviets once they declared that Afghanistan had become a Marxist/Leninist state and by implication, a state embraced by the Brezhnev Doctrine\textsuperscript{18} which does not permit any retreat in the frontiers of socialism.

The initial months of the new PDPA regime\textsuperscript{19} witnessed a certain amount of 'influencing' by the Soviets. This influence did not amount to complete control - or the Parcham, Khalq conflict would not have been allowed to split the

\textsuperscript{16} Harrison, n.11, p.170.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} In November 1968, at the Polish Party Congress, Brezhnev formulated the Brezhnev Doctrine emphatically underlining the qualified sovereignty of the communist countries, and the Soviet Union's obligation to intervene where socialism is imperilled, for details see John Donberg, Brezhnev: The Masks of Power (New Delhi, 1974), p.229.

\textsuperscript{19} The revolutionary government of the PDPA was a coalition with Taraki of the Khalq as President, Amin also of the Khalq as Foreign Minister and Karmal of Parcham as Vice-President. For details see Seth Singleton, "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan", AIR University Review (Washington), vol.32, No.3, March-April 1981, p.15.
party anew. On the other hand it was pervasive, as indicated by an oblique reference made by Taraki to the Central Historical Committee in November 1978, following a description of the organization of party commissions and duties of the party secretaries in managing state and party affairs, he said "this has been organized on the basis of profound studies and specialized advice. During the first days of the revolution some persons who had specialized in party organization came to Kabul at the invitation of the secretariat of the party and studied party affairs for three months, and consequently they gave specialized advice to the party and it was on the basis of these that the party is organized".

While Taraki did not name the nationality of the advisers, there can be little doubt that they came from the Soviet Union. The task apparently was to help the PDPA in the difficult transition stage from its role as a conspiratorial underground opposition to that of a ruling party. Thus within a few months of the coup, a completely new pattern of governance began to emerge in Afghanistan. With the communist rulers unable to run

20 In the spring of 1979, power struggles and intrigues within the PDPA again split it into two factions. The more radical group - Khalq - was headed by Taraki and Amin and the other one Parcham by the more gradualistic Karmal who was more favoured by the Soviets. See Jizi Valenta, "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: The Difficulty of Knowing Where to Stop". Orbis, vol.24, No.2, Summer 1980, p.205.

the country smoothly on their own and with the lurking fear of following the Daoud precedent, they began to depend more and more on the Soviet Union. This dependence ultimately led to a sharp increase in the number of Soviet military and civilian advisers in Afghanistan.

The Soviet advisers have played a major role in Afghan affairs since the days of King Zahir Shah. During Daoud's rule about 3,000 Soviet advisers were working in the ministries on civil projects and with the armed forces. With the takeover of the PDPA in April 1978 and its signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Good neighbourliness with the Soviet Union in December 1978,22 the number of advisers increased. Since one of the singular aim of the Friendship Treaty was to develop cooperation in the military field - there is reason to believe that by April 1979, around one third of the estimated 4,500 Soviet advisers were assigned to the armed forces.23

The Soviet advisers in Afghanistan, apart from performing their advisory functions, exercised considerable power in the government's decision making. In this regard the then Soviet

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ambassador was pre-eminent. He was credited with having the final word in all important decisions made in Kabul. Even though the ambassadors pretensions were greater than his actual powers; in certain areas he could assert tremendous influence because the PDPA government of Taraki was heavily dependent on Moscow for all its military supplies, much of its finance and technical expertise. 24

The Soviet advice was also given to the Youth, Women and Workers organizations. In all these, the Soviet advisers offered techniques based on the Soviet experience by which the PDPA hoped to mobilise the young generation inspiring it with revolutionary ardour. 25 In addition to the Soviets, advisory missions from other Socialist states - of the COMECON - were also very active in Afghanistan. The German Democratic Republic (GDR), opened an embassy for the first time in Kabul in 1978 and rapidly became an important provider of services, culminating in the GDR commitment to train Khalq cadres. Bulgaria concentrated on agricultural and technical aid by large scale training programme offered in Bulgaria. Cuba offered no particular programme but its ambassador helped to organize the national committee for the defence of the revolution. 26 It was contended by several

24 Ibid., p.106.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p.107.
Asian diplomats that the COMFON states joint initiative in
Afghanistan was purely because of the Soviet pressure to
express solidarity with a new entrant to the socialist fratern-
ity.  

The PDPA government also expressed its commitment to
socialist principles by promising to destroy the tradition
bound feudal society of Afghanistan. In this endeavour also
the government of Afghanistan was inspired by and guided by
the Soviet Union. In fact the Soviet model of an egalitarian
society became the basis on which the PDPA government formulated its several reforms. In all eight decrees were issued
of which three were intended or aimed at the existent social
structure in Afghanistan.  
a) Decree number six of 12 June 1978, was a noble attempt
to eliminate Usury in the countryside. It abolished
all mortgage agreements and loans made prior to 1973,
debts after 1973 were prorated. All debts of tenants,
agricultural labourers and small scale land owners
with less than ten Jeribs were abolished.  

27 Louis Dupree, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan
1979, Rhetoric, Repression, Reforms and Revolts", AUPR:
Reports, vol.1, No.32, January 1979, p.3.
28 All debts and mortgages entered after 1973 were to be
repaid as follows: Twenty percent to be paid after one
year, forty percent after two years, sixty percent after
three years and ninety percent after four years.
29 A total of 11.5 million peasants with little or no land
or more than eighty percent of the rural population were
freed from their debts, see Kabul Times, 1 February, 1979.
b) Decree number Seven of 17 October, 1978 was designed to implement Article 12 of the basic lines of revolutionary duties of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), which called for equal rights for women, in all social, economic, political, cultural and civil aspects. This decree aimed to remove the unjust Patriarchal and Feudalistic relations which exist between husband and wife and for the consolidation of sincere family ties. The decree confirmed equal rights for women, regularized dowry and marriage expenses and forbade forced marriages.

c) Decree number Eight of 28 November, 1978 introduced land reforms and emphasized individual ownership of land within established limits. The decree encouraged the formation of cooperatives to facilitate farmer credit and the distribution of fertilizers, seeds and other agricultural inputs. On paper, the land reforms appeared to be a combination of idealized Maoist localization of rural power and the Yugoslav system of individual ownership within cooperatives. No mention was made of collectivization.

In addition to these decrees the Revolutionary Council in accord with the powers of Decree number One, issued a number of laws and regulations, to fight corruption and assist


32 Dupree, n.28, p.3.

33 Ibid., p.22.
in the creation of cooperatives, agricultural credit and loan facilities. The law regulating duties and legislative procedures of the Revolutionary Council issued on 31 March 1979, was in reality an interim constitution and it gave the Council unlimited power to govern.  

The reforms envisaged were commendable especially to gain legitimacy for the new regime. Yet they evoked neither appreciation nor gratitude. On the contrary, they aroused widespread resentment. The government's effort to win over the masses came to nought. This was because Taraki's government was wholly identified with the Soviet Union. Any close association with a foreign power went against the Afghan tradition of patriotism and freedom. Besides the Soviet Union was a country which believed in an ideology diametrically opposed to Islam. This aroused the hostility of the masses, and opposition to the government took the form of insurgency which gradually engulfed the entire nation. Desertions from the armed forces became frequent and it began to shake the foundation of the government.

This situation was further complicated by power struggles and intrigues within the PDPA, which again split into two factions. Khalq led by Taraki and Amin, and Parcham by Karmal.  

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34 Ibid., p.4.

35 Internal factionalism between the Khalqis and Parchamites of the Revolutionary government produced a fresh crisis in July 1980. For a background and detailed analysis, see Newell and Newell, n.3, pp.122-3.
The Khalq strongman Amin emerged second in command as Prime Minister in March 1979, assuming charge of the army and security forces. Karmal in turn, was exiled as ambassador to Czechoslovakia in July 1979. Two months later, Taraki who perhaps with the Soviet blessing tried to do away with Amin, was killed in a mysterious shooting at the Presidential palace. To consolidate his victory, Amin also needed to liquidate Karmal who despite being recalled stayed on in Prague, probably to work for the overthrow of Amin with the Soviet support. 

Although the Soviets were careful not to display their displeasure in public, they were unhappy with Amin for having killed their favoured politician Taraki. Brezhnev in particular must have been embarrassed since it occurred five days after Taraki's public appearance at the Kremlin where Brezhnev reassured him of the Soviet Union's all round aid. In an effort to adjust to events and reverse the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the Soviets had to support Amin with increasing number of military advisers. "Thus in the Summer and Fall of 1979, Soviet Personnel, about 4,000 men proceeded to assume command and control responsibilities in the army down to company level posts. They also began to operate jets and helicopter gunships in support of the Afghan army." 

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36 Valenta, n. 20, p. 205.
37 Pravda, 10 September 1979.
38 Washington Star (Washington), 30 November 1979 and Baltimore Sun (Baltimore, Maryland), 5 December 1979.
The Soviets deployed their first combat unit in Afghanistan in July 1979. 39

The Soviet military assistance was insufficient to halt the tide of insurgency, instead it contributed to its increase. The Afghan armed forces suffered severe losses and desertions to the rebels and the Soviets themselves bore heavy casualties by November 1979. 40 Though the rebels did not appear to be in a position to overthrow the government they succeeded in limiting Amin's control, to only the large cities. The Afghan army was deteriorating and the Soviet advisers did not have experienced combat troops capable of conducting an efficient, large scale military operation. 41

The Soviets were unhappy with Amin's rule. He disregarded Soviet advice and had started pursuing a programme of radical socialism and brutal oppression which alienated the Afghan population from the leftist regime. Amin's resistance to the Soviet advice, his demand of the replacement of Ambassador Puzanov because he gave sanctuary to Taraki's followers after the coup, his attempts to meet the President of Pakistan

39 *News and Views From the Soviet Union* (New Delhi), vol.37, No.283, 6 December 1978, p.5.

40 Valenta, n.20, p.206.

41 Ibid.
did not go unnoticed by the Soviets. They began to view Amin as a loser and a traitor. With their experience with staunch but nationalistic leaders like Josif Broz Tito and Mao Tse Tung, the Soviets were eager to oust Amin whose radicalism was unpredictable. 42

The Soviets began to view developments in Afghanistan as volatile and unstable. Important personnel of the Soviet army who visited Kabul during this period concurred in this assessment. General Alexie Aleisivich Yepishev, First Deputy minister of Defence, and President of the Political Affairs of the army and navy of the Soviet Union, went to Afghanistan in April 1979. 43 The Deputy Minister of Defence and the Commander in Chief of Soviet ground forces Gen. Ivan G. Pavlovsky 44 visited Afghanistan during September 1979 and stayed on till October 1979. His reports, and the reports of the new Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan-Fikryat A. Tabeyev, possibly held that the regime was in the process of collapse. A few thousand Soviet advisers could not do much to save it.

The Soviet leadership was faced at this juncture with two options. One was to allow unpredictable events to develop without hindrance and be confronted with anarchy among the rebel

43 Kabul Times, 11 April 1979.
44 General Pavlovsky was incharge of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.
groups leading to the establishment of a hostile Islamic Republic close to their borders. The second option was to take drastic measures to control the course of events in Afghanistan at both the military and political levels.45

The Soviet debate over the course of action in Afghanistan attained its crescendo in November 1979. Although the debate on Afghanistan was not so prolonged and arduous as the debate that preceded the invasion of Czechoslovakia, some Soviet officials pushed for an all out military offensive. As in 1968, these were perhaps ideologists and bureaucrats responsible for internal affairs in the Soviet non-Russian republics. Both sets of officials were most concerned with the possible proliferation of Muslim fundamentalism. They were supported by Generals Pavlovsky and Yepishev. In fact on 23 November 1979, Yepishev called upon the Soviet servicemen to be 'on the alert' and to support the new Soviet foreign policy initiative made necessary because aggressive imperialist circles and the Beijing leaders in alliance, were striving to ensure their military superiority over the Soviet Union.46

The Soviet leaders responsible for the conduct of diplomacy were worried for a while about the adverse impact of


46 Pravda, 23 November 1979.
a full scale Soviet military response in Afghanistan.

"How would it affect Soviet relations with the West? What would its impact be on the internal communist movement? It is not unlikely that some Soviet leaders would have, for a time, questioned the wisdom of military intervention". 47

Further, one may comprehend that both Brezhnev and Kosygin might not have been present at the crucial Politburo meeting due to ill health. However, it is very unlikely, that the decision to intervene was taken without the consent of the two leaders or that they were over-ruled. As a matter of fact, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, Brezhnev, after a period of official silence, was the first Politburo member to justify the intervention. 48

The shift within the Politburo in favour of the invasion came in late November 1979 because of pessimistic reports from both Afghanistan and Iran and because of concern over the possible destabilizing effects of events there. One of the most important factors in the debate was the general nature of the US-Soviet relations vis-a-vis the US policy toward Iran, the probable US response to an invasion and the likelihood of an American military invasion of Iran. The

47 Leonid Brezhnev admitted that the decision to intervene was not a simple one, *New York Times*, 13 January 1980.

crucial role in estimating probable American reaction was played by the Soviet diplomatic personnel in the US, especially Ambassador Anatol Dobrynin, who was recalled on 10 December to Moscow, when final preparations for the intervention were being executed. The ambassador probably briefed the politburo that the situation in Iran held risks as well as opportunities for Soviet action. The US was distracted in Iran as it had been during 1956 Suez crisis when the Soviets invaded Hungary and as it had been in Vietnam when the Soviets intervened in Czechoslovakia. 49

From the Soviet perspective the intervention in Afghanistan could not have been delayed. "The Soviet leaders as Andrei Sakharov expressed, chose the moment to act because with the US pre-occupied with Iran and other related problems, they assessed the correlation of military and political forces to be in their favour." 50 Also in favour of the Soviets was the winter in Afghanistan, which compelled the rebels to move down from their mountain sanctuaries mostly without their primitive arms. The intervention, moreover, had to be undertaken before a US decision to use force in Iran. The Soviet leaders hoped with the deployment of Soviet combat troops in Afghanistan their strategic position vis-à-vis the US and China would improve. Sakharov pointed out that "the Soviet leadership calculated that the damage to their foreign relations would be minimal and temporary as compared to the major and

long term gains in power."51 It is in this background that
the Soviets opted to intervene militarily in Afghanistan and
thereby heralded a new chapter in Soviet foreign policy.

The Intervention - Pattern

The first step in this direction was taken by the
Soviets almost a year prior to the military intervention with
the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with
Afghanistan on 5 December 1978.52 The Treaty was broadly on the
same lines as the other treaties of friendship that the Soviet
Union had signed with other developing countries.53 The dist-
inctive feature of the treaty were those aspects which dealt
with defence matters and security considerations of both the
countries. It was agreed that in the interest of strengthen-
ing the defence capacity of both the countries, they would
continue to develop cooperation in the military field on the
basis of appropriate agreements concluded between them.
"Article 4 of the treaty stated that the two countries would

51 Ibid.
52 For Treaty provisions, see Keesings Archives, n. 22, p. 29459

President Brezhnev on the occasion of the signing of
the treaty stated "the treaty will not only provide the
foundation of the further strengthening of Soviet-Afghan
friendship but will also serve the interest of peace
and security in Asia, and thereby the world over". See,
News and Views, n. 39, p. 5.

53 The Soviet Union had earlier entered into treaties with
India on 9 August 1971, Iraq 9 August 1972, Angola 9
October 1976, Mozambique 31 March 1977, Vietnam 3 No-
Vember 1978 and Ethiopia 20 November 1978. For details
see Kuldip Nayar, Report on Afghanistan (New Delhi,
consult each other and that they would by mutual consent undertake appropriate measures to ensure their security, independence and territorial integrity.  

The signing of the treaty within eight months of the assumption of office by Taraki was by itself a significant departure from the pattern of behaviour characteristic of the Soviet Union. It generally concluded such treaties, only when it was assured of the stability of the regime in power and more importantly, of the continuance of the policies of that regime.

The haste with which the treaty with Afghanistan was signed indicates that the Soviet Union was anxious to deal with its own immediate and long term objectives and also to serve as a basis for possible military action on its part. The Soviet thinking in this direction was succinctly expressed by President Brezhnev when he stated "we decisively condemn underground activities against the Afghan Revolution and we would not let our friends alone in this hour of danger. Afghan people have the right to build their own life as they want". He reiterated in September 1979 his country's willingness to render all possible assistance to Afghanistan.

54 News and Views, n.39, p.3.
55 The treaty was signed within eight months of the April Revolution, and the coming into power of the PDPA, it was signed on 5 December 1978, see Keesings Archives, n.22, p.29459.
56 Krasnya Zvezda (Moscow), 13 July 1979.
57 The Patriot (New Delhi), 12 September 1979.
The Soviet General Staff began contingency planning for the intervention in Afghanistan several months before the actual operation. In fact, the airlift to Kabul was perhaps being practiced in late August 1979 when a fleet of Antonov 22 was reported to have transported 10,000 soldiers plus military supplies from the Soviet Union to South Yemen and Ethiopia and back.\(^{58}\) The final Soviet decision to intervene on a massive scale, however, seems to have been reached only late in November. This speculation is supported by the following facts.

First of all, in early December the Soviet diplomats began to implement a new policy, promising to Iranian officials unspecified support in the event of US military intervention. This was a shift from the moderate line of November when the Soviets heeding US protests toned down their inflammatory Parsi broadcasts. Around this time, the Soviets also began to warn the Carter administration that any military action in Iran would carry "grave consequences".\(^{59}\) By offering support to Teheran, the Soviets seemed to be trying to induce the Khomeini regime not to release the hostages, thereby ensuring the continued distraction of the US. At the same time, by warning the US, the Soviets seemed to be trying to manoeuvre the US into an extended deployment that would stop short of actual use of force.


\(^{59}\) *Pravda*, 10 December 1979.
Amin, however, apparently declined to follow the Soviets new pro-Khomeini tactical line. That the Soviets had decided to get rid of Amin by this time is suggested by various references to "left wing extremists in Afghanistan and by omissions of any reference to Amin in some Soviet news media reports in early December". Meanwhile, Radio Moscow significantly altered its broadcasts to Afghanistan where Amin was represented by the Muslim clergy those broadcasts now closed with the invocation 'God protect us'.

Other evidence about when the decision was made is provided by changes in the Soviet military deployment along the Afghan and Iranian borders. In late November 1979 US intelligence detected the Soviet troop mobilization in Turkmenistan; in early December, they noticed the military build up on the Afghan borders, the Soviet troops and tactical aircraft having been shifted from the Iranian frontier. During the first two weeks of December, an airborne regiment of 1,500 men, equipped with tanks and artillery was airlifted to the Bagram air base, north of Kabul, thus enabling the Soviets to take effective control of the base. The unit's mission became clear with the advent of the intervention to

60 Ibid., 7 and 13 December 1979.
61 Toronto Mail (Toronto), 13 December 1979.
63 Ibid.
handle incoming flights and clear the highway from the Soviet border to Kabul. Concurrently, the Soviets airlifted a number of small units into the Kabul city airport. Also in early December, high level consultations took place among Soviet and Warsaw Pact officials; the commanders of the military districts bordering Iran and Afghanistan participated. At the same time, several western embassy attaches in Moscow were denied permission to visit Central Asia.

The actual intervention in Afghanistan was scheduled for December 24-27, 1979, during the Christmas holidays when most western officials would not be available. As in Czechoslovakia, there was Soviet tactical deception a few days prior to the intervention. The Soviet advisors disarmed two armoured divisions of the Afghan army by convincing their commanders of the necessity of taking inventory of their ammunition and anti-tank weapons and of winterizing their tank batteries. The Soviets even succeeded in moving Amin from his royal palace to an isolated palace on the outskirts of the city.64

As in Czechoslovakia in 1968, a crucial factor in the intervention of Afghanistan was the element of surprise. Soviet military doctrine stresses the primacy of a stunning offensive operation, a kind of blitz-krieg aimed at preventing the organized resistance of opponents. A surprise airborne landing at strategic centres throughout the country, especially

64 Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles), 10 January 1980.
the capital city Kabul was accompanied by the speedy movement of ground forces from the border along the strategic routes toward the other vital centres. Thus to save the revolution and to protect its interests, the Soviets intervened on a massive scale in Afghanistan with their troops landing in Kabul and other places from 24 to 26 December 1979. The Soviet intervention of Afghanistan—as per Pakistani estimates—were carried out by eight to ten divisions of the Soviet armed forces with support troops and air force personnel of about 90,000 men together with another two divisions in the pipeline.66

The units associated with the intervention according to reports were: The 105 Guards Airborne Division with headquarters at Kabul and units at Jalalabad, Shindand, and about 80 miles north of the Iranian border. The 5 Motorized Rifle Divisions at Farah, the 16 Motorized Rifle Division at Kunduz near the Soviet border which was also entrusted with the responsibility of providing border security and keeping open the roads to Kabul,67 The 66 Motorized Rifle Division with headquarters at Herat, and units deployed west of the city near the Iranian border. The 357 Motorized Rifle Division

65 Times of India (New Delhi), 27 December 1979. All references to the Times of India in this chapter are to the New Delhi edition of that newspaper.

66 Haggerty, n.45, p.39.

67 The Statesman (New Delhi), 21 January 1980. All references to the Statesman in this chapter are to the New Delhi edition of that newspaper.
based at Kabul and units stationed near Herat; the 360
Motorized Rifle Division positioned at Kandahar, with some
of its elements near Herat; the 201 and 346 Motorized Rifle
Divisions were also identified but with their location uncertain.
However, it was held that one of these divisions had moved into
an area near the Shindand air base and the town Farah near
the Iranian border. 68

The intervention began when the Soviets made a massive
airlift to Kabul during the Christmas week 24-26 December 1979,
together with the concentration of about five divisions along
the Afghan-Soviet border. The airlift was executed by about
200 flights of AN 12 Transports which brought in troops and
field equipment. 69 Reports from Kabul stated that the sound
of approaching aircraft which began a day prior to the coup,
continued the next day also. 70 The airlift into Bagram and
Kabul airbase brought in about 5,000 to 10,000 Soviet combat
troops in 48 hours. 71 Watching Soviet troops sitting on
top of tanks parked around the airport one correspondent
stated, 'there had been a complete Soviet takeover and that
the Soviets were in charge all over the city.' A massive Soviet

68 Farah is in the western part of Afghanistan. For
details see Newell and Newell, n.3, p.130.
69 Times of India, 27 December 1979.
70 Ibid.
71 Ceylon Daily News (Colombo), 29 December 1979.
military presence was obvious from the number of Soviet aircraft at the airport. Quoting diplomatic sources he said "during the height of last weeks airlift which brought in about 10,000 Soviet personnel, a take off or landing occurred every thirty seconds". The Soviet backed military operations to overthrow Amin began at around 6.45 pm on 27 December 1979, when an explosion at the Central Telegraph Office signalled its commencement. Soon thereafter the Soviet Tanks began to rumble in and they came in formations. The people rushed indoors. One column of the advancing Soviet troops quickly advanced on the building housing the Ministry of Interior and the Main Post Office. There was no resistance but the Soviet troops continued to fire to prove the futility of resistance. At the Post Office an explosion occurred and by 7.15 pm it was in the Soviet hands.

Another column advanced towards the radio station, guarded by Afghan troops, there was an exchange of fire, but it was only a skirmish and the Afghans surrendered. Major Aslam Watanjar, once a minister in Amin's government led the Soviets. Oblivious to these happenings, President Amin was in Darulaman Palace to which he had shifted earlier on the advice of Lt. Genl. Viktor Samyenovich Paputin, First Deputy Minister.

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72 Sunday Standard (New Delhi), 30 December 1979. All reference to the Sunday Standard in this chapter are to the New Delhi edition of that newspaper.

73 Nayar, n.53, p.5. 
of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs who was on a visit to Kabul since 1 December 1979. At lunch time on 27 December, Amin appeared to be his usual self and seemed to have enjoyed the lunch made by the Russian cooks brought from Central Asia. 74 Soon after lunch Amin fell ill; he told his son Abdur Rahman that he suspected poisoning and asked him to summon Mohammed Yakub, Chief of General Staff. By the time the General Yakub arrived, Amin could barely speak.

On being briefed of the happenings, the General alerted the guards, who fired on the Soviet troops as they arrived. Amin's guards were overwhelmed by the Soviet fire power yet they fought for a couple of hours before surrendering. Amin was hit by bullets but it was believed that he was dead before the shoot out. 75 His two sons and few guests were also killed. His wife and one daughter escaped, the other was wounded and hospitalised. Genl. Yakub who tried to bring in his garrison to the palace was also killed by the Soviet troops. 76 By 10.30 pm 27 December 1979, the regime of Amin was overthrown.

Immediately after the Soviet backed coup, ordinary communications with the land-locked country remained cut, Kabul airport was closed and Afghanistan's land route east to Pakistan through the Khyber pass remained sealed. Uzbek and Turkomen soldiers who have racial and linguistic links

74 Ibid., p.6.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
with Afghanistan's various tribal groups were among the heavily armed Soviet soldiers who sealed off Kabul from the outside world.\(^77\) During and after the coup the Soviet troops appeared to be fighting in the streets of Kabul. The fighting took place in various parts of the city particularly near the Radio station and the Presidential palace.\(^78\) The Soviet troops were also seen manning Tanks and Armoured Personnel Carriers during the three hours of tank and artillery duelling that ended at midnight on 27 December 1979. The number of Soviet tanks involved were around 350, including the latest T-62 tanks and scores of light Personnel Carriers. The city of Kabul was also filled with white Russian soldiers, about 20,000. The road to the Presidential palace and the Soviet embassy was sealed off by heavily armed troops who turned back all visitors. The Afghans seemed to have resigned themselves to the Soviet presence and they went about their daily affairs unmindful of the troops.\(^79\) After the coup, which was executed with surgical precision, the Soviets began to erect a defensive perimetre around the capital Kabul.\(^80\) They also began taking up position in other areas and cities of the country. Around 15,000 Soviet troops crossed the

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77 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 31 December 1979.
78 The Times (London), 29 December 1979.
80 Ibid.
river Oxus (Amu Darya) on 30 December 1979 and took up positions in Jalalabad and within 55 kilometres of the Khyber Pass. The Soviet troops also moved into the main regional towns of Herat, Kandahar, Ghazni, Mazar-i-Sharif and Gardes. By the end of December 1979 and the beginning of January 1980 rough estimates put the Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan at 25,000 together with scores of armoured vehicles. Major sections of the Soviet armed forces were stationed at camps near the Kabul airport and at the Khar Khana and Mina areas of Kabul city. About 6,000 Soviet soldiers backed by tanks also patrolled the streets, while MIG Jets flew overhead. One should take due note of the fact that throughout 28 December 1979 MIG's flew over Kabul in formation and reports spoke of Soviet troops manning key positions around the government offices in Kabul. During the entire period of the Soviet military operation in Kabul the 20,000 Afghan soldiers stationed there were confined to their barracks. The Soviets had completely disarmed them. There was no trace of Afghan soldiers in the capital, one could only see Russians all round. Travellers on an Indian Airlines Boeing from Kabul stated "Soviet soldiers were moving in the city as if they were in their own country."83

81 The Hindu (Madras), 31 December 1979.
82 Hindustan Times, 1 January 1980.
83 Indian Express (New Delhi), 3 January 1980. All references to the Indian Express in this Chapter are to the New Delhi edition of that newspaper.
With the success of the Soviet inspired coup and the removal of Amin, the ground was prepared for the take over of the Revolutionary government by the Parchamite Karmal. He seems to have been a fitting choice to succeed Amin; in the light of the new Soviet policies toward Afghanistan and Iran. His administrative, political and diplomatic experience, the necessary revolutionary credentials - having been a student leader and having spent time in prison for these activities - his moderate approach to internal affairs, and above all his pro-Soviet stance tilted the scales in his favour. The parchamites took over the revolutionary government with ostensible Soviet backing. There is no concrete information of the exact time of Karmal's return to Afghanistan. He was in exile in Eastern Europe, and was reported to have returned to Kabul from Soviet Central Asia with five other Afghan exiles, along with Soviet troops airlifted to Afghanistan. However, the broadcast proclaiming Karmal's takeover from Amin - after the coup - originated from outside Afghanistan. Perhaps it came from across the Soviet border, 300 kilometres

84 Hafizullah Amin in July 1978 replaced Taraki as the Secretary General of the PDPA, he dismissed leading members of the Parcham faction from the government and sent some including its leader, Deputy Prime Minister Karmal to insignificant diplomatic posts abroad. Karmal became Afghan Ambassador to Czechoslovakia but soon left his post and remained in exile in Eastern Europe till December 1979. See "Crisis Over Afghanistan", Strategic Survey (London,1979), Spring 1980,p.49.

85 The Times, 29 December 1979.
north of Kabul. It was only on 2 January 1980 that he along with his cabinet colleagues appeared on Afghan Television. The Television room of the Kabul station was projected particularly to convince the viewers of his physical presence in the capital. As he spoke, 200 tanks surrounded the Television station. All the roads in Kabul were blocked, the soviet soldiers were guarding fleets of its military and transport aircrafts and helicopters. The troops had also set a road block half a kilometre from the airport where all the vehicles were searched. The Soviet troops also launched all out efforts to clear guerrilla pockets to block escape routes and to crush all opposition to Karmal's regime.

In his first statement after taking over power, Karmal announced the release of all political prisoners, promised to restore democratic rights, and committed himself to finding a political solution to the insurgency which involved the Muslim fundamentalist tribesmen of Afghanistan. Immediately after his take over, Karmal was greeted by the Soviet President, Brezhnev, who stated "on behalf of the Soviet leadership and from me personally I wish you much success in your many sided activities and for welfare of the Afghan people."

86 Ibid.
87 Indian Express, 3 January 1980.
88 The Times, 3 January 1980.
89 Ibid.
President Brezhnev further stated, "in the present conditions, the Afghan people would be able to defend the gains of the April Revolution and maintain the sovereignty, dignity and independence of the new Afghanistan." Thus the Soviet leadership hoped that Karmal with his charm and conciliatory approach could mellow down the rising opposition to the Soviet installed revolutionary government in Kabul.

The opposition to the regime instead of diminishing was steadily increasing as the days passed. To deal with the situation the Soviets continued to pour in troops and military equipment into Afghanistan, to gain control of the rest of the country. The Soviet troops had to move out into the rugged mountain provinces to quell the rebellion. They were sent into Paktia province 150 kilometres from Kabul as also to Nuristan and Kunar provinces. Previously these provinces were inaccessible to Afghan forces but the Soviets with modern equipment made much headway. They used steep climbing mechanized columns to battle the anti-government forces operating from the mountainous regions with outdated arms.

The Soviets also initiated steps to restructure the Afghan police on the Soviet pattern; they were provided with automatic weapons and Armoured Personnel Carriers. The Afghan

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90 Ibid.

91 The Soviet anti-guerrilla operations began in early January 1980, see Times of India, 3 January 1980.

92 Ibid.
Police was restructured to deal with the rising demoralization in the army and the defection of some army officers and men to rebel ranks; satellite broadcasting stations and powerful microwave communication systems were also set up within Afghanistan. The Soviets urged Pakistan to close its border with Afghanistan and thus prevent both further exodus of Afghan refugees into Pakistan and the return flow of armed rebels from refugee camps in Pakistan. The Soviet advisers were placed in all ministries and at all levels of the government. No policy decision could be taken without consulting the Soviets. According to diplomats, Soviet military advisers were attached to all the battalion sized units and all operations were directed by them. Advisers also flew combat missions as co-pilots in action against the rebels. After the Herat rebellion, the Soviet Union began the massive supply of arms which included heavy armaments including T-62 Tanks to Afghanistan.

93 Ibid., 4 January 1980.
95 The first serious opposition to the regime was in Herat on 22 March 1979, after Pashtuns and Shiias seized control of the city. Hobs hunted down all Khalqi officials and Soviet residents. Savage atrocities were committed. The insurgents maintained effective control over the city for three days before armoured and air force units retook it in a bloody counter attack. There is some evidence that members of the Afghan Army units defected in the course of the fighting. Casualties from the fighting and the subsequent reprisals were extremely heavy. Some reports stated about 500 were killed in a city with a population of about 85,000. For details see, *The Economist* (London) 22 September 1979.
According to reports from Kabul, a month after the coup of December 1979, there were about 70,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Most of the divisions which were involved in the coup were redeployed. The airborne divisions which came to Bagram airbase 35 kilometres from Kabul, were divided between Kabul and Shindand near the Iranian border. The mechanized division which had crossed into Afghanistan by road was spread between Herat and Farah provinces of the Iranian border. Further north-east in Badghis and Faryab provinces a motor rifle division based at 'Mary' near Samarkhand had cut deep into Afghanistan's South-west corner to position itself around Zarganaj near Iran. A motor rifle division was also based at Baghlan and it covered the Badakshan, Kumaar and North western areas. One motor rifle division which was based at Kandahar extended its operation to Paktia province. Here the Soviet and Pakistani army divisions were separated by only 40 kilometres of mountain territory. In addition to these divisions, the Soviets brought in 1,750 tanks of all types, 2,200 Armoured Personnel Carriers, large number of 122, 125 and 130 milimetre (mm) field guns; radar controlled anti-aircraft guns; 11 mm anti-tank guns; over 400 fighter bombers and 55 MI 24 helicopter gunships. With this armed strength and together with the total administrative control of the country,

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
the Soviet appeared, at least outwardly, to be well in control.

The Soviets justified their entry into Afghanistan by stating that it was a response to a request by the Kabul government. A statement of the Kabul government defended the action as it was in terms of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation of 5 December 1978 between the two countries. The Soviet government, the statement concluded, had only complied with the Afghan request. The Soviet ambassador also justified the intervention, and insisted that Moscow had intervened in fulfilment of treaty obligations under Article 4 of the 5 December 1978 Soviet-Afghan Treaty and at the specific request of the Afghan leadership. Further, the Soviets made it very clear, that the force sent would be used exclusively for cooperation with the Afghan authorities in the repulsion of armed interference from outside the country and that it would be recalled as and when the reasons for its presence in Afghanistan no longer existed.

Post-intervention Pattern

The Soviet Union after having consolidated its position in Afghanistan initiated a multipronged strategy of pacification in the country. This strategy included the following aspects:

100 The Times, 29 December 1979.
101 Ibid.
a) The emphasis on Islam.

b) A propaganda effort against the US and China on the Afghan crisis.

c) Effort to maintain unity among the factions of the pro-Soviet PDPA.

d) Attempt to build a loyal Afghan armed force.

e) The use of over 80,000 Soviet troops against a variety of religious, ideological, regional and tribal opposition.

f) Persistent intimidation of neighbouring countries to prevent them from providing the Afghan opposition, support and sanctuary.

In the following pages, these points may be elucidated.

Islam in Soviet Tactics

Ever since the intervention in Afghanistan, the Soviets have been engaged in a major ideological exercise to win support for the new Kabul regime. They recognize the political power of Islamic revival in Afghanistan and have taken steps to prevent it from taking an anti-Soviet character and give it an anti-US orientation. In Afghanistan, emphasis on Islam has been a major part of the Kabul government's official statements. \(^{103}\) The all Red Flag, given by the Khalq regime - of Taraki - was changed to one featuring the Islamic green. The government established an office of Islamic teachings under Karmal's direction. \(^{104}\) The new regime also sponsored a

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103 For details see message of the DRA's Revolutionary council presidium, to the Muslims of Afghanistan and the world, in White Book, Foreign Policy Documents of the DRA (Kabul, 1981), pp. 34-38.

series of meetings with local religious leaders from all over Afghanistan and organized a national conference of religious scholars and clergy to specifically show them that the Karmal regime respected Islam and reckoned it to be a part of the government programme.\textsuperscript{105}

President Karmal began each of his speeches with a reference to Allah and interspersed it with quotations from the Koran and references to Afghanistan's Islamic tradition.\textsuperscript{106} He also began to hold the view that true Islam existed in the Soviet Central Asian Republics and offered facilities to Afghan Ulamas to travel to these places for a personal assessment.\textsuperscript{107}

A delegation of 88 Afghan religious leaders was sent to the Soviet Union to visit mosques and interact with the Muslims of the Soviet Union, "To see for themselves that the Soviet Union is Islamic".\textsuperscript{108} Karmal described the events of 27 December 1979 as the "intervention of God Almighty and also termed the Soviet help to Afghanistan an act of God".\textsuperscript{109}


\textsuperscript{107} See FBIS-SAS, 7 July 1980, p.C-3.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{109} FBIS-SAS, n.106, pp.C-1-5.
Since the intervention, the Soviet media paid enormous attention to Afghan events. The theme is similar and its analysis predictable. The goal has been to win popular support for Soviet actions both in the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. It has increased in importance since the escalation of the Soviet military operations in Afghanistan. Moscow's 42 hour a week broadcasts to Afghanistan in Dari and Pashtu, and the Soviet controlled Afghan propaganda machinery have attempted to convince the Afghans and others that only a limited Soviet military contingent was sent to Afghanistan at the request of the legitimate government and that the overthrow and execution of Amin was the handiwork of the armed forces of Afghanistan supported by the broad strata of the populace. The sole object of the Soviet assistance, it was stated, was to defend the country against external attacks. Those accused by Moscow of attacking Afghanistan included the US, China, Pakistan, Egypt and Israel. The Soviets also declared Amin to be a CIA agent. The response of the US to the Afghan intervention, was described as part of a continuous effort by Washington to sabotage detente, revive the cold

110 Dari and Pashtu are Afghanistan's two major languages.
111 Pravda, 7 January 1980.
112 Pravda, 6 January 1980.
113 Pravda, 24 January 1980.
114 Pravda, 18 January 1980.
war and pursue a hegemonist course. President Carter's State of the Union message during January 1980 was characterized as a declaration of the US to intervene in any region it deemed fit.

President Karmal charged the US and its allies of having worked out a plan that would have killed three to four million Afghans. Their designs he said "were to have the country torn to pieces and divided, one part was to be annexed by Pakistan another by China and the remaining areas along with Kabul being retained by Amin".

The Soviets asserted on several occasions that their troops would be withdrawn as soon as the reasons for their presence i.e. external interference is eliminated. The cause of their delay in departure from Afghanistan it was stated was because of the persisting external interference into Afghanistan's affairs especially by the US. Despite the assurance to withdraw, Moscow has rejected as illogical the British sponsored proposal of the European Community for the neutralization of Afghanistan with international guarantees. It has refused to enter into negotiations about the

115 Pravda, 5 January 1980.
117 See, DBIS 1980, 2, pp. C-1-5.
118 Leonid Brezhnev stated "The US loudly demands a withdrawal of Soviet troops when in fact, they do everything to eliminate this possibility. Let the US together with Afghanistan's neighbours, guarantee the cessation of external interference and then the need for Soviet military assistance will disappear", Pravda, 25 February 1980.
future of Afghanistan with a three man committee appointed by the Islamic Conference and has shown a similar attitude toward several Iranian proposals.

In their scheme of propaganda within Afghanistan the Soviets together with the Karmal regime have concentrated on the Afghan youth. A new weekly publication Darafshe Jawanan was started primarily to gain support among the youth. The government also established a new school named The Faculty of Workers' to train Afghan youth ideologically and hundreds of Afghan students were sent to the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries. An agreement was also reached between the two countries to send 350, ninth graders every year to the Soviet Union for vocational training.

Efforts at PDPA Unity

A major goal of the Kremlin since the intervention has been to harmonize relations between the PDP factions - Khalq and Parcham - and to broaden the base of support for the regime by inducting non-party members into the government. Karmal as the new President claimed the leadership of a united party. Several Khalqis, especially those who had been loyal to Taraki, were appointed to high positions in the regime.

Despite these steps there were many indications that the Soviets were not successful in affecting complete integration of the two groups. Factional conflicts were reported from all levels of the civil and military bureaucracy. A leading figure of the PDPA government Ghulam Ahmed Sarwari, a Parchamite, like Karmal in 1978 was dismissed and sent to Ulan Bator as ambassador. There were also feuds and shoot outs between the two factions at the lower levels of the armed forces. The appointment of a Parchami officer to replace a Khalqi as Commander of the 14 Armoured division at Ghazni reportedly contributed to that divisions mutiny in August 1980. In October 1980 there were reports of shootings between the rival factions in 4 and 15 armoured brigades in the Pul-e-Charkhi garrison near Kabul.

Many Parchamites who had suffered under Khalqi rule were determined to take revenge against the supporters of Amin and Taraki. On their part the Khalqis who constituted two thirds of the PDP's civilian membership and four fifths of the military—considered the Parchamites as usurpers, unfit to govern.

124 There are various roots of the traditional conflicts between Khalq and Parcham. For one, Khalq is largely dominated by persons of Pashtun background, whereas Parcham has a greater Tajik representation. Khalq also tended to favour a more radical socio-economic programme than Parcham.

125 Ghulam Ahmed Sarwari was replaced by an unknown Khalqi figure, Abdorrashid Arien, see The Economist, 30 August 1980.


127 Among the Khalqis executed were ten associates of Amin including his brother and nephew. Ibid., 19 June 1980.

128 The Economist, 8 August 1980.
Internal dissent has demoralized the PDP and further complicated the crisis of legitimacy and security for the Kabul regime. It has also been a perennial problem for the Soviets as a too close an identification of Moscow with the Parchamites could unite the Khalqis to actively oppose the Soviets in Afghanistan. 129

The efforts of Karmal - under Soviet guidance - to base his government upon a national united front under the leadership of the working class, the induction of more than a dozen non-party members to top government positions, did not give stability to his regime. This was because the establishment of opposition groups was not permitted which resulted in organized armed resistance to the regime. Karmal's effort to win support from the people came to nought mainly because of the Soviet troop presence which has also prevented the regime in Kabul from attaining the required legitimacy for governance.

**Attempt to Build a Loyal Afghan Armed Forces**

A major element of the post intervention Soviet policy has been to reconstitute the Afghan armed force to the pre-1978 level, i.e. over 100,000 men, to minimise the Soviet manpower losses. During the period between the April 1978 coup


and the intervention. Afghanistan's army had experienced numerous purges of officers, a decline in morale and number of defections. Since the intervention, the defections have not abated. At the end of July 1980 the 14 Armoured Division based at Ghazni mutinied. In September 1980, effective regular military strength was estimated at less than 30,000. The Soviets apparently cannot entirely trust even this small force, specially with weapons which would be useful to the rebels or freedom fighters - the Mujahideen.

To increase the number of Afghans fighting the Mujahideen the Kabul regime took several steps. One has been to reduce the legal age of draft from 23 years to 20 years. Another has been to enlist hitherto exempted categories like the only breadwinner in the family and university students. Forced recruitment has the danger of training up unwilling recruits into potential insurgents.

The Soviet backed regime in Kabul also tried to organize party controlled militia consisting of young recruits. To attract the youth the regime offered a salary in excess of $160. According to reports from Kabul these militia

132 PBIS-3A3, 10 September 1980, pp.3-6.
133 Ibid.
134 Baltimore Sun, 3 September 1980.
were used during August and September 1980 in battles against the rebels in northern Afghanistan near Mazar-i-Sharif. The new regime also sent a number of young Afghans to the Soviet Union for military training.

**Soviet Military Operations**

Months after the Soviet intervention, the internal security situation in Afghanistan did not improve and the Soviet forces were compelled to adapt themselves to unforeseen conditions. They foresaw a long drawn-out armed struggle and prepared themselves for the post-intervention military strategy and operations in Afghanistan.

Initially the Soviet Union relied on large scale ground operations involving use of tanks, armoured vehicles, and large troop formations. These forces had difficulty in maneuvering in the mountains, which the rebels use as bases for raids against the Soviet and Afghan forces. Consequently, the Soviets began to deploy helicopter borne commandos backed by columns of motorized infantry. Moscow also employed fighter bombers to weaken the rebel areas before the commandos struck. There have been charges that the Soviets have used

137 The hit and run raids also extend into the cities, one such group Jan Nasaran (Suicide Squad) Operated in Kabul, see *The Afghanistan Times* (Kabul), 7 March 1980.
napalm nerve gas, booby traps, anti-personnel cluster bombs and the internationally outlawed Dum Dum bullets. This new Soviet strategy resulted in the destruction of a number of Afghan villages and led to a substantial rise in the number of refugees fleeing to Iran and Pakistan.

It has been reported that the Soviets have called in Cuban and Vietnamese experts to aid them in counter insurgency operations against the Afghan guerrillas. Further, as the conflict has dragged on, the Soviets have gradually brought in older and more experienced troops to replace the young and inexperienced draftees who constitute the bulk of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

By the end of the year 1980, the Soviet Union had deployed in Afghanistan about 85,000 men and 320 combat aircraft - including more than 70 Mi-24 helicopters, more than 100 MiG-21 and 30 MiG-23 and several Ilyushin bombers. In addition, the Soviets maintained a sizeable force in Soviet Central Asia - very close to the Afghan border for deployment in Afghanistan at short notice.

Post-intervention Military Strategy

Immediately after the December 1979 Soviet military operation the Soviet armed forces took charge of the Afghan

139 The Times, 19 September 1980.
140 Ibid., see also Washington Star, 4 September 1980.
military bases located in the Kabul area, Mazar-i-Sharif, Gardez, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz and Herat. Later the Soviets divided the country into seven military commands. Moscow's 201 Motorized Rifle Division located at Kunduz and Faizabad in the North-east was entrusted with that region's security. The 16 Motorized Rifle Division based at Mazar-i-Sharif was entrusted with the security of Balkh province and the surrounding region. The 275 Division, operating out of Jalalabad was made responsible for the security of the Eastern-central region. The 105 Airborne Division was made responsible for the security of Kabul and the neighbouring areas. The 54 Division, located at Herat and the 68 Division stationed at the Shinand airbase were responsible for the security of western Afghanistan. The 357 Motorized Rifle Division was charged with the security of Kandahar.142 In each of these military regions, the Soviets deployed several hundred commando forces as well. Though all these regions have a local PDP leader, they are in actual fact governed by the Soviet Generals.143

Besides the military deployments, the other signs of increased Soviet capability for an indefinite presence in Afghanistan include the reported establishment of a separate military headquarters and the construction of permanent underground storage facilities for fuel and ammunition. They

142 Ibid.
have built at least one permanent bridge across the Amu Darya at Termez. They have constructed permanent communication facilities, upgraded Afghan airfields, enlarged existing helicopter gunship maintenance workshops and begun the construction of new airports. Plans to construct a railroad in Afghanistan linking it with the Soviet rail system was also initiated. Finally to 'legitimize' the Soviet presence, Moscow signed a status of forces agreement with the Karmal regime. This agreement is similar to those in force between the Soviet Union and several East European countries.

Post-intervention Soviet Economic Policies in Afghanistan

In addition to its heavy political and military commitments specially after the intervention, the Soviet Union has also made considerable economic investments in Afghanistan with particular emphasis on the sector mines, industries and energy. A close analysis of these schemes bring to light two particularly significant aspects. First, there is a great emphasis on the development of the country's natural resources.

144 Washington Post, 8 January 1980.
notably for export to the Soviet Union, a pattern which resembles the economic development of many colonies in the past. The second aspect concerns the geographical distribution of Soviet financed projects. Most of the important Soviet development programmes in the country are situated in Northern Afghanistan, bordering the Soviet Union. This region being less favourable to rebels than the other regions. Here the Soviet armed forces are able to control the population more easily than in the mountains of the centre and the east. Thus the majority of the Soviet planned investment is concentrated in the provinces lying north of the Hindu Kush, the great mountain barrier which separates Kabul from Turkestan. 147

The northern plain of Afghanistan is thus being developed with Soviet assistance to export gas and petrol to the Soviet Union, while at the same time improving local capacity for industrial production. This strategy of the Soviets gives a clear indication of a progressive integration of the regional economy with that of Soviet Central Asia. The development of Afghan Turkestan modelled on the republics of Central Asia is to make this region dependent on the Soviet economy. 148

A similar trend is observable in the energy sector. It is planned to build an electrical transmission system linking the Afghan and the Soviet grids to facilitate exchange of energy.

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147 Ibid., p.185.
148 Ibid.
Thus the Afghans could export energy from the Kunduz river dam to the advantage of the Soviet economy and of Afghan exports. The integration of the two grids would mean the partial integration of the two economies. 149

In the field of communication, the construction of permanent bridges across the Amu Darya is symbolic of the concerted efforts of the Soviets to bring about close economic cooperation and integration between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Within two years of their entry into Afghanistan the Soviet Union had come to control all the major levers of the northern economy and soon a partial integration of the economy with those of the neighbouring Soviet Republics may take place. 150 The concerted efforts of the Soviets in this direction leads one to ponder as to whether the Hindu Kush has already become the frontier of the Soviet Union with Afghanistan.

**The Increased Soviet Pressure on Afghanistan's Neighbours Post-intervention Development**

The Soviet Union has exerted both implicit and explicit pressure on Afghanistan's neighbours in an attempt to limit their reaction to the intervention. Afghanistan's immediate neighbour Pakistan has been particularly critical of the intervention. The position taken by Islamabad regarding the Afghan rebels will have an important bearing on the success

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., p.187.
or failure of the Soviet policy in Afghanistan. By providing sanctuary and limited support for the groups fighting the Soviets, Pakistan can be an obstacle to the Soviet pacification strategy in Afghanistan. On the other hand if the Pakistani regime takes strong measures against anti Afghan action from its territory, it could aid the Soviet aims in Afghanistan.

Taking account of this fact, the Soviet Union has applied considerable pressure on Pakistan. The Soviet aircraft have frequently violated Pakistani airspace\(^\text{151}\) and Moscow has threatened to support political groups within Pakistan opposed to the government of Zia-ul-Haq with the aim of installing a government that would be hostile toward the Afghan Mujahideen.\(^\text{152}\) Several leading members of the opposition People's Party of Pakistan are at present residing in Kabul. There is also the possibility of Soviet support for ethnic nationalists in the Pashtun, Baluch and Sind areas of Pakistan. The former DRA regime led by Karmal was in touch with the opposition groups in these areas especially those unfriendly to the Afghan rebels and Karmal while in power had threatened open support for Pakistan's Baluch and Pashtun nationalists.\(^\text{153}\)

\(^{151}\) According to the Pakistan President Zia-Ul-Haq, there have been 200 violations of Pakistani airspace by Soviet and Afghan aircraft, for details of these violations see *New York Times*, 8 January 1980.

\(^{152}\) *Business Week* (New York), 15 September 1980.

Finally, there is the possibility of the Soviet Union initiating military action against Pakistan for defensive reasons.

While the Pakistanis have generally restrained themselves from challenging Soviet air incursions, they have protested against the shelling of Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan by the Soviet forces based in Afghanistan. In August 1980, the Pakistanis expelled the Soviet Ambassador Jarwar Azimov on charges of subversion. It also closed down the Soviet Press and Information Office in Karachi and asked the Soviets to reduce the size of its diplomatic corps in Pakistan. New restrictions on travel by foreign diplomats within Pakistan seemed to be directed principally against persons from the Soviet bloc countries.

Confronted with various forms of Soviet pressure, the Islamabad government is reluctant to permit a significant quantity of Western weapons to reach the rebels fighting the Karmal regime. However, it is not likely to accept the Soviet demand and put an end to the Mujahideen entering Pakistan. It would face serious problems - as would any government hostile to the Afghan Mujahideen - in completely controlling its border with Afghanistan.

156 It was reported that the Soviets were spreading anti-Zia publications in the Karachi area. Ibid.
157 Ibid.
Iran has also been subjected to pressure by the Soviet Union, and it has not permitted the establishment of a rebel controlled Afghan radio station on its territory. Moreover, Iran's war with Iraq restrains Iran from taking any step vis-a-vis Afghanistan which will incur the displeasure of Moscow.

In the light of the given circumstances both within and around Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has been committed for a long stay in that country. The continued presence of Soviet troops within Afghanistan will to an extent usher in progressive changes within the feudal oriented society there. At the same time the consequences of a continued occupation is bound to be serious not only for the Soviet Union and Afghanistan but for all those who abide by the principle of regional stability in international relations.