Afghanistan was the first country outside the East European socialist bloc and Warsaw Treaty Organization in which the Soviets had intervened militarily since World War II. The ground for this intervention was developing since the Communist takeover in April 1978. Since then, bombardments, military assaults, executions, imprisonments and other forms of repression were common events in Afghanistan.

With the deliberate massacre of the entire male population of the village of Kerala and the mass execution under the supervision of Soviet advisers on 20 April 1979 during Taraki-Amin's rule, the resistance forces increased their attack on government forces. Further, the government was unable to defeat or suppress the resistance due to the increasing strength of the resistance movement.

When Amin became president in September 1979, his repressive policies made hundreds of thousands of people to flee from the country as refugees into Pakistan, Iran and other neighbouring countries. The refugees who fled from Afghanistan started operating from their foreign bases. Due
to the extreme pressure from the domestic as well as foreign resistance to Amin's dictatorial rule, the Soviet army was alleged to be invited to rescue the Afghan communist regime by intervening militarily. Thus, as an extension of Kerala massacre in retaliation to the resistance, the Soviet move to increase the involvement in Afghanistan to defeat the 'jihad' against communism got escalated into a Soviet military intervention on 27 December 1979. And the Soviet contingents arrived in Afghanistan when Amin, a CIA agent as alleged by Soviets, was the legal head of Afghanistan.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was a complex and contradictory development. This chapter tries to analyse these complexities and contradictions on the assumption that the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan on the pretext of the 1978 Friendship Treaty was primarily motivated by the Soviet Union's fear of a danger to their own security, and the goal of for protecting revolution or rescuing marxist regime in Afghanistan came handy. The Soviet policy of military intervention is also seen as a fear of Chinese and US dominance in Afghanistan, and a threat to the Soviet Muslim republics in Central Asia. This analysis concludes with the assessment that the intervention was primarily the result of a Soviet miscalculation and
misreading of the developments in Afghanistan and not of any long-term expansionist intention towards Persian Gulf or further.

John Fullerton describes the Soviet intervention: "On the Christmas Eve, 1979, units of the "special assignment" 105th Guards Airborne Division seized Kabul airport in an operation lasting less than five hours. This opened the way for about 280 individual transport aircraft, a massive airlift bringing in the rest of the division as well as paratroopers from 103rd and 104th Divisions."¹ He continues: "As these elite troops in their distinctive blue berets and striped jumpers rushed on the capital, the first of four motorized rifle divisions - the 357th, 360th and 201st - rolled across the country's northern borders and sped south, covered by several squadrons of Mig-21 and Mig-23 aircraft. A special KGB "hit squad" in Afghan Army uniforms assaulted the city's Darulaman palace, gunning down the country's communist leader, Hafizullah Amin, and his immediate family."²

2. Ibid.
Though the military intervention took place on 27 December 1979, it seems that preparations for the intervention was going on even before that. Within a day it is impossible to move such a large contingent of troops. It is reported that the intervention was scheduled for 25-26 December, when most of the Western officials go for Christmas holidays.3

The Soviets claimed three grounds for the intervention:

1. A request for military assistance from Afghan government headed by Amin.
2. The Soviet Union's commitment to give the required assistance to respect the terms of the 1978 treaty.
3. Self-defence against foreign armed aggression, in accordance with the UN Charter.4

But when we analyse the situation the Soviet claim of a request for help from Amin seems to be quite contradictory. The Soviets themselves distinguished Amin as a CIA agent and they were very much interested to eliminate him. And Amin


very well knew the Soviet conspiracy to murder him. In this situation, it is unlikely that Amin invite his own executioner for help. Though the Soviet Union argued that the troops had been sent to Afghanistan on an invitation, the installation of Babrak Karmal and the subsequent murder of Amin and his family raise doubts about the real motives of the Soviet Union.

An interview given by Abdul Zahoor, a PDPA Central Committee member to K. Gopalakrishnan, correspondent of 'Janayugam', a weekly of Communist Party of India narrates the intervention as a pre-planned exercise from the side of the Soviet Union and their agents in Kabul. Zahoor says: "...the preparations for the uprising had actually begun several months ago. An elaborate system of secret signals and codes was established among Army officers and Party functionaries regarding the timing of uprising and the modus operandi. Except for the guards protecting Amin, we had comrades in every unit. And when the actual uprising took place, not a single unit opposed it, except Amin's guards. Their resistance was quickly overcome. The entire planning and execution of the uprising of December 27 was the work of Leadership Committee of the People's Democratic Party, in co-ordination with the Kabul City Committee and Army units
loyal to the April revolution."\(^5\)

But, Subrata Banerjee has another version. He states: "Actually the coup (of December 27, 1979) was well prepared. Babrak Karmal is reported to have visited Afghanistan secretly in November (1979). On 27 December night an army unit commander loyal to the Parcham group handed over arms to 3,000 trained Parchamites. Actually Soviet troops had arrived much earlier, with the knowledge and support of Amin himself."\(^6\)

The knowledge and permission of Amin in getting Soviet troops into the Afghan soil is disputed. A Soviet journal reported that Amin asked military help from the Soviet Union. It said that "throughout December 1979 Amin asked the Soviet ambassador four times that Soviet troops should be introduced into Afghanistan" due to pressure from "healthy forces" in the leadership.\(^7\) It is obvious that Amin willingly is not part of the "healthy forces" inside PDPA.


A statement made by Karmal in January 1980 mentioned that Amin "did not ask the limited contingent for help. This request was made by the Revolutionary Council." 8 In March, Karmal changed version and revealed that Amin was forced by the Central Committee and the Revolutionary Council to make the invitation himself. Karmal then became more defensive and explained that this was done "without my personal knowledge concerning that request, and without an opportunity (for me) to bring influence to bear." 9

These contradictory statements show that the preparations to install Karmal, with the help and support of Soviet military was well planned and Karmal might have been well informed of everything. The 'invitation' allegation on Amin may be an after-thought of Karmal and his Soviet programme planners to defend their actions.

When the Soviet troops entered Afghanistan Brezhnev stated that "when making the request to us, Afghanistan proceeded from the clear cut provisions of the Treaty of Friendship, Good neighbourliness and co-operation, concluded

by Afghanistan and the USSR in December 1978, from the right of each state in accordance with the UN Charter, to individual or collective self-defence, a right that states have exercised many times.\(^{10}\)

Under the UN Charter also the intervention cannot be justified. Though the UN Charter mention that states have the right of collective self-defence, it does not mean that in accordance with the 1978 Treaty between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, the Soviets can take decision even to send its troops in Afghanistan and eliminate its Head of State.

The Soviet policy towards Afghanistan had assumed a different dimension since its troops marched into Afghanistan in 1979. Until 1979 the Soviet Union was pulling strings from behind and they could make sure that the Afghan administration did not have a pro-western stand.

The most important aim of Soviet policy in Asia in the 70s and 80s were the containment of Chinese power and counterbalancing the American influence. Therefore Brezhnev was interested to pursue a policy of creating a stable communist regime, dependent on Soviet Union. In this perception, to

make sure that its neighbour would not fall on the hands of "counter-revolutionaries", Politburo decided to intervene militarily, without consulting non-voting members. Vladimir Kuzichkin, a KGB defector revealed that it was Brezhnev who argued in favour of intervention, though KGB expressed serious doubts about the operation. 11

Brezhnev stated that "it was no simple decision for us to send military contingents to Afghanistan. But the party's Central Committee and the Soviet government acted in full awareness of their responsibility and took into account all the relevant circumstances.... The increasing armed intervention and the well advanced plot by the external forces of reaction posed a real threat to Afghanistan's independence and created the possibility of making it an imperialist military bridgehead on our (Soviet Union) country's southern region." 12 Here it seems that the important


Soviet concern was the external threat to the independence of Afghanistan for which they have intervened. 13

**Different Views Regarding Intervention**

Many analysts observed the Soviet intervention as defensive, especially as self-defensive. For example, Jonathan Steel explains the intervention as the result of two Soviet motives - "the necessity to self-defence and the desire to spread the message of the Soviet power." 14 Jiri Valenta observes four major reasons for intervention. They are "(a) Russia's traditional search for influence in the area (b) fear about domestic stability (c) the precarious political situation in Afghanistan (d) national security and strategic considerations." 15 Another analyst also holds the same view that the geopolitical compulsions and political developments in Afghanistan prompted the intervention. 16

13. It is reported that Brezhnev had serious health problems and he had taken even the "Automatic Electric Stimulator" tablets to hide his ailments. His decision to intervene can be considered in this light also. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 12 November 1994.


The Soviet intervention raised doubts about their expansionist policy as an instrument of spreading revolution. But it seems that they had intervened in Afghanistan primarily to support a government of their own choice and the ruling elite who had come to depend on a growing Soviet assistance.

The increased American military presence in the Persian Gulf region, after the fall of Shah of Iran worried the Soviets and to prevent a western advancement into Afghanistan, they intervened in the country. The intervention can be seen in this light also.

Alfred Monks argues that it was the result of a shift in Soviet military doctrine. His analysis tells that "...they (the Soviets) had a doctrinal justification for intervention in that country: force was justified because it was employed to protect a socialist country threatened from external and from internal enemies.... The current Soviet concept of civil wars stress not only conflict between the bourgeois and proletarian classes, the traditional Marxist concept, but between the reactionary forces, aided by the western powers, and the progressive forces within the
Another perception about the Soviet intervention is that of the fear of export of Iranian revolution to Soviet Islamic republics. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was preceded by the Iranian revolution. Though the Soviets favoured an Islamic revival in Iran, it wanted to check the spreading of Iranian revolution into Soviet Muslim republics.

Another argument is that, the Soviet intervention was the result of the Soviet fear of resource shortage. John K. Shroder argues that generally, the Soviet policy was "motivated by a desire to control resources", because of their long-standing fear of shortage. In a certain extent this argument is not wrong, because the Soviets spent great amounts of aid for resource exploration and development. They encouraged the exploration of resources which are abundant in Afghanistan and scarce in Soviet Union. And these resources, they were getting from Afghanistan would


have been used for the development of Soviet Central Asian republics. Therefore, it is natural that the Soviet Union would prevent Afghanistan going into the hands of Western forces at any cost.

As a whole, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was the result of miscalculation and ignorance of the political situation of that country. Chantal Lemercier suggests that after the death of the Oriental historian Reisher in 1958, lack of a competent Afghanologist in the USSR, made the Soviet Union to underestimate the real conditions of Afghanistan. The Soviets remained ignorant of the resisting power of that country. Hence, the entire world witnessed the Soviet miscalculations and almost all the nations in international community including even communist countries condemned them for their misdeeds in Afghanistan.

Impact of the Intervention on Afghan Resistance

The resistance to the Soviet-backed government had not started with the Soviet intervention in December 1979. Its

19. He was the pioneer of Indian and Afghan studies in USSR.
roots can be traced back even from the days of Daoud, when he received great help from Soviet Union which developed a long-term dependency. When the Communists assumed power in April 1978 this resistance assumed much significance. This local conflict turned into a war of national liberation with the intervention of the limited contingent of Soviet troops in 1979.

The important resistance groups were 'Pak-Seven' under Gulbuddin Hakmatyar and the "Tehran-eight" under karim Khalidi.21 The 'Pak Seven' includes:

1) Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar.
2) Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) led by Mohammad Yunus Khalis. This was a splinter group of the Hikmatyar's Party.
3) Jamiat-e-Islami (Islamic Association) led by Barhanuddin Rabbani.
4) Mahazi Islami (National Islamic front) led by Sayed Ahmad Gillani.

6) **Harakat-i-Enquilab-i-Islami** (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) led by Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi.

7) **Itihadi Islami Baraye Azadi Afghanistan** (Islamic Union for Liberation of Afghanistan) led by Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayaf. 22

The important Iran-based groups were:

1. The Afghan Nasr Organization (Sazmane Nasr) led by Abdul Karim Khalili.
2. The Da'wa Party of Islamic Unity of Afghanistan.
4. Islamic force of Afghanistan.
5. Islamic Movement of Afghanistan.
6. Islamic Struggle for Afghanistan.
7. Party of God.
8. United Islamic Front of Afghanistan. 23

The Pak-based parties got help from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, USA, etc. 24 Among the Pak-based fundamentalist parties Hekmatyar's party was more radical and he stood for

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22. Ibid.


immediate armed revolts.\textsuperscript{25} Almost all others advocated a moderate strategy.

The Iran-based parties got the support mainly from Iran, China, Egypt, etc. also supported them. A French reporter opines that "...the Iranians consider the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan the most favourable situation for the consolidation and extension of their influence in the country. In the beginning they decided to help all the Hazara group without discrimination. When it did not work according to their wishes, they changed their policy and decided to federate the groups under the umbrella of one organization. Nasr, a party which they found the best organized. Nasr, founded in 1980, is an amalgamation of two parties.... The Iranians were deeply disappointed and convinced that it was impossible to accomplish anything with the Afghan parties. Then they decided to operate through their own Iranian party inside Afghanistan and created Sepah-e-Pasdaran; it has the same structure and the same organization as the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Party. Only the members are Afghans."\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.

Though all these parties were fighting against their common enemy - the Soviet Union, there was disunity among them due to strategic, ethnic and personal conflicts. They even had bitter rivalry between each other. For example, Independent Afghanistan, a secret document of Hikmatyar's Hizbi Islami says: "Members of the Hizbi Islami while fighting against the "Red Satan" must corner, isolate and even eliminate the other rebel groups in order to project the image of Hizbi Islami-e-Afghanistan. If you consider yourselves weaker militarily to act against them (other groups of the alliance) then the commander can inform the occupant Russians or their dependents about domiciles of alien guerrillas." 27

On 19 March 1980, all parties except Hekmatyar, formed an alliance. Then it split into two - the Islamists and the Royalists, when some joined with Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar was for Islamists and all other were for Royalists. The Iran-based parties were not taken seriously or were invited for an alliance until 1984. 28


For the first two months of the intervention the resistance was somewhat passive due to hard winter and less repression from the government. During this period Karmal was also trying to get popular support for his government. He adopted different strategies and a more conciliatory attitude towards Islam. He appointed important Khalqi leaders in his government. He stressed that his government would be based upon "a national united front under the leadership of the working class." He offered the people a "revolutionary tranquility" and permission to develop "progressive and patriotic parties". Even then he could not pacify the resistance forces.

On February 21 and 22, there were large scale demonstrations in Kabul. In May also there were bloody demonstrations against the Soviet stay in Afghanistan. The Afghans showed their protest and defiance of the Soviet intervention and the Soviet installed Karmal regime, by voicing "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great), when they gathered on


30. Ibid.
their flat roofs at night.31 People shouted slogans such as "Russians, Afghanistan is not Czechoslovakia", "Down with Babrak, puppet of the Russians", "Out with the Russians", etc.32

The students also participated in the anti-government protest and demonstrations. They fought for freedom. The main slogans they were chanting were "Liberty or Death", "Russians go home", etc. The student demonstrations were organized by SAMA, a Maoist-socialist group that came up in 1980.

The people's strikes and revolts were put down by the government and Soviet troops mercilessly with heavy loss of life and execution. The resistance became more and more strengthened and captured important cities. The fighting between the Soviet troops and the resistance became more severe such that the Soviets could make it sure that winning over Afghan resistance is not an easy task.

33. Ibid., p.178.
Soviet Strategy in the Afghan War

After the intervention, the Soviet Union wanted to crush the activities of the counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan. In the Afghan war the Soviets followed a three pronged strategy, i.e., military, political and diplomatic. Militarily, they followed the policy of defeating the important Mujahideen units, protecting Soviet lines of supply, particularly Panjsher valley and acquiring full control over the cities and lines of communication. Politically, they followed a strategy of establishing the authority of the ruling PDPA, developing loyal cadres and formulating reliable government through pro-Soviet Afghans. Diplomatically, they wanted to work for the recognition of the Karmal regime, and were holding out the prospect of negotiated settlement. They were encouraging the UN to continue talks towards a settlement, of the Afghan crisis. Even then the Soviet options and intentions remained unknown to the rest of the world. They followed this strategy till 1984.

Their another strategy to fight against the guerrillas were, to employ ethnic forces of same origin. But this


35. Ibid.
strategy was found ineffective and the Central Asians became unreliable. When they started helping the guerrilla forces, they were replaced by the more reliable and able slavic forces.  

An eyewitness report states that "when these people (Soviet Central Asians) realised that the only people they were fighting in Afghanistan were Afghans... then these Soviet Central Asians began helping us. They left us packages with weapons and ammunitions." 

The Soviets followed also the policy of destroying Afghanistan's agriculture, depopulating the countryside, etc. They used the military organization for false propaganda, handling political prisoners etc.

The military organization or perhaps the new security service, Khedmat-e-Elela'at-e-Dawlati (KHAD) was formed in


January 1980, to handle the rebels and was organized and trained by KGB. While interrogating, KHAD tortured men, women and even children and it was also under the direction and presence of Soviet advisers.39 A woman teacher in Kabul recollected her experience when she protested that the Soviet interrogators "did not have any right to question an Afghan in Afghanistan. This angered them and they tied her hands and burned the lips with cigarette.40 Many brutal activities of this kind were enacted by the instructions of Soviets.

The Soviet manpower which was 85,000 in 1979 was increased by almost 115,000 in 1984. In 1984, they started their operations against Mujahideen with substantial combined air-ground operations. Several of such operations took place in 1984 itself and it resulted in heavy loss of life of civilians and destruction of property, etc.41

The operations against Mujahideens were done with the help of highly sophisticated Soviet weapons, After the


40. Ibid.

intervention Afghanistan became a testing ground for Soviet weapons. Even newly introduced weapons were also used by the Soviet troops.

After the intervention, the Soviets assumed the complete control of the government and the war against insurgents. A former Afghan diplomat and UN General Assembly president Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, has rightly told that, "(it) is quite clear to everyone that the real power lies with Moscow and not with Babrak Karmal." 42

When the Soviet troops entered to protect the Afghan government, as a matter of new policy, the old advisers were replaced and new advisers were given charge of military affairs. And they were directed to appoint Parcham members and sympathizers to leading posts. 43 General Muhammad Rafi, the then defence minister was directed to order these officers to get the approval of the Soviet advisers for all military transactions. The notice mentioned: "The Soviet advisers have been assigned the task to co-ordinate the the Afghan and the limited friendly contingents on the Soviet pattern to imbue the Afghan army with long revolutionary

42. Edward Girardet, n.32, p.135.
experiences of the Red Army."44 This meant that the Soviet
advisers were the actual commanders of the military opera-
tions designed by the Soviet Union.

In 1983 at an international Afghanistan Hearing in
Oslo, Mohammed Ayub Assil, revealed that by then without
Soviet approval not a single important order was given.
According to his estimate, since the communist takeover,
12,000 people had been tortured to death and 10,000 were
missing and several thousands were executed without trial.45

The Soviets tried to transform all that belonged to
Afghanistan. Their activities in that country showed that
they wanted to impose Russian culture gradually in Afghani-
stan.46 Through institutions, education, ideology, etc.
they tried to make Afghanistan to look like Soviet Muslim
republics.

The political institutions, especially the PDPA were
somewhat same as that of the CPSU. Its ideology, constitu-
tion, organization, etc. resembled much of the CPSU. Even

44. Ibid.
45. William Dietl, Bridgehead Afghanistan (New Delhi:
46. "Millions of People of India! Learn from the Enslaved
People of Afghanistan", Maarefat (Liberation), 25
November 1986, p.3.
the political terminology used were also Soviet terms.47

In schools Russian was taught. Textbooks printed in USSR were distributed in schools. The Afghan history was rewritten. Students were ordered to read "progressive" books. A former High School student from Ghazni stated that "we used to have books dealing with Islam and its philosophy. Now they have changed all this with books about Lenin and Marxist thought... religious science has been repressed."48

47. Olivier Roy, "The Sovietization of Afghanistan" in Milan Hauner and Robert L. Canfied, eds., Afghanistan and the Soviet Union: Collision and Transformation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), p.49. Olivier Roy noted down certain Soviet terms used in an article appeared in the Haqiquat-i-Engelab-i-Saur (HES) to show the Sovietization of political terminology. These were "direktif", "internationalisti", "aprat", "plan", "tyori", "nurm", "fraksyoni", "prinzip", "formulizm" (i.e. formation), "organ", "biro", "plinum", "fiz", "biografi", "Kandidan", "Supervizor", "pruse", and "nomenklatura". He mentioned that there are also many calques, like markaziat-i-demokratik (democratic centralism). A number of articles on Lenin and Marx also appeared. "For instance, the whole front page of the HES on 22 April 1987, was devoted to Lenin's birthday. According to some journalists who defected, most of these articles were written in Moscow and directly sent by telex to HES offices in Kabul, where they are translated into Persian, either by Soviet Tajiks or by Tudeh Party members from Iran. Most of the text books used in schools or distributed through libraries were in fact written in Soviet Tajik. They were not "translated" but merely adapted from the Cyrillic Arabic alphabet". See footnote 2 of the article.

The students who had party connections were given concessions. A Kabul radio announcement in 1982 stated that "Those students who have been rejected by all educational institutes will be automatically inducted into the armed forces."\(^49\)

All these activities of the Soviets did not help to get the revolutionary government consolidated in Afghanistan. Babrak Karmal realised this fact and the need to consolidate his regime with popular support. To this end, he decided to form National Fatherland Front which includes religious, tribal, ethnic and political leaders. The NFF came into being on 15 June 1981. More than 900 representatives from different classes and sections participated in the founding Congress of the NFF.\(^50\) Ziray was selected as chairman. Its constitution provided that PDPA was "the guiding force of the National Fatherland Front and the whole society of Afghanistan".\(^51\) The Constitution stated: "The basic task of the NFF is that, following the general policy line of the PDPA, vast masses of the people be attracted to participate

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49. Ibid., p.143.


actively and consciously in constructing democratic and progressive Afghanistan and in observing respect for the sacred religion of Islam, the specific historical, spiritual and national customs and traditions of all nationalities and tribes of the country and to propagate and explain on a broad scale the policy of the PDPA, the Revolutionary Council and the Government of the DRA." 52

KHAD had a significant role in the functioning of the NFF. A kind of divide and rule policy was pursued to deal with different groups through the departments of the Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs, under the supervision of Dr. Najibullah.

To stabilize the situation in Afghanistan many measures were taken. But the Mujahideen resistance were continued. Refugee problem was also not solved. It seems that the people still did not trust the offers made by Karmal and his officials. And till the stabilization of the Karmal regime the Soviets also decided to be in Afghanistan and to support their dependents at any cost.

The responses of different countries regarding the Soviet intervention were expressed in resolutions before the

52. Ibid.
United Nations, Islamic Conferences, the European Economic Community and such other world and regional bodies. Majority of the countries condemned the act of the Soviet Union as an act of aggression or invasion. Even some of the Communist parties of Eastern Europe condemned the Soviet intervention.

As a reaction to the Soviet troop's presence in Afghanistan, American President Carter announced six sanctions against the Soviet Union in 1980. Carter also announced the "Carter Doctrine" which has called for resisting the Soviet expansion beyond Afghanistan. The consideration of ratifying the SALT II Treaty was also delayed.

The Third World nations expressed their concern over the security of the region. Some of the nations made several allegations on the real Soviet motive.

**Diplomatic Efforts for a Peaceful Settlement of the Afghan Problem**

In 1981 UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim expressed his interest in resolving the Afghan crisis. For this he appointed Perez De Cuellar as his personal representative to Afghanistan. Cuellar studied the complexities of the situation and discussed with the concerned parties about a nego-
tiated settlement of the problem.

Brezhnev cleared his position on troop withdrawal when he said that "(as) for the Soviet military contingent, we will be prepared to withdraw it with the agreement of the Afghan Government. Before this is done, the infiltration of counter-revolutionary gangs into Afghanistan must be completely stopped. This must be secured in accords between Afghanistan and its neighbours. Dependable guarantees required that there will be no new intervention. Such is the fundamental position of the Soviet Union, and we adhere to it firmly." \(^{53}\)

In June 1982, the first proximity talks began in Geneva between Pakistan and Afghanistan under the UN special representative on Afghanistan Diego Cordovez. \(^{54}\) The important issues discussed were the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and guarantees against it, and voluntary return of Afghan refugees. \(^{55}\) But it ended without taking any


\(^{54}\) Fullerton, n.1, p.176.

The second round of Geneva talks began on 8 April 1983 in a situation when Moscow showed their willingness to withdraw their troops, provided Pakistan stops assistance to rebels. Pakistan also gave much hope to a negotiated settlement. But the talks were suspended on April 22.

During this period, the then Soviet head of the State Yuri Andropov was not a hardliner like Brezhnev. He took more conciliatory approach to the problem. But this policy had changed when Chernenko became the General Secretary of Soviet Union. Soviet position on Afghanistan hardened and negotiations were also in trouble. This is expressed in the negotiations when Geneva second round talks was reconvened and Soviet Union contended for the conditions and time-table for Soviet troop withdrawal. Though the negotiations were convened, it also ended without producing any result.

Pakistan and America continued their assistance to the Afghan resistance. Soviet Union also escalated their operation in Panjsher Valley and other such important resistance centres in early 1984. This showed the prospect of a long

56. Ibid.
occupation of Kabul. 57

In August 1984 third round of Geneva talks were held. In this talk, a Soviet negotiator on the Afghan side was absent. Fighting between resistance and government forces intensified. And, the US continued supplying arms to the resistance. Therefore, this round of talks also ended without any result.

In October 1984 US Congress approved a resolution which declared that "it should be the policy of the United States to encourage and support the people of Afghanistan to continue their struggle to be free of foreign domination." 58 Till Gorbachev came to power, the US-Soviet rivalry in their policy towards Afghan crisis also continued without any sign of an immediate settlement.
