Chapter V

SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

This chapter is an attempt to analyse the developments leading to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on 27 December 1979, its aftermath and the international response to get the Soviet aggression vacated from Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was preceded by the seizure of power in Kabul by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in April 1978. The PDPA regime committed Kabul to Moscow.

Communist Coup of April 1978

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power in Kabul on 27 April 1978 by overthrowing the government headed by Sardar Mohammad Daud which had been saddled into power since 17 July 1973. When Daud had assumed power he had announced the replacement of monarchy by "a republican system, consistent with the true spirit of Islam". Daud, a seasoned statesman and a strategic thinker, pursued a "lukewarm" foreign policy in the initial years of his assumption of power. His endorsement of the Soviet plan of collective security in Asia was more governed by the domestic compulsions than a manifestation of the Afghan foreign policy. After securing his domestic position politically, he no more needed the "crutches" of the leftist groups or others. He openly declared that he was not adopting a leftist attitude or

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accepting the claims of any ideological faction. On 28 February 1974 Sardar Daud said: "We have no connection with any group, and linking us to any group or movement is a sin."  

On 27 April 1978, a coup was staged by the PDPA and the same day Kabul Radio announced that "for the first time in the history of Afghanistan an end has been put to the sultanate of the Mohammadzais (the Afghan Royal Family) and power has passed into the hands of the masses". On 30 April 1978, it was announced that power in Afghanistan was being exercised by a Revolutionary Council comprising military and civilians and headed by Noor Mohammad Taraki. On 1 May 1978, the names of other ministers of the new government in Kabul with their portfolios were announced. Babrak Karmal was placed as number two and Hafizullah Amin as number three after Taraki. On 9 May 1978, President Taraki while announcing the foreign policy of the new Afghan Government, promised a foreign policy of non-alignment and good relations with all neighbours and also singled out such goals as "to further strengthen and consolidate friendly relations and all-round cooperation with the USSR".


United States and New Regime in Kabul

There was no immediate official reaction by the United States to the Communist coup in Kabul. The US economic, cultural, educational and Peace Corps programme in Afghanistan continued. This studied silence maintained by Washington showed that it was "unconcerned that another country apparently had joined the Soviet bloc". While defending the US policy, Theodore Eliot wrote:

The United States continued to keep an open mind toward assisting Afghanistan, maintained a dialogue in Kabul on possible new AID, Peace Corps or cultural programme and indicated a willingness to help to the extent proposals met out our legislative and developmental criteria. This policy made sense because cutting off these programmes unilaterally would duly reduce Afghan options and drive the Afghan Government deeper into the Soviet embrace. 7

This view was also shared by the then US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, who wrote in his memoirs: "I concluded that our best chance to maintain a measure of influence in Kabul was to continue limited economic aid. To cut off all assistance or refuse recognition would almost certainly weaken our position in Kabul." 8

The then National Security Adviser to the Carter Administration had approved of the restrained response to the coup in Kabul. He said: "It was an internal coup, there was no evidence of Soviet involvement and hence there was no grounds of an American protest.

7 Ibid.
The regime was undefined and not in consolidation, there was doubt as to whether it could hold power. As long as we could have some influence in Kabul, why cut off aid? It was better to wait and see how things worked out.” However, former US ambassador to Kabul, Neumann told the US Department of State that he had known the new leaders of Afghanistan for years and they were definitely communists and would follow orders from Moscow hence the US should stop all aid to the new regime. Cyrus Vance also later realized that the US reaction to the new regime was too mild. He wrote:

In looking back I think we should have expressed our concern more sharply at the time of the April coup that brought Taraki to power. There were reasons why we did not protest more vigorously. Although there was little question that Taraki government would make itself responsive to Moscow, there was room for doubt about whether the Soviets had planned the coup or were involved in its execution. And there was reason to think the strong Afghan nationalism of Taraki, and even more of Hafizullah Amin, might keep Afghanistan from becoming a Soviet satellite... We concluded that our interests would best be served by letting Afghanistan continue to its traditional balancing act between East and West. The United States had few resources in the area and historically we had held the view that our vital interests were not involved there. Moreover, our friends in the region had adopted a wait and see attitude. There was no disposition on their part to add to the instability by supporting opponents of the Marxists in Kabul. Although we were contacted from time to time about Coup plots, my advice was that we not get involved. 11

Though there was no official comment or reaction by Washington to the advent of communist coup in Kabul, the American press reacted very sharply to these developments. An editorial published

9 Quoted in Hammound, n. 5, p. 63.
10 Ibid.
11 Vance, n. 3, p. 386.
in the \textit{New York Times} expressed concern that "a genuinely non-aligned country had fallen to an avowedly communist one that is likely to tilt towards Moscow". The strategic analysts in the United States also quickly concluded that Afghanistan had been pushed into Soviet affairs opined: "The great game is over and the Russians have won it". Leon B. Poullada has also regretted that no attempt was made by Washington to break relations with the communist usurpers nor to express official disapproval of such a shift in political power in a strategic country like Afghanistan.

\textbf{Moscow and New Regime}

Links of PDPA leaders, who assumed power after the coup, with Soviet Union were very clear. It is worth mentioning here that at the time of coup there were about 350 Soviet military advisers in Afghanistan who played a significant role in the coup. A broadcast from the Kabul Radio reported on 30 April 1978 that one Puzanov of the Soviet Embassy in Kabul met Taraki and gave him a message of diplomatic recognition.

\textbf{References:}

finally reported on 3 May 1978 about according Soviet recognition to Taraki Government but it cited Kabul Radio as the source. On 3 May 1978 Soviet leaders Brezhnev and Kosygin sent "hearty congratulations" to the Taraki Government and wished for its great success. The advent of communist regime in Kabul had certainly raised high expectations for Kremlin. The soviet daily Pravda, while pronouncing the official Soviet attitude towards Kabul, wrote on 6 May 1978: "The interests of social development demanded a fundamental break with obsolete social relations... complex task of forming the new power, the intrigues of internal and external reactionary forces and struggling for a better future for the Afghan people, lie ahead." The reports appearing in the Soviet media by mid-May 1978 indicated that Moscow was happy with the regime.

Hafizullah Amin, the then Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, while on his way to attend the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned countries at Havana, stopped in Moscow on 18 May 1978. He was greeted by the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. The Soviet media, and the joint communique on their talks, identified the two men not only by their government position but also as members of the politburos, that controlled their respective parties, the communist party of Soviet Union (CPSU) and PDPA.

17 FBIS Trends, 3 May 1978, p. 2.
During June-July 1978 Taraki managed to get rid of the leading Parchamites by appointing them as Afghan ambassadors abroad. Nur Ahmad Nur was sent to the United States, Karmal to Czechoslovakia, Anahita Ratebzad to Yugoslavia, A. Mahmud Barialay, Karmal’s younger brother to Pakistan.

During the initial months of 1978 Moscow tried to keep a low profile in Afghanistan. In July 1978, an agreement to provide $250 million worth of Soviet weapons to Afghan armed forces was neither made public nor Soviet media made any reference to it.

Afghan-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation

Despite its overt silence, Moscow was making every attempt to see that the PDPA remained in power and consequently Kabul in the Soviet orbit. A major milestone in this direction was laid during the first week of December 1978 when both countries signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation on 5 December 1978 at Moscow. The treaty was signed during Afghan President Noor Mohammad Taraki’s visit to the Soviet Union from 4 to 7 December 1978. This treaty was used as a pretext a year later by the Soviet Union to invade Afghanistan. Article IV of the said treaty, inter-alia said:


22 The text of this agreement in Afghanistan, n. 15, Appendix A.

The high contracting parties, acting in the spirit of the traditions of friendship and good neighbourliness, as well as the United Nations' Charter, shall consult each other and take by agreement appropriate measures to ensure the security, independence and territorial integrity of the two countries. In the interest of strengthening the defence capacity of the high contracting parties, they shall continue to develop cooperation in the military field on the basis of appropriate agreement concluded between them. 24

Under the treaty, though Moscow was not bound to prevent the downfall of the new communist regime in Afghanistan, it was already preparing the possibility of saving it from failure and keeping that country under Soviet influence even by force if needed. After the conclusion of the treaty, Soviet leader Brezhnev said that the relations between the two countries "have assumed a qualitatively new chapter permeated by a spirit of friendship and revolutionary solidarity. The treaty came into effect with the exchange of instruments ratifications on 27 May 1979.

The joint Communiqué issued after Taraki's visit observed that the contacts between the PDPA and the CPSU would be expanded. Along with the friendship treaty, another agreement was also signed between Kabul and Moscow to establish a permanent intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation. Thus Soviet Union had taken over the overall responsibility of Afghanistan's economic and military responsibilities even in December 1978.

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
Assassination of US Ambassador in Kabul

Adolph Dubs, the US Ambassador in Afghanistan was assassinated by four Afghans in Kabul on 14 February 1979. He had presented his credentials on 17 June 1978. Dubs's assassination cast a spell on the already deteriorating US-Afghan relations as there were supposed to be many unresolved questions about the role of Afghan Government in the affairs and its consequent uncooperative attitude.

The assassins of Dubs had held the US Ambassador as hostage in Kabul hotel and demanded from the Afghan Government the release of the arrested some leftist members in exchange for Dubs. The US Embassy in Kabul advised the Afghan Government to prolong the negotiations while applying rescue operations. But the Afghan forces along with Soviet advisers stormed the hotel room which resulted in the death of Dubs and the kidnapped. According to Richard P. Cronin: "Soviet security advisers appeared to be directing the operation and the Afghan government disregarded US suggestion that an attempt to rescue Dubs by force be delayed."

The Afghan Government tried to underplay the incident by blaming some groups. As Beverley Male has also opined: "The choice of groups as the culprit appears a convenient ploy to divert attention from the real beneficiaries of the kidnapping and murder of the US Ambassador." However, the official organ, Kabul Times, in a

29 Ibid.
defensive editorial wrote:

The terrorists and the enemies of the people of DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) by committing such an inhuman and cruel act may think they would disturb or damage the ties between the two friendly countries... The people and the government of the DRA and the USA are fully aware of the acts of their enemies. They know that such provocative acts will not undermine the friendly relations between the two nations. 32

Such a defence in an official daily was nothing but a move by the communist regime in Kabul to absolve itself from the responsibility of being involved in Dubs' murder and thus shift the blame to others. The outraged Carter Administration accused Moscow of involvement in the bungling that caused Dubs' death but Kremlin denied it. The US economic aid to Afghanistan was slashed.

On 23 July 1978 Washington announced the withdrawal of most of its diplomatic personnel from Afghanistan because of "security reasons". Although the Carter Administration had announced a drastic curtailment of US economic aid to Afghanistan but it was not totally stopped until in August 1979, when President Carter signed PL 96-53, the International Development Cooperation Act of 1979, into law. Section 505 of the said Act prohibited any further assistance to Afghans unless the President certified to the Congress that the Afghan Government had officially apologized and assumed responsibility for Ambassador Dubs and agreed to

32 Kabul Times, 15 February 1979.
34 Ibid., 24 July 1979.
35 Cronin, n. 30, p. 4.
provide suitable protection for all US personnel in Afghanistan. Thus, in the aftermath of Dubs' assassination, the US relations with Afghanistan had reached the lowest ebb.

On 15 September 1979, the Afghan Revolutionary Council announced that Taraki had asked to be relieved from party and state posts on health grounds, and Hafizullah Amin became the new President of Afghanistan.

**Soviet Union and Amin Regime**

Amin had developed a distrust towards Moscow especially after what happened on 14 September 1979 when an attempt on his life was made in the presence of Russian Ambassador. On 17 September 1979, Soviet leaders, Brezhnev and Kosygin, while sending congratulations to Amin expressed the confidence that "fraternal relations between the Soviet Union and revolutionary Afghanistan will be further developed successfully on the basis of the treaty of friendship". The Moscow's message lacked the usual Soviet warmth. Another fact indicating Soviet disenchantment with Amin was that Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin after visiting in early 1979 on his way back to Moscow did neither stop over Kabul nor send usual message of greetings.

Shal Wal, Foreign Minister in Amin's Cabinet accused the Soviet Ambassador in Kabul, Puzanov not only of harbouring four

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36 Ibid.
37 Kabul Times, 16 September 1979.
39 Halliday, n. 2, pp. 34-35.
but also of being involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Amin and asked Moscow to recall the Soviet ambassador which was done in November 1979. The new Soviet Ambassador in Kabul was Fikriat Akhmetdzhanovich Taibeev who assumed charge on 28 November 1979.

Prior to his assumption of power Amin, as a Foreign Minister and later on as a Prime Minister under Taraki, had seldom shown his disenchantment for Moscow in his public pronouncements. He said on 22 July 1979: "Any person and any element who harms the friendship between Afghanistan and Soviet Union will be considered the enemy of the country, enemy of our people and enemy of our revolution. We will not allow anybody in Afghanistan to act against the friendship of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union." However, at the same time he also seemed worried about the increasing Soviet presence in Afghanistan. On 17 July 1979 he said: "Those who boast of friendship with us, they can really be our friend when they respect our independence, our soil and our prideful traditions." Male opines that Amin was too

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40 On 14 September 1979, four ministers, Major Sherjan Mazdooryar, Colonel Mohammed Aalam Watanjar, Colonel Syed Mohammad Gulabzoy and Asadullah Sarwari were dismissed by Amin and after the shoot out incident, they reportedly took refuge in Soviet Embassy in Kabul. See Hammond, n. 5, p. 83.

41 Cable no. 07444 from US Embassy in Kabul to State Department, 11 October 1979, ibid., p. 86.

42 Kabul Times, 1 December 1979.


44 Ibid., 21 July 1979.
much of a realist to imagine that the PDPA could survive without Soviet assistance and in any case too good a socialist to wish to see relations with the Soviet Union deteriorate further. According to Western political analysts, Moscow was anxious to draft Karmal as Taraki’s successor and it could be done only after eliminating Amin. And such planning was done in mid August 1979. Taraki’s visit to Moscow on 9 September 1979 had been utilized by the Soviet leadership to implement it. Amin never made public his distrust or disenchantment with Moscow but he seemed to be equally concerned with increasing Soviet influence in Afghanistan. In early October 1979, Amin, while acknowledging the Soviet military aid, said: “Soviet Union is providing whatever we can use ... (to defend Afghanistan) ... but we will defend our country ... (and will) never give this trouble to our international brothers to fight for us.” Thus it can be surmized that Amin was interested in maintaining good relations with Moscow but at the not same time was/opposed to increasing Soviet influence in Afghanistan.

United States and Amin Regime

After Adolph Dubs death, Washington had almost become lukewarm toward the communist regime in Kabul. On 11 September 1979, Amin had told the American Charge d’Affaires, J. Bruce Amstutz, that he wanted to have "friendly relations" with the United States.

45 Male, n. 31, p. 184.
46 Ibid. Also see Bradsher, n. 16, p. 116.
47 FBIS Trends, 3 October 1979, pp. 15-16.
48 Cable no. 06729 from Kabul to State Department, 11 September 1979, p. 1, cited in Hammound, n. 5, p. 87.
However Amstutz did not take it seriously.

Following the assumption of power by Amin, on 15 September 1979 the US State Department became more interested in the question of Amin's attitude toward the United States. Amstutz called on Amin on 27 September and found that the latter was "all charm and friendliness" and once more spoke in favour of better relations with the United States. 49 Shah Walli, Foreign Minister in Amin's Government, met the senior officials of US State Department in New York on 27 September 1979. In early October 1979, Archer Blood, a US diplomat went to Kabul and met Amin. The former told that Amin "wanted American aid without offering anything in return". 50

The Carter Administration made the issue of "violation of Human Rights" in Afghanistan as a starting point with Amin. The violation of human rights took place when Amin was in power. The report prepared by the State Department devoted six pages to violation of human rights in Afghanistan. The report contained sweeping generalizations without providing evidence of specific instances of atrocities which could be documents or checked.

Archer Blood in his assessment to the US Department of State reported that Amin was "content for the time being with a polite but limited relationship, which both countries would

49 Cable no. 07218 from Kabul to the State Department, 27 September 1979, p. 1, ibid., p. 87.

50 Cited in Male, n. 31, p. 200.

refrain from exacerbating by word or action". Even the US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance summed up: "At maximum we regard our current dialogue with the Afghans as a means of exploring the possibilities for a less contentious relationship and we are not overtly sanguine that even this limited objective can be sustained."

The above analysis reveals that the US missed a golden opportunity by not making the strategic advantages of the situation. As Poullada has aptly observed: "American weakness and complacency over development in Afghanistan convinced the Soviets that America had abandoned the field to them there, and that they could safely move into the vacuum with tacit American consent."

SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

The world was taken by surprise by the events of 27-28 December 1979 when sizeable number of Soviet troops equipped with sophisticated weapons invaded Afghanistan in which Hafizullah Amin was killed and Babrak Karmal was installed as a new ruler of Afghanistan. The foundations of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had been laid much earlier and the December end 1979 episode was the final act.

52 Cable no. 07726 from Kabul to State Department, 28 October 1979, pp. 1-3, cited in Hammound, n. 5, p. 287.

53 Cable no. 222436, State Department to US Embassy in Islamabad, 29 October 1979, p. 1, Ibid., p. 87.

54 Poullada, n. 14,p. 248.
According to Thomas T. Hammond, the information for preliminary planning by Moscow would have been collected when General A. Epishev, the head of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet armed forces, made an inspection tour of Afghanistan in April 1979. This was followed by the visit to Afghanistan by General Ivan G. Pavloski, Deputy Minister of Defence from August 1979 to October 1979. Pavloski had earlier undertaken a similar mission in Czechoslovakia in 1968 prior to the Soviet invasion of that country and he led the Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia. Thus he was a logical choice to make the assessment for launching Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Along with preparation of such strategic planning, there was also augmentation in the presence of Soviet military and civilian advisers in Afghanistan during October-November 1979. The Afghans had almost lost control of the essential levers of power to 1,500 or more Soviet officials in the civilian ministries and between 3,500 and 4,000 Soviet officials and technicians in the Afghan armed forces. An estimated half of the 8,000 officers and non-commissioned officers of the Afghan army had been purged in October 1979.

In late November 1979, Moscow put its troops in a state of alert and reservists were called up to fill up understrength

55 Hammond, n. 5, p. 9.
56 Afghanistan, n. 15, pp. 37-38.
57 US, Department of State, Chronology of Recent Developments Related to Afghanistan (Washington, D.C., 1980), p. 4.
58 The Economist (London), 17 November 1979, pp. 68-69.
combat divisions in the central Asian military district. 59
Bridging equipment was moved to the Afghan border. The Warsaw
Pact countries had also placed their troops on an advanced stage
of readiness. By mid-December Moscow had airlifted about two
battalions of troops with heavy weapons into Bagram Air Base,
whose management had already fallen into the Russian hands.

While making strategic and military preparations to invade
Afghanistan, Moscow also continued efforts to make Amin agree to
invite Soviet troops into Afghanistan. On 28 November 1979, a
Soviet deputy minister of internal affairs, Lt. General
V.S. Paputln arrived in Kabul to discuss "mutual cooperation and
other issues" with the Government of Afghanistan. According to
Thomas T. Hammond, Paputln's real mission was to help prepare
Kabul for the invasion by getting control of the Afghan police,
to pressurize Amin to step aside in favour of Karmal, persuading
Amin to invite the Soviet Union to send large numbers of Soviet
troops into Afghanistan, if all those failed, assassinating Amin.

On 17 December 1979 there occurred a shooting incident at
the official residence of Amin in which his nephew, Asadullah
Amin was injured and then flew to Moscow for treatment.
Asadullah was the head of Afghan intelligence service and Amin's

59 Patrick J. Garrity, "The Soviet Military Stake in Afghanistan
1956-1979", Journal of the Royal United Services Institute
for Defence Studies (London), vol. 125, no. 3, September
1980, pp. 35-36.
60 Ibid.
61 Kabul Times, 1 December 1979.
62 Hammond, n. 5, p. 98.
top security aide was thus removed. The airlifting of Soviet troops to Kabul had started by 23 December 1979 and by 27 December 1979, their strength was sizeable enough to take control of Afghanistan. Thus by the evening of 27 December 1979, the Soviet forces had launched the invasion and asserted its control over Kabul and other strategic places in Afghanistan. A late evening broadcast, on 27 December 1979 by Babrak Karmal as reported by Soviet news agency Tass, said:

... who upto the present have been subjected to intolerable violence and torture by the bloody apparatus of Hafizullah Amin and his minions, these agents of American imperialism... The day of freedom and rebirth ... has arrived ... The central Committee of the united Peoples Democratic party and the revolutionary council party of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan proclaim true peoples power... we have once again raised the banner of national Jihad ... a just war of the Afghan people for true democratic justice, for respect for the holy Islamic religion ... for implementation of the aims of the glorious April revolution. 64

In another broadcast on 27 December 1979 the Kabul Radio announced the request of Afghan Government for Soviet armed assistance:

Because of the continuation and expansion of aggression, intervention and provocation by the foreign enemies of Afghanistan, and for the purpose of defending the gains of same revolution, territorial integration, national independence and preservation of peace and security, and on the basis of the treaty of friendship, good neighbourliness and cooperation dated 5 December 1978, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan earnestly demands that the USSR render urgently the political moral and economic assistance including military aid to Afghanistan. The Government of the USSR has accepted the proposal of Afghan side. 55

This statement was the justification for Soviet invasion of Afghanistan implying that Afghanistan requested Moscow to send their armed forces and the latter complied accordingly. The above sequence of events reveals that the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan with the help of its armed forces and installed Babrak Karmal as a puppet in Kabul whose strings were in the hands of Kremlin. A statement published in Pravda on 31 December 1979 stated that the Soviet Union had decided to grant Afghanistan's:

Insistent request ... (for) immediate aid and support in the struggle against external aggression ... and to send to Afghanistan a limited Soviet military contingent that will be used exclusively for assistance in preventing the armed interference from the outside. The Soviet contingent will be completely pulled out of Afghanistan when the reason that necessitated such an action exists no longer. 66

By 1 January 1980, fifty thousand Soviet troops were in Afghanistan and more were on the way. Thus by January end 1980, the number of Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan was estimated between 80,000 to 100,000.

The emergence of Karmal regime backed by Soviet troops pushed Afghanistan into Soviet orbit and its nonaligned status was completely undermined. Engineering of the April 1978 coup and signing of the Afghan Soviet friendship treaty in December 1978 were steps towards the final takeover of Afghanistan by Moscow in December 1979.

International Response

It is one of Newton's laws that every action evokes reaction. Similar analogy is applicable in international relations. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan took the world by surprise and it severely condemned and criticized. The United Nations General Assembly and Security Council have passed resolutions condemning the "aggression" in Afghanistan and called for the withdrawal of "all foreign troops from Afghanistan". Besides, the European Economic Community (EEC), Organisation of Islamic Countries, Seventh and Eighth Nonaligned summits, and other countries have severely criticized the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan while calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. However the United States has played a leading role in this regard by not only condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan but has taken certain steps since 1980 to help resolve the tangle. The succeeding pages present an in-depth analysis of the international response evoked by Soviet Union by invading Afghanistan.

(A) The US Response

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was not only alarming but challenging as well for the United States. The US President Jimmy Carter, was surprised and his reaction was severe and spontaneous. He said that "we are the other Super Power on earth and it became my responsibility ... to take action that would prevent the Soviets from (accomplishing) this invasion with impunity." A day after the Soviet invasion,

President Carter informed the leaders of France, United Kingdom (UK), West Germany, Italy and Pakistan about what had happened in Afghanistan and all leaders agreed that "the Soviet action is a grave threat to peace". Sensing the magnitude of Soviet threat, President Carter, during the first week of January 1980, said that the Soviet act in Afghanistan posed a grave threat to peace because of the threat of further Soviet expansion in to neighbouring countries in South West Asia and also because such an aggressive military policy is unsettling to other peoples throughout the world. While refuting Soviet claim that they had not invaded Afghanistan but were "invited" President Carter said: "...The Soviet claims, falsely that they were invited in to Afghanistan to help protect that country from some unnamed outside threat." President Carter did not confine US concern over developments in Afghanistan to making public pronouncements but also took up the issue with Soviet leaders. On 28 December 1979, President Carter in a message sent to Soviet leader Brezhnev called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and warned that if Afghanistan action was not corrected it "could have very serious consequences to United States - Soviet relations". Finding that Brezhnev had not given a satisfactory answer, President Carter said on 31 December 1979:

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70 Presidential Documents, no. 16, 14 January 1980, p. 25.

71 Ibid.

He (Brezhnev) claimed that he had been invited by the Afghan government to come in and protect Afghanistan from some outside third-nation threat. This was obviously false because the person that he claimed invited him in, President Amin, was murdered or assassinated after the Soviets pulled their coup. He also claimed that they would remove their forces from Afghanistan as soon as the situation should be stabilized and the outside threat to Afghanistan was eliminated. So that was the tone of his message to me, which as I say, was completely inadequate and completely misleading. 73

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also proved instrumental in changing US perceptions about Moscow. As President Carter said that "the Soviets have seriously misjudged our own nation's strength and resolve and our unity and determination and the condemnation that has accrued to them by the "world community"... They underestimated the courage and the tenacity of freedom in that country (Afghanistan), and they did not anticipate the world's quick and forceful response to their aggression." 74

The US reaction to these developments irked Moscow and the Soviet media especially Pravda accused the United States of "anti-Soviet hysteria reminiscent of the lamentable cold war times". To this, President Carter added: "We do not want to return to the cold war, we do not want to have a confrontation with the Soviet Union... The Soviets have tried to mislead the world, they have failed." 77 However the Soviet media continued its criticism of Washington while concealing the real facts.

73 Ibid., 1 January 1980.
74 Presidential Documents, no. 16, 28 January 1980, p. 111.
75 Ibid., no. 16, 25 February 1980, pp. 386-87.
77 Presidential Documents, no. 16, 3 March 1980, p. 387.
The above analysis reveals that the Carter Administration's reaction to the Soviet invasion was very sharp though belated. But now the question arises whether United States had prior information of what was going to happen in Afghanistan and if so why it failed to preempt the Soviet move. An answer to this question lies in the analysis of US policy prior to the invasion. As we have seen in the preceding pages, the US had reacted mildly to the advent of communist coup in April 1978 and until the assassination of Ambassador Dubs, the United States' flow of economic assistance to Kabul continued and it was drastically curtailed only after February 1979.

Between April 1978 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December end 1979, the US policy towards Afghanistan under Carter administration was mainly determined by Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Adviser and other top officials of the State Department, particularly Christopher and Marshall Shulman, besides Carter himself. The main difference of opinion towards Soviet Union existed between Vance and Brzezinski. Cyrus Vance and his chief Soviet expert Marshall Shulman were in favour of soft-peddling towards Soviet Union to preserve the spirit of détente while Brzezinski who also favoured détente was, however, less optimistic of any outcome. Vance was perhaps convinced that the US should continue appeasing Moscow to get agreements like Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II (SALT II) approved by it. Thus he said in April 1978: "The Soviets may find it difficult to understand some of the things

78 Hammond, n. 5, p. 105.
They do not like many of the things we stand for. The future is going to depend a lot on whether or not we can begin to make progress on areas of central importance. At the heart of this lies SALT. If we can eventually reach a SALT agreement, which I believe we can, this will begin to change the whole character of the relationship, put it on the right track again.\textsuperscript{79}

Vance was honest enough to admit that he and Brzezinski had conflicting attitudes toward the USSR: "We have differences of view from time to time... A different perspective with respect to the Soviet Union is the biggest set of differences. I believe it is essential we try to find common ground (with the Soviets)... we should not be fearful of everything they do and automatically accept the thesis of the worst case motivations."\textsuperscript{80}

On the other hand, Brzezinski was of the opinion that the relationship between Washington and Moscow was inherently competitive and even conclusion of any number of agreements including the SALT would not be able to alter Soviet determination to undermine the United States and make itself the dominant power on the globe.\textsuperscript{81} In his opinion Moscow did not want true "peaceful coexistence" with the West and could not be trusted. He also regarded Vance and Shulman as "accommodationists" who were willing to go much too far in accommodating American policies to please Moscow, in the vain hope that this would buy peace.

\textsuperscript{79} Time (New York), 24 April 1978, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{81} Quoted in Hammond, n. 5, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
This difference in opinions among the advisers of Carter administration toward Soviet Union also determined their policy perspectives on Afghanistan after the Communist coup of April 1978. Despite the increasing Soviet military activities during 1979, there were no public statements by the US State Department either to forewarn the US administration or to the world about impending Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was not until 21 December 1979, that the US State Department finally revealed that the Soviets had assembled more than 30,000 soldiers on the Afghan border and had flown three battalions of troops to an air base near Kabul. Though one State Department official told the New York Times that the "Soviet preparation on the Afghan border show all the marks of a major military intervention" but Cyrus Vance, on being asked whether Soviets were going to invade Afghanistan, replied, "That would be only speculation on my part".

Lee Hamilton, Chairman of the House Sub-committee on Europe and the Middle East, in a letter to Marshal Shulman, on 18 March 1980 asked that when the US Government knew in October 1979 about a high-level Soviet military visit to Afghanistan, "then why does our government wait until December (1979) to make any official presentation or protest to the Soviet government"? Shulman replied that

84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
the actual Soviet movement of troops and equipment towards Afghanistan was observed only in late November 1979 "prompting us to make December approaches to the Soviets... We acted as promptly and as forcefully as the evidence warranted". 87

A detailed analysis of the divergent views among the policy makers of the Carter Administration towards Afghanistan prior to Soviet invasion, is beyond the scope of present study. It suffices to say that the lack of decisive action by the Carter administration "may have been due in part to the tradition of US government, whether Democratic or Republican, of looking upon Afghanistan as an insignificant country". 88

By January 1980, the Carter administration had realized that the Soviet invasion and subsequent occupation of Afghanistan posed a challenge to US strategic interests in the Gulf region and South West Asia and a direct threat to its security. As President Carter said on 14 January 1980:

Our own nation's security was directly threatened. There is no doubt that the Soviets move into Afghanistan if done without adverse consequences, would have resulted in the temptation to move again until they reached warm water port or until they acquired control over a major portion of the world's oil supplies... The Soviet Union has altered the strategic situation in that part of the world in a very ominous fashion. It places the Soviets within aircraft striking range of the vital oil resources of the Persian Gulf; it threatens a strategically located country Pakistan; (and) it poses the prospect of increased Soviet pressure on Iran and on other nations of the Middle East. 91

87 Ibid., p. 118.
88 Hammond, n. 5, p. 112.
89 Presidential Documents, no. 16, 14 January 1980, p. 41.
90 Ibid., no. 16, 28 January 1980, p. 165.
91 Ibid., p. 185.
Again on 23 January, President Carter in State of the Union address to the Congress, which was labelled as "Carter Doctrine", said: "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

The post-Dubs assassination and pre-invasion period had witnessed the mounting Soviet influence in Afghanistan which gradually led to the decline in Afghan-US relations. Jack C. Nikolas, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, in a statement before the Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House of Representatives, said on 15 May 1979 that US relations with Afghanistan had regrettably deteriorated significantly. He further added that as the Soviet Union had become more directly involved in Afghanistan, "we have detected a corresponding decline in interest in US programmes and in sensitively to our concerns..." Washington had made efforts to make clear to the Communist regime in Kabul that good relations were a two-way street which required concrete steps from both sides to demonstrate their interest in cooperation: "This distresses us that this is not the case in US-Afghan relations, particularly, because we know that there is still a great reservoir of good will among the Afghan people for the US

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92 Ibid., p. 197.
94 Ibid.
and the Americans, as there is for Afghanistan in our country..."

Niklos further opined that the existing state of affairs was not the US creation:

It is the inescapable result when one party to a relationship shows no interest in giving life and substance to these ties... Because of the lack of interest we have reduced our economic assistance programme, terminated our military training programme and for the time being withdrawn our Peace Corps volunteers and staff. 96

The increasing Soviet influence after the April 1978 coup in Kabul was detrimental to the United States' strategic interests in the region. Such an indication was given by Harold H. Saunders, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in a statement before the Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House of Representatives on 26 September 1979 when he said, "Our effort to encourage peace and stability in that troubled region is clearly made more difficult by Afghanistan's internal unrest and the exodus of refugees from Afghanistan..." 97

The United States regretted the "reorientation in Afghan foreign policy ... away from its traditional genuine non-alignment... Washington also realized that direct interference in Afghanistan by any country including the Soviet Union, would threaten the integrity of that country as well as the peace in the region and it was a "matter of concern to the United States..." 98

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., December 1979.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
told the Sub-Committee that the US had no special interest in Afghanistan and at the same time "we have repeatedly impressed on the Soviet Government the dangers of more direct involvement in the fighting in Afghanistan..."

As has been described in the preceding pages, when Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, the United States not only condemned the Soviet aggression but also took some measures to persuade Moscow to vacate the aggression in Afghanistan.

The specific US measures against the Soviet action in Afghanistan were envisaged in the announcement made by President Carter in his message to the nation on 4 January 1980 suggesting US measures in this regard:

(i) Blocking grain sales to the Soviet Union beyond the 8 million metric tons already contracted. This means withholding an additional 17 million metric tons which the Soviets have already ordered;

(ii) Stopping the sale of high technology and strategic items to the Soviet Union, including computers and oil drilling equipment;

(iii) Curbing Soviet fishing privileges in US waters. The catch allowed to Soviet fishing fleets in 1980 would be reduced from 350,000 tons to 75,000 tons, resulting in an estimated Soviet economic loss of $55 million to $60 million;

(iv) Delaying the opening of a new Soviet consulate in New York and an American consulate in Kiev;

(v) Postponing new cultural and economic exchanges between the two countries, now under consideration;

(vi) Boycotting the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow...

The United States imposed these sanctions while its allies and other friendly countries did not follow the suit. A study

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid., January 1980.
undertaken by the Congress Research Service (CRS) to assess the impact of sanctions imposed by the Carter administration against Soviet Union, concluded that Carter's sanctions might have had political benefits but:

the economic punishment to the USSR was quite limited ... while many nations supported the Olympic boycott, no other nations followed fully the US embargo and restrictive actions. This illustrates the difference between the United States and the other Western allies, which generally supported the political aspects of the sanctions while not supporting the principle of economic punishment adopted by the Carter administration ... 102

The United States did boycott the Moscow Olympic games and it claimed to have "helped to persuade 59 other countries to take similar action ..." However, despite the US boycott, about 50 countries participated in the Moscow Olympic games and the Carter administration "could only be dissatisfied at the level of support for the boycott on the part of its traditional allies in Western Europe..."

In the wake of sanctions declared by the Carter administration, the Soviet media launched a virulent propaganda against the United States. A statement issued on 6 January 1980 by Soviet news agency Tass declared that, "If the White House decided to influence in some way the Soviet Union and its foreign policy, this is a hopeless undertaking. Such attempts flopped in the

103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
past and they will flop now..." The Soviet leader, Brezhnev in a statement published in Pravda dated 13 January 1980 said that Carter's steps "show that Washington again, like decades ago, is trying to speak to us in the language of the cold war". The statement further contended that:

the arrogation by Washington as some sort of a "right to reward" or "punish" independent sovereign states raised a question of a principled character. In effect, by such action the US government deals a blow at the orderly international law system of relations among states ...the world is increasingly forming the impression of the United States as an absolutely unreliable partner in interstate ties ... These actions of the US administration will not inflict on us the damage obviously hoped for by their initiators ... they will hit back at their initiators if not today then tomorrow.

It had become evident that Moscow did not care for the United States' move of imposing sanctions against it or the criticism of the Soviet action in Afghanistan.

On 28 December 1980, marking the occasion of the first anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter in a statement observed that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and attempted forceful occupation "of that fiercely independent non-aligned Moslem nation has had profoundly negative impact on the international community". President

107 Ibid.
Carter further urged Moscow to respond to those countries which were urging withdrawal of Soviet military forces and inviting Soviet cooperation in the search of a political solution to the Afghanistan crisis: "For our part, we have offered to join in the effort to find a political solution involving a Soviet withdrawal, and we repeat that offer to-day..."

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had accelerated the process of reinforcements of some form of qualified globalism for the US policy. "The invasion appeared to challenge the United States to create a policy based on a new national consensus, one that required the necessary military power to support whatever role it determined to play".

In 1981, when Ronald Reagan assumed the Presidency of the United States, the US policy toward Soviet Union on the issue of Afghanistan became more clear and practical. The main elements of President Reagan's policy towards Afghan crisis included humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugees seeking shelter in Pakistan, diplomatic support for a political settlement along the lines of the United Nations Resolution the resolutions passed by the Islamic Conference and Non-Aligned Summit Conference.

The US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig said on 22 May 1981 that the United States was in favour of convening an international conference to focus the world attention on Afghan crisis and take measures to defuse it. While cautioning

109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
Moscow that it could not dominate the world by invading Afghanistan, Haig further added: "The people of Afghanistan overwhelmingly oppose the Soviet occupation and the Babrak Karmal regime. The vast majority of the world's nations are challenging the Soviets to come to the negotiating table, to agree to a political solution, to withdraw their forces and to restore Afghanistan a non-aligned status..." While urging the Soviet Union not to underestimate the potential Afghanistan resistance and international pressure he said: "By supporting initiative such as that of the European community we offer the Soviet Union the alternative of an honourable solution..."

The US Ambassador to the United Nations, J. Kirckpatrick, while addressing the UN General Assembly on 16 November 1981 on resolution on Afghanistan, called for:

(i) Immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces;

(ii) Restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and nonalignment of Afghanistan;

(iii) Restoration of the right of the Afghan people to choose their own form of government and economic and social system, free from outside intervention, coercion or restrained; and

(iv) Return of the refugees to their homeland...

She further added that Washington was firmly committed to the above mentioned terms: "The struggle of the Afghan nation for survival was consistent with the basic and most cherished purposes of the UN..."
President Reagan also showed his grave concern over the developments in Afghanistan and the continued presence of Soviet troops on Afghan soil. While lauding the courage of Afghan people, President Reagan said that despite the presence of over 90,000 Soviet combat troops, "the courageous people of Afghanistan effectively deny Soviet forces control of most of Afghanistan..." He further urged Moscow sincerely implement the proposals set forth by the UN General Assembly for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan "so that an independent and non-aligned nation can be re-established".

President Reagan issued a proclamation on 10 March 1982 designating 21 March as "Afghan Day" in the United States, to commemorate the valour of the Afghan people and to condemn the continuing Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The proclamation said: "The international community, with the United States joining governments around the world, has condemned the invasion of Afghanistan as a violation of every standard of decency and international law and has called for a withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan..." The message further added that "Afghanistan Day" would serve to recall not only these events, but also the principles involved "when a people struggles for freedom to determine its own future, the right to be free from...


117 Ibid.

foreign interference and the right to practice religion according to the dictates of conscience..."  

Keeping in view the continued Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the question has been raised as to what can the United States do to prevent more such Communist takeovers in the Third World countries. In this regard Thomas T. Hammond has suggested that "the US must be prepared to intervene diplomatically, economically and, if necessary, militarily..."  

The public opinion in the United States has strongly favoured the full US support to the Afghan freedom fighters. The National Association of pro-American, in its resolution on "support for Afghan Freedom Fighters", passed on 21 April 1983, resolved that "President Reagan and the Congress should authorise support necessary to restore Afghanistan's independence and freedom..." It also called for diplomatic and economic pressure to be brought against the Soviet Union to "immediately withdraw their forces from Afghanistan..." Both the Houses of the US Congress - Senate and the House of Representatives, have also expressed their solidarity and support for the Afghan Mujahideen. On 6 October 1983, the House of Representatives in a resolution passed unanimously observed that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the first Soviet seizure of an independent

119 Ibid.  
122 Ibid.
territory since the 1940's and represented "a dangerous development in Soviet foreign policy...". It further noted that the struggle for liberation in Afghanistan could succeed "if those of us believed in freedom could render support...". The resolution envisaged that the policy of the US should be:

(i) To encourage and support the people of Afghanistan in their struggle to be free from foreign domination;

(ii) To provide the people of Afghanistan if they so request with material assistance as the US considers appropriate to help them fight effectively for their freedom;

(iii) To pursue a negotiated settlement of the war in Afghanistan based on the total withdrawal of Soviet troops and the recognition of the inalienable right of the Afghan people to choose their own destiny free from outside interference or coercion so that the four millions of Afghan refugees return to their country in safety and in honour...

The US Under Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, while addressing a forum on Afghanistan, sponsored by the US State Department and the Centre for Afghanistan Studies of the University of Nebraska, said that the Reagan Administration recognized that the invasion of and continued occupation of Afghanistan by Moscow was destroying the infrastructure of this poor country: "It has taken the lives of thousands of civilians while creating the world's largest refugee community - nearly three million Afghans now living in exile..." While summing up

124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
the US policy, Eagleburger said:

Our strategic interests as well as our humanitarian instincts make it absolutely essential that the Soviet aggression be checked. We continue to look for signs that the Soviet Union is willing to work seriously for a negotiated settlement that would return Afghanistan to its people. Until then, we will continue to support and be inspired by the spirit of the Afghan Mujahideen in their fight for freedom... 127

The US support for Afghanistan, in the wake of Soviet occupation has been vigorous, constant and encouraging. It has increased with passage of time. While addressing the UN General Assembly on 15 November 1984, the US Ambassador to the UN, J. Kirakpatrick, envisaged the American viewpoint:

The elements comprising the honourable solution of Afghanistan ... immediate withdrawal of foreign troops, the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, non-aligned character of Afghanistan, the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint, and the creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntary to their homes... 128

Even President Reagan on 27 December 1984, in a message marking the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, said that the United States had told the Soviet leaders "that their occupying forces in Afghanistan constitutes a serious impending to improving US-Soviet relations..." 129 Recalling the five years of Soviet armed occupation of Afghanistan, the US President said

127 Ibid.


that the Soviet Army had waged war in the proud and deeply religious people of Afghanistan and there was no end in sight as yet. "This fifth anniversary of Afghan defiance stands in stark contrast... yet there is a message of inspiration in the causal tale being written..." While referring to the repeated condemnation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan by the United Nations, President Reagan said: "For our part, the US has made clear ... (that) we cannot and will not remain silent on Afghanistan. We join our voice with other members of the world community in calling for a prompt, negotiated end to this brutal conflict..." He recalled that the history of independent Afghanistan went back more than 2000 years and was far more being finished: "My deepest hope is to speak of freedom restored to Afghanistan by December 1985." While expressing the hope that the valiant struggle being waged by the people of Afghanistan would bear the fruits of success, the US President said: "we will not forget the people of Afghanistan who are struggling to live once again among the free nations of the world. These brave people will continue to have the support of all Americans in their noble struggle."

The present day Afghanistan is reeling under terror. The US Congressmen and media have denounced the blatant violation of

130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
human rights by the Russians in Afghanistan. Mark D. Siljander, 
member of the House of Representatives, said on 18 September 1985 
that the "creeping cowardice syndrome" being played by the 
Russians in Afghanistan has gripped the US foreign policy since 
Vietnam.

The Congressman Jim Courter has strongly pleaded for 
supply of US arms and ammunition for the Afghan Mujahideen. He 
acknowledged the courage of Afghan freedom fighters when he 
said on 26 September 1985: "The Afghans have never before felt 
the crush of Red army occupation. For 6 years now, they have 
resisted fiercely. Their pride and their religion are two firm 
guarantees that they wish to continue to do so." On 8 October 
Gordon 1985, Senator/Humphrey, moved a resolution (S. Res. 237) in the 
US Senate which while condemning the Russian violation of human 
rights in Afghanistan, inter alia envisaged:

(1) Strongly supports President Reagan's intent 
to discuss directly with the Soviet leaders 
American concerns with the Soviet presence in 
Afghanistan; and

(2) Calls upon the President to reiterate the 
desire of the United States to achieve a 
negotiated political settlement agreeable 
to all interested parties in Afghanistan, 
which settlement should include -

(A) the complete withdrawal of all foreign 
troops;

(B) the restoration of the independent and 
onaligned status of Afghanistan;

134 Congressional Record, 99th Congress, First Session, 

135 Ibid., vol. 131, no. 131, 26 September 1985, 
p. E 4209.
(C) self-determination for the Afghan people;
(D) the return of Afghan refugees with safety and honour. 136

This resolution was passed by the US Senate unanimously on 25 October 1985.

While drawing the attention of the fellow Congressmen to the forthcoming Reagan-Gorbachov Summit meeting held in November 1985, Congressman, Norman D. Shunway told the House on 23 October 1985: "... As we look forward the November summit meeting between President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachov, I believe that the plight of Afghanistan should not be pushed to the back of our minds..."

On 31 October 1985, Congressman, Kemp, while introducing an identical resolution, as introduced earlier in the Senate (S. Res. 237) in the House of the Representatives, urged the fellow Congressmen:

... Join us in this resolution to honour the great struggle of the Afghan people and proclaim their right to democracy and self-determination. And let us pray that someday the forces of tyranny will finally be lifted from the earth and all nations under God will respect the sacred and inalienable rights of mankind. 138

On 12 November 1985, the US representative to the UN, while addressing the General Assembly expressed regret over the relentless war waged by "Soviet troops for almost six years

now, against everything in Afghanistan". He further added that using a combination of military terror on the one hand and psychological manipulation in the form of re-education and indoctrination efforts on the other, "the Soviet forces have tried for six years - longer than the duration of the Second World War - to break the Afghan spirit". While expressing US support for the efforts of the UN Secretary General and latter's personal representative to find a just and viable settlement of Afghan crisis, the US representative said: "The United States is prepared to guarantee a comprehensive and balanced settlement in Afghanistan, consistent with the General Assembly's resolutions and predicated on a complete withdrawal of Soviet troops in a fixed and reasonable length of time."

On 13 December 1985, both the Senate and the House of Representatives jointly passed a resolution, which inter alia:

(1) Condemns the six years of aggression waged against the independent country and people of Afghanistan;

(2) urges expeditious conclusion of a negotiated political settlement based on --

(A) the complete withdrawal of all foreign troops;

(B) restoration of the independent and nonaligned status of Afghanistan;

(C) self-determination for the Afghan people; and

(D) the return of the Afghan refugees with safety and honour.

139 UN Doc. A/40/PV.72, 12 November 1985, p. 2.
140 Ibid., pp. 3-5.
141 Ibid.
It is evident that the US Congress was seriously seized of the problem of Afghanistan in the wake of Russian aggression on that country. On 14 December 1985, a republished article in the Washington Post quoted the Deputy Secretary of State, John Whitehead, as having said that the US was prepared to play a role in guaranteeing provisions of a ceasefire and Soviet withdrawal in Afghanistan. In this context, Senator Byrd said on 18 December 1985 that he hoped that the Soviet leadership would take up the US offer and thus end the stalemate over Afghanistan.

The US President, Ronald Reagan, in his message on Afghan Day on 21 March 1986, while reiterating his country's support for the Afghan Mujahideen said: "For the heroic Afghan people, it marks the beginning of yet another year in their struggle for national liberation against the ruthless Soviet military force that seeks to conquer them." While paying his tributes to the Afghan freedom fighters, the US President further added that the sacrifices made by them could never be forgotten. The US President also raised the issue during his summit meeting with Soviet leader Gorbachev at Rykvyky and urged the Soviet Union to resolve the Afghan crisis as soon as possible.

146 Ibid.
On 17 September 1986, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a US representative to the Conference on US-Soviet relations at Riga, Latvia, said that the United States had no special interest in Afghanistan except to see it nonaligned and at peace with itself and with its surrounding neighbours. On 8 October 1986, the US Defence Secretary Weinberger in an interview on ABC Television in Beijing said that the Soviet offer of withdrawal of some of its troops from Afghanistan was only "a deceptive ploy". He further added that the Soviets had sometime ago inserted more troops into Afghanistan so that they could withdraw those same troops and leave their net strength the same.

The Soviet proposal of withdrawing some of its troops from Afghanistan was only a "gimmick" because no exact information was made available about the modus operandi. The Western and other journalists, who were invited to cover the Soviet withdrawal of six regiments from Afghanistan, were kept under tight security and followed a closely monitored schedule. On 30 October 1986, the Director of the US Defence Intelligence Agency while addressing a press conference at the Pentagon said that the United States had clear and convincing evidence that Soviet claims of having withdrawn six regiments were a "sham and deception". According to US Defence sources, the Soviet troops strength had only been

148 USICA, Recent Developments in Afghanistan (New Delhi, 1986), p. 11.
149 Ibid., p. 12.
150 Ibid., p. 13.
151 Ibid., p. 15.
reduced by 2,000 and not the 8,000 as claimed by Moscow.

On 31 October 1986, the US President, Reagan, while commenting on the Soviet troop withdrawal accused Moscow of bad faith in its conduct in Afghanistan and added that "phony book-keeping would not end the war".

The US Ambassador to the United Nations, Herbert Okun, in his address to the General Assembly on 6 November 1986 regretted that despite the repeated calls given by the UN General Assembly for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union had not bothered to comply with these resolutions. While denouncing the Soviet military adventures in Afghanistan, the US Ambassador said that the Afghan Mujahideen were giving stiff resistance to Soviet forces. He further added:

The Afghan people will never surrender. The magnitude of the Soviet threat - not only militarily, but for traditional Afghan religious and cultural values -- has forged a unity of purpose among resistance fighters unparalleled in Afghanistan's history. Today, the resistance is cooperating more closely together than ever before joining forces, coordinating attacks, and sharing intelligence and battle techniques.

He further said that if Moscow wanted to demonstrate its interest in a political settlement in Afghanistan, what it needed was to only respond to seven General Assembly resolutions which called for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces. While reiterating the US support for the efforts made by the UN

153 USICA, n. 148, p. 16.
154 USICA, Backgrounder, 6 November 1986, p. 3.
155 Ibid., p. 5.
Secretary General and his personal representative in conducting negotiations aimed at achieving a political settlement, the US Ambassador said: "... the United States firmly supports this process. We have made known our willingness, in writing, to play an appropriate guarantor's role with respect to a comprehensive and balanced settlement that protects the legitimate security interests of all concerned." 

The New York Times in an editorial has questioned the legitimacy of the Soviet backed communist regime in Kabul to speak for the whole of Afghanistan in the UN General Assembly. The editorial further added that there was a powerful case in logic, justice and precedent for seating the Afghan resistance because it spoke for more people and controlled more Afghan territory than the Kabul regime. On 28 November 1986, Samuel Wise, the Deputy Head of the US delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Vienna said that the Soviet conduct in Afghanistan called into question its commitments to every one of the solemn pledges it made in signing the Helsinki Final Act (1975). The US delegated called upon the Soviet Union to stop genocide in Afghanistan and pave way for the political settlement of Afghan problem.

The US President Ronald Reagan in a statement on 27 December 1986 marking the seventh anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, called upon the Soviet Union to accept

156 Ibid., p. 6.
158 USICA, n. 143, p. 19.
the necessity for a political solution and self-determination for the Afghan people. He further said: "If the Soviets truly want peace, let them present at Geneva realistic timetable for the withdrawal of their troops from Afghanistan." While reiterating US support for a negotiated political solution to the Afghan tangle, the US President said that the United States "will place no barriers in the Soviet's way should they decide to negotiate seriously an end to their occupation of Afghanistan".

The United Nations Response

The issue of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has been engaging the attention of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council since January 1980.

In the early days of January 1980, a six-Power draft resolution was introduced in the Security Council. The draft resolution was mildly worded and it avoided "condemnation". It merely "deplored the recent armed intervention in Afghanistan" which it described as inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and it called "for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan". The Soviet Union was not referred

160 Ibid., p. 2.
161 Ibid.
162 These countries were: Bangladesh, Jamaica, Nigeria, the Philippines, Tunisia and Zambia.
to by name in the entire text of the draft resolution. When the Six-Power draft resolution was put to vote it failed to secure adoption because of the negative vote cast by Soviet Union. The voting pattern was 13 in favour and two against. Consequently another draft resolution sponsored by 24 countries was introduced in General Assembly on 10 January 1980 which was adopted by an overwhelming majority on 14 January 1980. The voting was 104 in favour to 18 against with 18 abstentions. The resolution strongly deplored "recent armed intervention into Afghanistan as inconsistent with a fundamental principle of the Charter" and called for an "immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan in order to enable its people to determine their form of government and choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever". The resolution also called for providing aid to the Afghan refugees through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and also urged the Security Council to consider ways and means to assist in the implementation of the resolution.

On 20 November 1980, the General Assembly again passed

164 Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic (GDR) voted against it.

165 Those who voted against were: Afghanistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, GDR, Grenada, Hungary, Laos, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, the Ukrainian SSR, Soviet Union and Vietnam.

166 General Assembly resolution ES-6/2, 14 January 1980.
resolution against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. But the second resolution was weak as compared to the first one. It used the phrase "grave concern" instead of "strongly deplores" withdrawal of foreign troops. On 11 February 1981, the then Secretary General of the UN, Kurt Waldheim, appointed Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is the current UN Secretary-General, as his special representative to seek negotiations over political settlement of Afghan issue in the context of the previous resolution passed by the General Assembly.

On 6 November 1981, the Secretary General submitted his report on Afghanistan situation which stated that the special representative of the Secretary General had thrice travelled to Afghanistan and Pakistan on 12-16 April 1981 and 4-9 August 1981 to hold discussions with the senior officials of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The report added that an understanding had been reached in August 1981 on the substantive issues to be negotiated but on their format. The report finally concluded that the approach adopted could facilitate the search for a fair political solution which would ensure that no Afghan people would be able to determine their own destiny, free from foreign intervention and interference.

168 UN Doc. A/36/653, 6 November 1981.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
On 18 November 1981, the General Assembly adopted a resolution 36/34 on Afghanistan situation by a recorded vote of 116 to 23 with 12 abstentions. The countries which voted against the resolution were mainly the Soviet Union, its allies and client states. The resolution called for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and reiterated that preservation of that country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity was essential for a peaceful solution of Afghan tangle.

The General Assembly has been continuously seized of the problem of Afghanistan. On 29 November 1982, the General Assembly again adopted a resolution on Afghanistan, which inter alia said:

(i) Reiterates that the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan is essential for a peaceful solution of the problem;

(ii) Reaffirms the right of Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever;

(iii) Calls for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan...

Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, a former Afghan diplomat and permanent Afghan representative to the United Nations, in an interview

172 Ibid.
173 For full text see, USICA, "UN Resolution on Afghanistan", Official Text, 6 December 1982.
with the Voice of America (VOA), which was later published in a Pushtu language paper, urged for more amendments in the UN resolution of 29 November 1982. Referring to "immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan", as envisaged in the UN resolution, Paxhwak said that instead the resolution should have included, "immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops". He made various suggestions the incorporation of which could help the speedy solution of the Afghan problem. He laid emphasis on the fact that any solution to Afghan problem could be had only by involving the Afghan Mujahideen. He further emphasized that any solution of Afghan problem without the participation of Afghan Mujahideen would be unacceptable to the people of Afghanistan.

The General Assembly in its resolution of 15 November 1984, called for the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan and reiterated that "the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan was essential for a peaceful solution". It also reaffirmed the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside

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175 Ibid.

176 For text of the resolution see, UN Information Centre, *The UN Weekly Newsletter* (New Delhi), vol. 35, no. 4, 4 December 1984, p. 1.
intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint. This resolution was adopted by a record vote of 119 in favour to 20 against with 14 abstentions. The resolution also recognized the significance of the initiatives of the Organization of Islamic Conference and the efforts of the movement of non-aligned countries for a political solution. It also called upon all parties concerned to work for the creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety with honour. It also renewed its appeal to all countries and national and international organizations to continue to extend humanitarian relief assistance to Afghan refugees in coordination with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The General Assembly again passed a resolution in November 1982 with 122 votes in favour and 19 against with 12 abstentions. The similar pattern was repeated in November 1986. The following table reveals the voting pattern.

177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
180 Ibid., 30 November 1986.
### UN General Assembly Voting Patterns

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Votes for</th>
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<th>Abstentions</th>
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<td>January 1980</td>
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Source: UN Monthly Chronicle 1980-1986

The above table reveals that when the issue of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan came up before the General Assembly in January 1980 it was supported by 104 countries and the number increased with the passage of time reaching up to 122 in November 1986. The number of countries voting against the resolution fluctuated between 18 to 23 and the majority of these countries belong to Soviet bloc.

However the number of abstentions decreased gradually. In January 1980, there were 18 abstentions which declined to 14 in 1986. This shows that majority of the world community is opposed to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.
Geneva Talks on Afghanistan

The "Geneva talks" is a part of the UN initiative to solve the Afghan tangle.

The Geneva talks to find a political solution to the Afghan question started in June 1982 in pursuance of the resolutions passed by the General Assembly. In the wake of Pakistan's refusal to recognize the Karmal Government in Kabul, the UN Secretary-General and his personal representative, Diego Cordovez, made hectic efforts during 1981-82 to help hold "proximity talks" between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Diego Cordovez held indirect talks with the representatives of Pakistan and Iran which led to the first round of talks in Geneva in June 1982. Iran refused to take part in the negotiations. There was no outcome of the talks which led to its postponement. However it was agreed that the "proximity talks" veered round four main points: (1) Withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; (ii) Non-interference in the internal affairs of states; (iii) international guarantees of non-interference; and (iv) voluntary return of the refugees to their homes.

Soviet Union was a silent observer while Iran preferred to be simply "kept informed". Until the middle of 1983, both Islamabad and Kabul had not relented. The proximity talks held in June 1983 resulted in the preparation of 23-page draft agreement for the consideration of "concerned parties". The


UN Special Representative Diego Cordovez claimed that 95 per cent of the agreement was in hand. But there was no satisfactory outcome because of the differing opinions among the concerned parties. The fourth round of Geneva talks held in June 1985 also proved a failure. However the eighth round of talks held in Geneva in the beginning of August 1986 was adjourned on 8 August 1986 in view of the reported Soviet proposal to "withdraw some troops". Though there has been no substantial outcome so far, but the efforts are being made by the UN Special Representative as well as the "concerned parties" to find a speedy settlement.

The Response of Organization of Islamic Conference

Ever since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has been seized of the Afghan problem and the OIC has played a prominent role by mobilizing the international public opinion against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It was but natural for the International Islamic Community to express its solidarity with the people of Afghanistan who had been subject to Soviet armed aggression.

The first extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers which met in Islamabad, Pakistan, from

27-29 January 1980 unanimously adopted a resolution 1/368 which
inter alia noted that "the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan
constitutes a violation of its independence, and aggression
against the liberty of its people and a flagrant violation of all
international covenants and norms, as well as a serious threat
to peace and security in the region and throughout the world".

While condemning the Soviet military aggression against
the people of Afghanistan, the resolution denounced and deplored
it as a flagrant violation of international laws, norms of the
Charter of the UN and the Charter of the Organization of the
Islamic Conference. It called upon all peoples and Governments
throughout the world to "persist in condemning this aggression and
denounced it as an aggression against Human Rights and a violation
of the freedoms of people, which cannot be ignored". Apart from
demanding the "immediate and unconditional" withdrawal of all
Soviets stationed in Afghan territories, the Conference reiterated
that the Soviet troops should refrain from acts of oppression and
tyranny against the people of Afghanistan.

The Conference took the bold decision of suspending the
membership of Afghanistan in the Organization of the Islamic
Conference and urged the member countries to withhold the
recognition to the "illegal regime" in Afghanistan and "sever

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186 For full text of the resolution see, UN Doc. A/35/109,
187 Ibid., p. 17.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid., p. 18.
diplomatic relations with that country until the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It also called upon member countries to envisage through appropriate bodies not to participate in Olympics Games being held in Moscow in July 1980 unless the Soviet Union in compliance with the call of the UN General Assembly and Islamic Conference, withdraws its troops forthwith from Afghanistan.

The eleventh conference of Foreign Ministers of Islamic countries held in Islamabad in May 1980 adopted a resolution 19/11 GC on Afghanistan which represented a substantial softening of the January 1980's emergency conference's strong condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The resolution established a ministerial committee comprising Tunisia, Iran and Pakistan empowering them to open negotiations with all parties involved in Afghanistan, including Soviet Union, to solve the Afghan problem. It also called for: "(i) the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops; (ii) recognition of the Afghan people's rights to choose their own form of government and socio-economic - political system; (iii) respect for the independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan; and (iv) creation of conditions within that."

190 Ibid.
191 Ibid., p. 19.
193 Ibid., p. 6.
The OIC has continuously taken up substantial decisions on Afghanistan in its period sessions. The Third Summit Conference of the OIC held at Mecca, Saudi Arabia, from 25-28 January 1981 also adopted a resolution 3/3-0 (IS) on the situation in Afghanistan. The Conference viewed with "grave concern" the continued Soviet military occupation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the consequent impediments "which stand in the way of the Muslim people of Afghanistan to exercise their right to determine their political future according to their will". It strongly urged for the creation of appropriate conditions to enable the Afghan refugees to return to their homeland in safety and honour. The resolution called for increasing all efforts to ensure that "Afghanistan remains an independent and non-aligned state and to enable its people to exercise in all freedom their right to express their will as regards the system of their own choosing."

The coordinating meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held at New York on 10 October 1983 while expressing its serious concern over the deplorable situation in Afghanistan resulting from the fact of the continuing foreign presence in that country, evinced its interest in the "efforts exerted by the Special Envoy of the

195 Ibid., p. 36.
196 Ibid., p. 38.
197 Ibid.
Secretary-General of the United Nations and by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with a view to finding a solution for the problem which this strife torn Muslim country Afghanistan is experiencing. It further demanded the cessation of the armed intervention by "foreign forces in the internal affairs of their brotherly country, and the retreat of these forces from Afghan territory; and reaffirms right of the Afghan people to adopt a system of government of their choice".

The fourteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers was held at Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 6 to 10 December 1983 and unanimously adopted a resolution 13/14-P. The resolution expressed serious concern over the continued Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and the consequent impediment thereof.

The Islamic Conference in its meeting held at Morocco in early February 1986 again called upon the Soviet Union to vacate its aggression in Afghanistan and also reaffirm the right of the Afghan people to adopt a government of their own choice.

Response by the European Economic Community

The European Economic Committee (EEC) comprising 10 member countries of Western Europe have also taken a serious note of

198 UN Doc. A/36/236, 7 May 1984, p. 3.
199 Ibid., p. 4.
201 The Times (London), 8 February 1986.
Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. During its annual meeting the EEC has frequently expressed concern over the continued Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The Heads of State and Government and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the ten members of the EEC, met at Maastricht, the Netherlands, in March 1981. The resolution on Afghanistan passed by this meeting of the EEC noted with grave concern the military operations by Soviet troops against the Afghan people, "who are resisting this external interference.

The resolution further envisaged EEC's call "for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan to exercise freely their right to self-determination and for Afghanistan thus to return to its traditional status as an independent state, neutral and nonaligned." Similar stance was reiterated by the EEC in 1982 and 1983. It called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and restoration of its nonaligned and independent status.

On 14 May 1984, the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member countries of the EEC was held in Paris. The meeting adopted a resolution on Afghanistan which reiterated the attachment of the EEC countries to the principles set forth in the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly calling for

203 Ibid.
205 Ibid., 14 May 1983.
the withdrawal of foreign troops, self-determination of the Afghan people, voluntary return of the Afghan refugees and non-alignment being the conditions for an honourable, just and lasting settlement for all the parties involved. The EEC also reviewed its appeal to Moscow to embark on that course and to contribute to the efforts undertaken to that end by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

While speaking on behalf of the EEC, as well as Spain and Portugal, the representative of Luxembourg told the General Assembly on 12 November 1985 that the large scale Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 was a shock to the international community and "it remains one of the most serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations". While expressing concern over the plight of Afghan refugees the Luxembourg's representative further added that "in order that a satisfactory solution to this serious humanitarian problem may be found, it is necessary that the refugees be enabled to return to their native land in dignity and safety". In his opinion such an eventuality could be facilitated if the independent and non-aligned status of Afghanistan could be restored and the Afghans were allowed to exercise their right to self-determination.

While alluding to the efforts made by the UN Secretary General and his personal representative with regard to a negotiated settlement of Afghanistan, the representative further

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207 Ibid.
208 UN Doc. A/40/PV. 71, p. 53.
209 Ibid., p. 58.
observed: "We note with interest the report that they have submitted to the Assembly, which shows that technical progress has been achieved in developing several international instruments. We shall continue to support those mediation efforts and we anticipate that rapid, genuine progress may be achieved, especially towards an agreed timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops."

Response of the Nonaligned Movement

The nonaligned countries were also alarmed over the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. This alarm was manifested in February 1981 when the conference of Foreign Ministers of nonaligned countries was held in New Delhi. The final communique issued after the conference called for a political settlement on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops and full respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and nonaligned status of Afghanistan. The communique also referred to the right of Afghan refugees to return to their homes in safety and honour. The conference urged all concerned to work towards such a settlement which would ensure that the Afghan people would determine their own destiny from outside interference and which would enable the Afghan refugees to return to their homes.

The Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Nonaligned countries which met at Havana from 31 May to 5 June 1982 reiterated the urgent call made at the New Delhi Ministerial

210 Ibid., p. 57.
211 Government of India, Twenty-five Years of the Nonaligned Movement (New Delhi, 1986), vol. 1, p. 507.
212 Ibid.
Conference held in February 1981, for a political settlement of Afghan problem on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops and full respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and nonaligned status of Afghanistan. The other part of the resolution was similar in words and content as of February 1981.

The final declaration adopted by the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Nonaligned Countries held in New Delhi from 7 to 12 March 1983, viewed the situation in Afghanistan with grave concern. It reiterated the earlier calls given by the NAM Conferences for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. The Heads of State or Government of the nonaligned countries expressed their appreciation for the sincere efforts made in the search of a political solution in Afghanistan and extended their support to the constructive steps taken in this regard by the UN Secretary General. They regarded the discussions through the intermediary of the UN Secretary General as a step in the right direction and urged their continuation with a view to promoting an early political settlement of the problem in conformity with the ideals and principles of the nonaligned movement.

The similar stance was reiterated in the final communique issued after the meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegation of

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213 Ibid., p. 571.
215 Ibid.
216 Ibid.
the nonaligned countries held at New York from 1 to 5 October 1984. The meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the nonaligned countries which was held at Luanda from 4 to 7 September 1985 had also reiterated the old stand on Afghanistan.

The final communique issued by the meeting of the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the nonaligned countries held at New York on 1 October 1985 while reiterating the earlier stand of the NAM hoped for an early solution of the Afghan tangle.

The Ministerial meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the nonaligned countries which met at New Delhi in April 1986, while reiterating the NAM stand on Afghanistan expressed appreciation for the sincere efforts made in the search for a political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan and extended its full support to the constructive steps taken by the UN Secretary General. It also called on all states to exercise restraint to avoid further endangering the peace and security of the region and to take such steps as would lead to the creation of conditions conducive to stable and harmonious relations among the countries of the region.

The Nonaligned Summit held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe in September 1986, reiterated its earlier stand on Afghan issue and called for the earlier solution of the Afghan

217 Ibid., pp. 118-19.
218 Ibid., p. 184.
219 Ibid., p. 291.
problem. It also appreciated the efforts of the UN Secretary General in this regard and expressed the hope that the solution to Afghan problem would soon be achieved.

The foregoing analysis reveals that the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 and the continued presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan have been widely condemned by the United States, another Super Power, United Nations, Islamic Community, European Economic Community and the Nonaligned Movement (NAM).

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