Existence of a small nation in a multipolar world strewn with power rivalry between the Super Powers presents an interesting study of interaction of geopolitical forces in international relations. Such a study assumes added significance when it pertains to Afghanistan which has been subject to Super Power rivalry since centuries and, since December 1979, it has been the victim of Soviet invasion. Afghanistan, which shares common border with Soviet Union, had been subject to Anglo-Russian rivalry for about fifteen decades. In the wake of the emergence of cold war in the immediate aftermath of the conclusion of the Second World War, the Soviet-United States rivalry also spread its tentacles towards Afghanistan but, like the past, the rulers of Afghanistan maintained the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan by pursuing the policy of strict neutrality and genuine nonalignment.

However, the traumatic political events leading to the advent of Soviet-backed communist coup in Kabul in April 1978 had triggered the process of rapid Soviet infiltration into Afghanistan which culminated in the Soviet invasion of that country in December 1979. Since then hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops are present in Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion was and has been opposed by the people of Afghanistan. Six million Afghans are living as refugees in Pakistan, Iran and other countries. The Afghan freedom fighters, also known as
Afghani Mujahideen, are giving a tough resistance to the occupying forces.

Thus, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the continued presence of Soviet troops in that country has been the focus of strategic thinkers, policy makers, academicians, journalists and freedom loving people throughout the world. The resultant impact has been the appearance of plethora of literature on various aspects of Afghanistan. The bulk of literature available on the subject deals with the analysis of the developments leading to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This literature comprises the works of Western academicians and journalists who have written research-oriented books and articles. A close scrutiny of the available literature reveals that many pertinent questions have remained unanswered. The questions like when a Super Power invades a nonaligned country like Afghanistan, and how the other Super Power reacts to it, how a small and nonaligned country like Afghanistan can exist in the wake of severe Super Power rivalry; and how the international community has responded in the wake of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. All these questions have been deeply examined in the present study.

The author owes his intellectual debt to his supervisor, Dr. Akhtar Majeed, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University whose able guidance and constant encouragement enabled the author to sift chaff from the grain. His profound expertise on South and Southwest Asia and the Indian Ocean enabled me to understand the subtle
implications of Super Power rivalry for Afghanistan in a better way. The author is also grateful to Dr. S.A.H. Bilgrami, Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, AMU, for his keen interest and encouragement. I also owe my gratitude to Professor A.F. Usman, Professor in the Department of Political Science, for his benign cooperation and encouragement. My thanks also go to my other teachers at AMU whose profound knowledge and experience enabled me to sharpen my tools of learning.

I am also intellectually indebted to Abdur Rahman Pazhwak, the outstanding statesman and seasoned diplomat of Afghanistan who has served as Permanent Afghan Representative to the United Nations, as Afghan Ambassador to the United Kingdom, West Germany and India, for his valuable comments on the various complex aspects of Afghanistan's foreign policy. I have also greatly benefitted from his writings. Despite his preoccupations, he has been kind enough to answer some of my queries which have unfolded unto me the great reservoir of his dispassionate analysis and deep understanding of Afghan diplomacy. The impact of his learning looms large in the present study.

I am also beholden to Dr. Zamin Nomand, an expert on Afghan diplomacy, currently with the Voice of America, Washington D.C., for his constant encouragement and valuable comments on various aspects of Afghan diplomacy. I feel obliged to Zakaria Ferotan, a research scholar of Delhi.
University for his cooperation. I am equally grateful to Adeena Niazi, Assistant Professor of Persian Literature, Faculty of Literature, Kabul University, and presently a research scholar in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for her encouragement. I owe my thanks to Dr. Chaibain Mostamandi, renowned archaeologist of Afghanistan and Mrs. Maria Mostamandi, both now in the United States for their affection and encouragement. My sincere thanks also go to Mohammad Hassan Wolasmal, editor of former Afghan Mujahid now known as Mujahid Woles, whose writings have been a source of constant inspiration for me. I am also indebted to Dr. Miratta Mugalzai, former Assistant Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Naugarhar University, and now working with Afghan freedom fighters, for his kind cooperation. I am deeply indebted to Professor Shirindal Gardiwal, Professor in Pushtu Department, School of Languages, JNU, New Delhi for his affection and cooperation. My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Arshad Mahmood, M.D., an Indian friend who stood by me through thick and thin. I am also immensely obliged to my senior Afghan colleagues — Dr. Qudus, M.D., Taj Mohammad Akbar, and Said Mohammad Mainward, for their affection and encouragement.

I am also intellectually beholden to Professor M.L. Sondhi, Professor and Chairman of the Centre for International Politics and Diplomacy, School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi for his valuable suggestions. I also feel obliged to Professor Ram Rahul Sheel,
an expert on Central Asia for his valuable comments when the present study was at the draft stage. My thanks also go to Dr. Ram Avtar Sharma of Delhi University and Yogesh Kumar Pathak, research scholar from JNU, for their benign cooperation.

I owe special gratitude to Dr. Joseph J. Brenning, Deputy Director, American Centre, New Delhi for his constant encouragement and sustained interest.

My sincere thanks go to the librarians and other members of the staff of Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh, National Archives of India, New Delhi, Sapru House Library, IDSA Library, JNU Library, American Centre Library, UN Information Centre, all in New Delhi, who generously helped in making the adequate material available to me.

Finally, a word about the spellings of Afghan names. The name of A.R. Pazhwak is spelled out as Abdur Rahman Pazhwak and as Abdul Rahman Pazhwak. Both spellings are commonly used. Besides the name "Mahmood" is generally written as Mahmood or Mahmud but for the purpose of the present study, the spellings retained are as "Mahmud". Similarly, the word Mohammad is also spelled as Mohammed, but the former spellings have been retained for the purpose of the present study.

(MOHAMMAD KHALID)