Chapter III

AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS: THE POST-WAR PERIOD

This chapter purports to analyze the relations between Afghanistan from the post-World War II period until the advent of Soviet-backed communist coup in Kabul in April 1978. Relations between the two countries prior to the Second World War have been examined in the preceding second chapter.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Afghanistan maintained a policy of strict neutrality throughout the course of the Second World War. Thus ending of the hostilities had least effect on the internal and external situation of Afghanistan. However, the global geopolitics underwent a tremendous change immediately after the war. The status of the United Kingdom (UK) as a great power had been relegated to the oblivion paving way for the United States. However, the Soviet Union retained its great power status. Rather it emerged as much more stronger. As analyzed in the fourth chapter, the United States (US) declared its policy of global containment of communism and the Truman Doctrine inaugurated the onset of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, both Super Powers.

Despite the onset of the cold war in late 1945, Afghanistan was not faced with any immediate threat either from British India or Soviet Union. Thus, as a traditional adherent to the policy of strict and positive nonalignment, Afghanistan kept aloof from the manoeuvres of both the Super Powers. The then Afghan rulers addressed themselves to envisage an allround development of Afghanistan. In the early months of 1946, Shah Mahmud Khan took
over as Prime Minister of Afghanistan. In May 1946, Shah Mahmud declared that the principle of establishing friendly relations with all countries, especially with the neighbouring countries formed the bedrock of Afghan foreign policy. On 13 June 1946, Kabul and Moscow signed an agreement to define the Amu river border, thus settling the ownership of some 1,191 islands. However prior to signing this treaty, the Russians always claimed without justification that the Amu river's boundary lay on the southern bank - on Soviet side. Signing of this treaty showed a relatively benign post-war Soviet attitude to Afghanistan which was because "perhaps Afghanistan seemed too unimportant, too unthreatening to be worth the trouble and outcry of a territorial grab". Besides Moscow also wanted to get the sympathy of Afghanistan.

As stated earlier, the Afghan Government was addressing itself for promoting the economic development of Afghanistan. As the then Prime Minister Shah Mahmud said: "... for the first time in our history, we are free of the threat of great powers' using our mountain passes as pathways to empire. Now we can concentrate on talents and resources in bettering the living conditions of our people".

1 Islah (Kabul), 15 May 1946.
Partition of the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan

The partition of the Indian subcontinent in August 1947 resulted in the emergence of India and Pakistan as two independent sovereign countries. Pakistan emerged as the immediate neighbour of Afghanistan. A major area of Pushtunistan as a sequel to Durand Line demarcation of 1893 had been inherited by Pakistan after the partition. "The Afghans saw perhaps their last chance to retrieve by negotiation their lost territories in the NWFP" which was originally annexed by the British. At the time of partition, the question of North-West Frontier Provinces (NWFP) was to be decided whether it should go to India or Pakistan. The Afghan case was that since it was the aggrieved party, it should have been involved. The plebiscite conducted under the aegis of the British awarded NWFP to Pakistan. It was claimed that 99 per cent of those who voted in the plebiscite opted union with Pakistan. However only 55.5 per cent of the enfranchised electorate turned out to vote. The Afghan Government rejected the "plebiscite" and thus the issue of "Pushtunistan" became the major irritant in Afghan-Pakistan relations. The detailed analysis on this aspect is beyond the scope of present study. The issue is analyzed in light of Afghan-Soviet relations.

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6 See Chapter I.


8 Louis Duvernoy, "Afghanistan's Big Gamble: Part II, Economic and Strategic Aspects of Soviet Aid", American University Field Staff Report (AURS), vol. 4, no. 4, May 1960, p. 6.
On 26 July 1949, a Lovah Jirgah in Kabul formally and specifically abrogated all of its international treaties which supported the Durand Line as a border or which referred to the status of the Pushtuns.

The Soviet Union after the Amu river agreement was gradually increasing its influence in Afghanistan. On 14 June 1946, the New York Times reported that the Soviet Embassy in Kabul had about 600 personnel and Soviet officers were imparting training to the Afghan Air Force personnel.

On the Pushtun issue, the Soviet Union supported Afghan stand. The Soviet scholar A. Dyakov commented that the British and Americans were planning to establish military bases in the Pushtun region. Another Soviet scholar, E. Atramonov while supporting the Afghan stand on Pushtunistan, wrote that UK and United States were determined to create instability in the region by inciting Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In 1947, there was an agreement to establish a telegraph link between Kabul and Tashkent. In the wake of its strained relations with Pakistan over Pushtun issue, and a Super Power as its neighbour, the Afghan Government sought military and economic assistance from the United States in 1948-49. However it got

11 For details see, A. Dyakov, "A Partitioned India", New Times (Moscow), 14 January 1949.
12 E. Atramonov, "How the British and American Imperialists are Interfering in the Afghan-Pakistan Dispute", ibid., 22 June 1949.
only economic assistance and military aid was denied because US
preference was for Pakistan. This aspect is discussed in details
in Chapter IV. It is suffice here to say that the US refusal to
accede to Afghan request for supply of arms was one of the main
blunders which made Kabul dependent on Moscow for arms supplies.

**Beginning of Soviet Opportunities**

The Soviet ventures in post-war Afghanistan commenced with
economic aid. In July 1950, Moscow and Kabul signed a four year
trade agreement which envisaged Soviet petroleum products, cotton,
cloth, sugar and other commodities in exchange for Afghan goods —
wool, fur, raw cotton, fruits and nuts at a higher currency
exchange rates and duty free exchange.

Pakistan's joining of US sponsored military alliances —
Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September 1954 and
Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955, further heightened
Afghan apprehensions of Pak military might. The US refusal to
provide military assistance to Afghanistan in October 1954 made
Afghanistan feel dejected. In the meanwhile, Sardar Mohammad
Daoud took over as Prime Minister of Afghanistan in 1953 and he
wanted to make Afghanistan a strong and prosperous country.

In January 1954, Kabul and Moscow signed a major agreement in
terms of which the Soviets lent $3.5 million for the construction
of grain elevators at Kabul and Pul-i-Khumri and a flour mill and
bakery at Kabul. Until the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953,

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13 Dupree, n. 8, p. 3.
Moscow had not favoured the policy of forging close relations with the Third World countries. When Khrushchev succeeded Stalin, the official policy towards Third World began to change quickly. According to Rubinstein, Moscow began to represent itself abroad as the champion of developing countries, helping the latter to establish economic as well as political independence. The Soviet leader, Khrushchev in 1953 told visiting US Congressmen that "We value trade least for economic and most for political reasons". Thus it becomes evident that after 1953, Moscow adopted the strategy of using economic aid as a bait to hoodwink the developing countries into its orbit of influence. In pursuance of this policy, Moscow augmented its economic assistance to Kabul. In July 1954 an agreement worth $1.2 million was signed between the two countries for the construction of a gasoline pipeline across the Amu river. In August 1954, another agreement worth $2 million was signed between the two countries for road building equipment. Again in October 1954, Soviet Union advanced another loan worth $2.1 million which provided for an asphalt factory and equipment. According to Bradsher: "These were early examples of a Soviet talent for getting maximum propaganda value from aid projects..." On 28 June 1955, Afghanistan negotiated a new

16 Ibid., p. 383.
17 Goldman, n. 14, p. 115.
18 Franck, n. 14, pp. 56-58.
19 Ibid.
20 Bradsher, n. 4, p. 24.
agreement on duty-free transit of Afghan goods through Soviet territory based on Article 6 of the 1921 treaty between the two countries.

Khrushchev and Bulganin's Visit to Afghanistan

On 15 December 1955, the First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita S. Khrushchev and Soviet Premier, Nikolai A. Bulganin, paid an official visit to Afghanistan. The Soviet dignitaries were given a rousing welcome at the Kabul airport by King Zahir Shah and Prime Minister, Sardar Mohammad Daud, and other Government officials. While thanking the Afghan people, Bulganin hoped that the visit would help in forging closer relations between the two countries.

The visiting Soviet leaders being aware of the Afghan sentiments over Pushtunistan said: "We sympathise with Afghanistan's policy on the question of Pushtunistan. The Soviet Union stands for an equitable solution of this problem which cannot be settled correctly without taking into account the vital interests of the people inhabiting Pushtunistan". The Afghan Prime Minister, Sardar Mohammad Daud in his welcome address said that Afghanistan was the staunch adherent of the principles of nonalignment; "Afghanistan will accept economic assistance with gratitude but it

21 Arnold, n. 7, p. 35.
22 Islah, 16 December 1955.
24 Ibid., p. 175.
should not be linked with political strings\textsuperscript{25}.

Both the Soviet leaders also announced the gift of 100-bed hospital to be built in Kabul with Russian aid. It was also promised that Soviet Union will give a credit worth $100 million repayable in thirty years at two per cent interest. The Soviet leaders also visited the military training school at Kabul and thereafter Bulganin said that his country fully appreciated the Afghan desire for modernizing their armed forces. After paying a five day visit to Afghanistan, the Soviet leaders returned to Moscow.

While recounting the Soviet thinking during this period on Afghanistan, Khrushchev later in his memoirs said:

America was courting Afghanistan, appearing to give that country economic aid but actually being much more interested in carrying political favour... At the time of our visit it was clear to us that the Americans were penetrating Afghanistan with the obvious purpose of setting up military base... The capital which we've invested in Afghanistan hasn't been wasted. We have earned the Afghan's trust and friendship, and it has not fallen into the American trap... The amount of money we spent in gratuitous assistance to Afghanistan is a drop in the ocean compared to the price we would have had to pay in order to counter the threat of an American military base on Afghan territory. 28

The Soviet leaders extended an invitation to the Afghan leaders to visit Soviet Union and Prime Minister Daud accepted the invitation.

\textsuperscript{25} Goldman, n. 14, p. 115. Also see Dupree, n. 9, pp. 508-9.
\textsuperscript{26} Goldman, n. 14, p. 508-9.
\textsuperscript{27} Bulganin and Khrushchev, n. 23, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{28} Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (Boston, 1971), pp. 560-2.
\textsuperscript{29} \\textit{Islam}, 19 December 1955.
On 18 December 1955, both the countries concluded a treaty under which the Article 8 of the Treaty of June 1931 ensuring the neutrality and non-aggression was amended and the treaty was extended for further ten years. It also contained a provision that either side could abrogate the treaty by giving an advance notice of six months.

Following the visit of the Soviet leaders to Afghanistan, the Kremlin started evincing keen interest in Kabul. In March 1956, the projects selected by a joint Afghan-Soviet survey team, though excluding railroads, were linked to a large extent with creating and modernizing other transportation facilities. These included two airport projects, one major highway linking Kabul with the strategic Soviet border, one river port facility, construction of bridge, auto repair workshops etc.

In March 1956, both countries signed an agreement that provided for regular flights between Tashkent and Kabul. The Article VI of this agreement provides a curious fact of Soviet strategic concerns in Afghanistan: "Each side has the right to refuse or amend flight permission to the other if it does not have proof that the majority ownership or actual control of that enterprise is being realized by citizens or organs of that country". This provision makes it evident that Moscow did not

30 For details of the Treaty see, Bulganin and Khrushchev, n. 23, pp. 188-92.
31 Franck, n. 14, p. 57.
33 Ibid.
want any other country to challenge the Soviet monopoly in Afghanistan. At that period, 49 per cent of the Ariana Afghan Airlines, the only airlines of Afghanistan, with which the Soviets had concluded the said agreement, was owned by one Peter Baldwin, an American businessman who had sported that airlines in April 1955. At this juncture the inclusion of such a provision in the agreement insisted by Moscow aimed at alleviating the American influence. However, in 1957, the Pan American Airways bought out Baldwin’s share in the Ariana Airway for $400 thousand and actively helped the Ariana with its operation and maintenance problems for more than two decades thereafter.

During March 1956, another agreement was signed between Kabul and Moscow under which the Soviet specialists were to be stationed in Afghanistan for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and training the Afghan personnel regarding various projects to be jointly set up. These Soviet specialists were also supposed to oversee the Afghan construction activities according to the approved project plans.

In January 1956, the Soviet Vice-President A. Mikoyan visited Afghanistan during which the earlier mentioned agreement with $100 million credit was signed. In February 1956, the

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35 Franck, n. 14, p. 461.

36 Arnold, n. 7, p. 38.

37 Islah, 29 January 1956.
Soviet leaders sent messages of greetings to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1931. Soviet media and scholars tried to project a rosy picture of "friendly relations" between Moscow and Kabul and emphasised that Soviet economic assistance to Afghanistan was without any "political strings".

Prime Minister Daud's Visit to Russia

On 17 October 1956, Sardar Moharmad Daud reached Moscow on an official visit. He was given a warm welcome on his arrival. The leading Soviet daily Pravda in its issue of 18 October 1956 while welcoming the visit of Afghan Prime Minister commented that Afghan-Soviet friendship had stood the test of time.

Concluding his fortnight's visit to the Soviet Union, the Afghan Prime Minister said that his visit had been very fruitful because there had been a frank exchange of views between the leaders of the two countries. However Sardar Mohammad Daud remained very cautious about his views on global issues. He stressed emphasis on Afghanistan's traditional policy of neutrality.

King Zahir Shah's Visit to Soviet Union

In July 1957, the King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Naim

38 Moscow News (Moscow), 29 February 1956.
40 Izliah, 18 October 1956.
41 Moscow News, 20 October 1956.
42 Ibid., 30 October 1956.
and other ministers visited Soviet Union. They were given warm welcome on their arrival in Moscow. In his welcome address the Soviet President Varashilov said that the visit of Afghan King was of tremendous significance because it was symbolic of the growing friendship between the two countries professing different political systems.

In his reply the Afghan King referred to the growing friendly relations between the two countries. On 30 July 1957, at the conclusion of the visit of King Zahir Shah, a joint communique was issued. Both the countries expressed their faith in the principles of peaceful coexistence and Afghanistan was praised for pursuing the policy of strict neutrality. According to a report published in Pravda of 31 July 1957, the Foreign Ministers of both countries agreed in principle to concluded an agreement regarding the demarcation of border areas between the two countries. The Soviet Union attached great importance to this visit because since King Amanullah's visit, it was the second visit by any Afghan King to the Soviet Union. Moscow promised Kabul to advance a credit worth $15 million for the development of natural gas exports to the Soviet Union.

43 Pravda (Moscow), 18 July 1957, cited in New Times (Moscow), July 1957.
44 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Frankel, n. 14, p. 57.
Augmentation of Soviet Military Influence

The beginning of 1950s had witnessed the inauguration of the penetration of Soviet military influence in Afghanistan. According to Bradsher, Afghanistan was first in the Third World to receive Soviet economic aid and second to receive military aid. In August 1955, Afghanistan negotiated a cash deal worth $3 million for Czechoslovak weapons. According to Anthony Arnold, "Afghanistan signed an agreement with the Soviet Union in August 1956 on re-equipping Afghanistan's armed forces with Soviet materials". Of necessity, given the complexity of modern armaments, this agreement involved the training of Afghan officers in Soviet military schools and the stationing of Soviet experts at Afghan military bases. This gave the USSR an opportunity for assessing and recruiting individual officers to serve Soviet political aims is self-evident, and it was not ignored.

In the wake of these developments, many observers on Afghanistan apprehended that Dauod was pushing his country into Soviet vassalage. Others perceived his actions as a high-risk gamble to improve his country's lot by playing off the great powers against each other. However Louis Dupree is optimistic of Dauod's policies during 1950s. According to him, Afghanistan had become an "economic Korea where the competition between the

48 Bradsher, n. 4, p. 27.
50 Arnold, n. 7, p. 38.
51 Ibid.
East and the West benefited a local population without endangering its independence. During 1956-58, Afghanistan got substantial economic assistance from Moscow as well as Washington. Between 1950 to 1959, the US assistance to Afghanistan totalled to $143 million, while the Soviet assistance amounted to $246.2 million. The bulk of the US assistance comprised in the form of outright grants, the Soviet provided long-term loans. The US objective in augmenting its Afghan share of aid aimed at securing "maximum internal political stability, promoting friendly economic relations with her Free World neighbours; and minimizing any possibility that Afghanistan might either be a victim of, or a pathway for, Soviet domination in South Asia."

However, a close analysis of the Soviet strategy of extending economic assistance and trade facilities to Afghanistan reveals that between 1950 and 1960, Kabul's dependence on Moscow for arms had become almost hundred per cent, for petroleum products from 10 per cent to 90 per cent and in case of foreign trade from 17 per cent to almost 50 per cent.

Under the cover of providing economic assistance for transportation and road construction, the Soviet Union was also concentrating on strategic areas. The Soviet highway project that ran from the Soviet border at Kushka to Herat and Kandahar,

52 Dupree, n. 9, pp. 5151-16.
54 Franck, n. 14, p. 72.
55 Dupree, n. 8, p. 32.
linked up there with the other highway to Kabul being constructed by the US assistance. Thus the Kremlin was building up strategic highways linking its border with important parts of Afghanistan which it could use one day for exerting its control over that country, as happened in December 1979. Moscow had stipulated such clauses in its agreements with Kabul which it could exploit at short notice. Article 21 of the border agreement between the two countries signed on 18 January 1958 envisaged that at 48-hour notice either side could examine those parts of international bridges linking the two countries that were situated on the other side's territory.

In May 1959, Moscow and Kabul signed another agreement on building the Kushka-Kandhar road. In July 1959 both countries signed another agreement regarding the construction of three new bridges across the Besud, Kameh and Astar Rivers. The construction of the bridges was to be carried out by the Afghan workers under the supervision of Soviet Union.

**Khrushchev's Visit to Kabul**

On 2 March 1960, the Soviet Premier N. Khrushchev visited Afghanistan. King Zahir Shah while welcoming the visit of Soviet Prime Minister, hoped that the relations between the two countries would improve further. Khrushchev lauded Afghan foreign policy

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57 Ibid., pp. 179-82.

of nonalignment, internation peace and economic development. He also referred to the growing political, economic and cultural relations between Soviet Union and Afghanistan.

Just a couple of months ago, prior to Khrushchev's visit to Afghanistan, Soviet Union and Afghanistan had signed an agreement in January 1960 in which Moscow promised to give economic assistance worth $22.4 million during the five year development plan for 1960-65. Even during his visit in March 1960, Khrushchev offered to finance the entire Afghan five year plan for 1960-65 on the condition that Soviet advisers be placed at the highest levels in all Afghan ministries. But Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Dauod, was cautiously skeptical and he reportedly turned down the Soviet offer.

The visiting Soviet Premier visited various projects launched with the Soviet help. In a dinner hosted by Soviet leader Khrushchev in favour of Afghan Prime Minister, Mohammad Dauod on 4 March 1960, the Soviet Premier repeatedly emphasized the fact that it was Soviet leader, Lenin, who first recognized the independence of Afghanistan. The Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Dauod, in his reply, said that Soviet Union under the leadership of Lenin recognized independence of Afghanistan and the latter also took no time in according

59 Ibid., pp. 266-7.
62 Khrushchev's Visits, n, 58, pp. 288-90.
recognition to the new Government which assumed power after the October Revolution. This was characteristic of Daud to tell the Soviets that Afghanistan did not lag behind in repaying the gratitude it owed to others.

On 4 March 1960, both countries signed a cultural agreement to promote and cooperate in the fields of science, art and culture. The joint communiqué issued on 5 March 1960 at the conclusion of Soviet Premier's visit to Kabul, reiterated the desire of both countries to further improve their relations.

The above analysis makes it evident that Afghan leadership while accepting Soviet economic and technical assistance, did not compromise the foreign policy of Afghanistan but rather secured Soviet endorsement of Afghanistan's independent and non-aligned policy. In early 1963, Sardar Daud Khan resigned as Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Some Western experts on Afghanistan are of the view that Sardar Daud during his premiership (1953-63) allowed Soviet influence to increase in Afghanistan unhindered. According to Leon B. Poullada, during Daud's rule of a decade "the USSR had established a firm base of operation in Afghanistan".

However Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Daud until 1963 had remained cautiously skeptical about the Soviet motives in

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63 Ibid., p. 291.
64 Ibid., pp. 293-6.
65 Ibid., pp. 302-3.
Afghanistan. In reply to a question about Soviet subversion in 1956, Daud had, while referring to the 1948 Communist takeover in that country, replied: "Does anyone think we have not heard of Czechoslovakia?"

Poullada cites another example to prove his dictum that Daud dismissed in 1956 a warning from an American Ambassador that Soviet economic aid was laying a logistical infrastructure for invasion and the Soviet training of Afghan military officers could create a fifth column in the armed forces. Such misgivings about Daud's foreign policy might have been prompted in the light of the fact that he ignored such "warnings" or "advices".

Despite heavy US arms and economic assistance to Pakistan during 1953-63, with which Afghanistan had strained relations over the issue of Pashtunistan, Daud neither criticized the United States nor sought massive arms aid from the Soviet Union; rather he pursued a policy of genuine nonalignment. Daud had declared sometime in 1960: "Our whole life, our whole existence, revolves around one single focal point - freedom. Should we ever get the feeling that our freedom is in the slightest danger, from whatever quarter, then we should prefer to live on dry bread, or even starve, sooner than accept help that would restrict our

67 Quoted in Bradsher, n. 4, p. 27.

By the early 1960s, the people of Afghanistan had realized that:

...Soviet actions were always motivated by their own interests and by those alone. But the Afghans reasoned assuming Soviet planners to be reasonable men, those interests could only be augmented by an attack on Afghanistan. The country would be an economic liability to the USSR, to control it would be difficult and costly; and most important, any such aggression would have disastrous repercussions among the neutralist nations in Asia and Africa.

Thus on the basis of above analysis, it is clear that though during the period 1953-63, Soviet Union did render considerable economic assistance to woo Afghanistan to its fold, the latter did not fall a prey to Soviet overtures and pursued an independent and genuinely nonaligned foreign policy.

Following the ouster of Sardar Mohammad Daoud in 1963, Dr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan became the new Prime Minister of Afghanistan. He could remain in office for a short time and in October 1965, Mohammed Hashim Maiwandwal was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Afghanistan.

Mohammad Zahir Shah, the King of Afghanistan paid an official visit to the USSR from 3 to 16 August 1965. The King's entourage was accompanied by other ministers and officials of Afghanistan. During the visit the Afghan King had meetings

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with Leonid Brezhnev, A.N. Kosygin and other Soviet leaders. The talks between the leaders of the two countries proceeded in an atmosphere of friendship, sincerity and mutual understanding.

The two sides expressed full satisfaction with the continuous development of friendship which had a traditional basis and mutual confidence, and comprehensive cooperation between the two countries. Both sides reaffirmed that they would not permit any damage to be done to these relations.

The joint communique issued at the end of Afghan King's visit to Soviet Union also noted the conviction of both countries that "the friendship and cooperation between the peoples of their countries is a brilliant example of the realization of the principles of peaceful co-existence of states with different economic, social and political systems and that there is an important factor in the consolidation of peace in this part of the world and corresponds to the sincere designs of all the peoples of the world." It was further acknowledged that the Soviet economic assistance had played important role in implementing the first and second five year plans for the development of Afghanistan and that the "continuation of this assistance toward the realization of the third five year plan will have a great and positive effect on the economic development of Afghanistan".

72 Ibid., p. 609.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
The Afghanistan side emphasised and reaffirmed its policy of neutrality and nonalignment which was in the interest of the people of Afghanistan and of peace throughout the world. The Soviet side reaffirmed that "this policy of Afghanistan is an important contribution to the cause of relaxation of international tension and the strengthening of peace and friendship among the people". Thus the visit of Afghan King to Moscow proved instrumental in procuring Soviet endorsement of Afghan foreign policy.

Between 1963-73 the Soviet-Afghan relations continued on the friendly pattern. There was no major point of departure in the traditionally friendly relationship. Between 1967-70, the value of Russian assistance approximated 70 per cent of the total aid received by Afghanistan from all sources. On 6 February 1968 both Afghanistan and Soviet Union signed an agreement for economic and technical assistance. Under this and earlier agreements, Afghanistan was bound to export 2.5 billion cubic metres of natural gas, on average, to the Soviet Union upto the year 1985. Though under the agreement of 1968, it was envisaged that the prices of the natural gas would be "determined by the two sides" but in practice the Soviet Union unilaterally determined the price it would pay and controlled all information regarding the quantum of gas it imported. "In fact, the Soviet Union never paid

76 Ibid., p. 610.
77 Newell, n. 53, p. 147.
Afghanistan more than twenty percent of the going world market price for natural gas.  

**Afghanistan and Brezhnev Doctrine**

In the wake of growing schism between Soviet Union and People's Republic of China (PRC) in the late 1960s, Moscow sought to isolate China from the world Communist movement and in Asia. In late May 1969, the then Soviet Prime Minister A. Kosygin during his visit to Kabul, proposed regional economic cooperation among Afghanistan, Pakistan and India as a step toward creating a peaceful environment in the region. On 7 June 1969, the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, while addressing the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow, declared: "We are of the opinion that the course of events is putting on the agenda the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia". This concept of collective security in Asia came to be known as "Brezhnev Doctrine". The Soviet leader Brezhnev did not elaborate his doctrine in 1969. However, it was on 30 March 1972, that Brezhnev stated:

> Collective security in Asia must, in our view, be based on such principles as renunciation of use of force in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and the inviolability of borders, noninterference in internal affairs and the broad development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of full equality and mutual development.  

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79 Ibid., p. 256.


82 Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter FBIS), FBIS/USSR, 21 March 1972.
In pursuance of Brezhnev Doctrine, the Soviet Union wooed Afghanistan to endorse the plan for Asian collective security. However, Afghanistan kept cool towards this plan and reiterated its commitment to the policy of nonalignment. During May 1973, the Soviet President, Podgorny visited Kabul. The joint communique issued after his visit spoke of the great importance which the Soviet Union attached to "Afghanistan's policy of positive neutrality and nonalignment". It further noted:

"Considering that observance of the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with differing social and political systems is an effective way toward establishing lasting peace both in Asia and other parts of the world, the USSR and Afghanistan again declare that in order to guarantee security in Asia it is essential for all countries of the area to make joint efforts in that direction."

However this could not be considered as Afghan endorsement of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

**Afghan-Soviet Relations During Daud Period (July 1973 - April 1978)**

Sardar Mohammad Daoud who had resigned in 1963, seized power in Kabul in July 1973 in a bloodless coup by overthrowing the monarchy. After about a year of his assumption of power, President Sardar Mohammad Daoud paid an official visit from 4-7 June 1974 to Soviet Union and "accepted Soviet-drafted language in a joint communique endorsing the Brezhnev Doctrine". The joint communique noted: "The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan are deeply interested in ensuring peace and cooperation in Asia and

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consider that the creation of a system of security by the collective efforts of all the states of Asia would correspond to the interests of the Asian peoples\textsuperscript{85}. The Soviets proved themselves clever enough to extract Afghan endorsement of Soviet plan but did not repay the favour. Both Moscow Radio and Tass omitted reference to Pakistan from Dauod's speech at Kremlin banquet. After having private talks with President Dauod, the Soviet President Podgorny publicly said that Afghanistan's "great and complex talks of renovating political, economic and cultural life ... can be solved successfully, when the course charted is pursued firmly, when broad popular masses are drawn into the work of building a new life and when the forces which are sincerely interested in strengthening the new system act vigorously and in close unity\textsuperscript{87}". This was a direct suggestion by the Soviets to President Dauod to work closely with the pro-Moscow communists of Afghanistan. Henry S. Bradsher has also supported the analysis.\textsuperscript{88} The Soviet Union also granted an interest free ten year moratorium on a \$100 million debt and promised another \$428 million in development aid to Afghanistan. In December 1975, the Soviet President, Podgorny visited Afghanistan. Unlike earlier visits, this visit lacked enthusiasm, both in Kabul and Moscow. The official Soviet reports spoke coolly

\textsuperscript{85} FBIS/USSR, 10 June 1974, J. 4.
\textsuperscript{86} See Ibid., 4-12 June 1974.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 6 June 1974, pp. J1-3.
\textsuperscript{88} Bradsher, n. 4, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{89} The Economist (London), 3 August 1974, pp. 29-30.
of Podgorny’s visit to Afghanistan and made reference to Soviet-Afghan relations in a stereotyped fashion. The joint communiqué issued after the visit of President Podgorny made only an oblique reference to Asian security plan without any mention of Afghan endorsement. One could notice the “cool-off” stage in Afghan-Soviet relations.

Perhaps by then Sardar Mohammad Daud had realized that the growing Soviet influence was contrary to Afghanistan’s traditional policy of genuine nonalignment. Thus with a view to alleviate Afghan economic dependence on Soviet Union and keeping in consonance with the principles of nonalignment, President Daud took positive measures to improve Afghanistan’s relations with Pakistan, Iran, and other Islamic countries. In October 1974, Iran promised Afghanistan to provide $2 billion in economic aid over a period of ten years, and a part of this aid was to be spent on the construction of a railroad from Kabul to Iran, which eventually would have provided Afghanistan with a trade route through Iranian ports, thereby decreasing Afghan dependence on Soviet trade. This shows that President Daud was following an independent and nonaligned policy by developing close relations with nonaligned and Islamic countries.

President Daud visited Soviet Union from 12 to 15 April 1977. Before visiting Soviet Union, President Daud had taken

90 FBIS/USSR, 10 December 1975.
certain measures in his own country which included the removal of Soviet military advisers from the lower levels of the Afghan armed forces. In the Soviet Union, Brezhnev had become President by removing Podgorny.

An analysis of the statements made by the Soviet Union and Afghan President in Moscow during the visit do not show that Afghan-Soviet relations had deteriorated. The Soviet President, Leonid Brezhnev, did ask his Afghan counterpart about the need for a "concerted effort of all the people". However President Dauod was more frank when he said that good relations "stand on the firm foundations of good neighbourliness, frankness, sincerity and disinterested and worthwhile cooperation". While reiterating his Government's decision to promote economic development, President Dauod said that his country was "creating premises for rapid socio-economic and political development ... that demand all round efforts from the people and government of Afghanistan. Cooperation and disinterested aid from friendly states will play a valuable part in this undertaking". The communique issued at the end of the visit envisaged that talks took place in an atmosphere of "friendship, trust and understanding and there was a circumstantial exchange of opinions on urgent world problems". On his return to Kabul from Moscow, President Dauod expressed his confidence that the

93 Bradsher, n. 4, p. 65.
96 Ibid.
relations between Afghanistan and Soviet Union were based on "good
eighbourliness, mutual respect and non-interference in domestic
affairs".

However Bradsher claims that "Daud's proclaimed confidence
was more diplomatic than real". Most of the scholars agree that
there was hot exchange of views between President Dauod and Soviet
leaders. Thomas T. Hammond has quoted an incident, which is based
on his interviews with persons having close contacts with Afghan
developments. According to this account during President Dauod's
visit to Moscow, Brezhnev addressed the Afghan President in a rude
manner and raised objections to certain policies pursued by the
Afghan Government. President Dauod then reportedly told Brezhnev:
"I want to remind you that you are speaking to the President of an
independent country, not one of your East European satellites. You
are trying to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and
this I will not permit". Thus, it is evident that Sardar Mohammad
Dauod behaved in a true Afghan tradition.

There is no doubt that there were signs of deteriorating
relations between Kabul and Moscow during the mid 1970s and
Moscow seemed to be displeased with Dauod Government in Kabul.

99 Bradsher, n. 4, p. 65.
100 Thomas T. Hammond, Red Flag Over Afghanistan (Boulder, Colo:

This incident is also substantiated by Henry S. Bradsher
who after interviewing various Afghan officials in Kabul
has confirmed it. See Bradsher, n. 4, pp. 65-66.