Chapter IV

AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS

This chapter endeavours to make an indepth analysis of Afghan-US relations since their advent till April 1978 when the Soviet backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power in Kabul by staging a bloody coup.

Afghan-US Relations Unto the end of Second World War

The formal diplomatic relations between Kabul and Washington were established in 1940s but efforts in this direction were initiated during King Amanullah's time. However it was during the middle of nineteenth century that some American missionaries made efforts to establish contacts with Afghanistan. The American Presbyterian missionaries made a pioneering attempt to direct contact with the Afghans. They established a mission at Ludhiana, where several prominent Afghan refugees, including the former Amir Zaman Shah and Shah Shuja were staying. However, the American missionaries failed to establish contacts among "the exiled Afghan leaders or their retines".

Until the advent of the regime of King Amanullah in 1919, there were virtually no direct or indirect contacts between Kabul and Washington. King Amanullah gave a new direction to Afghan


3 Gregorian, n. 1, p. 69.
foreign policy by seeking to establish friendly relations with Soviet Union, United Kingdom (UK) and Turkey. Amanullah sent his personal emissary to explore the possibilities of establishing friendly relations with the United States and other European countries.

In July 1921, an Afghan mission headed by Mohammed Wali Khan visited the United States. On his arrival in New York on 11 July 1921, Mohammed Wali Khan said that he had come to explore the possibilities of establishing friendly relations between Afghanistan and the United States. Prior to his meeting with the then US Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, Wali Khan told the press on 17 July 1921 that the establishment of relations between Afghanistan and the United States would provide ample opportunities for American businessmen to invest in Afghanistan. However, despite all such optimistic pronouncements Wali Khan was not sure about the success of his mission. Leader of the Afghan mission met some officials of the State Department of the US before he could meet the Secretary of State. However, the New York Times commented that the welcome accorded to the Afghan Mission by the United States could not be interpreted as US recognition of King Amanullah's regime in Kabul. The then US Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, wrote to the US President on 18 July 1921: "Apparently we have,

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 18 July 1921.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 20 July 1921.
hitherto, had no relations with Afghanistan directly as formerly our dealings with that country were through Great Britain. In 1919 Great Britain "recognized the independence of Afghanistan". However, the UK did not like Afghan policy of foreign relations with other European powers. Hughes in his letter to the President conveyed the British feelings about Afghan Mission that "the British Government did not look with favour on its activities or its endeavours to conclude agreements with other Governments, as Afghanistan, though ostensibly independent, was still within the British 'sphere of political influence'."

The US Secretary of State expressed the view that there was no way of having relations with Afghanistan "at that time unless they are had directly and there is nothing in the British position which precludes our reception of the Mission". The US was aware of Afghanistan's Treaty of Friendship with Soviet Union, signed in September 1920, and ratified by Afghanistan in August 1921. The US Secretary of State, Hughes, expressed the view that Afghanistan's relations with the Soviet Union did not prevent the United States to establish close relations with Kabul. He wrote to President Harding that "the Soviet Government had dealings with other powers with which we are in relations and I do not believe that the Soviet Treaty with Afghanistan furnishes

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10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.
a reason for precluding ourselves from the opportunities which otherwise might be open in that country". Thus the US Secretary of State advised the US President to receive the Afghan Mission and opined that he did not think "however, that pending further inquiries, it is necessary or advisable to go beyond their courteous reception".

Consequently, the Afghan Mission was received by the Secretary of State on 20 July 1921. Secretary Hughes in another letter to the President Harding on 21 July 1921 informed the latter that the Afghan Mission was in the United States for the establishment of diplomatic relations." There did not prevail or exist formal or informal diplomatic relations between Kabul and Washington. In view of the fact that the Great Britain had "relinquished her protectorate" over Afghanistan, the United States could establish direct relations with Afghanistan. But the then US Secretary of State did not favour the establishment of direct diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. He advised the President that "nothing further should be said at this time and that the matter will be taken under careful consideration".

The Afghan Mission met the US President Harding on 26 July 1921. Mohammed Wali Khan, leader of the Afghan Mission, handed over a personal letter from the Afghan King, Amanullah, to

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., p. 259.
14 "Secretary of State to President Harding", 21 July 1921, ibid., pp. 259-60.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
President Harding. Amir Amanullah wrote: "As I used to have the sincere wish to establish permanent friendly relations between Afghanistan and the high Government of the United States, I expect that Your Excellency’s high Government may be satisfied with the keeping of that friendly relations too."

President Harding in his reply to Amanullah’s letter wrote:

It is my wish that the relations between the United States and Afghanistan may always be of a friendly character, and I shall be happy to cooperate with Your Majesty to this end. I am constrained, however, to confirm to Your Majesty, what was stated orally to G. Mohammed Wali Khan, that with respect to the United States, the question of the creation of a Diplomatic Mission and of the appropriate action to that end by the Congress of the United States must be reserved for further consideration.

It becomes clear from the above analysis that the United States had deferred the Afghan request of establishing diplomatic relations between Kabul and Washington. The fact that the US did not recognize Amanullah’s regime in 1921 could not be interpreted as the negation of US interest in Afghanistan.

There occurred a spell of about four years when there was discernible effort on either side to resume negotiations on establishing diplomatic ties between the two countries. In October 1925, the Afghan Ambassador to France, Nadir Khan, contacted the US Ambassador in France, Merrick, in that connection. On 30 October 1925, Nadir Khan wrote a letter to Merrick urging him to resume negotiations regarding the

17 Amir Amanullah’s letter to President Harding (no date), ibid., p. 260.
18 President Harding to Amir Amanullah, 29 July 1921, ibid., p. 261.
establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Afghan Ambassador in his letter had also attached a draft proposal for a treaty to be concluded between the two countries which incorporated provision for Ambassador level relations and increased economic cooperation between the two countries.

Merrick forwarded Afghan Ambassador's letter along with the proposed draft treaty to the US State Department. The US Secretary of State, Frank B. Kellogg informed Merrick to convey to the Afghan Ambassador the appreciation of US Government's appreciation of friendly sentiments towards the United States and also enclosed a draft reply purported to be sent to Afghan Ambassador. The proposed note, a copy of which was handed over to Nadir Khan on 20 February 1926 in Paris, conveyed the appreciation of US Government towards Afghanistan's friendly sentiments and assured that "careful consideration will be accorded to the draft treaty which you have presented". In 1927 and 1928, the exchange of communications between Kabul and Washington used to be through either French Ambassador in Kabul or through their respective missions in Paris.

In the wake of the downfall of King Amanullah in April 1929, the process of negotiations between Afghanistan and the

20 Ibid.
22 Secretary of State to Merrick, 26 July 1926, ibid., p. 559.
23 Draft Note from Ambassador Merrick to the Afghan Ambassador in France (no date), ibid., p. 560.
United States suffered a setback. Nadir Shah who succeeded Amanullah as the new King of Afghanistan could remain in power from the end of 1929 to 1933. During this period the Government of Afghanistan did make certain efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the United States. In 1931, the Afghan Ambassador in London made attempts to contact the US ambassador in London. Consequently, the US ambassador in London informed the Department of State and requested for further instructions. However there was no positive response by the State Department to Afghan proposal. The Secretary of State directed the US ambassador in London that if Afghan ambassador raised the question of recognition "you should state that you are not authorized to discuss the matter with him".

The Department of State was informed in September 1931 by the US ambassador in Italy, Kirk, that the Afghan Government believed that the United States might be inclined to establish official relations with Afghanistan. The Afghan ambassador in Rome had contacted ambassador Kirk there and conveyed to the latter his government's desire to "establish relations with the United States Government and was prepared to negotiate a treaty". The Afghan ambassador had further informed that in case the US

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24 Gregorian, n. 1, p. 266.
26 Secretary of State to Dawes, 16 April 1931, ibid., p. 825.
27 Kirk to Secretary of State, 19 September 1931, ibid., pp. 825-26.
28 Ibid.
Government gave due weightage to the Afghan proposal, his
government would undoubtedly empower him to undertake preliminary
negotiations in Rome. Thus the Department of State was requested
by the US ambassador in Rome to issue instructions to the latter in
this matter.

The US Secretary of State in his reply to ambassador Kirk
wrote that the Afghan ambassador could be informed that "no recent
consideration has been given to by his Government to the question
of the establishment of official relations with the Afghan Govern­
ment and the present moment is not considered to be opportune to
negotiate a treaty". The US Department of State regarded the
question of establishing official relations with Afghanistan at
that time as premature "since the present regime in Afghanistan
has not yet been recognized by this Government".

Consequent upon the death of King Nadir Shah, in 1933, Zahir
Shah took over as the new King of Afghanistan. The new King adopted
measures to improve Afghanistan's relations with Japan, Italy,
France and Czechoslovakia and also made efforts to procure
economic assistance from these countries. In July 1934, King
Zahir Shah sent a letter to the US President through Afghan
ambassador in Paris expressing his desire to strengthen political

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., p. 826.
31 Secretary of State to Kirk, 24 September 1931, ibid., p. 826.
32 Ibid.
and economic relations between Afghanistan and the United States. The then US Acting Secretary of State, William Phillips, wrote to the US President Roosevelt that although the US had never entered into direct diplomatic relations with Afghanistan, President Harding in 1921 received an official mission from that country by which it was generally accepted that "recognition had been accorded to the regime of King Amanullah who was then in power". However the US reluctance to establish diplomatic relations with Afghanistan was evident from his statement: "We have been naturally conservative on the subject of establishing relations with Afghanistan owing to the primitive conditions in that country, the lack of capability or other guarantees to the safety of foreigners and the absence of any important American interest." However the Acting Secretary of State further wrote that he could see no reasons "why we should withhold recognition of Afghanistan". President Roosevelt in his reply sent to King Zahir Shah wrote: "I cordially reciprocate the sentiments which you express in extending recognition to Your Majesty's Government, take this opportunity of assuring you of my hope that friendly relations will always exist between the United States and Afghanistan." Thus it was for the first time

34 Marriner to the Secretary of State, 30 June 1934, n. 9, 1934, vol. II, p. 747.
35 Acting Secretary of State to President, 21 August 1934, ibid., p. 749.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 President Roosevelt to Zahir Shah, 21 August 1934, ibid., p. 750.
that the United States accorded recognition to Afghanistan. A friendship treaty between Afghanistan and the United States was proposed by the former in October 1934. The then US Secretary of State in his reply to US ambassador in France, Straus, wrote that although the United States was not opposed to "concluding a treaty of friendship and commerce with the Government of Afghanistan, it considers that the purpose which the two Governments have in mind might be accomplished more expeditiously and satisfactorily by the conclusion of a less formal agreement."

Subsequently a draft proposal envisaging proposed US amendments to the Afghan draft treaty was sent to Afghanistan. The proposed agreement consisting of seven articles envisaged political and economic relations between Washington and Kabul. The resultant impact of these negotiations was that on 26 March 1936, the agreement was signed between Kabul and Washington at Paris. Thus by March 1936, the United States had recognized the Afghan Government and both countries had signed a formal agreement. Accordingly on 4 May 1936, Hornybrock, presented his credentials to the Afghan Government at Kabul as the first US ambassador, in Afghanistan, with his headquarters at Tehran.

40 Secretary of State to Ambassador Straus in France, 2 January 1935, ibid., p. 556.
41 For full text of the draft agreement, see ibid., pp. 557-56.
43 New York Times, 6 May 1936.
The year 1937 marked the beginning of the economic cooperation between Kabul and Washington when Afghan Government granted its first concession to the American Inland Exploration Company a 75-year option on the exploration of the Ore resources available in Afghanistan. However, negotiations in this regard had started in October 1936 and on 20 November 1936 an agreement was signed between the representatives of the Inland Exploration Company and the Afghan Foreign Minister, Faiz Mohammad Khan. Under the terms of this agreement, the US Company acquired the rights of exploring oil in Afghanistan and the agreement proved very useful for the Company. Reports indicate that German Foreign Office and Berlin based Soviet Ambassador made frantic attempts for thwarting the conclusion of this agreement. Realizing that their efforts in thwarting the conclusion of the said agreement could not succeed, the Soviets adopted other measures to exert pressure on Afghanistan. Consequently, Moscow laid claim over Afghan territory along the Afghan-Soviet border, which was refused by the then Afghan Government.

Such reports also emanated from Moscow. The acting US Ambassador in Moscow, in a letter to the Secretary of State,

44 US Ambassador in Germany's letter to the Secretary of State, 24 November 1936, n. 9, 1937, Part II, pp. 597-98.
45 American Economic Counsellor in Germany's letter to the Secretary of State, 30 November 1936, ibid., pp. 598-99.
47 US Economic Vice-Counsellor in Karachi to Secretary of State, 13 March 1937, ibid., p. 602.
48 Ibid., p. 603.
Informed the latter that within a few days after the American Company had concluded oil exploration agreements with Iran and Afghanistan, the Afghan Ambassador in Moscow told the former that the Soviet officials were annoyed because of having not been consulted by Tehran and Kabul in connection with conclusion of such an important agreement. The Soviet attitude might have been governed by the fact Moscow regarded Afghanistan under its sphere of influence and hence it disliked any third country to become its rival.

At the same time, Moscow also did not allow transition facilities to Afghanistan. There also did not exist any treaty or agreement between Kabul and Moscow in this regard. The Afghan Ambassador in Moscow is on record of having said that it would have been better if the Americans avoided using Soviet rail transport for supplying their material to Afghanistan, otherwise Moscow could exert undue pressure on Afghanistan. The Afghan Ambassador had further observed that Russia was not prepared to provide transition facilities through its territory because Moscow was trying to impose a trade agreement on Afghanistan which could have undermined Afghan interests. The US Company was also accorded the right to explore the mineral deposits subject to further negotiations. The Inland Exploration Company on its part

49 US Ambassador in Moscow to the Secretary of State, 3 December 1937, ibid., p. 752.
50 Head of the Near Eastern Division to US Ambassador in Tehran, 24 December 1937, ibid., p. 756.
51 Ibid., p. 757.
52 Ibid.
agreed to pay $330,000 in the first years of the concession and 20 per cent of the concessions thereafter. However within a year, the Inland Company surrendered its concessions pleading that the rich oil deposits of Afghanistan were virtually inaccessible and would require about $300 million to exploit them. Even the global situation was not suitable for foreign investment in Afghanistan. By 1938, the possibilities of the outbreak of hostilities in Europe had become almost certain. The management of the Inland Company thought that in the vent of war, oil fields in Afghanistan could be vulnerable to Soviet attack and thus their investment would be wasted.

The Inland Company's decision served a blow to Afghan policy of seeking support, services and investments from distant countries which were, it was hoped, politically disinterested in Afghan affairs. In the wake of US disinterestedness in large scale and long-term investments, Afghanistan became determined to disallow concessions to the Soviets and British nationals and rather thought of relying on German, Italian, Japanese and Czech investment and technicians.

Impact of Second World War

In the wake of the outbreak of Second World War, the Afghan economy was adversely affected because its exports of Karakul to the Western Europe had almost stopped. During 1940-41, out of

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53 Islah, 3 May 1937.
54 Gregorian, n. 1, p. 381.
55 Vasudeo B. Mehta, "Changing Afghanistan", United Empire, November 1939, p. 1109.
2 hundred thousand hide-skins, Afghanistan could export only 38,940 skins to Germany and Soviet Union. At this crucial juncture, the United States came to Afghanistan's rescue to help it export its Karakul in American markets.

By January 1941, the US had not established any diplomatic mission in Kabul. Murray, the Chief of State Department's Near Eastern Affairs Section, had observed that as long as the US interests continued to be slight, there was no possibility of the United States establishing diplomatic mission in Kabul. It was only in December 1941 that the US initiated a move to establish a diplomatic mission and it was on 6 June 1942 that the US diplomatic mission was inaugurated in Kabul. While addressing the Loya Jirgah on 15 June 1942, King Zahir Shah, welcomed the opening of US mission in Kabul and expressed the hope of better economic and political relations between Kabul and Washington. On 25 July 1942, Cornelius H. Van Engert presented his credentials as US Ambassador in Kabul to King Zahir Shah. Ambassador Engert and King Zahir Shah exchanged views on mutual cooperation and world peace.

58 Thyges to the Secretary of State, 6 June 1942, ibid., 1942, vol. IV, p. 50.
59 Ibid., 17 June 1942, p. 5.
60 Engert to Secretary of State, 25 July 1942, ibid., pp. 51-52.
In August 1942, the Afghan Foreign Ministry urged the US Government to help it in exporting 900 bales of Karakul, 100 bales of Fur, 250 tonnes of Wool and 40 tonnes of Pistachio, which were lying at the Karachi port to the American markets. The Afghan Government also expressed hope of similar US cooperation in future. The US ambassador in Kabul even suggested to station some US Air Force bombers in Kabul during the war period with a view to boost the morale of Afghan Government. However, the US Government rejected this suggestion.

The US State Department had come out in December 1942 with a proposal of constructing a motorable road passing through India, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union to reach China with a view to supply material to China through road transport. Consequently a US official, Gordon Bowles, reached India to explore the possibility of such a plan. Following the Soviet refusal to allow any American national on its territory even for survey purpose and Afghan reluctance to do so, the US had to abandon such a plan.

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61 Engert to the Secretary of State, 5 August 1942, ibid., pp. 53-54.
62 Ibid., 7 August 1942, p. 54.
63 Secretary of State to Engert, 29 October 1942, ibid., pp. 57-58.
64 Ibid., 9 December 1942, (1943), vol. 1, p. 614.
65 Secretary of State to US Representative in India (Phillips), 28 January 1943, ibid., p. 618.
66 US Ambassador in Moscow to Secretary of State, 28 December 1942, ibid., p. 616.
67 Phillips to Secretary of State, 16 January 1943, ibid., p. 616.
As is well-known, the Afghan Government had declared to pursue policy of strict neutrality during the Second World War. In this regard, King Zahir Shah had issued a farman on 17 August 1940, proclaiming the continuance of the policy of neutrality. During the war period, there had been no major breakthrough in political or economic relations between Afghanistan and the United States. In April 1944, John L. Savage, a US engineer, visited Afghanistan to help the latter in devising its irrigation plans. In the beginning of 1945, the US envoy in Kabul, presented a memorandum to the Afghan Government urging the latter to bring the production of opium in that country under strict control for exclusive use in medicine and other scientific purposes. The Afghan Government, while acceding to American request, declared that it was going to ban the production of opium from 21 March 1945.

Thus during the period of Second World War, the relations between Afghanistan and the United States had become friendly and formal. During this period, the US diplomatic mission was established in Kabul. Afghanistan while promoting its diplomatic and economic relations with the United States, pursued a policy of strict neutrality during this period.

69 Engert to Secretary of State, 27 May 1943, n. 64, pp. 54-63.
US-Afghan Relations After the Second World War

During the immediate postwar years, the era of good feelings lingered and Afghan leaders realized that "the United States would be the ideal substitute for receding British power, since distant, America was no imperialist threat to Afghanistan".  

In May 1946, the Afghan premier, Shah Mahmud Khan, had given gestures of cementing bonds of relations between Kabul and Washington. He said that he was "convincing that America's championship of the small nations guarantees my country's security against aggression. America's attitude is our salvation."  

Even when the clouds of war had not completely faded in 1944, the US Ambassador in Kabul Cornelius Von H. Engert, had recommended to the State Department:

With a view to further consolidate our gains, it is essential to continue our present policy during the war period and subsequent period of reconstruction. I am little worried about the fact that during the immediate period preceding the war, the requirements of Afghanistan may not get due priority to U.S. foreign policy. Therefore I request the Department of State, Washington and the future policy makers to take into consideration the fact that Afghanistan, besides being an independent Muslim country, is also strategically important for the United States' policy in the Middle East.  

Immediately after the conclusion of the Second World War, the Afghan Government asked the United States to send American teachers and engineers. In 1946, an agreement was signed between the Afghan

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72 Islah, 9 May 1946.

Government and the Morrison-Knudsen Company of the United States worth $17 million for repairing the dams and their reconstruction, and the construction of 350 miles long highway. All these plans were to be implemented in the Helmand Valley region. The Helmand Valley project was so far the most ambitious project undertaken by the Government of Afghanistan. It was the multipurpose water and land development scheme for which initial surveys had been done by the Japanese engineers in the 1930s.

By the end of 1948, the Afghan Government after having launched ambitious developmental projects, fell short of foreign exchange and thus required foreign assistance. Consequently, it turned to the United States. Accordingly, in 1949, Abdul Majid Zabuli, the Afghan Minister of National Economy, and a financial genius, visited Washington to negotiate loans for Afghan economic development plan. Zabuli asked for the loan worth $118 million. The US Department of State instead of acceding to his request, rather made him shuttle to the US Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank) "which completely failed to understand the quality and integrity of his plan and offered instead to finance the ongoing work of the Morrison-Knudsen Company in the Helmand Valley".

75 Richard S. Newell, Politics of Afghanistan (Ithaca, 1971), p. 120.
76 Franck, n. 74, p. 38.
As compared to original Afghan request for $118 million, the Bank sanctioned only a loan of $21 million. Even this loan was also sanctioned because of the Morrison-Knudsen Company's political influence. Zabuli insisted that such unbalanced development would be a mistake and that the long payback of a multipurpose reclamation project like the Helmand would cause serious problems for Afghanistan. So he recommended to his Government to decline the loan, "but his Afghan superiors overruled him because they wanted to establish close economic relations with the United States for political reasons".

Zabuli had also requested the United States to provide American weapons so that Afghanistan could modernize its armed forces in the wake of possible Soviet danger. He said:

... Properly armed, and convinced of US backing, Afghanistan could manage a delaying action in the passes of the Hindu-Kush which would be a contribution to the success of the armed forces of the West and might enable them to utilize bases which Pakistan and India might provide ... When war came Afghanistan would, of course, be overrun and occupied. But the Russians would be unable to pacify the country. Afghanistan could and would pursue guerrilla tactics for an indefinite period.

However, Zabuli's request for US arms assistance was rejected. Even the Afghan Government seemed to have not taken a serious view of Zabuli's requests and US offers and rejections. Kabul

78 Franck, n. 74, p. 39.
79 Poullada, n. 71, p. 152.
80 Poullada, n. 77, p. 233.
rather accepted the meagre loan offered by the United States. Even Afghan Prime Minister, Shah Mahmud had observed in a conversation with the US President, Truman: "The Afghan Government tends to think of the loan as of political as well as of economic importance, possibly increasingly so in the light of manifestations of Soviet interest and offers of assistance to Afghanistan." Repeated requests for weapons were put off, even though in 1949 Afghan officials suggested that "unless US gave Afghanistan more assistance, Afghans might turn to USSR". Actually, Afghanistan had made requests for US arms assistance as far back as in 1944. Since then the repeated Afghan requests for American arms had been ignored by the United States. According to Leon. B. Poullada: "Afghan overtures to America were met at first with bureaucratic and legalistic evasions and finally with a clear negative response. True, the Afghan approaches were often naive and awkward, but sophistication on the tortuous ways of American policy making could hardly be expected". The US Embassy in Kabul recommended arms sales on 4 January 1950 "to exclude Soviet influence, cement Afghan-American friendship, maintain internal security and promote settlement of differences with Pakistan". However, in Washington the policy

82 Cited in Poullada, n. 77, p. 233.
84 Poullada, n. 71, p. 186.
85 Ibid.
86 Airgram No. A-2, 4 January 1950 from Embassy Kabul to Department of State, cited in ibid.
makers were underscoring the strategic significance of Afghanistan. As is revealed from an assessment made by the US National Security Council in early 1951:

The Kremlin apparently does not consider Afghanistan's relatively meagre assets to be worthy of attention and probably believes that it can take Afghanistan easily whenever its broader objectives would be served. There is little doubt that Afghanistan could be conquered regardless of its will to resist. In the event of an invasion, it is possible that certain elements - particularly the Afghan (Pathan) tribesmen, would continue to resist. 87

However, the then US Assistant Secretary of State, George McGhee, visited Kabul on 12 March 1951 and discussed the Afghan defence requirements with Sardar Mohammad Daud, then Minister of War. George McGhee suggested a formal request by diplomatic note with a detailed list of desired equipment attached and assured Daud that it would receive "sympathetic consideration". Poullada claims that Daud understood it to mean that approval was assured. The Afghan Government had never made a formal official request unless it was assured beforehand that it would be approved.

The Afghan Prime Minister, Shah Mahmud, during his visit to the United States in April 1951 took the matter with US President, Truman. However even prior to the visit of Afghan premier, the US Department of State in a note to the President on 21 February 1951 had observed: "Afghanistan continues to maintain toward the USSR an attitude of cautious correctness combined with firm resistance to Soviet efforts at penetration... So far, Soviet pressure has not

87 Index of Declassified Documents (Arlington, Virginia, 1978), No. 377A.
88 Ibid.
89 Poullada, n. 71, p. 186.
been severe nor has the Soviet influence in Afghan territory contiguous to the Soviet Central Asian Republic [sic] been extensive." The State Department further advised the US President that the Afghan requests for arms were being ignored rather than refused. President Truman was further advised to tell the Afghan Prime Minister of "the limitations of the ability of the US to furnish military assistance" to stress reliance on collective security within the United Nations, and to hold out hope for more financial and technical aid. But the Afghan Government still insisted on procuring arms from the United States and by August 1951, a formal request with arms list was presented to the United States. On 27 November 1951, the US Government instructed its Ambassador in Kabul to tell the Afghan Government that "the arms requested will cost $25 million. They will have to be paid in cash. Transit through Pakistan will have to be arranged with no help from the United States. The sale will have to be made public, and it would help if the Pushtunistan claim is dropped." It appeared that the US was ready to supply arms to Afghanistan on cash payment and simultaneously it expected Afghanistan to strike a deal on Pushtunistan, a step which no Afghan Government could ever undertake. Thus there was a clear indication that US was reluctant to supply arms to Afghanistan. And the issue was shelved for the time being by both sides.

91 Ibid., p. 1965.
92 US, National Archives, File No. 890, 20/7-2048 as cited in Poullada, n. 71, pp. 186-87.
Until the beginning of 1952, the United States had been taking the growing Soviet influence in Afghanistan very lightly. But it was compelled to revise its assessment. On 9 September 1952, the US Charge d'Affaires in Afghanistan Horner in a despatch to the Department of State wrote: "Over past year Embassy \( \text{US} \) has reported evidences increasing Soviet interest in Afghanistan... It may suffice to say that we have felt earlier estimates of relative Soviet non-interest in this country to be in need of radical revision."

On 9 September 1952, the then Afghan Foreign Minister, Ali Mohammed Khan, in a conversation with Philip Beck and Louis de Lalve, two members of the United Nations (UN) technical assistance mission, confirmed that the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Kabul, Shpeidko, had delivered a stiff aside memoire to the Afghan Government on 7 August 1952, which inter-alia noted that Soviet Union would regard Afghan plan for oil drilling in northern part by a French firm under UN auspices "to be unfriendly act and specific violation of the non-aggression treaty of 1931". During the first week of September the Soviet Foreign Minister Vishinsky had called the Afghan Ambassador in Moscow, Sultan Ahmad, and warned him orally "in a severe tongue lashing". However on 8 September 1952, the Afghan Government in a written reply handed over to the Soviet Charge d'Affaires in Kabul asserted that the proposed oil exploration "was purely an internal matter" of

94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
Afghanistan. The Afghan Foreign Minister regarded the Soviet demarche regarding oil as having broader implications.

The US Ambassador in Kabul further noted that any US advice to Kabul in that regard depended upon evaluation of overall Soviet intentions and he solicited the views of the Department of State on the matter. In his view it was difficult to imagine that Soviet Union would take any overt steps against Afghanistan at that particular juncture. The Afghan Government seemed to be disturbed over the Soviet demarche. The First Under Secretary in Afghan Foreign Ministry, Abdul Hamid Khan Aziz, told the US Ambassador in Kabul on 9 September 1952: "Afghanistan considered US her really true friend and counts on US to help Afghanistan take her place among free and democratic nations of the world." 

The US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson did not feel that the Soviet demarche was precursor of any immediate Soviet threat to Afghanistan. He regarded the Soviet demarche as the first step in Soviet campaign to prevent the entry of Westerners in north of Hindu Kush "in line with long standing Soviet policy and an endeavour to prevent economic improvement amongst peoples who are potentially exploitable by the Soviets on ethnic grounds". 

In middle of September 1952, the Afghan Government announced its plan to construct modern roads in the north Afghanistan. The

97 Ibid., p. 1448.
98 Horner to Department of State, 9 September 1952, ibid., p. 1450.
99 The Secretary of State to Embassy in Afghanistan, 12 September 1952, ibid., p. 1450.
100 Ibid., pp. 1450-51.
US Ambassador in Kabul recommended to the Department of State to provide $1 million worth of economic assistance to Afghanistan in this regard. In its view, the granting of such assistance would:

(i) strengthen Afghan will to resist Soviet presence;
(ii) provide additional incentive towards development of north;
(iii) provide effective means for overall economic strengthening of Afghanistan;
(iv) reduce the possibility of the success of Soviet economic pressure on North Afghanistan;
(v) increase Afghan potentiality to combat subversion and subversive rebellion in north;

Strangely enough the US Department of State instead of considering seriously the recommendations of its Ambassador in Kabul, rather noted that Afghanistan, aside from a desire for friendly advice from the United Kingdom and the US, "may well be capitalizing on demarche in attempt to achieve (i) increased economic assistance; (ii) military assistance; and (iii) US-UK pressure on Pakistan to negotiate Pushtunistan agreement with Afghanistan." It further noted that the Soviet demarche when considered in historical perspective, did not pose any threat to Afghanistan.

101 Horner to the Department of State, 23 September 1952, Ibid., p. 1453.
102 Ibid., pp. 1453-54. The clauses vi and vii are deleted in the original.
103 Secretary of State to the Embassy in Afghanistan, 29 September 1952. Ibid., p. 1454.
However Ambassador Horner while expressing his doubts over the instructions of the Department of State asserted that "no account seems to have been taken of Afghan psychology or existence of important elements here willing to come to terms with the Soviets". He further informed the State Department that the Afghan cabinet was coming around to view that "accommodation with Soviets must be sought at almost any cost". Thus Ambassador recommended that "we should not promptly and positively and not wait until enemy [Soviet Union] is already within gates".

The available evidence shows that Washington did not take Soviet démarche to Afghanistan seriously and only expressed its moral support in that regard. It also expressed its inability to provide increased economic assistance to Afghanistan. Besides, in the wake of these developments, the US did not apprehend any danger of Afghanistan's falling "into Soviet camp".

Since 1951, the United States had been involved in establishing a military alliance in the Middle East to strengthen

104 Horner to the Department of State, 2 October 1952.
   Ibid., p. 1456.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Afghanistan, 11 October 1952. Ibid., p. 1462.

108 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State For Near Eastern, South Asia and African Affairs (Byroade) to the Under Secretary of State (Bruce), 10 October 1952, ibid., p. 1460.
its position. The news reports that Pakistan would join the proposed US defence alliance created worry and anxiety in Afghanistan. The proposed alliance was named as Middle East Defence Organization (MEDO). The Secretary of State informed the US Embassy in Afghanistan that the MEDO was conceived to be a military planning organization only, not involving formal alliances or commitments. He further added that when the organization was established "perhaps it would invite other nations of general area for example, Afghanistan or Pakistan, if they are then interested". However the Department of State wondered whether Afghanistan would join MEDO in view of its geographic proximity to the Soviet Union and Article 2 of the Afghan-Soviet treaty of June 1931.

The year 1953 marked a change of leadership in Afghanistan when on 6 September 1953, Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan took over as Prime Minister of Afghanistan. In the United States, John Foster Dulles had taken over as the Secretary of State. Dulles provided a new impetus to American cold war policies by establishing defence alliances with active US support and involving countries having geographic proximity to the Soviet Union and People’s Republic of China. By 1953, Pakistan had started receiving massive economic and military aid from the United States which was bound to create an alarm for Afghanistan which had strained relations with Pakistan over the issue of Pushtunistan. However

109 Secretary of State to the Embassy in Afghanistan, 20 February 1953. Ibid., p. 1465.

110 Ibid.
the United States still ignored the strategic significance of Afghanistan. It is evident from a secret study conducted in 1953 by Joint Chiefs of Staff which inter-alia concluded:

Afghanistan is of little or no strategic importance to the United States. Its geographic location coupled with the realization by Afghan leaders of Soviet capabilities, presages Soviet control of the country whenever the situation so dictates. It would be desirable for Afghanistan to remain neutral because otherwise it might be overrun as an avenue to the Indian subcontinent. Such neutrality will remain a stronger possibility if there is no western-sponsored opposition to communism in Afghanistan, which opposition in itself might precipitate Soviet moves to take control of the country.

In December 1953, the then US Vice-President, Richard Nixon visited Northern-tier countries including Afghanistan. During his tour to Afghanistan, Nixon tried to impress upon the Afghan ruling elite the need for forging an alliance between Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. He gave the impression as if he disliked the non-aligned policy of Afghanistan and regarded the prevailing controversy between Afghanistan and Pakistan as of less importance. He however, assured Afghanistan of continued US help for Helmand Valley project but no assurance was given regarding the military assistance.

The supply of US military assistance to Pakistan in 1953-54 evoked general concern in Afghanistan. The Afghan Ambassador in

111 Index of Declassified Documents (Arlington, Virginia, 1979), no. 33A.

112 For details see, Department of State Bulletin (Washington), 15 June 1953.

113 Louis Dupree, "The Mountains go to Mohammed Zaheer", American University Field Staff Reports (hereafter AUSFR) (New York), vol. 4, no. 6, June 1960, p. 3.
Washington met the US Secretary of State in early January 1954 and urged the latter to maintain economic and military balance in the region. While explaining his country’s reaction over US military assistance to Pakistan, the Afghan Ambassador further expressed the hope that his government expected the US to maintain existing military balance in the region.

In early 1954, the military cooperation pacts were signed between Pakistan and Turkey and Pakistan and United States. The Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement was signed between Pakistan and the United States at Karachi on 19 May 1954. In the wake of these developments, the belief was growing in the Afghan Governmental circles that "the US has turned its back to Afghanistan". The US Ambassador in Afghanistan, Ward, expressed the view that the Soviet Union had been taking moves to strengthen its ties with Kabul through trade on terms very favourable to the Afghans and through credits for economic development accompanied by technical assistance. He further asserted that should Soviet efforts be intensified and in the absence of any effective counter move by the United States, "We can expect the Soviets to establish effective control in the trans-Hindu Kush area of

115 For text of the Agreement, see US, United States Treaties and Other International Agreements (Washington, 1958), vol. 5, p. 1954.
116 Memorandum to the Deputy Director, Office of South Asian Affairs (Smith) to Donald D. Kennedy of the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, 23 June 1954, n. 93, p. 1474.
117 Ibid.
Afghanistan within the foreseeable future. Thus he emphasized that there should be an appraisal by the appropriate US military authorities of the importance of Afghanistan, both direct and indirect, for the United States. Ward recommended the supply of US military assistance to Afghanistan in the context of a regional arrangement — an association with Turkey or Pakistan or both in arrangements similar to those existing between Pakistan and Turkey. He also suggested to the Department of State: "We should be forthright in making clear to Afghanistan that we can make no commitments beyond the language of the mutual defence assistance agreement. We cannot guarantee Afghanistan's borders." He also cautioned not to overlook the fact that the Soviet Union might react to US move of providing arms assistance to Afghanistan and asserted that "this possibility exists whether or not we extend military assistance to Afghanistan".

The United States also seemed to be worried about the growing Soviet economic penetration into Afghanistan. A note prepared by the US Department of State in June 1954 entitled "United States and Soviet Interests in Afghanistan", noted that the dangers of the increased Soviet activity in Afghanistan included the military aspects of road and oil storage construction and the subversive activity by Soviet "technicians" who were of

118 Ibid., p. 1475.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
the same racial stock as the Afghans. The note called for a review of US economic policy in Afghanistan to counter the mounting Soviet influence. It *inter-alia* suggested the three following alternatives:

(i) Keeping our present policy without significant increases or decreases in our aid;

(ii) minimize our losses by gradually reducing our activity and our aid to a minimum consistent with achievement of bare economic results; and

(iii) countering the Soviet moves so as to preclude infiltration by Soviet technicians or mitigate their effectiveness. 123

However with regard to the third alternative, the note envisaged that it might be expensive as it would probably be possible only upon US acceptance of likely Afghan requests for substantial additional US economic aid and US military aid on certain guarantees.

The Afghan Ambassador in Washington met the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs on 27 July 1954 and expressed his Government's willingness to consider US military assistance on a bilateral basis without reference to a regional organization, with the avowed objective of bolstering its internal strength and of improving its capacity to resist aggression from whatever direction it should come.

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122 Memorandum by the Officer in Charge of Economic Affairs, Office of South Asian Affairs (Flucker) to the Deputy Director of that Office, 25 June 1954, *ibid.*, p. 1476.


125 Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs (Byroade) to the Secretary of State, 27 July 1954, *ibid.*, p. 1479.
Byroad while accepting that the Middle East being a vulnerable area was threatened by increasing Soviet interest, added that the conclusion of a US-Afghan military aid programme might provide a very strong Soviet reaction thus undermining the interests of both the countries. The Afghan Ambassador also met the US Secretary of State on 27 July 1954 and told the latter that the United States had not yet taken any decision on Afghan request for American arms. The Secretary of State told the Afghan Ambassador that his country should proceed slowly in the matter "... and some of the more immediate imponderables in considering military aid for Afghanistan were the nature of the aid programme for the coming year, the character of our current commitments and future contingencies...."

In October 1954, the National Intelligence Estimates Committee, an inter-departmental wing of the National Security Council (NSC) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) prepared a report entitled "Outlook for Afghanistan". The report noted that the growing Afghan reliance on Soviet Union for trade and loans with technical assistance made it highly vulnerable to Soviet pressures. Afghanistan's participation in a Western-backed defence arrangement or its acceptance of substantial

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126 Ibid.
127 Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Officer in Charge of Pakistan-Afghanistan Affairs, 27 July 1954, ibid., p. 1480.
128 Ibid.
129 For details see, ibid., pp. 1481-97.
130 Ibid., p. 1482.
Western military aid was bound to evoke adverse Soviet reaction. It was further observed that the USSR could easily take over Afghanistan if it chose to do so, but openly aggressive action against Afghanistan would "almost certainly entail anti-Soviet reactions elsewhere, particularly in the Arab-Asian bloc which the USSR would wish to avoid". However the report expressed the hope that the Afghan Government was likely to continue with its fundamental policy of attempting to play off the great powers to Afghanistan's advantage, meanwhile continuing its association with the Arab-Asian bloc in the United Nations. However the report also noted the future policy which Afghanistan might pursue:

Afghan leaders will attempt to obtain additional Western economic aid to counterbalance that received from the USSR and will probably display continuing interest in the idea of participating in Western-backed military aid programmes. However, it is unlikely that the Afghans would actually accept membership in a Western backed area defence arrangement since they almost certainly realize that no foreseeable arrangement could furnish them sufficiently realistic protection against Soviet attack to compensate for the increased Soviet hostility toward them which would almost certainly ensue.

In October 1954, the Afghan Foreign Minister, Sardar Mohammed Naim met the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles and pleaded for the supply of US arms to Afghanistan. However Dulles replied: "After careful consideration, extending military aid to Afghanistan would create problems not offset by the

131 Ibid., pp. 1482-83.
132 Ibid., p. 1483.
133 Ibid.
strength it would generate. Instead of asking for arms, Afghanistan should settle the Pushtunistan dispute with Pakistan." Thus by the end of 1954, it had become evident that the United States was reluctant to provide arms assistance to Afghanistan. Leon B. Poullada has observed that "American failure between 1942 and 1954 to respond to the genuine economic and security needs of a friendly and pro-Western Afghan government, and to understand the political imperatives behind the Pushtunistan problem, set the stage for the stunning success of Soviet diplomacy." On 16 December 1954, the US Acting Secretary of State emphatically said that the United States would not, for present, extend military aid to Afghanistan. However it could consider doing so upon "attainment of improved Afghan relations with Pakistan and Iran".

The increased US economic and arms assistance to Pakistan but rejection of Afghan proposal for the supply of arms by the United States had perturbed the policy-makers in Kabul. Consequently "in January 1955, Daud approached the USSR regarding long standing Soviet offers of military aid which Afghanistan had previously rejected". However the visit of top Soviet leaders to Burma, India and Afghanistan in the later period of 1955 which

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134 Cited in Poullada, n. 77, p. 235.
135 Ibid.
136 The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Afghanistan, 16 December 1954, n. 92, p. 1497.
137 Poullada, n. 77, p. 235.
envisaged promise of increased Soviet help for Afghanistan, perhaps prompted Washington to review its policy towards the region especially Afghanistan. The New York Times had opined that Moscow had challenged the US policy towards Afghanistan.

The aftermath of these developments was the emergence of three schools of opinion in Washington regarding US policy towards Afghanistan. One school was of the view that the US should counter the Soviet influence in Afghanistan. The second school of thought favoured Afghanistan to be left to its own fate and in case it tilted towards Moscow, it would be a warning to other nonaligned countries. The third school of opinion espoused for the continuance of incremental help to Afghanistan. Hamilton F. Armstrong, the editor of prestigious quarterly Foreign Affairs, while supporting this view wrote in an article: "It would seem to indicate the right position for us to take realistically and morally as well, but only in the conditions and up to the point." He further expressed the view that the conditions were such that "the Afghans, who sincerely want to protect themselves from domination from any quarter, shall be intelligent and farsighted in their steps to avoid dangers of crisis." The author strongly pleaded for the supply of US arms to Afghanistan:

140 Hamilton F. Armstrong, "North of the Khyber", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 34, no. 4, p. 619.
141 Ibid.
... Afghans are tough and resilient lot and it is possible that even the subtle programme on which the Soviet Union seems to be embarked for disarming them economically and financially will fail. Nothing that we can do can guarantee that result. But we can encourage the Afghan leaders to feel that they are not alone, we can continue our aid in moderate amounts, giving them time to get their bearing; we can perhaps be of service to them politically, and we can warn against further steps which will end almost automatically in delivering their country to foreign hands even if seeing that result as imminent they belatedly revolt against it. 142

The augmentation of Soviet economic and military aid to Afghanistan had unnerved the US policy makers for a while. Recognizing this fact, the US Secretary of State, Dulles, said that the success of Soviet aid and resultant increase in its influence was discernible from the pace of developmental programmes being carried out in Kabul. 143 Report indicated that when Soviet leaders were in Kabul in December 1955, President Eisenhower wrote a letter to King Zahir Shah expressing concern over deteriorating relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. 144 The contents of this letter were never made public. Dulles also said: "I cannot disclose the contents of the correspondence ... both sides have not published it."

In view of the growing Soviet influence in Afghanistan, the failure of US policy to abate it had been subject to criticism at

142 Ibid., p. 618.
home. Lesley E. Crane, an American engineer, who had worked in Afghanistan, said in an interview with the US News and World Report that the United States had spent millions of dollars in Afghanistan without gaining any advantage. There were some who favoured a positive attitude towards Afghanistan. Adam C. Powell told the House of Representatives that by remaining neutral during the two world wars, Afghanistan had earned admiration of world community which was evident from the fact that Kabul's admission to the United Nations was done unopposed in 1946. The official circles in Washington also acknowledged that Soviet package-aid deals had great impact on the developing countries of South Asia especially Afghanistan, but at the same time they expressed the view that Washington had not lost its interest in Afghanistan.

The United States provided air-travel facilities to over 1000 Afghans for Haj pilgrimage in June 1956. During this period Afghanistan was hit by food shortage and it urged the US to supply foodgrains to meet the shortage. The International Cooperation Administration of the United States declared on 17 November 1956 that Afghan Government had accepted the aid worth $100,000 for the reconstruction of a part of Habibia College and the Department of State Bulletin called it an expression of US friendship towards the

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147 Congressional Record, House 84th Congress, Second Session (Washington, 1956), vol. 102, Part II, pp. 8976-77.
149 Ibid., 2 July 1956.
people of Afghanistan. William M. Routry, a senior official of the Department of State told the Committee on Foreign Relations that the US investments in Afghanistan in 1956 were to the tune of $15.6 million. In 1957, the United States agreed to provide Afghanistan technical aid worth $3 million and $11.4 million for development purposes. The International Cooperation Administration in cooperation with the Department of State prepared a report which analysed the impact of US assistance on Afghanistan. The report noted that the US aid proved instrumental in saving Afghanistan from being pushed into the Soviet camp.

The pattern of Afghan-US trade had remained always uneven. In 1957, the Afghan US trade was worth 994.66 million Afghanis. However during 1956-57, the Afghan imports from the United States accounted for only 3.4 per cent of former's total imports. Afghan exports to that country during the same period accounted for 21.3 per cent.

Afghanistan and Eisenhower Doctrine

The US President Dwight D. Eisenhower in a message to the US Congress on 5 January 1957 said that the countries of the Middle

151 Department of State Bulletin, 3 December 1956.
153 Ibid. Also see Department of State Bulletin, 9 April 1957.
154 Ibid., p. 615.
156 Ibid., p. 205.
East were facing the threat of communism. He further added that the United States in pursuance of its policy of global containment of communism, wanted to provide increased economic and military assistance to the countries of the Middle East with a view to stem the tide of Soviet communism. This message later came to be known as "Eisenhower Doctrine". James P. Richards, a senior officer of the Department of State, visited Afghanistan in early 1957 as part of his tour to the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, to explain the purpose of the Eisenhower Doctrine and its importance in safeguarding the independence of these countries. Richards tried to convince the Afghan rulers the benefits of joining the US sponsored alliances under the Eisenhower Doctrine. However, Richards's mission was not in keeping with the well-known Afghan policy of traditional neutrality. Afghan acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine meant renouncing its centuries old and time-tested policy of neutrality which Kabul could not afford.

**Prime Minister Daud's Visit to US**

The Afghan Prime Minister, Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan paid a fortnight's visit to the United States starting from 24 June 1958. He was given a warm welcome on his arrival. In his reply to the warm welcome at the airport, Sardar Daud hoped that his visit would be helpful in further strengthening the relations between two countries. The officials of the State Department were

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157 For details see, *Department of State Bulletin*, 21 January 1957.


159 *Department of State Bulletin*, 21 July 1958.
quoted as having praised the Afghan policy of neutrality.

The discussions between the Afghan Prime Minister and the US leaders were marked by cordiality and genuine friendship, which characterized Afghan-US relations. The US President explained the objectives of US policy in the field of international affairs and Prime Minister Daud similarly described the attitude of his government in the field of international affairs including its traditional policy of neutrality and independence. Afghanistan was assured of the continuing readiness of the United States to be of assistance to Afghanistan in its high objectives of developing the resources of the country for the welfare of the people. It was further agreed that cooperation which already existed in the development of Afghan civil aviation, the Helmand Valley, surface transportation projects and the Afghan educational system, would be continued with a view to making each of these projects as efficient and effective as circumstances would allow. On 26 June 1958, a cultural agreement was signed between the two countries as a symbol of warm relations and as an indication of a desire of the two nations to base their relations on mutual understanding. Both the sides expressed their desire to maintain and strengthen the cordial understanding between the

162 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
164 Ibid.
two countries. Thus the visit of Sardar Mohammad Daud to the United States proved successful and a milestone in the Afghan-US relations.

President Eisenhower's Visit to Afghanistan

In December 1959, US President, Eisenhower visited Afghanistan. The news of the visit of the US President was given due publicity in the Afghan media. *Anis* and *Islah* wrote that President Eisenhower was a great world statesman and President of a great nation who was due to visit Afghanistan. *Anis* expressed the view that the proposed visit of President Eisenhower was significant on two counts. Firstly, because the countries of the region had differences on political and regional issues and secondly, the visit would help in ascertaining the US viewpoint on significant issues. The paper further noted that the US President's visit to neutral Afghanistan was more significant because it was not a member of any US sponsored military alliance.

The visit of President Eisenhower to Afghanistan was very short - just for five hours. President Eisenhower reached Kabul on 9 December 1959. Welcoming the US President, the Afghan King Zahir Shah hoped that the visit would help in strengthening the relations between the two countries. President Eisenhower, while praising the valiant Afghans, hoped that his brief visit

165 Ibid.
166 Cited in Dupree, n. 113, pp. 6-7.
167 Ibid., p. 7.
168 Ibid.
would help in understanding the great country of Afghanistan. The United States provided financial and technical assistance to develop Kandhar International Airport as a major refueling point for flights across southern Asia. The United States provided $10 million in grants and $5 million in loans for Morrison and Knudsen to build the airport. Prior to the airport could be opened in December 1962, modern jets had come into use and were speeding across the area without need to refuel.

Afghan King Zahir Shah's Visit to US

The Afghan King, Zahir Shah paid an official visit to the United States from 4 to 16 September 1963. During the course of his visit, the Afghan King had an exchange of views with US President, John F. Kennedy, on matters of mutual interest to Afghanistan and the United States and the contemporary world situation. The joint communique issued after Afghan King’s visit to the US, noted that the US had followed with interest and sympathy the efforts being made by Afghanistan under the leadership of King Zahir Shah, to achieve economic development and social progress. President Kennedy assured the visiting Afghan King of the "continuing desire of the US to cooperate with Afghanistan in economic and technical fields by so doing to contribute to the success of the efforts which Afghanistan is making to provide a

170 Ibid.


172 Department of State Bulletin, 7 October 1963.

173 Ibid.
better life for its people." The joint communique further noted that in the sphere of international relations both the countries were dedicated to the furtherance of the cause of world peace and to bring about the elimination of reduction of tensions between nations. Both countries expressed their deep conviction of the indispensable role of the United Nations in advancing the cause of peace and of the necessity of supporting its efforts directed to that end. It also noted that "Afghanistan's traditional policy is the safeguarding of its national independence through non-alignment, friendship and cooperation with all countries. The US for its part places great importance on Afghanistan's continued independence and national integrity." Both Washington and Kabul agreed that the visit of Afghan King had contributed to better understanding between the two countries.

Prime Minister Mainwadwal's Visit to the US March 1967

Mohammad Hashim Mainwadwal, the Prime Minister of Afghanistan, visited the US from 25 March to 9 April 1967. He stayed in Washington from 28-30 March 1967 and held talks with the US President Lyndon B. Johnson and other US officials. The US President in his welcome speech on 28 March 1967 said: "... Afghanistan is far from us in miles and hours as we meet this morning. But for us it is no longer a distant, far off remote place." The US President listed the following four commonalities between the two countries:

174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid., 17 April 1967, p. 627.
(i) Your land, like ours has a strong tradition of freedom and independence;

(ii) your people, like ours, cherish diversity, while they seek unity in mutual respect and justice;

(iii) you, like us, are experimental in the art of government and social reform;

(iv) and we share in common dedication to peace and to the idea of a world community based on freedom.

President Johnson further added that the relations between Kabul and Washington had been close and cordial: "Today they are warmer than ever before. It is a very great honour and privilege to have you with us to discuss an even more productive future."

The visiting Afghan Prime Minister in his reply thanked the US President for latter's "kind expressions of friendship toward Afghanistan". The Afghan Prime Minister further said that despite the considerable geographic distance separating us and Afghanistan, "our common belief and devotion to liberty and respect for the inherent dignity of man has bridged this distance". The Afghan Prime Minister expressed his confidence that his visit would serve to strengthen and promote the friendly and cultural relations which so happily had prevailed between Afghanistan and the US. He also appreciated the role of US assistance in the development of Afghan economy. The Afghan Prime Minister said: "Afghanistan follows a policy of active nonalignment and is

178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid., p. 628.
determined to exercise the free judgement in international affairs. It endeavours wherever possible to serve the cause of international peace and the rights of nations and peoples in the firm belief that only in peace can the progress of all nations, including Afghanistan, be assured and that international understanding is the best way of insuring human prosperity throughout the world."

The joint statement issued on 28 March 1967 noted that the two leaders talked about current developments elsewhere in Asia, particularly the urgent need for peace and stability in South-East Asia. They outlined their respective positions on the problems of Vietnam and agreed that a peaceful and just settlement is urgently needed.

The United States and Afghanistan concluded an agreement on 19 July 1967 for the sales of agricultural commodities under title of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. On 25 May 1969, the US Secretary of State, William Rogers, had a brief stopover in Kabul, on his way to Paris to attend the Sixteenth Plenary Session on Vietnam. In his statement issued on 9 May 1969 prior to his reaching Kabul, Secretary Rogers said: "I am also very pleased to be stopping in Kabul where I will be the first US Secretary of State ever to visit Afghanistan. The

182 Ibid.
183 Ibid., p. 632.
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid., 28 August 1967.
visit will give me an occasion to express our friendship for that country."

Then followed the visit of the then US Vice President, Spiro Agnew to Afghanistan in early part of January 1970. On 6 January 1970, Spiro Agnew reached Kabul. In reply to a toast at a reception given by Afghan Prime Minister, Nur Ahmed Etemadi, the US Vice-President said that many Americans having known Afghanistan had "made us eager to see this beautiful and spirited land and to meet, at first hand, its proud people with their strong tradition of freedom and jealously guarded independence". Referring to the geographical distance between the two countries, the Vice President further added: "We share a kindred spirit and many of the same aspirations ... no vexing problems divide us nor diminish the respect we hold for each other nor lessen our ability to work together." While making a reference to the striking similarities in the national character and outlook of the people between the two countries, Spiro Agnew said that both Washington and Kabul shared common aspirations of deep traditional devotion to freedom and national independence. While praising Afghanistan for having longer history of maintaining such traditions, he said:

... We Americans are proud of our association with Afghanistan over the years in working toward a brighter future for Afghanistan we feel confident that Afghanistan will continue its drive to utilize its resources to build new and better institutions, to improve its

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186 Ibid.
188 Ibid.
agriculture, to broaden its industrial base and create more educational and employment opportunities for its people. As Afghans persevere in their efforts, we look forward to assisting in any way we can. 189

It was evident that the US Vice President had assured the Government of Afghanistan of continued US assistance.

The Visit of Henry Kissinger

On 1 November 1974, the then US Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, visited Afghanistan. During his visit, Kissinger had various rounds of talks with Afghan Head of the State and Prime Minister, Sardar Mohammed Daud and other Afghan officials. The joint communique issued after Kissinger's visit, the same day, at Kabul, noted that both the countries conducted frank discussions on a wide range of issues in the friendly atmosphere that "characterizes US-Afghan relations". Both sides held talks on the wide ranging issues which included bilateral relations, recent developments in the Near East and South Asian region, progress in international detente and mutual interests of both nations of securing a peaceful, stable and cooperative world.

The Afghan officials apprised the visiting US Secretary of State about their Government's views on regional and global problems. Both countries agreed that "the way to find lasting, durable and peaceful solutions to existing problems and differences between states is through constructive and thorough

189 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
discussions among all sides concerned. While expressing his
appreciation for that opportunity to visit Afghanistan, Henry
Kissinger affirmed his admiration for progress being made by the
Government and people of Afghanistan. Both Washington and Kabul
laid stress on the importance of international cooperation in the
field of economic and technical development and "its major role in
strengthening international stability and peace". Afghanistan
expressed its "pleasure at the contribution towards this end being
made by the United States in Afghanistan through bilateral economic,
technical and educational cooperation". The US Secretary of
State, Henry Kissinger, expressed his government's continuing
desire to "cooperate with the Republic of Afghanistan in achieving
its economic development goals". He further informed the Afghan
Government that he would ask a senior official of the US Agency for
International Development to visit Afghanistan in the near future
to renew with the Afghan authorities joint programmes and progress
in bringing projects to fruition.

The US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger again visited
Afghanistan on 8 August 1976 and held discussions with Sardar
Mohammad Daud, the then President of Afghanistan. The talks
were held in the warm and friendly atmosphere. There was friendly

192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid., 6 September 1976.
and fruitful exchange of views between the two sides on major international questions of mutual interest, especially the development of situation in South Asia and the Middle East. Both the leaders also exchanged views on Afghan-US bilateral relations and cooperation in different fields. Both sides also reaffirmed the importance of the strengthening and expansion of friendship and cooperation between the two countries for preserving and consolidating the regional and world peace. The two sides noted the similarity of the "views and purposes of Afghan and American leaders and peoples regarding national independence and integrity". The Government of Afghanistan pointed out that its traditional policy - based on positive neutrality, nonalignment and friendship and cooperation with all peace-loving countries was guarantor of Afghan independence. The US Secretary of State said that his government appreciated Afghanistan's position.

In his discussion with other Afghan officials, Henry Kissinger, reaffirmed US interest in participating closely in Afghanistan's economic development and also noted with satisfaction the ongoing work in various spheres with American help. The Afghan Government expressed its satisfaction at US contributions which had been and were being made through bilateral economic, technical and educational cooperation. Both sides

198 Ibid.
199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
expressed their desire to expand further existing cooperation, particularly in the technical and economic fields. On this occasion, an agreement was signed between the two countries for the sale of edible oil to Afghanistan on concessional terms.

The pattern of friendly relations between Afghanistan and the United States continued smoothly even after the advent of Carter administration in Washington. During the summer of 1977, the efforts were made by both the countries to arrange a visit of Sardar Dauod to the United States. And finally the visit of Sardar Dauod to the US was tentatively planned for September 1978, a dream which never came true because of the Communist coup in April 1978 in Kabul. Washington had rather started making preparations for the forthcoming visit of Sardar Dauod. A senior State Department expert on Soviet Affairs, Adolph Dubs, who was then overseeing South Asian Affairs in the State Department, told a House of Representatives Subcommittee on 16 March 1978, just six weeks before the coup in Kabul that "internally, the political situation is stable" in Afghanistan and "President Daud remains very much in control and faces no significant opposition".

The Communist's seizure of power in Kabul by staging a coup in April 1978 served a blow to the rapidly growing ties between Washington and Kabul. The impact of April 1978 coup and subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, on Afghan-US relations is analyzed in the next chapter.

202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid., May 1978.