CHAPTER V

THE GENEVA ACCORDS
AND
THEIR IMPLICATIONS
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The eight-year old Afghan crisis entered a crucial phase with the signing of the Geneva Accords in April 1988 and the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. For several years, the United Nations representatives had been actively involved to bring about a solution to the problem. But negotiations suffered occasional setbacks due to the conflicting positions of the countries involved in the crisis, besides the worsening internal situation in Afghanistan. A major factor which facilitated the process of negotiations leading to the Accords in 1988 was the reorientation of Soviet foreign policy under Mikhail Gorbachev. However, the United States policy options during this time centered around questions of Soviet withdrawal of troops, the return of three million refugees to their homeland and the restoration of Afghanistan’s independent status. The year 1988 was crucial for the Reagan administration, for it was the final phase of its term. Though Washington responded positively to the Geneva Accords, it retained the option of continuing to aid the fighting mujahideen. Reagan’s successor George Bush did not undertake any substantial change in its policy, though there were serious debates in the ruling circles with regard to the US support to the fighting rebels. The significance of Bush’s term was that during 1989-91, the global political and strategic landscape changed fundamentally following the developments in Soviet Union and East Europe.
This would have a great bearing on the American policy towards the Third World, and Afghanistan could be a case in point. This chapter tries to analyse the crucial phases in the negotiations leading to the Geneva Accords and their implications in the post-withdrawal scenario. It also examines the United States involvement and its policy responses during 1988-91. The chapter also keeps in perspective the Soviet factor that facilitated the Geneva Accords and the subsequent Soviet policy positions which affected the United States' perception and role in the Afghan crisis.

The Afghan Crisis and the Geneva Negotiations

The UN attempts to negotiate a settlement of the Afghan crisis date from a November 1980 mandate of the General Assembly.¹ The diplomatic process was initiated by the UN Secretary General with the support of all governments concerned and aimed at achieving through negotiations a political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan. The negotiations were under way in pursuance of the General Assembly Resolution of November 1981, which listed four essentials for a political solution; (a) the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan; (b) the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic,

political and social system free from outside interventions, subversions, coercion or constraint of any kind whatever; (c) the immediate withdrawal of the “foreign” troops from Afghanistan; and (d) the creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour. Negotiations led by UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs, Diego Cordovez, the Secretary General’s personal representative, were held periodically since 1982 in Geneva. Having agreed to work towards a comprehensive settlement designed to resolve the various issues involved and to establish a framework for good neighbourliness and cooperation, Afghanistan and Pakistan entered into negotiations through the intermediary of Diego Cordovez at Geneva in June 1982.

Following consultations held by the personal representative in Islamabad, Kabul and Tehran during January-February 1983, the negotiations continued at Geneva in April and June 1983. His consultations dealt with four items previously identified for consideration. Diego Cordovez again visited the area for high level discussions in April 1984. Although the parties reportedly made progress in defining the nature of a comprehensive settlement - its principles and objectives, the interrelationship among its four components, and the provisions for its implementation - the talks stalled on the crucial issue of the Soviet’s unwillingness to provide a

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timetable for troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.\(^3\) It was then agreed to change the format of the negotiations, and in pursuance thereof, proximity talks through the intermediary of the personal representative were held at Geneva in August 1984. Another visit to the area by Diego Cordovez in May 1985 was followed by further rounds of proximity talks in Geneva in June, August and December 1985.\(^4\)

In March 1986 Cordovez again shuttled between Islamabad and Kabul in an effort to move the discussion of the fourth instrument forward. Afghanistan produced the timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. The Afghan plan also called for monitoring to determine that 'outside interference' ceased before Soviet Union initiated its troop withdrawal. However, Pakistan appeared encouraged by the progress of the negotiations.\(^5\) Cordovez delivered a new draft of instrument four to the parties in April that served as the basis for another Geneva session that began on 5 May 1986. The talks, though suspended for some time, resumed again in July-August 1986. Cordovez visited the area during November-December 1986 for further

\(^3\) See “Afghanistan: 4 Years of Occupation,” US, Department of State Bulletin, January 1984, p.79.

\(^4\) The sixth round of negotiations came to an end with no significant change. The US was unhappy that the Soviets were unwilling to put forward a timetable for the withdrawal of troops. See Weekly Compilation of the Presidential Documents: The Administration of Ronald Reagan, 28 December 1985, p. 1506; Earlier the US offered to play the role of guarantor. See David K. Shipler, “US Offers to Act as a Guarantor of an Agreement,” The New York Times, 14 December 1985.

consultations, and negotiations continued in Geneva during February-March 1987.\textsuperscript{6} Two sessions of the seventh round of the indirect talks were held during the year. Later, in his report on Afghanistan, the UN Secretary General said that negotiations had reached “an advanced stage” and that “substantial, but not sufficiently sustained progress” had been made.\textsuperscript{7} The personal representative visited the area during January-February 1988, and the talks resumed at Geneva from 2 March to 8 April 1988. Cordovez indicated at this stage that the two sides had removed all significant obstacles to agreement ending Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Despite hopeful assessment, US officials warned that there were still major issues to be resolved.\textsuperscript{8} However, the format of the negotiations was changed in April 1988 when the instruments comprising the settlement were finalized and, accordingly, direct talks were held at that stage.\textsuperscript{9} What appeared to have facilitated the process of prolonged negotiations reaching the stage of an agreement was the change of attitude in Moscow and its policies towards


\textsuperscript{8} See \textit{The New York Times}, 5 March 1988; Other complications almost prevented the signing of the Accords. In the last minute, after the United Nations had convinced the Soviet Union to drop its demand for a coalition government as a pre-condition to signing, Pakistan insisted on the formation of a rebel-dominated interim government, made up largely of rebel and other non-PDPA elements, before it would sign the Accords. Later, Pakistan agreed to sign if pro-Soviet Afghan government would commit itself to promoting formation of an interim government. See \textit{The New York Times}, 25 March 1988.

\textsuperscript{9} The UN mediator announced at this time that full agreement had been reached on treaty under which Soviet Union would withdraw its 115,000 soldiers from Afghanistan. See \textit{The New York Times}, 9 April 1988.
the West and the Third World. This calls for a brief overview of the developments in Soviet Union during the period of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Reorientation of Soviet Foreign Policy

A significant political development that redefined both the domestic configuration of power in the USSR as well as the external environs of politics was the ascendancy of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. His vision of the organization of the state in the USSR represented a break with that of his predecessors. The Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev began to take a new course which was different from that of the earlier approach of “struggle with imperialism.” His ‘new thinking’ came to be known as perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness). The restructuring efforts and the policy of openness brought about radical shifts in the direction and content of Soviet domestic and foreign policies.10 The foundations of the new initiatives were laid first by the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in which the party took stock of the world situation.11

Initially, Gorbachev seemed to be critical of “imperialism’s inhuman course.” Yet, at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986, the Soviets came to the conclusion that contradiction between capitalism and socialism could


11 See Mikhail Gorbachev, Selected Speeches and Articles (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1987), pp.11-36; also see New Times No. 12, March 1986, pp.4-5.
proceed “only and exclusively in forms of peaceful contest” because the modern world had “become much too small and fragile for wars and a policy of strength.” Gorbachev said that there were “signs of a change for better” in Soviet-American relations and that the Soviet Union must “look for, find, and use even the smallest opportunity in order... to reverse the trends towards an escalation of the threat of war.” According to him,

Continuity in foreign policy has nothing in common with a simple repetition of what has been done, especially in tacking the problems that have piled up...(There is need) for an orientation on dialogue and mutual understanding rather than on confrontation.13

Calling upon the US to join hands with the Soviets in searching for solution to the Third World problems, Gorbachev said:

We do not pursue goals inimical to western interests. We know how important the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and other Third World regions ... are for Americans and West Europeans, in particular as raw material sources. To cut these things is the last thing we want to do and we have no desire to provoke ruptures in historically formed mutual economic interest.

According to Gorbachev, economic problems of the Soviet Union were so compelling that a thorough revision of its priorities was inevitable. That explains why he launched a series of new initiatives under perestroika and


13 Gorbachev, *Speeches*, n.11, pp.418-422.
glASNost. While perestroika sought to make a fundamental restructuring of the Soviet economy and polity, glasnost enhanced the possibilities of a democratic foreign policy. The 'new thinking' thus proclaimed the renunciation of the concept of confrontation as a principle of foreign policy and ending the domination of ideological standards by "deideologising state-to-state relations..." 

In the emerging scenario, Soviet Union sought "interdependence and collaboration" with the West and a sort of "disengagement from the Third World." In accordance with this, the revolutionary forces and regimes in the Third World were asked to rely primarily on their resources and even to negotiate or collaborate with their adversaries. Soviets said regional conflicts should not be used to engender confrontation between Moscow and Washington... and that no further large-scale military and economic aid to the Third World was in store.

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14 Perestroika implies not only eliminating the stagnation and conservatism of the preceding period, and correcting the mistakes committed, but also overcoming historically limited outdated features of social organization and work methods... The purpose of perestroika is the full theoretical and practical reestablishment of Lenin's concept of socialism. Special supplement of Soviet Review (Moscow), No.13, 1986, pp 1-72; and Gorbachev, n.10, p.143.

15 Gorbachev, n.10, p.178.


17 See Gorbachev, n.10, pp.176-78.
Thus, the transition to the Gorbachev leadership was marked by a gradual withdrawal of major Soviet operations in the Third World. Ever since, Moscow began to pursue new policies, both at home and abroad. Afghanistan, which enjoyed a special position in Soviet Union's strategy to protect its sensitive southern border, was no exception to Gorbachev's new Third World policy. As early as in November 1985, in his Report to the USSR Supreme Soviet, Gorbachev said:

The Soviet Union consistently favours a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. We stand for friendly neighbouring Afghanistan to be an independent non-aligned state, for creating conditions of guaranteed non-interference in Afghanistan's affairs. The question of withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country will also be resolved. The Soviet Union and the government of Afghanistan are wholly for this. And if anybody hinders an early resolution of that question, it is above all the United States, which is financing, backing and arming gangs of counter-revolutionaries and frustrating efforts aimed at the normalization of the situation in Afghanistan.18

In December 1986, Gorbachev informed Afghan President Najibullah in Moscow that the Soviet military commitment to his government was 'limited.' Najibullah returned to Kabul and immediately launched a policy called

18 Gorbachev, *Speeches*, n.11, pp. 297; He said: Counter-revolution and imperialism have turned Afghanistan into a bleeding wound... We should like, in the near future, to withdraw the Soviet troops stationed in Afghanistan at the request of its government. We have agreed with the Afghan side on the schedule for their phased withdrawal as soon as a political settlement is reached that will ensure an actual cessation and dependably guarantee the non-resumption of foreign armed intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Ibid., pp.419-22)
“national reconciliation,” an effort to broaden the government’s political support base. He also announced a cease-fire and an amnesty for armed oppositionists. The process of glasnost got slowly manifested in the international behaviour of the Soviet Union when on 8 December 1987 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan signed a historic treaty in Washington to eliminate an entire class of nuclear missiles from the earth. While signing the INF Treaty, Gorbachev was also holding closed-door discussions with Reagan towards an agreement on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

Apart from Gorbachev’s ‘new thinking,’ the internal compulsions also caused a change in Soviet attitude towards Afghanistan. In 1986, the Kremlin conceded that the war had become too costly. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet men had rotated in and out of service in Afghanistan and brought home all the signs of a losing battle. The war also hit home in other ways. Billions of roubles were spent on Afghanistan despite the dismal state of the Soviet economy. Stephen White depicts the responses of the Soviet civil society:

The war was an unsatisfactory one for the USSR in several other aspects. It alienated world opinion, particularly in the Third World; it was very expensive (according to figures made public in 1989, the cost was about 5 million roubles annually) and it was very costly in terms of human life (according to figures again


made public in 1989, nearly 14,000 Soviet Service men lost their lives in the course of the war, more than 11,000 of them in combat). The war became a most unpopular one domestically as the toll of dead and injured steadily mounted. Despite attempts to glamorize those who died fulfilling their ‘internationalist duty’ in Afghanistan, there were many letters in the Soviet press complaining of the one-sided treatment of the war that had been provided in the Soviet media and of the failure to make proper provision for the wounded on their return to the USSR. 21

Influenced by considerations such as these, successive leaderships had attempted, since almost the beginning of the war, to disentangle their forces from the conflict. Apparently, there were other reasons for the shift in policy that later prompted Soviet plan of withdrawal from Afghanistan. In the troubled Central Asian Republics, Soviet Muslims had come into contact with the Afghan mujahideen when, at various points during the war, rebel bands crossed the sensitive Soviet border to foment unrest among the Islamic population. 22

Gorbachev took more than a year to formulate a new policy for Afghanistan. He and his supporters in the Politburo and the Central Committee of the CPSU had to wear down considerable opposition from upholders of the Brezhnev line in the party, the government, and the armed forces to a decision to withdraw the Soviet “limited contingent force” from


Afghanistan. In the Seventh round of UN sponsored Geneva proximity talks, the Soviet Union announced that it had reached an agreement with the Marxist regime in Kabul on the modalities of withdrawing the Soviet contingency force. At Geneva, the Soviets asked for a four-year timeframe for the withdrawal. Pakistan insisted on a time limit of six months. It had the solid backing of the Untied States. However, Moscow sought to break the stalemate outside the Geneva process. Soviets announced that it had reached an agreement with Kabul to withdraw six regiments from Afghanistan. Mikhail Gorbachev's intention to withdraw the Soviet forces from Afghanistan was hailed by many countries, including Iran and China. But the most significant response to the peace move was that of the US. Washington knew very well that Mikhail Gorbachev was determined to get the Soviet forces out of Afghanistan. In his famous Vladivostok speech of 28 July 1986, Gorbachev had the courage to describe it as a "bleeding wound". But before he could take out his troops, there must be a government in Afghanistan that would not only survive but be able to maintain law and

23 Gorbachev seemed to have taken some time to convince the CPSU that Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was a mistake. See Bhabani Sen Gupta, The Gorbachev Factor in World Affairs (Delhi: B.R Publishing corporation, 1989), p.187; Gupta says that a year-long intense debate in the CPSU had yielded several points of agreement. First, the military intervention was a mistake of the first order caused by a very serious misreading of the political realities prevailing in the entire South Asia–Persian Gulf region. Second, its political cost had been enormous. Third, disengagement from Afghanistan was an essential first step to mollify the West Europeans, the Arabs and Japan, countries with whom Gorbachev hoped to do good business, before he could penetrate Reagan's iron curtain...the Marxist regime in Afghanistan was a big liability.
order in the country and prevent a blood bath far exceeding what happened during the last seven years.24

Gorbachev established friendly relations with Iran, China, Sri Lanka and other regional powers to have their support to settle the Afghan issue. He tried to mobilize whatever support he could in Western Europe and the Middle East to put pressure on Washington to take a more realist position on the Afghan issue. Thus, Gorbachev's foreign policy based on his 'new thinking' began to show results in his handling of international relations. Stephen White writes that the central achievement of Gorbachev was the restoration of normal relations with the other global superpower after the collapse of détente in the late 1970s. The Soviet Union also broadened its relations more generally with the world community, with Latin American states, apart from Cuba, with the Vatican, Israel and even with South Africa.25 In November 1987, Moscow indicated an early Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. As the next round of Geneva negotiations was scheduled for 22 February 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev announced that Soviet troop withdrawal could begin on 15 May if accords were signed by early 15 March.26 Moscow also agreed to complete its withdrawal in nine months instead of the four years it had demanded earlier. This was a real breakthrough in the long drawn-out negotiations. Then consultations followed between Afghanistan, USSR, US and Pakistan to arrive at a

24 Ibid., p. 187.


concrete settlement. The Geneva Accords were, thus, signed after a very lengthy process, which paved the way for withdrawal of Soviet forces.

**The Geneva Accords**

The Geneva Accords signed on 14 April 1988 consisted of four official agreements, plus unilateral statements by the United States and the United Nations. Each agreement was to enter into force on 15 May 1988. Afghanistan and Pakistan adhered to the "principle of non-interference and non-intervention" in the internal affairs of each other (Article I). Both countries agreed "to respect the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, security and non-alignment" of the other; "to respect the sovereign and inalienable right of the other to determine its own political, economic, cultural and social systems, to develop its international relations and to exercise permanent sovereignty over its natural resources in accordance with the will of its people, and without outside intervention, interference, subversion, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever"; to refrain from the threat or use of force in any form whatsoever so as not to violate the boundaries of each other, to disrupt the political, social or economic order of the other or to overthrow or change the political system of the other; to ensure that its territory is not used in any manner which would violate the sovereignty, political independence,

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territorial integrity and national unity or disrupt the political, economic and social stability of the other; to refrain from armed intervention, subversion, military occupation or any other form of intervention and interference, overt or covert, directed at the other country or any act of military political or economic interference in the internal affairs of the other, including acts of reprisal involving the use of force; to refrain from any action or attempt in whatsoever form or under whatever pretext to destabilize or to undermine the stability of the other country or any of its institutions; to refrain from the promotion, encouragement or support, direct or indirect, of rebellious or secessionist activities against the other under any pretext whatsoever, or from any other action which seeks to disrupt the unity or to undermine or subvert the political order of the other; to prevent within its territory the training, equipping, financing and recruitment of mercenaries from whatever origin for the purpose of hostile activities against the other, or the sending of such mercenaries into the territory of the other and accordingly to deny facilities, including financing for the training, equipping and transit of such mercenaries; to prevent within its territory the presence, harbouring, in camps and bases of otherwise, organizing, training, financing, equipping and arming of individuals and political, ethnic and any other groups for the purpose of creating subversion, disorder or unrest in the territory of the other country and accordingly also to prevent the use of mass media and the transportation of arms, ammunition and equipment by such individuals and groups.  

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28 Article II of the Accords. See Agreements on Afghanistan, n.27; and Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, n. 27.
Under the Geneva Accords, the United States and the Soviet Union signed a one-page document pledging support for the Afghan-Pakistan agreement. The two superpowers said that they would refrain from any form of interference and intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and Pakistan and to respect the commitments contained in the bilateral Agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Likewise, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to allow all Afghan refugees temporarily present in the territory of Pakistan to return voluntarily to their homeland. As per this, Afghanistan “shall ensue; (a) all refugees returned in “freedom to their homeland”; enjoying the free choice of domicile and freedom of movement within Afghanistan; (c) enjoy the right to work, to adequate living conditions and to share in the welfare of the State; (d) the right to participate on an equal basis in the civic affairs of Afghanistan; (e) enjoy the same rights and privileges, including freedom of religion, and have the same obligations and responsibilities as any other citizens of Afghanistan without discrimination. Pakistan should also “facilitate the voluntary, orderly and peaceful repatriation of all Afghan refugees staying within its territory and undertakes to provide, within its possibilities, all necessary assistance in the process of repatriation.” 29

Nearly all negotiations involved the fourth agreement, signed by Afghanistan and Pakistan and witnessed by the US and the USSR. In accordance with

29 See Agreements on Afghanistan, n.27; also see UN Chronicle, Vol.66, Summer 1988, pp.922-45.
the time-frame agreed upon between Soviet Union and Afghanistan there
"will be a phased withdrawal of the foreign troops which will start on the
date of entry into force mentioned above (15 May 1988). One half of the
troops would be withdrawn by 15 August 1988 and the withdrawal of all
troops would be completed within nine months." The agreement further says
that a representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations "shall
lend his good offices to the Parties and in that context he will assist in the
organization of the meetings and participate in them. He may submit to the
Parties for their consideration and approval suggestions and
recommendations for prompt, faithful and complete observance of the
provisions of the instruments." In order to enable him to fulfil his talks, the
representative shall be assisted by such personnel under his authority as
required. On his own initiative, or at the request of any of the Parties, the
personnel shall investigate any possible violations of any of the provisions of
the instruments and prepare a report thereon. For that purpose, the
representative and his personnel "shall receive all the necessary co-
operation from the Parties, including all freedom of movement within their
respective territories required for effective investigation." Any report
submitted by the representative to the two governments "shall be considered
in a meeting of the parties no later than forth-eight hours after it has been
submitted." A separate memorandum called for UN Secretary-General to
appoint two five member inspection teams to be headquartered in Kabul and
Islamabad.30

30 Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, n. 27; and Agreements on Afghanistan, n.27.
In the Annex II of the Accords, the Soviet Union agreed to “fully comply with the obligations contained in the Geneva agreements” and “fulfil its treaty obligations to Afghanistan.” The Soviet side should also “provide assistance in resolving the problem of refugees and in contributing to Afghanistan’s economic reconstruction and development.” In the Annex III, United States agreed to act as a guarantor of the political settlement of the situation relating to Afghanistan. The US believed this “settlement is a major step forward in restoring peace to Afghanistan, in ending the bloodshed in that unfortunate country, and in enabling millions of Afghan refugees to return to their homes.” In agreeing to act as a guarantor, the United States said:

(1) The troops withdrawal obligations set out in paragraph 5 and 6 of the Instrument on Interrelationships are central to the entire settlement. Compliance with those obligations is essential to achievement of the settlement’s purposes, namely, the ending of foreign intervention in Afghanistan and the restoration of the rights of the Afghan people through the exercise of self-determination as called for by the United Nations Charter and the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on Afghanistan.

(2) The obligations undertaken by the guarantors are symmetrical. In this regard, the United State has advised the Soviet Union that the United States retains the right, consistent with its obligations as guarantor, to provide military assistance to parties in Afghanistan. Should the Soviet Union exercise restraint in providing military assistance to parties in Afghanistan, the United States similarly will exercise restraint.
(3) By acting as a guarantor of the settlement, the United States does not intend to imply in any respect recognition of the present regime as the lawful Government of Afghanistan.31

Iran, which had refused to participate without the inclusion of the Afghan resistance, was officially kept informed in the negotiations. However, neither of the organized Afghan resistance nor any other representative of the non-communist people of Afghanistan, including representative of the refugees, was included in the negotiations or kept officially informed. Pakistan, in effect, served as negotiator on their behalf.32

All four of the Accords were to come into force on 15 May 1988, the date specified for the beginning of the Soviet withdrawal. The documents did not, however, deal directly with the Soviet presence in Afghanistan per se. This was consistent with the position of both Moscow and the Kabul regime. The Soviet-supported governments since 1980 had been seen as the "lawful legitimate" government of Afghanistan and the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan was, therefore, interpreted as an internal matter to be determined by the Kabul government on the basis of bilateral arrangement between two sovereign states.33

31 Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, n. 27; and Agreements on Afghanistan, n.27.
The first of the bilateral agreements between Pakistan and Afghanistan, binds the two parties to refrain from various specified activities that could institute interference in one another's affairs. Its detailed clauses effectively prohibit every means by which Pakistan could assist, or could permit its territory to be used to assist the Afghanistan resistance.34 On the other hand, it did not specifically mention in any way the Soviet military presence or any form of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. Both the Soviet Union and the Kabul regime consistently maintained that the agreement applied only to outside assistance to forces opposed to the regime i.e., Afghanistan resistance, and not to the Soviet military aid to or other involvement in the Kabul regime, which was, they claimed, a bilateral determination between two sovereign governments. This interpretation appeared to have been adopted in the Accords.35

How 'intervention' was defined also affected interpretation of the "Declaration on International Guarantees" signed by the United States and the Soviet Union which committed them to non-interference and non-intervention in the affairs of the signatories, Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also committed them to respect the Afghan-Pakistani non-intervention accord; the other accords were not specifically mentioned at all in the


“Declaration on International Guarantees.” If carried out to the letter, the bilateral agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan on non-interference and non-intervention and, particularly the specific Provision of Article II—while not affecting Soviet assistance to Kabul, would bar the government of Pakistan from providing any sanctuary or assistance to the Afghan resistance or any other opponents of the regime in Kabul. It would also bar Pakistan from allowing anyone else to provide such assistance through the territory or air space of Pakistan since this was the only route available into landlocked Afghanistan; enforcement of Article II would, in practical terms, negate any possibility of continued US or other international aid to the resistance.37

Regarding the issue of refugees, the anticipated speedy return of approximately 3.5 million refugees in Pakistan (as well as two more in Iran) turned out to be equally cumbersome. The text of the bilateral agreement on refugees was vague and unclear about implementation. It also emphasized that the return of refugees was to be 'voluntary'. It was not clear how many millions of refugees were to be persuaded to return to live under the government they detested and rejected.38 Rosanne Klass pointed out that

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36 Agreements on Afghanistan, n.27.

37 As a guarantor, the US essentially committed itself to cut off aid to any sort of the Afghan opposition and to make sure that Pakistan did the same. See Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, n. 27.

38 Annually, a number of Afghans used to cross the borders of Pakistan for pasturing and similar cases. After a season (mainly winter), they came back to their homeland. But after the Soviet intervention, those who had crossed the Pakistan border were not allowed to return. They were also recruited as refugees. Pakistan had kept the "refugee problem" on the limelight to get international sympathy and support for the Zia Ul-Haq regime and also to get maximum US economic and military aid to Pakistan government for its very existence. In Pakistan, refugees were allowed to work and used as mercenaries.
the refugees were reluctant to return to Afghanistan not due to the communist regime but due to the loss of property and shelter and land mines, and infighting that was going on in Afghanistan.39

United States Policy Responses

In late 1987 and early 1988, the Reagan administration came under pressure of the conservative members of the Senate as well as the House on the question of supporting the Afghan mujahideen.40 This was the time when reports about a “secret understanding” between Moscow and Washington sparked heated debates. In late February 1988, the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs held hearings at which Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert A. Peck testified:

The obligation which the United States would undertake as a “guarantor” would relate exclusively to our policies and actions. We would bear no responsibility for the actions of others, or for the successful implementation of the agreement as a whole. We and the Soviet Union would agree to the same basic commitment regarding noninterference and nonintervention. We would be prepared, if completely satisfied with the agreement, to prohibit US military

39 See Rosanne Klass, n.33, pp.940-942.

assistance to the Afghan resistance. We would expect the Soviet Union
to show reciprocal restraint under the Geneva accords in stopping its
military support for the Kabul regime. The commitments of all the
parties would enter into effect on an agreed date following signature; at
the present time this is expected to be at the end of 60 days.41

Peck's speech enraged senators. For example, Majority Leader Robert C.
Byrd said that he was "shocked" and "stunned." According to him, this "does
not comport with what Secretary Shultz and the President have said to
me.... This would be a sellout by the United States, if I understand it
correctly... and it would be a shameful sellout."42 Congress members,
Humphrey, Wilson, Byrd and others insisted that there had to be 'symmetry'
between US and Soviet actions in Afghanistan. In other words, the United
States would continue supplying arms to the mujahideen as long as the
Soviets gave military supplies to Kabul. The Senate went further by
approving a non-binding resolution(S Res 386) on 29 February 1988
demanding that the US aid to the rebels continue until it was "absolutely
clear" that the Soviets had left Afghanistan and that the guerrillas were "well
enough equipped" to defend themselves.43

The resolution was sparked by widespread reports that the Geneva
negotiations would require the United States to end military aid to the

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41 For the full text of the statement see Wireless File, mimeographed release of the

42 For details see Congressional Record, Vol.134, No.21, 29 February 1988, p.81608.

mujahideen as soon as the Soviet troop withdrawal begins. The key provision of the resolution expressed the Senate's strong belief:

the government of the United States should not cease, suspend, diminish, or otherwise restrict assistance to the Afghan resistance or take actions which might limit the ability of the resistance to receive assistance until it is absolutely clear that the Soviets have terminated their military occupation, that they are not redeploying their forces to be inserted again, and that the mujahideen is well enough equipped to maintain its integrity during the delicate period of a transition government leading up to new elections.44

On the House side, however, conflict between liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans stalled a similar resolution hindering Congressional efforts to push President Reagan towards a tougher stance in UN talks on the pull out of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The disagreement forced the cancellation of the panel's scheduled March 8 markup of a non-binding resolution urging President Reagan to resist a hasty cut off military aid to rebels battling Soviet troops and the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan. A key provision of H Res. 396, offered by Gerald B.H Solomon said US aid should not cease “until the president has determined that the Soviets have terminated their military occupation” of the country. The Solomon formulation represented a weaker version of a provision included in a non-binding resolution (S Res. 386) unanimously approved by the Senate. However, Stephen J Solarz, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs, sought to moderate the Solomon provision to call for

aid to continue until Reagan had determined the Soviets 'are terminating' their occupation. Solomon refused to accept this change.45

The concept of "symmetry" was enunciated by the State Department in early March 1988 in response to the critical Senate reaction to the State Department's willingness to agree to the immediate cut off US aid to the Afghan resistance on the day the Accords would come into being, despite the continued Soviet military assistance to Kabul. This was reiterated in the statement submitted by Secretary of State Shultz in Geneva on 14 April.46 How the position could be reconciled with the Accords, including US guarantees to ensure noninterference, was not revealed.

Meanwhile President Reagan said:

The Geneva Accords that we've been negotiating on and picking back and forth at each other for a long time. We have finally reached an agreement and there is nothing in that agreement that is going to prevent us from supplying the (mujahideen) as long as they need it and as long as the Soviet Union continues to supply the Afghan forces in their puppet government that they're leaving behind. So, there's no

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46 At a pre-summit meeting in Washington on 22 March Shultz told Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that the US would refuse to sign the accords without a US-Soviet agreement allowing symmetry on the issue. On 30 March, Shultz sent a letter outlining the symmetry proposal. See Congressional Quarterly Almanac, Vol. XLIV, 1988, p.469; Soviet Union later announced that the remaining issues were settled. The New York Times, 8 April 1988.
restriction on us; the (mujahideen) are going to continue to have our help.47

On another occasion, Reagan stated:

We feel that as long as the Soviet Union has provided support and arms and so forth and advisors to the Afghan force of their puppet government, that even though they go, we must continue to support the (mujahideen) so that the people of Afghanistan can now, without the absence of Soviet Union - I mean without the presence of Soviet Union, that they can bring about a government that is a government chosen by the people of Afghanistan And we do not recognize that the government there in Kabul is anything but a puppet government established by the Soviet Union. And so...as long as weapons are being supplied to that other side, we're going to do whatever is necessary to support the (mujahideen).48

During the critical days before the Geneva Accords, Senator Humphrey visited Pakistan and Geneva, cabling President Reagan to report the unanimous opposition of the Afghan resistance to the accords under negotiation.49 When the Accords were signed, there emerged mixed reactions from Washington. President Reagan stated that the US “takes great pride in having assisted the Afghan people in this triumph” and assured them of “continued support.” The administration presented the Accords as “great achievement.” Secretary of State Shultz said that the

48 Ibid., p 614
49 Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, leader of the resistance, rejected accords and raised threat of unrest among Afghan refugees in Pakistan. See The New York Times, 10 April 1988; also see Rosanne Klass, n.33, p.936.
policy goals of the US in Afghanistan had been fully realized. He assured American support for the resettlement of the refugees. The critics denounced the Accords. Senator Humphrey said it "constitutes a slow-motion sell out" and betrayal of Afghan fighters. The conservatives also worried that their "liberal colleagues on Capitol Hill might weaken their support for the guerrillas once it is clear that the Soviets are on their way out of Afghanistan." They feared that Pakistan would face international pressures to close crucial arms-supply routes to the guerrillas, while the Soviets would continue aiding the Kabul regime.

By the end of April 1988, President Najibullah said that Soviet military advisors would remain behind help Afghan armed forces after Soviet troop withdrawal while asserting Afghanistan's right to continue acquiring weapons from Soviet Union or elsewhere. The Reagan administration expressed concern about the possibility of strong Soviet influence remaining in Afghanistan's military affairs. However, the Soviets formally began pulling out 115,000 troops from Afghanistan on 15 May 1988. Washington

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50 See Agreements on Afghanistan, n.27; also see The New York Times, 12, 13 and 14 April 1988.

51 See John Felton, "Afghan Deal Won't End War, Policy Questions," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 16 April 1988, p.993; also see Congressional Quarterly Almanac, n.44, p.467; However, some other active supporters of the mujahideen endorsed the Accords and said that the conservative fears were unjustified. They argued that the Soviet guarantee had opened the way for the policy of symmetry, enabling the United States to match Soviet military aid to its clients, at least theoretically, with American aid to the resistance. Ibid.

welcomed the Soviet withdrawal of forces.\textsuperscript{53} Later, the UN officials confirmed that the USSR had already removed tens of thousands of soldiers from Afghanistan and that the process was well under way. However, the US officials had some doubts about the Soviet commitment of troop withdrawal within the stipulated time in the background of Moscow's charges that Pakistan was violating the Geneva Accords by aiding the \textit{mujahideen}.\textsuperscript{54} Meanwhile, Washington's support to the Afghan cause continued. Richard S. Williamson, a US official told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States budgeted $119 million in humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugees in fiscal year 1988. He said that despite budgetary constraints, the US intended to maintain an overall level of bilateral and multilateral aid around $119 million in fiscal year 1989.\textsuperscript{55} In August 1988, the Reagan administration said that 10 to 16 million land mines were hidden in Afghanistan, posing dangers that could delay return of Afghan refugees. It also accused the Soviet Union of rejecting its appeals for the removal of land mines.\textsuperscript{56}

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{54} Michael H. Armacost, US Under Secretary for Political Affairs, in a statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said that in charging that Pakistan was violating the Accords, Moscow sought to build up pressure on the Pakistanis to rein in the \textit{mujahideen}. See US, Department of State, \textit{Status Report on Afghanistan: Current Policy} No. 1087 (Washington, D.C: Bureau of Public Affairs, July 1988), p.2.

\textsuperscript{55} See ibid., p.4.

\textsuperscript{56} Soviet Union said that it was helping the Afghans remove and defuse mines which it said were planted by Afghan guerrillas. \textit{The New York Times}, 17 August 1988.
\end{footnotes}
As the Reagan era was coming to an end, American foreign policy observers felt that there was "a full agenda of unfinished business in conflicts where the United States sided with 'freedom fighters' against leftist governments." John Felton writes that of "those guerrilla groups, only the (mujahideen) in Afghanistan appear to have victory within reach." During his election campaign, President-elect George Bush said that he would favour a "global commitment" by Washington on behalf of guerillas that were battling Soviet-backed leftist regimes in the Third World. In his last statement as President, Ronald Reagan said:

...as February 15 approaches, the Soviets continue offensive military preparations in Afghanistan. The introduction of new weapons and the escalation in the use of Soviet warplanes in bombing raids against Afghanistan call into question the Soviet commitment to a peaceful solution.

In early 1989, the Department of State estimated that the US hopes for the Soviet restriction of military assistance to the Kabul regime were not realized. It also noted that despite improvements in some aspects of the human rights situation, there were cases of torture and ill-treatment of


58 In his first news conference as President-elect, Bush said that he would hold Soviet Union to its troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and was eager to continue good will towards Moscow. The New York Time, 10 November 1988.

prisoners. The State Department also noted the latest UN resolution which said that human rights violations "persist with the same frequency as in the past" and the civilians were most affected.\textsuperscript{60}

In the background of the internal turmoil in Kabul, the new Secretary of State James Baker decided, just hours after being sworn in, to close US Embassy in Afghanistan temporarily because of increasing instability during the final stages of the Soviet withdrawal. His decision reflected concern for safety of remaining American diplomats and Marine guards stationed in Kabul. Bush defended the action, which was followed by Britain, France, Italy and Japan.\textsuperscript{61} However, the Bush administration had not yet made decisions with regard to Afghanistan's future, including whether to continue supplying rebels with military equipments after the Soviet withdrawal. Meanwhile, the administration began to consider lifting export controls on high-technology items which had not been sold to Soviet Union for nearly a decade after the intervention.

In February 1989, the Bush administration, under Congressional pressure to maintain military backing of the \textit{mujahideen}, moved to review the next steps in US policy towards Afghanistan. Administration officials were quoted as saying that Washington faced several questions in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal, such as: how long to continue shipping weapons and other

\textsuperscript{60} US, \textit{Department of State Bulletin}, March 1989, pp.75-86.

supplies to the guerrillas through Pakistan, how to attempt to influence the formation of a new government for Kabul, and when to extend official diplomatic recognition to a new regime. US aid to mujahideen had long been supported by a broad bipartisan majority in Congress. Key activists supporting that aid had insisted that “the administration continue the aid until the guerrilla leaders say they no longer need it.”

On 15 February 1989, Soviet Union completed the troops withdrawal ending nine-year history of uncertainty. In the immediate aftermath of the completion of the withdrawal, there were concerns everywhere what would happen to the Najibullah regime in Kabul. Apparently fearing the possibility of a coup, Najibullah announced the imposition of martial law, appointed a Hazara (in a gesture aimed at the shi'ite community), Sultan Ali Keshtmand, to the post of Prime Minister, replaced six non-party ministers (who had come into the government as part of the December 1986, national reconciliation policy) with party members, and formed a Supreme Defense Council of top party members. Najibullah continued to advocate his national reconciliation policy.

In Washington, Islamabad, and Peshawar, all peace proposals by the Soviets and the Kabul regime were rejected. The mujahideen and their supporters


were not interested in any formula which would allow the PDPA to retain any power and saw its collapse as imminent. This expectation of swift victory apparently resulted in the decisions by the US regarding the mujahideen in the history of their relationship. Despite insisting during the Geneva talks on the principle of "positive symmetry," the United States apparently cut back considerably its military aid in late 1988 and early 1989. According to sources in the intelligence community, in May 1988 Michael Armacost, Under-secretary of State for Political Affairs made a verbal agreement with the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister whereby the United States agreed to cut back the supply of Stinger and advanced Spanish 120mm mortars in return for which the Soviets would refrain from launching offensives during their withdrawal. There was some fear that the Stingers would end up in the hands of terrorists once the war was over. As the withdrawal proceeded, the arms supply began to dry up. According to former Senator Gordon Humphrey, who was co-chairman of the Congressional Task Force on Afghanistan, the supply of arms in the first half of 1989 was less than half that of same period in 1988.64 Whatever that got through was reportedly taken over by the ISI in preparation for the Jalalabad offensive or possibly to prevent any field commanders not beholden to the Pakistanis, such as Ahmad Shah Massoud, from taking advantage of the completion of the Soviet withdrawal to move quickly to overthrow the regime.

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Thus, as events unfolded after 15 February, there was a great deal of optimism on the part of the *mujahideen* and their supporters. Soviet troops were gone, the regime appeared to be on the defensive, the *mujahideen* in the West were patting themselves on the back for a job well done. Events in early 1989 were soon to intrude on that optimism and lead rapidly to an abject pessimism. The 'holy warriors' were about to become those bickering factionalists who could not get their act together. As the Soviet Union completed its withdrawal, the *mujahideen* political leadership in Peshawar, Pakistan, in anticipation of the rapid collapse of Najib's government in Kabul, began moving quickly to form an interim government. A *shura* was convened in Rawalpindi on 10 February, and, after two weeks of discussions, an interim government was elected on 23 February.65 Moderate Sibghatullah Mojadedi was named President, Abd-ur-Rab-ur-Rasul Sayyaf was chosen as Prime Minister, and the other cabinet posts were distributed between the seven Peshawar-based parties.

Even before the *shura* voted, it was clear to most observers that the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) would be deeply flawed. To correct these problems, it was hoped that general elections could be held within six months. Though Pakistan had played a major role in shaping the outcome of the *shura*, including allowing militants from Gulbuddin Hikmatyar's *Hizb-e Islami* to attack opponents and critics of the process, the Benazir Bhutto

government also refrained from recognizing the AIG. The United States greeted the formation of the AIG as a positive step, and proceeded to work with it while withholding formal recognition. The US insisted that the government-in-exile meet the criteria such as control over territory, functioning civil administration and broad popular support. The only countries to formally recognize the AIG were Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the Sudan, and Malaysia.

Meanwhile the Bush administration said it would continue to use Pakistan's intelligence services as conduit for military aid to Afghan rebels instead of sending it directly to newly rebel government-in-exile. An important problem at this stage was that the American officials were divided on the question whether the US should play more active and direct role in trying to influence Afghanistan's future. Former officials and foreign policy observers also put across their positions on Afghanistan. For instance, Richard Nixon observed that in Afghanistan a "sustained, bipartisan

66 In one incident, on 8 February royalist tribal elders from the Durrani tribes, demonstrating in favour of the return of King Zahir Shah, were attacked by Hizb-e Islami (Hikmatyar) radicals while Pakistani police stood by and did nothing. See Rubin, n.63, p. 445.


68 Essentially, the problems with the AIG were the way it was formed and its composition. It was formed hastily, under pressure from outside elements with their own agendas - Saudi Arabia and Pakistan - and the money and arms to back their hand-picked representatives, and the shura which elected it was far from representative. It excluded representatives of the traditional tribal leadership of Afghanistan and was heavily weighted toward Ghilzai and Eastern Pashtuns and away from Durrani Pashtuns (who were seen as too royalist) and Afghanistan's many ethnic and religious minorities. The eight Iran-based Shi'ite parties did not participate.


70 Ibid., 1 March 1989.
program of large-scale assistance to anticommunist freedom fighters can produce major geopolitical gains." He says:

Our goal has been twofold, to force the Soviet Union to withdraw and to restore the Afghan people's right to self-determination. Achieving the former does not automatically accomplish the latter. First of all, the communist regime in Kabul must be replaced. The best solution would be the removal of the Soviet puppet regime through the direct talks now taking place between Moscow and the resistance leadership. But should those talks stall or fail we must continue to provide whatever kinds of weapons the resistance requires to topple the Kabul regime. Since the character of the fighting has changed from guerrilla warfare to battles for taking and holding cities, the United States must upgrade its assistance quantitatively and qualitatively, particularly in terms of antiaircraft missiles, long-range mortars, and mine-clearing devices and equipment.71

In May 1989, President George Bush outlined the emerging foreign policy perspectives and strategies of the United States. These would have far-reaching implications for its global involvements, particularly in the background of the developments in East Europe. At the outset, he spoke about the "the world we want to see, and what we can do to bring that new world into clear focus."

We live in a time when we are witnessing the end of an idea – the final chapter of the communist experiment. Communism is now recognised - even by many within the communist world itself - as a failed system –

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71 Richard Nixon, "American Foreign Policy: The Bush Agenda," Foreign Affairs,
- even by many within the communist world itself – as a failed system – one that promised economic prosperity but failed to deliver the goods, a system that built a wall between the people and their political aspirations.72

Bush claimed that the United States and its allies were strong – “stronger ...than at any point in the postwar period, and more capable than ever of supporting the cause of freedom.” He said that there came “an opportunity before us to shape a new world.” Outlining the broad features of the emerging global economy, he said that “a dynamic free-market system” would be “generating prosperity and progress on a global scale.” Bush continues:

We must combat misguided notions of economic nationalism that will tell us to close off our economies to foreign competition, just when the global market place has become a fact of life. We must open the door to the nations of Eastern Europe and other socialist countries that embrace free-market reforms. And finally for developing nations heavily burdened with debt, we must provide assistance and encourage the market reforms that will set those nations on a path towards growth.73

President Bush also spoke about his perceptions about the Soviet Union. Welcoming the changes under way in the country, he said that the United States would like to see the policies of glasnost and perestroika succeed and institutionalized within the Soviet Union. Bush further observed that the “grand strategy of the west during the postwar period has been based on


73 Ibid.
the concept of communism" and "checking the Soviet Union's expansionist aims." And the United States "have a precious opportunity to move beyond containment." He said that the US "goal – integrating the Soviet Union into the community of nations – is every bit as ambitious as containment was at its time."74 In the following months, between July and December 1989, the communist governments of Eastern Europe collapsed, giving the United States a sudden and unexpected 'victory' in its global conflict with the Soviet Union. In Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, the changes were so sweeping that the new regimes began to proclaim their commitment to democratic politics and market economics. 74

Meanwhile, the United States policy towards Pakistan came under reevaluation, particularly in the background of the developments in East-West relations, including the Soviet pullout of troops from Afghanistan. In June 1989, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto visited Washington and had discussions with the Bush administration. Dispelling the conservative fears that her government would go soft on the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul, Benazir declared that Afghan president Najibullah and his associates could not be part of any settlement in Afghanistan. However, she insisted that the US and Pakistan push the fractious Afghan

74 President Bush also spoke about the US military strategy for the future. He said that deterrence was central to the US defence strategy. He said: "In today's world, nuclear forces are essential to deterrence. Our challenge is to protect those from attack. See Ibid.

74 See Michael Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, Vol.70,
resistance forces to broaden their political base inside their homeland and seek an eventual political settlement that would exclude Najibullah. Benazir’s trip also yielded Pakistan more concrete results: Bush agreed to help Pakistan modernize its aging air force with 60 new F-16 fighters, contingent on approval by Capitol Hill. And he promised a $1.5 million contribution toward the cost of setting up an elite anti-narcotic strike force in Pakistan.75 However, there were speculations in policy circles whether the Bush administration would certify Pakistan’s nuclear position for authorizing further foreign aid in spite of Benazir Bhutto’s declaration that Pakistan did not have weapons programme in its nuclear research and development.76

During this time, the situation in Afghanistan was becoming much worse when fighting between various factions of the resistance resulted in heavy casualties.77 Though Hikmatyar’s forces had been attacking other mujahideen for years, the magnitude of this attack, combined with the

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evaluation of US policy toward Afghanistan concentrating on Hikmatyar’s role and the ISI’s support for him. A number of issues dominated the policy debate during the year. The primary ones were: an apparent cut-off or significant cutback in US military aid to the mujahideen; the CIA’s allowance of the ISI to control the flow of arms; the failures of the AIG; the level of continued Soviet involvement in Afghanistan; and charges that the US had no diplomatic strategy for ending the war and that US policy was driven by inertia. The question of the drop in US military assistance came to fore in August at a Congressional hearing where Gen. Rahim Wardak testified that the resistance had not received any significant supplies of arms since December 1988. Congressional criticism of the CIA’s mishandling led to the removal of the head of the CIA’s Afghan Task Force in late August. Not only had the supply of weapons slowed to less than half of the levels of the previous year, but because the CIA had acquiesced to Pakistani control over the arms pipeline, most of the supplies were provided to the factions favoured by ISI. Ahmad Shah Massoud, who refused to allow the ISI to dictate terms to him, charged in an interview in October 1989 that “this year, we have not received [even] a single map.” Other sources indicated that most of what aid the US sent was hoarded by Hikmatyar’s Hizb-e Islami or sold by the Pakistanis in the black market. The role of the ISI had been

80 The US sharply cut arms supplies to groups that were accused of attacking other factions in the seven-member rebel coalition. The New York Times, 19 November 1989.
brought up when Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto visited the United States in June 1989. Bhutto managed to replace the head of the ISI, General Hamid Gul, by promoting him and assigning him command of a corps, but General Mirza Aslam Beg, Pakistani Army Chief of Staff, simply brought Gul to his headquarters as an advisor on Afghan affairs and took more direct control of Afghan policy. Bhutto's replacement for Gen. Gul, Lieutenant General Shamsur Rahman Kallu, was bypassed by ISI deputies who went straight to Beg. Though the subversive role of the ISI was recognized by virtually everyone involved in setting US policy, US respect for Pakistani sovereignty and the inability of the Bhutto government to rein in the military prevented the US from effecting much change.

By the summer of 1990, the problem with the ISI advanced to the point that two members of Congress, Dave Dreier and Don Ritter separately began measures aimed at pressuring the Bhutto government to bring the ISI into line by threatening to cut off aid to Pakistan, but the downfall of the Bhutto government and the cutoff of aid in response to Pakistan's nuclear program removed virtually all of the United States' leverage in Pakistan. The United States also reevaluated its relationship with the Afghan Interim Government in late 1989. Most observers had by that point conceded that the AIG had been an utter failure. It had no control over the supply of humanitarian and military aid and so could not enforce its many decrees. It had failed in its efforts to broaden its base or move forward on its election plan. Its authority did not extend outside its offices in Peshawar. In fact, the AIG's only positive accomplishment was to shrink its base, when, after Mohadedi denounced
Hikmatyar for the attack on Massoud's commanders and accused him of killing hundreds of political opponents, and the AIG began an investigation of the Farkhar massacre, Hekmatyar left the AIG in late August.\(^8\) Hekmatyar still received the lion's share of Saudi and Pakistani support.

However, in the light of all of the problems with the CIA, the ISI, the AIG, and Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, the US decided in late 1989 to have second thoughts on the *mujahideen*. However, the continued Soviet support for the Kabul regime, which seemed to defy explanation given the relaxation of East-West tensions and the apparent Soviet desire to concentrate on putting their own house in order, gave strength to those who did not want to see the United States "abandon" the Afghans. The level of Soviet support even at this time was reportedly massive and unprecedented. Intelligence reports indicated that between February 15 and the end of August, 3,800 flights landed in Kabul in what was described as the "largest airlift in Soviet aviation history."\(^8\) By October, according to US intelligence estimates, the rate of Soviet resupply had grown to 2,700 tons per day valued at $400 million per month.\(^8\) This compares with US aid to the *mujahideen* which various estimates place at between $500-$600 million per year.


\(^8\) *Washington Times*, 18 October 1989.
During this time, US intelligence agencies also reported that Soviet advisors were directly involved in supporting the regime’s military operations. They reported that "all functions connected with the security, transportation, storage and launch of Scud missiles are handled by Soviet advisors," some wearing Afghan uniforms. Other advisors were involved in planning military operations and training regime troops and militiamen. In early October, after returning from a trip to Pakistan, Claiborne Pell, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, arguing that "U.S. interest in Afghanistan is primarily humanitarian and not strategic" with the decline of the Cold War, revived the issue of negative symmetry, the mutual negotiated cutoff of arms deliveries by the United States and the Soviet Union. Democrats in Congress and others criticized the administration for failing to pursue a political solution to the Afghan war. The administration responded by pointing to the extent of continued Soviet military support to the Kabul regime, but did broach the subject of negative symmetry at the Malta summit. The Soviets supported negative symmetry, but linked it to a ceasefire and negotiations between the mujahideen and Najib's government, terms which were unacceptable to the United States and the mujahideen. The only Afghan to favour negative symmetry was Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, who seemed to attack the Americans and the AIG more than the Kabul regime. The level of Soviet support to the Kabul regime, the inability to narrow US-Soviet differences at the Malta summit, and the feeling that the

failure of the mujahideen to achieve victory in 1989 may have been partly the fault of the United States precluded the administration from significantly altering its policy in 1989, beyond denouncing Hikmatyar and seeking to bypass the ISI and the parties to deliver arms directly to the field commanders.

For the most part, 1990 saw a continuation of the same pattern as in 1989. The military stalemate continued. Soviet aid to the Kabul regime remained, amounting to some $4-$5 billion in 1990, despite the worsening economic crisis in the Soviet Union.88 Despite attempts to polish its image, the regime of Najibullah remained unpopular and rent with divisions, with only its secret police and the inability of the mujahideen to form a viable alternative keeping it in power. The AIG continued to falter. The consensus behind US support continued to weaken while the Bush administration worked to narrow its differences with the Soviets on a diplomatic settlement. At this time The New York Times urged the Bush administration to rethink its entire policy on Afghanistan saying that the "onus for fueling the murderous civil war there now falls on US and Pakistan, the main supporters of the rebel coalition."89 As the uncertainty continued, the mujahideen scored some important military successes and the regime was further weakened by a major coup attempt in March 1990.90

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90 The Bush administration said that the coup attempt showed that the Kabul regime was too weak and vulnerable. Ibid., 12 March 1990.
During the year, the United States had grown increasingly suspicious about Pakistan's nuclear programme and charged Islamabad with continuing to produce fissional material in violation of pledges made to qualify for US economic and military assistance. Reflecting the changed global and priorities, Washington brought its security ties with Pakistan to a sudden end in October 1990, when President Bush withheld certification to Congress that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons, whereupon the disbursement of $573 million in assistance earmarked for Pakistan in fiscal year 1990-91 was suspended.\footnote{Muslim, 5 October 1990.; also see Rasul B. Rais, "Afghanistan and Regional Security After the Cold War," \textit{Problems of Communism}, Vol.XLI, May-June 1992, p.88.}

Congress had already moved to cut and place restrictions on Bush administration's request for continued covert military aid to Afghan rebels.\footnote{For a comprehensive view of the opinions of the Congressmen, see \textit{US, United States Policy Toward Afghanistan: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred First Congress, Second Session 7 March 1990} (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1990); and \textit{The New York Times}, 30 September 1990.}

Even as the civil war in Afghanistan continued, the Bush administration provided no funds for Afghan rebels in its proposed 1992 budget for the reason that the efforts to overthrow the Kabul regime seemed to be outmoded and hard to defend. The move was seen as part of larger strategy of the Bush administration to induce Soviet Union which was reportedly
providing an estimated $250 million to $300 million in arms to Kabul.\textsuperscript{93} By September, the US and Soviet Union agreed to stop all arms sales to combatants in Afghanistan to help pave for free election and end to civil war. During the same month, President Najibullah offered ceasefire with western backed rebels after agreeing to cooperate with American-Soviet agreement to halt arms supplies to end war itself.\textsuperscript{94}

In early 1992, it was reported that Pakistan also decided to halt supplies of arms to Afghan rebels and endorsed the UN efforts to end fighting and bring democracy to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{95} Meanwhile the civil war in Afghanistan reached a critical stage and on 16 April 1992, President Najibullah’s government was ousted from power. A coalition of rebel leaders and army officers soon captured power. The Bush administration called on all factions in Afghanistan to cooperate with the UN in peaceful transition of power.\textsuperscript{96} Later the US welcomed the formal transfer of power in Kabul.\textsuperscript{97} However, the transfer of power in Kabul was the beginning of a new spell of power struggles and proxy wars among the different factions of the \textit{mujahideen}.


\textsuperscript{96} The Washington Post, 17 April 1992.

\textsuperscript{97} The New York Times, 29 April 1992; In June a US delegation arrived in Kabul to discuss the question of establishing diplomatic relations with the Afghan government.
The volatile situation in Afghanistan also led to a renewed interest of regional powers in the affairs of Kabul. Thus, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, and some of the Arab Gulf countries, besides Russia - the successor state of the Soviet Union - were involved in the power struggle and proxy wars. This culminated in the capture of power by Taliban, the Pashtun-led movement supported by Pakistan and some Arab Gulf states, in 1996.98

The Post-Cold War Situation and American Foreign Policy

The disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 and the collapse of the entire East Europe accelerated the pace of transformation of the global politics that was under way since 1989. All these generated worldwide debates on the nature of the emerging international order. Following the arguments of Samuel P. Huntington and Paul H. Nitze, former National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski said that the catalyst for the transformation in the global politics was the "success of the West and, specifically, the United States in the outcome of the Cold War." 99 As stated before, with the end of the cold war, the "familiar guideposts" of the United


States foreign policy disappeared. The sweeping changes in Soviet Union and East Europe tended to influence the very structure and pattern of international system, and they had a deep impact on America's relations with the rest of the world. There was greater discontinuity in foreign policy between the first and second halves of the Bush presidency than between any two administrations in the post-war period. During this time "the post-cold war international agenda" was taking shape. Michael Mandelbaum observed that this agenda would be dominated by economic issues - particularly when East Europe and other countries began to move towards market institutions and practices - rather than military confrontations between nuclear powers or even by crises like the one in the Gulf after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.100

However, Charles Krauthammer characterized the immediate post-cold war world as "unipolar" and said that the "center of world power is the unchallenged superpower, the United States, attended by its Western allies." Washington's preeminence is based on the fact that "it is the only country with the military, diplomatic, political and economic assets to be a decisive player in any conflict in whatever part of the world it chooses to involve itself." He elsewhere argued that the Gulf war marked the beginning of a Pax Americana in which the world would acquiesce in a benign American

hegemony. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., a former member of the Carter administration, while agrees that "the new world order has begun", said that it tends to be "messy, evolving and not susceptible to simple formulation or manipulation." According to Nye, the "problem with the Bush administration was that it thought and acted like Nixon, but borrowed the rhetoric of Wilson and Carter." Yet, the administration "has not sorted out the relation between them." Nye argued that the new world order reflects a multilevel interdependence:

No single hierarchy describes adequately a world politics with multiple structures. The distribution of power in world politics has become like a layer cake. The top military layer is largely unipolar for there is no other military power comparable to the United States. The economic middle layer is tripolar and has been for two decades. The bottom layer of transnational interdependence shows a diffusion of power.102

While debates on the "new world order' continued, the United States began to chart out its role and responsibilities in the emerging international system. A Pentagon report on the US's military priorities in the 1990s, leaked to and published in The New York Times on 8 March 1992, laid down


a detailed strategy to ensure that the United States would remain the world's only superpower in the post-cold war era. This was in effect "a blueprint for a Washington-centric, unipolar world." The leaked, classified document asserted that, if the United States was to maintain global supremacy, it must act vigorously all over the world to protect American interests and those of its allies. Later, Colin L. Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US armed forces, said that the new national security strategy was formulated by President Bush in consultation with his advisors and the Secretary of Defence. He says:

In the Pentagon we took the new national security strategy and built a military strategy to support it. Then, in August 1990, as President Bush made the first public pronouncement of America's new approach to national security, Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait. His brutal aggression caused us to implement our new strategy even as we began publicizing it. America was able to see our strategy validated in war.

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Powell said that the central idea of the new strategy “is the change from a focus on global war-fighting to a focus on regional contingencies. No communist hordes threaten western Europe today and, by extension, the rest of the free world.” He said that the objectives for which we use ‘violent’ force “can range from hurting an enemy enough so that he or she ceases to do the thing that is endangering our interests... to unseating the enemy’s government and altering fundamentally his or her way of life.” Because of the need to accomplish a wide range of mission, “our new armed forces will be *capabilities* oriented as well as *threat* oriented. Powell outlines the role that the United States would play in the emerging global order:

America is still the last best hope of earth, and we still hold the power and bear the responsibility for its remaining so. This is an enormous power and a sobering responsibility, especially since America is no longer alone but is accompanied by a free world growing ever larger and more interconnected.¹⁰⁵

This broadly reflects the contours of the United States foreign policy in the post-cold war period. Predicated on this framework, the successive US administrations tried to rationalise American intervention in many conflict zones in the Third World.

In sum, the United States policy responses to the developments in Afghanistan reveal that the Reagan and Bush administrations considered a wide range of options keeping in view the spillover effects of US involvement

¹⁰⁵ For details see ibid., pp.32-41.
in the region. However, the period 1988-91 was marked by intense debates within the United States – the crux of it was whether it should continue to support the fighting mujahideen and sustain the politico-strategic ties with Pakistan, the ‘frontline state’ in the American strategy of containing Soviet Union in Southwest Asia. The debate in Soviet Union, on the other hand, set in motion a wave of reform process under the initiative of Gorbachev which helped resolve the question of troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. The United States effectively utilized this occasion to further promote its interests. Plausibly, the Geneva Accords provided the framework for a rationale of superpower disengagement, but the United States and Soviet Union, at least until 1991, maintained ambiguous positions which only prolonged the civil war and the agony of the Afghan people. What seemed to have dampened the interest of the United States in the Afghan affairs were the far-reaching changes in global politics following the collapse of East Europe and the disintegration of Soviet Union. However, in the emerging scenario of intense rivalry among different political factions in Afghanistan, the United States sought to avoid any direct involvement until the Taliban consolidated its position in the mid-1990s. The dilemma of Washington still persisted in different forms. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon on 11 September 2001 changed the entire complexion of American perceptions and what followed was the “War on Terrorism”, which, in effect, meant the war on Afghanistan and the Taliban regime. Afghanistan, thus, once gain slid itself into the vortex of global power game.