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# United States-Afghanistan Diplomatic Relations, September-December 1979: Hafizullah Amin's Struggle For Survival

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# UNITED STATES-AFGHANISTAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
# SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 1979:
# Hafizullah Amin's Struggle For Survival

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ABSTRACT

UNITED STATES-AFGHANISTAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

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Hafizullah Amin's Struggle For Survival

During the 19th and early 20th centuries Afghanistan remained a buffer zone between Czarist Russia and British India. The struggle between these two powers to control the region or at least to deny such a control to their rival was called "The Great Game." When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, the U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Kabul wrote in a telegram addressed to Washington "...the Great Game is over."[1]

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the most recent Russian ambitious act to extend their control beyond their southern border. The Soviet control over Afghanistan lasted for more than a decade. From 1978 to 1986 four presidents ruled Afghanistan. All, except Hafizullah Amin, were installed and supported by the Soviet Government. President Amin, who forced himself to power by eliminating Noor Mohammad Taraki, ruled Afghanistan for one hundred and three days.

The shaky relations between President Amin and the Soviet leaders forced Amin to reduce his dependency on the Soviet Union and also to prevent further Soviet influence in Afghan affairs. In order to achieve his goals and to assure his survival, Amin tried to established closer relations with other countries, especially with Pakistan and the United States. Amin could neither improve his relations with the Soviet Union

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[1]Authoritarian Regimes in Transitions. U.S. Department of States, Foreign Service Institute. Washington, D.C., 1987. p. 80.

nor was he able to gain the trust of western countries including the United States government. His failed efforts ended with his murder.

Amin's personality, his relations with his predecessor Noor Mohammed Taraki, and his relations with the United States is the subject of this thesis. This research also focuses on the factors contributing to the invasion of Afghanistan and Hafizullah Amin's search for survival.

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CHAPTER ONE

## Afghanistan: Historical Background

Afghan emperor Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747, named Afghanistan, meaning the land of the Afghans.[1] Afghanistan previously had been called Aryana in the pre-medieval period and Khurasan during the Middle Ages. No historical records exist concerning the people who lived in this region prior to the Aryans settling in Balkh (Bactria), a city in northern Afghanistan, around 3000 B. C. The Aryans built cities, established an elementary form of democratic government, and composed the Rigvedic hymns, their first literary work, in Afghanistan about 2000-1400 B.C.[2]

Historical records reveal that Afghanistan had been a cross-road between "East" and "West," and it was in this land that different races and various cultures and civilizations met. Afghanistan's geographical location attracted numerous invading armies since its very early history. Indeed, Afghanistan has been invaded more than any other nation in the world.[3]

Among the invading forces was the army of Alexander the Great. In 330 B.C. he entered Afghanistan on his way to conquer India. After his death in 327 B.C., the Greek settlers in Balkh established a strong government and ruled Afghanistan for some two hundred years. In the third century B.C. Ashoka the Great ruled Afghanistan and it became a part of his empire. Beginning with the second century B.C. after the Ashoka empire weakened, various invaders, such as Scythians, Parthians, the Kushans, the Ephthalites and the White Huns conquered and ruled this country. During the seventh and eight centuries A.D. the Arabs invaded Afghanistan. Although they failed to conquer the entire country, the

Islamic culture and Islamic religion became a dominant feature of the people. In the thirteenth century the invading armies of Genghis Khan destroyed the country and killed millions of people.[4]

From 1370 to 1506, Afghanistan was ruled by the Timurid Dynasty. After the Timurids weakened, the Monghuls and the Safavid ruled in Afghanistan until 1747.[5] In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani laid the foundation of a strong central government in Afghanistan. However, after his death in 1793, a power struggle began among his descendants. Civil wars crushed the country and Afghanistan became weak. While Afghanistan was becoming weaker, the British empire in India was gaining ground on its eastern border.

During the 19th century, the weakened Afghanistan was caught between two powerful imperialist rivals, Great Britain and Russia. Both were eager to expand their sphere of influence and occupy more territories in the area. The rivalry between these two, called "The Great Game," increased when the Russians continued to expand their southern border and occupied the small khanates in the Central Asia.[6] Tashkent was taken by the Russians in 1865, Samarkand in 1868, Kokand in 1871, Khiva in 1873, Ashkabad in 1881, and Merv in 1884. Panjdeh was taken from Afghanistan in 1885.[7]

Observing the Russian expansion in Central Asia, the British were concerned about the Russian advance toward India through Afghanistan, as Herat, a western city in Afghanistan, was considered the gateway to India. Afghanistan, as a buffer zone between the two powers, suffered the loss of its territories as a result of imperialist expansion at her borders. In the nineteenth century Great Britain invaded Afghanistan

twice, in 1839, and then again in 1879. The Afghans defeated the British army in 1839. However, after the 1879 war Afghanistan and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Gandumak. The Treaty recognized Afghanistan as a sovereign state, and the British government paid the Afghan monarch an annual stipend, in return the British government received the control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs. Subsequently the British annexed a large area of eastern Afghanistan to British India.[8]

Afghanistan, weak now as a result of her wars with Britain and Russia, needed a strong central government. Amir Abdul Rahman (1880-1901) then became the ruler in Afghanistan and devoted his efforts to building a strong government in Kabul. He conquered several tribes, including the Hazaras and Kafirs and brought them under the control of the central government.[9]

After the death of Amir Abdul Rahman in 1901, his son Habibullah (1901-1919) ascended the throne of Kabul. During his eighteen years reign he wished to modernize Afghanistan during the World War I. Afghanistan remained neutral during that war. Afghan intellectuals believed that the western world was "capable of self-destruction" and thus could not assist them in building a modern society. They therefore, refused to get assistance from the eastern world.[10]

On February 20, 1919, an unknown assailant assassinated Amir Habibullah in Kalagosh of Laghman during a hunting trip.[11] Amanullah, the Amir's son was in Kabul at the time of the assassination. In the absence of his father, Amanullah was Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and served as the regent in Kabul. Upon learning the news of his father's

death, Amanullah declared himself king of Afghanistan. At the same time, as Amanullah was claiming the throne in Kabul, his uncle Nasrullah, supported by Amanullah's brothers in his claim, declared himself Amir of Afghanistan in Jalalabad. This power struggle among the family members of a ruling clan in Afghanistan was not an unusual situation. And it often ended in civil wars, murders and bloodshed in addition to a weak government. The young Amanullah at age 19, succeeded in defeating his rival Nasrullah, and became king in Afghanistan.[12] On February 28, Amanullah arrested Nasrullah, and sentenced him to life in prison in connection with the murder of Amir Habibullah.[13]

Although it was not known who had murdered the Amir, and what exactly the motive was behind the murder, many were accused of participating in his murder plot and were punished. The Russians blamed the British for hiring Mustafa Saghir as an assassin, and the Afghans officially acknowledged this version. Mutafa Saghir was later arrested in Ankara and accused of plotting to murder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. In spite of the British efforts to save his life, Saghir was hanged in Ankara in 1922.[14]

After King Amanullah (1919-1929) established himself as the sole ruler of Afghanistan by removing his rivals from the political scene, especially Nasrullah, he devoted his efforts to securing Afghanistan's complete independence from Britain. Although Britain failed to annex Afghanistan to their Indian empire in the two Anglo-Afghan wars, King Amanullah believed that British government had forced the Treaty of Gandumak on the Afghan Amir.

Upon his accession in 1919, Amanullah declared that Afghanistan was an independent country, and stated:

> ...the Government of Afghanistan shall be internally and externally independent and free; that is to say, all rights of Government that (are currently) possessed by other independent powers of the world shall be possessed in their entirety by Afghanistan.[15]

Amanullah had the support and the encouragement of Mahmoud Tarzi, his father-in-law, who was a prominent Afghan nationalist and an advocate of independence. When Amanullah was grieving at his father's death, Mahmoud Tarzi told him "Do not cry, now is the time for action."[16]

At the time of Afghan's newly declared independence, the British government was facing a number of problems. World War I had just ended and England was still trying to recover from the war. In addition, Great Britain had significant problems with the native people in India who were not happy with British rule and were engaged in anti-British activities. The Afghan monarch believed that the time was right to secure Afghanistan's complete independence from Great Britain while other problems occupied it.

Amanullah was aware of the British policy toward Afghanistan. He knew that the British government would not surrender their authority to Afghanistan easily. Amanullah also knew that they would not accept the Afghan demand of complete independence and would attempt to retain control of Afghan foreign policy as long as they could. Amanullah wished to free Afghanistan completely from British influence, then to modernize Afghanistan through a series of reforms. He hoped that the British government would acknowledge Afghan independence through

negotiation, without engaging Afghanistan in a war.

However, Amanullah without consulting the British government, conducted his country's foreign affairs, and acted as a completely independent ruler as soon as he assumed power. He created a new Department of State for Afghanistan and appointed Mahmoud Tarzi as the head of the Department in charge of Afghan foreign affairs. Tarzi informed the Foreign Secretary of India that Afghan foreign relations would be conducted by the Afghans themselves through the Afghan Department of State.[17]

The Afghan leader wished to establish diplomatic relations with other nations. On April 7, 1919, King Amanullah sent identical letters to the Soviet Union, Japan, United States, France, Iran and Turkey stating that: "This is the first time that I have had the good fortune of sending (a) friendly letter in the name of the Afghan nation..., and on behalf of the independent and free government of Afghanistan."[18] King Amanullah requested the establishment of diplomatic relations with the formerly mentioned countries. By doing so they would formally acknowledge Afghanistan's independence.

The British government refused to accept Amanullah's proclamation of independence and prepared for a war against the Afghans. To assure their success, the British wished to gain the support of the tribes living in India, east of the Afghan border. Sir George Roos-Keppel, the British Chief Commissioner, was authorized to spend unlimited funds and to buy the loyalty of these tribes.

Amanullah launched anti-British campaigns in Afghanistan and in British India. Britain wanted to delay the discussion of Afghan

independence, while Amanullah wanted to gain Afghanistan's freedom quickly as he could. He wanted to incite insurrection in the tribal areas of the north-western frontier against the British, and then send the Afghan army to join the tribal groups in a march to the Indian border.[19]

The British delay in acknowledging Afghanistan independence resulted in the third Anglo-Afghan war. On May 9, 1919, war began between Afghans and British forces, and officially ended on August 8, 1919.[20] On June 3, 1919, Afghanistan and Britain agreed to a cease fire. A series of discussions between the two countries began after the cease fire. Britain accepted Afghan's demand for independence and granted the Afghans full rights to their external and internal affairs. On August 8, 1919, Afghanistan and Great Britain signed a treaty in Rawalpindi. Great Britain recognized Afghanistan's complete independence.[21]

On November 22, 1922, Mahmoud Tarzi, Chief of the Delegation of the Afghan Government and Henry R. C. Dobbs, Envoy Extraordinary and Chief of the British Mission to Kabul signed another treaty in Kabul, establishing diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and British India.[22] In addition to Britain, several other countries acknowledged Afghanistan's independence and established diplomatic relations with the country. The Soviet Union recognized Afghanistan's independence as soon as the Afghan monarch announced his country's independence. On March 15, Izvestia published Afghanistan's declaration of independence, prior to the Afghan and British governments reaching a conclusive agreement.[23]

In May, 1919, Vladimir Ilich Lenin responded to Tarzi's letter and congratulated the Afghan king on his new government. The Soviet Union was the first country to recognize the independence of Afghanistan and to send an ambassador to Kabul. In February, 1921, a treaty of friendship was signed, between the governments of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.[24] Some historians believe that the reason for the Soviet's close relations with Afghanistan was the new Soviet government's need for international allies. Furthermore, the British were supporting anti-revolutionary elements in the Soviet Union.[25]

King Amanullah wished to establish diplomatic relations with all countries. In spite of repeated requests by the Afghan leaders, the United States did not give a positive response to Amanullah and refused to consider Afghanistan an independent state. The U.S. government kept the issue of recognition in doubt for some fifteen years.[26]

In 1921, King Amanullah sent a high ranking diplomatic mission, headed by General Gulam Mohammad Wali, as an extraordinary Ambassador, to Europe and the United States. On July 20, 1921, Wali met with Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes, and on July 26th he met with President Warren G. Harding. Wali carried a letter from King Amanullah addressed to the President of the United States stating that:

> As I used to have the sincere wish to establish a permanent friendly relation between Afghanistan and high government of the United States, I expect that Your Excellency's high government may by satisfied with the keeping of this friendly relation too.[27]

President Harding's letter in response to King Amanullah's letter was that:

> 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 Wali Khan, that with respect to the United States, the question of the Creation of Diplomatic Mission and of appropriate action to that end by the Congress of the United States must be reserved for further consideration.[28]

However, King Amanullah did not give up, and in 1928, he planned a tour of Europe during which he desired to include the United States. However, before his trip to the U.S., the United States government informed him that: "his visit be unofficial, at his own expense and that entertainment would be limited to lunch with President Coolidge."[29] Amanullah thereupon canceled his trip to the United State but continued with his European trip where he was received with honor.

Although King Amanullah gained Afghanistan's independence and established diplomatic relations with other countries, his reforms and modernization of Afghanistan cost him his throne. Religious leaders and tribal groups resented his reforms and turned against Amanullah and his family. Anti-government activities began in Afghanistan with the burning of the king's palace and the British consulate in Jalalabad in November, 1928. Revolt against the king increased and spread to other parts of the country. The tribes formed an army and started marching toward Kabul. Amanullah sent his troops, but the troops instead of fighting the tribal army united with them against the Kabul government. The weak Kabul government became vulnerable to any attack. Habibullah (Bacha Saqqao) came from the north and attacked Kabul and gained control of the Kabul government. He ruled for nine months in Afghanistan during

which time he killed thousands of people. Amanullah's efforts to regain his throne failed, he left the country and lived in exile for the rest of his life.[30]

After Amanullah's defeat, Mohammad Nadir Khan, a former army general and Afghan Minister at Paris, with his two brothers, Mohammad Hashim Khan and Shah Wali, came to India. There they gathered a tribal army returned to Afghanistan, and defeated Habibullah on October 10, 1929, ending his nine month regime of terror and bloodshed. The tribal army elected Nadir Khan as King of Afghanistan.[31]

King Mohammad Nadir Khan (1929-1933) established a stable government in Kabul. In 1931, through the Afghan Embassy in Rome, Nadir Khan expressed his desire to establish diplomatic relations with the United States. Once again the United States' response was negative. The September 24, 1931, dispatch from Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State, to Alexander Kirk, American Charge d'Affaires in Italy stated the American "reasons" for denying official diplomatic contact:

> At your discretion you may orally inform the Ministry of Afghanistan that no recent consideration has been given by the government to the question of the establishment of official relations with the Afghan government and the present moment is not considered to be opportune to negotiate a treaty. It may be stated for your own confidential information that the present request to establish official relations is premature, since the present regime in Afghanistan has not yet been recognized by this government.[32]

In 1933, Abdul Khaliq, a student assassinated King Nadir Khan. Ghulam Nabi's family was Nadir Khan's chief opponent; they hired Abdul Khaliq to assassinate Nadir Khan.[33] Thus Nadir Khan's only son, Mohammad Zahir (1933-1973) became king in Afghanistan. King Zahir also

requested the U.S. for an official recognition of his government; again the United States denied the request. This denial was based on the recommendations of Wallace Murray, a Middle East expert in the State Department, whose knowledge of Afghanistan was very limited.[34]

On April 24, 1934, King Mohammad Zahir, repeated his desire, once again, for establishing diplomatic relations between the United States and Afghanistan. Finally, the United States government granted recognition because: "... the government of Afghanistan was recognized by all of the Great Powers, [and] the present government of Afghanistan was a stable one."[35] However, until 1942, no U.S. official resided in Afghanistan; on June 6, 1942, Cornelius Van H. Engert, became the first American Minister to live in Afghanistan.[36]

The main reason for the U.S. delay in establishing diplomatic relation with Afghanistan was its lack of interest. Factors contributing to American non-interest were Afghanistan's "under-developed infrastructure", and its rugged terrain. These features decreased its economic potential and its strategic value. Furthermore, "Afghanistan had poor relations with neighboring Iran and Pakistan, and the United States was reluctant to become involved in these parochial rivalries."[37] Afghanistan had limited business opportunity due to its primitive conditions; and finally, they lacked adequate safety measures for Americans due to its unstable government.[38]

Therefore, although diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in 1934, no major economic relations existed until 1936. Then the major economic relations between the United States and Afghanistan was a short lived oil concessions of the Inland Exploration

Company. The Afghan government granted the American consortium "an exclusive 25-year concession."[39] The Inland Exploration Company operated from November 19, 1936, until June 19, 1938. On June 19, Inland Exploration Company formally discontinued having learned of a newly discovered oil reservoir in Saudi Arabia.[40]

While American interest in Afghanistan remained minimal, Soviet interest in Afghanistan also declined beginning in the mid-1920s. By then the new regime in the Soviet Union had become more stable, the anti-revolutionary elements were defeated, and Soviet-British relations had improved. Indeed, the Soviet government had become so strong that it disseminated its socialist doctrine to other peoples outside its boundaries. Afghanistan, being its southern neighbor was not left out; in the 1940s, the Soviets distributed "pro-communist propaganda" among the Afghan people. But, in general until the late 1950s the Americans and the Soviets, both, ignored Afghanistan.[41]

However, American neglect of Afghanistan became more evident after 1953, when John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, formalized the 'Northern Tier' alliance treaty. This alliance led to American military pacts with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Although Afghanistan was situated between Iran and Pakistan, the treaty did not include her because the United States had no interest in the nation.[42]

In 1955, Secretary Dulles established the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) as an anti-Soviet alliance. Again it included Turkey, Iran and Pakistan; but not Afghanistan. The Americans were not interested in the later.[43]

In addition, the American view on Pashtunistan, the disputed territory between Afghanistan and Pakistan, further limited the relationship between United States and Afghanistan. Prior to 1955, the United States had indirectly supported the Afghan view on Pashtunistan. But later, the American press and publications referred to Pashtunistan as: "...the tribes are linked with Afghanistan ethnographically, culturally, religiously and linguistically;" and "...the Durand line was without any strategic, geographic, and cultural basis;" and "...the Afghans feel an obligation to the tribes."[44]

Later, however, the United States changed its view on the Pashtunistan issue. In a SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organization) meeting, John Foster Dulles stated that the United States "would help Pakistan in her dispute with Afghanistan." American's popular press reiterated and emphasized the official view. The April 9, 1956, Life magazine wrote that the U.S. would support the Pakistanis in their claim for Pashtunistan.[45] SEATO was founded in 1954, in order to provide assistance to member countries in case of foreign attack. The Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, Britain and the United States were members of this organization.[46]

The relations between the Afghan government and the U.S. government were further affected by the U.S. refusal to cooperate in the Afghan modernization of their military. Mohammad Daoud, Afghan Minister of War, wished to modernize the Afghan military; so the Afghan government requested military assistance from the United States. The later nation agreed to sell arms to Afghanistan; and on March 12, 1951, Secretary of State Dulles visited Kabul to discuss military aid with

Daoud. Seven months later, the U.S. Ambassador in Kabul, George Merrill, told Prime Minister Shah Mahmoud that the arms sale would cost Afghanistan $25,000,000 and the U.S. wanted the payment in cash.[47]

Since Afghanistan had no access to the open sea, the arms had to be shipped through Pakistan. The U.S. indicated as they were not responsible for making arrangements with the Pakistani government, thus the Afghans must arrange the matter with Pakistan. Other conditions attached to the arms sale were that Afghanistan had to drop its claim for Pashtunistan. These conditions were unreasonable and unacceptable to the Afghan government and the arms deal with the United States was therefore postponed.[48]

Then in 1953, Daoud became Prime Minister. He was still especially interested in building and modernizing Afghan's military. Conditions in the army were deplorable. The army carried nineteenth century rifles of the Snyder and Lee Enfield type, had unreliable ammunition, and untrained soldiers. The Afghan air force consisted of twelve "bi-planes" from World War I.[49] Between 1953-1955, Prime Minister Daoud, a talented army general and former Minister of Defense, unsuccessfully requested United States military assistance. Apparently the United States was concerned that the Afghan government might use the arms against Pakistan.[50] For example, in 1954, Daoud attempted to secure American assistance in modernizing of the Afghan army. In October, 1954, the Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Naim, visited with Secretary of State Dulles in Washington to obtain military aid from Washington. In December Dulles replied:

> After careful consideration, extending military aid to Afghanistan would create problems not offset by the

> strength it would generate. Instead of asking for arms, Afghanistan should settle the Pushtunistan dispute with Pakistan.[51]

Dulles sent a copy of the letter to Pakistan as well. Afghanistan would not have been so anxious about receiving military aid from the United States if Pakistan had received similar treatment. But through the Baghdad Pact, and the Central Treaty Organization, the Pakistani government received a huge amount of military aid from the United States, and Afghanistan received none.[52] Although the Afghans failed to receive military aid from the United States, they received $25,000,000 in arms from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and East Germany. The U.S.S.R. also built military airfields in Mazar-i-Sharif, Shindand, and Begram.[53] America's non-interest in Afghanistan encouraged the Warsaw pact countries to meet the military needs of the Afghan government.

The American Embassy in Kabul was also responsible for the lack of U.S. interest in Afghanistan, and refused to cooperate with the Kabul government. It failed to normalize the relations between the two countries. The U.S. Ambassador in Kabul, Angus Ward, hated communism and believed that Daoud was a Communist. Ward had bitter memories of communism from when he had been held a hostage of the Chinese communists when he was a Consul General in Mukden. Ward failed to report to Washington the danger of the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. He tried on several occasions to remove Daoud with the help of CIA and the Pakistani government.[54] Although Daoud was aware of the American Embassy's plot through his secret police, Washington did not have any knowledge of Ward's plans.[55] Ward's activities in Kabul gave rise to

anti-American feeling among Afghans.[56]

Ambassador Ward was a main contributor to the existing poor relationship between the United States and Afghanistan. In addition, the American Embassy in Kabul did not have a single American official in the Embassy with sufficient background on Afghan diplomacy or who knew the language.[57]

However, Daoud's close relations with Moscow did not go unnoticed by the United States. Some American specialists believed that Daoud could not be trusted and labeled him as being pro-Moscow. The United States ambassador in Kabul who failed to remove Daoud described Daoud as "untrustworthy and rash."[58]

As the result of the hostile relations between the United States and Afghanistan, the Kabul government relied on Moscow not only to modernize its military but also to build its economy. The Soviets provided Afghanistan with economic, technical and military assistance and began training the military. Thus, the "Soviet Union became Afghanistan's largest trading partner, and its largest supplier of military and economic aid."[59] Although the United States also provided Afghanistan with some economic aid, it was a very small amount compared to that from the Soviet Union or compared to the U.S. aid to Pakistan and Iran.[60]

In mid-1955, Ward was replaced by Sheldon T. Mills, and Armin Meyer was assigned as deputy chief of mission. Communication between the American Embassy and Afghan officials, that was almost non-existent during Ward's ambassadorship, was re-established. The United States became involved in several projects in Afghanistan.[61] However, these

projects were small compared to the U.S. projects in Iran and Pakistan. By 1956, Afghanistan received about six million dollars in technical assistance, although Iran and Pakistan, each had received more than one hundred million dollars.[62]

Most of United States' aid was spent on education, irrigation and transportation. Much of the fund was devoted to an irrigation project in the Helmand Valley. In the field of transportation the U. S. helped Ariana Afghan Airlines, which served Afghan major cities, and flew international flights to Delhi, Beirut, Mecca, Tehran, Prague, London and Frankfort. The United States also built the Kandahar International Airport. In education, a large number of Afghan students studied in American universities. In addition, a number of American instructors were sent to teach in Afghan schools and Kabul University.[63] The Americans were aware that their assistance to the Afghan government was very small compared to the Soviet Union.

In November, 1956, Nikita Khrushchev visited Kabul. He met with King Zahir and Prime Minister Daoud, and announced that his government would provide a hundred million dollar loan to Afghanistan, an Ilyushin airplane and fifty public transportation buses. With the help of the Soviet loan the Afghan government started a five-year plan in the areas of transportation, communication, industry, social services and mining. Although the plan did not meet it goals, significant achievements were made.

The Soviet projects, compared with the American projects were:

> completed speedily and placed only a modest burden on the Afghan economy, the American projects dragged on interminably and were more costly, with a high proportion of expenditures going for American salaries

and expensive housing...[64]

Unfortunately, the remainder of the Ward era led Afghans to believe that American assistance meant fighting the Cold War on their soil.[65] In 1957, Washington began to take seriously the degree of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. They sent Henry Byroade as their new ambassador to Kabul, to reduce Soviet influence and involve Americans in more Afghan projects. At this late date even the U.S. projects were late and insufficient compared to those of the Soviets.[66]

In fact, the United States did not succeed in competing with the Soviets in Afghanistan during Daoud's presidency, 1953-1963. U.S.-Afghan relations improved only after Daoud lost power. Afghanistan adopted a new constitution in 1964. It changed the government from an oligarchy to a constitutional monarchy. According to the new constitution, immediate members of the royal family could not serve as prime minister. Daoud, being first cousin to King Zahir, was forced out of power. Daoud had no authority of any kind during the constitutional era.

The United States had an opportunity to build constructive and positive relations between the two countries after Daoud was removed from power. However, relations between the two countries did not improve as compared to the U.S.-Iran relations and U.S.-Pakistan relations. During the constitutional period, 1963-1973, only one Afghan prime minister was invited to Washington, because earlier he had been ambassador in Washington. The American ambassador in Kabul was also unable to convince Washington to increase its political and economic support for the Kabul government.[67]

The Soviets, on the other hand, took advantage of the situation. The new constitution which authorized the formation of political parties, resulted in the establishment of Khalq, a pro-Moscow communist party in 1965, with the support of the Soviet Union. At the same time the Soviets seemed to consider the removal of Daoud from power as a perfect opportunity for them. They approached Daoud, apparently encouraged him to seize power, which he did and proclaimed a republic in Afghanistan in July 1973.[68]

On July 17, 1973, Mohammad Daoud came to power as president in a bloodless coup d'etat. The coup came as a surprise to the Afghans; government employees witnessed some disturbances on their way to work but were unaware of its cause. Afghan radio broadcast at 7:20 a.m. on July 17th, that a republic had been established in Afghanistan, and that the government of King Mohammad Zahir had been replaced by Mohammad Daoud.

The coup was carried out by junior officers of the Afghan armed forces, mostly trained in the Soviet Union. President Daoud in his first public speech, on Radio Afghanistan acknowledged the important role played by the Afghan army officers in making the coup a success. At the close of his speech Daoud said: "I once again congratulate all my countrymen on this great national achievement, and express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all patriots especially the Afghan armed forces who did not refrain from any sincere and selfless efforts".[69] Daoud's coup marked the end of monarchy and establishment of a republican government in Afghanistan.

Most Afghans welcomed the change and the establishment of a new

republic and considered the coup as the opening of a new era in the history of Afghanistan. Although the form of the government changed from monarchy to republic, the power remained in the same family. Daoud's regime was supported by the members of the pro-Soviet leftist Parcham party. The members of Parcham participated in important governmental decisions.

The Soviet Union was the first nation to recognize the new Afghan republic. On July 19, Alexander Puzanov, the U.S.S.R. ambassador in Kabul, extended his government's recognition of Daoud's regime. A year later, in early June 1974, President Daoud visited the Soviet Union and discussed twenty-one Soviet-assisted projects in various fields.[70]

President Daoud's relations with the Soviet Union during the decade of his prime ministry from 1953-1963, and his successful coup supported by the Parcham party members, made the West to believe that he was pro-Moscow. President Daoud acknowledged the Parchamis support of his republic and appointed some Parchamis to high government offices. This action was even more reason for western journalists to believe that he was pro-communist.[71] Moscow countered the propaganda spread by the western media. On July 24, 1973, Moscow radio denounced the "imperialist propaganda" and said that the change in the Afghan government was the result of the Afghan desire for the advancement of the country.[72]

Although Daoud was supported in his coup d'etat by the pro-Moscow Parcham party, and had assigned Parchamis to some high positions, he was neither a communist nor wished to depend on Soviets for all his needs.

He wished to improve his relations with the United States, and some other nations as well. In addition, Daoud desired to maintain friendly relations with Afghanistan's neighbors, Pakistan, Iran and the Soviet Union. He therefore began to limit the power of the leftist elements in his government. In spite of the Parchmis' full support of Daoud's regime they were relieved from important government positions.[73]

Regarding President Daoud's relations with Pakistan, the Pashtunistan issue was the main obstacle to improving diplomatic relations with Pakistan. It had created tension between the two countries since the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The Afghans supported the right of the Pashtuns to self determination.[74] The Pashtunistan issue had hampered the Afghan economy because Afghanistan had no access to open sea. Most imported merchandise entered Afghanistan through the sea port of Karachi.

In addition to Pakistan, Daoud wished to have closer relations with Iran, the United States, and other nations because he wished to reduce Soviet influence in Afghanistan. In the spring of 1978, President Daoud "visited India, Egypt, and Yugoslavia, clearly preparing the way for closer alignment with these countries."[75] Daoud also sent a larger number of Afghans for military training to India, Egypt and the United States in order to limit the influence of the Soviet-trained Afghans in the army and to reduce Afghan dependency on the Soviet Union.[76]

In January, 1977, President Daoud and his brother Mohammad Naim, met with Leonid Ilich Brezhnev in Moscow. Brezhnev, aware of President Daoud's decision that he would

follow a more balanced policy and would reduce the Soviet influence in Afghanistan, asked Daoud to "get rid of all those imperialist advisors in your country." President Daoud responded that there was a need for those advisors, if there was no need for them they would have left.[77] President Daoud's change of policy alarmed Moscow and the U.S.S.R. realized that "... Daoud's continuation in office was no longer in the Soviet interest."[78] In 1977, the Soviets convinced the Parcham and Khalq communist parties of Afghanistan to unite against Daoud, and a coup was planned to overthrow Daoud's government in August 1978.

Continuing his policy of limiting communist activities in 1977, Daoud introduced a new constitution. He appointed a cabinet consisting of his close friends and the members of his family whom he could trust. The new constitution legalized a one party system, the National Revolutionary Party. President Daoud himself selected the members of its central committee.[79]

Daoud however, was unaware of the Soviet plot against his government and continued to pursue improved relations with the United States. On October 1, 1977, he sent the Afghan Foreign Minister Waheed Abdullah to meet with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Assistant Secretary of State for Near-Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Alfred L. Atherton. In this meeting Abdullah mentioned that his government desired to establish closer relations with the United States, and desired a "very visible" U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Vance responded by extending an invitation to President Daoud to visit the United States in the summer of 1978; Daoud accepted the invitation.[80]

President Daoud decision to reduce the influence of the leftist

elements in his government and to ban illegal political parties alarmed leftist groups, as well as the Soviet Union. It energized Moscow and members of the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to remove Daoud from power.[81]

# NOTES

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# CHAPTER TWO

## The 1978 Coup d'etat in Afghanistan

An unknown assailant murdered Mir Akbar Khayber, a leading member of Parcham Party, on April 17, 1978, in Kabul. During Khyber's funeral, Afghan communists, former members of Parcham and Khalq parties rallied in an anti-government demonstration. In 1977, the two parties united and constituted the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan. They accused Daoud's regime of Khyber's assassination and tried to create anti-government feeling among the people and to gather more support for their cause. They blamed the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in addition to President Daoud's secret police, for Khyber's murder.[1]

Khyber's funeral gathered some ten to fifteen thousand sympathizers who demonstrated in the streets of Kabul. Leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) led a well organized anti-government demonstration during Khyber's funeral. This alerted President Daoud and the members of his cabinet to the communist threat.[2] For the first time Daoud noticed a strong alliance among the leftist groups opposed to his regime. He therefore feared further anti-government activities by the communists and ordered the arrest of leading members of the PDPA party.

On April 26, many PDPA party leaders were arrested, except for Hafizullah Amin, a prominent PDPA leader. Amin was held under house arrest for 10 hours for no obvious reason. While Amin was under

detention he was allowed to receive visitors. Since Amin had recruited a large number of military personnel for the PDPA party prior to Khyber's murder,[3] he had enough time, while under house arrest, to pass coup instructions to key personnel in the army and air force. Amin's coup instructions on April 27, 1978, were based on a coup originally planned in August, 1978. A basic coup plan had previously been prepared by the Soviets and the PDPA leaders. Thus, it was easy for Amin to follow the instructions and to stage a coup in a very short time. Although Amin used the plan, he was unable to coordinate his actions with the Soviets due to his rapid actions.[4] Therefore, Amin did not secure approval from Moscow for all his activities.[5]

Amin authorized Colonel Mohammad Aslam Watanjar to control the ground forces, and Abdul Qadir, an air force officer, to command the Afghan air forces.[6] On the morning of April 27, 1978, the coup d'etat began and the Afghan military successfully carried out the coup.

Air force and the ground troops attacked the Presidential palace. Daoud refused to surrender and continued to fight until he and some of his family members and supporters were killed. Although fighting continued at military bases between communists and units loyal to Daoud, the communists were able to seize control of important government offices and announce their victory.

The members of the former Parcham party were aware that the country was not ready for a socialist regime and a premature socialist coup would have undesirable consequences. They did not know that Amin had sent instructions for staging a coup. They "were caught by surprise by the timing, but not the Soviets, whose sources kept them abreast of

developments at the time, though they made no move to warn president Daoud."[7]

Most Afghans were also surprised on the morning of April 27, and had no knowledge as to who was fighting whom. Late in the afternoon Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, an army officer, announced on the radio that the power of the government had been transferred to the Revolutionary Council and Daoud's regime had ended. A further announcement stated that: "The power of the family has been put to an end. Now, for the first time, power has come into the hands of the people."[8]

The coup was bloody and sporadic fighting continued in various parts of the country and at military bases. The new leaders, however, were able to hold on to power, to establish a socialist regime and to force a new government in Afghanistan. On April 30, Radio Kabul introduced the members of the new government. Noor Mohammad Taraki became head of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister, Babrak Karmal became Vice-President of the Revolutionary Council and Vice-Premier, and Hafizullah Amin became Vice-Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs.[9]

The members of Khalq and Parcham parties had a leadership role in the Afghan government; they were united in 1977 and formed the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Their unity was short lived as a result of continuous conflict between the PDPA members over the leadership. The temporary unity between members of Parcham and Khalq was turbulent, since members of each faction wanted to have the upper hand in the government. Each party, in turn, removed the members of the opposite faction from high government positions when they had the

opportunity to do so.

Although the ultimate goal of both factions was to implement socialism in Afghanistan, they differed in their strategies of how to create an Afghan socialist society. Party interests kept the new government divided and weak. It did not take long for Taraki and Amin, who belonged to the Khalq party, to remove Parchamis and some non-party members from high government positions. Between July 1st and July 15th, nine prominent Parcham party members were sent into exile. Among them was Karmal who was the leader of the Parcham party. Karmal was sent to Prague on July 5th, as ambassador to Czechoslovakia. Amin was then elected Secretary General of the PDPA Central Committee.[10] To further reduce the influence of Parcham in the government, in August of 1978, Minister of Defense Abdul Qader, Minister of Planning Sultan Ali Keshtmand and Minister of Public Works Mohammad Rafi, all members of the Parcham party, were accused of planning to overthrow Taraki's government and were arrested.[11]

In addition to a struggle for leadership among the party members, the newly established Afghan government was unable to gain the trust of the people and had to convince the Afghans that the leaders would work for their interest. Most Afghans, at the very early stage of the coup, were unable to predict the consequences of the events and did not express their strong opposition to the new regime. They waited to see how events would turn out. Opposition however to the new regime gradually increased. There were several reasons for the peoples' lack of opposition to the new regime; the following are some of the reasons:

First, many people wanted a change in the government; the previous government had failed to meet the needs of the Afghan citizenry. The educated class in Afghanistan was frustrated with the government bureaucracy and many found themselves unable to secure suitable jobs unless they had some connections with the ruling family or had personal friends in high government official circles. Also, the coup ended the almost half century of one family rule which had ruled Afghanistan since 1929. Afghans were satisfied, if not happy, to see a change in the leadership.

Second, the newly appointed president, Noor Mohammad Taraki, was of Pushtun origin. Some 56% of Afghans were Pushtuns. Pushtuns had ruled the country for centuries and the appointment of a Pushtun as their leader was acceptable to most.

Third, Prime Minister Taraki was a middle class Afghan intellectual. The majority of Afghans felt comfortable with him and thought that he would understand their problems and would realize their needs better.

Fourth, although Taraki was a socialist, he did not openly admit it and did not identify his government as a socialist regime during his presidency. Afghans did not show strong opposition as long as he respected their idealogies and beliefs.

Fifth, the central government in Afghanistan did not have any role in Afghan tribal areas, where a tribal leader implemented his own rules, and settled disputes in his own way without referring the matter to the central government. The change in government therefore did not affect the tribal structure of Afghan society since the central government did

not have any role or power to exercise in tribal areas.

Thus, the PDPA did not face strong opposition from the people at the beginning of the regime, except for the fighting which had continued at military bases between the supporters of the old and the new regimes. However, opposition to the government did increase after the new government became known as a Marxist-Leninist regime.

Furthermore, the government failed to broaden its base and did not include other elements of the society in its operational organization. Also, the government introduced a series of hasty reforms instead of introducing gradual change over a longer period of time. The decrees that the government implemented were in conflict with the Afghan traditional practice. The Afghans reacted angrily to the Marriage Law and also did not support the Agrarian Reform. Decrees No. 6 and No. 8 introducing agrarian reform abolished feudalism in Afghanistan. In introducing Decree No. 7 the government wished to impose a restriction on marriage expenses and to prevent child marriage which was practice in the country. It set a minimum age for marriage for girls at sixteen and for boys at eighteen.[12] The failed reforms resulted in more opposition and bloodshed in the country.

The coup d'etat in Afghanistan was not only a surprise to Afghans but was also a surprise to United States officials.[13] Washington claimed that they were not aware of a possible Afghan coup and had no advance knowledge that President Daoud's government was in danger. According to some reports, however, Washington was informed of a possible coup in Afghanistan but did not consider the threat to Daoud's regime to be a serious one. In fact, Washington ignored Pakistan's and

Iran's reports regarding Daoud's weak position and the threat to his government.

Six months before the coup, the Shah of Iran reported that "Daoud was getting old and disturbing elements were at play in the country..."[14] According to another report published in the Washington Post, Pakistan warned the Carter administration about the possibility of a socialist coup in Afghanistan. The warnings were ignored by the Carter administration.[15] Subsequently, the United States repeatedly denied receiving such warnings.[16]

After the successful coup, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) was established. The United States government was uncertain as to the ideology of the Afghan regime, and did not know whether to label the DRA regime as a communist or a neutral government. Though the DRA was pro-Soviet and followed a socialist pattern in its administrative affairs, it was difficult for the United States to name the Afghan regime communist since the Afghan leaders did not admit it. The Carter administration therefore decided to maintain friendly relations with Afghanistan for as long as Afghanistan followed a non-alignment policy as before.[17] Theodore Eliot, the U.S. ambassador in Kabul from 1973 to 1979, in a telegram to Washington on May 11, 1978, wrote that:

> We have not yet been able to determine whether or not the new Afghan government indeed qualifies as a Communist regime in the context of Section 629 (F) of the Foreign Assistant Act.[18]

Eliot suggested that the United States should not commit itself to new aid obligations in Afghanistan.[19]

Thus, the United States followed a wait and see policy the first few months. On the one hand, the Soviets were involved in the daily affairs of the Afghan government. On the other hand, the Afghan government officials indicated on various occasions that they would welcome any economic assistance from the U.S. government. Noor Mohammad Taraki, president and prime minister of the new Afghan regime, in his first news conference on May 13, 1978, said that his government hoped for economic assistance from the United States.[20]

The U.S. government did not commit itself to new economic projects in Afghanistan; in fact, it reduced its existing aid programs. However, the United States decided to maintain its presence in Afghanistan and met with Afghan government officials.[21] Thus, in its March 28, 1979 meeting the U.S. Foreign Affairs Committee suggested further cuts in U.S. aid projects.[22]

Afghanistan was not of vital interest to the United States even before the socialist regime in Afghanistan. The U.S.A. had maintained close relations with Iran and Pakistan. However, in 1978, the situation in Iran had also changed; the Islamic revolutionaries had gathered enormous support and had turned almost everyone in the country against the Shah. The Shah was forced to leave Iran on January 16, 1979.[23] Iran was the closest U.S. ally in the area and was militarily strong. "By 1975, Iran was the fourth most powerful military machine in the world - after the United States, the USSR, and Israel."[24] The United States knew that the American position in the area had weakened after the fall of the Shah. The relationship between Iran and the U.S. became

hostile after Ayatullah Khomaini took power in Iran. On February 14, 1979, the US embassy in Tehran was surrounded by Iranian students who shouted anti-American slogans. The U.S. ambassador in Tehran, William Sullivan, and some seventy members of the embassy staff were trapped in the embassy for about ninety minutes while gun shots were fired outside the embassy compound.[25]

U.S. relations with Pakistan were tense as well. The Pakistani government was engaged in constructing a nuclear enrichment facility. In 1976, France wanted to supply Pakistan with a nuclear reprocessing plant, but as a result of strong U.S. objection, the French government withdrew from the agreement. In April 1979, the United States government under the provision of the Foreign Assistance Act, prohibited supplying new economic and military assistance to those countries acquiring material or technology to build nuclear facilities.[26] Thus, the United States had not only lost the support of the Shah of Iran, but its relations with Pakistan were also going badly. The success of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan convinced the U.S. policy makers that the Soviet Union was gaining influence in the area and was on the verge of achieving its centuries-old desire of controlling the Persian Gulf. President Carter's policy was to defend the Gulf states from foreign attack. He increased the U.S. military presence in the region by signing agreements with Oman, Egypt, Somalia and Kenya.[27]

The United States had traditionally considered Afghanistan as being within the Soviet sphere of influence and therefore, did not include Afghanistan in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), South East Asian Treaty (SEATO) and the Northern Tier Alliance Treaty.

However, the U.S. did not ignore the changes in government in Afghanistan after the socialist coup. Afghanistan was considered a buffer zone and was not strong militarily. When Daoud requested military assistance, the U.S. government declined. Daoud's military needs were then met by the Soviet Union.[28] Secretary of State Cyrus Vance wrote in his memoirs that: "The United States had few resources in the area and historically we had held the view that our vital interests were not involved there."[29]

In 1978, the United States government replaced Theodore Elliot, the U.S. ambassador in Kabul, with Adolph Dubs, Soviet specialist and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.[30] Dubs knew that Afghanistan was important for regional stability.[31] He wished to analyze the Afghan situation in the context of Soviet relations, and advise the U.S. government accordingly. However, the unfortunate kidnapping of Dubs ending in his assassination on April 14, 1979, worsened the relationship between the DRA and the U.S. government. Dubs' assassination by suspected "anti-Afghan government elements", combined with the Foreign Affairs Committee's decision to reduce aid programs in Afghanistan, led to a major cutback in the U.S. presence in Afghanistan and the termination of U.S. aid programs in that country.[32] The Voice of America subsequently announced that $17 million in American assistance to Afghanistan had been curtailed due to Ambassador Dubs' murder.[33]

While the Americans were cutting their aid programs in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union was increasing its economic aid. U.S. economic aid in Afghanistan in 1979 amounted to $10.6 million; in 1980

it ended. During the same period, the Soviets increased the amount of their economic assistance to Afghanistan. Soviet economic assistance in 1980 amounted to $705 million; in 1981, $25 million, 1982 $90 million, 1983, $370 million, and in 1984 $325 million.[34] The U.S. government estimated that the Soviet Union's cost of occupation in the first four years was $12 billion; and in 1984 it was estimated at $4 billion.[35]

The decision to cut back American aid programs was also recommended to U.S. government officials by other countries including Great Britain, Germany, Canada and India. However, they did suggest that the United States should maintain its presence in Afghanistan.[36] After Dubs' murder the Americans living in Afghanistan were concerned about their own safety. Non-essential American personnel and all Peace Corp volunteer workers left Afghanistan in early 1979. Occasional safety instructions were issued by the U.S. Embassy to the remaining American personnel still living in Afghanistan.[37]

Vasiliy Safronchuk, Soviet ambassador in Kabul, assured Bruce Amstutz, American Charge' d'Affaires, of the safety of the American personnel in Afghanistan. Safronchuk stated that the Afghan government had the situation very much under control and he saw no reason for the Americans to evacuate.[38]

The safety assurance to the Americans in Kabul did not come only from Soviet sources but from Afghan government authorities as well. On July 24, 1979, Shah Mohammad Dost, First Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, met with Amstutz, Charge d'affaires, U.S. Embassy in Kabul, and Bruce A. Flatin in the Kabul Foreign Ministry building. Dost expressed his concerns about the evacuation of United States personnel from

Afghanistan, and assured Amstutz that the Americans would be safe in Afghanistan.[39] On July 25, the Soviet ambassador Alexander M. Puzanov met with Amstutz. Puzanov brought up U.S. concerns about "potential harm" to the Americans in Kabul.[40] Not withstanding these assurances, it seemed that the United States government was determined to reduce its staff members in Afghanistan and the safety assurances to the Americans by DRA and the Soviet officials did not change their decision.[41] Other countries in the area thought that the U.S. should maintain its presence in Afghanistan so that in the event of any political developments in the country, the United States would be capable of responding in time.[42] The evacuation of the American personnel from Afghanistan was also accompanied by an enormous amount of publicity in the American media. In fact, the Afghan government was more concerned about U.S. publicity regarding the evacuation than the evacuation itself. The publicity not only damaged the Afghan government's prestige as far as being able to provide safety for its foreign residents, but it also encouraged other countries to follow the American lead. Dost pointed out his government's concerns to Amstutz and Flatin during their July 24th, meeting, and said that: "this plan could have been worked out in a calm and quiet form without being publicized."[43] On August 7, 1979, more than one hundred U.S. citizens were evacuated from Afghanistan.[44]

Other western countries followed the American leadership. For example, on August 7, 1979, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Political Committee discussed the Afghan situation. The Canadian representative at the meeting mentioned his government's desire to evacuate its personnel from Afghanistan.[45] The evacuation of the

western countries from Afghanistan not only made the Afghan government weak, but it also left no other options for the DRA but to depend on the Soviet government and other Eastern European countries for assistance in handling the growing economic and political problems in Afghanistan.

In spite of the United States' decision to evacuate, the Afghan government tried to improve its relations with the United States. U.S. government officials, while assuring Afghan leaders that their government had a desire to improve relations with them, at the same time were engaged in anti-Afghan government activities by supporting the anti-government groups. Amstutz wrote about his meeting with Dost to the State Department, saying that he responded to Dost's desire for improved relations with: "the USG (U.S. government) also wants friendly relations with the DRA, ... and, once again, denied that we were engaged in any subversive anti-Khalq efforts."[46] When Amstutz wrote to Washington that he "denied" being involved in anti-DRA activities, it, of course, could have meant that he knew the fact but he denied it. The U.S. also denied that it was providing military assistance to the rebels in 1979. Americans did not want the Soviets to justify their action in fighting the Americans in Afghanistan.[47]

American officials denied providing assistance to the DRA opposition and said that if the Afghan government had evidence of it they "would like to know about it."[48] On July 5, 1979, during a meeting with Amstutz, Puzanov indicated that the government of Afghanistan had "documented evidence" of foreign interferences in the Afghan affairs.[49] The Carter administration claimed that the United States did not favor the anti-Afghan groups who were unlikely to unite

and had conservative views.[50] However, U.S. knowledge of the rebels' views did not stop the CIA from covert operations and from providing extensive military assistance to the rebels in their fight against the Kabul government.

The U.S. government did not wish to improve its relations with Afghanistan as long as a socialist government remained in power, and the Soviets had the upper hand in Afghan affairs. Although the DRA sent several messages requesting closer ties with the United States through various channels, the U.S. government failed to take advantage of the situation and to consider the Afghan request more seriously. Puzanov also indicated the DRA's desire for improving relations with the U.S. government. Puzanov added that it was obvious from the DRA's recognition of the 4th of July, the American independence day, that the DRA wanted to have close relations with the United States.[51] Several high ranking Afghan officials attended the 4th of July reception in Kabul. The Kabul Times, a daily English language newspaper, in its July 4th issue published on its front page, president Carter's photograph and a congratulatory message from the Afghan government to the Americans, on their independence day. A friendly editorial article also appeared in the same issue.[52]

On August 6, Amstutz met with Shah Wali, the newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Amstutz handed over to Wali a letter from the US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, congratulating him on his new appointment. During this meeting Wali indicated that the DRA desired to maintain good relations between the two countries. At the same time he also criticized the American press for its negative

attitude toward the DRA.[53] Louis Dupree, U.S. historian and Afghan specialist, said that:

> ... one may deplore the bloodshed which accompanied the revolution and feel remorse for the dead, but an enlightened press should avoid the loose use of the term 'communist.' All should examine the words of the new leaders carefully, for government, like persons, should be considered innocent until proven guilty.[54]

Later Shah Wali, in an interview with the United News of India, emphasized that: "Afghanistan wanted good political relations with the US, but Washington seems to be unwilling to assist us." The Afghan government officials' repeated desire for better relations could have been an indicator of Afghan desire for good relations with all countries; to keep the non-alignment status of Afghanistan alive; and to reduce the DRA's dependency on the Soviet Union. Wali's desire for "good political relations" could also be an indication of DRA's tense relations with the Soviet Union. The use of the word "assist" by Wali might indicate the seriousness of DRA's troubles with Moscow.[55] It was clear from circumstance that Amin was unhappy with the developments in Afghanistan and he was ready to accept the consequences of his actions.[56]

Amin, in another interview on September 6, said that Afghanistan was looking forward to establishing friendly relations with the U.S. The U.S. considered the Afghan government's desire to establish better relations a "fairly standard" announcement.[57] Prime Minister Amin in his interview with foreign journalists on September 6, again expressed his government's desire for improving relations with the United States. Amin said: "We want to have friendly relations with China and the United

States."[58]

As shown above, the Afghan government made several attempts to improve their relations with the United States. The US government officials understood the Afghan desire, but they viewed the Afghan actions as "unimportant gestures".[59]

The political situation in Afghanistan changed again. On September 14, 1979, Prime Minister Amin removed Taraki from power and became President and Prime Minister. Beginning with Amin's presidency relations between Kabul and Moscow started to deteriorate. Foreign diplomats noticed this deterioration. For example, it took five days for Soviet leaders Leonid Brezhnev and Alexi Kosygin to send congratulatory telegrams to Amin.[60] Normally, the Soviet Union responded immediately; the five days delay seemed unusual for Moscow.

During his three months of rule, Amin unsuccessfully and overtly tried to improve relations with the United States. The murder of Ambassador Dubs, and the DRA's dependency on the Soviet Union were the major obstacles in the way of improving relations between the two countries.[61] While the U.S. government did not make any move to improve its relations with the DRA, it did however, continue to maintain contact with Afghan authorities. The United States blamed the Afghan government for the poor state of relations between the two countries. Jack C. Miklos, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau for Near Eastern & South Asian Affairs, Department of State, in a congressional briefing said: "The poor state of our current relationship was not our choice ... We would be happy to see some concrete signs that the Afghan government share this desire."[62]

U.S.-Afghan relations did not improve. President Amin met with Amstutz on September 27. Amin knew that he was in deep trouble with the Soviet Union and wished to improve relations with the U.S. and other countries in order to survive. The Soviets had always disliked the independent-minded Amin and had tried on several occasions in the past to eliminate him. However, their plans failed.[63]

President Amin stopped the Soviets from building military bases in Afghanistan and reconstructing Afghan security forces. A contract was signed between Moscow and Kabul before September 1979, to build two military bases in Afghanistan. The CIA estimated a $200 million contract for building these two bases near Farah and Shindand. On September 18, 1979, Amin announced his intention to reorganize the security services thereby frustrating the Russian plans.[64]

In this direct confrontation with U.S.S.R. Amin needed the economic support of the U.S. government for his survival. During the September 27th meeting with Amstutz, Amin emphasized improving relations between the two countries. Amstutz, upon instructions from the State Department, avoided giving any promises, did not discuss the U.S. embassy staff reduction, and kept the meeting as short as possible.[65]

The U.S. wished to hear from Amin that he would be reducing the Soviet influence in Afghan affairs, and also desired an official apology from the Afghan government for Dubs' murder. When Amin expressed his willingness to apologize for Dubs' assassination, American officials regarded it as a Soviet strategy for "... upgrading the image of Amin, as we (the U.S.) believe they might be advising him to improve his relations with non-socialist countries."[66] The U.S. however, failed to

clarify the Soviets' motive for enhancing Amin's efforts for improving his relations with the United States.

Considering the strained relations between Amin and the Soviets it was doubtful that the Soviets were willing to improve Amin's reputation. Because Amin would not allow Russian troops to enter Afghanistan, the U.S.S.R. could justify their involvement in Afghanistan as maintaining Afghan sovereignty by "freeing" that nation from American imperialism. Whatever the case might be, it seems unlikely that the Russians would instruct Amin to improve his relations with the United States. Amin's desire for improved relations could only mean that Amin was trying to reduce his dependency on the Soviet Union. The tense relations between Amin and the Soviets would end only in the elimination of Amin, unless he had a strong backing from the U.S. government. Amin was aware of the fact that his days were numbered unless he received United States support. Amin expressed his feelings and said that he hoped to be alive "to see a socialist society in Afghanistan."[67]

Amin struggled to gain the trust and the support of U.S. government officials for his government. For example, Afghan Minister of Information and Culture, Khayal Mohammad Katawazi, sent thirty-four of his staff members for English training to the classes provided by the American Embassy in Kabul. He also asked the U.S. for "increased cooperation between Afghanistan and the United States."[68] During a September 27th meeting in New York, David Newsom, U.S. Under Secretary for Political Affairs, U.S. Department of State, and Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shah Wali expressed his government's desire for better relations with the U.S. Newsom, in addition to mentioning Amin's

cordial conversation with Amstutz, said that the U.S. Congress had reacted strongly to the assassination of Ambassador Dubs, and: "we welcomed word that President Amin wants better relations. When the time comes that better relations can be discussed, we will explore how the conditions laid down by congress might be met."[69]

On the same day Asadullah Matin, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information Division, met with Marilyn Mcafee, Afghanistan Desk Officer. Matin had also noted the Afghan government's request for improved relations with the United States, and said that Amin was "personally extremely interested in improvement of relations with the US. Now was the time of opportunity."[70] Amin was aware that the Soviets were determined to remove him from power and to install a more obedient leader who would follow their orders.

The United States was aware of Amin's tense relations with the Soviet Union.[71] Although the DRA and USSR were careful to hide their differences publicly, they did not remain hidden. Soviet interest and participation in Amin's government decreased. Puzanov, the U.S.S.R. ambassador in Kabul did not participate in Afghan government activities as he previously did. On October 2, Puzanov was not present at the inauguration of the PDPA Training Institute and did not attend Shah Wali's briefing of "friendly socialist ambassadors", which was held on October 6th. On October 10, Puzanov arrived late at "the ceremony instituting the Constitutional Convention."[72]

The Kabul government wanted to emphasize American involvement in Afghan affairs. Probably government officials thought that it would convince the Americans of Afghan desire for improved relations. On

October 8, the Kabul Times published a news item about the purchase of a DC-10, and its arrival at the Kabul airport a day earlier. The news mentioned that at the ceremony, Bareq Shafiee, minister, Nazar Mohammad, deputy minister of Transport and Tourism, the United States Charge d'affaires and other members of the US embassy in Kabul were present.[73]

On October 1, Amstutz wrote the following to the State Department, in which he mentioned that:

> During the last seven days, we have been receiving clear signals that the DRA seeks better relations with US. I think it is important that these be appreciated, but I also believe it is too early to tell whether these signs will be substantiated in areas important to us.[74]

As a gesture of good will, Amstutz mentioned that the Afghan government, in addition to repeated requests for better relations between DRA and U.S. government, had recently sent a large contingent of high ranking Afghan officials to attend the 4th of July reception in Kabul. Amin also received Amstutz in his presidential palace in a very friendly atmosphere on September 27. Amin requested improved relations between the two countries. In addition, Minister of Information and Culture, Khyal Katawazi talked to an ICA Washington visitor on the phone; she was denied previously.[75]

How did the United States respond to these overtures? The State Department instructed Archer K. Blood, Amstutz's replacement, to question the DRA's position on issues close to those of Soviet Union and Cuba.[76] The U.S. official should have realized that Amin was an Afghan nationalist with a Marxist-Leninist ideology. His ideas on international issues were not from the Soviet Union or Cuba but based on

his own ideology. His plea for U.S. assistance did not mean that he had changed his ideas. He wished Afghanistan to be independent. Thus, Amin's opinion on national and international issues was not dictated to him by the Soviet Union. In fact, Amin's position on many issues concerning his government were not what the Soviets desired. The reason that the Soviets wanted to remove him was because he resisted Soviet plans in Afghanistan. In addition, Amin's brutal treatment of his opposition had turned Afghans against the Soviets who supported the Marxist regime in Afghanistan. The Russians wanted to gain the confidence of the Afghan people in order to achieve their objectives and to maintain a Soviet-controlled socialist government in Afghanistan.

On October 27, 1979, Archer K. Blood, the U.S. Charge' d'affaires in Kabul, met with Amin. During this meeting Amin emphasized that he wanted to improve relations with the United States and he added that Afghanistan was in "desperate need" of aid. Amin said that the United States was prepared to give $10 million to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, but it was not assisting the Afghan government to solve the problem.[77] Next day, the October 28, issue of the Kabul Times published a photograph of Amin's meeting with Blood on the first page.[78]

Three days later, the U.S. ambassador in Pakistan, Arthur W. Hummel, met with Riaz Piracha, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, regarding the Afghan situation. Hummel briefed Piracha on the October 27th meeting between Amin and Blood; Piracha was surprised that Amin personally met with Blood instead of the Afghan Foreign minister Shah Wali.[79]

Amin tried to limit the Soviet influence in Afghanistan. The Soviets desired to build military bases in Afghanistan; Amin stopped their plan. In an interview with Adel Said Bishtawi, an Arab journalist, Amin on December 12, stated: "No Soviet military bases will be built in Afghanistan." During the same interview he also said that he was awaiting visits with Agha Shahi, Pakistan Foreign Minister, and Zia ul-Haq, Pakistan Prime Minister in an effort to improve relations between the two countries.[80] Amin also denied the Soviets' request to send troops to fight the Afghans opposing his government. Amin unsuccessfully tried to balance the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. In doing so he contributed to his downfall. Thus, the Soviets, alarmed at his "independence," took action to halt Amin's "pro-western" inclinations.

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# CHAPTER THREE

## Hafizullah Amin

One of the most active leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan was Hafizullah Amin. Amin was born in 1929, in Paghman Woleswali of Kabul to a Ghilzai Pashtun family. Amin lost his father, Habibullah Amin, while he was still a young boy. After his father's death, Amin's elder brother, Abdullah Amin, became his guardian. Amin completed his primary education in Paghman, and his secondary education in Darulmalimin of Kabul. He enrolled at Kabul University, Faculty of Science where he earned a Baccalaureate of Science degree, majoring in mathematics and physics. After his graduation from Kabul University, he taught and later became the vice-principal at the Institute of Kabul Darulmalimin. After a short period of time he served as principal of Ibn-e-Sina high school in Kabul.[1]

In 1957, Amin earned a scholarship to the United States to work on his master's degree in education at the Teachers College Columbia University. He completed his studies in education administration and organization in the United States and returned to Afghanistan. In Afghanistan he joined the Faculty of Education at the Kabul University. The Kabul Ministry of Education first appointed Amin as Principal of Ibn-e-Sina high school, later as Principal of Darulmalimin of Kabul, before being transferred to the newly established Teachers Training Institute in Kabul.[2]

In 1962 Amin received another scholarship to the United States to work on his Ph.D. at Columbia University. He attended a summer study camp at the University of Wisconsin where he was elected the President of the Afghan Students Association in the United States. Although his Ph. D. course work was almost completed and he was preparing himself for the oral defense, the United States authorities asked him to leave the country because of his political activities.[3] His request to be allowed to complete his work, even at his own expense, was denied due to his politicals. Amin's politically active life in the United States ended in his expulsion from the United States in 1965.[4]

Although the real reasons for Amin's expulsion from the United States were his political views and his active involvement in communist circles, the U.S. government officials told Amin that the government of Afghanistan has recalled him even if he has not completed his Ph.D. work at Columbia University. Amin left the United States in 1965. After he arrived in Kabul, he learned that the United States government had deported him.[5] Anthony Arnold, a specialist in Afghanistan studies and the author of several books and articles on Afghanistan, believed that Amin's political activities left him with little time to complete his studies.[6] According to Bruce Amstutz, Amin "failed his doctoral examinations at Columbia University."[7]

In the fall of 1965, Amin ran for the 12th Wolesi Jirgah (National Assembly), a four year term, from Paghman Woluswali of Kabul. He lost in the election. Amin subsequently taught at the Rabia Balkhi high school for about a year. Then he served as a member of the Primary Education Department of the Ministry of Education for another three

years. Khalq was established in Kabul and held its first meeting on January 1, 1965, under the chairmanship of Noor Mohammad Taraki. In 1965, Amin joined the Khalq Party, a socialist party, as an alternate member.[8] Amin was unable to attend the meeting of the first Congress because he was in the United States working on his Ph.D. The Party's "Congress elected a Central Committee of eleven, seven full members and four alternate members, with Taraki as the Secretary General."[9] In 1968, Amin became full member of Khalq's Central Committee after the Party split.[10]

In 1967, the Khalq party split into two factions, due to disagreements over a number of issues, including the Party's reaction to the Afghan government's termination of the Party's official publication. Khalq ceased in May 16, 1966, after six issues were published. Taraki, the Secretary General of Khalq Party, and Babrak Karmal who had the post of Secretary of the Central Committee of the Khalq Party wanted to react differently to the government's action.[11] Karmal wanted to compromise with the government and assure the Afghan authorities that they were not communists. Karmal also suggested to change the red color on the "masthead" of the Khalq to a darker color. Taraki was not willing to compromise since Taraki had received a letter from the Ministry of Information and Culture, stating: "As your magazine entitled Khalq has already been banned and since you want to issue a magazine having the same aims and object, you cannot be given permission to re-issue the same or a new paper."[12]

Other issues that contributed to the split in the party were the Party's "organizational tactics; Taraki favored a Leninist-type party

based on the working class, while Babrak wanted to form a broad national-democratic front."[13] In addition, the Party's personal backgrounds; as Karmal's supporters had better educations and were mostly form Kabul and other big cities, while Taraki's associates had only limited education, were mainly from the country, and were mostly non-Persian speakers.[14]

As a result of such disagreements and the split of the Party, Karmal and his supporters created the Parcham Party, in 1967, under Karmal's leadership. Amin remained with the Khalq faction which was headed by Noor Muhammad Taraki and became the second most important individual in the Party after Taraki.[15]

Amin was the most energetic member of Khalq's Central Committee. His excellent administrative skills increased the party's popularity and brought a better organization in the party.[16] In 1969, Amin ran for the 13th National Assembly for the second time. He won this election and became a member of the National Assembly from the Paghman Woluswali of Kabul, and represented his party's interests in the Afghan parliament.[17]

After completing his four year parliamentary term in 1973, Amin focused his attention on recruiting young military officers for the Khalq party.[18] In 1978, Amin played a key role in initiating, staging and directing the successful coup d'etat. Although Amin made the coup a success, and thereby brought the Afghan socialist regime into power, the Soviets did not appoint him as president or prime minister. presumably the Soviets were not sure of Amin's loyalty to their government. The Russians debated between Karmal and Taraki to head the new Afghan

government. Finally, they appointed Taraki to lead the new Afghan government.[19]

Later the government announced its appointed cabinet members. On May 4, 1978, The Kabul Times introduced the members of the newly formed Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). The paper indicated that the Revolutionary Council of the DRA elected Noor Mohammad Taraki as the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and the Prime Minister of the DRA. Babrak Karmal was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and Deputy Prime Minister. Amin and Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, both, became Deputy Prime Ministers in addition to their respective responsibilities as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Communication. The newspaper carried the photographs of the members of the DRA government. Taraki and Babrak's pictures appeared larger, while Amin's picture with the other eighteen members of the cabinet were published much smaller.[20] Although Amin was not completely forgotten by the Russians it was obvious that his leading role in the coup did not gain him a high position in the Afghan government.

Members of the Khalq and Parcham parties constituted the new Afghan government. The two parties united in 1977, in an attempt to install a socialist regime in Afghanistan. However, in the new Afghan cabinet, the Khalq party had a majority. Eleven of the twenty-one cabinet members belonged to the Khalq party, and constituted a majority in decision making.[21]

Although Khalq had the majority in the cabinet, Taraki and Amin were unhappy about sharing authority with the members of the Parcham party. They removed Parchamis from high government positions in order

to assure their complete control of the government. In July, 1978, Taraki appointed Babrak Karmal, the leader of the Parcham party, and several other Parcham leaders as ambassadors. Later, the Taraki-Amin government relieved them of their duties and called home; but the Parchamis refused to return.[22]

While the division between Khalq and Parcham grew wider the struggle for power between Taraki and Amin also became more obvious. From the beginning of the DRA regime Amin was eager to gain power in the government. As the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs, he represented Afghanistan in the non-aligned summit in Havana a week after the 1978, coup. On his way to the conference, Amin stopped in Moscow and met with leading Soviet officials.[23]

Amin's authority in the Afghan government was increasing. On March 27, 1979, Amin became Prime Minister, but he retained his position as Foreign Minister. At that time President Taraki held the post of Minister of Defense.[24] On July 27, 1979, Radio Afghanistan announced that Amin had added the Ministry of Defense to his responsibilities; he was to perform the duty of the Defense Ministry under Taraki's supervision.[25]

The non-stop power struggle, first between Khalq and Parcham and later between Taraki and Amin continued to grow. Amin was Prime Minister and the Head of the Afghan Government so he formed a new cabinet.[26] Amin was not pleased with the way Taraki treated him. Taraki did not wish to pass to Amin the authority that went with the position as the prime minister. For example, Taraki chaired the meetings of the Council of Ministers, instead of allowing Amin to do so.

Amin resented Taraki's handling of the government affairs and his meddling in Amin's areas of responsibilities. Normally, the President appoints the Prime Minister, and the later appoints his cabinet members. Taraki did not permit Amin to change the cabinet members.[27]

Amin resented Taraki's restraint on his authority while Taraki believed that Amin was a threat to his government. Although Taraki and Amin needed each other's support to stay in power and to pursue their common idealogy, Taraki needed Amin's aid more than Amin needed Taraki. Publicly Taraki and Amin appeared as one team. But privately they had their disagreements on running the daily affairs of the government. They were, however, fascinated by socialist idealogy and wished to move Afghanistan in that direction. At that time the country was not prepared for it, and conditions were not suitable.

Although Taraki relied on Amin's ability, he also feared Amin's ability and found his own position in danger. He had noticed Amin's rapid achievements in gaining control of the government, and thought that if Amin was allowed to continue, he, himself would become Amin's next target.

According to Beverly Male, Amin's biographer, the relationship between Taraki and Amin "was founded on something far less sentimental than the official histories would imply."[28] Male believed that Taraki relied on Amin's ability and Amin needed Taraki's support. They needed each other's support to fight their common enemies. According to Male, two of Amin's prominent characteristics were "self-confidence" and "unquenchable optimism."[29] Karmal described Amin's associates as "the satanic band of Amin."[30] Amin was the most brilliant and well

organized member of the Khalq party. The Soviets were aware of Amin's ability as well, and had acknowledged the fact. Alexander Puzanov described Amin as a "strong and well organized..." individual.[31]

Although Amin controlled the government affairs, the Afghan press paid more attention to Taraki's activities. Taraki's literary works were also broadcast on radio as well as on television on various occasions. He was portrayed as an intelligent revolutionary leader, a successful politician and a brilliant philosopher and writer. Taraki might have been a successful writer and philosopher, but he failed to end the political turmoil in Afghanistan. In fact, he was unable to make decisions on his own. He needed the aid of either Amin or even the Soviets to administer the government. For example, after the uprising in Herat in March of 1979, Taraki was unable to control the situation, and requested Russian troops to end the uprising. Afghan soldiers joined the people against the government. Many were killed in that uprising, including a number of Soviet advisors and their families.[32]

Taraki feared Amin's increasing authority in the government; and was aware of Amin's independent minded personality. Taraki would not face reality by admitting that Amin was controlling the government. Whenever Taraki had an opportunity, he had mentioned that he was instructing Amin. His supporters also referred to Amin as Taraki's faithful student. Thus, Taraki in his late December address to a group of army officers said:

> The students we have trained in our party have cooperated with their party according to their talent and capacity... Our Comrade Amin is one of the most brilliant students of our school who has taken part in every regard. There is no doubt that other friends have also taken part. Comparatively I should say that

> whatever plan I have given Comrade Amin, he has put it into action very well. I am satisfied with him and the party is pleased with him.[33]

Clearly Taraki in his speech tried to reduce Amin's role as to nothing more than a faithful student who took instructions from him with no initiative of his own. However, four days later, Amin responded to Taraki's comment during his speech in a function celebrating the fourteenth year of founding of the PDPA party, at which he accused Taraki of dogmatism.[34]

The Soviet Union did not ignore the increasingly acrimonious in-fighting within the Afghan government. Rumors spread that Moscow was not pleased with the current Afghan leadership and wanted to replace both Taraki and Amin.[35] Although the Russians were not pleased with either leader, they preferred Taraki to Amin. Taraki was more acceptable to the Russians than Amin, because he was more agreeable to most Soviets plans. By April of 1979, the Soviets were questioning Amin's reliability. In May, 1979, Alexi Yepishov, the Soviet Union's First Deputy Minister of Defence, joined Vassily Safronchuk in Kabul, to conspire Amin's removal from power.[36]

The Soviets distrusted Amin believing that he was pro-west. A KGB investigation found Amin to be a "smooth-talking fascist who was secretly pro-western..."[37] Amin, therefore, was not a favorite Afghan leader of either the Soviets or the Afghans. Amin did what he believed in, ignored the Soviet advisers as much as he could. The Soviets

advised Amin to introduce gradual reform. During the early days of the DRA's regime, Amin and Taraki both, speeded the reforms and introduced a series of rapid changes.[38] Specifically the DRA issued several decrees challenging the norms and the standards of Afghanistan's traditional tribal society and offending the people's beliefs.

Due to the people's strong resistance, the government failed to implement their reform programs. Opposition to the government increased; Afghans retaliated by confronting the government in armed struggle and in resisting acceptance of the reforms. The DRA in return introduced a regime of terror; the government arrested, killed, and tortured thousands of Afghans who opposed the new regime. Many feared government atrocities and spent their lives in hiding as long as they could; others escaped to neighboring countries. Moscow naturally blamed Amin for the increased violence and rebellion in the country. Thus, the Soviets wished to eliminate Amin.

Direct talks between Soviet and Afghan leaders were necessary. During Taraki's Moscow meeting with Brezhnev in September, 1979, Brezhnev advised Taraki to eliminate Amin. Taraki, aware of Amin's greed for power, with Moscow's approval planned to remove Amin. Taraki's plans to remove Amin failed because his supporters informed him of Taraki's intentions. Furthermore, since Amin knew that Taraki wished to remove him he was extremely cautious in his actions. Taraki's efforts to eliminate Amin "in March and September 1979, also failed.[39]

When Taraki returned to Kabul, the Afghan Cabinet members met in mid-September. At that meeting Amin requested a cabinet change because he wished to replace the Interior minister, Mohammad Aslam Watanjar; the

Foreign minister, Sher Jan Mazdoryar; and the Communication Minister, Sayed Mohammad Gulabzoi. Taraki strongly rejected the idea. Amin's insistence on dismissal of the three ministers was to weaken Taraki's position in the government. Amin however, dismissed the three ministers without Taraki's approval and announced a cabinet change.[40] As expected, Amin's action antagonized Taraki. The three cabinet ministers dismissed by Amin took refuge in Kabul's Soviet Embassy.

Amin decided to change the cabinet after he learned that Taraki intended to remove him from power. Sayed Daoud Taroon, who was with Taraki during Taraki's trip to Havana and Moscow, informed Amin of the Brezhnev-Taraki plot against him.[41] Amin described Taraki's plan as the following:

> A few hours before Taraki's plane was due to land at Kabul airport ... I learned from my men that a plot to eliminate me at the airport, when I should be on hand to greet Taraki had been hatched by Taraki himself, with the active participation of the secret police (AGSA) chief Assadullah Sarwari, Minister of Interior Col. Watanjar, and Communication minister Golabzoy.... I took immediate measures, essentially replacing secret police personnel at the airport by loyal army men.... When Taraki saw me alive, he was very surprised and shocked because he realized that I had discovered his plan. Nevertheless he tried to stay calm and smiled. For security reasons I declined to ride in Mr. Taraki's car on its way to the Presidential Palace, and went instead straight to my office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[42]

Taraki took two days to come up with another plan to eliminate Amin. He called Amin and asked to meet with him in the Presidential Palace in order to clear the misunderstanding that existed between them. However, Amin was informed by several persons including Taroon, Chief of the Palace Guard, that Taraki planned to kill him during the meeting. Amin, not wishing to take unnecessary risks,

declined the meeting using his daughter's illness as an excuse. Amin then asked the high ranking Soviet advisors in his office if they were aware of the reason why Taraki desired to eliminate him. The Russian advisors assured Amin that they would investigate the matter; the advisors, of course, never did reply to his inquiry.

The maneuvering continued. On September 14, once again, Taraki called Amin and insisted on meeting with him to clear the misunderstanding. At that time the Soviet Ambassador Alexander Puzanov was also with Taraki in his office. While Taraki requested Amin to meet with him, Puzanov assured Amin of his safety. Amin agreed to meet with Taraki believing in Puzanov's "guarantee" of his safety.[43]

A pamphlet was also published on September 16, by the Central Committee of the PDPA. The publication accused Taraki of conspiracy and anti-party inclinations, especially against Amin. The pamphlet documented the expulsion of Taraki, Watanjar, Mazdooryar, Gulabzoi and Assadullah Sarwari from the Central Committee.[44]

Amin, however, was not reckless and took extra precautions. He was accompanied by eight body guards instead of the usual four. After entering the Palace, Taroon, Chief of the Palace Guard, warned Amin of Taraki's assassination plot. Amin still believed that in the presence of Puzanov, Taraki would not try to kill him.[45] The following describes Amin's situation:

> I climbed the stairs to Taraki's office. There, the guard stationed before Taraki's office door told me that he had orders from Taraki not to let me in except alone. But Tarun (Taroon), as his hierarchical superior, shoved the guard aside and preceded me into Taraki's office. As soon as he entered, shots rang out and Tarun was mortally wounded. By self-protecting instinct, I ran down the stairs to reach my car while

> I heard shots ring out in my direction. My aide-de-camp was also mortally wounded in the shooting. Once in my car, I told my chauffeur to drive me straight to the Defense Ministry, ... at the Defense Ministry, I gave orders to arrest Taraki's partisans...[46]

In the end, Taraki failed to remove Amin, instead Amin arrested Taraki. On September 16, 1979, Amin became president.[47] At 8:00 p.m. Amin broadcast a speech on Afghanistan Radio. In his speech Amin mentioned that Taraki due to health conditions had submitted his resignation to the Politburo of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and was, therefore, unable to continue his official duties. The Politburo and Revolutionary Council, chaired by Foreign Minister Shah Wali, named Hafizullah Amin as the President and Secretary General of the PDPA. Amin, in addition, would continue his current duties as the Prime Minister.[48]

Amin survived, but Taraki's condition and his whereabouts remained unknown. On October 3, the Soviet Counselor Vilior G. Osadchiy told an American Embassy official that Taraki had been imprisoned at the Palace.[49] There was no further news except that he was supposed to be seriously sick. On October 6, Taraki was murdered by Amin's supporters. The assassination remained secret[50] until October 9, when Radio Afghanistan stated that Taraki had died.[51] The Soviet media, in announcing Taraki's death, quoted the Afghan news media.[52] Amin's takeover may have surprised the Soviet Union. According to Safronchuck the Soviets had no prior knowledge of Amin's plan.[53]

For all these reasons Amin's distrust of the Soviets increased during his presidency. As a nationalist, Amin wished to reduce his government's dependency on the Soviet Union and hoped to gain the

support of the Western countries in order to stabilize his government. During Amin's one hundred and four day presidency he tried to establish closer relations with the United States, Pakistan and some Arab countries.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

## The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Most diplomats believed that the main objectives of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were: "... safeguarding the investments they (the Soviets) have made to support the revolution, maintaining a Socialist regime in Afghanistan, and extending their influence..."[1] J. Bruce Amstutz, the United States Charge d'Affaires in Kabul, based his assessment of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on Moscow's fear that the collapse of the Afghan government would damage Soviet prestige internationally; and Amin's distrust of the Soviets would probably diminish the Soviet influence in Afghanistan.[2]

After the socialist government gained power in Afghanistan in April 1978, the Afghan government failed to establish a stable regime in that country. The Soviets feared that the friendly socialist regime in Afghanistan would collapse as a result of constant power struggles among the Afghan government leaders and the people's increasing opposition to the new regime. Afghans resented the growing influence of Russian advisors in Afghan affairs. They also opposed the reforms introduced by the government. Moscow could not convince the Marxist regime in Afghanistan to implement gradual reforms. As a result, the Afghan regime faced strong resistance from the people who otherwise would have supported the regime, or at least would have remained indifferent to the Afghan government. In addition to this opposition, Afghans were engaged in active anti-government activities as well. The Afghan government therefore, was unable to implement order in the country.

To control the situation, the Soviets advised Afghan leaders to broaden the government's base and to assign some Parchamis and non-party members to high government positions. In 1978, Parchamis held high positions in the Afghan government. The Khalqis purged the Parcham party members for the government in order to have a complete control over the Afghan affairs. However, the Russians wished to see that the members of both Parcham and Khlaq parties, become equally responsible for government affairs. When the Parchamis were purged the situation in Afghanistan did not improve; Moscow became dissatisfied with Amin and Taraki because they were unable to control Afghan events. Moreover, the Soviets observed "...a gradual deterioration in the domestic position of the Marxist regime ... and lost patience with Amin's group who refused to take Soviet advice about governing the country."[3] The Russians decided to change the leadership and the government, if they had to, with one more acceptable to the Afghan people in order to achieve their goals of having a socialist regime in Kabul.[4] Moscow wished to replace Amin, because the Russians believed that the achievements of the 'Saur Revolution' as they called the coup of 1978, would be diminished if Amin remained in power. The Russians' distrust of Amin increased after Amin eliminated most of his opponents, in 1978-79, including Taraki.

The Soviets had not allowed, and were not ready to permit, any socialist government, installed and supported by them, to be controlled by anti-Russian elements. Soviet leaders feared that Amin's continuation in power would result in the failure of socialism in Afghanistan. The effect of such a failure could mean undesirable global

consequences and damage to the Soviet's international prestige. In addition, it was possible that the Soviet failure in Afghanistan would lead to some disturbances in the Soviet Central Asian republics, which shared the same religion and ethnic background as their neighbors living across the border in Afghanistan. Soviet leaders therefore:

> ... became apprehensive that the advent of socialism instead of strengthening their position in the area was likely to jeopardize Russian security and turn the traditionally friendly country into a hostile neighbor. It was in this defensive anxiety that Soviet Union contemplated the political if not physical elimination of Amin."[5]

Moscow, therefore, considered Amin more a threat to Taraki's regime than the army officers who revolted occasionally or the resistance groups who were engaged in armed struggle against the government. The Soviets blamed Amin and believed that he was responsible for all of the country's troubles. If Amin was removed, the Soviets thought, peace would return to Afghanistan. Thus, eliminating Amin from the Afghan political scene was the Soviet's main concern.

In early 1979, the Soviets began their propaganda against Amin. An underground letter distributed in Afghanistan described Amin as a CIA agent and asked for the removal of Amin and his associate; the letter did not include Taraki.[6] The Soviets accused Amin of having connections with the CIA; and they mentioned it on several occasions to indicate that the United States was responsible for the Afghan catastrophe.

The anti-Amin propaganda aimed to convince Afghans that the Americans were responsible for the nation's chaos. The Russians portrayed Amin as being a CIA agent. Russia wished the Afghans to

believe that they were trying to maintain peace in Afghanistan and the United States was responsible for all the disturbances in the country. Therefore, the removal of Amin would end the chaos in Afghanistan.

In early 1979, the Russians advised Taraki to change personnel and to get rid of Amin.[7] This Taraki could not do; nor could the Soviets. The Soviets not only failed to limit Amin's authority, or to remove him from power, they also failed to stop Amin from gaining more authority and becoming the strongest individual in the Afghan government. Amin, however, mistakenly believed that he could survive without Russian support. He ignored Russian advice, exercised his power and authority, eliminated his opponents mercilessly and handled governmental issues the way he wished to handle them. Amin was a "... more independent-minded nationalist than Moscow wanted...", or could handle.[8]

The Russians also made numerous unsuccessful attempts to assassinate him; which also failed. Amin gradually out maneuvered Taraki, purged the Parcham members of the PDPA party, and assumed control of all government affairs. Although Taraki was the president, Amin's activities and his involvement in government affairs placed Taraki in the background. According to Hermann Schwiesau, ambassador of the German Democratic Republic to Afghanistan, Amin was, "... the strong man ..." who, "... personally runs the entire government, controlling decisions." He also mentioned that Taraki, "... does not know much of what is going on in the country."[9]

After the Soviets failed to remove Amin from the Afghan political scene, they decided to use military force and change the government in Afghanistan. Although the Russians had the opportunity to bring in

their military forces in Afghanistan few a months earlier they had not done so. Noor Mohammad Taraki had requested Soviet military assistance from the Soviet Chief Advisor, Lieutenant General Lev Gorelov after the mutiny in Herat in February, 1979, and also after the mutiny in Jalalabad in April of the same year. The Soviets denied Taraki's requests due to their advisors' lack of confidence in his government.[10] A few months later the Russians reversed their policy desiring to use their military forces, not to put down the uprising against the Afghan government, but to change the leadership in Afghanistan.

Amin was very much aware of the Russians' intentions. He knew that the Russians were trying to eliminate him and he was able to avoid the Soviet inspired assassination attempts. Amin also had strong opposition to his power within his own government. According to Schwiesau, East German Ambassador in Kabul, "Amin is very alert to the developments."[11] Schwiesau further added that Abdul Karim Misaq, Finance Minister; Abdul Hakim Sharaie Jauzjani, Justice minister; Dastagir Panjshiri, Public Works minister; and Bareq Shafeye, the Information and Culture minister were all anti-Amin.[12]

On July 18, Amin delivered a public speech expressing his awareness of the Soviets' "behind-the-scenes" activities to change DRA's leadership. Specifically alluding to the Soviet Union, Amin stated:

> we will always be faithful (to) whatever country we extend the hand of friendship... (and) we have not made a treaty of friendship with anybody unless he has respect for our independence.[13]

Regional factors also contributed to the Soviets' decision to invade Afghanistan including the fall of Mohammed Reza in Iran, the

deterioration of U.S.-Pakistan relations, the hope for the return of Indira Gandhi in India, and world acceptance when the Soviet-supported Cuban army began its 1965 African operations (invasion).[14] Robert Canfield, an Afghan scholar, argued that the fall of the Shah of Iran made the invasion possible.[15]

Subsequently, Moscow's intention of invading Afghanistan was not kept secret. Most countries, including the United States, knew that the Russians were dissatisfied with the existing leadership in Afghanistan, were preparing to change the government and were preparing an invasion. The Soviets signalled their intention in advance through Hermann Schweisau, German Democratic Republic ambassador to Afghanistan in an effort to determine the attitude of the United States and other countries before committing themselves to the drastic solution of invading Afghanistan. On July 17, 1979, Schweisau told Amstutz that Vasily Safronchuk, Soviet Minister-Counselor had been given the task of bringing about a radical change in the Afghan government. He said that the Soviets were intending a military coup and planned to depose Amin.[16] Schweisau added that Soviet military intervention would solve one problem but would inevitably turn all Afghans against the Soviets.[17] On September 30, 1979, Bogdan Malbasic, the Yugoslavian ambassador to Kabul, also mentioned to the U.S. diplomats in Kabul that the Soviets might intervene militarily in order to eliminate Amin.[18]

The Soviets' activities along the Afghan/Soviet border were clear indications of the Soviets' intention to invade Afghanistan. For example, the Soviet military activities in the Soviet Central Asian republics began before the invasion. In November, 1979, the Soviets

moved bridging equipment to their Central Asian republics and stored it there, across from the Afghan border.[19] Anthony Arnold, Soviet specialist stated:

> Marshal Sergey L. Sokolov set up his headquarters at Termez, just over the border from Afghanistan; and Warsaw Pact countries placed their forces on an advanced state of readiness.[20]

Some two weeks before the invasion, the U.S.S.R. sent troops equipped with heavy weapons to Begram air base in Kabul. The U.S. did not protest any of these Soviet activities.[21] According to Amstutz, the Soviets were signalling their unhappiness with Amin and their plans to forcibly overturn the Afghan government.[22]

To explain the American inaction perhaps, the U.S. believed that the Russians were not serious about their invasion plan and would not invade. Or the American government desired Russian embroilment in an Afghan crisis resulting in a Vietnam type war. If so, American inactivity encouraged the militants within the Soviet military and civilian establishment.

Some U.S. specialists doubted that the Soviet Union would invade Afghanistan. They thought that the invasion would "... shatter any remnants of U.S.-Soviet detente; it would "alienate" Pakistan, Iran, and India; it would damage the US-Soviet arms-control negotiation; and it would engage the Soviets in a lengthy war with the Afghans.[23] U.S. intelligence, however, overestimated the Russian desire for detente; they also excluded the possibility of installing Karmal in power and believed that the Soviets would choose Watanjar to replace Amin.[24]

On September 16, after the palace incident, Amin stripped Taraki of his presidency and all his official titles. Amin took control of the entire government and kept Taraki captive more than two weeks. On October 6, an Amin loyalist strangled Taraki. Although the Soviets distrusted Amin they had to deal with him because he was then the head of the State. Neither could Amin trust the Russians, nor could the Soviets rely on Amin any longer. Amin was reluctant to involve Soviet officials in government affairs; he tried to avoid taking advice from the Russians, even when he needed to. Often Amin confronted the Russians, sometimes angrily. Rumors spread that Amin had slapped Alexander Puzanov, the Soviet ambassador to Kabul, during a heated argument with him in Amin's office.[25] Amin also doubted the Soviet's honesty with his regime and knew that his days were numbered. Amin's efforts to reduce his government's dependency on the Soviet Union brought about his end.[26]

The Soviets' soon realized that they could not control Amin and decided to eliminate him as soon as they could. To them Amin was not only a "power-hungry politician of dubious ideological convictions"[27] but "Amin's rise to power provoked an angry debate within the Soviet diplomatic community in Kabul."[28] Puzanov suggested that Moscow should continue supporting Amin.[29] Puzanov was a pragmatist; he had supported Taraki in his attempts to remove Amin and was an active participant in the plot to eliminate Amin. Puzanov advised Moscow to continue cooperating with Amin until the Afghans resolved their crisis. Puzanov's advice was ignored. Unfortunately Amin did not trust Puzanov and asked Moscow to recall its ambassador.[30]

If the Soviets could have assassinated Amin, an invasion would not have been necessary. The Soviets tried three times to eliminate Amin between September 14, and December 17.[31] On December 13, 1979, Viktor Semenovich Paputin, Soviet First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, entered Afghanistan to engineer Amin's assassination, as well as to assist in the invasion plan. On December 17, Paputin failed in his attempts and was shot by Assadullah Amin, Hafizullah Amin's nephew, who headed the Afghan intelligence agency. Paputin who was critically wounded returned to Moscow where he died from his wounds.[32]
During these last critical months of his regime, Amin tried desperately to secure assistance from other countries, especially, from the United States and Pakistan. Amin knew that without such assistance he could not survive. Amin, however did not gain American trust or did he improve his relations with the Soviet Union. The United States' administration distrusted Amin as much as the Soviets and thus did not respond to Amin's repeated requests for improved relations.

Although the DRA and the Soviet Union publicly maintained good relations with each other, in actuality Amin struggled to limit the Russians' control of his government, and the Soviets simultaneously engaged in a plot to eliminate Amin. For example, on December 5, 1979, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the DRA-USSR Friendship Treaty congratulatory telegrams were exchanged between Amin, Brezhnev and Kosygin.[33] Neither party admitted the hostile relations which existed between them. On December 24, Kabul Times quoted the December 23, Pravda issue confirming the good relations between DRA and Soviet Union.[34]

Amin made no public appearance after December 19 and moved to Darulaman Palace on December 20.[35] A United States' intelligence report indicated that though Amin favored receiving the Soviet's help in crushing anti-government elements, he wanted Afghanistan to remain an independent nation.[36] Amin's desire to maintain Afghanistan's independent status was of course, the source of Moscow's disagreement with Amin.

While Amin was attempting to secure assistance from other countries, specially United States and Pakistan, Moscow was preparing an invasion plan. Several Russian groups entered Afghanistan to facilitate Afghanistan invasion. Aleksey Alekseyevich Yepishev, (who had experience in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia), and General Ivan Grigoryevich Pavlovsky visited Kabul to assist in an Afghan invasion plan. General Viktor Paputin also participated in assassination of Amin.[37] Hermann Schweisau, Ambassador to German Democratic Republic in Kabul, also mentioned to foreign diplomats in Kabul that Safronchuk was preparing for a coup to end Amin's government in Afghanistan.[38] Thus, after all the Soviet efforts failed repeatedly to eliminate Amin, they decided to intervene militarily.[39]

Moscow's decision to invade Afghanistan was based on a report received from the KGB headquarters in Kabul. According to Alexander Morozov, the KGB's deputy station chief in Kabul, direct military intervention could remove Amin from power and Moscow would then be able to control the Afghan government. The Soviet Politburo, in a session when "... quite a few of its members were absent," passed the decision to send Soviet troops to Afghanistan.[40] On October 29, 1979, the

Soviet Politburo committee on Afghanistan met in Moscow. In this meeting the members of the committee expressed their concerns regarding Amin's loyalty, his attempts to purge the government of his opponents, and his effort to seek a "more balanced foreign policy". The Committee members did not trust Amin. Foreign minister Andre Gromyko, defense minister Dmitri Ustinov, KGB chief Yuri Andropov, and the Communist Party secretary in charge of relations with "fraternal parties" Boris Ponomarev, signed this report.[41]

In a later special Politburo session, December 12, 1979, chaired by Brezhnev, the Soviets reconfirmed their decision to invade Afghanistan. Except for Alexi Kosygin, presumably against an Afghan invasion, all other Politburo members were present. Mikhail Gorbachev was a non-voting member and claimed that he was not consulted.[42]

Once the Soviets decided to invade, they planned to use the Red Army because they had no confidence in Afghan military forces. The Soviets knew that they could not secure Afghan military support to ensure the invasion's success and to install Karmal. Afghan military forces in 1979, were weak, divided and disorganized; the Afghan army was little more than half of its normal size. A great number of military personnel had defected, been killed or imprisoned; from 90,000 military forces in early 1978, some 50,000 to 70,000 were left.[43]

What was left in the Afghan military was disunited. Disunity and mistrust among the remaining military personnel was significant and often resulted in bloody conflicts between the members of Parcham and Khalq factions. Moreover, the Khalqis were further divided as to supporters of Taraki and supporters of Amin. In addition, non-party

military personnel resented the Soviet's presence in Afghanistan, wanted them to leave the country and did not agree with either Khalq or Parcham parties. Naturally, under such circumstances the Soviets doubted the loyalty of the Afghan military forces. They therefore, brought their own troops to assure Karmal's installation in power.

December was the crucial month for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; western countries were preparing for Christmas. The Soviets started air lifting their troops in December. Thousands of their troops were transported by air and land in two days.[44] On December 24, five thousand Soviet troops entered Kabul.[45] Although Moscow knew that Amin was not a man whom they could trust, and were preparing to invade, they "... proposed to Amin that Soviet combat forces be brought in to put down the rebellion".[46] At the same time that Moscow was trying to convince Amin to allow the Soviet troops to fight in Afghanistan their troops had already entered Afghanistan and more were enroute. Amin adamantly rejected the "offer" of Soviet troops. As late as December 24, 1979, only three days before the invasion, the Soviet ambassador in Kabul, once again appealed to Amin to allow the Soviet troops into Afghanistan to fight the rebels.[47] And, again Amin refused to allow the Russians to fight in Afghanistan.

According to Babrak Karmal, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan during the second week of December. Karmal said: "... the ruling People's Democratic Party forced Amin to call in Soviet troops during the 2nd week of December when he was planning to request the intervention of American, Chinese and Pakistani forces."[48] This, therefore, was the manner whereby the Russians justified their invasion

by stating that if they had not sent their troops, Afghanistan would have been invaded by Americans.

How did the Soviets implement their invasion plan? On December 24, Nikolay Vladimirovich Talyzin, the Soviet Minister of Communication, accompanied by a large number of his aides, entered Afghanistan and took charge of the invasion operation. The Uzbek SSR's Minister of Water and Resources, H. E. Jorabikov also in Kabul at that time states: "On December 27, he and Talyzin co-hosted at the Intercontinental Hotel a large reception to which leading Afghan dignitaries were invited. At the end of the festivities the guests were all arrested."[49]

Simultaneously Soviets invaded Afghanistan. The Russians killed Amin in Darulaman Palace.[50] This invasion of Afghanistan was the first direct Soviet military involvement in a non-Soviet block nation.[51]. Moscow immediately installed the government of Babrak Karmal; he had been in exile during the Taraki-Amin regime. Karmal appeared publicly on January 2, 1980. On the platform with him were General Abdul Qadir, Colonel Mohammed Aslam Watanjar, who had been in hiding, presumably in the Soviet Embassy compound during Amin's presidency.[52] Thus, direct Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan ended Amin's one hundred and three day presidency.

# NOTES

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9Danishjuyan-i Musalman Payraw Khatt-i Imam, GDR Ambassador Reports That Soviet Hope to Replace Prime Minister Amin With a Broader Based Government, July 18, 1979, (Tehran: Danishjuyan Musalman Payraw-i Khatt Imam, 1979), v. 29, p. 179.

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# CONCLUSION

The coup of 1978, that installed a pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan surprised the United States' government. Americans were confused over the nature of the new Afghan government as to whether or not the government was marxist. Although the Afghan leaders did not acknowledge their socialist idealogy, the government followed a socialist trend in its policies, programs and reforms. After the April 1978 coup Afghanistan emulated the U.S.S.R. in its governmental model: "the PDPA had a Soviet style Politburo, Secretariat, and Central Committee at the national level, and similar bodies in local cities."[1] In addition, the new leaders invited a large number of Soviets to counsel Afghan officials in the various ministries.[2] The Soviets also increased the number of their military advisors in Afghanistan. In April 1978, Afghanistan had some 350 military advisors, by August the number was almost doubled.[3]

Despite the great involvement of Soviet officials in Afghan affairs, and the United States' confusion over the nature of the new Afghan regime, the United States government decided to maintain its relations with Afghanistan.[4] Americans, however, did not initiate new economic projects but began to reduce their economic involvements in Afghanistan. Then, the unfortunate assassination of Ambassador Adolph Dubs in February 1979, led the United States to further reductions in their funding of Afghan economic projects. This reduction in foreign aid led to a deterioration in the relationship between the two

countries.[5] While U.S.-Afghanistan diplomatic relations worsened, the U.S.S.R. increased its economic aid to Afghanistan.[6] Ambassador Dubs' murder also resulted in the evacuation and the deportation of a large number of Americans from Afghanistan.

Other problems soon developed. Although the new Afghan regime had the full support of the Soviet Union, it could not establish a stable government. Power struggles began first between the Parcham and Khalq members, later between Taraki and Amin and their followers.[7] Immense popular opposition also weakened the central government.

As a result in early 1979, the Russians lost confidence in the Afghan leaders and decided to change the leadership. The Soviets feared that the collapse of the socialist regime in Afghanistan meant the failure of the Soviet policy in Afghanistan. To save their prestige, the Soviets needed a strong central government, and an Afghan leader who would pay more attention to the Russians' advice. The Soviets were convinced that Amin was a threat to socialism, as well as to the Soviets' interests in Afghanistan; Amin's continuation in power would, therefore, result in the failure of socialism.[8] To achieve their goals, the Soviets attempted several times to assassinate Amin. For example, Bruce Amstutz states: "In mid-October he (Amin) had survived a coup attempt that seemed to combine the forces of the extreme political right and those of the ousted pro-Soviet left."[9]

Moscow failed to remove Amin from power; instead Amin gained more authority in the Afghan government. The Russians certainly were not happy about the turn of the events in Afghanistan especially after Amin removed Taraki from power. The Soviets were determined to remove Amin

even if they had to use military force. Why Moscow was so fixated in removing Amin is unclear. Amin was a loyal socialist who admired the Soviet style of government. He did, however, refuse to allow building of Soviet military bases in Afghanistan. He also denied the Soviets permission to bring their military forces into Afghanistan to fight the anti-government forces. Amin was difficult and stubborn in U.S.S.R.-Afghanistan negotiations.

Amin of course was very much aware that the Soviets intended to eliminate him. So, he tried desperately to gain the support of other governments, the United States of America and Pakistan in order to survive. Amin hoped to convince U.S. officials that his government was sincere in requesting improved relations with the United States. Louis Dupree, historian and Afghan specialist, stated that Amin "... had been frantically attempting to contact the U.S., as well as Pakistan and other Muslim states, for he realized the Russians would not support him."[10] The United States, however, learning from their past experiences with Amin, did not take the Afghan government's requests seriously. American officials believed that Amin's desire for improving relations was "fairly standard."[11]

What should have been obvious was not. Amin was in conflict with the Soviets but he sincerely denied improved relations with the United States. That did not mean he was not a Communist. Amin needed U.S. support at that specific moment to save his life and his government. He knew that without the Soviets' support his days were numbered unless he received support from other countries.[12] The Soviets were not satisfied with Amin;[13] and questioned his loyalty to their regime.[14] To

add insult to injury, Amin requested the recall of the Soviet Ambassador.

By confronting the Soviets, Amin took a great risk because United States also did not trust Amin. The reasons for the distrust were many. Amin was a marxist responsible for the murder and torture of thousands of innocent Afghans. Would the situation have been different, if the United States had assisted Amin? Would the Soviets have invaded Afghanistan if the United States had supported Amin economically and politically? Although answers to these questions can not be determined, it is probable that Afghanistan's situation would be far different from what it is today.

What should we conclude from the Afghanistan experience? Amin was a shrewd politician who was not trusted by anyone - Afghans, Soviets or Americans. He apparently would do anything to preserve his authority. He eliminated party and non-party members alike whom he believed were a threat to his rule. At the time that he was in trouble with the Soviet Union, he wished the United States and Pakistan to save his government.

The United States and Pakistan especially, needed more time to evaluate Amin's behavior. Although Pakistani Prime Minister General Zia ul-Haq agreed to meet with President Amin, the meeting did not take place because the Afghan situation changed so rapidly. For example, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Agha Shahi, was scheduled to arrive in Kabul to meet with Amin on 22 December 1979. On that day a heavy snowfall closed Kabul the airport. Agha Shahi's visit with Amin was, therefore, postponed to December 30.[15] As the result of the Soviets'

invasion on December 27, 1979, Amin did not meet with either Zia or Agha Shahi.

How should we evaluate U.S. policy related to Afghanistan? The United States government was aware of Soviet intentions some two months prior to the "unexpected" invasion. Americans failed in sending a strong message to "cease and desist" to the Soviet Union in order to stop the invasion. Realistically it is unclear whether or not such a message could have changed the Soviet decision. The possibility of Amin remaining in power, even with the assistance of the United States or Pakistan and other Muslim nations was very slim. The Soviets had been deeply involved in Afghan affairs since April 1978. They were in control of major government operations in Afghanistan. For the Americans to acquire a similar degree of knowledge and involvement in Afghan government affairs they needed time, at least a year with complete Afghan government cooperation. Amin's loyalty to the U.S. government was very much in question. His goals were not American goals. He needed U.S. support only to save his government not to serve American national interests in Afghanistan. Amin's days were numbered; he survived as long as he could. With or without the American cooperation Amin's destiny was already drawn by the Soviets; he had to go.

Moreover, when Amin importuned United States' aid, it was already too late. Only during the early part of the 1979 when the Soviets signaled their dissatisfaction with Afghan leadership could the U.S. effectively and diplomatically intervene. While the U.S. received the message the government did not respond by signalling its opposition to

the Russians invasion plan.

Then again, the Soviets' invasion date, December 27, assured their success. Americans were celebrating national and Christian holidays from November 25 onward. After Thanksgiving Day Americans were involved in Christmas preparations. It is a busy month and almost everyone concentrates, exclusively, upon Christmas and New Year's celebrations. Also, during this holiday season many plan more vacation days in order to extend their celebrations. Thus the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan may have surprised many Americans who did not learn of it until after the holiday season.

NOTES

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