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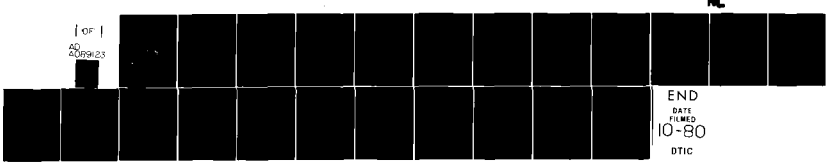

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THE SOVIET UNION IN AFGHANISTAN: BENEFITS AND COSTS

by

Shirin Tahir-Kheli

12 June 1980

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Composition of this memorandum was accomplished by Mrs. Kathleen M. Preitz.

FOREWORD

This memorandum evolved from the Military Policy Symposium on "The Soviet Union in the Third World: Success and Failure," which was hosted by the Strategic Studies Institute in the Fall of 1979. During the Symposium, academic and government experts discussed a number of issues concerning this area which will have a continuing impact on US strategy. This memorandum considers one of these issues.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

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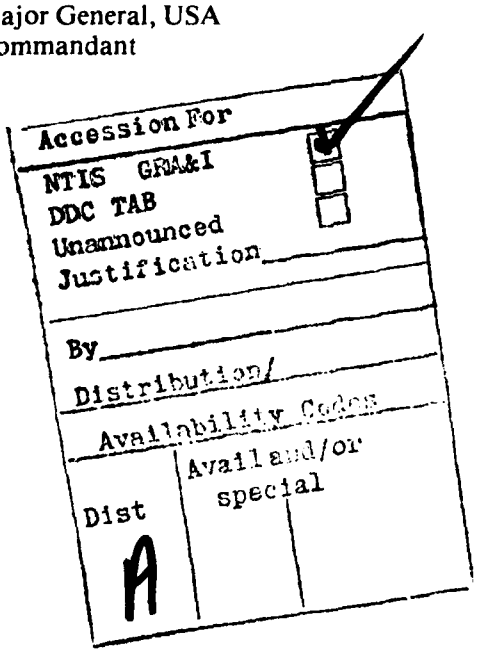

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. SHIRIN TAHIR-KHELI has been an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Temple University since 1973 and a Research Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute since 1978. A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, she received her master's degree and doctorate in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. Her publications include a book *on Soviet Moves in Asia* (1976), a study on "Nuclear Decision-Making in Pakistan" in James Katz and Onkar Marwah, eds., *Nuclear Decision-Making in Developing Countries* (forthcoming), and several articles on South and Southwest Asia in such journals as *Naval War College Review, Orbis, Asian Survey,* and *World Affairs*. She is currently engaged in a study of *The United States-Pakistan Influence Relationship After 1971* (1980).

THE SOVIET UNION IN AFGHANISTAN: BENEFITS AND COSTS

Russian interest in Afghanistan goes back to the Tsarist times. The small landlocked and backward country was then a buffer zone between two empires and it was keenly aware of its powerful northern neighbor. By virtue of its size and common border, the USSR has held an important place in Afghan foreign policy, even though the intensity of Moscow's relations with Kabul has varied. This essay will examine Soviet objectives in Afghanistan and gauge Soviet success in achieving these objectives and the cost that is involved.

SOVIET OBJECTIVES

Afghanistan did not in the 1950's become a party to the anti-Soviet alliances which were joined by its neighbors, Iran and Pakistan. One of the main objectives has been to continue to keep Afghanistan out of the western orbit. As expressed by the then President Podgorny at the conclusion of a visit to Afghanistan in June 1967, the Soviet Union had "high evaluation of Afghanistan's

foreign policy, which is based on principles of positive neutrality, nonparticipation in blocs and military groupings. . ."[1]

A second objective of Soviet policy has been to use its relationship with Afghanistan to create difficulties for Pakistan, a US ally and one-time base for spying operations against the Soviet Union. Tacit support from the USSR was important in Afghanistan's decision in December 1953 to repudiate the 1921 treaty in which Afghanistan had recognized the Durand Line as the international boundary between Afghanistan and what was then British India. The same year, the Afghan premier declared that American military aid to Pakistan constituted a threat, a view that was shared in Moscow. And when Kabul articulated its support for Pakhtoonistan,[2] Moscow announced and repeatedly confirmed its support of the Afghan moves.[3]

The anti-Pakistan policies of Afghanistan elicited strong Soviet support in the diplomatic crises which on two occasions led to diplomatic breaks between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Nor has the Soviet objective in playing up the nuisance value of Afghanistan for Pakistan always been subtle. To this day, Moscow presses on Islamabad the need for strong Soviet-Pakistani relations as the only real guarantor of improved Pakistan-Afghan relations and of a peaceful northern border for Pakistan.

The third Soviet objective in Afghanistan is to demonstrate its "good neighborly" policies. The Soviets have repeatedly emphasized a policy termed by Khrushchev in 1960 as never having "a friendly neighbor alone in her needs."[4] Soviet aid to Afghanistan was part of this policy and Soviet cultivation of good relations with Muslim Afghanistan kept their common border peaceful and did not provoke the ethnically-related Soviet Muslims. The USSR's objective here was to demonstrate in Afghanistan the advantages that accrue to a Third World country that remains outside the American orbit.

The fourth Soviet objective can be characterized as an outgrowth of the Soviet Union's perceptions of its role. The USSR is an Asian as well as a European power and it projects its image in the Third World more as an Asian power which identifies with the concerns of the less-developed countries. Despite the challenge from the People's Republic of China in this quarter, Moscow has persisted. Soviet involvement with Afghanistan helps to legitimize the Soviet Union's Asian concerns. It also offers a foothold for Soviet

operations in a region that has seen rivalry between the three superpowers. The Soviet objective is to neutralize and if possible to exclude other powers from the region, and Afghanistan is an important part of this regional strategy.

INSTRUMENTS OF SOVIET POLICY

The USSR as a superpower has several means at its disposal which it can utilize in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives. The Soviets offered Afghanistan military aid as well as training for the Afghan armed forces, much needed economic aid to help develop their backward neighbor, trade which helped to offset the foreign aid debt and to offset the geographic disadvantages of diplomatic support for Afghan causes—in particular the Pakhtoonistan quarrel with Pakistan. Each of these will be analyzed below.

Initially, the Soviet Union gave military aid to Afghanistan to counter US aid to Pakistan and Iran. Considerations of *realpolitik* necessitated this Soviet attention to Afghanistan in the interests of denying that bordering country to the rapidly growing American alliance system. Between 1955 and 1972 Afghanistan, formally nonaligned, was given $455 million in military aid.[5] To date, Soviet military aid deliveries to Afghanistan are in excess of $600 million.[6] Since 1956 the USSR has supplied 95 percent of Afghan military equipment. In addition, as of 1979 there were some 4,500 Soviet military advisers in Afghanistan helping to maintain military equipment and to direct the fighting against insurgents. As Afghanistan moved closer to Moscow, its military dependence increased. With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet military has essentially taken over all of the functions previously performed by the Afghan army.

Soviet military instructors accompanied modern Soviet weapons. In fact, Soviet instructors replaced the Turkish and German officers who were the traditional instructors of the Afghan army. Both at the military academy in Kabul and in the field Soviet instructors became closely involved with the development of the Afghan military, helping with the assembly and maintenance of military equipment, training local personnel in the use and maintenance of military equipment and advising staff and military officers. Furthermore, Soviet instructors have trained a substantial number of Afghan pilots and crewmen to operate the modern jets

delivered by the USSR. The closeness of this relationship has developed strong pro-Soviet elements within the officer corps in the Afghan military, and it is this group which executed the *coup d'etat* against King Zahir Shah in 1973 and played a key role in the 1978 coup against President Daud which brought the Communists to power in Afghanistan.

Military aid to Afghanistan has been a part of the overall pattern of Soviet relations. It was initially given to enhance Soviet power and prestige. In order to continue the pursuit of that power and prestige, Moscow has had to undertake a greater military commitment to the Afghan regime than it may at first have foreseen.

Economic aid has also been an important component in the Soviet-Afghan relationship. Between 1954 and 1975 the Soviet Union gave $1.263 billion in aid to Afghanistan, making it one of the largest recipients of Soviet assistance.[7] Grants comprise a larger share of Soviet aid to Afghanistan than to any other Third World country. Approximately 1,500 Soviet economic advisors and technicians are assisting Afghanistan in a multitude of projects.[8]

Afghan dependence on the USSR for economic aid has been pronounced since the fall of Daud. Indeed, the offer of $2 billion made by the Shah of Iran to help counteract this dependence was a factor in the overthrow of Daud, who was perceived by the pro-Soviet factions in Afghanistan as moving to the right and also as weakening the growing ties to Moscow. Economic aid from the United States reached $500 million by 1977 but was cut off in February 1979 after the murder of the American Ambassador Dubs. Thus Kabul is no longer able to exploit the competition between Washington and Moscow, as previously it had done so successfully.

The Soviet Union is Afghanistan's largest trading partner. Afghan trade with Eastern Europe is also shipped through the USSR, whereas trade with the West and with India is handled through Pakistan. Pakistan continues to allow transit facilities, but because of the poor state of its relations with Afghanistan, the latter's dependence on trade with and through the Soviet Union has increased.

Soviet diplomatic support has been instrumental in strengthening Afghan claims against Pakistan. Afghan calls for Pakhtoonistan have been credible because of Soviet backing, and it is for this reason that they have been taken seriously by Pakistan. Soviet

diplomatic support is used as an instrument for rewarding the "correctness" of Afghan policy toward the USSR.

TABLE 1

Soviet Trade With Afghanistan

(In Millions of US Dollars)

Year	Exports	Imports
1970	40.0	34.3
1971	50.3	38.4
1972	46.1	37.3
1973	45.5	48.3
1974	81.6	80.0[a]
1975	93.7[b]	88.7
1976	116.4	88.8
1977	154.5	104.0

[a]The two-fold increase occurred following the 1973 pro-Soviet coup in Afghanistan. Imports increased due to Afghan sale of gas to the USSR.

[b]The jump in exports was tied to Moscow's $425 million credit, extended in 1975 for Afghanistan's current seven year plan (March 1976-March 1983). This represents the largest single commitment by the Soviet Union to Afghanistan.

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, Changing Patterns in Soviet-LDC Trade, 1976-77, ER 78-10326, May 1978, pp. 10-11.

ASSESSMENT OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

The period of Zahir Shah's rule was the most trouble-free time in Soviet-Afghan relations. In retrospect, it is ironic that Moscow's tacit support was instrumental in the King's overthrow and the subsequent declaration of the Republic by his pro-Soviet cousin—Mohammed Daud, who took over as President—and the pro-Soviet elements in the Afghan military. For a time after taking over, Daud followed a classic pro-Soviet and anti-Pakistan stand, thereby pleasing the "activists" in the military who felt that Soviet backing was essential for a solution to Afghanistan's "only problem"—the Pakhtoonistan issue.[9]

Moscow greeted the Daud coup with enthusiasm and hailed the new regime's determination to pursue a policy of nonalignment and "nonadherence to military blocs."[10] Reaffirming the classic Soviet approach to South Asian politics, *Pravda* stated:

> Naturally the people of the Soviet Union cannot be indifferent to the political changes taking place in Afghanistan. The question is not merely concerned with the fact that our southern neighbour, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union have a common border more than 2,000 km. long, but that Afghanistan is a friend and its people are our friends.[11]

There were other competitors for Soviet goodwill, apart from Daud himself and the Soviet-trained Afghan military personnel. The Marxist-Leninist Khalq (Masses) party (led by Taraki and Hafizullah Amin) went beyond Daud's program by calling for a policy which would alleviate "the boundless agonies of the oppressed peoples of Afghanistan," through a victory of international socialism over international capitalism, supremacy of public over private sector, and land reform to overhaul the feudal system dominating Afghan society. The Parcham (Flag) party (led by Babrak Karmal) was an offshoot of the Khalq party from which it had split in 1966, as a result more of tactics than philosophy. Parchamis were more in favor of working within the system and were even accused after the 1978 coup of collaboration with Daud, even though they had become disillusioned with the weakening of the "progressive" side of his regime and had largely withdrawn their support. Even though they had helped in the 1978 coup against Daud, Parcham leaders were either sent abroad or liquidated when the Khalq party took control.

The 1973 coup was expected to further Moscow's objectives in Afghanistan, and for a while it did. Daud at first allowed greater participation for the pro-Moscow left in Afghan politics and reaffirmed Afghan gratitude for Moscow's support and largesse. He not only moved closer to the Soviet Union in public support, but he also expressed support of Moscow's Asian "Collective Security" plan and became hostile to Iran and Pakistan. But soon Daud began to run into difficulty, losing the support of pro-Soviet elements who considered his modernization programs and reforms a farce. Expectations that Daud would broaden the decision making base to include those who helped him to power proved false, and the narrow base of power remained essentially in Mohammadzai hands. Furthermore, the traditional conservative

elements in Afghan society were suspicious of Daud for his known flirtation with Moscow and his reliance on the latter in his 1973 takeover.[12]

The cost to the Soviet Union of Daud's takeover came in increased aid support in the economic and military sectors. While half of the $1.3 billion aid committed by Moscow to Kabul has been delivered, the pace of delivery was stepped up after 1973. The Soviet Union committed itself to 20 major projects in agriculture, irrigation, electric power, oil and gas exploration, mineral and metal processing and transportation.[13]

Moscow's honeymoon with Daud began to sour after the Shah of Iran successfully wooed the Afghan President away from exclusive dependence on Moscow. Daud, who was in trouble with domestic factions of both the left and the right, responded by settling his differences with Pakistan. He blamed domestic difficulties for the delay in signing an agreement recognizing the Durand Line as the legal boundary between Afghanistan and Pakistan. When Daud, during a visit to Sadat's Egypt in 1978, chastised Cuba for its non-neutral stand in the nonaligned movement, the Soviet Union saw that the success of its objectives in Afghanistan, achieved over decades of diplomacy, was in danger of turning to failure.

THE TARAKI COUP: ALLIANCE FOR MOSCOW

Although Daud's overthrow came at a time when Moscow was increasingly unhappy with his policies, there is little evidence to suggest direct Soviet interference in the April 1978 coup. In it Daud was killed along with 29 other members of his family and an estimated 3,000 others who were either Mohammadzais or simply guilty by association with the ruling family. There is, however, the possibility that Moscow's unhappiness with Daud's policies was a crucial factor in encouraging the Parcham and Khalq factions to unite.

The new Soviet leverage in Afghanistan is best understood in historical perspective. While successive Afghan rulers had been able in the 19th and 20th centuries to play off Russian interests against those of the British and later the Americans, their ability to perform this balancing act has now been complicated by the presence of domestic forces trained or influenced by Moscow. In other words, Moscow has acquired local allies who can press for

reforms and policies that could be favorable for the USSR, but which it could not press for directly. Pro-Soviet elements in the military, a crucial source of support and power in the Afghan system, have proved particularly useful to Moscow in executing this strategy.[14]

The 1978 coup has been referred to as the "accidental coup" by an observer of the Afghan scene who witnessed it from close quarters.[15] It resulted from the frustrations caused by Daud and came as a direct consequence of the murder on April 17, 1978, of Akbar Khyber, the ideologue of the Parcham faction. Although the Khalq faction was suspected of involvement, anger was vented against Daud, and he ordered a crackdown against leftist leaders. Hafizullah Amin, the Khalq co-leader who later became president of Afghanistan, was able immediately before his arrest to contact three military officers (two majors in the army and a colonel in the air force), who launched the coup because of a feeling of "now or never." The 2,000 bodyguards of Daud were finally subdued by air force bombing. Air force squadrons loyal to Daud could not retaliate because of a communications breakdown. Thus the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was born espousing nonalignment, the welfare of peasants and workers, and land reforms.

Once again the shift towards Moscow came immediately; Soviet recognition was extended to the new regime, and Moscow showed its delight at the Afghan tilt in its favor. Soviet objectives of a pro-Soviet Afghan regime, serving as an example for neighboring countries and assisting in denying the region to great-power competitors, was being fulfilled. Afghanistan had become yet another "success" in a series that encompassed Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen. It demonstrated the aggressive thrust (pursued actively or by default) of growing Soviet power. The United States, by contrast, seemed in the eyes of regional countries to be on the defensive and condemned to inaction.

The 1978 coup was followed by stepped up Soviet economic and military aid. The cost of alliance could be seen in this increased support. Seventy-five new economic assistance agreements were signed by Moscow between April 1978 and March 1979, and these were accompanied by an influx of almost 4,500 Soviet advisers. As the Taraki regime fought for legitimacy and control, it maneuvered the Soviet Union (by virtue of its self-declared alliance with Moscow) into giving greater support.

The careful balance in Afghan policy under Daud, who had sought economic assistance from both East and West, was once again dropped in favor of total reliance on Soviet aid. Because the Taraki regime turned against all technically trained or political Afghans, most of whom were linked to the previous regime, it desperately needed Soviet advisers to fill in the gap in each ministry of the government. In addition, Soviet advisers were posted in the office of the president. The culmination of the tilt came in the Treaty of Friendship signed by Taraki in Moscow on December 5, 1978. This pact institutionalized Afghan dependence on the USSR.

Taraki was unable to get a majority of Afghans to back his vision of a new Afghanistan. His reforms in education, land ownership, and social policy ran into difficulty as a revolt by a few tribesmen grew into large scale opposition in a majority of the 28 Afghan provinces. A trickle of refugees entered Pakistan after May 1978, and by August 1979 their number had increased to 100,000. They talked about the movement against the Communist regime in Kabul as a religious as well as a nationalistic revolt, since Taraki had turned against Islam and "sold Afghanistan to the Soviet Union."

Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Taraki government and had offered full cooperation in transit and trade facilities. The Pakistani president, General Zia, visited Kabul without an invitation in September 1978. However, as popular resistance to the Taraki regime spread, Pak-Afghan relations deteriorated. Pakistan counted 56 violations of its air and ground space (penetratioins of up to three miles above the 1,200 mile Pak-Afghan border) and Afghanistan charged Pakistani (as well as Chinese, Iranian, and American) collusion in the growing revolt within the country. These charges were supported by the Soviet Union, as Afghanistan's neighbors were made scapegoats on a campaign to persuade Afghans that the revolt was not internally based.

The Soviet Union continues to put pressure on Pakistan to send back the 450,000 Afghan refugees because their presence is seen as constituting an embarrassment to the success of a socialist regime. Pakistan has responded that it cannot force them back for humanitarian reasons. Furthermore, these refugees have relatives in Pakistan with whom many are staying. The border is a porous one and Pakistan is unable to stop them from crossing over.

However, according to the Pakistan government, it is up to the Afghan government to stop them, if that could somehow be managed. Moscow has subsequently put pressure on India to persuade Pakistan to return the refugees. The Indian response under Desai was to advise the Afghans to create internal conditions which would facilitate their return.

As the fighting increased, the Soviets were drawn in with increased military aid, and soon there were reports of Soviet pilots flying combat missions against rebel strongholds. In addition, an East German embassy was opened, and the Cuban mission enlarged to eighty persons. In contrast Kabul asked the missions of the United States, China, Iran and Pakistan to decrease their staffs.

While the Soviet Union benefitted in that Afghanistan began to follow Moscow's line slavishly after April 1978, the costs were increasing as Moscow became more heavily committed. It could be seen as a case of the tail wagging the dog and Moscow, for the first time, faced a dilemma in Afghanistan. It had a duty to support a self declared socialist regime, but the cost in material and diplomatic terms was increasingly high. Not to support the regime meant the collapse of Afghanistan's socialist experiment and a victory for "reactionary elements" there as well as in Iran, Pakistan, China and the United States, since Soviet propaganda has repeatedly linked these countries as conspirators seeking the overthrow of the Communist regime. There appeared to be no easy answers, and Moscow's search for a solution was compliçated once more by yet another coup.

THE AMIN COUP: A CLIENT STATE FOR MOSCOW?

Soviet advisers cautioned Taraki and Amin to act more slowly in implementing reforms, in order not to alienate so many so rapidly. Reports of Soviet contacts with Afghan supporters of King Zahir Shah, who lives in Rome, sparked rumors of the King's return under a Soviet aegis. This may have contributed to the September 1979 coup in Kabul.

Hafizullah Amin was the strongman and ideologue of the Khalq party. He perceived that Taraki was succumbing to pressures to moderate. For example, at the Havana Summit of Nonaligned Nations, Taraki moved away from the direct confrontation with neighbors that he had previously threatened. That this moderation

was not distasteful to the Soviets is suggested by the fact that Taraki stopped in Moscow on his journey home from Havana and was given a warm welcome. However, reports circulated that Moscow was less than satisfied with the prime minister, Hafizullah Amin, and would seek to replace him in a move to win support from the rebels. Instead, Amin moved first, and a week after Taraki returned from Havana he was overthrown in a coup and was killed. Amin declared that Taraki was alive but sick and almost a month later admitted he was dead as a result of a "long illness"!

Amin declared that his September 16, 1979, coup marked the "beginning of a better socialist order" in which the enemies of the people had been "eliminated."[16] He moved harshly against the opposition, dropping napalm on rebel villages, removing political opponents, organizing the secret police under his personal control, appointing his brother as Governor of four provinces and other friends and relatives to key posts. He had not previously listened to Soviet advice to go slowly, and there was little to indicate that he would do so after he assumed power.

Soviet stakes in Afghanistan are high, and Moscow was put in a position where it had to support Amin at least for a limited time or face the prospect of a backlash (similar to the anti-US feelings in post-Iran) if the rebels won. But Moscow was looking for an alternative leader even as President Brezhnev sent Amin a letter congratulating him on his "election" shortly after the coup.[17] Amin was committed to ensuring that reforms launched after 1978 were not set back. The coup was a desperate attempt to prevent a change in policies. To win Moscow's concurrence, Amin acted as a client of Moscow's—but a client that told its patrol that it cannot be forced off its chosen path to socialism. It was a new version of the patron-client relationship, and it turned out that Moscow did not like its new equation with Amin.

SOVIET INTERVENTION AND KARMAL—A PUPPET?

On December 27, 1979, the Soviets moved with 50,000 troops[18] into Afghanistan and established control. In the process, they killed Hafizullah Amin and brought in—three days after the "coup"—Babrak Karmal, the leader of the Parcham party, to be the new president of Afghanistan. This move, characterized as "the most serious challenge since World War II" by President Carter,

destroyed detente and put Southwest Asia directly in the path of a possible US-Soviet confrontation.

The timing of the Soviet move was curious. As early as June 1979 there had been reports in Pakistan of a Soviet division within Afghanistan's borders waiting to interject direct Soviet force. It is surprising that US intelligence reports did not pick up this information. Contrary to many reports, the rebel movement was inflicting no more damage against the Kabul government in December than it had been in the months past. In fact, there was some indication that the Soviet-backed Afghan army would make a successful bid against the insurgents before the winter snows deepened. So why did the Soviets invade Afghanistan now?

There are a number of plausible reasons for the Soviet move. First, Moscow perceived US policy in Southwest Asia to be essentially bankrupt and US responses limited by an inability to project American power beyond a temporary naval presence. The 100,000 man Rapid Deployment Force is operationally years away, and the lesson learned in projecting US forces even 90 miles from American shores in Cuba (in the exercise ordered by President Carter after the discovery of the Soviet brigade) could not have been lost on Moscow. The exercise, hopelessly delayed by foul weather and bogged down in bureaucratic and logistic problems, demonstrated the inadequacy of any US response in a critical situation half a world away.

Second, the Soviet Union took advantage of the American preoccupation with Iran. The spectacle of a United States condemned and held hostage in a country where only in January 1978 President Carter had proclaimed the Shah to be "an island of stability in an unstable area of the world" permitted a unique chance for Moscow to move to project its own power in a region where the United States had only recently been dominant.

Third, in the invasion of Afghanistan the USSR took advantage of a golden opportunity to move towards the final play of the "Great Game," i.e., fulfilling its ambitions to secure a warm water port on the Indian Ocean—now only 300 miles from Soviet army positions through troubled Baluchistan. The temporary collapse of detente seemed a price worth paying for the achievement of such a major and concrete objective. While the United States may threaten future action against further Soviet moves, for now the Soviet Union has dramatically changed the political map of areas

under its domination and control. One has to understand the larger objectives of this invasion—Afghanistan in and of itself is not a sufficient prize. The Soviet invasion has destroyed what remained of the "regional" leaders, a concept put forward by Dr. Brzezinski and endorsed in the Carter visit to New Delhi and Teheran. With the collapse of the Shah and his role as the policeman of the Persian Gulf, the return of a Moscow-oriented Mrs. Gandhi, and the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan, Washington can no longer count on any of its regional powers in Southwest Asia to guard its interests in a game where the stakes are high.

Fourth, the Soviet Union did not wish to see a "reactionary" Islamic revivalist area encompassing Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan which might encourage its own Muslim population—a goal it probably shares with India. This could not have been a goal uppermost in the minds of the Soviet planners, but in combination with the other factors it undoubtedly influenced the decision to intervene.

Finally, the prospect of a failing Socialist experiment invited a Soviet response to move—with force sufficient to get the job done. While socialist honor had to be defended, Moscow must have recognized that the negative publicity of the move would not redound to its propaganda advantage, as seen in the condemnations of the Soviet move in the General Assembly and Islamic Nations Conference.

Babrak Karmal has, in the words of one Afghan, been brought to power "perched on Soviet tanks." Despite his attempts to discredit Amin as a "stooge of the CIA" and his promises to wipe out the brutal excesses of the Amin regime through gestures such as the release of Afghan political prisoners, there are few indications that he is perceived as being more benevolent—or more independent. While the Soviets are carrying out policies to "soften" the antireligion and antitradition perceptions of the Communist regime in power,[19] the presence of Soviet troops everywhere feeds the opposite belief, i.e., that Karmal is not the master in his own house.

CONCLUSION

Soviet policy in Afghanistan has so far been a success. Soviet objectives—to keep Afghanistan out of the Western orbit, to use

the country to legitimize Soviet concern with Asia, to demonstrate to Pakistan the need for Soviet friendship—have now largely been realized. While the virtues of Soviet friendship are suspect in light of the strong embrace of Afghanistan, there is grudging respect for the extent of the support that a Soviet commitment brings.

The primary position of Moscow is ensured in Afghanistan by virtue of its size and common border and because it is Afghanistan's foremost trading partner. Soviet diplomacy has cultivated Afghan good-will over decades. In the last 5 years, it had become more heavily committed to the course of events unfolding in Kabul. Post-1973 success for Soviet policy in Afghanistan came as Moscow reaped the benefits of domestic discontent and pro-Soviet Afghan groups sought to initiate "progressive" changes. They have operated, at times, with direct Soviet approval, but have always had Moscow's tacit support in aiming Afghan policy towards a clearly Soviet orientation. These groups were encouraged by their perception of American unwillingness to get involved in regional problems driven by a desire to settle scores with their neighbors—Pakistan foremost among them.

The USSR is now heavily involved in Afghanistan. The cost of that involvement is rising. While Moscow may wish a reconciliation between the Afghan government and the rebels who disagree with "the socialist path," and may even look for a compromise, there is little indication that the regime will be able to get the support of the population. But they have military control and while Soviet power is dominant, their control is ensured. The Soviets may even succeed in "pacifying" the rebels with their vastly superior force and the use of nerve gas. They will run a puppet regime in Kabul knowing that otherwise the conservative Muslim rebel forces could win, thereby changing the Southwest Asian scene to a "mullah" controlled one—with possible adverse implications for Soviet control of the USSR's Muslim population.

The Soviet invasion may have been the last card that Moscow chose to play, but there is no doubt that it prefered to play the card rather than to lose its long cultivated and hard won place in Afghanistan. Moscow could not have wished for the souring of the Afghan revolution, but faced with its demise again "the Soviets will protect the Revolution."[20]

ENDNOTES

1. *Pravda,* June 4, 1967, *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* (hereafter referred to as *CDSP*), Vol XIX, No. 17, 1967.

2. Defined variously from an autonomous region for Pushtu speaking people, to a measure of freedom for them within a united Pakistan.

3. For example, Moscow stated that it could not remain indifferent as the Soviet Union bordered directly on this region. The Soviet Government therefore supported a "just" settlement of the problem, by which it means—"respect for the interest of the people inhabiting Pushtunistan." *Pravda,* March 21, 1961, *CDSP,* Vol. XIV, No. 13, 1961.

4. *Dawn,* Karachi, September 30, 1960.

5. US Department of State, *Communist States and Developing Countries: Aid and Trade in 1972,* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, August 1973.

6. US Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World, 1977,* ER 78-10478 U, November 1978, p. 35.

7. Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *Soviet Economy in a New Perspective,* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1976, p. 194.

8. Central Intelligence Agency, p. 35.

9. Statement by Daud after 1973 take-over, quoted in *The New York Times,* July 29, 1973.

10. *Pravda,* July 18, 1973, quoted in *USSR and the Third World,* Vol. III, No. 6, September 2, 1973, London: Central Asian Research Center, p. 380.

11. *Ibid.,* July 22, 1973.

12. Hannah Negaran, "The Afghan Coup of April 1978: Revolution and International Security," *Orbis,* Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring 1979, pp. 93-113.

13. The Soviets have developed Afghanistan's natural gas production facilities and built pipelines to transport gas to the USSR. In 1975 sale of natural gas amounted to 1/3 of Kabul's total exports to the USSR covering the debt service by Afghanistan. US Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World, 1975,* ER 76-10372 U, July 1976.

14. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "The Southern Flank of the USSR: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan," *Naval War College Review,* Winter 1979, p. 36.

15. Louis Dupree, "Inside Afghanistan: Yesterday and Today—A Strategic Appraisal," *Strategic Studies,* Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, Vol. II, No. 3, Spring 1979.

16. *The New York Times,* September 19, 1979.

17. *Philadelphia Inquirer,* September 19, 1979.

18. Now estimated to be in the range of 85,000.

19. *The New York Times,* January 28, 1980.

20. Declared, ironically, by Hafizullah Amin at the 61st anniversary of the Soviet revolution.

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This memorandum examines Soviet objectives in Afghanistan and gauges Soviet success in achieving these objectives and the cost that is involved. The author finds that Soviet policy in Afghanistan has so far been a success. Soviet objectives--to keep Afghanistan out of the Western orbit, to use the country to legitimize Soviet concern with Asia, to demonstrate the need for Soviet friendship--have now largely been realized. The Soviet Union has gained a long cultivated and hard won place in Afghanistan.

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