

LINKAGE BETWEEN THE GREAT OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE SAUR REVOLUTION OF AFGHANISTAN AND ITS EFFECTS ON PAKISTAN

*Riffat Sardar**

1. Introduction

It has been 39 years since the then Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 in order to protect the communist regime- a communist regime which got inspiration from the Great October Revolution in Russia. To many, the Saur Revolution in Afghanistan was another attempt by the Soviet Union to export communism to other countries. However the famous historian Peter Kenez says that the Soviet standing in world affairs was not based on ideological appeal, but on military strength.¹ At the end of the Brezhnev era, when the Soviet economy ceased to perform well and the political system was troubled, the Soviet Union possessed an influence in the international arena that neither it nor its predecessor, imperial Russia, had ever before achieved. By sending Soviet troops into Afghanistan, the Soviet Union wanted to support the Saur revolution through its military might. However there is no denying the fact that many youth, including Nur Mohammad had been trained in the Communist ideology. So the Great October Revolution in Russia influenced the Saur Revolution- the Communist revolution in Afghanistan.

Though communism vanished along with the Soviet Union as it did from Afghanistan but it left behind war and destruction not only in Afghanistan but also neighboring Pakistan. Both the countries have suffered immensely. The continued policy of confrontation has not yielded the desired results. Would the continuation of a deliberate policy to make war and more war, really result in gaining peace? Why not give consideration to political negotiations and political settlement. This paper

* Presently serving as Assistant Professor, SZABIST University, Islamabad, Pakistan

¹ Kenez, P. *A history of the Soviet Union from Beginning to End*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006): 31-32

looks into the background to the current issue of Afghan crisis, and its implications for Pakistan. How the Afghan crisis affected world politics, and what role Russia has played all along. What has the implications been for Pakistan, and what will be the future policy of Pakistan for its survival, now that another, more brutish super power is sitting in its neighborhood and has no plans to leave soon.

2. The Regional Setting: 1947-78

Ever since its creation, Pakistan's quest for national integrity and security has been the primary and most constant theme in its foreign policy. Right from the time of Pakistan's independence in 1947, the new state of Pakistan felt insecure. It looked around to the east and saw India as hostile power ready to dismember and absorb it. To the west it was Afghanistan, a fellow Muslim state, but unfriendly to the extent of casting the only negative vote in the United Nations when Pakistan requested membership. To the north it was the USSR – a Marxist-Leninist state, whose leaders looked upon Pakistan's independence with disdain because it had been brought about by what the Soviets regarded as feudal elements who colluded with the British authorities for the extension of Western imperialism.² This is not to say that the two countries remained entirely aloof. Ambassadors were exchanged and in 1950, and relations were established, but they were to remain minimal and cool at least for some time. The Soviets invited Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to visit Moscow in 1949. The latter first accepted but then decided against the visit. Pakistan felt miffed because the Soviet Union had moved slowly in extending recognition to Pakistan and Russian leaders had sent no congratulatory messages to Jinnah when Pakistan came into existence.³ When in 1948 Pakistan's dispute with India over Kashmir came to the Security Council, the Soviet Union remained neutral. This irked Pakistan because by remaining neutral, the Soviet Union was in effect favouring the status quo in Kashmir which was quite acceptable to India but not at all to Pakistan. Pakistan's independence movement contained much rhetoric concerning the Islamic ideology. Many Islamic scholars regarded the Marxist-Leninist ideology as antithetical to their own. On their part, the Soviets scorned "Islamic ideology", the concept of an "Islamic State", and its call for the creation of an "Islamic Bloc", comprising the Muslim states. Thus with such opposing ideological stances, the possibility of an extensive cooperative relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union was not feasible.

² Choudhury, G. *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Major Powers*, (The Free Press, 1975). 5.

³ Burke, S. M. *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, (Oxford University Press, 1973): 53.

By the beginning of the 1950's, Pakistan had already fought one war with India over Kashmir. India's posture towards Pakistan remained one of hostility. The Pakistan Government thus felt an urgent need to acquire a sufficiently large and modern military capability. In this situation the United States, which was looking for allies on behalf of its policy of containment, appeared as a source of military supplies at virtually no cost to Pakistan. The Soviet Union, by contrast, had neither the interest nor the resources, at that time, to arm Pakistan with modern weapons. It is not surprising then that Pakistan joined American alliances, intended to contain the Soviet Union and China, in the hope of becoming better able to contain its own hostile neighbors, namely India and Afghanistan.⁴ The Soviet Union knew that Pakistan Government was more interested in resisting India than in containing the Soviet Union or China. Pakistani alliance with the United States might be irksome but the Soviet officials did not see it as a credible threat to their security. They showed their annoyance by supporting India in its contention with Pakistan over Kashmir,⁵ and by supporting Afghanistan's demand for "*Pukhtoonistan*", the more extreme versions of which meant that Pakistan's western provinces – Baluchistan and then the North Western Frontier Province (now *Khyber Pukhtoon Kwa*)—be separated from Pakistan and joined with Afghanistan. At the same time the Soviet Union expressed an interest in trade relations with Pakistan and signed the first trade agreement in 1956.⁶ In December 1959, the American President Eisenhower visited India after visiting Pakistan, and failed to influence India to agree to a resolution of Kashmir dispute. American aid to India was not affected despite its refusal to heed Eisenhower's advice for a Kashmir settlement. Pakistan realized that India continued to be America's favorite. Soon thereafter, Pakistan signed an Oil Exploration Agreement of 1961 with the Soviet Union, which was later Bhutto recalled was the first "tangible step toward the establishment of good cooperation" between the two countries.⁷ Whether the Soviets offered positive incentives – technical

⁴ Hassan, K. S. *The Strategic Interests of Pakistan* (Vol 1). (Pakistan Institute of International Affairs. 1954) 10. Khan, H. U. R. "Pakistan's Relations with the USSR." *Pakistan Horizon*, 14(1), (1961). 33-55. Qureshi, K. "The Soviet Union, Pakistan and India". *Pakistan Horizon*, 16(4), (1963): 344-355.

⁵ When in February 1957, the Kashmir issue was taken back to the Security Council, the Soviet Union vetoed the resolution, see, Hassan, K. S. "Kashmir before the Security Council" *Pakistan Horizon*, 10 (1). (1957). 26-33.

⁶ Syed, A.H. *China & Pakistan: diplomacy of an entente cordiale*. (Univ of Massachusetts Press.1974). 32

⁷ "Pakistan's Bhutto Asks for Understanding", *The Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, no. 11, 12/4/ 1972.

assistance, economic aid—or whether they used negative incentives – vilifying propaganda, threats—Pakistan has always thought that had the Soviet Union not lent support to Afghanistan and India, they might not have been so intransigent over Pukhtoonistan and Kashmir disputes.

3. Afghanistan under the Soviet influence

Russia has been interested in Afghanistan since the time of the Czars, partly because it served as a gateway to the British Empire in India, and partly because of its proximity to Central Asia. It also gained importance because its southwest portions lie a few hundred miles away from the Persian Gulf. Sardar Daoud became prime minister of Afghanistan in 1953, and pursued policies which had the unintended result of putting Afghanistan under Russian influence. Daoud, pursued the following major interrelated goals: rapid economic modernization; aggressive agitation of the Pukhtoonistan issue; and creation of a strong Afghan military force. To further these policies, Daoud reversed centuries of isolationism and fostered both American and Russian competition inside Afghanistan in order to rebalance Afghanistan's non-alignment. Rewards soon followed. In a pragmatic way American economic aid greatly increased.⁸ In December 1955, Bulganin and Khrushchev arrived in Kabul and three agreements were signed, which included a loan of \$100 million, the largest ever made outside the Socialist bloc. In 1956 Soviet arms began to arrive in Afghanistan. The Soviets also helped to construct and expand military airfields in Mazar-i-Sharif, Shindad, and Begram. Later Soviet military aid was expanded to create a modernized Afghan army, dependent almost exclusively on the Soviet bloc countries for new weapons, spare parts, and military instructors and advisors. And this is where the importance of the agreement lies. The Soviets started training the Afghan officers, technicians, and specialists, who were sent to USSR at the rate of 200-300 per year. By 1979, when the Soviet Union marched its troops into Afghanistan, it had trained some 10,000 men or about 10% of Afghanistan's servicemen, including almost the entire officer's corps. Some of these became revolutionaries later, and held key staff positions when the time came for Afghan Marxists to strike in 1978. By 1977, the Soviet Union had supplied more than 700 tanks, and 184 combat aircraft. It was with the help of the Afghan army that Daoud overthrew King Zahir Shah and seized power in 1973, and again it was the backing of the armed forces that enabled the Marxists to oust Daoud and take power. In the words of the British Prime Minister on January 28, 1980,

⁸ For chronology, see, Adamec & F. Irwin ed. *Afghanistan: Some new approaches*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan press, 1969), 281-338. See also, Manzur Zaidi, "Afghanistan: Case Study in Competitive Co-Existence", *Pakistan Horizon*. 15 (2). (1962): 93-101.

“Soviet tanks crossed Afghanistan on roads built with Soviet army, and their aircraft landed on airfields similarly financed”.⁹

4. Communism in Afghanistan

Afghan Marxism had a short history. Its roots go only as far back as 1947, when an organization called *Wikh-i-Zalmayan* (Awakened Youth) was formed in protest against the abuses of power by the royal family. A key figure in this opposition was Dr. Abdur Rahman Mahmudi, who founded a newspaper, *Nida-i-Khalq* (voice of the masses), which was banned after 29 issues. This paper was a forerunner of a more outspokenly communist paper, *Khalq*. Significant Marxist organization began only in 1965 when the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was formed. The key figure in this development was Nur Mohammad Taraki. Besides Taraki, the other two persons that were to play an important role in the Marxist movement of Afghanistan were Hafizullah Amin and Babrak Karmal. Once the PDPA was formed as an organization, it contested elections to the Lower House of Parliament (*Wolesi Jirgah*), which resulted in victories for a few PDPA Central Committee members, including Babrak Karmal. In 1966, PDPA’s Secretary General Taraki started publishing newspaper “*Khalq*” (the masses), which vilified the royal family, and called for sweeping social changes, and closer ties with the Soviet Union. It was closed down by the Government after five issues. After *Khalq*’s demise, there was no communist journal until Sulaiman Laeq began publishing “*Parcham*” (the banner) in March 1968. Laeq’s co-editor on *Parcham* was Mir Akbar Khyber – Karmal’s ideological mentor and *Parcham*’s theoretician – whose assassination ten years later was to trigger the 1978 communist coup.

In June 1967, the PDPA split into two hostile factions: the *Khalqis* under Taraki and Amin, and the *Parchamis* under Babrak Karmal. But both remained firmly loyal to the Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism, and differed only as to the tactics. The *Khalqis* put emphasis on class-conflict, while the *Parchamis* called for a united democratic front to work within the framework of the existing order. The main reason for their break was the personal antagonism and rivalry for control of the party between the two leaders – Karmal and Taraki. Each commanded loyalty of about half of the PDPA movement, and each was to maintain an unbroken hostility toward the other for ten years, until 1977.

⁹ David Rees, “Afghanistan’s Role in the Soviet Strategy”, *Conflict Studies*. 118. (London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1980). 1.

On July 17, 1973, the *Parcham* succeeded in carrying out a coup that brought it and Daoud to power. The coup demonstrated that the Marxists had extended their operations from campuses and streets of Kabul into the bases of the armed forces. While Daoud had maintained close relations with senior commanders of the armed forces, the *Parcham* had penetrated and recruited strategically placed junior officers who played a major part in the success of the coup. Initially, the new Daoud regime projected a leftist image through revolutionary rhetoric of social and political reforms, and it installed *Parcham* leaders in some ministries and the cabinet. But by 1975, Daoud began to purge the *Parcham* leaders from his government. Simultaneously, he moved to disengage his government from the Soviet embrace. His moves alienated the Marxists, and certainly gave the Soviet Union a cause to reconsider its support.

5. The Saur (April) Revolution, 1978

In a violent coup on April 27, 1978, the Communists took power in Afghanistan, organized a Central Revolutionary Committee, which named Nur Mohammad Taraki President of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and Prime Minister of its Cabinet. Hafizullah Amin, and Babrak Karmal were appointed Deputy Prime Ministers. The regime avoided the use of communist or socialist terms to describe itself.¹⁰ In his first press conference, on May 7, 1978, Taraki described the regime as reformist, constructive, and tolerant of Islam. In spite of emphasizing continuation of Afghanistan's non-alignment in international politics, the new regime initiated radical changes in both its external and internal policies. Externally, it moved closer to the Soviet Union.¹¹ And internally it adopted policies which provoked large-scale opposition that soon turned into a major insurgency.

On October 19, 1978, the government declared that the national flag would be modeled after those of the Soviet republics¹². Then sweeping reforms were announced: the most important were 1. Land reforms to transfer agricultural land from large holders to small holders or landless; 2. elimination of all usurious credit arrangements between money-lenders and the rural poor; 3. Marriage regulation that placed a ceiling on the customary bride price at 300 Afghani (at that time \$6); licensing of all marriage, and designation of the minimum age for marriage at 18 years; 4. introduction of mandatory education based on Soviet model curriculum for both sexes. Introduction of Russian as a required foreign language in place of English for secondary education was announced earlier.¹³ For a people

¹⁰ "Afghanistan". *New York Times*. 7/5/1978.

¹¹ "Policies of the New Government in Afghanistan". *New York Times*. 16/6/ 1978.

¹² "Glorious Red Flag Hoisted", *Kabul Time*. 21/10/ 1978.

¹³ "Panjsheri Opens Russian Language Course". *Kabul Times*, 15/10/ 1978.

who had not known much government interference in their private lives, this was a rude awakening. To the Afghans, the red flag and the reforms demonstrated the regime's Marxist character. The Afghan dissidents felt that their way of life would not survive unless they were able to remove the *Khalq* regime.

6. The Resistance to Saur Revolution

The first major revolt against the government took place in the Nuristan province on October 1978, and then in the province of Kunar. After that fighting spread to other parts of central Afghanistan and the Perwan province. With the formation of the Islamic Republic in Iran, the Afghans living close to the Iranian border got inspired and a major uprising took place in Herat in March 1979. This uprising was significant in many ways: twenty Soviet Personnel were killed which led to a greater Soviet military presence and transfer of arms. After the Herat uprising, the general security situation in the country worsened quickly. By end of May 1979, many parts of Kunar, Paktia, Nuristan, Nangarhar, Gher, Bamian, and Uruzgan provinces were under the insurgents' control. On September 16, 1979, Taraki was overthrown and killed, and Hafeezullah Amin took over power. Amin's success came at the cost of a rift with the Soviets which ultimately could not be healed. Their penetration of the armed forces through their network of advisers seriously limited Amin's freedom of action. Amin proceeded to purge the party, the government and the armed forces of not only Taraki's followers but also of Karmal's followers. Soviet objections prompted Amin to accuse the USSR of interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Amin publicly demanded the recall of the Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan, a request that they had to honour.

Sounds of explosions were heard daily in Kabul, the Afghan army was disintegrating, the tribal insurgents were gaining and their power was growing in the immediate vicinity of Kabul itself. Amin's challenge and the growing turmoil in the country confronted Moscow with the most unpleasant choice.¹⁴ Thus on December 25, 1979, the Soviet military contingent in Kabul, augmented by newly arrived reinforcements, moved against the presidential palace. Amin was arrested, and shortly afterwards, executed.

¹⁴ Harrison, S. S. "Dateline Afghanistan: Exit through Finland?" *Foreign Policy*. (41). (1980). 163-187.

Babrak Karmal returned from Moscow to become Afghanistan's new President and Secretary General of what remained of the PDPA.

7. Reaction to the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was widely condemned all over the world. For the Pakistanis the Soviet invasion posed a direct threat to its own territorial integrity, and it saw itself as a front-line state. For the Americans, the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan posed a threat to the Persian Gulf region with its enormous oil resources. West European governments shared American concerns. The Muslim countries were the most angry and upset about the invasion. But because of their disunity, they were not able to take any joint steps to make the Russians withdraw from Afghanistan. The Chinese government naturally came out with the strongest condemnation of what it termed as "naked aggression". It called the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan a "grave threat to the peace and security in Asia and the whole world".¹⁵ India too was profoundly disturbed; it was caught between the desire to maintain close relations with the Soviet Union and its conviction that Soviet forces must eventually withdraw from Afghanistan.

The personal beliefs of President Zia ul Haq of Pakistan and his domestic ideological stance of Islamization facilitated and supported the US objectives in Afghanistan. In February 1980, President Carter sent Brzezinski to Pakistan to confer with President Zia ul Haq on the Afghanistan situation. Soon thereafter the American offered aid worth \$400 million. Pakistan rejected the American offer of aid as peanuts, and calculated that sooner or later Washington, in its own interests, would have to be more amenable to Pakistani request for military assistance. In April 1981, the Reagan Administration offered Pakistan a \$3.2 billion military and economic assistance.¹⁶ The American attitude changed towards Pakistan because they realized its strategic value. American aid to the insurgents, as approved by Congress, amounted to \$280 million for 1984.¹⁷

In the meantime the Afghan refugees started pouring into Pakistan, and Pakistan provided relief to more than three million Afghan refugees. Pakistan also provided support to several Afghan resistance groups. While the Soviets warned Pakistan on several occasions of dire consequences if it did not stop its support to the Afghan resistance groups, Soviet policy towards Pakistan remained cautious and prudent. It did not put any overt military pressure on Pakistan. The Soviets had already eight divisions of

¹⁵ "People's Daily", Commentary in *Dawn*. 2/1/ 1980.

¹⁶ "Pakistan Reports US has offered 5-year Aid Deal", *The New York Times*. 22/4/1981.

¹⁷ "US Aides Predict more Help for Afghan Rebels", *New York Times*, 2/10/1983.

their army in Afghanistan, for attacking Pakistan it would have needed another twelve or more divisions. The Soviets had justified the presence of their troops in Afghanistan on the basis that they had been invited by Kabul. The Soviets were seen as responsible for the turmoil in Afghanistan, and for breaking the equilibrium of the region, and Soviet withdrawal was therefore laid down as a prerequisite for any peace settlement of the Afghan crisis.

However, as time dragged on and as the costs multiplied, especially within the overall faltering economic situation of the Soviet Union, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan could not be sustained. The Soviet Union, then under reformist leader Mikhail Gorbachev, ended the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in February 1989, thus completing a ten-year long stay. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, Najibullah Government remained in power until 1992. He pursued a policy of national reconciliation to end the conflict. However, Pakistan continued its interference in support of the Mujahideen forces challenging Kabul. Eventually it was Pakistan's policy which caused the overthrow of the Najibullah Government. In December 1991, the whole of Soviet Union, once a super power came crushing down to non-existence. That also ended the Soviet support to Najib Government. This, coupled with the internal collapse of his government, led to his resignation in April 1992. That was the end of the Communist regime in Afghanistan as well as in the Soviet Union.

The Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996 and ruled until 2001, when the 9/11 terrorist attack of Al Qaida took place on the American soil. As a result of the 9/11 attack on America, American President George W. Bush launched invasion of Afghanistan. Thus he brought about a regime change in Afghanistan by ousting the Talibans. As a result Afghanistan has to this day not witnessed peace or tranquility.

8. Present US Strategy in Afghanistan

Recently the US President Donald Trump announced his strategy for Afghanistan by committing more American troops and committing to fight as long as it takes until the war is won. Currently the US engagement in Afghanistan is costing them approximately \$23 billion per year. Ever since Donald Trump took office, the number of air strikes has more than doubled that of 2016. This also means a spike in civilian casualties. When President Obama took office in 2009, he raised the US troops to 100,000 in the NATO force of about 150,000, and planned to reinforce the US troops with better equipment and technology and then to hand it over to the Afghan

army and police, which he did in 2014. The 2009 surge in troops by President Obama proved that even the most modern armies, with latest weapons, and backed by sophisticated air power, cannot totally defeat the unconventional guerrilla warfare that the Taliban carry out. Increasing the number of American troops in Afghanistan, will make no difference on the battlefield, because the bulk of fighting is undertaken by the Afghan security forces, who are currently dying at the rate of 30 per month.

9. Russian Interest and Role in the Region

Recently Mr. Sergey Lavron, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation remarked that: “Russia consistently advocates for the settlement of the internal Afghan conflict within the framework of a national reconciliation process led by Afghans themselves”. He advocated for a direct dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, while respecting the criteria set by the UN Security Council.¹⁸

The relations between Pakistan and Russia have had a complicated history. Both the countries were fighting a proxy war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which resulted in the downfall of the Soviet Union and the victory of the Taliban. Since then the relations between Pakistan and Russia were almost non-existent, until when the Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu visited Pakistan in November 2014 and signed a defence cooperation contract with Pakistan. Then both the countries’ naval forces participated in exercises in 2014, 2015; and in “*Druzhbha-2016*”, a Russian word *Druzhbha* meaning “friendship”. Pakistan also confirmed purchase of Mi-35 ground attack helicopters from Russia in 2015. In April 2017, the Russian Deputy Chief of General Staff Colonel General Israkow Sergi Yuryevich was hosted by Peshawar Corps Commander Lt-General Nazir Ahmed Butt on a visit to North and South Waziristan.¹⁹ After Trump announced his policy for the region, the Russian President’s envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov said that Pakistan was “a key regional player to negotiate with” and warned that undue pressure on it could “seriously destabilize the region’s security situation”.²⁰

¹⁸ “Foreign Policy News”. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. 25/9 2017. http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news//asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2874634?utm_source=World+Affairs+Newsletter&utm_campaign=cd142e8f36EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_09_25&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f83b38c5c7-cd142e8f36-294712977

¹⁹ “Are Pakistan and Russia forming an alliance? Not without China, says expert”. *Dawn*, 1/4/2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1324187>

²⁰ “Khwaja Asif to embark on three-nation tour to discuss US policy”. *Dawn*. 26/8/2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1354043>

Russia wants to bring Afghanistan under its influence as much as the US does. As Pakistan has a history with Afghanistan and the Taliban, and Pakistan is also friend of China, therefore Russia cannot ignore all these factors, and therefore are interested in solidifying relations with Pakistan. But on the Kashmir issue they are still silently avoiding the issue of atrocities committed on Kashmiri Muslims by the Indian Government. It seems that Russia is keeping consistent with the old Soviet policy of supporting Indian stand on the Kashmir problem. While they want the Afghans to find an Afghan solution to the Afghan problem, they also know that this may not be possible because peace in Afghanistan cannot be restored without Pakistan.

10. China's Role in the Region

China of late has set aside its traditional role of supporting Pakistan policy in Afghanistan, and has been playing a more independent role. China has also been cooperating with Russia in an effort to find regional solutions to regional problems. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), formed in 2001 originally comprised of China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In 2012, Afghanistan became a formal observer of the SCO, and in 2015 it decided to give membership to India and Pakistan as well, because it realized that without these two countries it was not possible to bring peace to Afghanistan and eliminate drug trafficking from there. Since 2005, the Chinese have tried to arrange a truce between the Afghan government and the Taliban. After meeting with the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the SCO summit, Xi Jinping the Chinese President announced closer cooperation, including more equipment and training.²¹ There is a convergence in the policies of both Russia and China on the Afghan issue, as both want direct negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. The Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi praised Pakistan's "great sacrifices" in the fight against terrorism and urged their acknowledgment by the world. China knows that without peace in Afghanistan, there can be no peace in Pakistan, so their priority is to have peace in both the countries. Towards this end, they are even flexible in their approach to the Indian involvement in the finding peaceful solutions.

²¹ Richard Weitz. "Afghanistan, Not New Members, Will Determine SCO's Relevance". *World Politics Review*. 14/7/ 2015. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/16223/afghanistan-not-new-members-will-determine-sco-s-relevance>.

11. What do the Afghans Want

Ever since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Afghanistan is suffering from violence and war. In October, 2017, the Afghan Defense Ministry reported that fighting is taking place in 20 of the country's 34 provinces, with intense violence in eight of them.²² The Afghan President, Mr. Ashraf Ghani announced his plan for peace in Afghanistan. He said: The Afghan government is working on a four-year 'multi-dimensional' security reform programme, the fundamental aim of which is to provide grounds for a political settlement to the Afghan conflict. He welcomed the recent US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia, and said that the US troops have a role to play in Afghan security. The other two major components of the Ashraf Ghani programme are: Pak-Afghan peace, and political dialogue with the Taliban. Besides, reducing poverty, judicial reform and infrastructural development are other factors that he thinks can set the stage for sustainable peace in Afghanistan.²³ It seems that there is contradiction in the Afghan Government plan for peace in Afghanistan. If Ashraf Ghani is preparing ground for a political settlement, then why support the US in bringing more troops to Afghanistan, because more troops mean more wars. Is he willing to share power with the Taliban, and accept the legitimacy of their control of almost half the country? While he says that Afghanistan need a comprehensive national dialogue, he also knows that the Taliban are not ready yet for negotiations, therefore he is proposing to "have to force the consensus", meaning that the Taliban are made so weak that they have no choice but to come to the negotiating table.

Immediately after President Trump announced reinforcement of American troops in Afghanistan, reactions from within Afghan elite also started resurfacing. Gul Rahman the head of a political party called The Peace and Salvation Council said that if military option could bring the solution, then the Americans and their allies would have brought peace to Afghanistan in the past fifteen years. But that did not happen, as neither side was strong enough to eliminate the other. He reiterated that only diplomacy could solve the Afghan problem, and for this he proposed the convening the traditional *Loya Jirga* with representation from all parts of Afghanistan,

²² "Afghan Forces Killed in Friendly-Fire Airstrike, Capping Deadly Week", *The New York Times*. 1/10/ 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/01/world/asia/afghan-airstrike-helmand-province.html?action=click&contentCollection=Asia%20Pacific&module=RelatedCoverage®ion=Marginalia&pgtype=article>

²³"What is Ashraf Ghani's Plan to end Afghanistan 40-years conflict" Sep 25, 2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1359337/what-is-ashraf-ghanis-plan-to-end-afghanistans-40-year-conflict>

as he believed that only such a mechanism could find solutions to the Afghan problem.²⁴

A recent survey to assess what the Afghans think of the situation in Afghanistan showed that only 29% of Afghans believe the country is headed in the right direction; nearly 90% denounced government corruption as a problem in everyday life; and over 40% of Afghans fear bumping into their army or police.²⁵ This speaks volumes about the common Afghans perception of the precarious situation inside Afghanistan: not only the violence related to war that is taking place, but the corruption in the Government, and the fact the security personnel are everywhere. This is not a life that the Afghans lived under King Zahir Shah's peaceful Afghanistan; this is not a life that any peaceful human being would want to live.

12. What does Pakistan Want?

In 2004, during the Bush Administration, Pakistan was granted the Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA) status to encourage Pakistan to support the fight against the Taliban and al Qaeda. As an MNNA country, Pakistan became eligible for priority delivery of defense material, arms sale, military hardware, and more sophisticated weaponry. As such the Bush administration gave Pakistan \$12.4 billion in aid, and the Obama administration gave over \$21 billion. What did it achieve? While the fighting continued in Afghanistan, both Pakistan and the US lost trust. Pakistan blamed the US of supporting India which carried out proxy war inside Pakistan by training and supporting terrorist activities in Pakistan. The US blamed Pakistan for not doing enough as insisted on "do more" policy.

It seems that America believes that Pakistan is perpetuating war inside Afghanistan. That is why the American President Donald Trump announced that it would order American army hot pursuit of Taliban into neighboring Pakistan. That would mean violating the territorial integrity of Pakistan and fighting on Pakistan territory. Pakistan strongly reacted to this

²⁴ "Only traditional Loya Jirga can end current challenges: Gul Rahman Qazi", *Afghanistan Times*, __ 28/8/ 2017. <http://afghanistantimes.af/only-traditional-loya-jirga-can-end-current-challenge-gul-rahman-qazi/>.

²⁵ Kolenda, Christopher D. "Focused Engagement: A new way forward in Afghanistan". (Center for New American Security (CNAS) 21/2/2017). <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/focused-engagement>

policy statement by President Trump. The National Security Committee (NSC) of Pakistan which is headed by the Prime Minister and has senior officials from the bureaucracy and military gave a sharp response to the new US strategy. According to the NSC the Trump strategy seems to be an endorsement of perpetual war in Afghanistan; secondly it puts the onus on Pakistan to act without addressing Pakistan's security concerns of anti-Pakistan militant sanctuaries in eastern Afghanistan. Trumps encouragement of India to do more and play a greater role in Afghanistan, shows total disregard for Pakistani concern of Indian involvement. The US strategy amounts to minus-Pakistan formula; rather the Trump strategy also ignored Iran, China and even Russia.²⁶ The then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, stated that the "US military strategy in Afghanistan has not worked and it will not work". He said that only a political settlement in Afghanistan can be the bottom line. He also said that "we do not intend to allow anybody to fight Afghanistan's battle on Pakistan's soil".²⁷ The Afghan war has since years spilled into Pakistan, and after suffering huge losses both in terms of human and infrastructure, Pakistan has been taking measures to contain the war in Afghanistan to Afghani soil, and not to allow its territory to be infiltrated with terrorists. Recently the Foreign Minister Asif Khwaja, remarked that the Taliban control more than 40% of Afghanistan, why would they need hideouts in Pakistan, when they could very well hide in that 40% of their land which is securely in their control.

13. A Regional Approach to the Problem

A regional approach to the Afghan question should necessarily include Iran, Russia, China, and Pakistan. For Pakistan "a politically negotiated outcome", is the only solution. Similarly both Russia and China are desirous of a political settlement. To put pressure on Pakistan, the US is asking India to do more in Afghanistan (apparently in terms of development support), but certainly the message is that India has a role in peaceful Afghanistan. Pakistan has clearly told the US that it does not want its financial support.

Afghanistan until the Soviet invasion was a neutral country. The United States should promote Afghan sovereignty and reduce the regional competition by supporting Afghan regional neutrality coupled with regional

²⁶"Minus-Pakistan formula?" *Dawn*, 25/8/ 2017;

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1353810/minus-pakistan-formula/>

²⁷ "Trump's Afghan strategy will not work: Abbasi", *Dawn*, 28/8/ 2017.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1354443/trumps-afghan-strategy-will-not-work-abbasi/>

commitments for non-interference in Afghan affairs.²⁸ Neither the Taliban can completely overthrow the Afghan Government, nor the Afghan government can completely eliminate the Taliban. It is up to both the parties to realize for how long will they be fighting for one or the other foreign interests. Once the battlefield is stabilized, then the second step would be to engage in regional diplomacy, which should aim at leaving a neutral Afghanistan, which it was even during the cold-war period, and a member of the Non-Alignment Movement.

Conclusion

Revolutions happen in a certain time and space when all the causal factors are present. The Great October Revolution in Russia, in time changed not only the politics within Russia, but also impacted on the whole of the Eastern Europe, and had appeal for the youth in a Muslim country like Afghanistan. The Communism in Soviet Union did not engineer the communist coup in 1978 that ousted Daoud. But once a communist regime was in, it became a matter of face for the Russians to protect it, especially since it was in their neighborhood. Trying to save communism in Afghanistan served as a trigger for the downfall of their own communist regime in the Soviet Union. Revolutions even if successful cannot be sustained if the external interference is stronger, which will create, design, and breed a counter-revolution.

As Leon Trotsky said: “It is facts and not illusions that decide”²⁹ It has been demonstrated by history, that for any regime to survive, especially in a developing country, it is of utmost necessity that the regional neighbors do not see it as a threat to their own security. No regime in Kabul has ever effectively ruled all of Afghanistan. Similar to the present situation, the cities and towns were controlled by the government and the countryside by local tribal leaders. The Afghan Government cannot last without American support. The Americans, unlike the Soviets, have enough resources to stay for an indefinite period, and are there to stay. The Pakistanis would not like to see another super power sitting in its neighborhood. If the Afghan Government wants the war in Afghanistan to end, they have to opt for power-sharing.

²⁸ Kolenda, *Ibid.*

²⁹ Trotsky, Leon. *The Revolution Betrayed*, (New York: Pathfinder Press. 1972). 4

Bibliography

- Barfield, Thomas. *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Bryan, A. *Unspoken Abandonment: Sometimes the hardest part of going to war is coming home*. Create Space, 2012.
- Burke, S. M. *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Choudhury, G. *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Major Powers*, The Free Press, 1975.
- Coll, Steve. *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*. Penguin Books, London. 2004.
- Dobbins, James F. *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan*. Potomac Books, 2008.
- Hassan, K. S. "Kashmir before the Security Council" *Pakistan Horizon*, 10 (1). 1957.
- Hassan, K. S. *The Strategic Interests of Pakistan*. (1). Pakistan Institute of International Affairs. 1954.
- Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. W. W. Norton, 2009.
- Kenez, P. *A history of the Soviet Union from Beginning to End*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Khan, H. U. R. "Pakistan's Relations with the USSR." *Pakistan Horizon*, 14(1). 1961.
- Qureshi, K." The Soviet Union, Pakistan and India". *Pakistan Horizon*, 16(4). 1963.
- Rahid, Ahmed, *Descent Into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*. Viking, 2008.
- Rashid, Ahmed. *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. Libri, 2010.
- Rees, David. "Afghanistan's Role in the Soviet Strategy", *Conflict Studies*". 118. London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict. 1980.
- Semple, Michael. *Reconciliation in Afghanistan*. Institute of Peace, 2009.
- Syed, A.H. *China & Pakistan: diplomacy of an entente cordiale*. University of Massachusetts Press. 1974.
- Trotsky, Leon. *The Revolution Betrayed*. Pathfinder Press. 1972.