

Pak-Afghan Relations during Z.A. Bhutto Era: The Dynamics of Cold War

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Abstract

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have not been smooth and cordial since the very inception of Pakistan in 1947, except for the ephemeral period of the Taliban. However, relations between the two neighbourly nations aggravated more during the regimes of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Sardar Muhammad Daud Khan. The paper analyses the factors that brought bilateral relations between the two neighbours to such an impasse which eventually led to Soviet arrival in Afghanistan and subsequently to War on Terror. The paper also sheds light on the twin simmering issues of the Durand Line and Pakhtunistan (an independent state for Pakhtuns living on east of the Durand Line). Pak-Afghan relations could not have been smooth during this period due to Cold War politics between the two super powers i.e. Soviet Union and United States as Pakistan and Afghanistan remained the camp followers of the Communist and Capitalist blocs led by Soviet Union and United States respectively. Besides, the paper attempts to answer the questions as to why Pak-Afghan relations remained unfriendly despite having so much in common and why both the countries followed two opposing blocs? Moreover, how

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far the Cold War politics between the two blocs affected their relations?

Introduction

In the words of Pakistan's former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, "no two countries have so much in common as Afghanistan and Pakistan."¹ The same feelings were expressed nearly two decades later by Hamid Karzai, the Afghan President, by calling the two states inseparable "twin brothers."² Despite the sharing of such well-meaning intentions by leaders of both the countries and sharing historical, religious, cultural, economic, ethnic and linguistic bonds, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have hardly enjoyed cordial relations except during the internationally pariah regime of Taliban (1996-2001). Majority of the people in Pakistan and Afghanistan follow the Sunni version of Islam with pockets of Shia Islam. Their religious bonds were well displayed during the Indo-Pak War in Kashmir in 1948 when around 3000 tribesmen from Pakistan and Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan fought with the Pakistani tribesmen.³ Again during the Afghan Jihad (1979-1989) and more recently after the event of 9/11 when many Pakistani Islamic zealots crossed over to Afghanistan against the US-led coalition.

One of the largest ethnic groups in Pakistan consists of Pakhtuns. They are concentrated mainly in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and some parts of Balochistan with variable presence in other parts of Pakistan as well. Pakhtun being a major ethnic group in Afghanistan share the centuries-old tradition of *Pakhtunwali* which has been referred to as 'the

1 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *The Quest for Peace* (Lahore: Classic, 1995), 98.

2 Alam Rind, "Afghan Dimension to Pakistan-India Relations", *The Frontier Post*, April 21, 2010.

3 Juma Khan Sufi, "Lar Au Bar Dwa Afghan Ka Yao Afghan: Da Durand Tharoon, Haquqi Ao Qanooni Hasayat" [Pashto: Near or far the Afghans or one Afghan: The Durrand Line factual and legal status] *Lekwal* (Pakhtu), (Monthly) May, 2012, 12.

way of the Pathan'⁴ by James W. Spain. Traditionally, the Afghans have been shuttling between India and Afghanistan for trade and commerce.⁵ Long before the establishment of Pakistan, the *Kochis/Powindah* [Pashto: nomads] used to work as seasonal labour in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and in the coal mines near Quetta (Balochistan).⁶ This pattern of crisscrossing of *Kochis* has been very aptly encapsulated in this Pakhtu couplet/*Tappa*:⁷

په مسافري راسره نه تلي, اوس مي د کډو خوا ته مه رآهه چي
مرمه⁸

*You refused to be my companion during my seasonal
journey,
Now it is futile to visit me while I am dying.*

However, over the last six decades, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan witnessed many ups and downs despite the fact that both shared many characteristics. The main reasons of tension were the issues of Durand Line and Pakhtunistan. Afghans argue that the Durand Line only demarcated the 'sphere of influence' between British India

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- 4 Pakhtunwali is the centuries old Pakhtun way of life. It has many features like providing *Panah* [Pashto: shelter to helpless], *melmastia* [Pashto: hospitality] and *badal* [Pashto: revenge], etc. which regulate their life. James W. Spain, *Pathans of the Later Days* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 39-150; James W. Spain, *The Way of the Pathans* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1962), 46-48; Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, *Ethnicity Islam and Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North Western Province 1937-47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), iii.
- 5 Tanvir Anjum, "Afghan: Are They Refugees in Pakistan", *Dawn*, December 9, 2000.
- 6 "They have actually engaged in this type of migration from the Vedic period...". M. Hassan Kakar, eds., Nicola Di Cosmo, Devin Deweese and et. al., *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901* (Boston: Brill's Inner Asian Library, 2006), 38. Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 169-70.
- 7 *Tappa* is also called *landai* or *Misra*. It is one of the oldest literary fields of Pakhtu Language. It is typical of Pakhtun culture and has no parallel in other languages. It consists of a small couplet about one and half line but its import is full of emotions, feelings and longings. Akbar Shah, *Azadi Ki Talash*, Trans., Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, (Urdu) (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1989), 423.
- 8 Shah, *Azadi Ki Talash*, 294.

and Afghanistan. It was not permanently agreed by the Afghan Amir, Abdur Rahman.⁹ Although the Taliban, purported to be Pakistan's protégé, also refused to recognize the Durand Line. However, Pakistan rejected the Afghan claim by asserting its rightful position being the 'legal' successor state of British India.

Besides Afghanistan's irredentist claim on Pakistan's border region, there have been other reasons that kept the relations unfriendly between the two countries. The geo-strategic location of both the countries as well as the geo-political and economic interests of the external and regional powers coupled with the lack of democratic governments played a role in shaping and reshaping the relations. The Indian factor has also played an important role in determining the dynamics of relations between the two countries. Pakistan and India have been locked in a perennial rivalry on many fronts, especially with Kashmir as the core issue for both states.

The concept that Muslims and Hindus are different nations by all accounts resulted in the partition of India in 1947. However, Pakistan received the first shock from a fellow Muslim country, Afghanistan, when Pakistan's entry was blocked in the United Nations Organization (UNO), on the issue of Pakhtunistan. Afghanistan's action clearly manifested that "actions of states are determined not by moral principles and legal considerations but by interests and power."¹⁰ As Morgenthau has eloquently explained in these words:

The idea of interest is indeed of the essence of politics and is unaffected by the circumstances of time and space... Realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in their abstract universal formulations. But they

9 Ali Khan Mahsud, *La Pir Rohana tar Bacha Khana Pori Da Pakhtanu Milli Mubarazi Ta Katana* [Pashto: A Study of National History of Pakhtuns: From Pir Rokhan till Bacha Khan] (Peshawar: Danish Publishers, n.d), 310-12.

10 Jack Donnelly, "Realism", in *Theories of International Relations*, Scott Burchill, and *et.al*, eds., (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 48.

must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and space.¹¹

Afghanistan's refusal to recognize the Durand Line and its support for Pakhtunistan was a manifestation of the fact that Pakistan's religious nationalism that led to the partition of Indo-Pak Subcontinent was challenged by Afghanistan's ethno-linguistic nationalism. Both states supported their respective proxies, the Baloch and Pakhtun nationalists by Afghanistan and Islamists by Pakistan with the tacit support of Soviet Union and United States of America respectively till the disintegration of the former in December 1991.

However, this threatening tone between the two states continued until 1979 when the thorny issues of Durand Line and Pakhtunistan were about to be amicably resolved by Z.A Bhutto and Daud Khan. However, both countries underwent rapid changes. Martial law was imposed in Pakistan by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq on July 5, 1977 and a year later Sardar Daud's government was toppled in a bloody *coup* called *Saur*¹² *Inqalab* [Pashto: April Revolution] on April 27, 1978 by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).¹³ The Islamists in Afghanistan launched massive attacks against the new regime of Noor Mohammad Tarakai.¹⁴ Afghanistan's situation went from bad

11 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc, 1997), 10-12.

12 Saur is the name of April month.

13 PDPA was founded in 1965. However, the Party split into two factions *Khalq* [Pashto: People] and *Parcham* [Pashto: Flag] in 1967, on the question of Party programme. The Party again reunited in 1977. The reason behind the PDPA's unification was the massive anti-leftist measures of President Daud. Martin Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan: Studies in Asymmetric Warfare* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Groups, 2005), 104.

14 Noor Muhammad Tarakai, born on July 17, 1917 in the home of Nazar Muhammad in Sur *Kalay* village Naveh Woleswali (District), Ghazni Province. He was founding member of PDPA and remained its Secretary General till his death on September 17, 1979. He was also a literary man. His novel *Sangsar* [Persian: stoning to death] foreworded by Hafizullah Amin, his Deputy and Foreign Minister, very aptly depicts the conditions of Afghanistan under the monarchical system of Afghanistan. Muhammad Ibrahim Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana* [Pashto: A glance over the long history of Afghanistan] (Kabul: Mewaind

to worse until Soviet Union intervened on December 27, 1979 to save the pro-Russian Afghan government against the rising attacks of Islamists. The presence of Soviet forces in neighbouring Afghanistan was perceived by Pakistan as an existential threat to its security as Soviet Union was an ally of India and it was perceived that Pakistan could be the next target of Soviet Union in its lust for the Warm Water. In the coming years, around 3.5 million Afghans left their country to seek refuge in Pakistan and the neighbouring Iran. Afghanistan became the epicentre of the cold war, while Pakistan as Front Line state.

Pak-Afghan Relations after East Pakistan Debacle

In the aftermath of East Pakistan debacle in December 1971 in which a major role was played by India and its ally, now the defunct Soviet Union,¹⁵ the military regime of Yahya Khan relinquished power to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had won majority of seats in the then West Pakistan. Bhutto's priority was to establish cordial relations with the Muslim world in particular and the world at large. He visualized that Pakistan's defence priorities now hinged upon co-operation with Iran and Afghanistan.¹⁶ The loss of East Pakistan and the establishment of Bangladesh with the active support of Pakistan's arch rival, India, brought

Khprandooya Toolana, 2011), 312-13; see also, Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, *The Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan 1917-79: An Appraisal* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1997), 461.

15 The United States supported Pakistan both politically and materially. The USA feared Soviet expansion into South and Southeast Asia. The Soviet Union supported the Indian Army and *Mukti Bahini* during the war, recognizing that the independence of Bangladesh would weaken the position of its rivals, i.e., the United States and China. The USSR gave assurances to India that if confrontation with the United States or China developed, it would take counter-measures. This assurance was enshrined in the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty signed in August 1971. "Indo-Pak War and USSR", <http://www.cssforum.com.pk/css-optional-subjects/group-f/international-relations/18839-indo-pak-war-ussr.html>

16 One Unit Plan was enacted in 1955 by Pakistan to blunt the numerical majority of the Bengalis who were not happy with the Punjabi-dominated West Pakistan since Pakistan's independence. S.M Burke and Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 442.

about a radical shift in the geo-strategic environment of South Asia. The undoing of One Unit Plan in August 1970 was welcomed by the Afghan government.¹⁷

As a goodwill gesture, due to its neutrality in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, Afghanistan was chosen to be the first country visited by Z.A. Bhutto after becoming the President of Pakistan.¹⁸ Later the first lady, Nusrat Bhutto, also paid three-day visit to Kabul in May 1972.¹⁹ During her visit, agreements on economic cooperation were signed with Afghanistan yet Kabul continued with its Pakhtunistan stance. Nonetheless, Bhutto's desire to have cordial relations with Afghanistan proved merely a wish due to Muhammad Daud Khan's ascent to power on July 17, 1973 by overthrowing his cousin-King Zahir Shah. As soon as Daud came to power with the help of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), he declared Afghanistan a Republic. Both Daud and Soviet leadership denied any involvement of Soviet hand in overthrowing King Zahir Shah's regime.²⁰ However, in hindsight Soviet Union's involvement could not be overruled. USSR was opposed to the King and his Prime Minister, Musa Shafiq because of their efforts to improve relations with its cold war rivals, US and Pakistan. Moreover, it was also accused of not only being lukewarm on the Pakhtunistan issue but was also held responsible for not acting forcefully against the dismissal of the National Awami Party's (NAP), provincial government in former NWFP (new name as Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan by Pakistan's Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in

17 *Dawn*, August 26, 1970.

18 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *Reshaping Foreign Policy: A Collection of Articles, Statements and Speeches*, Comp., Sani Hussain Panhwar, available at www.bhutto.org, 67.

19 Anees Jillani, "Pak-Afghan Relations, 1958-1988", in *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy: 1971-1998*, Mehrunnisa Ali, ed., (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 378.

20 USSR became the first state that recognized Sardar Daud's government after the *Coup*, on July 20, 1973. Abdul Samad Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan: An inside's Account* (Pergamon Brassey's International Defense Publisher, Inc., 1988), 159.

1973.²¹ Daud being a diehard supporter of the Pakhtunistan wanted to take advantage of Pakistan's troubled situation and force it on the re-opening of talks on the Durand Line issue.²²

For Daud Pakhtunistan was the "lost lands" of his forefathers. "For the descendants of Sultan the lure of Peshawar is passion, deep in their heart".²³ In his first broadcast speech on July 17, 1973 he declared that Pakhtunistan is an "incontrovertible reality"²⁴ and hoped that the issue would be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Pakhtuns. Sardar Daud said "his country had no dispute with any other country except Pakistan."²⁵ Afghanistan would continue to find a solution to this.²⁶ Daud's seizure of power was seen threatening in Pakistan because of his old record of supporting separatist movements amongst Pakhtuns and Balochs living across Durand Line.

In response to Daud's speech Bhutto said in London that we are capable of defending our own interests and warned Afghanistan not to foment problems inside Pakistan.²⁷ So

21 Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 55; Barnett Rubin and Abubaker Siddique, "Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate", *United States Institute of Peace*, Special Report, 176, October 2006, 7.

22 Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan between Mosque and Military* (Lahore: Vanguard Book, 2005), 168.

23 Daud was the great-great grandson of Sultan Muhammad Khan, the last Afghan governor of Peshawar until the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh forced him out in 1823. Sultan Muhammad Khan was the brother of Afghan King Amir Dost Mohammed Khan. Dilip Mukerjee, "Afghanistan under Daud: Relations with Neighbouring States", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (April 1975), 306. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2643235> Accessed: 03/05/2010 06:24

24 Niloufer Mahdi, *Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1981: The Search for Security* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1999), 129.

25 Saeeduddin Ahmad Dar, ed., *Selected Documents on Pakistan Relations with Afghanistan 1947-1985* (Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azan University, 1986), 139.

26 Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, 109.

27 Mohammed Ayoob, "Pakhtunistan: A Ghost Resurrected", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 8, No. 39 (September 29, 1973), 1758-59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4363060> Accessed: 27/05/2009 03:36.

much so Bhutto was alarmed by Daud's seizure of power that he had to cut short his visit abroad and ordered the deployment of troops on the Pak-Afghan border.²⁸ In July 1973, Bhutto formed an Afghan Cell in the Foreign Office to encounter propaganda from Afghanistan. Major General Naseerullah Khan Baber was given charge of the Afghan affairs and Afghan Cell was working on regular basis for the next four years.²⁹

On September 20, 1973 former Afghan Prime Minister Muhammad Hashim Maiwandwal³⁰ and several other were arrested by the Daud regime on the suspicion of plotting a *coup* against his government at the behest of a foreign country without naming Pakistan.³¹ The Afghan government also permitted Baloch fighters to set up camps in Afghanistan and declared them official refugees.³² Daud regime provided overt and covert military and political support to the Pakhtun and Baloch nationalists. According to one estimate, the Afghan government spent \$ 875,000 per year on the Pakhtun and Baloch activities.³³ Asfandyar Wali Khan, Sardar Ataullah Mengal, and Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri, were given arms and political asylum by the Afghan government to pressurize Pakistan on the Pakhtunistan issue.³⁴ Ajmal Khattak,³⁵ the Secretary General of NAP was blamed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for giving speeches to

28 Mahdi, *Pakistan Foreign Policy*, 125.

29 A.Z. Hilali, *US-Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (London: Ashgate Company, 2005), 180-84.

30 Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 286.

31 Rizwan Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy in Afghanistan* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 79.

32 Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence of Islamic Militancy*, 79.

33 Tahir Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1988), 156.

34 Imtiaz Gul, *The Unholy Nexus: Pak-Afghan Relations under the Taliban* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2002), 89.

35 Ajmal Khattak was born in 1925 at Sarai Akori. His father's name was Hikmat Khan. He died on February 6, 2010. Haroon-ur-Rasid Khattak, ed., *Baba Ajmal Khattak: Da Adab Jamal Ao Siyasat Jalal* [Pashto: Baba Ajmal Khattak: The Beauty of Literature and Arrogance of Politics] (Pakhtu) (Peshawar: Ghani Sons, 2006), 38.

miscreants against Pakistan.³⁶ Khattak, in an interview to *Al-Fatah* newspaper in Kabul said that his aim was to create an independent Pakhtunistan on the model of Bangladesh.³⁷

The relations were so much tense that President Daud did not participate in the Islamic Summit Conference held in Lahore on February 21, 1974 however sent his delegate, Abdur Rahman Pazhwak. The Afghan envoy raised Pakhtunistan issue on the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) platform but with no effect.³⁸ Again on November 27, 1974 in a letter to the UN Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, Daud expressed Afghanistan's concern regarding the Baloch freedom fighters and "Pakistan's systematic use of force, including bombardment.... genocide and mass extermination of thousands of people, including children, women and old people...."³⁹. Bhutto retorted in a letter to UN Secretary General that "under the disguise emotional attachment and defense of political rights, the Afghan Government has been actively encouraging and assisting subversive activities and acts of terrorism...."⁴⁰.

Pak-Afghan relations further worsened when on February 8, 1974 Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao, a leader of Pakistan Peoples Party and Chief Minister of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa was killed while attending a ceremony in The University of Peshawar. Z.A. Bhutto accused NAP of

36 Dar, *Selected Documents*, 121.

37 Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Pakhtoonistan and Its International Implications", *World Affairs*, Vol. 137, No. 3 (Winter 1974-1975), 235.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20671568> .Accessed: 24/01/2011 00:23

38 Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, 116; Muhammad Ikram Andesmand, *America pa Afghanistan ke* [Pashto: America in Afghanistan] Trans., Sayed Abdullah Bacha (Kabul: Mewaind Khprandooya Toolana, 2010), 71.

39 "Letter by the Afghan President Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan to the Secretary-General Kurt Waldhelm accusing Pakistan of using force against the Baluch Freedom Fighters", on November 27, 1974 in Mehrunnisa Ali, *Pak-Afghan Discord: A Historical Perspective (Documents: 1855-1979)* (Karachi: Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, 1990), ed., 337-41.

40 "Letter by Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto to the UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, replying to the allegations levelled by the Afghan President, Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan", January 17, 1975 in *Pak-Afghan Discord*, , 343.

assassinating Hayat Sherpao and banned it. Wali Khan, the then president of NAP, and his son Asfandiyar Wali Khan including many other members were put behind the bars.⁴¹ On August 12, 1974 Quetta, (Balochistan) was rocked by a bomb blast while Bhutto was addressing a meeting in the city. Pakistan accused that Afghan government was providing facilities to Ajmal Khattak, the NAP Secretary General, who was living in Afghanistan, and was disrupting law and order situation in Pakistan.⁴² Afghanistan conducted war games in the Nangarhar Province in the winter of 1974 and 1975 which were perceived in Pakistan as Afghanistan's troop mobilization which further deteriorated the relations.⁴³

In order to blunt Afghanistan's support to the Baloch and Pakhtun nationalists Bhutto retaliated by providing shelter and armed support to the Afghan Islamists and pro-monarchy opposition,⁴⁴ including Burhanuddin Rabbani, Ahmed Shah Masud (both were Tajik) and Gulbadin Hikmatyar⁴⁵ who were against the pro-Moscow Daud and did not share Kabul's territorial claims on Pakistan.⁴⁶ On January 13, 1975 the Afghan Foreign Minister, Waheed Abdullah, in an interview to the *Sunday Times* (London), termed the Durand Line as "completely artificial and illegal."⁴⁷ In March 1975, with the support of Pakistani

41 Mahsud, *La Pir Rokhana tar Bacha Khana Pori*, 834-35.

42 Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, 123; Mahdi, *Pakistan Foreign Policy*, 130.

43 Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, 112.

44 Tahir Amin, "Afghan Resistance: Past, Present, and Future", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (April, 1984), 373-99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644334> Accessed: 03/05/2010, 06:23.

45 Hikmatyar was born in Imam Sahib (Northern Province of Kanduz) in 1957. He is a Kharuti Pakhtun from Ghilzia Tribe. His parents came from Baghlan but they moved to Kanduz. In 1996, he joined the government of Rabbani as Prime Minister but soon fell before the Taliban. After the fall of Taliban regime in 2001 as a result of US and allies attacks he was busy waging guerrilla war against the US and its allies in Afghanistan. Amera Saeed, ed., *Afghanistan, Past, Present and Future* (Islamabad: Institute of Regional Studies, 1997), 393.

46 "Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation", *International Crises Group Asia Report No.62* Kabul/Brussels, 5 August 2003, 9.

47 Mahdi, *Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-198*, 129.

Islamists made a futile attempt to foment uprising in the Provinces of Afghanistan, i.e. Paktia, Jalalabad, Laghman, Panjsher and Badakhshan.⁴⁸ Pakistan's support and asylum to the Islamists was also due to the Soviet's fear with regard to its 'expansionism' and warm water obsession.⁴⁹ Bhutto's government not only gave training to 5000 anti-Daud elements in secret camps established in Peshawar but also sent an emissary to the exiled King Zahir Shah to Rome (Italy), in an anticipation in case Daud was ousted from power.⁵⁰ Bhutto wanted to force Daud to stop supporting anti-Pakistan elements.

Bhutto's vigorous policy to counter Daud's espousal of nationalists through Islamists and Soviet Union's increased involvement in Afghanistan's domestic affairs forced Daud to change his mind. In June 1976, Daud invited Bhutto to visit Afghanistan for the settlement of the only 'political difference' between the two countries.⁵¹ Things improved further and the two leaders exchanged reciprocal visits. Bhutto paid a visit to Afghanistan on June 7, 1976 and signed a friendship treaty with Afghanistan. Daud also paid a state visit to Islamabad at the invitation of Bhutto in August the same year. These reciprocal visits helped in reviving trust, defusing tension, resolve of peaceful coexistence and finding pacific settlement of disputes. Bhutto agreed to release the NAP leaders, who were imprisoned following their trials in the Hyderabad conspiracy case.⁵² While Daud agreed to recognize the Durand Line, as an international border

48 Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 762; Andesmand, *America pa Afghanistan ke*, 71.

49 Gul, *The Unholy Nexus*, 11-13.

50 Marvin Weinbaum, *Pakistan and Afghanistan: Resistance and Reconstruction* (Lahore: Pak Book Corporation, 1994), 5; Amin, *Ethno-National Movements*, 157.

51 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *If I Am Assassinated* (Lahore: Agha Ameer Hussain, 1994), 127.

52 In Hyderabad Conspiracy Case the NAP leadership was blamed for working against Pakistan and its dismemberment. The NAP was banned in February 1975, and its leadership was put behind the bars by the Bhutto government in the murder case of Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao. Mahsud, *La Pir Rokhana tar Bacha Khana Pori*, 834-35.

between Pakistan and Afghanistan at a later stage after consulting *Loya Jirga* [Pashto: Grand Council of Elders].⁵³

On the whole mutual visits of heads of both the states brought about a welcome respite. Transit trade began smoothly and on March 2, 1976 air service was resumed which had been suspended since 1974. Even surplus wheat from India was allowed to be imported by Afghanistan.⁵⁴ The view of Barnett Rubin that "Once the military in Pakistan [took over], all attempts to propose a settlement of the situation and recognize the Durand Line, be it by Daud or his communist successors, Noor Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, were rejected."⁵⁵ His opinion that a new era of Pak-Afghan relations was vitiated by General Zia-ul-Haq's military *coup* against Bhutto does not hold weightage in the face of facts. Zia resumed from where it was broken.

In October 1977, Zia-ul-Haq visited Kabul. The visit though short but was fairly useful.⁵⁶ Before his second official visit within a span of nineteen months to Kabul on March 5, 1978 the military ruler, General Zia freed all the imprisoned Pakhtun and Baloch leaders that was appreciated by Daud.⁵⁷ It was a 'big step forward' in their relations. During his visit, he observed that colonial powers had put obstacles between the two peoples "through their

53 Mahsud, *La Pir Rokhana tar Bacha Khana Pori*, 128. See also Babar Shah, "Pakistan's Afghanistan policy: An Evaluation", *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, Vol. 2, No. 3. 2000. Available at: http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2000_files/no_2_3/article/6a.htm

54 Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, 140.

55 Grare, *Carnage Papers*, 17.

56 Message from General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) of Pakistan to the Afghan President Mohammad Daud from Plane on his departure from Kabul, 11 October 1977, Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*.

57 Zia released NAP leadership for two reasons: one, to improve relations with Afghanistan and secondly, in order to strengthen his grip on power and to deal with the PPP loyalists positively as they were up in arms against Zia since Bhutto's removal from power. The release of NAP leadership from jail was his need. Mahsud, *La Pir Rokhana tar Bacha Khana Pori*, 839; Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan*, 141-42.

policy of divide and rule".⁵⁸ However, when asked about the issue of Kashmir he commented a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan.⁵⁹ Though his visit ended on a happy note but nothing substantial followed these visits as the President Daud was assassinated in a *coup* on April 27, 1978 by the leftist revolutionaries. The killing of Daud in Kabul vitiated all such efforts and changed the political landscape of Kabul and Islamabad to a great extent.⁶⁰

Both Bhutto and Daud were punished by USA and USSR for adopting a free stance in their respective policies. Bhutto was threatened to be made "horrible example" by Henry Kissinger for initiating work on its independent nuclear programme.⁶¹ Daud was removed from power and assassinated at the behest of USSR because he refused to follow the Soviet line and its unacceptable interference in the affairs of his country.⁶²

The Saur Revolution and Pak-Afghan Relations

The coup against Daud's regime took everyone by surprise. Noor Muhammad Tarakai of the Khalq faction became the President and Prime Minister of Afghanistan.⁶³ Soviet Union's hand could not be ruled out in this major development. There were many reasons that led the Soviet Union to support the communists to overthrow Daud. Before his death and April Coup Daud improved relations with Pakistan and forged strong relations with Iran. He also

58 "Speech by the Afghan President Mohammad Daud at the civic reception given in his honour at the Shalimar Gardens, Lahore, March 7, 1978", 384-85; Jilani, "Pak-Afghan Relations, 1958-1988", 380.

59 Reported version of the proceedings of Press Conference held by President Daud of Afghanistan in Islamabad before his departure for Kabul March 8, 1978. Ali, ed., *Pak-Afghan Discord*, 387.

60 Gul, *The Unholy Nexus*, 11-13.

61 M.S. Korejo, *Soldiers of Misfortune: Pakistan under Ayub, Yahya, Bhutto & Zia* (Karachi: Ferozsons, 2004), 128

62 Misdaq, *Afghanistan*, 95-96.

63 21-member Cabinet was formed of which 13 were taken from the *Khalq* faction and 8 from the *Parcham* including Babrak Karmal. See for detail of the portfolio of ministers, Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 301-302.

visited Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait but above all US President Jimmy Carter invited him to visit US in that year. All this Daud did without taking the Soviet leadership into confidence.⁶⁴

In 1977, Daud visited Moscow where he was rebuked by Brezhnev for allowing western 'spies' to work in Afghanistan under the guise of technical experts. But Daud dismissed all those strictures and insisted that unacceptable interference would not be allowed in the domestic affairs of his country. He marched out of the remaining meeting and thereby signed his own death warrants.⁶⁵ But what proved to be the *casus belli* was the killing of an Afghan leftist scholar and Parcham stalwart, *Ustaz* Mir Akbar Khyber on April 16, 1978. It led to widespread violent protests against the government.⁶⁶ Many Afghans feared regime's involvement in the killing. Daud strongly reacted to politicization of the issue and ordered the arrest of PDPA leaders including Noor Muhammad Tarakai, Babrak Karmal and Suliaman Laiq. Worried about their existence, the party members and sympathizers immediately staged a *coup* against Daud on April 27, 1977.⁶⁷ However, according to Azmat Hayat, there is no evidence of Soviet Union's connection in the killing of

64 Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 297.

65 Nabi Misdaq, *Afghanistan: Political Frailty and External Interference* (London: Routledge, 2006), 95-96; Abdur Rahim Muslim Dost and Badaruzzman Badr, *Da Gauntanamo Mathe Zaulane* [Pashto: The Broken Shackles of Gauntanamo] (Peshawar, Khilafat Khpranduya Toolana, 2006), 5.

66 His funeral was held on April 17, 1978. Soviet's spy agency KGB was suspected in his murder as Khyber was a rival of Babrak Karmal who was more close to the Russians. The Soviets wanted to kill two birds with one stone.

67 The total number of killed was around 200. Daud along with his wife, Zainab and sister of Zahir Shah were assassinated along with other eighteen members of his family. One account says that General Abdul Qadir along with his two subordinates machine-gunned him upon his refusal to surrender and trying to raise his pistol to shoot the officer. Misdaq, *Afghanistan*, 95-96; Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 299-300.

Daud by the leftist. Noor Muhammad Tarakai also denied any role of the outsiders and termed it a 'Revolution'.⁶⁸

The arrival of a communist and Indian friendly regime presented a nightmarish scenario for Pakistan as it was now confronted with a 'formidable Kabul-Delhi-Moscow axis'.⁶⁹ It was a God sent opportunity for Pakistan to further its own interests in Afghanistan by supporting the Islamic warriors fighting against the Tarakai's regime. Afghanistan witnessed unprecedented chaos and turbulence. By June 1979 Pakistan received approximately 40,000 Afghan refugees, but according to the Afghan official estimate number was only 23000.⁷⁰

The new regime of Tarakai also stuck to the issue of Pakhtunistan and stated that it would continue to sympathize with the Pakhtuns and Balochs on the other side of the Durand Line. He called for "the solution of the national issue of the Pashtuns and Baluch people... Afghanistan and Pakistan should settle their differences in the light of historical background."⁷¹ On May 9, 1978, the Afghan President referred to the border dispute with Pakistan after a meeting with Pakhtun leader, Abdul Ghaffar Khan in Kabul. The Afghan Foreign Minister, Hafizullah Amin⁷² in a meeting at United Nations with his Pakistani counterpart clearly told that Afghanistan was not bound by any of the agreements made by the former President Daud with Pakistan. In fact the PDPA regime in its first programme announced that it did not

68 Azmat Hayat, *The Durand Line: Its Geo-Strategic Importance* (Peshawar: Area Study Centre, 2000), 239.

69 Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence*, 98.

70 Grare, *Pakistan and the Afghan Conflict*, 77; Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence*, 98.

71 Selig S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981), 116.

72 He was a Pakhtun from the Paghman, Province of Kabul. His father's name was Habibullah Khan. After the assassination of Tarakai he became President of the DRA and Secretary General of the PDPA. On December 27, after three months as President, was killed by the Soviet forces. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, 286; Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 314-15.

recognize the Durand Line as it was imposed on Afghanistan against the wishes of its people. The programme also emphasized Afghanistan's support for the liberation movement of Pukhtunistan.⁷³ In December 1978, Afghanistan signed a Treaty of Friendship with Soviet Union.⁷⁴ Pakistan tried to warn US and asked for its aid but the Carter administration was unmoved and was more concerned about Islamic Revolution in Iran.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, Pakistan recognized the Tarakai regime.⁷⁶ In July 1978, General Zia-ul-Haq paid a one day visit to Kabul but it did not bear any fruit regarding Pakhtunistan and the Afghan Government's support to the nationalists and dissenting elements in Pakistan. The Kabul leadership rejected the Durand Line and called for a Pakhtun-controlled Greater Afghanistan. Addressing a tribal gathering on July 29, 1979 Hafizullah Amin declared, "All nationalities from the Oxus (Amu) to the Abasin (River Indus) are brothers of one homeland."⁷⁷

The PDPA regime's anti-Pakistan statements and its links with Moscow prompted General Zia-ul-Haq to organize the Pakistan-based Islamist parties into a viable political and military force. Jamaat-e-Islami was co-opted for devising an Islamist policy aimed at destabilizing the pro-Soviet Karmal regime in Afghanistan. General Fazle Haq, a Pakhtun from Mardan was appointed as Governor of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, who was the commander of the Army's XI corps, became the key figure in conducting the clandestine operations against the Tarakai-Amin government.⁷⁸ Pakistan backed the Afghan Islamists to discourage Afghanistan's support to the nationalists from raising the issue of Pakhtunistan. By preventing the PDPA regime from

73 Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence*, 89-126.

74 Hayat, *The Durand Line*, 279.

75 Haqqani, *Pakistan between Military and Mosque*, 177.

76 Mehdi, *Pakistan Foreign Policy*, 139.

77 Hafizullah Emadi, "Durand Line and Pak-Afghanistan Relations", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.25, No.28 (July 14, 1990), 1515-16.

78 Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence*, 101.

stabilizing in Afghanistan, Pakistan wanted to discourage the leftist forces on its soil, and to counter any move by Afghanistan to become a regional ally of pro-Soviet India as that was detrimental to Pakistan's security.⁷⁹

In September 1979, Hafizullah Amin told the *New York Times* that Afghan insurgency was being fomented by reactionary circles in Pakistan.⁸⁰ The same year both the President, Zia and Tarakai, again met on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Havana, (Cuba). Both the leaders agreed that Afghanistan would stop instigating tribesmen in Pakistan and Pakistan in return would stop using its land against Afghanistan. In order to formalize this agreement Pakistan's Foreign Minister would visit Afghanistan on December 22, 1979.⁸¹ However, on October 9, 1979 the President Tarakai was assassinated by his Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin. The Zia regime tried to mend fences and improve ties with Amin regime. As a result the Afghan government reciprocated and invited Zia to Kabul. However, it was not materialized due to Soviet intervention and the subsequent killing of Amin by Soviet forces and installing Babrak Karmal⁸² on December 27, 1979 in order to get rid of US inclined President.⁸³ Karmal

79 Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence*, 111.

80 Bhabani Sen Gupta, *The Afghan Syndrome: How to Live with Soviet Power* (London: Croom Helm Limited, 1982), 142-43.

81 Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 309.

82 The ethnic origin of Karmal is controversial. It is stated that his grandfather, Hashim Khan, came to Afghanistan from Kashmir during the second Anglo-Afghan war. While some say they were basically from the Ghazni Province but were settled in Kabul. His grandfather married a Persian-speaking woman and born to him the father of Karmal, Hassan Khan, who later on reached to the position of an Afghan Army General. He died of cancerous disease and as per his will was buried in Hiratan. When Taliban captured Hiratan they dug out his grave and thrown his remaining bones to the River Amu (Oxus). Aatai, *Da Afghanistan Par Maasir Tarikh Yawa Landa Katana*, 328-29.

83 Hafizullah Amin was assassinated for being in league with Pakistan and US who had consented to share power with Gulbadin Hikmatyar under an agreement with US and Pakistan as guarantor. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "The Afghanistan Crisis", *Islamic Defence Review*, Vol. 5, NO.2, October 1980, UK, 11-19; C. Mukeerji, *Afghanistan Zawal se Orooj Tak*, Trans., Ghulam Rabbani Taban, (Urdu) (Karachi: Guzaz Press, 1991), 124.

had been transported to Kabul in a Soviet transport plane in late December 1979.⁸⁴ Many Afghans termed his arrival as the re-enacting of Shah Shuja's⁸⁵ episode.

The Soviet forces added to Pakistan's security concerns. Pakistan thus faced a two-dimensional threat to its security.⁸⁶ Pakistan opposed the PDPA regime of Karmal because the regime was the strongest supporter of Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and he came to Afghanistan riding Soviet Tank. Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was opposed by majority of the States. The US and its allies including Pakistan funded the Afghan Islamists to force out the Soviet from Afghanistan. The Soviet troops fought desperately for the next decade. The arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev as a new President stopped the war who termed the Afghan conflict a "bleeding wound" resulted in the signing of Geneva Accord in April 1988. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan came to an end but the woes and miseries of the Afghans continued for another decade when another super power i.e., United States entered into Afghanistan in October 2001, this time again to eliminate the Islamists which were once its favourite allies against the Soviets.

Conclusion

Relations between the two countries were mostly influenced by the issues of Durand Line, the legacy of colonialism and Pakhtunistan, a natural sequel to the colonial powers' interests in the region. At times things took for a nasty turn to the extent that in the 1950s and 60s both the countries had to sever their diplomatic relations. The hostile relations brought them under the influence of Communist and US-led blocs. Afghanistan tilted

84 Hussain, *Pakistan and the Emergence*, 112.

85 Shah was brought to Afghanistan by the British and their Allies, the ruler of Punjab, Ranjit Singh, in order to place him on the throne of Kabul to forestall 'perceived' Russian intervention in Afghanistan. This attempt culminated on the first Anglo-Afghan War (1938-42) that resulted in the defeat of the British and allies. Kakar, (eds.), Nicola Di Cosmo, Devin Deweese and *et. al.*, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan*, 160-61.

86 K.M. Arif, *Working with Zia: Pakistan's Power Politics 1977-88* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 303.

towards Soviet Union and Pakistan allied itself with the US bloc. Communism and Capitalism at international level and ethno-linguistic nationalism at Afghan side and Islamism at Pakistani side became the dominant themes during the Bhutto-Daud era and continued till the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991. Islamism was promoted at Pakistani level to counter Afghanistan's ethno-linguistic and irredentist claims on parts of Pakistan.

The hostile relations between the two countries and Cold War between the two ideologies represented by United States and Soviet Union at the global level ultimately led to the arrival of Soviet forces in Afghanistan on December 27, 1979. The withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1988 as a result of the Geneva Accord ended the Afghan war but that did not augur well for the region, world and both the countries. The dark clouds of civil war stared hovering on the political firmament of Afghanistan among different factions. The unending civil war and interference of the regional and extra-regional actors resulted in the Taliban phenomenon in 1994. The Taliban started their juggernaut and almost occupied the whole of Afghanistan by 2001. The Taliban regime recognized only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, was condemned by the rest of the world community for their introduction of "medieval brand of Islam." They were also accused of harbouring Al-Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden — a *bete noire* of the USA. Amidst US-Taliban tension, the gruesome event of 9/11 took place. US blamed Taliban and Al-Qaeda and formed a formidable coalition against them with Pakistan as a front line state. The US intervention in Afghanistan in pursuit of Al-Qaeda did not change Pak-Afghan relations for better.