

## Pakistan – U.S. Relations and its Impact on Afghanistan

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### Abstract

*Afghan's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1979 created panic worldwide and proved a decisive moment in the international political scenario. Soviet expansionism policy when challenged the security of Pakistan, it appeared as a front - line country and the main route to provide aid for Afghan Mujahedin. This paper has analytically reviews the Pakistan's decision to join 1979 Afghan war and evaluated how it benefited economic and defense conditions of Pakistan. Simultaneously, the article presents how this Afghan war posed grave threats to security (internal as well as external) of the country due to refugees flood that resulted not only in problematic scenario with respect to the economy, politics, and society but also produced ecological difficulties. Moreover, Afghan refugees caused deforestation for their food, eroded soil, propped up Kalashnikov culture, illegal drug trade, and other infinite law and order troubles. However, Pakistan had no better option except to take part in the Afghan war.*

**Key Words:** Afghan War, Soviet Union, Pakistan, US Relations

### Introduction

After being accused for corruption and weak economic situation against the government of king Muhammad Zahir Shah (1933-1973), former Prime Minister of Afghanistan Daoud confiscated power in a military takeover on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1973. Ultimately, monarch period of Daoud concluded. Interestingly, common public used to admire his era, but disliked by proponents of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Opposition from PDPA's supporters intensified by the death of Mir Akbar Khyber, a leading PDPA member and authoritarian regime of Daoud. Khyber's mysterious death effervesced the protests in Kabul and many renowned PDPA leaders arrested. At last, Daoud was dethroned and assassinated along with his family members by Afghan Army during the Saur Revolution in April 27, 1978. Secretary General of PDPA, Nur Muhammad Taraki took the place of Prime Minister of the newly founded Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. These incidents led to the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Overthrown Pakistani Prime Minister in April 1979 and the killing of Noor Muhammad Taraki, Afghan Prime Minister in September of the same year.

In 1978, India's rapid growth in nuclear aroused a tension for President Daoud to strengthen the military relationships with India opposing the Pakistani and Irani forces before a war contract was signed between India and Afghanistan. Afghanistan looked for military support from Russia via PDPA (as of owner knowledge for computers care Agreement) contract.

It is important to state that in 1980s, Durand line was inundated by Afghan refugees who were escaping the Soviet employment in Afghanistan, and these refugees consisted of many Mujahidin rebellious groups who used to cross the border back and forth. Pakistan became the training station of more than 250000 Mujahidin who included locals, Arabs, and many more from forty different Islamic countries. The main purpose of Soviet invasion in 1979 was to prop up the communism that was about to collapse. The Soviet leaders wanted Afghanistan to be implicitly under Soviet rule but with the disguise of independence. This is like what America is currently doing in

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Afghanistan. At last, CIA defeated the Soviet forces in Afghanistan in 1980s by contriving the largest historical operation from Pakistan. The first and foremost purpose of the USSR's attack on Afghanistan was to reach to the hot waters of this area as the Soviet Union was interested to elongate its economic strategies towards the Afghan region. The geopolitical stakes in this region were the primary motive of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In addition, Russia wants to invade Pakistan and Iran to take over Afghanistan with the main purpose to control the middle east oil reserves. With these oil resources, Russia wanted to control the whole world, especially America and Europe.

### **Pakistan's Inclusion in Afghan Soviet War 1979: Goals and Objectives**

Pakistan got involved because Zia-ul- Haq had just hosted numerous Pashtun nationalists. Zia opponents during the 1980s, for example, murdered the elected prime minister and needed any reason he could get to stay in power. In addition, Hafizullah Amin was a known Pashtun nationalist and even though he tilted towards Zia right before his death, his successor Ghaffar Khan was buried in Jalalabad after he died. So, Pakistani authorities had some definite objectives in their mind while taking part in the Soviet Afghan war 1979. Firstly, it was so much necessary at that time for Pakistan to protect its border from possible invasion of USSR because USSR'S intention at that time were very clear that they wanted to take control of the whole this South Asian region as they wanted to strengthen themselves in this region for certain purposes. One major purpose was to make their economy flourishing. Secondly, India due to its proximity to Russia could be detrimental for Pakistan. Thirdly, Zia government was seeking some support from the world's leaders because they had a lot of controversies at that time. One major controversy was that they over rule an elected government and imposed illegal Martial Law. So, they thought it was a good time for them to get approval from the World. Fourthly, Pakistanis ever thought that they need to control Afghanistan to block Indian creasing role in this region. So, they considered that by taking part in the War and sending the people there who can work for them will strengthen their control in the region. Lastly, Pakistan need the American support for its nuclear program so it made an alliance with US temporarily. In a nutshell, we can say that Pakistan wanted to get a puppet government in Afghanistan, which can protect their national interests in the region.

### **Pakistan's Inclusion in Afghan Soviet War 1979: Alternatives**

If we want to analyze things critically, then surely we must see that what alternatives Pakistan had at that time related to its decision of taking part in the War. Alternatives for Pakistan were few when we discuss this war. The first alternative for Pakistan was to avoid from the war and join the group of those countries who never joined any alliance in the world. But very frankly, it was never possible at that time for Pakistan because of the geopolitical situation of the region. The second best option was to obtain USA's full support and involvement by making agree the USA's Government to stay in the region so that all stakeholders can control Post War situation. Third choice for Pakistan was to support Russia. Pakistan could support Russia at that time than during the Afghan war. If it was so, then it would have never lost its capital, individuals and other equipment. It would never have affected by the cold war and any incidents beyond it. As the last alternative, Pakistan could also play a neutral role in the case of Afghanistan and focus on its own defense when need.

### **Investigative Consequences and Analysis**

Now we need to discuss that, what the consequences for Pakistan of this war were. Was Pakistan amongst the beneficiaries of this war or amongst the loser? The bitter reality is that Pakistan has lost this war after winning it from USSR. There could be lots external and internal factors behind this.

After the Soviet attack on Afghanistan in December 1979 and during the 1980s' Afghan crises, alignment between two unequal powers United States(US) and Pakistan can be best exemplified for an opportunistic partnership. The Great power of US assessed the military and financial needs of Pakistan and hence exploited it for having powerful friends, approaching Pakistani bases, and other indispensable resources so that it could develop its policies for inculcating Soviet expansion. As compared to US with worldwide commitments and responsibilities. Pakistan, being a powerless with only regional stakes, grab the opportunity provided by US for becoming an anti-communist partners in South Asia region. It was golden chance for Pakistan to reinforce its position regarding India. Whenever countries form alliances, formal or informal, they had objectives that could

be for safeguarding their interests or reducing their obligations by sharing with others (Cheema & Riemer, 1990). So, any of the weak or powerful country can initiate to form alliances. Whenever the countries make alliances or join them, they had to face some costs along with availing potential benefits (Burton, 1967). The policy makers of Pakistan analyzed the benefits gained and costs incurred to Pakistan for its temporary alliance with the United States for Afghan war.

### **Revitalization of America-Pakistan Relations**

Pakistan was comparatively detached from the international world before the Soviet assault in Afghanistan in 1979. The country was suffering from non-democracy, exploitation of human rights, and ineffectiveness to secure the nuclear weapons. Where US did not consider Pakistan a preferred area, similarly, America's relations were at lowest ebb for Pakistan. However, Afghan war dramatically changed the America's foreign policy towards Pakistan and in the changed scenario, Pakistan became the most vital country for US. Soviet adventurism and improvisation in Afghanistan posed a genuine strategic threat to Pakistan's security. At that time, Pakistan was considered not to be safe and secure with respect to its external security, its existence as a nation, and integrity. America altered its policy for Pakistan that was previously categorized as low profile region and initiated to play a significant character for this territory. Hence, Soviet invasion proved a good sign for Pakistan as West started prompt for providing renewed economy, military assistance, and a helping hand to its flagging good-will. Consequently, military relations with Pakistan were revitalized by Washington with immediate effect and President Jimmy Carter's views on non-proliferation were left behind because US national interest lies in unrestricted support for Pakistan. In 1980, Carter presented a package of 400 million dollars for two years to assist military and economic conditions of Pakistan but avariciousness could not satiate Pakistan. So, President Zia-ul-Haq dogmatically refused this offer by calling it as not sufficient and comparing with peanuts and drop in an ocean (Barnds, 1987). Circumstances turned off when President Ronald Reagan took office. Zia's government becomes satisfied with Reagan's package for military and economic aid and rebuilt their trust in the US administration for supporting independence of Pakistan. Afterwards, Pakistan worked significantly for being a shelter to Afghan refugees and source of aid to the Afghan fight (Cohen, 1987).

### **Way to Nuclear Power**

Pakistan's tenet of going nuclear was well defined and direct objective of establishing obstruction to counter the apparent danger from India regarding Kashmir especially. In 1976, President Bhutto consented to an arrangement with France to buy plants for nuclear processing. After this agreement was signed, US pressurized the France and Pakistan to wipe out the agreement. In August 1976, Henry Kissinger, State Secretary cautioned Bhutto by stating that they could strike at the foundations of Pakistan economy and could make a horrendous case of theirs (6). In July 1977, Zia imposed martial law by overthrowing the democratic government of Bhutto. However, Zia proceeded with the nuclear program and fully supported the scientists to accelerate the pace of their work. Afterwards, Carter forced Pakistan to nullify the nuclear programs and compelled both Pakistan and France to cross out the nuclear processing plant agreement. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan resulted in a situation when President Carter sent a delegation to Islamabad, Pakistan for discussing possible security threats in the region. US willingly lifts its embargo on the condition to give economic assistance to Pakistan. Carter offered to put aside the obligation of Symington Amendment, according to which America was not allowed to facilitate any kind of assistance to a country involved in the trafficking of nuclear equipment and technology without regard international safeguards (Fraser, 1982). This waiver provided Zia's government an opportunity to acquire the nuclear weapons. By 1986-87, Pakistan become sufficient to produce the weapons-grade uranium and deliverable weapons (Albright & Hibbs, 1992). At last, Zia's period was utterly successful in its secret efforts. He fully buttressed the nuclear program of Pakistan by clearly mentioning that his nation will eat crumbs, but will not compromise on their national interest at any cost. Formerly, Zia stated that with technology at hand, as Pakistan do, you can do anything you wish. He further mentioned that Pakistan could develop a nuclear bomb at any time, but he intentionally analyzed the risks and adeptly manipulated the international scenario following the Afghan crises for pushing Pakistan in a situation to acquire Western style latest material and technology through black-market for its uranium plant in Kahuta (Deorner, 1987).

Nuclear uncertainty faded away when India conducted nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998. In May and June 1998, Pakistan also tested its nuclear explosion that ensured its survival, weakened the Indian's superiority

in military aspect, and offset the Indian's dominance, and helped to achieve its goal.

### Military Assistance

Pakistan was demanded to boost its defense competencies following the Afghan crisis. It had a plan to make certain reforms in its armed forces and eventually was successful in acquiring latest weapons from America. Pakistan's motive of cooperation with US was explained by president Zia ul Haq that their main objective was the security and safety of Pakistan from India and to ostracized Afghanistan and Soviet Union in north. Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), William Casey evaluated the terror created by the Indian threat to Pakistan. In his conversation with President Zia regarding the perils to northern and southern borders of Pakistan from Soviet, Zia ul Haq was aspired to save his Indian border. For providing Pakistan a helping hand and surety against Indian threat, CIA used Pakistan as a channel for Afghan Mujahidin to corrode the Soviet forces (Schweizer, 1994). It was obvious to America that Pakistan had not capabilities to deal with apparent Indian threat and both India and Soviet Union are far beyond the access of Pakistan in terms of their competencies (Cheema, 1983). However, military incompetency of Pakistan was evened out by Zia's regime and the country purchased hi-tech military weapons to secure against the activities of India and Afghanistan.

To support its military and economy, America provided funds to Pakistan worth 7.4 billion dollars at the start of 1982. Modernization program for massive military build-up consisted of better communication and warning systems, ground attack aircrafts, anti-tank missiles, armored personnel carriers, and tanks. This funding also enabled Pakistan to buy forty F-16 Hornet fighters equipped with Sidewinder and Sparrow missiles (siddiqi, 1988). These planes were modern and advanced aircrafts furnished with nuclear delivery systems. It was believed that these F-16 aircrafts would give strategic advantage to Pakistan in South Asian region (Wriggins, 1984). Initially, these aircrafts were ALR-46 rather than ALR-49 which is more sophisticated counter measure system. Later, on the request of Islamabad, America approved to provide F-16 fighter planes with ALR-49 version that was used by NATO (Paul, 1992; Wirsing, 1985). Moreover, Pakistan army also purchased advanced M-48 tanks, Harpoon anti-ship missiles, tank recovery vehicles, some helicopters, and few destroyers. Radar equipment was used for warning systems on Indian borders. Also, United States assisted in building new air bases in Pakistan's provinces Baluchistan and NWFP (Jones, 1985).

**Table 1.** America's Weapons Supply to Pakistan from 1980-1987

| Quantity Ordered | Weapon's Name          | Description                     | Ordered in | Supplied in |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1                | AN-IPO                 | Radar for tracking              | 1987       | 1987        |
| 2                | Naval Ship             | Carrier class destroyers        | 1985       | 1985        |
| 2                | Naval Ship             | Gearing class destroyers        | 1985       | 1986        |
| 2                | M-198                  | Howitzers                       | 1985       | 1986        |
| 2                | Mohawk                 | Observation aircraft            | 1986       | 1987        |
| 3                | Model 204 U11-4B       | Helicopters                     | 1986       | 1987        |
| 3                | P3s                    | Maritime reconnaissance         | 1985       | 1985        |
| 5                | E-2C-Hawkeye           | Airborne early warning aircraft | 1986       | 1987        |
| 10               | Radars                 | Ground-based air defense radars | 1985       | 1986        |
| 21               | Cobra                  | Combat Helicopters              | 1985       | 1986        |
| 40               | F-16                   | Falcon Fighters                 | 1984       | 1986        |
| 50               | M113 Military Vehicles | Armed personnel carrier         | 1984       | 1985        |
| 50               | Self-propelled         | Self-propelled artillery        | 1985       | 1986        |
| 60               | 155mm                  | Tracted Howitzer                | 1986       | 1987        |
| 80               | Naval Missile          | Harpoon                         | 1985       | 1986        |
| 86               | BGM-71D TGW-3          | ATM-military aircraft           | 1987       | 1987        |
| 88               | M-109 A-2 155mm        | Self-propelled Howitzer         | 1985       | 1986-1987   |
| 100              | M 1A1 Abrams & M 48 A5 | Battle tanks                    | 1984       | 1986        |
| 100              | AIM 9L Sidewinder      | Advanced air-to-air missi       | 1985       | 1986        |
| 110              | M-113-A-2              | Armoured personnel carrier      | 1985       | 1986-1987   |
| 124              | TOW                    | Anti-tank missiles              | 1987       | 1988        |
| 150              | FIM-92 Stinger         | Surface-to-air missiles         | 1987       | 1987        |

|      |                         |                          |      |           |
|------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------|-----------|
| 150  | TOW                     | Anti-tank missiles       | 1986 | 1987      |
| 200  | AIM 9L Sidewinder       | Anti-tank missiles       | 1986 | 1987      |
| 400  | BGM-71C 1-TCW           | Air targeting mode (ATM) | 1986 | 1987      |
| 500  | AIM-7                   | Air-to-air Missiles      | 1985 | 1986–1987 |
| 560  | AIM-7 Sparrow           | Air-to-air missile       | 1986 | 1987      |
| 9000 | SMAW anti-armour rocket | Shoulder-fire rockets    | 1985 | 1986      |

Sources: Crane (1996); Grimmert (1993); Klare (1987)

### Economic Assistance

Afghan war brought large economic assistance to President Zia's government, mainly from America. With provision of 7.4 billion dollars in economic and military assistance, Pakistan was ranked as second largest beneficiary of American aid (Choudhary, 1988). Annual US aid of 600 million dollars on average not only added value to fighting competencies of Pakistan army but also caused its economy to grow with minimizing hard currency deficit. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also funded many projects related to irrigation, farm water, and energy management in Pakistan costing 954.2 million dollars during the period 1980 to 1988 (Choudhary, 1986).

### Burden of Afghan Refugees

Afghan war also came with some terrible consequences for Pakistan. In the 10 years' period of war, Mujahidin established supply centers in Pakistan. Predictably, Afghan refugees rushed towards Pakistan and then country had to face the frequent terrorist attacks targeting civilians and ground and air attacks on the border areas by Soviet-Afghan armed forces. Refugees migrated following the 1978 Saur Revolution by communists in Kabul. However, the greatest influx happened right after the 1979 invasion of Soviet Union and Pakistan provided the shelter to almost one forth Afghan population counted as 307 million people (Wulf, 1994; Dupree, 1987; Malik, 1987). These refugees settled mostly in rural areas of NWFP and Baluchistan as these adjoined with Afghan border ("A Time of Terror", 1986). Such large population of refugees produced depressing consequences for Pakistan. First detrimental impact was caused by 2.5 million livestock these Afghan refugees brought with them. These livestock included sheep, camels, cattle, goats, and yaks and used to graze on limited grasslands, and frail soil, thus effecting the environment. According to United Nations (UN), these Afghan refugees were estimated to bring in 25000 donkeys and 45000 camels only for commercial pursuits (Farr, 1990). Uncontrolled grazing by the animals destroyed the grazing fields and put the ecology of greenery extensively at risk.

Moreover, inflow of refugees in Baluchistan and NWFP destructed the forests in Dir, Chitral, and Hazara divisions of Pakistan because refugees used wood to cook and heating purposes (Samdani, 1982; Azhar, 1990). Careless deforestation in mountain areas of Pakistan resulted in land sliding, disturbance in communications, and destruction at large scale (Samdani, 1994).

Mostly Afghan refugees were employed in construction and agricultural industry of Pakistan and proved a source of cheap labor. Apart from these, some of them started working as salesman, vendors, shoeblacks, and waiters in urban centers (Boesen, 1990). Additionally, several rich refugees made investment their capital in real estate, commercial properties, and transport. Eventually, the purchase of land and cheap small retail stores created a boom in real estate market particularly in Baluchistan, NWFP, densely populated urban areas of Sindh and Punjab, and along the main highways (Ackerman, 1982). This rich group of refugees aroused a tension in local market as rents went beyond the reach of local business class.

### Smuggling

Pakistan also suffered the boom of illegally across the border trade through Afghan vehicles. Rice and wheat was smuggled to Afghanistan and India for higher prices and shortages of these commodities were to face by Pakistan (Weinbaum, 1993). The major problem was the tax-free imports of Afghanistan through Pakistan that results significant losses to country's revenues. Approximately, every city of the country has a market of smuggled goods including, crockery, clothes, household appliances, petroleum products, and many more. For example, Bara market of Peshawar has all kinds of smuggled items. Tea was one of the prominent items that was smuggled through Afghan transit trade and triggered great harm to the financial situation like loss was estimated as 400

million rupees in 1993 only (Ahmad, 1993). For this reason, Sony TV assembling factory experienced huge losses and shut down their factory. Pakistan's government has to forgo its huge revenues (for example, 4.7 billion in late 1990s) due to smuggling that could be earned through custom duties, and other kind of levies imposed on the goods if these were not smuggled.

### Terrorist Activities and Attacks by Soviet Union

Soviet Union reacted in a very aggressive manner on the grounds that Pakistan had cooperated with Mujahidin of Afghanistan. Pakistan was blamed to train loads of terrorists for armed insurrection in Afghanistan using its 50 centers and 30 bases in Pakistan. Soviet Union urges few Baloch leaders to ask for an "independent Baluchistan" and demanded Moscow to mediate for this to happen (Bodansky, 1982). From 1980 to 1988, Afghan and Soviet aircrafts daily violated the ground and air spaces of Pakistan. These airspace violations were numbered over 200 in 1985 and in 1986 this figure increased to more than 700 (Collins, 1990). Pakistan suffered 517 military attacks and 574 air attacks only up to October 1987. In 1987, as per report of Defense, Department of America out of 777 terrorism activities occurred globally, 90% were incurred in Pakistan only.

**Table 2.** Consequences of Terrorist Explosions and Air Violations 1980- 1988

| Year | Terrorist Blasts |              | Artillery Attacks |              | Air Attacks |              |
|------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|      | Total Incidents  | Persons Died | Violations        | Persons Died | Violations  | Persons Died |
| 1980 | 0                | 0            | 25                | 0            | 174         | 2            |
| 1981 | 0                | 0            | 17                | 0            | 94          | 5            |
| 1982 | 2                | 0            | 22                | 0            | 59          | 0            |
| 1983 | 47               | 4            | 41                | 0            | 93          | 0            |
| 1984 | 28               | 8            | 49                | 38           | 119         | 133          |
| 1985 | 118              | 96           | 121               | 25           | 256         | 19           |
| 1986 | 487              | 216          | 495               | 56           | 779         | 39           |
| 1987 | 540              | 428          | 619               | 36           | 684         | 305          |
| 1988 | 1465             | 1186         | 1583              | 1041         | 867         | 1234         |

Sources: Menges (1990) and Karp (1987)

### Trading of Drugs

Along with costs of Afghan war, Pakistan endured with 70% of world's production of high grade heroin in late 1987 and almost forty drug cartels (Beatty & Gwynne, 1993). As Mujahidin needed sophisticated arms and weapons against Soviet Union, so CIA asked these Afghan groups to cultivate opium for money. This drug business made the Afghan Mujahidin financially stable and self-sufficient hence they set up their own armies. Drug mafia was created in Pakistan which expanded the trading of arms and heroin within the country. As compared to 1980s, when Pakistanis were not relatively drug addicted and poppy was not so much cultivated, during 1982 to 1987, figure of drug addicts mounted from 124000 to 450000 (Haq, 1991).

### Economic Insufficiencies

The large amount of economic aid received by Zia's government during Afghan war utilized mostly to import the consumer goods and areas of health, education, and rural development were completely ignored. During 1973 to 1980, national savings were only 6.4% of gross national product (GDP) that was further went down to 4.6% (Burki, 1988). In the President Zia regime, Pakistan had over 16 billion dollars long term debt obligation (half of its GDP), short term liabilities were outstanding at 2.3 billion dollars in 1987. Interestingly, budget allocated to health and education improvement was reduced to 1.5% of gross national product (GNP) from 2.1% (Noman, 1988). Hence, health, education, and social development were drastically neglected. Oppositely, focus in budgets was defense expenditure at the cost of development.

### Conclusion

Afghanistan's victory in 1979 war proved costly to Pakistan in various aspects. The influx of Afghan refugees put

a severe burden on Pakistan's economy because Pakistan had given shelter and was providing food to 307 million Afghan population. This was not the full stop rather these refugees started illegal drug trades and introduced Kalashnikov culture. With permission of Islamic centralism, sectarian and ethnic warfare, Afghans tried to control the country. Then the consequences were negative image of Pakistan on the international scenario and of Islamic being the violent and strict religion. This situation created tensions among Pakistan's neighbors. Despite these costs, this war offered Pakistan a golden opportunity to build nuclear potentials. It was successful to receive the military and economic aid from United States worth 7.4 billion dollars that ultimately strengthened defense capabilities, fostered economic growth, and reduces the currency deficits. After 9/11 incident, Afghanistan grabbed the attention of the world again because it was considered a training center of terrorist that were blamed for this incident. Afterwards, United States forcefully removed Taliban from Afghanistan and created and interim government there. This government is trying to build instable peace withinthe country till now.

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