

and themselves the central target of Afghan anger. The

Moscow urged Tarkai to join Karmal in opposing Amin. The

Americans through Washington's ambassador to Afghanistan,

dolph Dubs. Dubs, however, was kidnapped in 1979 and later killed

when the hotel room in which he was being held was attacked by

Afghan troops, allegedly directed by Soviet advisors. In the confusion

at is Afghanistan, the murder of Dubs was initially attributed to

Amin and the tragedy brought a halt to American programmes in

Afghanistan. This decision may have exposed Amin to greater attack

from his enemies and his instincts called for preventive measures.

receiving Tarkai to be his mortal enemy, Amin killed his colleague,

and when a broader purge of his government and party were con-

templated, Moscow decided to intervene and eliminate their

On 27 December 1979, Moscow ordered an initial force of 80,000

men into Afghanistan. The invasion surprised governments around

the world. The troops, the Kremlin spokesman, announced had been

requested by the Kabul government, and would stay only as long as

look to restore stability to the country. The first target of the

intervention, however, revealed another purpose of the Soviet forces.

filled him. The Soviets then recognized Babrak Karmal as the

Afghan Head of State and Government, and he was rushed to Kabul

from his refuge in Moscow.

Pakistan was affected by each event in the neighbouring state. It

had become a haven for Afghans fleeing their country, which after

the Soviet invasion, had grown from a trickle to a torrent. More than

three million Afghans ultimately found refuge in Pakistan. No less

important, Pakistan's perennially sensitive frontier area was trans-

formed into a rear staging area as well as central headquarters for the

carry their fight to the Marxisis, and particularly their

supporters, the Russians.

Lia could not ignore these developments or how they impacted on

Pakistan's national security. In examining the options, the ruling

elite concluded that the United States was their best source of

to action. Jimmy Carter was not as eager as his national

Arnold, Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective, Stanford: The

November, 1979. Foreign Affairs Pakistan 6, 11, Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1979.

President's Press Statement on the tragic incident at the American Embassy, 24

nation, and provided a new perspective from which to view Carter's

criticism of Zia, his administration, and programmes. They caused

emanating from Pakistan seemed to justify earlier American

United States only got worse with this incident. Zia's bad press in the

albeit with many programmes in suspension. Zia's bad press in the

theless, the American mission in the country remained in place,

immediately. US-Pakistan relations reached a breaking point; never-

dependents of American officials in Islamabad to return home im-

Washington, however, was incensed by the tragedy and it ordered the

Zia issued a statement calling the incident 'regrettable,'

assault; and by that time, all the damage had been done.

anti-rival forces into the area until several hours after the initial

razing of the building. Others were injured. And Zia did not order

tion of Islam's holiest site. But two Americans died in the siege and

appearance of favouring those believed responsible for the desecra-

of life. As a champion of the Islamic state, Zia could not give the

it was later reported, might have caused bloodshed and a heavy loss

warning of the demonstration, but decided to ignore it. Stern action,

The Pakistan government was slow to react. Zia had advanced

demonstrators proceeded to sack and burn it.

the embassy building. Gaining access to the structure, the

emotional crowd forced its way inside the compound and attacked

found in Islamabad. In the absence of adequate police defences, the

religious zealots was permitted to surround the US Embassy com-

rumours and on 24 November, a procession of Pakistani youth and

lim world. The Zia government did not immediately challenge the

said, were interested in putting Islam up to ridicule in the non-Mus-

tion of Islam's holiest shrine on the US and Zionist agents, who it was

counts aired by them appeared to lay responsibility for the desecra-

fanatics. The Pakistani media had reported the incident, and ac-

the seizure of the *Harām Shārf* in Mecca, by a group of Muslim

began hundreds of miles distant from Pakistan, in Saudi Arabia, with

embassy in Islamabad was attacked by Muslim zealots. This episode

Only a month before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the US

of the Soviet response, but to sharp differences with Islamabad.

Arg汗anian by way of Pakistan. Carter's indecision was not due to

security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, to challenge the Soviets in

preference for New Delhi. US-Pakistan relations might have taken another course had the Soviet army not invaded Afghanistan.

Reluctantly, Carter was drawn back to the alliance with Pakistan. The Carter Doctrine of 23 January 1980 was made to signal the Soviet Union about American intentions to defend the Persian Gulf. According to that doctrine, any attempt by Moscow to exploit the fluid conditions prevailing in the Gulf would be answered by the United States. A Soviet move in the direction of 'warm waters' was to be considered an attack on the vital interests of the United States. Some American observers believed the invasion of Afghanistan was timed by the Kremlin to exploit American problems in both Tehran and Islamabad. Without a US defence of Iran and Pakistan, both countries were perceived vulnerable to Moscow's aggressive posturing. With Soviet troops fanning out over Afghanistan, with the construction of advanced bases in easy striking distance of the Gulf, the Soviets were judged to be in a key position to intimidate the two Muslim states.

Carter could not allow Pakistan to become another Iran. Thus, it was agreed to put the burning of the embassy on a backburner, to demand compensation for the loss of life and property, but to renew assistance, including military paraphernalia, to Islamabad. When Zia requested his willingness to assume responsibility for the incident, Carter ordered the release of military stores and notified Islamabad it would make available an additional aid package of modest proportions. For this assistance, however, Washington expected Islamabad to make a commitment to the defence of Afghanistan that would facilitate mujahideen operations against the Russians from bases in Pakistan. Washington's plan meant Pakistan would be a 'frontline state' and the chief bulwark against the Soviet threat to the larger area. Zia pondered the Carter offer, and found it short in sophisticated weapons systems. Zia made it known he wanted weapons that would dramatically raise the capabilities of the Pakistan armed forces. American assistance, he insisted, had to go far beyond the needs of the guerrillas in Afghanistan. When the Carter administration balked at this proposal, Zia had no option but to reject the entire American offer.

Islamabad refused to tangle with the Soviet Union in the absence of greater assurances from Washington. Furthermore, negotiations on a common commitment were not possible with the then current principles. Given this impasse, US-Pakistan relations were

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THE SILENCE IN THE STORM

frozen in reverse gear, and support for the Afghan resistance was noticeably delayed.

Carter's defeat by Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election campaign brought an end to this disquieting sequence in US-Pakistan relations. Moreover, the new American President was eager to challenge Soviet policy, especially in Afghanistan where he saw a determined and courageous people willing to risk everything in defence of their homeland. The Reagan administration also had a positive view of Zia's role in Pakistan affairs. Reagan was comfortable with soldiers turned politicians and his administration was largely in agreement with the programme the junta conceived for the nation's defense and progress. The Reagan administration put a high priority on weapons of war and it quickly recognized that Pakistan's armed forces, after an initial boost from the Gerald Ford presidency, had been allowed to ossify during the Carter years. Reagan, therefore, enthusiastically supported the restoration of Pakistan's military prowess, despite cries of protest from more liberal circles in the United States.

Moreover, Reagan did not share Carter's view on India. Indira Gandhi's party had won the January 1980 parliamentary elections, and she had once again become the country's Prime Minister. Mrs Gandhi's performance following her victory was watched with considerable interest in both Islamabad and Washington. And when she failed to condemn the Soviets for their invasion of Afghanistan, both capitals drew the same conclusion, that is, she sympathized with the action. Indira, it was concluded, had chosen sides, and it was not with the mujahideen. This situation made it easier for Reagan to consider granting Zia his request for some of the more advanced weapons systems in the US arsenal. In fact, when the administration was seemingly blocked by the Symington amendment from supplying Pakistan with new weapons, Reagan asked for and received a Congressional waiver. The Symington amendment prevented the sale or transfer of American weapons to countries known to be engaged in the production of weapons-grade nuclear material. Thus, Reagan quickly bridged the gulf between the two countries. Pakistan was offered the most substantial military assistance programme in the history of its relations with the United States, and Zia in turn agreed to place his country in the middle of the Afghan struggle.

This agreement proved to be the turning point in US-Pakistan relations. It also redirected Zia's foreign policy. Although the General would continue to nurture Pakistan's intimacy with the Islamic nations, to reinforce its diplomacy with China, to assure the

After approximately six years of indirect talks in Geneva the UN mediation effort aimed at finding a way out of the Afghanisthan conflict met with a partial, though nevertheless significant success.¹ On 14 April 1988 Afghanistan and Pakistan signed agreements which they hoped would produce a final overall settlement. Neither Moscow nor the *mujahideen* were parties to the negotiations although the former approved of the process whereas the latter did not. In the end, the agreements were less than Zia had bargained for. He held up the signing in the expectation he could get agreement on the formation of an interim government that would replace the Kremlin-backed regime. Babrak Karmal had been dropped in favour of Afghanistan's police chief, Najibullah, but the Pakistanis and the several factions that made up the resistance were no less opposed to the Kabul government.

Zia finally accepted the terms that left the Kabul government in place because Washington saw the opportunity to rid Afghanistan of Soviet occupiers. Thus, the accords were prepared for signatures without the one item that Zia had judged the key to a true settlement.

Zia recognized the accords as only a first step, not the anticipated solution to the Afghan problem. With Najibullah holding fort in Kabul, with Soviet material assistance to his regime undiminished, a war was expected to enter a new phase. This meant the Afghan fugees would remain in Pakistan, as would the several resistance headquarters. Pakistan would still be a conduit for the flow of supplies to the *mujahideen*, and the Pakistani rear would still be subjected to terrorist attacks. In some respects Pakistan's security was more at risk after, than before, the accords.

Zia did not know how long he could count on the Americans to supply the *mujahideen*. Nor could Zia accurately predict how the *mujahideen* would fare in the absence of the Soviet enemy. Afghans would now be fighting Afghans exclusively and that turn of events would still unanswered questions about the character of the traditionally divided resistance forces. The likelihood of more serious division within *mujahideen* ranks could not be ruled out. Nor could Soviets be discounted, given their capacity to purchase the services of one resistance faction and to use it against another.² Bribeing as well as factional and tribal conflict was ingrained in the

Key Sections of the Accords on Afghanistan, *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern*

vol. 9, 4, Summer 1988, pp. 105-15.

See James Spinn, *People of the Khyber*, New York: Praeger, 1963.

Afghans, and nothing had happened in the course of the long struggle to change that condition. Clearly, there was greater opportunity to sow division now that the accords had been arrived at.

Zia's immediate answer to the problem necessitated violating that section of the accords that called for the observance of the principle of non-intervention. Pakistan could not abandon the *mujahideen* so long as the Soviet Union believed it had the continuing right to assist the Afghan government it had created. And the Soviets had declared they had every intention of sustaining the Najibullah government. For Zia, such asymmetric activity meant leaving the Afghans to fend for themselves, an impossible arrangement given their domicile in Pakistan. Moreover, Zia had managed assistance to the resistance with a mind toward needs inside Pakistan. In seeking to transform Pakistan into a chaste Islamic state, he was also thinking about Afghanistan's future. Afghanistan, he concluded, should share the same dream and represent the same values and virtues. His dream of an Islamic *ummah* might begin with the interplay between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan could only be envisioned on a foundation of genuine Muslim solidarity. Zia saw no other way to control the divisive Afghans, to regulate their combative nature, or moderate their tribalism. Hence, he saw to it that the more austere fundamentalist Afghan organizations received the lion's share of the supplies made available by the United States. But this unbalanced treatment was programmed to rebound once the Soviets completed their withdrawal and the factions began jockeying for advantageous positions *vis-a-vis* one another. Moreover, once the accords were made official, the United States indicated it could no longer support a policy which directed the heaviest portion of the supplies to Afghan fundamentalists. Zia had a tiger by the tail and the matter was unresolved at the time of his death.

On 17 August 1988, General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, the longest serving head of the Pakistani state, was killed in a still unexplained explosion that brought down the military aircraft taking him from Bahawalpur to Islamabad. Zia's death ended an eleven year reign which was notable for its Islamization programme, but even more so for its foreign policy. Zia fooled all the pundits. He was a gifted balancer, and an astute reader of contemporary events. While never overcoming his unpopularity, he managed to steer Pakistan through a difficult decade without loss of direction or purpose. But Zia left behind all the problems that burdened his administration in the years of his rule. It remained for those who followed him to pick up the