

THE OUTPUT OF AFGHANISTAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1973-1978: NEUTRALITY AND NEUTRALISM OF NON-ALIGNMENT

Ghulam Rabbani Qazizada¹

ABSTRACT

This article delves into the concept of neutrality and its various subtypes, attempting to trace their origins in Afghan foreign policy by providing detailed definitions and terminologies, as well as examining the differences between isolationism, declaratory neutrality, non-declaratory neutrality, and neutrality. The concept of neutrality is deeply rooted in international law and is used as a principle of foreign policy by many states to preserve their sovereignty and territorial integrity in the course of war or rivalry between big or major powers, as it happened in the case of Afghanistan, in order to be protected by being neutral under international law in the outbreak of conflicts in the region in particular and the world in general. In speeches, interviews, and addresses to the nation, as well as foreign policy briefings and

¹ Mr. Qazizada is a Postgraduate Research Student of Political Science at the International Islamic University of Malaysia. Mr. Qazizada is a humanitarian and academic. He was a lecturer in Jami, dean of faculty in Asia, and president of Alghias at the aforementioned universities in Herat, Afghanistan, as well as a former UNHCR, NRC, and OXFAM staff member and a Child Protection Project Manager of a UNICEF/ARAA Multi-Purpose Cash Project in Badghis, Afghanistan. Currently he serves as the president and founder of Refugee Aid Afghanistan Organization. This article is part of the author's academic research on Afghanistan's Foreign Policy under President Mohammad Daoud Khan from 1973 to 1978. His ORCID ID is 0000-0001-5840-0515. gr.qazizada@gmail.com

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

announcements, Afghan leaders frequently use the Bitarafi term. It is vital to understand what the Bitarafi word implies to them. Finally, the Non-Alignment Principles are compared to Afghanistan's foreign policy to see how they are implemented and reflected in the country's foreign policy. This article would answer the research question that did Afghanistan pursue the principle of neutrality as an output of its foreign policy from 1973 to 1978 and attempts to outline and explain one of the most significant outputs of Afghanistan's foreign policy during the Presidency of Mohammad Daoud Khan.

KEYWORDS: Neutrality, Non-Alignment, Non-Aligned Movement, Neutralism, Impartiality, Bitarafi,

INTRODUCTION

The history of modernization and reform in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a history of steadfast attempts by the Afghan ruling dynasty to proclaim and solidify their power. In order to maintain its power, the monarchy worked hard to make Afghanistan politically and economically unified and somewhat self-sufficient in terms of both the economy and the security apparatus.² Modernization and Afghan unity were very important issues that concerned almost every Afghan leaders, however there are prominent leaders in Afghanistan's modern history who contributed significantly in Afghanistan with their continued attempts for the modernization and reformation purpose, without a doubt they are Amir Amanullah Khan and Mohammad Daoud Khan. In striking comparison to the quiet but manipulative Mohammad Zahir Khan, Mohammad Daoud Khan was a man with a strong energy and charisma.³ In 1953, Mohammad Daoud Khan was appointed Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Frictions with Pakistan escalated, leading to various trade embargoes by Pakistanis over the Pashtunistan issue. Mohammad Daoud Khan resigned from office in 1963. But on July 17, 1973, Mohammad Daoud Khan, who had been sidelined during the time of the constitution decade (1963 to 1973), reappeared and staged a largely silent coup to seize power.⁴ Nevertheless, Afghanistan embraced Soviet military and economic

² Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 6.

³ William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 2nd ed. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 15.

⁴ Martin Ewans, *Conflict in Afghanistan: Studies in Asymmetric Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 99-104

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

support after early efforts to secure military aid from the United States failed due to the country's failure to support and acknowledge Afghanistan's concern over the Pashtunistan subject and issue and assisted Pakistan instead in all possible shape and form. The Soviet Union began to believe that influence of Afghanistan was crucial due to tensions with China and American support and assistance to Pakistan. The Brezhnev Doctrine, as it later became known, was just another example of Russia's long-standing border insecurity.⁵ People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) leadership started making firm plans to depose Mohammad Daoud Khan by 1977 and was actively recruiting within the Afghan military, many of whom had received Soviet training.⁶ The PDPA staged a coup on April 28, 1978, and brutally murdered Mohammad Daoud Khan and many of his friends and family members in order to start a new chapter in Afghanistan's history as they believed. By 1978, relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union were tense. Following Mohammad Daoud Khan's murder, the PDPA seized control of Afghanistan and enacted changes that many Afghans thought violated Islamic teachings. A number of groups opposed the PDPA.⁷ Taraki became Prime Minister as a result of the so-called Saur Revolution, which was designated after the month in which the coup took place. The Soviet Union swiftly acknowledged

⁵ Peter Pigott, *Canada in Afghanistan: The War so Far* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 36.

⁶ Tom Lansford and Jack Covarrubias, "Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam and the United States," in *America's War on Terror*, eds. Tom Lansford, Robert P Watson, and Jack Covarrubias, 2nd ed. (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 18.

⁷ Erinn Banting, *Afghanistan: The People* (New York: Crabtree, 2003), 11.

the new administration. Additionally, the Soviets expanded assistance, signed a 20-year friendship agreement with Afghanistan, and expanded the number of military experts.⁸ In Afghanistan, Mohammad Daoud Khan is a contentious character. Many see him as a representation of nationalism in today's Afghanistan, whereas others criticize him of toppling a constitutional monarchy and installing an autocratic regime that was anti-democratic. In the early 20th century, a number of nations, such as Germany, Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States, made an effort to persuade Afghanistan to depart from and violate its neutrality policy. In the middle of the Cold War rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States regarding Afghanistan's geopolitical and strategic importance, Mohammad Daoud Khan was fighting to uphold Afghanistan's neutrality and non-aligned status. The political downfall of Mohammad Daoud Khan in Afghanistan is remembered as a turning point in that nation's modern history. Since the 1880s, all rulers had laboriously increased their level of centralized power until his presidency. The Afghan nation has fought long and hard to forge and bolster the country and its centralized authority. The zeal, obstinacy, and naivety of Mohammad Daoud Khan set loose forces among the elite and intellectuals that resulted in his downfall and undermined the state's power structure. Despite being led by a small number of political activists, this new and modern force—as opposed to the traditional segmentary force—led Afghanistan into a civil conflict and to a level of devastation that had never been seen previously. Mohammad Daoud Khan appeared to be the desirable

⁸ Zachary C. Shirkey, *Joining the Fray: Outside Military Intervention in Civil War*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 134.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

Afghan ruler: fatalistic, stoic, bold, virtuous, and generous, but also impatient and irritable.⁹

This policy output is examined in terms of its primary objectives, actions taken, and rhetoric, and is linked to Afghanistan's historical and traditional isolationism and neutrality policy, which was launched by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan and proceeded by his son Amir Habibullah Khan, who shifted the policy to neutrality during World War I and then continued until the end of World War II. This explanation is attempted in a broader sense by connecting them to idiosyncrasy, domestic and external sources, and how their interaction shaped Afghanistan's foreign policy during the presidency of Mohammad Daoud Khan. Successive Afghan leaders learned that neutrality may play a crucial role in the country's foreign relations in order to preserve its autonomy and national sovereignty from Ahmad Shah Abdali's aggressive expansionist policy to Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's isolationist policy. By remaining neutral in declarative and operational foreign policy during the First and Second World Wars, this concept had a significant impact on its foreign policy. The neutral's position in the middle of two belligerents is one of the most crucial aspects of neutrality.¹⁰ In the 19th and 20th centuries, Afghanistan, was caught between the Tsarist Russians and the British Raj in the south during the Great Game over Afghanistan and neighboring territories in

⁹ Nabi Misdaq, *Afghanistan: Political frailty and external interference* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 96

¹⁰Jurg, Martin Gabriel, *The American Conception of Neutrality after 1941* (London: MACMILLAN PRESS, 1988), 6.

Central and South Asia. During the Cold War, Afghanistan had a similar position, with the Communist Soviet Union in the north replacing feudal Tsarist Russia, and Pakistan, after independence and separation from British India, being an important United States ally in South Asia.

Despite Soviet attempts to entirely subjugate Afghanistan to its ideology and control, this did not happen until the Communist takeover in 1978. The neutrality of Afghanistan continued to remain a topic of debate and dispute when examining President Mohammad Daoud Khan's republic's foreign policy during the cold war conflict between the Russians and Americans. This chapter attempts to analyze Afghanistan's foreign policy and determines that when Mohammad Daoud Khan joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and transformed the country's foreign policy, he was maintaining the country's historic neutrality policy as practiced by his predecessors. This research aims to determine if Mohammad Daoud Khan's foreign policy in Afghanistan was guided by the concept of neutrality, or whether he and other foreign policy decision-makers struggled with the notion and mistook non-alignment with neutrality.

1. CONCEPT DEFINITION

The concept of neutrality is deeply rooted in international law and is used as a principle of foreign policy by many states to preserve their sovereignty and territorial integrity in the course of war or rivalry between big or major powers, as it happened in the case of Afghanistan, in order to be protected by being neutral under international law in the outbreak of conflicts in the region in particular and the world in general.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

The observance and application of the international law of war and neutrality generally declined with the outbreak of the First World War. Modern warfare offered a wide variety of justifications and rationales for breaking accepted norms. The legal definition of war and peace even became murky with the resurgence of the "just war" doctrine.

The United Nations Charter contributed to this predisposition, and the line between war and peace also poorly defined during the Cold War. Consequently, a legal interpretation of modern neutrality cannot be the only subject. Although neutrality used to be mainly a legal concept, it has become essential to take into account it from a political perspective in this century.¹¹ According to Chadwick:

When it comes to a practical meaning of the term neutrality, it can be said that although it is an ancient European legacy, it was still used in the middle of the 20th century to maintain peace after a war broke out. As a result, as neutrality laws evolved over centuries, they reflected both the passage of time and the fact that aggressive behavior was far from forbidden. The legal institution of neutrality, in other words, became inherently flexible, which means that it can be extremely difficult to offer precise and objective definition of neutrality other than from within the context of its use. Accordingly, the term 'neutrality' is utilized within the following frameworks: (a) Following the start of the war,

¹¹ Ibid., 3.



the institution of neutrality maintained a set of rules for state conduct. (b) As a result, neutral state self-preservation was made possible during the war by neutrality rules. (c) Neutral states adhered to two fundamental principles in order to maintain their neutrality: they were impartial in their interactions with the warring parties and they refrained from participating in either belligerent's military campaigns. (d) Thus, neutral self-help might be crucial because the winner of a war could amend the rules and therefore, war was a source of legal ramifications. (e) In practice, neutrality could be described by the goals it was used to pursue at any given time, including the limitation of war, the preservation of trade, and/or the maximum possible degree of relations during peacetime. Consequently, there is a very clear reflection of self-interest in the decisions taken by neutral states, which becomes even clearer when viewed through the actual operation of ongoing trade during a war.¹²

It is important to explore the concept (of neutrality) through the international law, which is the law of international system of nation-states; obviously, it reflects the politics and values of the system and

¹² Elizabeth Chadwick, *Traditional Neutrality Revisited, Laws, Theories and Case Studies* (Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002), 2-4.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

serves its purposes.¹³ In a liberal, international political system, a primary value, perhaps the primary value, is the autonomy of the constituent states. Other states should not violate any state's autonomy; the law, the system, should protect every state against interference by other states. In general, autonomy is the "right to be let alone." This generally implies that each state has the freedom to choose its own internal political, economic, social, and cultural system, as well as its domestic and foreign policies and relations with other countries.¹⁴ The evolution of international law as it pertains to war, both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, mirrors the history of war and is as complicated to understand also as history of conflict itself.¹⁵

Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter does not mention war. The Charter forbids all forms of armed aggression, including full-scale war, and any use of force against the territorial integrity or national sovereignty, independence and self-determination of any country. The Charter sought to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It was designed to outlaw war, to eliminate the terrible fact of war as well as the concept of war, including the law of war. In fact, the Charter did not fully succeed in removing war from international law when in 1948, contrary to the Charter, the Arab States attacked the new State of Israel, they claimed the right to go to war, used the terminology of war, invoked the concept of belligerency, and maintained the state of war.

¹³Louis Henkin, *International law: Politics and Values* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995), 109.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

Israel responded to the same effect. The fact and terminology of war and belligerency gave new life also to neutrality. The Charter had intended that there could be no war, therefore neither belligerents nor neutrals; if a state committed an act of aggression, all states, severally and collectively, were to be on the side of the victim of the attack. But in the wars, that have taken place, again recently, for example, in the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988), states generally have acted as "neutrals" and some of them have asserted their neutrality (even while they acted to condemn the war as illegal).¹⁶

Neutrality in international humanitarian law refers to the stance taken by States to refrain from taking part in a military confrontation. Being neutral necessitates a number of obligations, including the commitment to refrain from taking part in armed conflict, the responsibility to be impartial toward belligerents, and the commitment to put up with neutrality violations like the responsibilities for prevention, impartiality, and abstention. The primary right that results from neutrality is the sanctity of the neutral's territory. When belligerent forces are discovered on the soil of a neutral state, they must be interned. A neutral state relinquishes its privileges to remain neutral if it violates one of its obligations, and the belligerents may then take action against that country. It is debatable as to which actions result in the loss of neutrality or if the country in question becomes a belligerent. The traditional idea of neutrality is put to the test by the evolving nature of military conflict, particularly cyberwar, as well as by the UN

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

collective security system and various military alliances.¹⁷ In attempt to address and respond to the research question: Was Afghanistan's foreign policy influenced by the principle of neutrality or any other principles?, legal and political aspects of neutrality will be discussed when trying to analyze the formulation of Afghanistan's foreign policy under President Mohammad Daoud Khan and its outcomes. Therefore, to explore further, according to Gabriel, there are various terminologies used by political scientists like Occasional Neutrality, Permanent Neutrality, Armed Neutrality, Neutralization, Differential Neutrality, Benevolent Neutrality and Neutralization to distinguish the blend of classical legal from modern political terminology.¹⁸

2. OVERVIEW OF BITARAFI (IMPARTIALITY) IN AFGHANISTAN FOREIGN POLICY 1973-1978

Throughout Afghan history, the nation has been vulnerable to invasions and has had to defend itself against foreign invaders, many of whom were regional or global powers. As a result, many Afghans believe that most of their problems stem from outsiders who refuse to leave them alone, continuously intervening in their domestic affairs and attempting to limit and diminish their independence. Freedom is an absolute necessity in Afghan culture. This idea is best explained by

¹⁷ Nicholas Tsagourias and Alasdair Morrison, *Law of Neutrality. In International Humanitarian Law: Cases, Materials and Commentary*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 207-226.

¹⁸ Gabriel, *American Conception of Neutrality*, 5-13.

Afghanistan's resistance culture, which has brought together various tribes and ethnic groups during foreign invasions throughout the country's turbulent history. As mentioned by Nasir Ahmad Andisha, "Some form of neutrality has often been considered one of the pillars of Afghanistan's foreign and security policy. Throughout the nineteenth century, Afghanistan was a buffer state separating the territories of the rival British and Russian empires in the region. Since regaining full independence in 1919—in particular independence in making its own foreign policy—almost all rulers of Afghanistan have advocated some form of neutrality in their official policy statements."¹⁹ After Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, this historical progression is completed by Mohammad Daoud Khan. Since then, no new developments in Afghanistan's foreign policy have been discovered that are more or less equivalent to the first republic's commitment to the Bitarafi (taking no sides) principles.

Given the historical challenges of modern Afghanistan, as well as significant territorial losses in the north and south of the Durrani Empire, and caught between two major powers at the time, the British Empire in the south and Tsarist Russia in the north, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan decided to pursue three main goals:

¹⁹ Nasir A Andisha, "Neutrality in Afghanistan's Foreign Policy" (United States Institute of Peace, March 2015), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12377>, 3.

Andisha claimed that the future of interactions was primarily made up of two ideas: the unification of all Pashtun territory under Afghan rule in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as a Cold War non-alignment strategy involving strict neutrality. See Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: a History of Struggle and Survival* (New York, United States of America: I.B. TAURIS, 2006), 123.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

1. Preserving the country's remaining territorial integrity.
2. The Durrani Empire's survival and the Barakzai rule's continuation.
3. Maintaining a regional power balance by maintaining its status as a buffer state or zone.

These three objectives led to adaptation of the isolationism policy as a foundation of neutrality in Afghanistan's foreign policy. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, the founding father of Afghan neutrality, who was wary of both Russian and British interests in Afghanistan, tried to keep both at bay by offering them what they desired at the time. Russians were extending their empire south to the Central Asian steeps and terrain beyond the Amu Darya, and British Empires wanted assurance that the jewel of their Empire (India) would be protected at all costs and that Russians would not advance further south. The geography of Afghanistan significantly influences how isolation or neutrality policies are adapted. According to Adamec since the beginning of modern Afghanistan in 1747, four distinct periods can be recognized in Afghanistan's foreign policy. First, the period of expansion, which lasted from 1747 to 1800; second, the period of foreign conflict, which lasted from 1800 to 1880; third, the period of defensive isolationism, i.e., from 1880 to 1919; and finally, the

formation of a consistent foreign policy of Afghanistan and pursuit of defensive neutralism.²⁰

In this article, the above classification is adopted but the researcher disagrees with Adamec over the use of the neutralism terminology for the period 1901 to 1919, which is not legally correct because Afghanistan declared its neutrality, it might be classified as benevolent neutrality due to British India's role in overseeing Afghanistan's foreign relations and their support for the Kingdome. Because Afghanistan's neutrality and abstention from military aggression against British India ran counter to Germany's will and desire, it is a clear sign of Afghan support for Great Britain during WWI, when Afghanistan looked favorably on the cause of Great Britain against Germany and the rest of the Central Powers. In the second half of Afghanistan's modern history, there are three important periods in the country's foreign relations history that can best describe the concept of impartiality, or Bitarafi.

2.1 Isolationism Policy

During this period, Afghanistan had no control over its foreign policy and foreign relations as the result of the treaties of Gandumak and Durand. Amir Abdul Rahman Khan was successful in isolating his country from the rest of the world by an agreement with the British Empire for the territorial integrity of Afghanistan following the Duran Line Agreement and his pledge to keep India's gate closed via

²⁰ Ludwig W. Adamec, *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany, and Britain* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1974), 1-2.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

Afghanistan. He took the policy very seriously and utilized it as an opportunity to enforce the country's law and order as strictly as possible. The role of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan is significant in pursuit of Afghan national interests through this policy.

According to D. P. Singhal, “Afghanistan owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Amir Abdul Rahman who guided her destiny in an hour of extreme danger with remarkable political perception, diplomatic shrewdness and perseverance. In spite of the many cruel deeds and inhuman punishments he inflicted upon the people in his bid to consolidate his power, he gave the Afghans a government such as they never known before.”²¹ In reality, as the only alternative open to Afghans at the time, isolationism policy protected Afghan society, land, and traditional way of life from further Western encroachment, even at the expense of sovereignty over its foreign relations. To modernize Afghanistan, Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's son and grandson needed to interact with the rest of the world. Afghans eventually won a political victory over the British Raj in the Third Anglo-Afghan war and gained complete control over the conduct of country's external affairs.

2.2 Wartime Neutrality

In Afghanistan's contemporary history, there have been two instances of wartime neutrality. Despite German and Turkish

²¹ Mohammad Hassan Kakar, *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 230.



expedition attempts in Afghanistan to persuade Amir Habibullah Khan to establish a front against British Raj in India, Afghanistan remained under British control from 1914 until 1918. Amir Habibullah Khan refused to succumb to the Turks and German demands, declaring Afghanistan neutral in exchange for regaining control of its foreign policy from the British Empire after the war, a desire that never came true throughout his lifetime.

“Once again anxious about provoking either of its powerful neighbors, Afghanistan refused to take part in World War II,” says Andisha, he summarizes Afghanistan’s wartime neutrality with,

“On September 6, 1939, Mohammad Zahir Khan, on the advice of his Prime Minister (and uncle), Mohammad Hashim Khan, declared that Afghanistan would remain neutral and not join any of the warring alliances. To strengthen his position, Zahir called a grand assembly of elders (Loya Jirga) in November 1941 to deliberate on the policy of neutrality and provide advice on the Allies’ demands for the eviction of all suspicious Axis nationals from Afghan territory. The Jirga overwhelmingly supported neutrality and announced that Afghanistan would not allow belligerents to use its territory against one another and that the country stood ready to defend itself against foreign aggression. The Jirga also recommended that German and Italian nationals be given a dignified and safe exit to their home countries. Except for a few diplomats who remained in Kabul, most Axis nationals were deported from Afghanistan to Turkey with

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

such a guarantee of safe passage. With few exceptions, then, between 1930 and 1945, Afghanistan pursued an internationally sanctioned wartime neutrality and a peacetime neutrality similar to those followed by other neutral states at the time.”²²

Despite a few pro-German sentiments at the time, Afghans made a good decision and were able to properly analyze the situation and assess the repercussions of each course of action. It is crucial to emphasize that the axis powers were not in defensive positions until 1943, and it was difficult to anticipate the outcome of the war from an isolated country like Afghanistan. Afghans have learned that, regardless of the outcome of the conflict, being impartial will serve their interests far more than joining any political or military alliance. This perception aided the development of the concept of flexible impartiality, as the researcher refers to it. The cornerstone of the justification for maintaining neutrality at the time is political and economic interests. As a flexible, neutral state capable of courting with anyone while remaining devoted to none.

2.3 Neutralism of Non-Alignment

According to Gabriel, “neutralism emerged in the course of the Korean War. From the very beginning, the United States had difficulty coping with the concept, and especially during the Eisenhower

²² Andisha, “Neutrality,” 9.

administration, some high officials confused it with neutrality, thereby creating considerable international embarrassment.”²³ The fifth period that has played a significant role in shaping Afghanistan from the mid-twentieth century to the present is certainly the period of modernization and non-alignment, which is coined in this chapter as Neutralism and Non-Alignment from 1953 to 1978. In 1953, King Mohammad Zahir Khan appointed his cousin and brother-in-law Sardar Mohammad Daoud Khan as Prime Minister of Afghanistan, defying his uncle's wishes. Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud Khan (1953-1963) pursued the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, realizing it was the best course of action in the Cold War era. After the July 1973 coup, Afghanistan's foreign policy resembled that of his Premiership. He tried to achieve his foreign policy objectives and used all the political and diplomatic means available for that. He asserted that neutrality and non-alignment are the cornerstones of Afghanistan foreign policy and relations.²⁴

He assured that there would be no changes in the foreign policy of Afghanistan. There were no substantial changes in foreign policy of Afghanistan under his leadership. His period is divided into two parts. The first period lasted until 1975, with the Pashtunistan issue acting as the principal impediment and subject of debates and propaganda. Furthermore, the second period was when Mohammad Daoud Khan launched the normalization of relations with Pakistan. His decision

²³ Gabriel, *American Conception of Neutrality*, 13.

²⁴ Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 173. See also Aziz Ahmad Rahmand, *History of Foreign Relations of Afghanistan from 1919 to 1978* (Kabul: Khorasan Publication, 2013), 116.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

could be influenced by the Shah of Iran's strategy and Pakistan's support for anti-Mohammad Daoud Khan militias. The Shah of Iran urged him to diversify aid and turn against the Soviet Union. His most recent trip to seek alternative sources of funding for his development plans was significant politically, but had no immediate impact. The Afghan communists deposed him in a violent coup. Unlike the assumptions provided in certain analyses of his period, researcher believes, Mohammad Daoud Khan would not behave like Sadat and humiliate Russians by immediately expelling them from Afghanistan. He would continue to drive out communist members from top and middle government's positions, but the Afghan-Soviet relationship may be preserved. Contrary to the Andisha's conclusion on Mohammad Daoud Khan, who mentioned William Piez, an economic and political officer at the American embassy from 1963 to 1966, is quoted as saying that Afghanistan was regarded as a neutral nation with a noticeable communist influence. When a significant subject came up at the UN, their official (Afghanistan) most often voted for the Russian position, and this was noted by American policy experts as primarily somewhat of a campaign tactic for Russians. The Afghan opposition to Cuba in the last NAM conference during Mohammad Daoud Khan ironically contradicts the above analysis.

Whereas in the Western Hemisphere, no country was as important to the Soviet Union as Cuba, and attacking Cuba was not seen as a friendly gesture by a Soviet aid recipient. Afghanistan attempted to maintain as much independence and neutrality as possible under Mohammad Daoud Khan. Non-aligned characteristics are apparent in

Afghanistan's foreign policy output under President Mohammad Daoud Khan. One example was his position against the Cold War. Despite the fact that the Russians formally announced their departure from the Stalin Doctrine, it seems that impartiality was not a reliable tactic for Americans and Russians. During the Cold War, the notion of being either with us or against us was influenced as a continuation of the Dulles legacy, for whom non-aligned had no favorable meaning. Dulles believed that neutralism was an obsolete conception that, except under unusual circumstance, was “immoral and short-sighted”.²⁵ Unbeknownst to him, Mohammad Daoud Khan's fate, Afghanistan, and the Cold War were all intertwined. The Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan soon after he was deposed by communists, who declared Afghanistan to be a Communist regime. Afghanistan's Communist regime abandoned Mohammad Daoud Khan's longstanding neutralism policy and became a Soviet satellite regime.

However, the heroic resistance of Afghans who found Communism irreconcilable with their traditional Islamic beliefs was supported not only by Muslims but also by the free world, bringing the United States and the Soviet Union into a proxy conflict in Afghanistan from 1980 to 1988, when their interests collided. Afghanistan was the last Soviet Union war, ultimately resulting to its complete disintegration in 1992 due to the bleeding wound of Soviet's unsuccessful adventure there. Under his leadership either as Prime Minister or President of Afghanistan, Mohammad Daoud Khan opposed military/security

²⁵ Jeffery J. Roberts, *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan* (West port, Connecticut: Prager, 2003), 152.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

alliance and membership. In 1953, the Middle East Defense Organizations (MEDO), which would have included a number of Arab states, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, was designed and offered Afghanistan to join. Afghanistan, whose rulers had declared in 1948 that " by being properly armed and having the Americans backing... [Afghanistan] could well hang in the Hindu Kush mountains and keep the Russian busy and is able to push them back to give the United States and its allies time to protect the Middle East and South Asia," declined to accept the offer. Similar to that, it disapproved of the western-sponsored Baghdad Pact (1955) and CENTO for two key reasons to follow a traditional policy and exhibit its good intention and will to the Russians.²⁶ Mohammad Daoud Khan in 1973, after the coup said: "The foreign policy of Afghanistan is based on neutrality, non-participation in military pacts, and independent judgment of the issues by the people themselves. Emanating from our national aspirations, this policy is designed to fulfil the material and spiritual needs of the people."²⁷ It suggested that Afghanistan was redefining the concept of neutrality in accordance with its own interpretation, tradition, principles, and moral judgement while taking into account the power, economic resources, and interests of Russia and the United States.

²⁶ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 119.

²⁷ Abdul Samad Ghaus, *The Fall of Afghanistan: An Eyewitness Account*, trans. Mohammad Younes Toghyan Sakayee (Peshawar: Danesh Publications, 1999), 109.

Mohammad Daoud Khan's policy of strengthening and modernizing the Afghan army was in line with non-involvement in power politics. Afghanistan's history of internal unrests and foreign invasions, convinced Afghan rulers adopting two strategies. First, an organized and structured modern army that serves the national and state interests and has enough power to ensure stability of a centralized government. Moreover, in case of foreign invasions, they were planning to mobilize and use a widespread tribal resistance. Afghanistan did not struggle for politics of the region since non-alignment rejects unhealthy struggle for local, regional, continental or world domination. Afghanistan remaining neutral in the Pakistan-India wars despite the deepest divide over Pashtunistan issue could exhibit their intention for committing to this notion. Afghanistan's foreign policy was opting for peaceful co-existence and non-interference, despite many frequent accusations between Afghanistan and Pakistan alleged interference in their domestic affairs, it appears that Afghanistan has been the target of regional and global powers' interference. Advocating for the rights of Pashtuns and Baloch, as described in Mohammad Daoud Khan's foreign policy declaration, and his conversations with U.S. officials could not match the amount of involvement inflicted by Pakistan and Iran by supporting anti-Mohammad Daoud Khan militants inside Afghanistan. Iran exerted pressure on Mohammad Daoud Khan to replace leftists by using its assistance as soft power and means of influence. Simultaneously, Savak (Iranian Intelligence and Security Organization, dissolved in 1979) channeled weapons, communications equipment, and other paramilitary supplies manufactured by United States to anti-Mohammad Daoud Khan forces. Some of these

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

assistances were given directly by Iran to tribal dissidents operating in adjacent western Afghanistan; some was channeled through Pakistan to the underground fundamentalist groups. The Pakistani pressure on Mohammad Daoud Khan regime stability culminated in a number of subsequent incursions by Islamabad's backed-up insurgents on police stations in the Panjshir Valley. The unsuccessful, fundamentalist-backed coup efforts against Mohammad Daoud Khan in September, December 1973, and June 1974 also involved Savak, the CIA, and Pakistani agents.²⁸

Afghanistan has made it obvious that it has a political disagreement with Pakistan over Pashtunistan, but it has never followed a policy that jeopardizes the peaceful coexistence of the two countries, putting peace and prosperity at risk. Even such differences were acknowledged by "In his telegram," Henry Kissinger after his second visit to Afghanistan said,

"The fundamental problem is that the Afghans, despite their insistence that they respect Pakistan's territorial integrity, never accepted as legally or ethnically valid the boundary imposed during the British period and incorporating minority ethnic groups that they believe should be part of Afghanistan, or at least should have had that option. I do not believe this situation risks hostilities

²⁸ Diego Cordovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 16.

in the foreseeable future, but it feeds Bhutto's preoccupation about an Indian-Soviet-Afghan conspiracy against Pakistan, provides a source for would-be trouble makers to exploit, and is one more element complicating the process of bringing stability to South Asia."²⁹

Mohammad Daoud Khan reiterated once again, in his foreign policy statement, "because we consider ourselves more than anyone else in need of trying to develop our country, we want world peace and tranquility more than anyone else. Therefore, the basis of Afghanistan's first foreign policy is peace and friendship with all peoples and nations of the world."³⁰ When it came to the issue of independence in foreign relations, Mohammad Daoud Khan was truly concerned and emotional. According to Cordovez, relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan appeared to be unaffected after Mohammad Daoud Khan's communist crackdown in 1977. However, simmering tensions soon exploded when Mohammad Daoud Khan clashed directly with Brezhnev on April 12, 1977 in an official meeting in Kremlin that served as a prelude to the dramatic events which would occur later. Abdul Samad Ghaus, Mohammad Daoud Khan's former senior member of foreign ministry, recalls this meeting and writes that Leonid Brezhnev voiced opposition to what he termed a "substantial rise" in the number of Western European professionals working especially in

²⁹ Henry A Kissinger, "Telegram 76 from Secretary of State Kissinger to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft)," U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State), accessed February 25, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d14>.

³⁰ Rahmand, *Afghanistan from 1919 to 1978*, 116.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

northern provinces of Afghanistan. “In the past,” Soviet leader said, summarized by Samad Ghaus,

“The Afghan government did not allow experts from NATO countries to be stationed in the northern parts of country, but this practice was no longer strictly followed. The Soviet Union took a grim view of these developments and wanted the Afghan government to get rid of those experts, who were nothing more than spies. In a cold, unemotional voice, Mohammad Daoud Khan...told Brezhnev that what was just said could never be accepted by the Afghans, who viewed his statement as a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.... Daoud said, and I remember clearly his exact words: “we will never allow you to dictate to us how to run our country and whom to employ in Afghanistan. How and where we employ the foreign experts will remain the exclusive prerogative of the Afghan state. Afghanistan shall remain poor, if necessary, but free in its acts and decisions”.³¹

According to Rahmand, it was expressed early in Mohammad Daoud Khan’s foreign policy doctrine that,” in our peaceful intentions and desire, we do not have any discrimination against any country or people, small or large, far or near. This element has been originated

³¹ Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 20.

independently of the wishes of the people of Afghanistan. The element that favors Afghanistan's traditional neutral politics with its openness and sincerity, which represents the independence of the national, will of the Afghan people."³² There nine important features of non-alignment were obvious in Afghan foreign policy. These features begin with the concept of active foreign policy. This was reiterated in the foreign policy doctrine of Mohammad Daoud Khan that on this basis, "Afghanistan's long-standing relations with the countries of the world are maintained on an unshakable and firm basis and will be further developed and expanded through diplomacy and personal contacts and international cooperation will be sought. Our desire is to get positive and practical results from it."³³ Therefore, the non-alignment and impartiality for Mohamad Daoud Khan never meant isolationism and were in contradiction of his modernization, development programs and policies that required international cooperation, support and financing. Afghanistan, under President Mohammad Daoud Khan, was an active participant in international politics. Furthermore, it is unclear whether Mohammad Daoud Khan intended to use NAM as a platform for building another bloc against the superpowers or not. It was not established that there was any uncertainty about the NAM's legal status within the scope of this study. Afghanistan's foreign policy was clearly guided by self-judgment and national interests. His perception and expectation of the role of non-aligned movement is best described by Cordovez "he [Mohammad Daoud Khan] was openly distancing himself from the radical wing of the non-aligned movement led by

³² Rahmand, *Afghanistan from 1919 to 1978*, 116.

³³ *Ibid.*

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

Cuba, Mohammad Daoud Khan criticized Havana on several occasions, declaring that Afghanistan would pursue true non-alignment.³⁴ . For Afghans, it appears that the non-alignment movement provided them with the space and resources they needed to maneuver their Bitarafi.

CONCLUSION

Since the late nineteenth century, Afghanistan has adopted a strict isolationist policy, which suited Afghanistan at the height of rivalry between Russia and the Great Britain. Afghanistan expected the British Empire to recognize and reward them for declaring neutrality during World War I. Amir Habibullah Khan demanded sovereignty and control over Afghanistan's foreign affairs. Despite its disadvantages based on prior experience, neutrality in Afghan politics continues to play an important role in Afghanistan's foreign policy. It should be noted that Afghans have a tendency to redefine any concept based on their own values, or simply Afghanize it, having developed a different concept out of neutrality, best suits their needs, even if it comes at a high cost at times. Afghanistan shifted its foreign policy around the concept of Bitarafi (impartiality or No-Sidedness) and almost for all rulers of Afghanistan isolationism, wartime neutrality and neutralism of non-aligned meant Bitarafi. They tried to stay out of wars and international crises, but they wanted to reap the benefits of winning

³⁴ Cordovez and Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan*, 21.

countries' rewards for refusing to take sides against them. This was evident when Amir Habibullah Khan demanded complete control over Afghanistan's foreign relations after refusing to allow Turks and Germans to open a front against the British Raj in India. Bitarafi had three dimensions for Afghans: political, economic, and military. Unlike Ahmad Shah Abadali and Taimur Shah, Afghanistan's military policy has been defensive since the nineteenth century. Military power was used to maintain control of the country and to resist invasions. Bitarafi was a political instrument used to keep the Durani Dynasty in power, while the economic benefits of Bitarafi were heavily employed by Mohammad Daoud Khan for the country's development and modernization.

The United States' foreign policy toward Afghanistan was similar to that of the Great Britain. They had no desire to be fully committed to the country, but they were also hesitant to leave it entirely at the mercy of the Soviet Union; they did not provide and meet the required support to the Afghan government, and they did not want to disengage completely. Afghan rulers regardless of being completely disappointed against the repeated pleas and request of more diversified U.S. support for Afghanistan, did not want to be fully trapped in the Soviet net. They tried their best to bring balance into Afghanistan's development and investment efforts. Afghanistan wanted to diversify its basic industry and Americans were more into agrarian support. To maintain law and order, control tribes, and counter the opposition of conservative Afghan religious leaders, the Afghan government

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

prioritized military and army modernization as a critical component of a successful modernization strategy.

Afghanistan' foreign policy was complex, but from the perspective of the stature that Mohammad Daoud Khan and his republic achieved, there is no doubt that he managed Afghanistan's foreign policy in the direction and scope of neutralism and non-alignment most successfully. He successfully managed to adhere to all non-aligned principles and balanced the relationship with independence, irrespective of its trade and economic dependency and enrolment with the U.S. and Soviet Union. His brand of neutralism and non-aligned also acted as a catalyst for the promotion of his version of republican nationalism, a necessary ingredient for mobilization of awakened youth, intelligentsia and tribal leaders for modernization and development despite historic Afghan society resistance against any rapid reformation and modernization. From a national interest perspective, his policy changed Afghanistan and benefitted the regime to finance the desired development projects and modernization policies. Mohammad Daoud Khan's regime was not attacking West or its values and cautiously interacted with Soviet Union and strengthen ties with U.S. too. This policy resulted in military and defense benefits from Soviet Union, infrastructure and sustainable projects from western countries and China. He managed to resolve the Pashtunistan issue with Pakistan in his final years of presidency. Afghanistan had little options but it used its Bitarafi, translated and transformed into neutralism very strategically and was politically active, despite of its weak resources

maintained its prestige as a free nation against all Soviet influence, pressures and simultaneous rejection, propaganda from Pakistan and its allies. Finally, to test the non-alignment principles adhered, in the foreign policy of Afghanistan under President Mohammad Daoud Khan, it was found that Afghanistan's foreign policy was independent based on non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. Afghanistan had opposed to colonialism and supported liberation movements, another cornerstone of its foreign policy was its unconditional, firm stand against the racist and apartheid regime of South Africa and expressed support for people of Palestine. During Mohammad Khan's presidency, Afghanistan was not member of any military alliance or bloc and had no bilateral military base/bases or allowed any military base of a foreign country to be on its soil and territories. The researcher concludes that in this research on Afghanistan' foreign policy under President Mohammad Daoud Khan preserved the unique traditional approach of Afghanistan's neutrality and isolationism. He mixed and blended these concepts by the virtue of neutralism of the non-alignment in his unique and flexible impartiality approach. In regards of non-alignment principles, he adhered to all these principles and they guided his foreign policy subsequently.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of
non-alignment

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamec, Ludwig W. *Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs to the Mid-Twentieth Century: Relations with the USSR, Germany, and Britain*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1974.
- Andisha, Nasir A. Report. *Neutrality in Afghanistan's Foreign Policy*. United States Institute of Peace, March 2015. Accessed July 27, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12377>.
- Banting, Erinn. *Afghanistan: The People*. New York: Crabtree, 2003.
- Chadwick, Elizabeth. *Traditional Neutrality Revisited, Laws, Theories and Case Studies*. Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002.
- Cordovez, Diego and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Ewans, Martin. *Conflict in Afghanistan: Studies in Asymmetric Warfare*. New York: Routledge, 2005
- Gabriel, Jurg Martin. *The American Conception of Neutrality after 1941*. London: MACMILLAN PRESS, 1988.
- Ghaus, Abdul Samad. *The Fall of Afghanistan: An Eyewitness Account*. Translated by Mohammad Younes Toghyan Sakayee. Peshawar: Danesh Publications, 1999.
- Gregorian, Vartan. *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan: Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969.
- Henkin, Louis. *International law: Politics and Values*. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995.
- Kakar, Mohammad Hassan. *A Political and Diplomatic History of Afghanistan 1863-1901*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

The output of afghanistan foreign policy, 1973-1978: neutrality and neutralism of non-alignment

Kissinger, Henry A. "Telegram 76 from Secretary of State Kissinger to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft)." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State. Accessed February 25, 2021. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve08/d14>.

Lansford, Tom, and Jack Covarrubias. "Osama Bin Laden Radical Islam and the United States," in *America's War on Terror*, edited by Tom Lansford, Robert P. Watson, and Jack Covarrubias, 2nd ed., 18-19. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009.

Maley, William. *The Afghanistan Wars*. 2nd ed. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Misdaq, Nabi. *Afghanistan Political Frailty and External Interference*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Pigott, Peter. *Canada in Afghanistan: The War so Far*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007.

Rahmand, Aziz Ahmad. *History of Foreign Relations of Afghanistan from 1919 to 1978*. Kabul: Khorasan Publication, 2013.

Saikal, Amin. *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*. New York, United States of America: I.B. TAURIS, 2006.

Shirkey, Zachary C. *Joining the Fray: Outside Military Intervention in Civil War*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Roberts, Jeffery J. *The Origins of Conflict in Afghanistan*. West port, Connecticut: Prager, 2003.

Tsagourias, Nicholas, and Alasdair Morrison, Law of Neutrality. Essay. In *International Humanitarian Law: Cases, Materials and Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.