



HCC
COMMITTEE GUIDE

HORIZONS V

Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Historical Crisis Committee at Horizons 2023! My name is Briana Chen, and I am incredibly honoured to serve as your Director for this iteration of Horizons.

Ever since I have embarked on my journey of Model UN in Grade 8, from generalised assemblies to specialised agencies, crisis committees have always been the highlight of my Model UN experience. Through engaging in rounds of fast paced debates, questionable assassinations and most importantly creating long lasting friendship and memories, they were always the most memorable. After this iteration of Horizons, I genuinely hope that you will feel rewarded both in terms of knowledge and personal growth.

Throughout this experience, I will be joined by my wonderful chairs Andreas Zhang and Amber Yang. On behalf of the entire dias team, I sincerely welcome you to our committee and wish you all the best in preparations for the upcoming conference.

In the Historical Joint Crisis, we will be exploring the multifaceted conflict of the Soviet's Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Stemming from the greater context of the Cold War, a period of ideological differences of Communism compared to Western democracy, there is an emergence of a new government in Afghanistan known as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), who were supported by the Soviet Union. Being knowledgeable towards military actions, nations' interests and goals, and different needs of diverse ethnic and religious groups of Afghanistan, delegates must proceed tactically in the prosperous Middle East.

I look forward to meeting all of you at Horizons 2023, and best of luck with all research. If you have any questions or inquiries prior to the conference, please feel free to contact me by email.

Best regards,

Briana Chen
Director of Historical Crisis Committee
CAHSMUN Horizons 2023

Topic Overview

The date is December 1st, 1979. Amidst the Cold War, the two global superpowers, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA), have been called to deal with an emerging crisis in the Near East.

In 1978, the Centrist, semi-democratic Government of Afghanistan was overthrown by a group of left-leaning military officials led by Nur Mohammad Taraki—leader of the Khalq Faction of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).¹ ² These military commanders created a new socialist government dominated by the PDPA, which subsequently formed close ties with the USSR for political support.³ The socialist government aimed to provide reforms such as improving equality in land distribution, creating more rights for women in the workforce, and industrializing the economy. In response to the coup d’état and the government’s strict social and land reforms, Afghani civilians formed rebel groups known collectively as the Mujahideen.⁴ The Mujahadeen would receive leadership and funding from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as they prepared to resist the government.⁵ The Mujahadeen carried out a series of attacks against the government through guerilla warfare and ambushes to disrupt its functions. The future of the Mujahadeen will play a major role in dictating the outcome of this conflict and stability within Afghanistan.

A few months later, the Government of Afghanistan devolved into infighting within the PDPA due to differing political views between the Khlaq, led by Taraki, and the Parcham (Banner), led by his opponent Hafizullah Amin. On September 14th, 1979, Amin declared himself Prime Minister, overthrowing Taraki.⁶ Amin attempted to improve relationships with Pakistan and the U.S., because he wanted to make Afghanistan more independent from foreign influence by the USSR. This resulted in further mistrust between Afghanistan and the USSR and resulted in the USSR moving around 30,000 troops to the Afghani border.⁷ ⁸

¹ <http://www.hackwriters.com/78RevolutionAfghan.htm>

² Arnold, Anthony. *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Perspective*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981, p. 74–75, 83, 86. Print.

³ Clements, Frank. *Conflict in Afghanistan: a historical encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, Inc, 2003, p. 207. Print.

⁴ http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/maktab_al-khidamat.htm

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hafizullah-Amin>

⁷ <https://library.iit.edu/>

⁸ Jonson, Lena. *Tajikistan in the New Central Asia: Geopolitics, Great Power Rivalry and Radical Islam*. I.B. Tauris, 2009. Print.

Simultaneously, Iran's civil war concluded which had massive ramifications to the geopolitical landscape in the region. Although the old Reza Shah's regime was marked by anti-dissident crackdown and authoritarianism, the nation was also a stable ally to the Americans and the British due to its rich oil reserves and anti-communist stance.^{9 10} The conclusion of two years of unrest and revolution resulting from economic stagnation and social issues in the 1970s saw the Shah exiled. Governmental power now rested in Ayatollah Khomeini, a religious leader of the opposition. The new regime in Iran could potentially completely change the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East, as Khomeini reverses the Shah's foreign policy, advocating against both the United States and the Soviet Union.^{11 12} Despite violent protests from followers of the Shah regime, ethnic minorities, and intellectuals, Khomeini is likely to continue to pursue this shift in foreign policy, making the situation in the region even more unpredictable.

All the while, the world faces economic stagnation.¹³ The failure of the traditional American Economic Policy along with a series of inefficient five-year plans from the USSR resulted in a loss of productivity.¹⁴ The First Oil Crisis caused widespread economic harm, as oil embargos were placed on nations that supported Israel during the Yom Kippur War. As a result, the cost of oil internationally increased and created inflation within several nations. Afghanistan's instability comes to the limelight of international politics and Soviet activity increases in the region, leading to world leaders being forced to thoroughly analyze and resolve this complex crisis.

Timeline

October 1, 1838 — The First Anglo-Afghan War begins. This war marks the beginning of European foreign influence in Afghanistan. Britain forces also establish the Durand line between Afghanistan and Pakistan, creating tensions between ethnic minorities residing on the border.¹⁵

November 21, 1878 – The Second Anglo-Afghan War begins. This war is a continuation of the tensions from the First Anglo-Afghan War between Russia, Britain and Afghanistan. The

⁹ <https://www.fpri.org/article/2009/09/the-u-s-and-iran-in-historical-perspective/>

¹⁰ <https://declassified.duk.org/when-britain-backed-irans-dictator/>

¹¹ Browne, Edward Granville. *An Outline Of The History Of Persia During The Last Two Centuries (A.D. 1722-1922)*. London: Packard Humanities Institute. Print.

¹² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ruhollah-Khomeini>

¹³ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-and-social-survey-archive-1970-1979/>

¹⁴ <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/29/formation-and-evolution-of-soviet-union-s-oil-and-gas-dependence-pub-68443>

¹⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Afghan-Wars>

war lays the foundation for the eventual independence of Afghanistan following the Third Anglo-Afghan War.¹⁶

1895 – The Russian Empire completes its conquest of Central Asian territory north of Afghanistan. This conquest is a part of Russian imperialism and expands Russian land, military power, and resources.¹⁷

July 28, 1914 – The First World War begins which will spur global industrialization and shift international relationships between nations such as the United States and Russia. The war would cause the Russian Revolution and empower the rise of communism in foreign policy.¹⁸

1922 – Joseph Stalin becomes General Secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union’s Central Committee, emphasizing the global spread of communism. As Stalin’s administration formed a centralized system of government, Stalin helped develop a stronger military force through the creation of the Soviet Armed Forces.^{19 20}

1925 – The Iranian National Assembly loses authority when Reza Khan seizes power and deposes the Qajar Shar, naming himself Reza Shah and abolishing the Constitution. The rise of the Shah marks the beginning of a more modernized and authoritarian Iran.²¹

1933 – Mohammed Nadir Shah, the King of Afghanistan, is assassinated and his son Mohammed Zahir Shah takes the throne. His administration marked a period of stability and modernization as he expanded projects on infrastructure development and agricultural reforms.²²

1939-1945 – The Second World War begins and sets the stage for the ideological battle in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. It also resulted in the creation of superpowers like the Soviet Union and the United States due to advancements of their military.²³

1950 – The so-called ‘Iron Curtain’ falls over Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe as contact with Western Europe is removed. It begins the ideological Cold War between the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Central-Asia-102306/Under-Russian-rule>

¹⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-I>

¹⁹ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/bulganin/1949/12/21.htm>

²⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Stalinism>

²¹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Reza-Shah-Pahlavi>

²² <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mohammad-Zahir-Shah>

²³ <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II>

Communist bloc, led by the Soviet Union, and Western democracies, led by the United States and its allies.²⁴

1964 – Afghanistan introduces a new constitution which includes a Democratic Assembly leading to the eventual establishment of the PDPA and a more sovereign nation in control of its own national and foreign policies.²⁵

1965 – The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) is founded. The PDPA establishes a closer relationship with the Soviet Union because of similar socialist policies and to receive the resources needed to modernize the economy.²⁶

1973 – The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Crisis takes place, where Arabian nations enforce an oil embargo on countries that supported Israel during the Yom Kippur War. This directly impacts oil production and costs across the world and draws focus on the economic and political influence of the Middle East.²⁷

1973-1974 – The American stock market crash begins. As an important global trade market, this led to enormous impacts on international trade and economies and triggered a worldwide recession.²⁸

April 27, 1978 – Afghani military units aligned with the PDPA to begin a pro-communist coup against Afghani President Mohammad Daoud Khan.²⁹

May, 1978 – An Afghani uprising, mostly by the rural population, begins in the Province of Nuristan to oppose the new Democratic Republic of Afghanistan under the PDPA. It marks the first Mujahideen attack against the PDPA government.³⁰

May 1, 1978 – Nur Mohammad Taraki is installed as President of Afghanistan under the PDPA, beginning an era of reform and improved relationship with nations such as the Soviet Union.³¹

²⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iron-Curtain>

²⁵ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Afghanistan_1964

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Mohammad-Zahir-Shah-1933-73#ref306682>

²⁷ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4537467>

²⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/Great-Depression/Economic-impact>

²⁹ <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/this-day-in-history-apr27/>

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_Herat_uprising#:~:text=Starting%20in%20May%201978%20in,but%20was%20nevertheless%20still%20pious.

³¹ [https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nur-Mohammad-Taraki.](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nur-Mohammad-Taraki)

December 5, 1978 – Afghanistan signs a treaty with the USSR, allowing the deployment of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan at the Afghani Government’s request.³²

March 27, 1979 – Hafizullah Amin forces Nur Muhammad Taraki to resign as the Prime Minister of Afghanistan.³³

April 1, 1979 – The Islamic Republic of Iran was founded by a National Referendum and Ruhollah Khomeini was declared Supreme Leader.³⁴

July 3, 1979 – Under President Jimmy Carter, the United States authorizes the Central Intelligence Services (CIA) to spend up to 951,000 CAD to support Afghan resistance groups such as the Mujahideen either directly or through a trusted third party.³⁵

September 14, 1979 – Amin overthrows Taraki, declaring himself President of Afghanistan. Following this, Amin strengthens relationships with Pakistan and distances Afghanistan from the USSR.³⁶

December 1, 1979 (Crisis Initiation)– The Soviet Union moves 30,000 troops to the Afghani border.³⁷

Historical Analysis

Historically, Afghanistan’s strategic position as “a gateway to India” and a part of the ancient Silk Road has caused its history to be fraught with conflict that has significantly affected the geopolitical landscape in the region.³⁸ Coming under the sway of Muslim rulers in 642 CE as part of the early Islamic conquests, the nation underwent Islamification which converted the majority of the population to Sunni Islam by the 9th century.³⁹

From 1747 to 1751, an Afghani general named Ahmad Shah Durrani was elected Shah of Afghanistan, creating the state we know today.⁴⁰ Following the assassination of Nadir Shah, a powerful Iranian ruler who created the Iranian empire, Durrani expanded and conquered

³² https://www.jstor.org/stable/20671949?read-now=1&seq=4#page_scan_tab_contents

³³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nur-Mohammad-Taraki>.

³⁴ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ayatollah-khomeini-returns-to-iran>

³⁵ https://commons.clarku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=graduate_history

³⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nur-Mohammad-Taraki>.

³⁷ <https://www.history.com/news/1979-soviet-invasion-afghanistan>

³⁸ Adamec, Ludwig W. *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*. Scarecrow Press, 2011. p. 1. Print.

³⁹ Dupree, Nancy Hatch. *Sites in Perspective (Chapter 3)*. An Historical Guide To Afghanistan Afghan Tourist Organization, Kabul, 1971.

⁴⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ahmad-Shah-Durrani>

territory to create modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, and a portion of Iran.⁴¹ During his administration, he enacted several successful conquests of the Mughal Empire, a strong Muslim state that dominated northern India from the 16th to the 19th century, hoping to expand his political power.⁴² ⁴³ However, with the expansion of the Sikh Kingdom in the early 19th century, Duranni lost the territory of Pakistan.⁴⁴ Additionally, the Sikh Kingdom was facing threats from the British Empire, which eventually defeated the empire in the Anglo-Sikh War (1845-1849). As a result, the British East India Company began to dominate the region and pushed to expand its influence into the Middle East.⁴⁵ The Treaty of Lahore of 1846, after the First Anglo-Sikh War, ceded Pakistan from the Sikh Kingdom to the British East India Company, bringing Britain directly to the borders of Afghanistan.⁴⁶

By the 19th century, both Russia and Britain participated in large-scale conquests known as the Great Game in Afghanistan and neighbouring territories in Central Asia.⁴⁷ Britain's primary goal was to use Afghanistan as a buffer state for the British Raj, a territory encapsulating modern-day India and Pakistan, from Russian influence. The British Raj was crucial for Britain because it was abundant in natural resources such as cotton and spices and was a major market for goods.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Russia was incentivized to carry out these conquests by the prospect of obtaining warm water ports in the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and Persian Gulf to conduct effective trade.⁴⁹

As British influence in the region increased, tensions rose with Afghanistan and resulted in the First Anglo-Afghan War in 1839 where Afghanistan secured a decisive victory.⁵⁰ However, the British managed to achieve their strategic aim of making Afghanistan a friendly buffer state against the Russian Empire.⁵¹ Eventually, the residual tensions from the First Anglo-Afghan War and further British expansion caused the Second Anglo-Afghan War from 1878 to 1880, which resulted in a British victory. Following their defeat, Afghanistan was forced to withdraw from foreign affairs but maintained its national sovereignty and continued to act as a buffer state.⁵² However, the First World War breaking

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/whp-1750/xcabef9ed3fc7da7b:unit-1-the-world-in-1750/xcabef9ed3fc7da7b:1-3-expanding-to-a-global-scale/a/read-mughal-empire-beta>

⁴⁴ <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/battle-aliwal#:~:text=During%20the%20early%2019th%20century,was%20adjacent%20to%20the%20Punjab.>

⁴⁵ <https://www.studyiq.com/articles/anglo-sikh-wars/>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ <https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=a0930b1f4e424987ba68c28880f088ea>

⁴⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/event/British-raj>

⁴⁹ <https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=a0930b1f4e424987ba68c28880f088ea>

⁵⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Afghan-Wars>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Browne, Edward Granville. *An Outline Of The History Of Persia During The Last Two Centuries (A.D. 1722-1922)*. London: Packard Humanities Institute. Print.

out in 1914 and weakening Britain, caused tensions to rise within the Afghani royal family over using Afghani resources to fight for complete independence from Britain.

Following the rise of Amanullah Khan, who adopted a stronger approach towards regaining ceded territory, the Third Anglo-Afghan War began in 1919 with the invasion of India.⁵³ The outcome of the Third Anglo-Afghan War was not clear, with the Treaty of Rawalpindi on August 8, 1919, recognizing Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty over foreign and national policy.⁵⁴ A series of controversial reforms were also implemented during this period, such as the building of schools, granting freedoms to women, and signing of a treaty with the USSR in 1921.⁵⁵ These reforms were controversial because they diverged from the traditional customs of Afghanistan.

In 1933, when the Minister of War Muhammad Nadir Khan rose to power, he prioritized improving and strengthening Afghan relations with the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ His efforts were not successful as the Afghanistan government was reluctant about Soviet intentions in Afghanistan.⁵⁷ In 1965, his son Zahir Shah formed a liberal constitution with a bicameral legislature, allowing for the creation of new political factions like the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).⁵⁸ The mission of the PDPA party in particular was to reform land distribution and further industrialize the economy through Soviet-styled Marxist-Leninist policies. However, The PDPA suffered a schism in 1967 between the divisive Khalq and Parcham parties due to holding ideologically different views towards economic and social actions in Afghanistan which made it difficult to implement effective actions. Furthermore, unrest led to the coup of President Daoud Khan on April 27, 1978, setting the stage for the Soviet Invasion in 1979.⁵⁹ The coup, also known as the Saur Revolution, was initiated by the Khalq faction of the PDPA under the leadership of Nur Mohammad Taraki. The PDPA desired to reform the inequality and secularism between wealth, land and social conditions for civilians of Afghanistan. Additionally, the PDPA believed that Daoud's government planned to remove the party as it was believed the government had taken part in the murder of Mir Akbar Khyber, a member of the Parcham party on April 17, 1978. This fear of President Daoud provided the necessary incentive to successfully enact the coup in 1978.

⁵³ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Third-Anglo-Afghan-War>

⁵⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Third-Anglo-Afghan-War>

⁵⁵ <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/reflections-king-amanullah%E2%80%99s-reforms-legacy#:~:text=Organizing%20the%20Constitutional%20Loya%20Jirga,abroad%20were%20among%20key%20items>

⁵⁶ Omrani, Bijan. *Afghanistan and the Search for Unity*. Vol. 38, Asian Affairs, 2007. Print.

⁵⁷ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/163602?seq=7>

⁵⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Mohammad-Zahir-Shah-1933-73#ref306682>

⁵⁹ <https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/this-day-in-history-apr27/>

Ethnic Groups

Afghanistan is located in the heart of Central Asia. Being a major destination on the historical Silk Road, migration from all directions has resulted in Afghanistan being home to a myriad of ethnic groups.

The two largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan are the Pashtuns and Tajiks.⁶⁰ Pashtuns mainly populate the heartland of the nation in the south and make up at least 40% of the urban population.⁶¹ On the other hand, Tajiks are concentrated in the Northeast and West of Afghanistan.^{62 63 64} Due to the varying ethnic groups and their geographic location, it is difficult to compare the economic conditions within each province. In more urban regions, such as the Kandahar province, abundant trade and commerce with neighbouring Middle Eastern and foreign countries are conducted. Comparatively, in more northern regions of Afghanistan, such as the Panjshir Valley, the climate and rich soil make the economy mainly focused on agricultural products like wheat.⁶⁵ The rural populations are primarily agrarian and have a significant pastoral subset when compared to the more industrial economy in cities.⁶⁶ Therefore, there exists a distinct divide between the urban centers of Afghanistan and the rural countryside.

Religion also plays a major role in contextualizing Afghanistan's ethnic relations, with the vast majority of Pashtuns and Tajiks following Sunni Islam.^{67 68} However, there are also the Hazaras, making up around 10% of the population, who follow Shia Islam and are concentrated in central Afghanistan.⁶⁹ The Hazaras economy is mainly agrarian based and there is a long history of tension between the Hazaras and the central Afghani government. This tension is mainly due to religious conflict between Shia Islam and Sunni Islam, with the Sunni central government often unfairly distributing land and food resources. Historically, tensions began when Abdur Rahman Khan rose to power between 1890 to 1901. Rahman Khan, being a member of the Pashtun ethnic group, hoped to create a centralized state by expelling and subjugating minority groups such as the Hazaras through the mobilization of Sunni ethnic groups such as Tajiks into militias.⁷⁰ The land gained from

⁶⁰ <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-of-afghanistan.html>

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1879366511000297>

⁶³ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pashtun>

⁶⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pashtuns#:~:text=They%20are%20the%20largest%20ethnic,of%20the%20total%20akistani%20population.>

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ <https://library.iit.edu/>

⁶⁸ <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/afghan-culture-religion>

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/hazaras/>

this conflict was then distributed to Pashtun tribes. Given these historical tensions, many Hazaras would rather join Iran, with its Shia majority, than remain part of Afghanistan.⁷¹

The final major ethnic group is the Uzbeks, a Turkic group which is located primarily in the Iranian-speaking parts of Afghanistan, around the mountainous, northern regions of Afghanistan. They are mainly Sunni and make up approximately 7% of Afghanistan's population.⁷² They are more pastoral than any of the other major ethnic groups and have been oppressed under the Pashtun-run Afghani government, resulting in many migrating to Iran for refuge.

Religious Composition

Approximately 85% of the Afghani population follows Sunni Islam while approximately 13% of the population follows Twelver Shia Islam, a branch of Shia Islam, with the remaining 2% either being non-religious or following another religion.⁷³ Both the Sunni and Shia communities vary widely in their interpretation of the Quran, the Islamic holy text, and the Hadiths, sayings of the prophet Muhammad.

Although not universal trends, agrarian populations hold generally moderately conservative interpretations, while pastoral populations generally hold more conservative interpretations.

The deeply religious nature of the nation makes support for secularism limited, and the atheistic nature of a number of PDPA members has sown distrust towards the government among the more conservative parts of Afghan society. For rebel groups, this could be a useful recruitment tool to strengthen resistance against socialist rule in Afghanistan. However, as many Iranian and Arabic political factions are demonstrating, leftist thought and traditional Islamic beliefs are not inherently contradictory as they share similar goals and ethical premises—both prioritizing the well-being of the community over that of the individual.

Demographics

Afghanistan's population is primarily young, rural, and uneducated.⁷⁴ The way of life for much of the rural population has changed relatively little since the 19th century, with the land divided into four main categories: urban, rural agrarian, rural pastoral, and

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² <https://minorityrights.org/country/afghanistan/>

⁷³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Daily-life-and-social-customs>

⁷⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Demographic-trends>

uninhabited.⁷⁵ The urban areas are similar to most other cities in the region, with businesses dominated by young educated men and having relatively easy access to social services.⁷⁶ These people are the least religious and the most likely to support the socialist regime.

Rural agrarian areas are similar to how they have been for generations besides the rise of technologies such as modern irrigation systems. Historically, until the late 1980s, rural agrarian regions lacked advanced technologies such as roads, dams, and irrigation.⁷⁷ Although networks of government institutions, organizations, and departments were established to support small farmers, technology was still often concentrated in agricultural areas close to urban provinces like Kandahar.⁷⁸ Power rests in the landowners who are typically the patriarchs of families dating back centuries to the pseudo-feudal structure of Afghanistan.⁷⁹ This structure created a hierarchy of classes: the King, the Nobility (tribal leaders known as Khans, who had political and land power over their specific regions), the Landowners (who controlled estate and those lower in the system such as peasants) and the Peasants.⁸⁰ The landowners, in collaboration with Khans and other administrators, often collected tribute in the form of agricultural goods, produce and livestock produced by the labourers.⁸¹ In return, the peasants received adequate protection in their communities and aspects of this system have continued to today. The rural pastoral populations are in many ways similar to the agrarian communities and are similarly governed by the remnants of the old, pseudo-feudal system.⁸² Deeply religious and traditional, pastoral populations are generally apathetic to state affairs, hoping to prevent government intervention in their daily way of life.⁸³ However, in recent months, the rural population has become opposed to government land reforms and religious views.⁸⁴ As the government slowly begins to lose control of rural areas, much of the population flees to Iran and Pakistan.⁸⁵

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ <https://www.fao.org/3/X0256E/x0256e03.htm>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ <https://www.lse.ac.uk/international-development/Assets/Documents/PDFs/csrc-working-papers-phase-two/wp40.2-afghanistan-transition-without-end.pdf>

⁸¹ <https://www.theleftberlin.com/afghanistan-feudal-reaction-and-imperialism-a-battle-continues/>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000534989.pdf

Initiating Crisis

On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1979, a holiday of joy and laughter, catastrophe struck Afghanistan as, under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the USSR Communist Party, 30,000 Soviet troops were moved to the Soviet-Afghan border. This operation began with the pretext of the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Treaty of 1978, which gave Afghanistan the ability to call for Soviet aid in times of crisis.⁸⁶ In this case, the PDPA government was struggling to fight against Afghan rebel groups such as the Mujahadeen. As the clock strikes midnight, the Committee of State Security (KGB) begins preparing an enormous airlift to drop 30,000 paratroopers throughout Afghanistan.⁸⁷ By the next morning, a force of 280 aircraft had taken off from Soviet territory and would arrive within the next 72 hours.⁸⁸ Within the next few days, the Soviet Union is planning an assault near the Tajbeg Palace, home of the Afghan royal family and government.⁸⁹ With aims to secure individual interests, achieve greater dominance and spread communist ideals throughout the region, the Soviet Union is ready to unleash its full power onto Afghanistan.

Current Situation

After the Khalq Faction took control of the capital on April 27, 1978, the faction declared the establishment of the People's Republic of Afghanistan, with Nur Mohammad Taraki as its President. The Taraki's cabinet aimed to reconcile the relationship between the Khalq and Parcham factions by reaching a compromise on how Afghanistan should be ruled. This involved Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parchams faction, being appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Amin, the second highest ranking Khalqi, being appointed as the Foreign Minister. The new government signed a Treaty of Friendship with the USSR, which allowed Afghanistan to call for Soviet aid in times of crisis.⁹⁰ However, the relationship between the parties soon broke down because of cultural, religious and ideological conflicts. The Parchamis, being mainly composed of educated elites and intellectuals who were not part of the main Pashtun ethnic group, were more conservative and wanted a more gradual approach to social reforms. Contrarily, the Khalq, consisting of peasants from a more diverse array of ethnic groups, pushed for direct and rapid reforms to modernize the

⁸⁶ https://www.jstor.org/stable/20671949?read-now=1&seq=4#page_scan_tab_contents

⁸⁷ <https://www.history.com/news/1979-soviet-invasion-afghanistan>

⁸⁸ https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Predicting_the_Soviet_Invasion_of_Afghan/Rbq7IluJgScC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=details+of+december+24+1979+afghanistan&printsec=frontcover

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ https://www.jstor.org/stable/20671949?read-now=1&seq=4#page_scan_tab_contents

nation away from traditional feudalist structures.⁹¹ This resulted in Parchami members of the cabinet losing their positions over time, which increased tension between the two factions.⁹² Furthermore, during this time, a tribal revolution began in the Nuristan Province in opposition to the new Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. In the forested, mountainous region of Nuristan, these ethnic groups of Nuristanis and minority Kunari Pashtun were driven together in the summer of 1978 to form the first Mujahadeen resistance against the new communist government.⁹³ In response to these insurgencies, the PDPA government army began to launch military operations throughout northern Afghanistan. However, these operations were often ineffective, as the Mujahadeen forces rallied support and conducted guerilla warfare.⁹⁴ Similar civilian uprisings across Afghanistan created further instability and ignited further incentive for the Soviet Union to invade on behalf of the PDPA. Internally, power struggles also occurred in the newly formed PDPA government. For example, in August, General Abdur Qadir and other Khalqi military leaders were accused of attempting to overthrow Taraki and subsequently executed. Taraki and Amin continued to rule Afghanistan, implementing further land and social reforms. This resulted in further instability, as the PDPA had failed to address the cultural and religious concerns of the mostly rural population.

Young women quickly became major supporters of the PDPA due to their progressive reforms, which provided them the opportunity to enter the workforce and receive education.⁹⁵ However, the land reforms were disastrous as the government attempted to split equal ownership of land between all traditional feudal classes.⁹⁶ They did not consider the established social system and the relationship between patronage and credit; therefore, these reforms were highly unpopular and did not receive the support of the general population.⁹⁷ The failure to amend the failures of the land reforms resulted in an agricultural crisis and famine throughout the nation, crippling the nation. Taraki's coup also changed public perception of reform as Taraki brutally executed political prisoners who obstructed modernization. Although progressive reforms were a salutary idea by Western standards, it was carried out in such a violent way that it alarmed even the Soviets.⁹⁸

⁹¹<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft7b69p12h&chunk.id=s1.3.3&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ch03&brand=ucpress>

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/afghanistans-heart-of-darkness-fighting-the-taliban-in-kunar-province/>

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Democratic_Party_of_Afghanistan

⁹⁶ https://www.jstor.org/stable/3011832?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Kaplan, Robert D. *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1990, p. 116. Print.

The famine, land reform, political repression, and forced secularization alienated a majority of the rural Afghani populace, which led to thousands of young men joining the Mujahideen.⁹⁹ With Saudi Arabian and Pakistani aid, the Mujahadeen carried out a series of attacks against the Soviet Union through guerilla warfare and ambushes that disrupted the Soviet's goals and army logistics. In particular, numerous wealthy Saudi families—notably the Bin Laden Family—sent sons to serve as leaders of Mujahadeen groups.¹⁰⁰ These leaders brought Wahhabism, a conservative interpretation of Islam originating in Saudi Arabia, which helped mobilize conservative communities that were opposed to the rise of the democratic PDPA and its collaboration with foreign states like the Soviet Union. Pakistani support for Afghanistan began during 1974, when they sent a secret operation to negotiate with the pro-Soviet Daoud regime.¹⁰¹ These operations caused President Daoud to immediately begin strengthening relations with Pakistan, realizing the shared interests between the two nations.¹⁰² As a result of this, relations between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union slowly began to deteriorate, because of Pakistan being historically allied with the United States.

Politically, Taraki was forced by Amin to resign as Prime Minister on March 27th, 1979, as a result of the failure of his reform efforts and a call was made to the Soviet Union for assistance.¹⁰³ This was in response to the rebellion against the PDPA growing in scope and the ill-prepared military being ineffective against the guerilla warfare techniques of the Mujahideen. In September, disagreements between Taraki and Amin surfaced as Taraki sought to create a socialist state by aligning closer with the USSR while Amin wanted to prevent the crisis by working with Pakistan and distancing from the Soviets. This tension culminated on the 14th of September as Amin declared himself president and arrested Taraki, taking power in a coup d'état.¹⁰⁴ Amin governed the country with an iron fist. He refused to address any of the economic issues plaguing the nation, such as the agricultural crisis and lack of funds to support infrastructure projects. As a result, Afghanistan's economy was not productive and the nation became more vulnerable to foreign interventions. His diplomatic overtures to Pakistan –and by extension the U.S.– were also unsuccessful as Amin has alienated the Soviets and the PDPA.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/miller.html>

¹⁰¹ <https://irp.fas.org/cia/product/afghanistan/index.html>

¹⁰² <https://thediplomat.com/2020/07/remembering-president-daouds-coup-lessons-for-afghanistans-future/>

¹⁰³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nur-Mohammad-Taraki>.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hafizullah-Amin>

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Iran

Iran's historical regional dominance, dating back to the Abbasids and the Islamic Golden Age (750-1258), has made it an influential actor in Afghanistan's affairs.¹⁰⁶ By the 20th century, foreign involvement in Iran had been a frequent occurrence since the discovery of oil in the region. Additionally, British and Russian exploitation of Iran during the First World War weakened the nation and exposed it to further foreign influences.¹⁰⁷ However, the early 20th century also saw foreign powers retreat as imperial powers weakened. Diplomatic agreements, such as the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, formalized shared influences in different parts of Iran.¹⁰⁸

The rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi, an Iranian military officer and politician, began an era of authoritarian rule. His successor, Mohammad Reza Shah, faced similar challenges. Due to the political and economic chaos in the mid-1900s, in particular, with the new oil crisis in 1973, Reza Shah's successor Ayatollah Khomeini's rule began with massive shifts in social, governance and foreign policies, including the nationalization of Iranian oil reserves.¹⁰⁹ ¹¹⁰ The subsequent Iranian Revolution in 1979 created a ripple effect in bordering Muslim countries. The revolution began due to the unpopularity of the Shah administration, which promoted rapid modernization, Westernization, censorship of content, and unfair wealth distribution throughout Iran. During the 1970s, the Iranian economy was also facing economic difficulties from the oil crises, leading to greater inflation in the economy and lower standards of living for civilians. Supported by parts of society such as religious figures, the rural population, and even students, the revolution caused similar movements throughout the Muslim world to promote Islamic fundamentalism, an expression of Islam that adheres to its founding principles.¹¹¹ Ultimately, this shaped the Middle East's geopolitical landscape.¹¹² Immediately, concerns were raised by the Soviets over protecting their regional interests in abundant oil reserves and dominance. Under the context of the Cold War, with differing ideologies and national interests, such a shift in regional policy made Soviet invasion inevitable.

¹⁰⁶<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/medieval-times/cross-cultural-diffusion-of-knowledge/a/the-golden-age-of-islam>

¹⁰⁷<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-discovery-of-oil-in-the-middle-east/>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Russian-Entente>

¹⁰⁹<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ayatollah-khomeini-returns-to-iran>

¹¹¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islamic-fundamentalism>

¹¹² <https://www.institute.global/insights/geopolitics-and-security/fundamentals-irans-islamic-revolution>

Economic Conditions

In the 1970s, the world experienced one of the greatest economic crises since the Great Depression in the 1930s, affecting the Cold War and causing widespread geopolitical ramifications.¹¹³ In 1971, to counter inflation in the United States economy, the Richard Nixon administration tried to abandon the gold standard, creating a fiat currency, where the government controlled the currency's value.¹¹⁴ The results were mixed as the weaker dollar discouraged Americans from importing overseas products, which was detrimental as America was an important global market for products.¹¹⁵ This was exacerbated by the Arab oil embargo in 1973 in response to American support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War.¹¹⁶ This shock to global oil supplies caused a dramatic increase in oil prices, leading to a worldwide recession due to rapid inflation.¹¹⁷ This oil crisis had important Cold War ramifications as it demonstrated the rise of nations in the Middle East and their immense diplomatic leverage through the control of global oil supplies.¹¹⁸

The Soviet Union was affected by these economic crises just as much as the West. The reactionary economic reforms attempted in the late 1960s under Premier Alexei Kosygin included promoting state-owned enterprises, allocating resources, and increasing the production of consumer goods.¹¹⁹ These reforms were attempted because of the stagnating Soviet economy after the Second World War due to slower production rates. However, the Prague Spring of 1968, a period of social, economic and political liberation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, decreased reform efforts amongst Soviet leadership.¹²⁰ The Soviets were ultimately fearful of how progressive reforms increased the probability of a similar revolution to the Prague Spring, which could lead to the fall of communist ideology. Eventually, Leonid Brezhnev, a general secretary of the Soviet Union, outmaneuvered Kosygin to become the chief architect of Soviet policy.¹²¹ Consequently, the Soviet economy stagnated in the mid-1970s due to the global oil crisis, the failure to reform the collectivized agriculture system, and the loss of efficiency in industrial sectors.¹²² However, the 1973 Oil Crisis did not impact the USSR as much compared to the U.S. because the USSR was self-sufficient in its own oil supplies.¹²³

¹¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/money/topic/Great-Depression/Economic-impact>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/n/nixon-shock.asp>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4537467>

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Prague-Spring>

¹²¹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aleksey-Nikolayevich-Kosygin>

¹²² <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24808741>

¹²³ <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/29/formation-and-evolution-of-soviet-union-s-oil-and-gas-dependence-pub-68443>

Despite the USSR having sufficient national oil supplies, they were still keen to access Afghanistan's abundant natural resources for minerals, gas and oil.¹²⁴ Hoping to prevent Western competition, the USSR began initiating several development loans with Afghanistan, including a loan of around 137 million CAD in 1955 for Soviet-assisted pipelines for natural gas and hydrocarbon exploration.¹²⁵ This led to the formation of the 1968 agreement, also known as the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighborliness, a bilateral treaty aimed to facilitate economic cooperation through mutually agreed prices, military development and non-interference of each nation's sovereignty.¹²⁶ Although prices for resources were to be negotiated by both parties under the 1968 Agreement, the Soviets often gained the upper hand and ensured that the money was applied as interest for future projects.¹²⁷ For example, in 1976, when it was time to discuss the overdue price of Afghanistan's natural gas, it was set at a low price of \$16.20 per 1,000 cubic meters. It is also worth noting that the Soviet Union "never paid Afghanistan more than twenty percent of the global market price for natural gas." From these initiatives, it is evident how Afghanistan's economic reliance on the Soviet Union might impact their relationship. Furthermore, though the oil crisis of the 1970s caused a drastic increase in prices, countries like the Soviet Union, which have large reservoirs of oil, gained enormous profits, further incentivizing them to increase their influence in oil-rich regions like the Middle East.¹²⁸

Western Influence and Support

The United States plays a significant role in the conflict by supporting the Mujahideen and other Afghan resistance groups.¹²⁹ During the Cold War, the U.S. resisted nearly all Soviet attempts to expand its influence in order to prevent the spread of communism under its containment policies.¹³⁰ For example, the United States intervened militarily in the Korean War to support South Korea against the Soviet Union-backed North Korea.¹³¹ They provided rebel groups with advanced technologies, such as shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, aided with military and weaponry training, and expanded their CIA programs to help fund resistance movements, such as the Mujahideens with Operation Cyclone.¹³²

¹²⁴ <https://www.csmonitor.com/1982/1222/122249.html>

¹²⁵ https://www.jstor.org/stable/20671949?read-now=1&seq=4#page_scan_tab_contents

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-united-states-and-the-mujahideen/>

¹³⁰ <https://americanarchive.org/exhibits/newshour-cold-war/afghanistan#:~:text=These%20fundamentalist%20soldiers%20would%20become,to%20the%20mujahideen%20in%201979.>

¹³¹ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War>

¹³² <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-united-states-and-the-mujahideen/>

Operation Cyclone beginning in July 1979 was a code name for the CIA's plan to arm and finance Afghan rebel fighter groups. According to the American Archives, at its height, the U.S. government spent 548 million CAD towards these programs.¹³³ Similar to the Soviet Union and other nations, the U.S. put great emphasis on ensuring regional stability in order to secure its trade interests for oil and in the prosperous trade region in Central Asia. The U.S. has also formed long-term alliances with Pakistan since its independence in 1947, demonstrating its attempts to maintain friendly relations within the Middle East.¹³⁴

Character Portfolios

Leonid Brezhnev

General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Brezhnev serves as the General Secretary of the USSR Communist Party and plays a pivotal role in the decision to invade Afghanistan in 1979. Under his Brezhnev doctrine, a foreign policy which states that the "Soviet Union has the right to intervene upon any country under socialist rule," he justifies the invasion of the anti-communist Afghanistan.¹³⁵ Aiming to protect its economic and regional interests and to support the PDPA, Brezhnev's leadership helps direct a series of covert military operations against the Mujahideen Afghan Groups.

Dmitriy Ustinov

Soviet Minister of Defense

Ustinov, as the Minister of Defense, serves as the right hand man to Brezhnev and a major supporter of the decision to invade Afghanistan. In November, Ustinov and Yuri Andropov, a General of the Army, began to formulate plans for the invasion. Nearing December 12, 1979, the Politburo, the central committee of the Communist Party, approved his plan to invade Afghanistan.¹³⁶ The invasion on Christmas Eve is in part to his contributions.¹³⁷

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴<https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-pakistan/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20established%20diplomatic,to%20Afghanistan%20stabilization%20and%20counterterrorism.>

¹³⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Brezhnev-Doctrine>

¹³⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dmitry_Ustinov#:~:text=In%20November%2C%20Ustinov%20and%20Andropov,1979%2C%20Soviet%20troops%20entered%20Afghanistan.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Moving forward, Ustinov will oversee all military operations in Afghanistan in hopes to lead the Soviets to victory.

Andrei Gromyko
Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs

Gromkyo plays a crucial role in diplomatic efforts and international relations surrounding the invasion. From becoming an United Nations ambassador in 1943 to a Soviet representative in the Security Council in 1946 and eventually part of the Central Committee in the Communist Party, he participated in a number of diplomatic missions.¹³⁸ As a knowledgeable speaker, he, along with Ustinov and Yuri Andropov, presented their plan to invade Afghanistan to the Politburo.¹³⁹ In hopes to gain public and international support for the Soviet's actions, Gromkyo must continue his diplomatic efforts with opposing nations such as the United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia for the Soviets to continue this war.

Marshal Sergei Fyodorovich Akhromeyev
Chief Marshal of Soviet Air Defense Forces

Akhromeyev serves as the Chief Marshal of Soviet Air Defense Forces. He is a high ranking officer who is responsible for overseeing Soviet air defense systems, including air operations, strategy, combat coordination, and aerial support for Soviet troops entering Afghanistan.¹⁴⁰ Akhromeyev plays an important part in ensuring air superiority in Afghanistan, which will play a major role in ensuring the effectiveness of Soviet operations.

Hafizullah Amin
Prime Minister of Afghanistan

Amin served as the Foreign Minister, leading the Khalqi party of the PDPA. Following internal conflict between the two parties and opposing ideologies, Amin declared himself as Prime Minister on September 14, 1979, overthrowing Taraki. However, compared to other Afghan governments, Amin takes on an anti-Soviet stance and attempts to strengthen relationships with Pakistan to become a more independent and sovereign state. The future for Amin is uncertain and he wields ultimate authority in the decision making of the Afghan government.

¹³⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Andrei-Gromyko>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/akhromeev.htm>

Ahmad Shah Massoud

Afghan politician and military commander: Mujahideen

Massoud, also known as the Lion of Panjshir, is a prominent Mujahideen leader. His tactile leadership and knowledge in guerilla warfare continues to play a significant role in Mujahadeen strategy against the Soviet forces.¹⁴¹ Despite being outnumbered and under-equipped compared to the modernized Soviet armies, he continues to firmly lead the Mujahideen opposition along with the support of other nations. Massoud also actively participated in the coup to overthrow President Daoud who supported Soviet alliances.¹⁴² The future of the Mujahideen lies upon the actions and command of Massoud.

Abdul Rasul Sayyaf

Afghan politician and military commander: Mujahideen

Sayyaf is also an influential leader within the Mujahideen groups. However, he leads the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, which aims to unify Islam among the different populations of Afghanistan.¹⁴³ Sayyaf is different from other Mujahideen leaders as he remains in close ties with other groups from Arab states such as Saudi Arabia. Having religious affinity to the Saudi Arabian Wahhabist religion and a close relationship with Saudi Arabian royalty, he plays a crucial role in supporting friendly relationships to gain volunteers and establishing training camps for the Mujahideen.¹⁴⁴

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

Afghan Leader: Mujahideen

Hekmatyar is another key Mujahideen leader in Afghanistan. His radical Islamic ideology and tactics sets him apart from other Mujahideen leaders, leading him to create the Hezb-e-Islami organization through Pakistani intelligence services.¹⁴⁵ The effectiveness of this organization's brutal tactics begins gaining large amounts of funding from the CIA. However, the purposes of these funds continue to be uncertain. This radical aspect of the Mujahideen increases internal tension within Afghanistan.

¹⁴¹<https://www.britannica.com/place/Afghanistan/Civil-war-communist-phase-1978-92#ref756374>

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdul_Rasul_Sayyaf

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulbuddin_Hekmatyar

Fazlullah Wahidi
Afghan Journalist and Writer

An Afghan journalist, Wahidi offers a distinct perspective towards the civilian side of this invasion. He collects a series of Afghan civilian witnesses and experiences regarding the changing social dynamics. Wahidi helps speak out about the humanitarian aspects of the war and shines light on the refugee crisis that's occurring.

Hedayat Amin Arsala
Afghan Minister of Finance

Arsala, as the Minister of Finance, helps manage the finances of the Mujahideen groups to ensure its survival. He is also a founding member of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) and a member of the Supreme Council of the Mujahideen Unity. He demonstrates strong support for Afghan resistance groups, and plays a role in ensuring economic stability during this period of conflict.

Jimmy Carter
President of the United States

President Jimmy Carter of the U.S. sets the foundation of American foreign policy towards this invasion and U.S. involvement in the Middle East. Carter will likely support the authorized Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) aid programs to the Mujahideen against the Soviet-backed Afghan government. His priority is to prevent the expansion of Soviet influence given the United States' economic, regional and foreign interests during the Cold War.¹⁴⁶

Zbigniew Brzezinski
U.S. National Security Advisor

Brzezinski, as the National Security Advisor, convinced President Carter to sign the covert aid directive on July 3, 1979 to support the Mujahideen both economically and technologically in order to counter Soviet influence.¹⁴⁷ He will play a critical role in shaping the U.S. policy regarding Afghanistan and in collaborating with other nations. Brzezinski works to also ignite more U.S. support from other states such as Pakistan to maximize their efforts.

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/carter-reacts-to-soviet-intervention-in-afghanistan>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/how-jimmy-carter-and-i-started-the-mujahideen/213722>

William Casey
Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

Casey plays an important role in this conflict as the CIA helps to financially and militarily support Afghan resistance groups and the intelligence services of other nations. Without the CIA, the Mujahideen's resources would greatly diminish and, without foreign support, would be severely weakened.¹⁴⁸ Moving forward, Casey will likely maintain his current position in Afghanistan and use his powers to ensure a Soviet defeat.

Charlie Wilson
U.S Congressman

Wilson, serving as an U.S. Congressman, plays a role in securing increased funding for the Mujahideen while working closely with the CIA to provide support for the Afghan resistance.¹⁴⁹ Wilson is also a former navy lieutenant and Pentagon intelligence officer who specializes in Soviet affairs, making him knowledgeable in U.S. actions against the Soviet Union. Important resources he would likely advocate for will include the shoulder-fired missiles, ammunition, and other equipment.

General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq
President of Pakistan

General Zia-ul- Haq, as the President of Pakistan during this period, is critical towards supporting Afghanistan.¹⁵⁰ In addition to the military and diplomatic support through providing training bases, Pakistan will also likely provide refuge for the potential millions of Afghan refugees who have fled their homes. Given Pakistan's geographic proximity to Afghanistan, he aims to provide impetus to the communist movement in hopes to protect their national sovereignty and state.

Akhtar Abdur Rahman
Pakistan Director General of Inter Service Intelligence

Rahman is the director general of the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI), which aims to protect Pakistan nationally and internationally from foreign forces. He played a part in rallying international support for Afghanistan. Despite covert operations being supported by the

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-J-Casey>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/charlie-wilson-congressman-whose-support-for-the-mujahideen-helped-force-the-soviet-union-out-of-afghanistan-1898180.html>

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/879374-general-ziul-haq-defender-and-liberator-of-afghanistan>

CIA and Saudi Arabia, large operations will continue to be organized and executed under his leadership.

Fazle Haq

Lieutenant General in the Pakistan Army

Lieutenant General Fazle Haq is the highest ranking officer in the Pakistan army, who was responsible for governing the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (also known as the North-West Frontier Province) during the invasion. He helps facilitate training networks among allied nations and the movement of resistance troops through border regions.¹⁵¹

Prince Turki Bin Faisal

Head of Saudi Arabia General Intelligence Directorate

Prince Turki Bin Faisal, being the Head of Saudi Arabia's General Intelligence Directorate, is heavily involved in coordinating Saudi Arabian financial and logistical aid towards Afghanistan.¹⁵² He also aims to protect persecuted Muslims in Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia's geographic proximity contributes towards the Prince's actions to ensure Soviets influences do not encroach upon their nation.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud

Saudi Arabia Ambassador to the U.S.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud plays an important role as the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the U.S. He contributes in communicating with the United States in supporting the Mujahideen forces, as the U.S. provided essential funds and advanced technologies. Prince Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud will likely continue to advocate and seek U.S. support for the Mujahideen.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini

Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Khomeini, as the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the Iranian Revolution, although not directly engaging in the war itself, influences Islamic movements across the Middle East. Through his success during the Iranian Revolution, he encouraged Shia communities to launch Islamic independence movements and intensify resistance

¹⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fazle_Haq

¹⁵² <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/former-head-of-saudi-intelligence-recounts-americas-longstanding-ties-to-afghanistan>

against the Soviet Union.¹⁵³ Despite advocating for resistance, this increases tensions in Afghanistan due to its Sunni-majority population. His role further complicates this issue and provides a unique perspective towards the Soviet's invasion.

Further Research

Infographics Show: <https://youtu.be/wDMktuiyiqk>

The Great Gamble:

https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Great_Gamble/cF4qmAEACAAJ?hl=en

Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6o0X1xHgHtNAyCUoK10sh4?si=fb0ce3f588c34d52>

Discussion Questions

1. How did the invasion impact the political, social and economic landscape of Afghanistan? What are the possible short and long term consequences for Afghan society and how could they be prevented?
2. Were there any prominent diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully? Could there have been more and how could it impact the trajectory of the war?
3. How does the cultural, ethnic and religious landscape of Afghanistan contribute to this conflict?
4. What might the future of Afghanistan look like in the case of a Soviet victory? What measures must be taken to implement preventative measures for the future?
5. Are there any international laws concerning sovereignty and precedence on the forced intervention of the Soviet Union? If so, might they shape the outcome of this event?

¹⁵³ <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/irans-ambiguous-role-in-afghanistan/>

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DEBATE, DISCUSS, DISCOVER

HORIZONS V