

TWO TIGERS IN AFGHANISTAN: THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE U.S. RESPONSE 1979-81

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Abstract. *The U.S. and Soviet Union relations have a bitter history since the creation of the United States. This paper deals with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the emergence of the Cold War in 1979 with a particular focus on the U.S. Foreign Policy responses to the Moscow threat during 1979-81. Soon after the Soviet troops entered into Afghanistan, Washington felt a threat to its interests in the region; hence, warned the Soviets to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan as well as re-established its foreign policy against them. The White House took a various set of unilateral and mutual actions as well as funnelling billions of dollars and armaments to Afghan freedom fighters (AFF) to battle against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. President Jimmy Carter's administration further reduced its relations with Moscow and developed an alliance with other countries to punish the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. This study is based on recent primary, but reliable declassified material of the governments of the U.S, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union as well as some eyewitness's biographies.*

Keywords: *United States, Soviet Union, Cold War, U.S. Policy Response, Alliance*

Introduction: Historical Background

Afghanistan is known as the place of invaders as many external intruders tried to exercise control over it for centuries. The Soviet Union, for instance, which was one of them, sought to have control over Afghanistan in 1979, a historical fact that resulted in the emergence of the Soviet – U.S. Cold War, in which the various external actors of the United States played a pivotal role in punishing the Soviets in Afghanistan. To gain a full understanding of this game, one needs to go back to the early 1930's when the control of Afghanistan's empire was waning, a complex historical moment that later paved the way for the emergence of the Soviet – U.S Cold War as well as the reforms in U.S foreign policy against Soviets.

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King Zahir Shah had been ruling Afghanistan since 1933. By then, the country was one of the most underdeveloped countries of the world. Therefore, numerous Afghans, particularly the reformist urban elite, stood against Zahir Shah. They became a leading resistant group known as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The PDPA was established in 1965 under the leadership of Nur Mohammad Taraki and Babrak Karmal (Afghan politicians) and these both strongly opposed the king's corruption as well as the backward nature of the country. Both Taraki and Babrak agreed on the socialist, political and economic reforms, however, not with the stance to solve these issues from a common perspective. Therefore, Karmal withdrew from PDPA and formed his own group and called it Parcham. This is while Taraki called his faction Khalq and both continued the opposition against the government and demanded reforms.¹

On the other side, Zahir's cousin and former Prime Minister Muhammad Daud also had his own political interests in getting to exercise control over the ruling chair. Therefore, Daud coordinated with Afghan military officers, Parcham leaders, and the government's interior minister to launch a successful coup against Zahir while he was on his vocational trip to Italy. He declared that "it is an end of monarchy and the beginning of a republican government." Daud further reformed the moderate, social and economic policies as well as took steps back from the Soviets; however, he was never wholly able to ignore Moscow. The U.S. Security agencies, on the other hand, considered that Daud "was happiest when he could light his American cigarettes with Soviet matches."²

Many political and religious leaders such as Burhanuddin Rabbani, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi and Abdul Rabb-ur-Rasul Sayyaf did not accept Daud's "atheistic" reforms; therefore, stood against his government. In 1975, Daud banned political opposition and enhanced his ties with Washington and Iran. The U.S. leadership welcomed Daud's new foreign policy reforms and stated, "he had made significant contributions to the improvement of regional stability – thereby helping to fulfil another principal U.S. objective."³

Daud further alienated various Parchamists from the government to make his secure grip over the party, but this action made the Parchamists and some other government allies angry. However, by 1977, Khalq and Parcham agreed to unify the PDPA again and allied with the Daud's government. The day came, on April 27, 1978, when PDPA with the collaboration of the military forces, overthrow Daud's government and replaced the republican government under Taraki and Karmal with a socialist stance, which was called "Saur Revolution." This new socialist and pro-Moscow government established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) party and cemented a treaty of "friendship" with Moscow in December 1978, which brought some aid and advisors to Afghanistan from the

¹ Oleg Leonidovich Sarin and Lev Semenovich Dvoret'skiĭ, *The Afghan Syndrome: The Soviet Union's Vietnam*, Novato, CA: Presidio, 1993, p. 35; The National Security Archive, *Afghanistan: Lesson from the Last War*; Afghanistan: The Making of U.S Policy, 1973-1990, 9 October 2001. <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html>.

² The National Security Archive, *Afghanistan: Lesson from the Last War*.

³ *Ibid.*

Soviet Union. This new government further reformed the social and economic policies; Khalq (Taraki and particularly Hafizullah Amin) began to remove the Parchamists from his government to exercise control over the regime. These actions further alarmed the Islamic leaders as well as the Parchamists.⁴

The opposition against the Afghan Government was growing day-by-day, and Amin, as defence minister, failed to exercise control over the insurgency that alarmed Moscow. In September 1979, the Soviet Union called Taraki to decide on Amin's future and helped him get a secure grip over the government. This is while Amin was well aware of the discussion between Moscow and Taraki. Therefore, on his return to Afghanistan, Amin arrested Taraki, executed him and started his control over the ruling chair.⁵ These ruler-coaster games gave more space to the Islamic resistance movements; hence, the Amin had lost control of 23 of Afghanistan's 28 provinces to numerous Islamic resistances. Under these circumstances, Amin requested the Soviet Union to help the Afghan government as well as send its troops against the rebels.⁶ That surprised Washington and resulted in the emergence of Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to reveal the history of the U.S. foreign policy initiatives taken by the President Jimmy Carter and his administration against the Soviet Union following their invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The study also sheds light on how Washington reformed its foreign policy and took the hard decisions to secure its interests in Afghanistan as well as punish the Soviets over there. This study is based on recent primary and declassified documents from governments of the U.S, Pakistan, and the Soviet Union as well as some eyewitness's biographies.

Rising the Lions The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union was closely watching all the situations in Afghanistan and found the various weaknesses in Afghan government as well as felt threats from Amin's administration, including his links with the U.S. and other Western countries. Moscow further thought that Amin might change the political directions of Afghanistan from Pro-Soviet to pro-U.S.⁷ However, Soviet leaders initially hesitated to send troops into Afghanistan and wrote a memo to Afghanistan's government on 20 March 1979, explaining that Soviet forces in Afghanistan could provoke other nations, which "might turn out to be more dangerous for our countries. If the Soviet troops were deployed in Afghanistan, the Afghan situation would be worst and our mutual enemy would be ready to interfere while they saw Moscow's

⁴ The National Security Archive, *Afghanistan: Lesson from the Last War*: Beverley Male, *Revolutionary Afghanistan: A Reappraisal*, Taylor & Francis, 1982.

⁵ The National Security Archive, *Afghanistan: Lesson from the Last War*.

⁶ See *Soviet Military Buildup in Afghanistan*: A telegram from U.S Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State dated 27 December 1979. FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 246.

⁷ Muhammad Kakar, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1995, p. 44.

forces in Afghanistan”, as the memo added.⁸ Afghanistan’s political situation was getting worse day-by-day, which further alarmed the Soviet Union. During a meeting on 24 December 1979, the Soviet highly-ranked leaders finally decided to send their troops to Afghanistan. The Soviet Defence Minister later explained that they had decided to send their soldiers into the Southern areas of Afghanistan to help the Afghan Government and their peoples to stop anti-Afghanistan activities from neighbouring countries.⁹ With the aggravation of the situation in Afghanistan, Moscow later re-established its policy towards Afghanistan and decided to send more troops there.¹⁰ At the same time, the U.S. was closely watching the circumstances happening in Afghanistan and viewed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as an act of invasion; therefore, the U.S. Department of State (1977) declared that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R) invaded Afghanistan to get control over the Warm Waters and Persian Gulf region as well as Southeast Asia.¹¹

The United States

The U.S. had various and huge interests in this area and therefore could never ignore the whole region. The National Security Archive (2001) highlighted the U.S. interests in the region and affirmed that:

“Brzezinski and others worried that the USSR might take advantage of its presence in Afghanistan to influence events in neighbouring Iran or Pakistan, two traditionally pro-American countries that for years had helped safeguard U.S. interests in the region, namely access to oil and the containment of the Soviet Union.”¹²

President Carter gave a strong reaction to Moscow’s invasion and received widespread approval among the U.S. policy-makers. During a Fourth Plenary Meeting on June 17, 1979, President Jimmy Carter intensified the U.S. interests in the region and explained, “We have vital interests in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, therefore, the U.S.S.R’s moves towards these areas may be a threat to our interests. Following various steps, “the U.S. and China’s strategic interests are the same, and we can work together in the United Nations or anywhere to get it,” the President further added. Those areas in the world – especially in Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf – where the U.S. and its allies have vital interests,

⁸ See *Record of Meeting of A. N. Kosygin, A. A. Gromyko, D. F. Ustinov, and B. N. Ponomarev with N. M. Taraki*, dated 20 March 1979, George Washington University, General Office, Top Secret, No. P499. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/r3.pdf>.

⁹ Georgy M. Kornienko, *The Cold War: Testimony of a Participant*. Moscow, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1994, pp. 193-95: The National Security Archives-Vol-II, *Afghanistan: Lessons from the Last War*; Vol. II, The Soviet Experience In Afghanistan, Russian Documents and Memoirs, October 9, 2001. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/soviet.html#docs>.

¹⁰ See *How Soviet took hard decision to send its more troops into Afghanistan: Soviet Afghan War*, Part 1-5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXsjVB9Im_s&list=PLmgTvAR7kVmDUp_lxTxfTSCfwRzDJ9Pit.

¹¹ U.S. Department of State, *The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. Response*. 1978-1980: Milestones, 1977-1980. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/soviet-invasion-afghanistan>.

¹² The National Security Archive, *Afghanistan: Lesson from the Last War*.

the president suggested, “we, both sides – Washington and Moscow – should avoid to interference in these sensitive areas otherwise dangerous confrontation might emerge.”¹³

Moscow’s involvement in Afghanistan increased day-by-day, so the U.S. Embassy in the Soviet Union sent a telegram to the Department of State and explained that the U.S.S.R’s actions in Afghanistan were threatening their interests in the region; hence, the U.S. should respond aptly to them. The telegram further suggested building pressure on the Soviets and warning them as to the high costs of their military build-up in Afghanistan.¹⁴ During a meeting with Congress members, President Carter remarked that “no doubt the Soviet’s invasion of Afghanistan is a one-step forward to get the control of oil supplies in such regions and Warm Waters”.¹⁵ On January 23, 1980, during his address to the State Union, the President declared that “America’s primary aim had been to lead the other nations; therefore, any interference in Persian Gulf region will be considered a threat to our interests in the area, and the U.S. should repel these threats by all means”.¹⁶ Finally, the fire of Cold War between the U.S. and Soviets was going to be launched.

The Blame Game

As the U.S. Government was closely watching the U.S.S.R’s military build-up in Afghanistan, the White House sent an urgent telegram to the U.S. Embassy in the Soviet Union insisting on arranging an urgent meeting with a Soviet Foreign Affairs official to ask for an explanation for their military build-up in Afghanistan. The same telegram was also sent to the Soviet Embassy in the U.S. for the said explanation.¹⁷ President Carter wrote another memo to Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, denouncing the invasion of Afghanistan. During the address to the State Union, President Carter announced a policy to protect the Middle East oil from other nations, which was later called the Carter Doctrine.¹⁸ The White House took the Afghan issue severely, and warned the U.S.S.R government by saying:

“We expect that the principle of non-interference will be respected by all parties in the area, including the Soviet Union. No useful purpose is served by false and provocative reports about outside

¹³ See *Fourth Plenary Meeting-International Issues*, dated 17 June 1979. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume 6, Document No. 204.

¹⁴ See *SALT and Afghanistan; Summary of Conclusions of a Meeting of the Special Coordination Committee, 6 June 1980*. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1969-1976, SALT II, 1972-1980, Volume-33, Document No. 250.

¹⁵ Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation. American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*. Washington, DC: Brooking Institution, 1994, p. 972.

¹⁶ Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address – 23 January 1980. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Bh9JN95eS4>.

¹⁷ See *Soviet Military Deployments; A Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union*, dated 15 December 1979. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document, No. 239.

¹⁸ See *The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. Response, 1978-1980*. Milestones, 1977-1980, U.S. Department of State. <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/soviet-invasion-afghanistan>.

interference – especially when they occur at the same time as increased Soviet activity in Afghanistan. We can only wonder at their intent. We would regard external involvement in Afghanistan’s internal problems as a serious matter with the potential of heightening tensions and destabilizing the situation in the entire region.”¹⁹

On December 27, 1979, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow replied to the U.S. State Department’s telegram and mentioned that the embassy asked the first duty minister of U.S.S.R Mr. V.F. Mal’tsev to explain their military build-up in Afghanistan. Mr. Mal’tsev answered in writing that “we (U.S.S.R) sent limited troops to Afghanistan on the request of Afghan Government to remove the external involvement in the country under the UN article 51 chapter 3, and these troops should be removed from Afghanistan as objectives that can be achieved”.²⁰ On December 29, 1979, President Jimmy Carter sent a hotline message to U.S.S.R General Secretary Brezhnev and warned that: “I want to ensure that you have fully weighed the ramifications of the Soviet actions in Afghanistan, which we regard as a clear threat to peace.”²¹

The President added that U.S.S.R military build-up in Afghanistan could mark a crucial turning point in the U.S. – Soviet relations. The Soviets’ decision – without discussion with the U.S. – “is also a violation of the friendship agreement between the Soviets and the U.S. Governments signed in 1972. The U.S. – Soviet’s interests are shared and comprehensive, so both our nations should accept that unilateral decision can be dangerous for other countries; therefore, Moscow should remove its troops from Afghanistan so our relations can become more constructive”, the President added.²² The General Secretary Brezhnev wrote a memo as response to the U.S. President Carter and argued that the Soviet Union did not agree with “your assessment towards Afghanistan and we (Soviet Union) have already clarified to your government that we have sent our troops on the request of Afghanistan’s Government. It is not essential that everyone should agree with us about Afghanistan’s situation that we have sent our forces to Afghanistan for purposes and reasons that followed”, as Brezhnev added:

“The Government of Afghanistan during nearly two years has numerous times turned to us with this request. One of these requests was sent to us on 26 December of this year. This is equally known by us and by the Afghanistan and Government, which sent us these requests. “I must further clearly state to you that the Soviet military contingents did not take any military action against Afghanistan, and we do not intend to do so. “You have blamed us in your message that we did not consult with the USA Government about the

¹⁹ Hilali, A.Z., *U.S-Pakistan Relationship. Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005, p. 144.

²⁰ See *Soviet Military Buildup in Afghanistan: A telegram from U.S Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State dated 27 December 1979*. U.S Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 246.

²¹ *Editorial Note* dated 30 December 1979. U.S Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Volume VI, Soviet Union, Document No. 248, pp. 715-719.

²² *Ibid.*

Afghanistan matter before introducing our military contingents into Afghanistan. Permit us to ask you – did you consult with us before beginning the heavy concentration of naval forces near Iran and in the region of the Persian Gulf, as well as in many other cases, about which it would have been necessary as a minimum to notify us? “There is, of course, no basis for your assertion that our actions in Afghanistan allegedly threaten the peace.”²³

Mr. Brezhnev further suggested to President Carter that “it would be better for us and for other nations that we think calmly and work together for global peace and the U.S. should stop its interference in Afghanistan”.²⁴ On May 27, 1980, the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Thomas John Watson Jr. sent a telegram to the State Department and claimed that Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko called him to discuss the political environment in Afghanistan and he categorically rejected the U.S. assessments towards Afghanistan. The U.S.S.R. “sent its military contingents to Afghanistan to repel the external interference in the Afghan territory, and we are not going to do any violation against the U.S. – Soviet treaty or international law” the Ambassador explained. The telegram further added Gromyko’s words that “our military contingents depended on external interference particularly from Pakistan and Iran, and troops would be removed after peace in the region”.²⁵ During an interview with the *New York Times* on December 31, 1979, President Carter stated that Mr. Brezhnev was not informing the world exactly about the Afghanistan situation and their invitation from the Afghan government. Now his (Carter’s) opinions towards the Soviets were wholly changed, the President added.²⁶ Roy (1987)²⁷ mentioned in his account that during a press conference on January 13, 1980, Brezhnev explained Afghanistan’s situation that “we felt the significant threat to lose Afghanistan and external military build-up on its southern border, which was a considerable security risk for the Soviet Union. Therefore, it was not an easy decision to send its troops to Afghanistan”, Roy added. The *New York Times* (1980)²⁸ published a report that the U.S. Government was divided into two groups towards Soviet military build-up in Afghanistan; some thought it was a vital threat to U.S. interests in the region, while others saw it as Soviet invasion and tried to exercise control over Afghanistan’s territory. Regardless as to how the U.S. interpreted Moscow’s actions in Afghanistan, however, the U.S. administration decided to realize the U.S. response to Moscow on their interference in Afghanistan. Finally, the U.S. re-established its foreign policy towards the Soviet Union and took hard actions against it, which was the beginning of the U.S – Soviet Cold War in 1979.

²³ *Editorial Note*, dated 30 December 1979.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See *Ambassador Watson’s Call on Foreign Minister Gromyko*: Telegram from the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State dated May 1980. U.S Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 279.

²⁶ U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s Interview. *New York Time*, 31 December 1979.

²⁷ Roy Arundhati, *The Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan: Causes, Consequences, and India’s Response*. Associated Publishing House, 1987.

²⁸ Soviet’s Military Build-Up in Afghanistan, *New York Time*, 6 January 1980.

An Angry Pig – The U.S. Initial Responses

Soon after the emergence of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, on January 3, 1980, President Carter asked Senator Robert Byrd to delay the SALT-II agreement due to the U.S.S.R's invasion of Afghanistan. The President further affirmed that Moscow's military build-up in Afghanistan made him more disappointed because of the failure of SALT treaty.²⁹ The President later ordered the withdrawal of SALT-II agreement from Senate and Zbigniew Brzezinski – U.S. National Security Advisor – said “SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogden.” President Carter also banned grain sales and export of technologies to the Soviet Union, and warned that the U.S. could use its troops in case of any further interference in the Persian Gulf region.³⁰

A National Security Council (NSC) meeting was held in Washington on December 31, 1979, to deal with Afghanistan's cause, and show further concern with the Soviets' interference in Afghanistan.³¹ Mr. Brzezinski sent a memo to the U.S. Vice President Mr. Walter Mondale, State Secretary Cyrus Vance, and the Secretary of Defence Harold Brown on January 2, 1980, and updated that NSC meeting reached the following decisions. Brzezinski explained that the U.S. State Department would send a proposal to all concerning the reduction of Soviet diplomatic employees on a case-by-case with the United States employees in the Soviet Union, and the same will be implemented on other Soviet officials who may care to visit the United States. The Soviet Consulates in New York and Kiev would be removed; media broadcasting would be financially backed to publicize the Soviet's actions in Afghanistan; officials in the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan would be reduced up to ten persons; and consular discussions – currently postponed – would not be re-started until further order, the memo further added. The U.S. State Department would delay or reject the Soviet official's visas the same as the Soviets would do with the U.S. officials in Moscow, and the Soviet media would be reduced on case-by-case with the U.S. in Moscow. The dialogue with the Soviet officials on the General Exchange Treaty would not be re-opened, the U.S. would also postpone the agricultural and health committee meetings planned in the Soviet Union, the memo further described. Mr. Sedgwick William Green, a member of the United States House of Representatives, would be convinced to suspend their tour to the U.S.S.R scheduled in the first week of January. All meetings at Assistant Secretary or above level would be reviewed, same as the U.S.S.R's actions; and participation in Olympic – going to be held in Moscow – would be decided after consultation with European allies, the memo further added. Washington “would treat Moscow's officials travel to the U.S. the same as they would treat us in U.S.S.R; Washington also treated the Soviet's

²⁹ Phillip R. Trimble and Jack S. Weiss, “The Role of the President, the Senate and Congress with Respect to Arms Control Treaties Concluded by the United States”, *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, 1991, 67, p. 645.

³⁰ Soviet's Military Build-Up in Afghanistan, *New York Time*, 6 January 1980.

³¹ See *Results of the NSC Meeting, January 2, 1980*: Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Vice President Mondale, Secretary of State Vance, and Secretary of Defense Brown. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 252.

business decisions as they treated us; the U.S. may restrict the business deals with our allies, and the fishing treaty with the Soviets should be restricted”, the memo also added. Brzezinski further suggested that “we would urge our European partners to increase their broadcasting in Muslim states to update the nations about the Soviet’s military build-up in Afghanistan. The U.S. should approach the Security Council to place the Afghan agenda on top, and raised this issue in General Assembly, and the U.S. should inform its allies about our decisions”, Brzezinski finally outlined.³²

U.S. Vice President Mondale also sent a memo to President Carter on January 3, 1980, and said that “we should suspend our agreements for sale of grain to the Soviet Union in which seventeen million tons under agreement and twenty-five million tons have not been yet in any contract. We remind the U.S. Ambassador in the Soviet Union of building up permanent troops in the Persian Gulf region and Indian Ocean, suspending the civil and commercial discussions and reducing the export and fishing to Soviets; and the U.S. raised the issue in the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly about the Soviets’ military forces in Afghanistan”, Mondale further added. The defence and technical material should be availed to China, and global assistance would be stopped to the Afghan government, aid would be provided to the Pakistani Government, and large resources should be provided to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Besides, the defence budget should be increased to counter the Soviet’s actions in Afghanistan, Mondale further explained.³³ On January 9, 1980, Brzezinski sent another memo to President Carter and suggested three main zones for immediate actions; Persian Gulf Region, Far East, and Western Europe. He further emphasized that:

“We need to generate a wider national consensus behind legislative and budgetary matters. Anything less will cause vacillation and accommodation by our allies and by states within the Persian Gulf region.”³⁴

Brzezinski also highlighted the importance of regional security and suggested unilateral and mutual actions such as covert aid and assistance programs; military aid to Pakistan; departure of survey groups to assess facilities for the United States, and review plans for the deployment of U.S. forces; as well as covert aid to Afghan insurgents and security organizations. Brzezinski further suggested that “we (U.S.) should enhance the alliance and security collaborations with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India, China and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to play a decisive role against the U.S.S.R; and supply the financial aid to the refugees in Pakistan”, and affirmed that these all actions may have heavy casts for the Soviet Union.³⁵ On January 20, 1980, President Carter wrote a memo to

³² *Results of the NSC Meeting, January 2, 1980.*

³³ See *Possible Restriction of Grain Sales to the Soviet Union: Memorandum from Vice President Mondale to President Carter dated 3 January 1980.* U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 253.

³⁴ See *A long-term Strategy for Coping with the Consequences of the Soviet Action in Afghanistan: Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter dated 9 January 1980.* U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 256.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

all diplomats posted to the U.S. Embassies in Pakistan and Libya and declared that the U.S. would not participate in Olympic Games because of the U.S.S.R.'s invasion of Afghanistan. He further asked National Olympic Committee to cancel or transfer the Olympics to another venue until the U.S.S.R. withdrew its troops from Afghanistan.³⁶

One Step Forward – The Covert Action

The Carter administration not only took numerous actions against the Soviets by itself but also financially supported the AFF and encouraged them to stand against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. CIA briefed the Special Coordination Committee on December 26, 1979, about the U.S. aid to Afghan mujahedeen and pointed out that:

“The greatest risk that we face is a quick, effective Soviet operation to pacify Afghanistan. This would be extremely costly to our image in the region and to your position here at home. Our objective, then, should be to make the operation as costly as possible for the Soviets. The covert actions that you authorized have been very slow in getting off the ground.”³⁷

Gates (2006)³⁸ mentioned in his worthy account “From the Shadows” that during 1981, William Casey, the Director of CIA and the biggest anti-communist, openly began to support the Afghan covert program and decided to funnel an aid of 20 million dollars for the AFF. In the last months of 1982, the U.S. aid amount reached 60 million dollars per year. The U.S. State Department Directorate (1986)³⁹ wrote a letter to the delegation of the AFF and mentioned the CIA’s role in supplying financial aid to the Afghan resistance movements. The letter further explained that the CIA controlled all the assistance from Washington to the hand of the resistance movements and the department was going to investigate the CIA as 1 billion dollars were issued to them for the FAA, whereas a little amount reached resistance movements. The Federation of American Afghan Action (FAAA) documents also highlighted that FAAA led a constant effort to pass the resolution for the provision of aid to Afghan resistance movements and finally this resolution was passed by 97 to 0 votes in the U.S. Senate and House.⁴⁰ FAAA documents further explained that:

³⁶ See *Presidential Message on Olympics*: Telegram from the Department of State to All Diplomatic Posts, the Embassy in Pakistan, and the Embassy in Libya dated 20 January 1980. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 259.

³⁷ See *Summary of Conclusions: SCC Meeting on Soviet Moves in Afghanistan (S)*: Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordinating Committee Meeting dated 26 December 1979. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Soviet Union, Volume VI, Document No. 245.

³⁸ Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006, p. 251.

³⁹ See *State Department and CIA Policy in Afghanistan – What Afghans and Americans Together Will Do to Fix Them* dated 1986, U.S. State Department Directorate, Federation for American Afghan Action. http://www.jezail.org/03_Eiva-FAAA/Eiva_6.pdf.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

“It would be indefensible to give the freedom fighters only enough to fight and die, but not enough to advance their cause of freedom. The resolution caused growing Congressional support for the Afghan resistance, triggering a 280-million-dollar covert appropriation for the Afghan resistance, approximately 100 million dollars more than the Administration asked for. It was also the largest annual budget ever for a covert paramilitary operation.”⁴¹

On January 5, 1980, a press-report was published with the title of “hush-hush decision” and highlighted the U.S. policy in respect of the provision of every possible aid and armaments to Afghan resistance movements.⁴²



Afganistan: Mujahedin in 1984. Photo from U.S. Foreign Policy in Perspective.

Afghan Freedom Fighters

<http://theragblog.blogspot.com/2009/12/us-in-afghanistan-1979-2009.html>.

External Actors – The U.S. Alliance Policy

President Carter’s administration further decided to enhance the alliance with other countries and encouraged the international community to stand against the Soviet Union’s actions in Afghanistan. The U.S. Special Coordinating Committee Meeting held in the White House on December 26, 1979, regarding the Soviet

⁴¹ *State Department and CIA Policy in Afghanistan – What Afghans and Americans Together Will Do to Fix Them*, dated 1986.

⁴² The National Security Archive, *The Intervention in Afghanistan and the Fall of Détente* dated 1980. https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/carterbrezhnev/docs_intervention_in_afghanistan_and_the_fall_of_detente/fall_of_detente_chron.pdf.

interference in Afghanistan decided that the U.S. should promptly brief all concerned states about Moscow's new developments in Afghanistan.⁴³ On the same issue, Brzezinski wrote a memorandum to President Carter and suggested consulting with European allies, China, Pakistan, and Indian Governments to play their decisive role in this situation.⁴⁴ Later, President Carter approached the heads of states for consultation on Soviet military build-up in Afghanistan and some out of them supported the U.S. narrative and agreed that Soviet influence in Afghanistan was a "grave threat to peace".⁴⁵

Later, an official meeting held between the Islamabad and Washington officials to discuss national and international matters – in particular – the Soviet military build-up in Afghanistan and decided that the U.S. should use its full power until the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, and Pakistan would encourage and support the Afghan freedom fighters against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. During an interview, on asking about the financial support of Pakistan, President Carter expressed his views that Washington was going to funnel billions of dollars to Pakistan as a defensive support in the wake of the Soviet military build-up in Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The U.S. treated Pakistan as more important than Afghanistan, according to the U.S. State Department record, and funnelled the billion dollars to Pakistan for military support and the Afghan cause.⁴⁷ Coll (2004)⁴⁸ told that Pakistan supported Afghan freedom fighters and established thousands of training camps in the northern areas of Pakistan, training thousands of Afghan soldiers to fight against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, and played a role as a bridge between the AFF and Washington. The National Security Archives (Vol. II, 2001)⁴⁹ also highlighted that almost two thousand AFF soldiers were trained in Pakistan under the umbrella of the Pakistani military forces. CIA purchased the Soviet-style weaponry for Afghan freedom fighters and most of the armaments purchased from China, Egypt and elsewhere and handed over to Pakistani intelligence agencies.⁵⁰ Pakistan also provided a new door to the U.S. for gathering intelligence and developed more alliances with each other to punish the Soviets in Afghanistan. Brzezinski sent another memorandum to President Carter and asserted that "we must trust Pakistani leaders and encourage them to support the Afghan freedom fighters as well as review the U.S. policy to supply more and more American aid to Afghan Mujahedeen through Pakistani Intelligence

⁴³ *Summary of Conclusions*, dated 26 December 1979, FRUS.

⁴⁴ See *A long-term Strategy for Coping with the Consequences of the Soviet Action in Afghanistan*, FRUS.

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State Bulletin, *Afghanistan: 4 Years of Occupation*. Office of Media Services & Office of Public Communication. <https://archive.org/details/departmentofstat841984unit/page/n3>.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Wright, *The Unintended Consequences of American Funding in Pakistan*. *The New Yorker*, 16 May 2011.

⁴⁷ *State Department and CIA Policy in Afghanistan*, U.S. State Department Directorate, 1986.

⁴⁸ Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2004*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004, p. 100.

⁴⁹ Svetlana Savranskaya, *Afghanistan: Lessons from the Last War: Vol. II, The Soviet Experience In Afghanistan*, Russian Documents And Memoirs, October 9, 2001, The National Security Archives, Vol. II. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/soviet.html#docs>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Agencies”.⁵¹ *People’s Canada Daily News* newspaper published a story about the U.S. policy towards Afghanistan and reported that George Pratt Shultz (Secretary of State by President Ronald Reagan) proclaimed in front of Afghan Mujahedeen gathering in Pakistani training camps that:

“This a gathering in the name of freedom, a gathering in the name of self-determination, a gathering in the name of getting Soviet forces out of Afghanistan...fellow ‘freedom fighters’ we are with you.”⁵²



Hamid Gul-Pak ISI, Willian – U.S CIA, Clair George – U.S. CIA

<http://www.washingtonsblog.com/2012/09/sleeping-with-the-devil-how-u-s-and-saudi-backing-of-al-qaeda-led-to-911.html>.

The U.S. further moved towards Saudi Arabia to get its confidence against the Soviets in Afghanistan. In 1980, Brzezinski travelled to Saudi Arabia and cemented an agreement to match dollar-with-dollar for the support of Afghan freedom fighters against the Soviets in Afghanistan.⁵³ After that, every year the Saudis sent their share to the CIA, and this share was further used to purchase the weapons and other requirements for Afghan freedom fighters.⁵⁴ George Crile (2003)⁵⁵ discusses in his account that Americans and Saudis helped each other to protect Afghanistan, Persian Gulf Oil and warm waters from the Soviets. The

⁵¹ Adrian Levy, and Catherine Scott-Clark, *Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007, p. 64.

⁵² Hafizullah Emadi, *New World Order or Disorder: Armed Struggle in Afghanistan and the United States’ Foreign Policy Objectives*. *Central Asian Survey*, 1999, 18, pp. 49-64.

⁵³ Gates, *From the Shadows*, p. 148.

⁵⁴ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁵ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson’s War: The Extraordinary Story of How the Wildest Man in Congress and a Rogue CIA Agent Changed the History of Our Times*. Grove Press, 2003, p. 165.

CIA and General Intelligence Directorate (GID) of Saudi Arabia agreed to work together against Soviet troops on the Afghan – Pakistani border, and CIA helped the GID to play its role against the Soviets in Afghanistan.⁵⁶

At the same time, U.S. leaders further approached China, Brown visited China on 7 January 1980 and met with Chinese Vice Premier Geng Biao in Beijing regarding Afghanistan's situation, and China condemned the Soviet move towards Afghanistan and called it the biggest threat to the regional peace.⁵⁷ Based on the China – U.S. alliance against the Soviets in Afghanistan, Chinese leaders affirmed 'we have been giving aid to Pakistanis, and they are satisfied with what we have done' and thanks to the U.S. for encouraging us and aiding the Afghan freedom fighters.⁵⁸



U.S Secretary of Defence Harold Brown and Chinese Vice-Premier, 1980s
[https://wondersofpakistan.wordpress.com/author/wondersofpakistan/page/182/.](https://wondersofpakistan.wordpress.com/author/wondersofpakistan/page/182/)

Conclusion

Soon after the emergence of the worst political situation in Afghanistan in the last month of 1979, the Soviet troops entered into Afghanistan, a fact that alarmed the international community. And that was the crucial cause behind the emergence of the U.S. – Soviet Cold War in 1979. After initial warnings, the

⁵⁶ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, p. 80.

⁵⁷ See *Meeting between Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Vice Premier Geng Biao, People's Republic of China: Memorandum of Conversation dated 7 January 1980*. U.S. Department of State, FRUS, 1977-1980, Volume XIII, China, Document 290.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

U.S. re-established its foreign policy towards the Soviet Union concerning their military build-up in Afghanistan. The study finds that the U.S. initially warned Moscow to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan on the one hand, and took unilateral and mutual actions against them on the other. President Carter's Administration further reduced diplomatic relations with the Soviets as well as funnelling billions of dollars and armament to Afghan freedom fighters, to battle against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. This research paper also reveals that the U.S. also enhanced the alliance with other nations, such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China, to punish the Soviets for their wrong decision. The intelligence agencies of the U.S, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia worked together against Moscow and its troops in Afghanistan and forced the Soviets to withdraw. The research outcome of this study is based on first-hand documents, primary sources and most reliable records of the U.S. State Department, President Carter's library, the U.S. Office of the Historian, Pakistani government, as well as on the biographies of eyewitnesses.

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