

# The afghanistan war with the soviet union history essay



The Afghan War changed the Soviets leadership's policies of using armed forces to impose political decisions, and additionally it is important to understand the culture and geography in order to better understand the victory of Afghanistan. Preceding the attack on Afghanistan in late 1970's the Soviet's had previous success with invasions. Their strong successful power was shown in Ukraine (1945-1951), East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia in (1968). The Soviets invasion in Afghanistan was a repeat of 1968 and also similar to the Vietnam US War. The Soviets main idea to invade Afghanistan, encountered several problems which kept them in Afghanistan for over nine years, predating both the coup of 1973 and the April revolution also known as " Saur revolution"; seizing power from Daoud. This revolution occurred in 1978 after the death of the " Parcham" which was a name given of one of the factions of PDPA. The PDPA (communist people's Democratic party of Afghanistan), was divided into two factions in 1967; the Khalq and the Parchem. The PDPA was under the Khalq faction, who wanted to include women's right, although strong Islamic believers did not agree, and the Parcham was a move toward socialism. The PDPA assisted Daoud to take power over Sahir Zhah, setting off the coup. Soviet were supporting Parcham because they believed that Afghans weren't developed enough to undergo communism. The PDPA eventually collapsed and Nur Mohammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal, and Hafizullah Amin overthrew the regime of Daoud, and renamed the country the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).

April 1973, Minister Daoud took power over his cousin who was the king and became President of Afghanistan. Little did he know that six years later in

April 1979, he would be overthrown by a " communist groups engineered by army and air forced officers who had studied the Soviet Union (Grau, W. L. 2004, p. 136)" . Although, in 1973 Daoud Khan came to a violent end, there was an enormous military attack in Kabul and with the help of Afghan military they killed Daoud and family members. It all began following this military coup, which the communist people's Democratic Party of Afghanistan were heading. During his rule Daoud eliminated all communists from the cabinet and began legislation to ban communist parties in Afghanistan. In December 1979, Muslim guerrillas emerged resisting to follow the coup, leading to Soviet troops moving into Afghanistan " setting off an international crisis (Grau, W. L. 2004, p. 134)". The Soviets were invited into Afghanistan to help fight the rebels who were so powerful and resisting this regime of communism, officially installed April 27 1978. The coup led pro Soviet Armed forces in, who installed a Marxist government under the leadership of Noor Mohammed Taraki. Rebels in Afghanistan were resisting this new Marxist government who were ' anti religion'. Marxism was mainly a dispute between socialism and capitalism. In 1979 Amin, who later became Prime Minister, assassinated President Taraki. The Prime Minister, Hazifullah Amin, tried to take out Muslim traditions, but the country as a whole had strong Muslim beliefs making this a lot harder to sweep aside. Amin was also a leader of a government who rejected religious beliefs and arrested thousands of Muslims. This caused thousands of Muslims to join the Mujahideen " a guerrilla force on a holy mission for Allah (Hughes, G. 2008, p. 336) who wanted to overthrow those who supported Amin. The Mujahideen were great opponents to this, accounting for seventy-five percent of Afghanistan's populations and the second most powerful military <https://assignbuster.com/the-afghanistan-war-with-the-soviet-union-history-essay/>

power there was absolutely no way they were going to allow religion to be swept away over communism. This outrageous attack took place on Christmas Eve as Soviets were well aware that Western governments were not prepared to attack. Soviets “ seized the salang tunnels, key airfield, key government and communications sites in Kabul” They occupied the main cities and expected it to all finish right then and there. The overall suffering that the Soviets caused on Afghanistan’s during the War was more than Germany on the Russians in World War II. Furthermore they killed Amin bringing into power Babrak Karmal as president.

It quickly became evident by mid 1980 that the Afghans were incapable of defeating the Mujahideen, and supporting a communist party in Kabul. Building socialism was illusory. This touched upon the Russians, who were now in Afghanistan claiming they were invited and that they were there to support the Amin government. The Soviets ideology took a lot longer than planned. Ideally the Soviets planned to send in the Red Army to take over or at least change “ political and economical domination (Hughes, G. 2008, p. 333). Their concept for military occupation of Afghanistan was based on “ stabilizing the country by garrisoning the main routes, major cities, airbases and logistic sites. Providing logistic, air, artillery and intelligent support to Afghan forces; accepting minimal Soviet casualties; and strengthening Afghan forces (Grau, L. W. 2008, p. 3)”, so once the resistance was defeated, the Soviet Army could be withdrawn Quickly within months Afghans armed themselves ready to attack the personal and the entire population in Kabul were chanting “ God is great”, emphasizing their strong Muslim beliefs. In 1980, President Reagan administration “ supplied Afghan rebels with stinger

surface- to-air-missiles, which substantially reduced the effectiveness of Soviet airpower in the war (Kalinovsky, A. 2008, p. 384)". These missiles were being launched up to take down helicopters, and they were mounted up on the shoulders of the soldiers. In 1986 Karmal resigned and Mohammed Najibullah took power. The Afghan War fought under four general leaders who went through the process of leadership throughout the invasion in Afghanistan coming to realise that they were unable to defeat the Afghans; Brezhnev, Chernenko, Andropov and Gorbachev. Brezhnev, who was in power in 1970 and was an important political figure for the Soviet Union, until his death in 1982, was the one lead communism to Afghanistan. Prior to 1970 there was the Brezhnev doctrine which stated " When forces that are hostile to socialism try to turn the development of some socialist country towards capitalism, it becomes not only a problem of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries." The doctrine was also to justify the soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, Furthermore to put an end to democratic liberalization. Many treaties were signed, although they were so broad that they even used these principles to justify their military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 and " neither him nor his people in the government, were party to the decision to invade Afghanistan in 1979 (Kalinovsky, A. 2008, p. 388)". These decisions were taken into account before with the general leader Leonid Brezhnev, who was in favor of limiting interventions only to maintain independent but openly pro Soviet Afghanistan. Brezhnev was not taking orders from Moscow and that is when they took him out of power and put their own candidate in power, and used an adverse intervention to aid the DRA, to fight against the Mujahideen as a <https://assignbuster.com/the-afghanistan-war-with-the-soviet-union-history-essay/>

cover and the Mujahideen's then began a Holy War. The Mujahideen's with time were becoming more equipped with modern weapons. They were becoming smarter as to how to fight the Soviets and didn't leave it easy for them. Receiving new and more powerful weapons they adapted to Soviets strategies; learning how to shoot down helicopters.

Gorbachev since October 1985 started pressing Karmal to change party policy and abandon communism and form a government in which included elements of the opposition (Kalinovsky, A. 2008, p. 384)". Although, two years later in 1987 the situation finally became clear to Moscow that it was more serious than they had thought. Soviet leaders were becoming aware that " their plans for saving the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan government, was insufficient (Kalinovsky, A. 2008, p. 384)". This became one of Gorbachev worries, and that was how the Soviet Union would be looked at in the Third World if the DRA regime was to collapse. They were failing to defeat the Mujahideen, and couldn't believe the power Afghanistan had overcome. In Hungary and Czechoslovakia they had it a lot easier. The Soviets had been trying to influence Afghanistan ideologically and economically and they were not ready to be destroyed. Gorbachev needed to make it clear that they were serious about their withdrawal. He pointed out that the USSR " wanted to be neutral in Afghanistan and did not need to maintain military bases. He knew at this point that withdrawing troops within twelve months would be feasible (Hughes, G. 2008, p. 333)". Soviets leaders tried to find many ways to withdraw from Afghanistan without undermining Soviet status. Gorbachev was willing to sacrifice his long standing position as a leader to stop the supply and arms to the Afghans. The USSR also insisted

that by occupying Afghanistan, Moscow would secure advantages over Pakistan and Iran. Moscow coerced Afghan into signing papers under the UN auspice that April 14 1988 the Soviet army would withdraw. During this time Pakistan and Iran were providing aid to the Mujahideen, and other place like the US, China, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and United Arab Emirates began “ funnelling military and humanitarian aid through Pakistan. It was Pakistan’s best interest to support the Mujahideen who would never accept the Soviets presence (Grau, 2004)”. The war in Afghanistan left the country with many political, economic and ecological problems. “ More than 1 million Afghans died in the war and 5 million became refugees in neighbouring countries. In addition, 15, 000 Soviet soldiers were killed and 37, 000 wounded. Economic production was drastically curtailed, and much of the land lay to waste (Hughes, G. 2008, p. 342).” The CIA provided Muslims between 1986 and 1988 with approximately 1, 000 of the missiles. After the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 in a humiliating defeat, the Afghan government continued to suffer attacks from the Mujahideen who were never going to accept the idea of bringing in Soviet troops to throw away their religion. The Afghan government received “ funding and arms from the Soviet Union until it collapsed in 1991(Grau, W. L. 2004, p. 134)”. Furthermore once the Russians withdrew the US government demanded the return of the weapons, although the response they received by the leader of the Islamic party at the time Yunis Khalis was “ We will not return the stingers, we need them the most (Prados, J. 2002, p. 471).” There was then a long process from the US to get back their missiles and they were buying them back for twice the amount, although in 2001 they still believe that 100 to 200 stingers are in the hands of Afghans.

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Today the Afghanistan War with the Soviet Union has been studied to prove that it led to a major rise of Islam. The following section which elaborates on concerns society has about contribution to Afghanistan and furthermore it will also look at how the US views Islam in today's society. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Red army in 1979-1989 consisted of the US supporting the Mujahideen once again but here against communism. This is where Khalid mentions in his article, how Bin Laden was fighting against Soviet Invaders; US supporting and training Bin Laden. But it had also been an argument that "the Muslims were a threat to Western Christendom long before they became a problem (Khalid, A. 2007, p. 128). Furthermore it raised the question of 'necessary enemy'. Osama Bin Laden was working against the Soviet invaders, during the invasion in Afghanistan and when the Talibans came to power. Bin Laden was originally receiving training from the CIA, who later handed him over to the Islamic fighters. In an article by Oleinik, he views the Afghan war from different perspectives, not only a geopolitical one and military issues, but he observes that there was an important economic factor with regards to the oil and gas industry. The Soviet Union had an interest in "exploitation of gas in Northern Afghanistan (Oleinik, A. 2008, p. 289)". Afghanistan is a very important country connecting Pakistan and India with rich oil and gas. Another problem was the Soviets realizing the Taliban controlled most of the country. Despite the economic factors, the Soviets were engaged in many reforms in Afghanistan, they assisted in training, and in building the police, army, the government and educational systems. The Soviets contributed to a large role in Afghanistan. They created an "Afghan syndrome (Prados, J 2002, p. 469)",



and for them in was a turning point in 1986 when the US supplied air-missiles. Afghanistan declaring victory will remain in history.

Most political and economic issues have been ignored for many years, but recently after the attack in New York in September 2001, there are numerous rumors saying that the US created Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is an Islamic group which was founded in the time of the invasion in Afghanistan 1988 and late 1989. They are formed mainly of Sunni Muslims, and a stateless army in which the majority consider them to be a terrorist organization. Despite the fact of false beliefs which indicate the US and allies created Al-Qaeda, there is absolutely no evidence to prove this, although it is typically ironic how the US does view Islam in today's society. The US since the 1980's always backed up the Afghan Mujahideen, however in the late 1990's America strove to overthrow Taliban Regime, which mostly belonged to Majahideen. The US had always followed a sort of double standard relationships with Islam, although terrorist attacks have openly presented an " opportunity for Washington to attempt to constrain the emerging international system as a whole, to focus it on the issue of anti-terrorism (Yazdani, E. 2008, p. 44)".

The main issue that has affected the US global policy is the terrorist attack on 9/11. It first began with President Bush who tried to identify a fight, although it was quickly focused against the Muslim and Non Muslim world. This point ended up stating that America considered being " supporters of terrorism". This therefore created possible links between the Al-Qaeda terrorists in Afghanistan and some groups of the Islamic world in Central Asia " made these parts a US security priority (Yazdani, E. 2008, p. 47)". Bush at <https://assignbuster.com/the-afghanistan-war-with-the-soviet-union-history-essay/>

this time proclaimed that the evidence they had gathered was pointed towards an affiliate terrorist organization, and that the leader was Osama Bin Laden. He also linked other organizations in other countries including the Egyptian's Islamic Jihad and more. The US seems to be fighting against "authoritarian governments of some Islamic nations, and in other ways the US shows that they are supporting cruel and dishonest monarchies (Yazdani, E. 2008, p. 40)". In other words there is a lot of controversy regarding the invasion in Afghanistan and the US creating Al-Qaeda. Main argument was that they trained Bin Laden for these attacks and there has not been any substantial evidence despite the links they have previously made.

The Afghanistan War till today is seen as an event in time where the Soviet leadership's policies of using armed forces were taken into account while invading. The Soviets did not use any armed forces to attack or tragically destroy a country like the Atomic Bomb dropped in 1945 by the Americans. Although the Soviets at the time were incapable of defeating the Mujahideen for example and they were in possession of serious armed forces, the Afghan War made them consider their political powers. The Soviets were considered throughout history to be the most powerful army having the Red Army in power, and they defeating the German Nazis which was a huge defeat. When Gorbachev made his final decision to withdraw, he did know however that it was important to keep authority and power, because his own people and the outside world. He explains how difficult, long and painful this process was and he wanted to refrain from public embarrassment. The Mujahideen brought upon the Soviets tough opponents, which they knew they were unable to defeat, although they did not want to underestimate their powers.

The Afghan War left Afghanistan with a tragedy they will not forget.

Furthermore in today's society the Afghanistan War has left many with doubts of this war creating Al-Qaeda and terrorism, and the US being the main focus, causing the attack in New York on September 11, 2001. Today many believed that within the next twenty years or so the US will become seriously involved with a " guerilla War". The US remains in Afghanistan, creating a larger risk of setting off a crisis. The Afghan War furthermore demonstrated that regardless of any lessons in past history, there is no army " however sophisticated, well trained, material rich, numerically overwhelming and ruthless can succeed on a battle field if not psychologically fit and motivated for the fight (Grau, L. W. 2008, p. 10)". The Soviets greatly determined this statement, and the Afghans proved it right. Winning a war consists of " moral qualities, strong faith, stubborn determination, individualism and unending patience (Grau, L. W. 2008, p. 10)".

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