

An American Provocation: U.S. Foreign Policy during the Soviet-Afghanistan War

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American President Jimmy Carter and the foreign policies of his administration towards Afghanistan between the spring of 1979 and the beginning of 1981 paved the way for more than a decade of U.S. intervention in the Soviet-Afghanistan War. As the political situation quickly deteriorated in Afghanistan during the last year of the 1970s, the President and his policy advisors began to pay considerably more attention to the Soviet Union's presence in the Southwest Asian country than it had during their first years in office. In doing so, Carter and his men spent much of their time trying to establish a comprehensive strategy for addressing the increasingly hostile political and military climate in light of the Soviet's occupation of the country. Within this context, the research illustrates how President Carter and members of his staff developed a foreign policy that was aimed towards influencing the outcome of the Soviet Union's latest encroachment across national boundaries during the final two years of the administration.¹ This article will examine a handful of important points, starting with why the United States got involved in this particular confrontation in the first place. It will also analyze President Carter's immediate public reaction to the Red Army's invasion and whether or not his administration was genuinely "surprised" by the Soviet Politburo's actions, considering the two nations were in a seemingly

¹ Although the term 'Russian' is often used without discretion when referring to someone or something related to the Soviet Union, I have chosen to use 'Soviet' instead for the sake of accuracy considering it was the USSR that invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. It is also important to clarify why I have decided to call the Soviet opposition – the Afghan Resistance Movement or the *Mujahidin*. The authors who have written on various aspects of this war use a number of terms in reference to the opposition movement ranging from the Afghan Rebels or the Afghan Alliance, to the Holy Warriors of Afghanistan. However, men fighting against the Soviet military are more commonly referred to as the Afghan Resistance Movement or the *Mujahidin* – I have chosen to use the two terms interchangeably as well. Throughout the work these terms may be shortened to the Afghan Resistance or Resistance Movement. With these usages under consideration, the *Mujahidin* or Afghan Resistance Movement is defined as a loosely linked Islamic organization of volunteer fighters and political operatives who felt they were waging a Holy War, or *jihad*, against a non-Muslim government occupying Afghanistan.

endless “Cold War” at the time of the invasion.² In doing so, the research illustrates how the response to the Politburo’s chess move by the decision-makers in Washington, D.C. was ultimately highlighted by the use of the American spy network to carry out the country’s foreign policy in this long conflict. The foreign policy initiatives set forth by the Carter administration following the invasion, were actually put in motion much earlier.

In examining the policy-making process during this two-year period, the analysis will also expose the differences of opinion between the administration’s lead advisors—National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance—on how best to address the Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan. It then recounts the two policy-makers’ ability to work through their contrasting viewpoints in route to the Carter administration’s overall response. Most importantly however, this discussion will explain when the United States government began helping the *Mujahidin* forces confront the Soviet Army. It reveals how the Brzezinski-led NSC ultimately won favor over President Carter during this deliberative period, and in doing so, opened the door for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to take a leading role inside Afghanistan six months *before* the Soviets invaded this geopolitically important country.³

The inroads made by the American intelligence network in the latter half of 1979 paved the way for the Carter administration to establish the two previously noted foreign-policy initiatives towards the war once the fighting officially commenced. The back and forth sway of the Cold War was routinely at the forefront of the two combatants’ strategic decisions, and as such, the Politburo’s move to militarily invade a Third World country during the last week of the year was one that cornered President Carter. With the Iranian Revolution still fresh in the general public’s psyche, particularly the revolutionaries’

² The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Soviet Politburo) was the head governing body of the former Soviet Union. It functioned as the main policy-making apparatus for the Soviet state and its members were responsible for the nation’s decision to invade Afghanistan in December 1979. For clarification purposes, it should be noted here that for stylistic purposes, the terms ‘Kremlin’ and ‘Moscow’ are used interchangeably throughout the work, in reference to the role played by the Soviet Politburo.

³ It should be pointed out that the terms ‘rebels’ or ‘insurgents’ will replace *Mujahidin* or the Afghan Resistance Movement where appropriate because American officials use the two words interchangeably to describe the Soviet’s opposition in their now declassified memorandum and other communications to one another.

refusal to release their American hostages, the U.S. Commander in Chief first addressed the most recent circumstances in Afghanistan early in 1980. He then followed up those remarks by laying out America's foreign-policy intentions towards the Soviet occupation of the country during his annual "State of the Union" speech. The President's statements on January 23, 1980 have widely become known as the "Carter Doctrine," and set the stage for an even greater strategic response to the foreign conflict, as witnessed in the unveiling of a new Presidential Directive in January 1981 known as NSC-63. This newly formulated geopolitical strategy created a 'Persian Gulf Regional Security Framework' and was put in place just in time to lay the foundation for future U.S. foreign-policy makers, such as then President-Elect Ronald Reagan and his incoming administration.

Prelude to an Adventure

Any further discussion of the Carter administration's foreign-policy towards Afghanistan before and after the Soviet Union's invasion must center on the perspectives of the President's leaders in both his National Security Council and Department of State. Although the U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, generally agreed on the potential ramifications of a Red Army incursion, the two policy-makers found themselves at odds on how best to deal with a Soviet-backed Muhammad Taraki regime ruling over Afghanistan in the spring of 1979.⁴ The policy considerations emanating from the State Department and National Security Council under the leadership of these two domineering individuals rose to the forefront of a debate on how the United States should respond to the tumultuous situation in Afghanistan. Answering directly to President Carter, the two men

⁴ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar and Strauss, 1983), 428; Thomas Hammond, *Red Flag over Afghanistan: the Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1984), 108. Cyrus Vance (1917-2002) was a former Naval Officer and Deputy Secretary of Defense before serving as President Carter's Secretary of State from 1977 to 1980. He resigned from his post within three years over differences of opinion on a number of policy issues, most notably how the administration was handling the Iranian Hostage Situation.

were best positioned to set the country's foreign-policy direction and had substantially different opinions on the course it should take once Muhammad Taraki took over the country.⁵

The two American officials, whose differences were significant, were apparently in general agreement on the course of action being taken in the country before the Soviet-supported leader took over following the Saur Revolution.⁶ According to historian Thomas Hammond, both Secretary Vance and NSA Brzezinski were willing to take a "wait and see" approach up to this point. In a later interview with Hammond, Brzezinski, when asked how he would respond to the public criticism that asserted the Carter administration had not been forceful enough in their opposition to the Taraki regime's rise to power, defensively asked, "What more could we have done?" He then went on to add, "It was an internal coup with no obvious support from the Soviet Union and did not warrant American intervention." Hammond's work also points out how Brzezinski clearly changed his tone and stance on the situation following the Saur Revolution in noting how the former NSA came to believe that the Soviets were emboldened by the United States' lack of a forceful response to the spring coup over Muhammad Daoud Khan in April of 1978.⁷ Finally, it should be noted how the memoirs of both Brzezinski and Vance reveal their differences

⁵ Nur Muhammad Taraki (1917–1979) was born in the Ghazni Province as part of the Pashtun Tribe in Afghanistan. He was a founding member of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) as leader of the *Khalq* faction and at the forefront of the Saur Revolution. Taraki and his subordinate, Hafizullah Amin, established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) in the days after the April upheaval, but Taraki was soon murdered by Amin just months later as the former Foreign Minister took control over Afghanistan as its new President on September 16, 1979. Ludwig W. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 368-369; David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 32-38, 87-88.

⁶ Edwards, *Before Taliban*, 27-29. The Saur Revolution was orchestrated by Nur Muhammad Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, and a few thousand military officers. The military used tanks and airpower to storm Daoud's palace and quickly deposed of the President and his regime. This event signaled the end to authoritarian rule in Afghanistan dating back to 1930. The two new leaders created the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) in the days after the Revolution and with the support of the Soviet Union, immediately instituted wide-scale land reforms, industrialization of the economy, equal rights for women, and ended feudal relationships in the rural areas of Afghanistan.

⁷ Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1984), 62-65. The date of the interview between Hammond and Brzezinski is not provided; however, the book was published in 1984 and the previous comments are my best estimation of when the meeting occurred. Muhammad Daoud Khan (1909–1978) was born in Kabul and educated in both Afghanistan and France. An early military career and eventual foray into politics led to his position as the nation's Prime Minister from 1953 to 1963 before returning to the government as Afghanistan's President from 1973 to 1978 when he orchestrated a July coup over his cousin, Muhammad Zahir Khan. In taking over as the nation's new leader, Daoud declared Afghanistan a Republic and three years later launched a 7-year plan that relied heavily on the Soviet

of opinion on Afghanistan – before the two men decided to put their varying viewpoints aside in a joint effort to outline the major points of the Carter Doctrine and NSC-63. National Security Advisor Brzezinski claims that he advocated for a considerably different approach to influencing the political environment in Afghanistan than what Secretary Vance was calling for. The former NSA no longer wanted to “wait and see” what might be next to require an American response. Brzezinski was starting to make plans for a considerably more aggressive posture by using the CIA to carry out any forthcoming policies in relation to Afghanistan while the former Secretary of State, by his own admission, was content to ride out the wave of existing U.S. aid being sent to the new regime.⁸

Proof of Zbigniew Brzezinski and Cyrus Vance’s opposing viewpoints is first witnessed in how the former National Security Advisor drew upon history to assert that Soviet aggression must be confronted in kind anywhere if it threatened U.S. interests. Brzezinski also figured that having to do so in the Islamic nation of Afghanistan during the latter part of the twentieth century was no different for the U.S. then than before. It was the newest development to the overall “Arc of Crisis” America now faced. This refers to the notion of how the countries situated along the Indian Ocean, having recently undergone a period of instability, faced an already tenuous situation in Iran and the Soviets now positioning themselves to occupy a large part of the overall region if they chose to do so.⁹ However, the President’s

Union for military support and developmental aid to address the country’s social and economic issues. Daoud’s rule over Afghanistan came to a violent end when another coup was staged amidst the Saur Revolution of 1978. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 2nd ed., 256.

⁸ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 426-428, 432-433; Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America’s Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Publishing, 1983), 385.

⁹ A.Z. Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 150. Afghanistan gained newfound geopolitical importance following the Soviet Union’s invasion in late December 1979 in that their military incursion south brought the Politburo’s influence into the Persian Gulf region and only served to further complicate the recent ‘Energy Crisis’ in the U.S. and Western world—a result of the Iranian Revolution and overthrowing of the American-backed Shah of Iran just months before. The tumultuous situation in Iran forced the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to increase oil prices to an all-time high and conflicted with America’s agreed price structure. In turn, the United States quickly found itself looking for a cheaper oil alternative and saw the Politburo’s decision to occupy a nation near one of America’s options, in the country of Saudi Arabia, as something that could not be easily dismissed. It was clear to U.S. policy-makers that they had to respond before losing any more of the country’s already teetering influence over the whole of the Persian Gulf region. The History Channel, “This Day in History: Iranian Students storm U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Leading to Oil Embargo,” History Channel, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/iranian-students-storm-us-embassy-in-tehran-leading-to-oil-embargo> (accessed March 28, 2013).

NSA was prepared to counter the Politburo's move and apparently knew that a transformation of the United States' national security capabilities would have to occur for America to do so.

In referring to his own hand-written notes he had kept during the months leading up to the December encroachment of Afghanistan by the Soviet Army, Brzezinski recalled how, "It is not widely known that during the Carter years, the CIA was held under strict control by the NSC and that the Agency's Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, had limited access to the President."¹⁰ Brzezinski also remembers channeling all of the CIA's information to the President after any important decision was made following a one-on-one "vetting" session between himself and Director Turner.¹¹ Brzezinski's most important recollection of this time however is one that sheds lights on the "means" of the eventual American response to the Soviet's military assault. He pointed out that, "He and Mr. Turner had overcome initial difficulties and eventually went on to develop a very good relationship during these meetings that would ultimately lead to his support for revitalizing the Agency."¹² The degree of

¹⁰ In an effort to address any concerns about his own recollection of the events and circumstances during this period, Brzezinski (1928-Present) provides qualifying remarks about his hand-written notes in pointing out that his comments come from his own memos to President Carter and from the minutes of the many meetings he either oversaw or took part in. The former National Security Advisor served the Commander in Chief in this capacity from 1977 to 1981 and notes how he had access to the Presidential archives while putting the book together. Also, much of his journal entries were composed the same day that noteworthy events took place, usually at night. Moreover, Brzezinski points out that some of the content in his book is quoted directly from his journal notes and that they have been reprinted verbatim, in which he asks his reader's forgiveness if they lack literary elegance due to them having been organized at the end of a tiring day. He remains an influential, if unseen, foreign policy maker to this day. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 72 and xv.

¹¹ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 73. Stansfield Turner (1923-Present) was a career naval officer and served with President Carter in the academy before later becoming the Central Intelligence Agency's 12th Director from March of 1977 to January 1981—the same time his former naval academy classmate was America's Commander in Chief. Central Intelligence Agency, "Stansfield Turner," CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/directors-and-deputy-directors-of-central-intelligence/turner.html> (accessed March 28, 2013).

¹² Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 73. Although a thorough discussion on the 'state' of the CIA during the 1970s and 1980s and why it was under the NSC's 'control' is beyond the scope of research presented here, it is worth mentioning that the intelligence organization was in some sort of flux during this period of time as thoroughly outlined in Stansfield Turner's book, *Secrecy and Democracy: the CIA in Transition*. This work was published in 1985 and provides an understanding of how the former Navy Admiral oversaw a reorganization of the American spy apparatus while serving as the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). Turner provides his version of what has now become known within the intelligence community as the 'Halloween Massacre' when the former DCI eliminated a number of positions within the Directorate of Operations (DO) – the branch responsible for covert action. Public reports claimed that upwards of 2000 positions were cut from this department and that the country's espionage capabilities had been significantly reduced by his decision. In reality however, only 820 positions were eliminated according to Turner and many were already vacant when cut from the espionage program. He stresses that only 17 people were actually fired from the Agency and points out that another 147 individuals were forced into early

Brzezinski's influence and whatever efforts were made to bring about such rejuvenation in the intelligence branch are hard to determine, but the CIA's newfound energy was indeed used by President Carter's administration to carry out the brunt of America's foreign-policy in Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion.¹³

There was hesitation and serious concern about using these new capabilities within the CIA, particularly on behalf of Chief Analyst for Soviet Affairs, Arnold Hoelick, when he contemplated the potential ramifications for the United States the world if America were to embark on such a foreign-policy agenda. Hoelick, in fearing the possible outbreak of World War III, wrote a doomsday scenario memo to CIA Director Turner on March 28, 1979. He was worried the Taraki regime would collapse under the pressure of the burgeoning Resistance Movement inside Afghanistan, and thus force the Soviets and then the Americans to intervene in support of their respective geopolitical interests. Responses of this nature by the Cold War rivals, according to Hoelick, would then likely set off a conflict involving multiple countries worldwide who maintained nuclear weapons capabilities, including China and Afghanistan's neighboring Pakistan.¹⁴

retirement with many others transferring to another department. Most importantly however, Turner asserts the culture of the Directorate of Operations began to change under his guidance when taking over the final say on personnel decisions, annual budgets, and the information put into the Presidential Daily Brief (PDB). The DO was no longer able to dominate the other branches within the overall organization or operate as a separate entity within the Agency itself. It now had to get direct approval for anything and everything it wanted to do from him and future DCI's – something the covert branch was unaccustomed to doing prior to the former Navy Officer coming aboard as the CIA's head. Turner, Stansfield. *Secrecy and Democracy: the CIA in Transition*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985), 183-189, 195-200.

¹³ The Central Intelligence Agency's Afghan Program was given the code name 'Operation Cyclone' and is thoroughly examined throughout Steve Coll's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Ghost Wars*. Over several chapters, he provides the outline of this fourteen-year covert operation that began in 1979 and ended sometime in 1993. With chapter titles such as "Lenin Taught Us," "Go Raise Hell," "We Loved Osama," and "Don't Make it Our War," Coll's work exposes the significant individuals, institutions, and countries involved in the operation between 1979 and 1984 while revealing exactly what kind of material support the CIA provided to the Afghan Resistance Movement over this period of study. Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2004), 42-46, 50-70, 81-82, 91-92, 101-105.

¹⁴ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 43; Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's story of five Presidents' and How they won the Cold War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Press, 1996), 131. It should be pointed out here that the men who joined the volunteer fighters along the Afghan Frontier from Saudi Arabia and elsewhere became known as the "Afghan Arabs" during this conflict. They have been defined as radical Islamists who were mostly of Arab nationality and gained military experience during the Soviet-Afghan War before returning to their home countries with the intention of toppling the government and establishing an "Islamic State." The actual number of fighters who made their way to war zones and took part in the combat during this time is disputed and

The diplomatic branch of the American government did not share similar sentiments with its counterpart in the National Security Council on how to most effectively confront the Soviet Union's military move south. Evidence of opposition to Brzezinski's viewpoints on the situation as head of the NSC is witnessed in how Secretary Vance's leadership of the State Department paralleled the previous concerns voiced by the CIA's Soviet Intelligence Analyst, Arnold Hoelick. President Carter's former Secretary of State recalled how he had led a restrained and isolated approach to the current situation in Afghanistan by sending his Under Secretary for Political Affairs, David Newsom, venturing off to the chaotic nation barely a week after the coup (Taraki over Daoud) to discuss continuing American educational and cultural programs, as well as the on-going economic aid it had been receiving.¹⁵ Secretary Vance then notes how Deputy Newsom returned home to report the situation inside the country as quite fluid and recommended a policy of "wait and see" as perhaps the best one to adopt at this point in time for the United States.¹⁶ With Newsom's experience in Afghanistan, and with the Embassy's reports coming back to Washington pointing to a lack of solid evidence overall surrounding Soviet involvement in the coup, Secretary Vance urged President Carter to continue down the path of providing non-lethal

unknown. However, it is estimated that in the 1980s and early 1990s, 5,000 men were from Saudi Arabia,, another 3,000 came from Yemen, and around 2,000 made the trek from Egypt during the first part of the war. It is also estimated that there were 2,800 Algerians, 400 Tunisians, 370 Iraqis, and another 200 fighters from Libya. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 3rd ed., 25.

¹⁵ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 385; Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 142. David Newsom (1918-2008) was very active in the Carter administration's assessments of the situation, emerging in Afghanistan in 1979 and 1980 as a member of the State Department. He was also on the Special Task Force addressing the Iranian Hostage Crisis and heavily involved in the negotiation process trying to gain their freedom. Prior to his time in the Carter administration, Newsom served in many capacities for the American government including its U.S. Ambassador to Libya between 1965 and 1969 and the Assistant Secretary of Africa Affairs from 1969 to 1973. David Stout, "David Newsom, 90, Diplomat in Iran Crisis, Dies," *The New York Times*, April 5, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/05/us/05newsom.html> (accessed March 28, 2013).

¹⁶ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 385; Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 142. The idea of the United States abruptly cutting off its pre-existing relationship with Afghanistan's government when Muhammad Taraki assumed power over the country and instead taking a 'wait and see' approach towards the new regime was echoed by others who were interested in this conflict as well. Distinguished Professors Louis Dupree and Richard N. Frye viewed Taraki's coup to be more 'nationalist' than 'communist' and supported the perspectives of Theodore Eliot, the American Ambassador to Afghanistan at the time, that eliminating the economic, cultural, and educational programs currently being provided by the United States would only serve to push the new Afghanistan government further into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan*, 62-63.

assistance in hopes of limiting the Soviet's impact on the Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin government.¹⁷

In recalling the United States government's preoccupation with the Iranian hostage crisis in the final months of 1979, it is logical to see why the State Department was not planning for America to covertly intervene with the provision of armaments in a place in which it considered the events in the Islamic country to be tangential to its overall geopolitical interests in the region.¹⁸ Nor does it seem surprising the diplomatic branch was not supportive of the same type of response advocated by that of the National Security Council when taking a moment to consider the mediating purpose and nature of the State Department. But long before the time Secretary Vance resigned from his post in late April of 1980, it had become clear that the National Security Advisor's desire to use the CIA as the driving force behind the American response to the Soviet invasion had won over the President. The influential Brzezinski held quite a different view from his long-time rival on how best to confront their common enemy and arch nemesis in the Soviet Union, and now moved forward to put a foreign-policy in place to do so.¹⁹

Tip of the Spear

Whether or not the Central Intelligence Agency had undergone the revival that President Carter's National Security Advisor was encouraging by the spring of 1979 is hard to say considering how the intelligence organization failed to predict an upcoming invasion that was just months away.²⁰ And

¹⁷ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 385-386; Kaufman, *Plans Unraveled: The Foreign Policy of the Carter Administration* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 162. Hafizullah Amin (1929–1979) was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and educated in both his native homeland and in the United States as a visiting Pashtun nationalist. However, it should be noted that this last point on the Afghan leader being educated within the U.S. at some point in time has been difficult to verify amidst the rest of my research. Amin took over the reins of the newly declared Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as its President on September 16, 1979 by having his superior, Nur Muhammad Taraki, murdered. He was then killed himself just months later during a bloody gun battle with Soviet Special Forces on December 27, 1979 as the Soviet Union began their invasion of Afghanistan. Adamec, *Historical Dictionary of Afghanistan*, 3rd ed., 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 386; Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 142-143.

¹⁹ Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 145.

²⁰ According to one author, evidence revealing the CIA's failure to predict a Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as the spring turned to summer in 1979 is available through a declassified U.S. government document entitled, "Afghanistan: Prospects for Soviet Intervention" from the American ambassador in Moscow to Secretary Vance –

although the Agency did not foresee the Red Army's move south, individuals who worked for the American intelligence apparatus provide an insider's perspective on the situation by highlighting how the American government began to take a greater interest in the political turmoil that was engulfing the country at this time. This notion is witnessed in how the CIA sent a covert memo to the Special Coordination Committee (SCC) regarding Afghanistan as early as March 5, 1979. According to Robert Gates, the early spring memorandum pointed out that, "The insurgents had stepped up their activities against the (Taraki) government and achieved surprising success that has led to the Communists having serious concerns about the increased opposition."²¹

Deeply interested in the simmering environment surrounding Afghanistan's political situation, Robert Gates additionally remembers how another memo issued to the SCC just weeks later noted, "Saudi Arabia was considering the notion of requesting the United States to help the rebels and that they could provide funding and encouragement to the Pakistanis if the U.S. would do so." The American intelligence network's consideration of their nation participating in such activity also led to this late March memo further concluding, "The Soviets could easily step up their own support and military aid, although we believe they are unlikely to introduce regular troops." Most significantly, Gates also recalls how the same memo continued to highlight the notion that, "If the Soviets decided to occupy the country militarily there was no practical way to stop them, but such a move would cause them serious damage in

however I am unable to locate it on the Cold War International History Project website or elsewhere. Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 44-46; 593.

²¹ Gates, *From the Shadows*, 144, 3-4. As a staff member for the President's National Security Council, Robert Gates (1943-Present) left the Carter administration on his own accord to become the Director of the Strategic Evaluation Center in the CIA's Office of Strategic Research in November 1979. By his own admission, Brzezinski was the only member of the White House in which he held similar views regarding the situation in Afghanistan and is in large part the reason he moved over to the intelligence branch. Gates has also served as Deputy National Security Advisor from 1989 to 1991, before becoming Director of the CIA under President George H.W. Bush from November 1991 until January 1993. He recently retired from public service after serving as the nation's Secretary of Defense between 2006 and 2011. In an effort to address any concerns on the reliability of Gates as a source, it should also be noted that he confronts any challenges to his work by using personal recollections surrounding the events and circumstances in the years between 1979 and 1981. Gates points out that he has relied almost entirely on his personal papers and memorandums from the time he spent in the CIA and NSC, as well as from memoirs by individuals that he worked with during this time. The long-time public servant further adds that a majority of the information used can be found in declassified materials now widely available to the public.

the region.”²² Recollections of this nature by those inside the CIA such as Gates serves to illustrate how there were individuals within the foreign-policy apparatus in the United States government who had come to accept the gravity of the current situation inside Afghanistan as the weeks and months passed by in 1979.

Further revelations by Gates offer insight into the President’s decision in the coming months on how the U.S. might respond to the rising tide of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. The first evidence recalls a March 30 mini-SCC meeting in which Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, David Newsom, stated, “It was U.S. policy to reverse the current Soviet trend and presence in Afghanistan, to demonstrate to the Pakistanis our interest and concern about Soviet involvement, and to demonstrate to the Pakistanis, Saudis, and others our resolve to stop the extension of Soviet influence in the Third World.”²³ Additional proof shows how the SCC considered potential responses to carrying out the policy laid out by Newsom in a meeting just one week later. According to Gates, the April 6 meeting consisted of six wide-ranging options that were provided by the CIA and included a small-scale propaganda campaign publicizing Soviet activities in Afghanistan, as well as the potential for indirect financial assistance to the insurgents. The proposal additionally reveals how the intelligence agency contemplated direct financial assistance to the various *Mujahidin* groups instead of indirect support of their anti-Soviet and anti-regime activities; and that assistance of non-lethal material, weapons support, and a range of training and other support options were also considered.²⁴

After a heavily contested debate inside the Carter administration on what may or may not provoke the Soviets into further military aggression in Afghanistan and elsewhere, the President

²² Gates, *From the Shadows*, 144. It should be pointed out here that the provision of information from these declassified memos is hard to come by when doing research on this topic. As previously noted, access to primary documents of this nature is available on-line when visiting the National Security Archive and Cold War International History Project. However, Steve Coll’s second chapter entitled “Lenin Taught Us” as part of his overall work, *Ghost Wars*, and Robert Gates’ ninth chapter, “Carter Turns to the CIA” in his book, *From the Shadows*, are the only two authors who offer significant exploration into the importance of the government’s declassified material regarding how the actual decision-making process took place that resulted in a U.S. foreign-policy of aiding the Afghan Resistance Movement between 1979 and 1984.

²³ Gates, *From the Shadows*, 144; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 44-45.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 145-146.

announced the foreign-policy direction America would pursue in July 1979.²⁵ Yet, for years the general public and historians alike were given the indication that American involvement in Afghanistan began only after the Soviets had invaded just days before the turn of the New Year.²⁶ However, later admissions on the part of Brzezinski and Gates revealed the United States government actually sent CIA operatives into Afghanistan earlier that summer. Declassified documents courtesy of the Freedom of Information Act confirmed their revelations. According to Gates, President Carter's July 3 'Presidential Finding,' "Authorized CIA support for insurgent propaganda and other psychological operations to entail the provision of radio access to the Afghan population through third-country facilities and America's supplying of non-military aid to include a half a million dollars in cash."²⁷ Brzezinski admits to as much in an interview he gave to a French newspaper, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in January 1998. In being asked about Gates' admission in his memoirs, Brzezinski responded:

Yes, according to the official version of history, CIA aid to the *Mujahideen* began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet Army began their invasion of Afghanistan on December 24th of 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was July 3 of 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the Pro-Soviet

²⁵ Gates, *From the Shadows*, 144; Coll's, *Ghost Wars*, 46; and Cooley, *Unholy Wars* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 1999), 19. Cooley also quotes an interview between Zbigniew Brzezinski and Vincent Javert of the *Le Nouvel Observateur*, a French newspaper, noted below.

²⁶ Authors who have written on the overall topic of U.S. foreign-policy during the war, such as Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (2002), Henry Bradsher's, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (1995), Thomas Hammond's, *Red Flag over Afghanistan* (1984), and Olivier Roy's, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (1986), among others, reported that American aid to the *Mujahidin* began after the invasion took place in December of 1979.

²⁷ Gates, *From the Shadows*, 146; Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 46. Coll adds that his research is drawn from his personal files as well as from the "Memorandum of Conversation between HRH Prince Turki and Senator Bill Bradley," April 13, 1980. It is also worth pointing out in gratitude of the research in the book, *The Secret War*, that one can wonder just how 'secret' the U.S. government's July 3, 1979 'Presidential Finding' was at the time of its signing – when on the same day, a foreign newspaper, *Le Figaro*, published an article claiming, "The United States wants to use the developments in Afghanistan as a lever for making the countries and parties deeply committed to the Moslem political camp hostile to the Soviet Union." The French published story goes on to assert another claim that was echoed by a Pakistani newspaper called *Millat*, in reporting the U.S. had moved its diplomatic and covert headquarters in the region from Iran to Pakistan following the Persian nation's political upheaval in 1979 and decided the Muslim country's territory provided the CIA with a perfect opportunity to launch their counter-attack against the Soviet's forces occupying Afghanistan. Bonosky, *The Secret War*, 201. Even if the rest of the world was not privy to the details of the planned American assistance to the Resistance Movement as specified in the classified July 3 'Presidential Finding' – these foreign news reports reveal that there were some countries around the world who were aware that the United States government was likely to take steps towards influencing the situation in Afghanistan as 1979 progressed. Below are links to President Carter's July 3 'Finding.'

regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the President in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.²⁸

The stage was set. President Carter's administration was ready to confront the Politburo's military forces in Afghanistan by aiding the burgeoning Resistance Movement as the summer of 1979 began. Now the Commander in Chief and his staff just needed the assistance of some foreign nations who were also feeling compelled do so. Although a thorough discussion of each nation's varied contributions is beyond the scope of research here, it should be pointed out that there were a number of foreign countries willing to help America carry out its diplomatic and covert policies in Afghanistan. Pakistan, for one, was most eager to do so in assisting the United States provide aid to the Red Army's opposition. The revelations of Robert Gates go on to further reveal that by the end of August Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq had applied enough pressure on the United States for arms and other advanced equipment, that then CIA Director Turner responded with having communications gear, and most significantly, lethal equipment sent to the insurgents via Pakistani handlers.²⁹ Another perspective from inside the depths of U.S. policy-making reveals Director Turner remembering that, "It was not a big struggle to gain Carter's approval for covert support to the *Mujahidin*."³⁰ This is not surprising when recalling the influence of former NSA Brzezinski and his ability to hold sway over the foreign-policy decisions of the President during their time in office together.

²⁸ Below is a link to a face to face interview between Brzezinski and an undetermined Realnews.com journalist that discusses the January 3, 1979 'Presidential Finding' and witnesses the former NSA contending that what was reported in the *Le Nouvel Observateur* article dated January 15-21, 1998 – from an interview the media outlet had previously conducted with him prior to the January publishing – was inaccurate in regards to what he told them regarding 'when' the United States started helping the Afghan Resistance, and whether this aid included lethal supplies and weapons or not. Brzezinski insists he only revealed that the Americans were providing non-lethal assistance, most specifically cash. YouTube, "Brzezinski and the Afghan War Pt," Flash video file, 00:1-3:30 and 5:02-9:05, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGjAsQJh7OM&feature=relmfu> (accessed April 4, 2013).

²⁹ Gates, *From the Shadows*, 147.

³⁰ Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 155. For a thorough understanding of why the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan led to President Carter's willingness to use the capabilities of the CIA as America's main response to it – one can review Henry Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, 191-193. Specifically, his discussion on the "The Trigger Theory" that permeated Washington circles during this time in reference to the Soviet's recent actions in Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen. Steven R. David's journal article, "Soviet Involvement in Third World Coups," is another informative source on how the Soviet Union attempted to promote its vision of utopia around the world during the Cold War. Steven R. David, "Soviet Involvement in Third World Coups," *International Security* 11 (Summer 1986): 3-36.

Apparently Brzezinski and Admiral Turner were on the same page at this time regarding the situation in Afghanistan as the latter further recalls that, “The primary thing we discussed was how we were going to pull it off, and that meant getting Pakistani cooperation. I explained to him how we were going to send Soviet-made weapons (through Pakistan) because we did not want knowledge of our own involvement to get out.”³¹ In considering these remarks, one also has to wonder what the Carter administration expected members of the Politburo to do once they discovered their Cold War rival’s involvement in blunting the Soviet’s influence in Afghanistan, especially when contemplating the Soviet Union’s deteriorating political position inside the country and looming questions as to whether or not the Communist-backed leader, Amin, was leaning towards American influence. Additionally, in recounting Hoelick’s March 28 memo to the White House, and its mention of a Soviet military intrusion into Afghanistan as likely to damage their standing in the region, one can easily start to ask questions about the intentions of the Carter administration. For example, was President Carter’s directive authorizing CIA covert operations in July 1979 designed with the hopes of luring Moscow into sending the Soviet Army across Afghanistan’s border? One could also ask whether or not the administration’s subsequent foreign-policy of “Bleeding the Soviets” was designed with the long-term foresight and intentions of forcing their enemy to make a decision on staying the course or withdrawing from the country?³²

The Soviet Invasion and Immediate U.S. Reaction

With President Carter vacationing at Camp David over the Christmas holiday on the eve of December 24, 1979, intensified violence erupted between Red Army troops and the Resistance

³¹ Hilali, *U.S –Pakistan Relationship*, 155. Hilali’s research on this particular quote cites Christopher Andrews, *For the Presidents Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush*, (New York: Harper-Collins Publishing, 1996).

³² The term ‘Bleeding the Soviets’ is a phrase that many outside the Carter administration have used to critically describe the early stages of American foreign policy towards the Soviet–Afghan War. As the former NSA, Brzezinski was responsible for implementing a policy with strategic aims designed to ‘*Help the Resistance Movement to the last Afghan*’ in meaning the United States government was only giving the opposition forces just enough aid to keep their fight against the Soviets going, but not enough to actually win the war. From the information available, this phrase was never ‘officially’ used by the Carter administration to describe their intentions, but rather was used by others in searching for a way to accurately, or at least adequately, understand what the American government was up to in Afghanistan. Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA’s Final Showdown with the KGB*, (New York: Random House Publishing, 2003), 208-210.

Movement's forces as the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan had begun. Soviet aircraft, tanks and some fifty thousand heavily-armed soldiers rolled through significance parts of the countryside on their way to major cities, most significantly, the nation's capital of Kabul.³³ By December 27, the Red Army had destroyed Kabul's main telephone exchanges and had taken over the post office, ammunition depots, and government buildings including the Ministry of Interior as KGB forces killed the latest benefactor of a coup, Hafizullah Amin, in the process.³⁴

As the "fog of war" took over the Islamic country in the spring of 1980, the Carter administration sat comfortably far from the action in their nation's capital of Washington, D.C. and interpreted the Politburo's acts of aggression as a desperate attempt to support the Afghan communist-backed government. Most importantly however, American policy-makers viewed it as a likely thrust towards the Soviets controlling the Persian Gulf, while knowing nothing of Moscow's fears surrounding the CIA's earlier incursions into the country over the previous summer and fall months of 1979.³⁵ However, as one might suspect considering the two superpowers divisive diplomatic history, the Soviet leaders did not share the same sentiments as those held by their American counterparts. The Soviet Union's rationale for "invading" Afghanistan can be seen in a memo members of the Politburo sent to the United Nations just days after their military move south. On December 27, the Politburo wrote:

As is well known everywhere in the world, including the governments of member nations of the UN Security Council, for a long time there has been outside interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, including the direct use of armed force. It is completely evident that the purpose of this interference is the overthrow of the democratic system established as a result of the victory of the April (*Saur*) Revolution of 1978. The Afghan people and their armed forces are actively repelling these aggressive and giving a rebuff to assaults on the democratic achievements, sovereignty, and national dignity of the new Afghanistan.³⁶

³³ United States President Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," Department of State, *Bureau of Public Affairs* – Current Policy No. 123, Washington, D.C. (January 4, 1980):1.

³⁴ Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 19.

³⁵ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 50, 57.

³⁶ This cable from the Soviet Union's Politburo to their representative at the United Nations office in New York on December 27, 1979 is intended to explain why they intervened militarily in Afghanistan's political affairs and can be accessed through the Cold War International History Project's collection, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan" at the link provided below.

http://legacy.wilsoncenter.org/va2/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=home.browse&sort=collection&item=Soviet%20Invasion%20of%20Afghanistan (accessed March 28, 2013).

In stressing that they were acting under the rights of states to individual and collective self-defense to repel aggression as stipulated in Article 51 of the UN's Charter, the Politburo then contended that:

Under these conditions, the leaders of the government of Afghanistan have turned to the Soviet Union for aid and assistance in the struggle against foreign aggression. Proceeding from the common interests on security issues which have been recorded in the 1978 Treaty of Friendship, Neighborliness, and Cooperation, and in the interest of preserving peace in the region, the Soviet Union has responded to this request by the Afghan leadership with approval and has decided to send limited military contingents to Afghanistan to carry out missions requested by the Afghan government. These missions consist solely of giving assistance to Afghanistan to repel foreign aggression.³⁷

Although the United States' pre-invasion attention and subtle warnings were ignored by the Soviet Union's government, America's initial reaction to the actual incursion across the Afghanistan border and subsequent response was one of great significance and overall consequence.

As we will see, the decisions made and policies set forth in 1979 and 1980 by the Carter administration had an impact on not only the two major combatants involved in the conflict, but also on the American nation itself and a number of other Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian countries in the region as well. Upon the President's return from Camp David four days into the invasion, Zbigniew Brzezinski recalls how a formal NSC meeting took place on the morning of December 28, and according to the then National Security Advisor, "Everyone in attendance knew the situation was grave and that a major watershed had been reached in the American-Soviet relationship."³⁸ The Kremlin's decision to venture militarily into Afghanistan as the 1970s were coming to a close left the American government feeling compelled to respond to the Soviet Union's continued aggression against other nations. The Red Army's march south could not go unabated. America, as the leader of the free world, had to respond.

After much deliberation on what to do next, Brzezinski notes in his memoirs how President Carter made it clear to him that the American government would indeed answer the call. In a meeting on December 28, 1979, the former NSA recalled how his boss wanted a tough message sent to the Soviet General Secretary, Leonid Brezhnev, directly. Brzezinski even remembers the President himself refining

³⁷ The remarks here are also from the December 27 cable from the Soviet Union to the United Nations and make clear that the Politburo was laying the blame for their invasion of Afghanistan in the hands of America, asserting that had the U.S. not intervened, the Red Army would not have entered the country.

³⁸ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 429.

the NSC's proposed response in asserting, "The Soviets' action was a clear threat to peace and that these actions could mark a fundamental and long-lasting turning point in our relations."³⁹ From this last remark, it appears the Carter administration had finally seen enough. Previous Presidential administrations through the years had witnessed the spread of Soviet influence into Europe in countries like Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and also watched the Soviet's impact grow on the continent of Africa in places like Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen. Much of Southeast Asia had also become significantly influenced by the Soviet Union as evidenced in nations such as North Korea, China, Vietnam, and elsewhere. Even Latin America felt the Soviet's impact in Guatemala, Chile, and on the island just ninety miles off the American coastline, in Cuba, and this Southwest Asian country, which brought the Soviet Union one step closer to the strategically important oil reserves of the Persian Gulf. Where would the Soviets go next if the United States did not confront the Red Army's march into Afghanistan?

Brzezinski also recalls this same December 28 meeting having more consequences regarding the American's decision to combat the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan. The former NSA further confirmed CIA Director Turner's previously noted recollections on influencing President Carter by recalling, "The United States additionally realized the need for reassuring Pakistan of its willingness to support the rebels cause while also protecting the Islamic nation's sovereignty from positions inside Afghanistan." Brzezinski went on to point out that additional efforts were made to enhance relationships with the leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia before summarizing how the President sent Warren Christopher to Pakistan for a visit with the country's leader, General Zia, in order to demonstrate American support.⁴⁰

Brzezinski's commentary on the American government's extensive policy deliberations as a result of the Soviet Union's military attack on Afghanistan reveal how many of the U.S. policy-makers

³⁹ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 429.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Warren Christopher (1925-Present) served in the Carter administration as Deputy Secretary of State from February 26, 1977 to January 20, 1981 and was instrumental to negotiating the release of American hostage being held by Iran. U.S. Department of State, "Secretary of State Warren Christopher," <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/biographies/christopher.html> (accessed March 28, 2013).

were now of the thinking that “Détente was dead” in reconsidering their previously accepted notions on how the two superpowers had resisted a violent confrontation with one another and instead, interacted diplomatically towards the other throughout much of the 1970s.⁴¹ His remarks also provide evidence of just how significant the Soviet Union’s encroachment into Afghanistan had become for the United States government, despite the Carter administration’s preoccupation with the Iranian Hostage Crisis as 1979 came to a close. The latest turn of events in Southwest Asia in fact led to a handful of public speeches by President Carter that were made within the first weeks after the invasion and ultimately changed the course of U.S. foreign policy towards the Soviet Union and several countries within the Persian Gulf region.

As previously noted, Brzezinski had a significant impact on the direction of American foreign-policy in regards to the Soviet’s presence in Afghanistan. The former NSA recalled that he had discussed at length with the President that, as Commander in Chief, his response should serve as the initial departure from their administration’s previous policy of moderately supplying the Afghan Resistance. Consisting of three main points, the first considered the adoption of sanctions directed at the Soviet Union specifically, while the second notion, in accordance with an American effort to shape a “Regional Security Framework,” contemplated the formulation of a doctrine linking the security of Afghanistan with that of the United States. The third pinpointed the need to accelerate the United States’ strategic renewal in terms of both the country’s doctrine and its defense budget if the nation was going to have the ability to facilitate the previous two point’s proposals. Following his lengthy discussions with President Carter, Brzezinski also remembered overseeing a series of NSC meetings spanning a five-day period starting on December 30 as the Council and State Department provided their boss with a list of some forty or so “punitive” measures that could be taken in response to the Soviet military’s overt action.⁴²

It is worth noting at this point in the analysis of America’s reaction to the Soviet invasion that the former National Security Advisor also recalled how his previous differences with Secretary of State

⁴¹ Tom Lansford, *A Bitter Harvest: U.S. Foreign Policy and Afghanistan*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 127.

⁴² Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 430.

Vance were put aside as both leaders began to realize the magnitude of the situation.⁴³ At the same time however, Brzezinski still carried his own strong personal beliefs and feelings regarding the deliberations in recalling them through journal notes of this period in writing:

Had we been tougher sooner, had we drawn the line more clearly, had we engaged in the kind of consultations that I had so many times advocated, maybe the Soviets would not have engaged in this act of miscalculation. As it is, American-Soviet relations will have been set back for a long time to come. What was done had to be done, but it would have been better if the Soviets had been deterred first through a better understanding of our determination.⁴⁴

Brzezinski's remarks offer possible proof to the question of whether or not the United States increased their "activity" in the summer and fall months of 1979 with the hopes of luring the Soviet Union into Afghanistan. They give one the impression that the American government hoped to prevent a military incursion through diplomacy. That said, one could respond with a counter-argument and evidence asserting the U.S. government is not going to openly acknowledge they tried to influence the boiling situation to the point that the Soviets felt the need to launch a war inside the geopolitically important nation of Afghanistan. Especially when considering the American's earlier assertion that doing so would have tragic consequences for the Soviet Union's status in the region, and to their nation overall.

⁴³ It is interesting to note how, under the umbrella of the overall larger Cold War, Zbigniew Brzezinski also provides commentary on remarks he made suggesting that the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan opened the door for an improved U.S.-Chinese security relationship. The former National Security Advisor then recalls his rival, Secretary Vance, taking the opportunity at later White House briefing on Afghanistan to reference previous comments the hardline diplomat had made about the possibility of enticing the Soviet's to withdraw through some sort of arms deal – to firmly state that the U.S. was not going to be supplying arms to either the Chinese or the Soviets. To the best of Brzezinski's recollection, these remarks were followed by Donald Rumsfeld then standing up to ask the question, "Is anybody in any seriousness suggesting or even contemplating selling arms to the Soviets?" It should be noted that this last comment on the part of Rumsfeld, and then later recalled by Brzezinski, is difficult to verify especially when further research into the former Defense Secretary's career reveals him to be working in the private sector at the time of this national security briefing and did not re-enter public service until 1983 when Ronald Reagan was President. That said, Rumsfeld may have indeed been in attendance considering his interest in Cold War foreign-policy and was worth mentioning here when considering how the Soviet's military move south clearly led to U.S. policy-makers contemplating some peculiar, if not hard to justify, options in trying to remove the Red Army from Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf region overall. Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 429, 431, 433.

⁴⁴ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 432.

Turning Up the Heat

With the speculated and perhaps even provoked Soviet invasion of Afghanistan now a reality, the Carter administration had a decision to make on how they would counter such an overt violation of international borders by their Cold War enemy. Evidence that an American response was imminent came in the form of the President's January 4, 1980 speech on Afghanistan outlining a handful of punitive measures that might be taken by the United States in light of the invasion.⁴⁵ He was not ready to commit the American government to specific policies just yet. As we will see, these would come a few weeks later in his annual State of the Union address to the nation on January 23. President Carter began his January 4 speech concerning the events in Afghanistan by stating, "I come to you this evening to discuss the extremely important and rapidly changing circumstances in Southwest Asia." Then, in referring to the consequences stemming from the Khomeini Revolution, the President goes on to add, "I continue to share with you the sense of outrage and impatience because of the kidnapping of innocent American hostages and the holding of them by militant terrorists with the support and approval of Iranian officials."⁴⁶

After a few brief statements further regarding how his administration was trying to deal with the hostage situation in Iran, President Carter then commenced to briefly review the history leading up to the hostile events in Afghanistan and asserted, "This invasion is an extremely serious threat to peace – because of the threat of further Soviet expansion into neighboring countries in Southwest Asia, and also because such an aggressive military policy is unsettling to other peoples throughout the world." The U.S. leader then continued to note how such acts of aggression were a violation of international law and the

⁴⁵ See the link below for an interesting thirteen minute video montage that initially records citizens from both the Soviet Union and Afghanistan performing mass demonstrations against the Red Army's invasion before then providing part of U.S. President Carter's January 4, 1980 speech in reaction to it. The short video that is available through the National Archives and Record Administration also records Egyptian leader, Anwar Sadat publicly admitting his willingness to help the United States aid the Resistance Movement while also briefly showing the United Nations vote of disapproval for the Politburo's decision to invade Afghanistan. Finally, the montage also captures Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev arriving in the occupied country to meet with a delegation of Soviet officials.

YouTube, "The Afghanistan Situation, 1980," Flash video file, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1doW0t5tY9k> (accessed March 28, 2013).

⁴⁶ United States President Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," Department of State, *Bureau of Public Affairs* – Current Policy No. 123, Washington, D.C. (January 4, 1980):1.

United Nations Charter.⁴⁷ He also made it clear that he felt a Soviet-occupied Afghanistan threatened both Iran and Pakistan while potentially giving the Soviets control over much of the world's oil supply. Each of these statements are worthy of mention when considering the leader of the "Free World" also pointed out how fifty different nations petitioned the United Nations Security Council to condemn the Soviet Union while demanding the immediate withdrawal of their military from Afghanistan. In an apparent effort to add substance to the UN's decision, President Carter further added that, "While the international community waited for them to do so, neither the United States, or any other nation committed to world peace and stability can continue to do business 'as usual' with the Soviet Union."⁴⁸

The President's January 4 speech – in a seeming reference to the significance of learning history's lesson of unopposed aggression from the early years of Adolf Hitler and the rise of the Third Reich – asserted that the Red Army's invasion of Afghanistan was a violation of international borders while highlighting each nation's right to independence. Moreover, in analyzing the Carter administration's response to the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, one has to wonder why more information is not available that reveals any deliberations they may have had regarding more overt action on the part of the United States military. Throughout the research only one remark stands out noting that some within the NSC contemplated the possibility of more aggressive action, only to have Vice-President Walter Mondale quickly shoot down any notions of the idea in light of the upcoming Iowa Caucuses in

⁴⁷ The Charter of the United Nations was signed on June 26, 1945. Within its declarations, the Security Council became the main decision-making body of the United Nations regarding matters of international security and was amended several times to incorporate additional countries into the fold. Article 1 of the United Nations Security Council's charter outlines the *Purposes and Principles* of this multi-national entity in Chapter One by noting it tries to maintain international peace and security. By its own definition, the Security Council's intent was to take effective collective measures towards the prevention and removal of threats to the peace in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. This first Article also states that the Security Council is supposed to develop friendly relations among nations based upon the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. Finally, Article 1 of the Security Council's charter proclaims a desire to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems that are of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character. The international governing body is also responsible for promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for the fundamental freedoms for all without distinction based on race, sex, language, or religion. United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations: Purposes and Principles," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml> (accessed Marchn 28, 2013).

⁴⁸ United States President Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," 1.

1980 and any negative impact military action might have on the President's re-election bid. He reasoned that American voters still held the ramifications of the Vietnam War too fresh in their minds that they would never support such a decision.⁴⁹ Granted the U.S. had only been out of Vietnam completely for less than five years when the Red Army moved south, such a remark leads to asking what it would have taken on the part of the Soviet Politburo for those in Washington to make a foreign-policy decision requiring the deployment of the U.S. military overseas – instead of one that was politically expedient on the domestic front for the sake of keeping their jobs.

President Carter's January 4 speech on Afghanistan highlighted a number of points that are most relevant to a thorough understanding of America's response to the Soviet invasion. It appears that Carter was just flushing out potential policy during this speech, realizing that his administration would then have an opportunity to gauge the public's reaction, both at home and around the world, before actually committing itself in the coming weeks when he addressed the nation once again. For example, the first point emerges with the U.S. leader's assertion that the on-going discussions on a second nuclear armaments treaty with the Soviets known as the 'SALT II' negotiations were now to be put on hold until the United States was able to fully assess the Politburo's intentions.⁵⁰ This decision on the part of the

⁴⁹ Walter Mondale (1928-Present) served as President Carter's Vice-President from 1977 to 1981 when their administration gave way to President-Elect Ronald Reagan. Typically, the position of Vice-President does not have an overly active role in formulating American foreign-policy and as such in the Carter administration – Mondale is perhaps best known for his viewpoints on the Soviet–Afghan War after they were published in *The Christian Science Monitor* on March 10, 1981. The former VP garnered widespread criticism from his political opponents after stating—“ I'm very worried about US-Soviet relations.” “I cannot understand – it just baffles me – why the Soviets these last few years have behaved as they have.” “Maybe we have made some mistakes with them. Why did they have to build up all these arms? Why did they have to go into Afghanistan? Why can't they relax just a little bit about Eastern Europe? Why do they try every door to see if it is locked?” Godfrey Sperling Jr., “Mondale in '84: he may run if Jimmy Carter Doesn't” *Christian Science Monitor* (March 1981). <http://www.csmonitor.com/1981/0310/031029.html> (accessed April 4, 2013).

⁵⁰ United States President Jimmy Carter, “Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan,” 2. Additionally, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) took place between the Soviet Union and United States from November 1969 until May 1972 as part of a larger overall policy between the two countries known as *Détente*. The negotiations main goals were to reduce, and in many cases, even destroy the excessive amount of nuclear warheads each nation was holding in case they needed them against the other in the event of a war between the two rival nations. The second set of extended negotiations (SALT II) began in November 1972 and concluded with President Carter and Soviet Premier Brezhnev signing their agreements in June 1979. However, it is worth offering a reminder that President Carter threatened to disregard the points in their years-in-the-making deal in light of the Soviet's invasion during his

Carter administration clearly demonstrates that the American government's perspective on their relationship with the Soviets had abruptly changed following the invasion. Years later, President Carter, in alluding to the potential consequences of a nuclear war between the two countries, noted that the breakdown of the SALT II negotiations were the most disappointing aspect of the Soviet's actions to him personally.⁵¹

As an extension of the diplomatic breakdown between the two countries, the U.S. Commander in Chief's speech then outlined a number of punitive sanctions that were under consideration with the full support of Congress as a result of the Red Army's presence in Afghanistan. The first notes that there was now going to be a delay of any new Consular facilities that were previously planned for opening up inside the Soviet Union. A second asserts the two nation's on-going cultural and economic exchanges were now being reconsidered.⁵² The cultural and economic exchanges the President alluded to were in reference to the superpowers' agreement dating back to a Summit between President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev when they had met in San Clemente, California during a week-long visit between June 18 and June 25, 1973. Their agreement, which had officially expired just days after the invasion, allowed Soviet researchers access to leading technological institutes and other places within the United States. The American counterparts however, found their access severely limited. The lack of "equal" cooperation quickly became a contentious issue between the Cold War rivals and clearly was the reason President Carter made a public announcement that the on-going negotiations for a renewal was now being reconsidered.⁵³

January 3, 1980 speech – only to recant his earlier threats once being assured that Premier Brezhnev would follow through on his commitments in the agreement as well. See the below web links for more information regarding the SALT I and SALT II negotiations between the United States and Soviet Union. "Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT I)," U.S. Department of State. <http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/salt1.html>; . "Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT II)," June 18, 1979, U.S. Department of State. <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/5195.htm> (accessed April 4, 2013).

⁵¹ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 473.

⁵² United States President Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," 2.

⁵³ Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, 194-195. See the below link to a June 26, 1973 *Washington Post* newspaper article covering the Summit between President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev. Robert G.

In expanding upon his meaning of the two nations "economic exchanges" now being under review, the President highlighted potential restrictions on U.S. – Soviet trade by claiming that American exports were going to be reduced in three important areas if the Politburo did not remove their military forces from Afghanistan immediately. The first area being a halt to "high technologies" or strategic items, the second as one that would severely curtail the Soviet's fishing privileges within U.S. waterways, and the third pointed out that the 17 million tons of grain the United States was about to give the Soviets could be withheld instead. Then, in a final point of interest, though really only as a symbolic gesture more than anything else, was President Carter's mention that the United States would consider boycotting the upcoming Olympic Games to be held in Moscow later that summer if the Soviet's continued their "aggressive" nature in Afghanistan.⁵⁴

As important as these potential retaliatory measures were to the overall American response, the idea that President Carter finished his speech by returning to a brief discussion on the independence and security of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the overall Persian Gulf region speaks volumes about the action his administration was now strongly considering on behalf of their own perceived national security interests and those of the international community. Evidence of such shows itself as the U.S. leader concludes his remarks by reasserting the American-led UN's commitment of forcing a Soviet withdrawal by pointing out how his administration was open to the idea of, "Providing military equipment, food, and other assistance to help Pakistan defend its independence and its national security against the seriously increased threat from the North."⁵⁵ Carter then takes the potential American commitment a step farther. The President reaffirmed the United States' willingness to help other nations in the region by stating the, "International response must match the 'gravity' of the situation inside Afghanistan."

Kaiser, "Brezhnev Says Goodbye to U.S. Till Next Time," *Washington Post*, June 26, 1973, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/summit/archive/june73.htm> (accessed April 4, 2013). This second link is to the text, also courtesy of the *Washington Post*, of the actual agreement itself that President Nixon and Secretary Brezhnev agreed to just days earlier on June 23, 1973. "Joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. Communique, San Clemente," *Washington Post*, June 24, 1973, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/inatl/longterm/summit/archive/com1973-1.htm> (accessed: March 28, 2013).

⁵⁴ United States President Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

It is President Carter's last statement that most succinctly illustrated the American perspective on the significance of the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan bringing them one step closer to the Persian Gulf region as a whole when he draws his public address to a close by firmly stating, "The U.S. will meet its responsibilities."⁵⁶ This last contention by the United States' Commander in Chief is of particular interest in the sense that President Carter finished his initial public remarks on the Soviet invasion by leaving the prospect of whether or not the United States was prepared to use its military might completely up in the air for the American people and rest of the world to ponder. He did make one thing certain however, when during a January 18 public television interview he followed through with one of his Afghanistan speeches' previous warnings by announcing that America was indeed boycotting the upcoming 1980 Olympic Games.⁵⁷ Less than a week after announcing that the U.S. was going through with its planned boycott, President Carter addressed the nation once again during his State of the Union speech on January 23, 1980.⁵⁸

The Carter Doctrine

Although this mid-January of 1980 speech touched on a number of topics, the President's remarks on the security of Afghanistan and the overall greater Persian Gulf region would later become known as the Carter Doctrine. The Khomeini Revolution and the Iranian hostage situation had delivered a dramatic blow to America's geopolitical standing in the region. Now the Soviet Army had been in

⁵⁶ United States President Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," 2.

⁵⁷ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 434.

⁵⁸ The full text of President Carter's January 23, 1980 State of the Union speech is available at the link below, courtesy of the online Jimmy Carter Museum and Library. The statements by the President in establishing a foreign-policy framework for securing U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf region, most specifically access to oil and natural gas, has been labeled the 'Carter Doctrine.' U.S. President Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980," *Jimmy Carter Library and Museum*, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml> (accessed March 28, 2013). The President's State of the Union speech is also available at the video link, below, courtesy of CSPAN's online video library. CSPAN, "State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980," <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/124054-1> (accessed: March 28, 2013).

Afghanistan for almost a month while showing no signs of adhering to the United States and international community's immediate demands of withdrawal. Apparently, it was time for the United States of America to "meet its responsibilities" just as President Carter succinctly stated it would do only weeks earlier. According to President Carter:

There were three basic developments that helped to shape the challenges the United States was then facing with the steady growth and increased projection of Soviet military power beyond its own borders; the overwhelming dependence of the Western democracies on oil supplies from the Middle East; and the press of social and religious and economic and political change in the many nations of the developing world, exemplified by the revolution in Iran.

Although the U.S. leader goes on to point out how each of these factors deserve considerable attention on their own, he then claimed that, "America was now faced with a broader and more fundamental challenge in this region because of the recent military action of the Soviet Union."⁵⁹

Such an aggressive military move essentially summed up the combative and untrusting, yet cooperative relationship between the two superpowers, and after providing some context as to why the United States government felt so threatened by these actions, President Carter returned to the potential responses that he initially had outlined and passed through the public's consciousness weeks earlier during his January 4 address on Afghanistan.

First up on the President's agenda was not so much about punishing the Soviets for their actions as it was about continuing the successful efforts of previous administrations that had been able to prevent a nuclear war between the two countries. He contended, "That's why we've negotiated the strategic arms limitation treaties – SALT I and SALT II. Especially now, in a time of great tension, observing the mutual constraints imposed by the terms of these treaties will be in the best interest of both countries and will help to preserve world peace. I will consult very closely with Congress on this matter as we strive to control nuclear weapons. That effort to control nuclear weapons will not be abandoned."⁶⁰ It did not take long however for the U.S. Commander in Chief to reveal the current divide between the superpowers in making his second overarching point by asserting, "Now the Soviet Union has taken a radical and an

⁵⁹ U.S. President Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980." *Jimmy Carter Library and Museum*, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml> (accessed March 28, 2013).

⁶⁰ President Carter's January 23, 1980 "State of the Union" address - the 'Carter Doctrine.'

aggressive new step. It's using its great military power against a relatively defenseless nation. The implications of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could pose the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War.” He then added:

The vast majority of nations on Earth have condemned this latest Soviet attempt to extend its colonial domination of others and have demanded the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Muslim world is especially and justifiably outraged by this aggression against an Islamic people. No action of a world power has ever been so quickly and so overwhelmingly condemned. But verbal condemnation is not enough. The Soviet Union must pay a concrete price for their aggression.⁶¹

After giving the viewing public the impression that leaders throughout the international community supported the decisions he was about to make, President Carter finally established an American foreign-policy in regards to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf region as a whole when he proclaimed:

While this invasion continues, we and the other nations of the world cannot conduct business as usual with the Soviet Union. That's why the United States has imposed stiff economic penalties on the Soviet Union. I will not issue any permits for Soviet ships to fish in the coastal waters of the United States. I've cut Soviet access to high-technology equipment and to agricultural products. I've limited other commerce with the Soviet Union, and I've asked our allies and friends to join with us in restraining their own trade with the Soviets and not to replace our own embargoed items. And I have notified the Olympic Committee that with Soviet invading forces in Afghanistan, neither the American people nor I will support sending an Olympic team to Moscow.⁶²

The President concluded his January 23 State of the Union address by answering the one question many around the world were wondering – would the United States use military force against the Soviets in Afghanistan? After acknowledging how meeting the Soviet's aggression will take national will, diplomatic and political wisdom, economic sacrifice, and military capability, Carter finished his speech by stating, “Let our position be absolutely clear: an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”⁶³

⁶¹ President Carter's January 23, 1980 “State of the Union” address - the ‘Carter Doctrine.’”

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

NSC-63

The points outlined during President Carter's January 4 and January 23 public speeches led to the formulation of a then classified National Security Council document just over one year later known as NSC-63. This influential document ultimately became the underlying premise of the Carter Doctrine's mandate to establish a greater U.S. military presence within the Persian Gulf region. With significant input and influence of Brzezinski as National Security Advisor and head of the NSC, this Presidential Directive, dated January 15, 1981, was presented to the President and other U.S. policy-makers by Vice-President Walter Mondale, Secretary of State Vance, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, and CIA Director Turner.⁶⁴ Secretary of Energy Charles Duncan and the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others were also a part of this meeting as they all gathered around to formulate a policy outlining America's newfound national security direction surrounding the Persian Gulf region.⁶⁵ In addition to its main focus of securing the Southwest Asian countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the then-classified document also demonstrated the American's intent to protect the Strait of Hormuz while simultaneously strengthening its other regional allies confronted by risks stemming from the recently launched Iran-Iraq War.

⁶⁴ Harold Brown (1927-Present) became the 14th U.S. Secretary of Defense while serving for President Carter from 1977 to 1981. Following the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan, Defense Secretary Brown was asked by his boss to oversee the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. By his own admission, this March 1, 1980 request ordered the RDJTF to develop plans for contingency operations, particularly in Southwest Asia; while maintaining adequate capabilities and readiness for such missions should they arise. United States Department of Defense, "Harold Brown," http://www.defense.gov/specials/secdef_histories/bios/brown.htm (accessed March 28, 2013).

⁶⁵ The Joint Chiefs of Staff was formulated as part of the 1947 National Security Act under President Truman and consists of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Chairman, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The collective body of the JCS is headed by the Chairman or the Vice Chairman, who sets the agenda and presides over JCS meetings. Their responsibilities as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff take precedence over duties as the Chiefs of Military Services. Moreover, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council (NSC), however, all JCS members are by law military advisers, and they may respond to a request or voluntarily submit, through the Chairman, advice or opinions to the President, the Secretary of Defense, or NSC. More information on the JCS can be found on its website page under the section, "About the Joint Chiefs of Staff." Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "About the Joint Chiefs of staff," Department of Defense, <http://www.jcs.mil/page.aspx?id=2> (accessed March 28, 2013).

Before breaking the "Regional Security Framework" down into separate military, economic, and foreign policy components, the Presidential Directive then summarized the U.S. strategy designed to meet these commitments and to defend its vital interests in the region as a whole. The first couple of points in the initiative focus on the United States' ability to build up its own capabilities of projecting force into the region while assisting countries already there with their ability to deter and diminish internal and external threats to each one's stability as they try to resist Soviet penetration—politically, economically, and militarily.⁶⁶ Two subsequent measures that are discussed in further detail later in the document, under "Military Component," were intended to, "Develop a broad range of military and other related response options against the Soviet Union to include U.S. force projection into the region as America tries to compensate for the current Soviet regional advantage of stationing conventional forces." At the same time, the United States wanted to, "Make the Soviet Union aware that it would also face a wide range of economic and diplomatic sanctions on a worldwide basis if it intervened further in the region."⁶⁷

The remaining summarized objectives of the United States' newly formed "Regional Security Framework" would eventually reveal themselves to be unattainable for a variety of reasons and quite relevant to the discussion regarding the Carter Doctrine's initial impact in the early to mid-1980s. The first alludes to the American government's burgeoning realization that a concerted attempt at, "Diminishing radical influences in the region and enhancing U.S. security by working for progress toward a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement" were now more critical than ever. At the same time, one of the final points acknowledges the American understanding of how their efforts at improving the security of the region and their access to it, still needed to, "Remain sensitive to the special historical experience of the region while not placing in jeopardy our relationships or the internal stability of the countries concerned by (the U.S.) insisting on formal basing arrangements."⁶⁸ In considering the magnitude of the situation inside Afghanistan, the objective measures on the part of the United States

⁶⁶ United States Presidential Directive, "Persian Gulf Security Framework," The White House, Washington, D.C. (January 15, 1981):1-2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁸ Presidential Directive, "Persian Gulf Security Framework," 2.

government as outlined in this new 'Regional Security Framework' were to be undertaken immediately and would begin to reveal their significance right away if the scope of this analysis was expanded upon through additional research and discussion.

A thorough judgment on the long-term implications of the Carter Doctrine is also beyond the scope of this analysis, however, its impact on U.S. foreign-policy during the first few years of the war is worthy of further discussion. The overriding goal of the United States' measures was to force the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan as soon as possible. The longer the Soviets took to remove their military forces, the more the Americans intended to make them "bleed" for doing so. A seemingly accurate assessment of the American government's stance is witnessed through the policies set forth by the Carter Doctrine in describing them as, "Defensive at the geopolitical strategic level, but decidedly offensive at the military level" in trying to confront what the President and his administration considered to be the most serious threat to world peace since WWII.⁶⁹ This sort of posture being taken by the Carter administration, most specifically National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, as the 1980s were just beginning provided the American intelligence network with the newfound freedom they needed to do their 'dirty work.'

According to the authoritative work of author Steve Coll and his book, *Ghost Wars*, President Carter's still classified July 3, 1979 "Presidential Finding" was not only meant to help the Resistance Movement, but it also intended to deter any further Soviet aspirations in Third World countries. So with some of the constraints on conducting covert warfare promptly removed by the stroke of President Carter's pen just weeks before leaving office, the American intelligence network was free to secretly ship weapons to the *Mujahidin* by using the word "harassment" as a cover to describe their goal of raising the "costs" of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.⁷⁰ Moreover, with a clear understanding now that the CIA

⁶⁹ Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 148.

⁷⁰ Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 58. Coll's work draws attention to how Carter amended his earlier July 3, 1979 'Presidential Finding' in late December of that year because the administrative had 'collectively' come to the conclusion that the *Mujahidin* forces could not win a war against the Soviet's military without the United States providing weaponry to them in some form or fashion. He also adds that this revised December 'Presidential Finding' was resigned by President Reagan once coming into office in 1981. Finally, Coll's footnote to this discussion reveals

was already at work in Afghanistan before the Red Army invaded the country, it is apparent the United States government needed a way to "blanket" the intelligence network's covert activities with a public foreign-policy towards the Soviet's intervention. The Carter Doctrine was initially established in January 1980 to provide this cover as the American government was just going to "stand up" for the rights and sovereignty of the Afghani people. A year later, NSC-63 was also put into place to justify the actions of the CIA as the spooks shouldered the brunt of carrying out the administration's policies towards the war. Perhaps President Carter himself describes best the immediate significance of his so-called "Doctrine" in trying to oppose the Soviet military's move into Afghanistan. In a January 27, 1981 interview with ABC's Fran Reynolds just one week after leaving office, the now former U.S. Commander in Chief declared, "The Soviet action had made a more dramatic change in my own opinion of what the Soviet's ultimate goals are than anything they have done in the previous time I had been in office." Despite President Carter's previous admission and the subsequent criticism by his political rivals and the mainstream media for such remarks as being naïve; it is now evident his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, had been doing his part for the American government in laying out defensive preparations that helped the administration respond to the Politburo's move as the 1980s began.⁷¹

In reflecting upon his time as the President's most trusted foreign-policy aid, Brzezinski recalls how the outlines and thinking of the Carter Doctrine had been modeled after the Truman Doctrine's enunciated response to the threat posed by the Soviets in Greece and Turkey shortly after World War II.⁷² The former NSA then asserts how, "The collapse of Iran; and the growing vulnerability of Saudi Arabia

how his research came from interviewing U.S. officials (without providing specific names) who were familiar with the Presidential Directive.

⁷¹ Hilali, *U.S.–Pakistan Relationship*, 149. A.Z. Hilali's citations here are drawn from a story in the *New York Times*, December 27, 1981, A7.

⁷² President Harry Truman laid out a speech on March 12, 1947 that committed the United States to providing economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey as part of America's overall larger efforts of 'containing' the spread of the Soviet Union's influence beginning shortly after the end of World War II. The President's public address later become known as the Truman Doctrine and paved the way for the National Security Act of 1947, which was passed that July and created a cabinet-level civilian post for the United States military in the Secretary of Defense. The National Security Act also established the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the National Security Council (NSC) while establishing the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as a way to replace the now defunct Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the military's intelligence gathering apparatus during WWII. George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 614-617.

had dictated the need for such a wider strategic response.” Brzezinski goes on to point out that he had given an interview to the *Wall Street Journal* in early January 1980 in which, “He spelled out the views that were previously discussed in the SCC on the three interrelated central strategic zones and on the consequent need for a new ‘Regional Security Framework’ for the Middle East.” According to his best recollection, he then followed up his public revelations by, “Sending a memo to President Carter on January 9th to show how the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Pakistanis, and the Turks could all be a part of this new alliance to combat Soviet aggression.”⁷³ In hindsight to Brzezinski’s contributions to the American response to the Soviet’s invasion, and the Carter Doctrine specifically, one can lay witness to how the former National Security Advisor was well prepared for this day to come and seemingly had been planning for such for a long time.

The situation in Afghanistan and the overall threat to the Persian Gulf region posed by the Soviet’s military occupation commanded much of the Carter administration’s attention between 1979 and 1981. The American foreign-policy apparatus took notice of the increased violence and political upheaval underway in the Southwest Asian country as the spring and summer months of 1979 wore on. The reaction of the President and his administration in the immediate aftermath of the Red Army’s incursion, and then in turn, their year-long response to the Soviet troop’s sustained presence in this geopolitically important nation revealed how the Kremlin’s decisions brought about the end of Détente. A major watershed moment in the two superpowers’ relationship had now been reached as the 1980s began. This moment of Soviet military aggression led to a significant amount of time spent deliberating “what to do now” in the years between 1979 and 1981 by those within the upper echelons of the Carter administration. Leading policy advisors such as National Security Advisor Brzezinski and Secretary of State Vance held starkly different views regarding the significance of the situation inside the country. Each policy-maker attempted to influence the President on just how the American government should be handling the Politburo’s decision to invade Afghanistan. While the Secretary of State wanted Carter to take a “wait and see” approach in further determining the Soviet’s intentions, the President’s NSA wanted

⁷³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 444.

him to re-energize the capabilities of the CIA so the intelligence wing could "take it to the Soviets" before it was too late to do so. Brzezinski's relentless ambition to move his ideas forward clearly won out over all others within the Carter administration as the American spooks went to work inside the country in order to carry out a newly formulated U.S. foreign-policy of providing non-lethal aid to the burgeoning Afghan Resistance Movement as early as July 1979 – and much earlier than initially disclosed by the American government or realized by the general public. The Politburo's decision to invade Afghanistan six months later served to provide cover for the U.S. intelligence agency's actions, and if anything, offered the Carter administration an opportunity to enhance their initial efforts by eventually supplying lethal aid to the *Mujahidin* forces once the war began.

While the CIA was off doing its "dirty work" of aiding the burgeoning Resistance Movement along the Afghan Frontier, the Carter administration's initial reaction and ultimate response to the invasion is illustrated in how Brzezinski and Vance set aside their differences of opinion on the matter and came up with a strategy for dealing with their commonly held Cold War foe. Together, the two policy-makers first presented the U.S. President with a list of punitive measures that could be taken against the Soviets as a result of their military invasion. As we have seen, President Carter's January 4, 1980 speech was not far behind as he made time for addressing the situation in both Afghanistan and Iran while outlining the soon to come American response that emerged weeks later in the form of the Carter Doctrine. The creation of NSC-63 would also come to life before the administration's time in office was over in January of 1981 with its newfound intent of securing the Persian Gulf region for the betterment of U.S. interests, no matter what the stakes or costs were going to be, as one American President gave way to another.

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