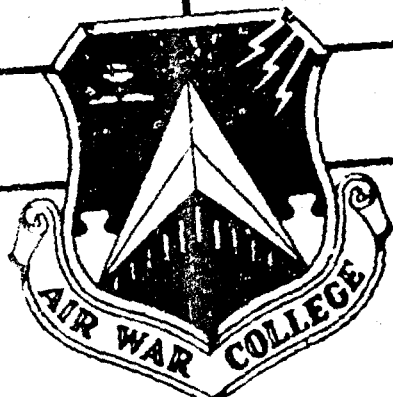


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RESEARCH REPORT

ASSESSMENT OF POLITICO-MILITARY LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE
SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN

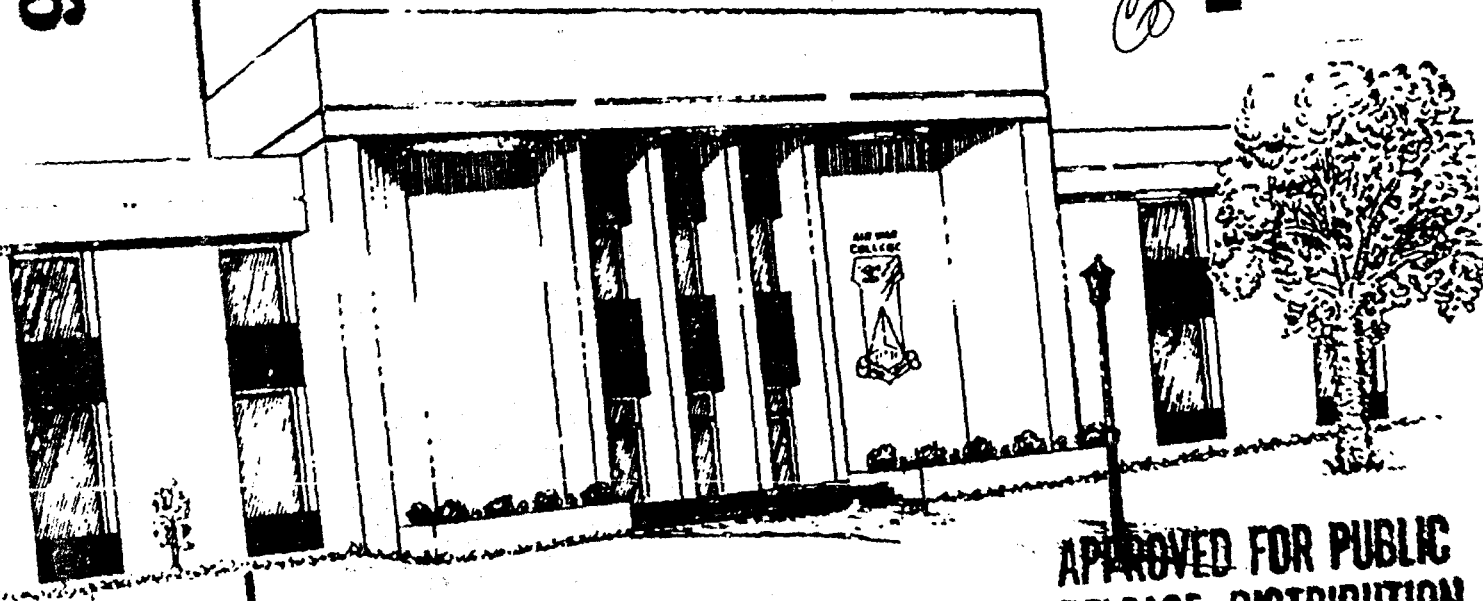
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ASSESSMENT OF POLITICO-MILITARY LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE
SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN

by
Daniel E. Owens, Jr.
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. James E. Winkates

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1989

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Assessment of Politico-Military Lessons Learned From the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

AUTHOR: Daniel E. Owens, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

Assesses the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and nearly 10 year occupation for lessons learned. Examines the historical Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and illustrates the importance of focused international relationships. Shows how U.S. diplomatic failures in Afghanistan created a void that opened the door for the Russians. Afghanistan demonstrates that superpower military intervention in the Third World may only offer temporary solutions and cannot ensure the achievement of political objectives. Five critical lessons learned are enumerated. Afghanistan serves as an example that the United States must clearly define regional foreign policy objectives for the protection of its long term interests.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel E. Owens Jr. received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Tennessee State University in 1969 where he completed Air Force ROTC. His first assignment was to Warner Robins Air Materiel Area, Robins AFB, GA. where he served as a logistics officer. He later cross-trained to aircraft maintenance. Upon graduation from Maintenance Officer School in 1972, he was assigned to the 2750th ABW, Wright Patterson AFB, OH. He went to Nakhom Phanom Thailand in 1973, and was subsequently assigned to Dover AFB, DE. In 1974. Lieutenant Colonel Owens earned a Masters of Arts Degree in Management and Supervision in 1975. He went to MAC Headquarters, Scott AFB, IL in 1977. Lieutenant Colonel Owens moved to the 834th Airlift Division, Hickam AFB, HI in 1979. He assumed command of the 374th Organizational Maintenance Squadron (OMS), Clark AB, Philippines in 1981, and commanded the 438th OMS, McGuire AFB, NJ from 1982 to 1984. Lieutenant Colonel Owens was assigned to the Pentagon in 1984 before coming to the Air War College. He completed SOS and Air Command and Staff College by correspondence. Lieutenant Colonel Owens completed the Air War College Associate Program by seminar in 1984.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, that began in December 1979 is a fertile politico-military laboratory for the United States to use in responding to crises and the security of national interests in the Third World. Lessons learned from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan could be extremely beneficial when considering the use of military alternatives to achieve national policy. When assessing Soviet actions in Afghanistan over the last nine years, casual observers may quickly conclude that the Soviets have failed in their venture. However, when evaluated over long term, the jury is still out.

The United States faces potential threats to its interests in Central America, the Middle East and other regions of the world. While instruments of national policy such as economic aid, participation in international organizations, and diplomacy are actively employed by the U.S. in the conduct of international relations, events or desired objectives could force national leaders to consider the use of military options to ensure the security of U.S. interests.

Any national policy initiative is presumably prefaced with a clear definition of objectives. After other instruments of national policy have failed, the pursuit of national policy objectives through military means makes risk and uncertainty

a reality. Overall Soviet military supremacy over a small country such as Afghanistan is a given, yet a military victory has proven to be out of reach for the Soviets, as can be seen in the February 1989 Soviet withdrawal. The incalculable impact of the powerful Afghan resistance expressed militarily by the mujahidin fighters, the inability of the Soviet supported government known as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to gain support of the Afghan people, international condemnation of the Soviet occupation, and the growing dissatisfaction of Soviet citizens have produced a synergistic effect that challenges the Soviet decision to use military options in Afghanistan. (1:1, 11)

This Defense Analytical Study (DAS) initially focuses on relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan before the 1979 invasion to provide the necessary base for the study. The DAS also closely examines difficulties encountered by the Soviets since undertaking military measures to achieve their objectives in Afghanistan. After the Soviet experience in Afghanistan is understood, specific United States interests in the Third World will be enumerated and pertinent issues explored. Once U.S. interests in the Third World are presented, the stage is set for the assessment of Third World situations that could imperil U.S. interests. These threats to U.S. interests will be compared with the factors contributing to the Soviet military campaign in Afghanistan.

The primary importance of this DAS appears in the final three chapters. First, an assessment of the use of U.S. military force in the Third World will be examined in Chapter VI. This chapter looks briefly at the possibility of employing military force in potential Third World trouble spots and determines extrapolates U.S. public opinion and international responses. Chapter VII closely examines the lessons learned, such as how the Soviets found themselves in Afghanistan, why they remained committed for nine years, and why they have decided to withdraw. Each lesson learned is applied to representative U.S. Third World scenarios and corresponding recommendations developed.

Use of military power to achieve national objectives in Third World nations may not be an effective instrument of national policy in most cases. Afghanistan, like Vietnam, supports this hypothesis. This DAS concludes by emphasizing the exhaustive use of all other instruments of foreign policy before resorting to the use of military force. In essence, political chaos and stifling economic problems thrive in a Third World nation when vast cultural, ethnic, and religious differences exist between a Third World nation and a superpower, then brute military force is not enough to impose the will of a superpower in a Third world country.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF SOVIET RELATIONS AND INTERESTS WITH AFGHANISTAN

Soviet interests in Afghanistan date back to the 1837 when a Russian-backed Persian attempt to seize the city of Herat failed. The following evidence provides insight into the early Russian philosophies concerning the Central Asian region encompassing Afghanistan. The first comes from the Russian manifesto justifying the expedition against the Khan of Khiva (1839):

The rights of Russia, the security of her trade, the tranquillity of her subjects, and the dignity of the state call for decisive measures...to make the inhabitants...esteem and respect the Russian name, and finally to strengthen in that part of Asia, the lawful influence to which Russia has a right, and which alone can insure the maintenance of peace. (2:380)

The second quote comes from a memorandum of Prince Gorchakov in 1864:

The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilized states which come into contact with half-savage, wandering tribes possessing no fixed social organization. It invariably happens in such cases that the interests of security on the frontier, and of commercial relations compel the more civilized state to exercise a certain ascendancy over neighbors whose turbulence and nomad instincts render them difficult to live with... The greatest difficulty is in knowing where to stop. (3:333-36)

It is important to note that British influence in the region was strong and centered in India. British and Russian confrontations occurred several times between 1837 and 1907 due to Russian expansion toward Afghanistan and the British fear that India would be endangered. Britain controlled Afghanistan's foreign affairs from 1879 to 1919, and London feared Russian expansion southeastward toward the Indian subcontinent. The following passage from a letter by British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston describes British concerns about Russia in the region:

The policy and practice of the Russian government has always been to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as apathy or want of firmness of other governments would allow it to go; but always to stop and retire when it was met with decided resistance, and then to wait for the next favorable opportunity to make another spring on its intended victim. (4:102)

Afghanistan's foreign and domestic policies were reshaped by King Amanullah Khan, who sat on the throne between 1919 and 1929, before being exiled. King Amanullah was instrumental in regaining the right to control its foreign affairs from the British following the brief Third Anglo-Afghan War (May-June 1919). Amanullah's reign also marked the beginning of Soviet influence in Afghanistan. The leaders of Afghanistan initially looked upon the Russian Revolution enthusiastically; however, by the mid-1920s most Afghans believed the Soviets had a profound interest in

annexing Afghan territory. Additionally, Soviet anti-religious positions and military encroachments into Afghanistan in 1929 and 1930 made the Afghans suspicious of Soviet motives.

The Soviets intervened militarily in Afghanistan three times between 1925 and 1930. The first incursion occurred in 1925 when Soviet forces occupied Urta Tagall, a small island in the Amu Darya river to prevent Uzbek rebels from using the island as a staging area for raids into the Soviet Union. When King Amanullah was overthrown, the Soviets sent up to 1,000 troops to Afghanistan in April 1929 to attempt to restore Amanullah to power. It is interesting to note that Soviet military forces were overwhelmingly successful in defeating Afghan troops, but were recalled by Moscow before attacking Kabul. The Soviets were disguised as Afghans, but were discovered which led to international opposition of Soviet actions. The withdrawal was prompted by the Soviet desire to maintain a favorable image while the Soviet government was seeking diplomatic relations with the international community. The third Soviet intervention occurred in June 1930 when Soviet troops intruded 13 miles into Afghanistan to deal with a Moslem rebel who had fled to Afghanistan after fighting Soviet rule. (5:6-15)

Afghan-Soviet relations were without significant incident for the rest of the 1930s and into the mid-1940s. The Soviet

Union faced considerable internal turmoil during this period and did not permit further aggression in Afghanistan.

The 1947 division of British India into the separate states of India and Pakistan made it inevitable that Afghanistan and Pakistan would eventually have territorial disputes over borders established in 1893 when the British established the Durand Line. In 1950, Afghan army irregulars attacked a Pakistani outpost that resulted in Pakistan temporarily closing their border to Afghan transport. This placed Afghanistan in a precarious situation since nearly all of their imports were shipped through Pakistan. The Afghan economy was severely impaired by this action. The Soviets saw this as an opportunity and on July 17, 1950, signed an agreement with Afghanistan that facilitated the exchange of Afghan agricultural goods in return for Soviet oil and its by-products, cloth, sugar and other items. The Soviets also agreed to permit the duty-free transit of Afghan goods over Soviet territory. (6:23,27,30)

The 1950 agreement gave the Soviet Union "political leverage on Afghanistan." Though Afghans did not trust Soviet motives in the region, realities forced closer cooperation between the two nations. (6:30-31) Mohammed Daoud became Prime Minister in 1953 and Marxists quickly penetrated his government. Afghanistan had a strong desire to modernize and develop its economy which led to the acceptance of Soviet influence. The Soviets dumped massive economic aid on

Afghanistan beginning in 1953, thus making Afghanistan the highest per capita aid recipient of any Third World nation. Soviet aid totalled more than \$3 billion from 1953 to 1978 (before the establishment of a Marxist government) and included approximately 120 projects. (7:333-334)

Most Soviet programs were designed to serve Soviet long-term political and military objectives. Afghan roads and airports were designed for future Soviet military use. In fact, the silos and hospitals built by the Soviets in the 1950s and 1960s were used in the 1980s by the Soviet military in Kabul. Natural gas, minerals, fruits, and other resources were exported to the Soviet Union at prices substantially below international prices. (7:334)

The Soviets have been successful in preempting Western influence in Afghanistan. Soviet program aid permitted the approval of substantial funds for Afghanistan without specifying specific projects. The Afghan economy was easily penetrated by the Soviets who funded visible and popular programs, underbid projects, provided low interest loans, and allowed liberal rescheduling of loans. Additionally, the Soviets sent technicians to complete programs and provided technical training for Afghans in the Soviet Union. Soviet influence in Afghanistan weakened the conventional Afghan economy where most Afghan people obtained their livelihood. The degree of gradual Soviet dominance on the Afghan economy can be seen by the increase in trade with the Soviet Union

that represented 7 percent of Afghan trade in 1921 and 70 percent in 1985. (7:334)

It is believed the significant increase in Soviet efforts in Afghanistan may have been triggered by the increased presence of the United States in the Near East. The 1954 signing of a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between the United States and Pakistan, and American support of a Turkish-Pakistani military alliance caused the Soviets to place greater importance on Afghanistan. (8:368)

The United States expressed virtually no interest in Afghanistan during the 1950-53 period. American policy makers did not perceive the Soviets as a credible threat, and little strategic importance was given to Afghanistan. Following World War II, the leaders of Afghanistan considered the Soviet Union their chief external threat and did not want to depend on Soviet arms. Some U.S. policy makers thought that open Western opposition toward Soviet initiatives via arms sales or military aid to Afghanistan may have forced the Soviets to seize the country.

A month after the last American turndown on military arms aid (in December 1954), the Afghans initiated negotiations with the Soviets on the Soviet offer to supply arms. Concurrently, the Afghans opened talks and reached quick agreement with the Czechs, in August 1955, to purchase \$3 million worth of Czech weapons; this agreement was the first major Afghan arms purchase since the purchase of British weapons during World War II. (4:102)

In July 1956 the Soviets agreed to a \$32 million concessionary loan for the purchase of Soviet weapons at cheap prices. Other Soviet arms agreements followed. And by 1978 the sum value of Soviet arms sold to Afghanistan totaled \$1.25 billion. (9:90)

Perhaps the most productive Soviet effort was the use of military instructors and advisers in the Afghan military. Soviet advisers were often assigned as low as company level and gave the Soviets an opportunity to recruit Afghans for intelligence purposes. Soviet advisers also selected the most cooperative Afghans for promotion and training in the Soviet Union. Those Afghan military personnel who demonstrated extraordinary interest in Soviet communism and proved "receptive to Soviet influence, were steered to the small but growing Afghan Communist Party." (5:22-23)

Today's communist regime in Kabul has its roots in the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The PDPA was founded in 1965 by a small group of Marxists including Babrak Karmal and Nour Mohammad. The PDPA did not have much impact on Afghan affairs for the first 8 years of its existence, but the dethroning of King Zahir Shah in 1973 in a bloodless coup marked the beginning of change for the PDPA. The coup was led by Mohammad Daoud who declared Afghanistan a republic and named himself president. In its early years, the PDPA experienced internal bickering between two factions, the Khalq (people's group) and the Parcham (banner group). Through Soviet efforts, the Khalq and Parcham factions of the

PDPA re-united in 1977. The PDPA led elements of the army and air force in a successful coup d'etat that resulted in the killing of Daoud, and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan on 27 April 1978. After the 1978 coup, Noor Mohammad Taraki, leader of the Khalq faction of PDPA, became president. He quickly acted by rounding up and jailing hundreds of members of the rival Parcham faction. Many were killed.

Within a few months, armed resistance to the new government was prevalent. Sporadic attacks on government facilities occurred (actually begun during Daoud's rule). Villagers and farmers protested government reforms that included attempts to confiscate land and change Islamic marriage customs. Civil war erupted in March 1979, in the city of Herat. Soviet jets and possibly Soviet pilots responded with the devastating bombing of Herat. Six months later, a successful counter-coup was staged by Hafizullah Amin, leader of the oppressed faction of the PDPA, resulting in the execution of Taraki. Internal conflict continued at increasing levels until the Afghan government was at the brink of collapse. This trend and a great rebel victory over government forces in October 1979 led to the invasion of 85,000 Soviet troops on December 27, 1979. (10:8) Amin was killed after the Soviet invasion and replaced by Babrak Karmal who remained in power until replaced by Najib.

It is essential for one to understand the historical development of the current Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. The first lesson to be learned from Afghanistan is that foreign policy issues must be viewed from a long-term perspective. The Soviets have apparently done this, and the current withdrawal does not necessarily mark the end of the pursuit of Soviet objectives in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS FOLLOWING THE 1979 SOVIET INCURSION

Since the 1979 invasion, the Soviets have attempted to shape Afghanistan to serve the purposes of the Soviet Union. These efforts have been met by considerable resistance. The Soviet Union's failure to measure accurately the strength of this resistance has been the most serious problem facing their military campaign in Afghanistan.

Small groups of Afghans in the countryside opposed Khalq reforms undertaken by Presidents Taraki and Amin in 1978 and 1979. Afghanistan's Islamic foundation presented a natural barrier to atheistic communist ideology. The Soviet invasion changed the character of the resistance from a civil war to a national liberation movement which quickly mustered support. The Islamic religion provides the resistance the moral purpose to prosecute the holy war (Jihad), and is the communication and coordination medium in what is otherwise not a united effort. (7:336)

The Soviet's have been unable to develop the Kabul government to self-sufficiency since the 1979 invasion. Now that the Soviet withdrawal of troops is completed, Kabul's 30,000 to 40,000 man army will become the focus of resistance efforts. Some U.S. intelligence estimates predict the Kabul government will fall within six months after the Soviet

pullout. Soviet analysts envision that after the removal of Soviet troops, Afghanistan will be ruled "as it has been for centuries, by a weak central government in Kabul while real power resides in the regions." (11:49) Though Moscow's desire to maintain a pro-Soviet government in Kabul was the Soviet near-term objective, long-term objectives could center on the historic desire for a warm-water port on the Indian Ocean. It is also easy to visualize Soviet geostrategic considerations related to the oil-rich Middle East.

Though assorted reasons for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could be developed, the one I subscribe to is that the USSR launched the invasion to "contain a rapidly growing insurgency against the oppressive radical Marxist government of Amin." The opposition movement threatened to end the rule of the Kremlin-supported Marxist regime resulting in the formation of a new anti-Moscow government. Military force has failed to achieve or assist in a political solution leading to desired Soviet objectives.

Economic conditions in Afghanistan have always been less than satisfactory due to its limited natural resources, scarcity of arable land, landlocked geographical setting and primitive infrastructure. The Soviet invasion has worsened conditions. Agricultural output has declined resulting in food shortages and the import of grain from the Soviet Union. Since most industry is state owned, the mujahidin has made industrial facilities targets and industrial production has

declined. The PDPA has remained fractured while under the tutelage of the Soviet Union. Political intimidation and assassination readily occur in Kabul and are often masked by blaming the resistance movement. The Soviet controlled Afghan government has been unable to govern effectively. Kabul has been under constant siege despite heavy concentrations of troops. The government has only been able to claim control of Kabul and a few other cities.

Those educated Afghans needed to build the nation have left the country in large numbers as a result of Soviet-inspired actions against the people. The Soviet regime in Kabul has vigorously worked to "sovietize" political life in Afghanistan. Widespread use of arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and the elimination of due process for those accused of political crimes has fueled the mass exodus from Afghanistan. Additionally, armed Soviet soldiers search and rob homes without warrants. Soviet forces arbitrarily retaliate against villages suspected of assisting the mujahidin where ordinary civilians and children have been brutalized. (12:42-48)

Overwhelmingly, world opinion has been against the Soviet invasion. Strong opposition has been voiced by the United States, the United Nations, and the Islamic conference. The world community of Western countries and the Third World have actively condemned Soviet actions in Afghanistan.

On January 14, 1980, just a few weeks after the Soviet invasion, the UN General Assembly passed by a margin of 104 in favor, 18 against and 10 abstaining, a resolution which strongly deplores the recent armed intervention in Afghanistan as inconsistent with the fundamentals of the UN Charter, and calls for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. (13:119-120)

The Muslim World League and the Islamic Congress have provided strong statements against Russian aggression in Afghanistan. In view of probable Soviet desires for favorable international relations with the countries of the Middle East region, the invasion of Afghanistan has been detrimental.

Soviet actions in Afghanistan have created political pressures from within the Soviet Union. Despite distorted reporting of the war in Russia, Soviet citizens view the war with suspicion. Soviet military casualties have been between 4000 to 5000 annually, and the war has cost the Soviets between \$4 to \$6 billion annually. (5:378,380) The manpower and economic costs add to the weakening of Soviet public support.

Now that the background of Soviet relations with Afghanistan has been outlined, and some of the post-invasion problems encountered by the Soviet Union have been listed, it is time to delve into what the Soviet invasion means to the United States, and what we should take as lessons learned when securing U.S. national interests in the international arena. In this study, Afghanistan exemplifies challenges

facing either superpower in the Third World, and assesses how the United States should respond when overt military initiatives are considered necessary.

CHAPTER IV

UNITED STATES POLICIES AND INTERESTS IN THE THIRD WORLD

This chapter transitions from solely an examination of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to a selected analysis of Third World conditions as they relate to United States interests. The Third World consists of the vastly different countries of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and the Eastern Caribbean. The Third World is viewed as a hotbed of potential conflict in its own right and should not be viewed as a pawn in purely East-West terms. This focus on Third World policies and issues is critical in developing parallels between U.S. actions in the Third world and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The overwhelming majority of all armed conflicts in the last 40 years have occurred in the Third World . During this same period, all wars in which the United States was involved were in the Third World.

(14:1,11)

In today's world, global interdependency has become a way of life. We are linked to a worldwide economic system that directly influences the U.S. economy. The United States has vital (willing to go to war to protect) political, economic, and military concerns throughout the Third World. Current conditions in specific Third World nations could eventually threaten American interests in other

regions of the world. Destabilization of democratic governments in some Third World locales is a prime concern of the United States; therefore, the continuation of democratic governments in those nations currently structured democratically is paramount. It is important for the United States to do the following in the Third World:

1. Provide economic development to impoverished Third World countries to narrow the gap between the "haves" and "have nots". Radical and anti-American feelings are often fostered by these conditions.
2. Understand the basis of popular nationalist concepts which are often in marked contrast to Western values.
3. Grasp an understanding of the governmental processes of Third World nations, and accept the fact that Western concepts of government and political life may not work in all cases. Insistence on Western concepts may result in the proliferation of unstable regimes.
4. Do not take actions that will inflame historical or ethnic territorial disputes.

(15:142)

While the Third World is of keen importance, even without introducing the element of outside influence, the activities of the Soviet Union in certain Third World areas force the United States to remain vigilant and participative in Third

World affairs. Geostrategic, and potentially economic and technological, reasons have prompted Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev to venture into Mexico, India, and Brazil.

Increased Soviet diplomatic activity in the Middle East tries to capitalize on the absence of U.S. foreign policy in the region. It should be noted that, with the exception of aforementioned Soviet Third World advances, Gorbachev appears to have discounted much of the Third World as a determinant in Soviet-American competition for independent Soviet geostrategic purposes. This is in contrast to previous Soviet regimes that pursued expansionism through economic assistance and military aid and sought to fill any vacuum created by a lack of Western presence.

U.S. foreign policy towards the Third World under the Reagan Administration lacked both compassion and strategy. U.S. priorities have not been defined, because of preoccupation and attention to peripheral affairs. The dismal economic conditions of many Third World countries should be a matter of concern to the United States. The humanitarian implications of poor economic development and growth are apparent. However, strategic importance should be the key determining factor governing the brunt of U.S. foreign policy towards the Third World. Selectivity must be at the forefront of U.S. Third World policy. The Soviet Union traditionally includes geostrategic interests in its foreign policy with the domination of the Eurasian landmass as its primary

geostrategic objective. Again, I must state that U.S. interest in the Third World is not driven by Soviet factors, but it is important for the United States to respond to Soviet initiatives when U.S. geostrategic interests are served.

Direct counters to known Soviet strategic objectives should be established as a U.S. starting point in shaping Third World priorities. Since World War II, the three Eurasian central fronts have dominated Soviet strategic priorities in U.S.-Soviet competition as Zbigniew Brezinski points out in his Summer 1988 article in The National Interest. Brezinski further states in the article that Turkey proves to be key to the first Soviet central strategic front, South Korea and the Philippines are pertinent to the second strategic front, while Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council States, and the moderate Arab states" are directly related to the third central front. Brezinski indicates it is becoming increasingly apparent that a fourth Soviet front is being formed in Central America. El Salvador, Nicaragua, and possibly Mexico seem to be instrumental to the Soviets in competing with the United States. (16:140-144)

CHAPTER V

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND THREATS TO U.S. INTERESTS IN THE THIRD WORLD

I will now illustrate the parallels between current and future threats to U.S. interests in the Third World and the factors leading to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This is important to comprehend because the U.S. may encounter situations in the Third World that could unknowingly develop to the point that decision makers must consider the use of military force as an appropriate response.

When examining Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion, certain destabilizing factors arose that set the stage for a Soviet military response. U.S. intelligence analysts saw no indication of Soviet subversive activity in Afghanistan as late as the 1960s. Afghanistan was seen as "dependent on the Soviets, constrained in its foreign policy, but completely autonomous in its internal affairs." There was no evidence of Soviet attempts to undermine Afghan sovereignty. The status quo in Afghanistan was eventually affected by the genesis of internal changes within Afghanistan. Constitutional changes advocated by King Zahir in 1964 served as the catalyst for the emergence of the first destabilizing factor in Afghanistan. The new constitution legalized political parties "and established a new

legislative council (Wolesi Jirgah), which was to contain some freely-elected members." The PDPA was formed as a result of constitutional changes and gained several seats in the new legislative council during the 1965 election. Factional disputes plagued the PDPA from the very beginning. The disputes were fueled by personal and doctrinal differences.

Afghanistan experienced a severe famine during the early 1970s and King Zahir's government failed to react meaningfully to the country's needs; thus, the monarchy began to lose the respect of the people. The military ousted King Zahir in 1973 and the former prime minister, Mohammad Daoud, rose to power. Daoud quickly abolished the monarchy and made himself "president of the of the new republic of Afghanistan." The Parcham faction of the PDPA supported the coup, and many Parcham members were appointed to positions in the Daoud regime. The communist leaning of the Parcham rooted Daoud regime generated an "unpredictable, and potentially destabilizing force in Afghan politics."

New policies adopted by Daoud proved to be particularly destabilizing. These new policies generally resulted in reducing Afghanistan's ties to the Soviet Union through such actions as sending Afghan military officers for training to India and Egypt rather than to the Soviet Union, drastically reducing the number of Soviet military advisors and settling disagreements with Pakistan. Internally, Daoud broke his

association with Parcham, purged military officers for leftist ideology, and appointed a well-known, anti-communist as Interior Minister. The Shah of Iran clearly influenced Daoud's anti-communist policies, and in 1974 the Shah of Iran established a comprehensive economic agreement with Afghanistan in which Iran intended to replace the Soviet Union as Afghanistan's main supplier of aid. Daoud's intense desire to reduce dependence on the Soviet Union made him easily susceptible to influence from Iran. The period between 1974 and 1978 saw Iranian influence in the form of construction, agricultural, and industrial assistance programs. Daoud adhered to a more pro-Western policy during the period. "Therefore, the first move, in the series of events leading to the 1978 communist coup, was made, not by the USSR, but by the Shah of Iran." (8:369-370)

The above recount of pre-1979 developments in Afghanistan is intended to serve as an example of how Third World internal affairs can evolve to threaten superpower interests, thus, leading to military intervention. While superpower rivalries are most often thought of as a source for military conflict, the ambitions of the Shah of Iran demonstrate how any outside element can be introduced to instigate conflict in the Third world.

The potential for armed conflict in the Third World exists on a large scale. Third World nations have purchased arms at a rate disproportionate to their overall economic

capabilities. Many newly developing countries have realized limits in their potential for substantial quality-of-life improvements. The hope of emulating the United States through replicating U.S. economic and government methods is growing dim. In many cases, the Third World is a powder keg suffering from problems such as population pressures, pollution, insufficient resources, and a technology gap. Yet these issues have not been high on the list of U.S. priorities when formulating Third World policies and programs. (17:388)

The 25 October 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada provides a recent example of U.S. response to threats to its interests in the Third World. A bloodless coup in 1979 initiated a chain of events that would bring American forces to Grenada four years later. The coup resulted in the country's leadership transferring from Sir Eric Gairy to Maurice Bishop. Gairy had been Prime Minister since Grenada received its independence from Great Britain in February 1974. Grenada was ruled as a parliamentary democracy after independence. Gairy's erratic behavior, corruptness, and use of armed intimidation against critics soon led to the formation of several opposition political movements. Of these opposition parties, the New Jewel Movement "was founded in the early 1970s as a coalition of populist, nationalist and Marxist groups, but after 1974 it took a clear Marxist-Leninist orientation." The principal members

of the New Jewel Movement, Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop, envisioned the movement as a classic Leninist organization through which a radical transformation of society would be achieved through the leadership of a few revolutionaries.

(18:7-8)

When Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement came to power, immediate action was taken to "establish a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship." The transformation of Grenada occurred as follows:

The economy was gradually centralized, with the eventual objective of nationalizing all agriculture and transforming it into a collectivized system along Soviet lines. Political control and repression were increased systematically. A massive campaign of indoctrination and "re-education" was launched to alter popular values and create a new "socialist revolutionary" consciousness supportive of the regime.... The most menacing aspects of the Bishop regime were its militarization of the island and its ties with the Soviet bloc. (18:7-8)

In my opinion, the area of greatest strategic interest that could lure the U.S. into war today is Central America. The geographic proximity to the United States, generally poor economic conditions in the region, political instability, and outside influence serve as obvious parallels to the Soviet relationship with Afghanistan prior to the 1979 invasion. It is totally conceivable that radical changes in the current status quo of Central America could easily prompt reaction by the United States.

Central America has always been seen as strategically significant for the projection of power. U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua in 1909, 1912-1925 and 1926-1933 demonstrates a long-standing U.S. concern for the region. (19:5,7) U.S. interests in Central America actually go back further. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 expressed U.S. opposition to European control or active involvement in the Western Hemisphere. The following excerpt from President Reagan's National Security Strategy of the United States provides a more recent official statement of U.S. desires for the area:

We remain deeply committed to the interdependent regional objectives of democracy, freedom, peace, and economic progress. To achieve these, we must counter the threat of Soviet expansionist policies not only from Cuba, but now from Nicaragua. Critical national security interests in Latin America are based on long-standing U.S. policy that there be no Soviet, Cuban, or other Communist bloc beachhead on the mainland of the Western Hemisphere, or any country that upsets the regional balance and poses a serious military threat to its neighbors. (20:25)

Long-standing policies such as the Monroe Doctrine provide the springboard for U.S. military intervention in Central America. In another region of the Third World, the Manila Pact of 1954 still links the U.S. to the military support of Thailand in the event Thailand encounters external aggression; thus, keeping the U.S. vulnerable to developments in Southeast Asia. (31:18, 213) The U.S. and Western

countries depend on the Middle East for oil, thus making most of the Middle East geostrategically important. U.S. attentiveness to Third World matters is therefore a matter of necessity. These examples of U.S. ties to Third World nations demonstrate how a minor ripple in the Third World could result in a new wave of U.S. military commitment. A U.S. response to its Third World interests could permit the international community to compare U.S. actions to the Soviets in Afghanistan. Soviet determination despite unfavorable domestic and world public is something America should remember when engaged in military operations in the Third World.

CHAPTER VI

WHEN AND SHOULD THE UNITED STATES USE MILITARY FORCE IN THE THIRD WORLD?

This chapter examines the use of U.S. military force in the Third World. The Soviet experience in Afghanistan since the 1979 invasion and the absence of a clearcut victory provide practical reasons for questioning decisions to employ military force in any Third World scenario, while the U.S. actions in Grenada present a counter argument that military responses may be appropriate in some instances. Since many conflicts in Third World countries are inspired by internal political instability, with underlying economic issues, military solutions do not appear to address the issues that can ensure decisive achievement of political objectives.

Before further examination of the application of military force in the Third World, it is important to remember that military objectives should be determined by political objectives. However, when war actually occurs, we see the focus shift to military goals. (22:338) Vietnam provides an excellent example of how things can go wrong if this fundamental principle is not followed. At the peak of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the United States had approximately 540,000 military personnel in South Vietnam fighting and/or supporting the war effort. Despite the overwhelming commitment of U.S. military resources to the Vietnam war, a

1974 survey of Army generals who had commanded in Vietnam indicated that over 70% were uncertain of the war's objectives. (23:66) Additionally, U.S. officials differed on the type of war we should have been fighting. Some believed Vietnam was a counterinsurgency while others saw it as a conventional war with the North attempting to conquer the South. (24:148-149) Future Third World conflicts could lead the United States to commit military forces for similar reasons that led to involvement in Vietnam. President Lyndon Johnson subscribed to several beliefs as to why Americans should be involved in Vietnam. Some of these were:

... The obligation of fulfilling a prior commitment, the necessity of deterring international aggression, the conviction that Vietnam was a test case for wars of national liberation, the prevention of Chinese Communist extension into Southeast Asia, the preclusion of a "domino effect" in the surrounding status, and the desire to maintain the credibility of America's word. (25:5)

The United States may not have the resolve to fight a protracted war in the Third World. In its 30 June 1988 Report, Supporting U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict, The U.S. Department of Defense Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, Regional Conflict Working Group acknowledges that "there will be times in regional conflict when a President decides to use U.S. forces in combat." The Working Group's report makes the following statement on what

our nation's expectations are when U.S. military forces are employed:

Armed interventions such as those in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and Grenada in 1983 (which this Working Group construes as beyond low intensity conflict) have major domestic and foreign policy implications, and cannot be undertaken lightly. The criteria for decision ought to include: can we succeed rapidly, with minimum cost and minimum damage? (14:27)

The United States seems to take a scientific approach to military actions with the belief that U.S. forces can be employed in combat operations and succeed through simple execution of empirically derived methods. This "systems approach" to warfare has been generated by technological advances in mass communications and computer modeling. Deep social and economic problems in the nonindustrial world can be traced back through centuries of evolution. The complexity of issues in Third World countries makes it highly unlikely that quick solutions are possible. (21:23) Any commitment of U.S. military forces in the Third World based on "systems approaches" and corresponding expectations of a quick victory is a grave mistake.

Central America represents only one of several regions of the Third World where political, social, and economic problems could erupt into conflict requiring a military response. Like Vietnam, Central America has experienced a protracted and debilitating pattern of conflict, resulting

from poorly-defined and ambiguous U.S. policies. Major U.S. involvement in Vietnam lasted about 13 years. The present U.S. focus on Central America has already gone on for approximately nine years. "History has documented a finite 'calendar of patience' with respect to the American polity's ability to sustain its attention on complex-and-internally debated-crisis beyond its borders, let alone its willingness to render sacrifice in behest of ill-defined stakes and objectives in such crisis." (21:25) It should be noted that 62 percent of Americans oppose aid to the Contras and 92 percent do not want to see U.S. forces involved in a shooting war in Central America. (27:2)

The following excerpt from the March 9, 1987 Scholastic Update highlights the strategic importance of Central America:

Half of the oil the U.S. uses and half of all U.S. imports and exports are shipped through the region. If a military emergency in Europe required the U.S. to reposition its armed forces around the world, experts say, the U.S. might ship half of its forces through the Panama Canal, which links the Pacific and Indian Oceans. (26:8)

Eva Lozer, a specialist in Central American Affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University, believes previous U.S. policymakers would have used military force to ensure U.S. influence in Central America when she said: "Twenty years ago, we would have used

gunboat diplomacy and sent in the Marines." Ms. Lozer says today, "there has been a realization that this doesn't work. U.S. policy alone cannot bring democracy to the region, unless there is a true desire on the part of the people to open up their political system." In lieu of direct U.S. military involvement, the Reagan Administration has opted to use economic and military aid to promote democracy in Central America. (26:8) An assessment of a theoretical U.S. invasion of Nicaragua presented in The Defense Monitor, Spring 1987, makes a strong pitch against the use of military force in Nicaragua. Besides over 1100 U.S. dead and 6,000 wounded, Nicaraguan civilian casualties would be extremely high. The total cost of such a war would be about \$12 billion and U.S. occupation troops would be required for a minimum of four years. However, the most astounding prediction in The Defense Monitor article is that:

An invasion by the U.S. could make more communists than it kills as the Sandinistas who escape Nicaragua will surely spread their fear, suspicion and hatred of the U.S. throughout all of Latin America.... An invasion would make a mockery of America's commitment to the principle self-determination and bring discredit on our government among millions of our citizens and millions of our friends abroad. (27:7)

While this chapter used Central America to depict issues associated with the use of military force as an instrument of national policy in the Third World, keep in mind that Central America is only representative and the bottom line is that

the use of military force anywhere in the Third World will not necessarily achieve the desired political objectives.

CHAPTER VII
CRITICAL LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 1979 SOVIET INVASION OF
AFGHANISTAN

The Soviet experience in Afghanistan provides numerous lessons that U.S. policy makers and military leaders must not overlook or downplay. Examination of Soviet objectives, doctrine, strategy, and tactics in Afghanistan not only permits an independent assessment of each for its credibility in the context of pre-and post-1979 Afghanistan, but closer analysis provides the United States an opportunity to assess its culpability for today's situation in Afghanistan. Though the evaluation of Soviet actions in Afghanistan presents a wealth of interesting details for study and discussion, the main focus is on extracting lessons from the Soviet experience in Afghanistan for the United States to apply when developing policy and considering the use of military force in the Third World. It is also important to note that this study does not attempt to list all the lessons of Afghanistan, but only those deemed critical or pivotal in potential U.S. Third World affairs. Tactical lessons learned will not be addressed.

The first lesson of Afghanistan is that a clear, attainable political objective is imperative before committing military forces. The relatively closed society of the Soviet Union does not permit a clear picture of initial

Soviet political goals in Afghanistan. Research of several sources revealed the following likely reasons for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979:

1. The growing Moslem insurgency in Afghanistan was not being controlled very well by the Afghan government, and the Soviets invaded to prevent the formation of a strongly anti-communist regime on its border. (8:375)

2. Collapse of the PDPA, a communist party, would have caused the Soviets to lose face internationally, therefore the invasion was an effort to preclude this. (8:375) "There is no doubt that the Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan in December 1979 was largely the result of the Russian desire to shore up the Communist Regime." (30:207)

3. "The expansionist school of thought argues about the historical drive theory. (Accession to warm waters of the Indian Ocean, Gulf oil and Imperial expansion)." (28:30)

4. "There are others who argue Soviet economic interests in Afghanistan, as Afghanistan possesses rich deposits of minerals including natural gas." (28:30)

5. Other ways of expressing reasons 1&2 above are: "Some analysts consider the Soviet move as purely defensive, caused by consideration of security and prestige." (28:30) "Many historians suggest that the Russians were partly prompted by

fears that the United States might seize the opportunity to install a right-wing fundamentalist regime in Kabul, from where it could incite disaffected Muslims in the Soviet Central Asian republics.(29:21) "The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to maintain a Marxist government." (7:334)

The Soviet Union probably used elements of all the above reasons to develop political objectives that led to the 1979 invasion. Reason #5 provides the best statement of the political objective. Therefore, the Soviet Union deemed the use of military force appropriate to maintain the Marxist PDPA government, and prevent the formation of a fundamentalist government that could influence Muslims in the Soviet Central Asian republics. The lack of definitive Soviet objectives in Afghanistan "led to problems in morale and drug abuse by Soviet soldiers" in Afghanistan. The following statement from a Soviet soldier who defected to fight with the mujahidin makes this point quite clearly:

... Every week, someone tried to escape. The Soviet troops can't find the mujahideen so they kill civilians... Our officers said we must go into a village and kill all the people and animals, sheep, horses, even dogs and cats. But I thought it was the mujahideen who were fighting against us-not dogs and cats. No one wants to be in Afghanistan. If they were told that they could leave, they would not wait for a truck or a plane, but would walk 10,000 kilometers to their homes. (33:70)

The Soviet military and the Soviet people in general could not readily comprehend the political objectives in Afghanistan.

Soviet commanders have experienced difficulties explaining to their troops that they are in Afghanistan as liberators. Soviet soldiers are told they will be fighting Americans, Chinese and Pakistanis. In the Soviet Union, newsreels shown on television reveal U.S. tanks and planes in Afghanistan. When the soldiers arrive in Afghanistan and find no one but the local population they are confused. The Soviets have decreased attempts to justify the war to their soldiers and have also decreased attempts to win over the population.
(34:70)

After nine years, it appears on the surface that the Soviet political objective has not been achieved, and with the completed withdrawal of Soviet armed forces from Afghanistan in February 1989, the likelihood of the current communist regime remaining in power is slim.

We must not view the Soviet troop withdrawal as a sign of Soviet failure. The nine years the Soviets invested in Afghanistan should be seen as the downpayment for continued Soviet dominance of Afghanistan. The Soviet military departure has captured the headlines, but Soviet strategy in Afghanistan has been based on achieving long-term objectives.

Soviet strategy and its results have been surprisingly clear for all to see. Soviet officials have also been far from shy about their intentions. One such official in Kabul, referring to the resistance to Soviet occupation, stated recently that "Time changes everything."

In another 10 or 20 years, the new generation of Afghans will view our presence differently.".... Moscow understood well that a purely military approach to the problem would require enormous resources, and would run the risk of strongly antagonizing the outside world. A gradual approach would accomplish the same goals without either of these drawbacks. (32:42)

Though the Soviets have withdrawn, they have proven "that it only takes a few well-trained, highly motivated soldiers to consolidate control over a Third World country in a matter of a few hours or weeks by seizing key objectives." Soviet actions in Afghanistan have followed the doctrine developed from experience in its Central Asian areas. (35:310-311)

The doctrine calls for the destruction of the local leadership and its ability to achieve unity, the erosion of popular bases through the destruction of the local social and economic infrastructure and the military isolation of the area. (35-311)

The destruction of Afghanistan over the last ten years, and Soviet influence during this period has undoubtedly changed Afghanistan forever. Who emerges as the leader of Afghanistan may prove to be insignificant if the Soviets decide the new leader poses a threat to Soviet interests in the region. Furthermore, the Soviets have planted the seeds to shape the evolutionary changes in Afghanistan. The Soviets adopted an aggressive program that took "young children of 8 or 9 away from their parents and sending them for lengthy periods (ten years or more) to the Soviet Union for 'education'" (32:43) The October 1988 issue of Current History

reported that 40,000 Afghans recently returned to Afghanistan after being trained and indoctrinated in the Soviet Union.

(35:336)

The second critical lesson of the Soviet invasion is that regardless of the seemingly decisive military advantage a superpower has over a Third World country, political objectives cannot be attained unless the superpower is aligned with the element commanding the overwhelming majority of popular support in the applicable Third World nation. Moreover, the element within the Third World nation receiving superpower military support must contribute military forces that represent a high percentage of its available manpower pool. Without this commitment by the Third World country receiving superpower military support, a superpower can only achieve long-term political objectives if it is willing to accept the requirement to provide military occupation forces indefinitely. It should be noted that this will generally adversely impact domestic and international support for the superpower action.

A 1986 article in Foreign Affairs reported how the Soviets "intensified their efforts to 'Afghanize' the war." Though these efforts saw the Afghan military in more engagements with some successes, Soviet support was quickly called on when serious opposition was encountered. Mass desertions are experienced when faced with mujahidin attacks. Afghan enlisted men simply don't want to fight the mujahidin. It has also been reported that Afghan troops have tried to stop Soviet reprisal attacks on civilians.

Four Afghan generals were reportedly arrested at the end of 1985 for cooperating with the mujahidin. The Soviets had to insist that the Afghan government take action to expand its ranks. "In March 1985, Karmal told the 15th Central Committee plenum that bringing the ranks of the military up to full strength cannot be delayed." (36:1039-1041)

Before the Soviet withdrawal, it was apparent that the Afghan army could not sustain the level of operations necessary to defeat the mujahidin. The Soviets had hoped to develop the Afghan army sufficiently to enable it to take over the majority of the fighting; however, that never happened and the Soviets did most of the fighting. (32:40-41) In a 1983 interview with U.S. News & World Report, Mr. Charles Dunbar, former U.S. Charge' D'Affaires in Afghanistan stated:

... the Soviets would have to bring in something in the order of a half-million men if they were to hope to do a great deal more than they are now in the way of suppressing the resistance. (37:24)

The third lesson learned is that the foreign policy of a nation must be long-range and global. Third World nations should not be ignored because of today's world stability. Tomorrow's uncertainty must be an integral part of foreign relations with Third World nations. History provides numerous examples of how situations change, thus changing the relative importance of countries and regions. Afghanistan's current situation could be the result of inept U.S. foreign policy in 1919 and in the period between 1942 and 1954.

Afghans considered 1919 the year of their independence after engaging in a short war with British India resulting in the signing of a treaty that gave Afghanistan the freedom to conduct its own foreign relations. The following excerpt from World Affairs, Winter 1982/83, illustrates the long-range implications of foreign policy actions:

Amanullah sent an official mission headed by the distinguished Mohammed Wali, to secure recognition of his newly won independence from a number of countries. The mission was given a warm welcome by the Bolshevik regime, and the USSR, by its prompt action, became the first nation to recognize Afghan independence. This made a strong favorable impression on Amanullah and laid the groundwork for the close Soviet-Afghan collaboration during his ten year reign. The United States, on the other hand snubbed the Wali mission. President Harding deliberately conveyed an ambiguous reply to the request for recognition, deeply offending the Afghans. (38:231)

The U.S. State Department did not establish diplomatic relations with Afghanistan until 1934, and a diplomatic mission was not opened in Kabul until 1942. During the post World War II period, the U.S. failed to establish close relations with Afghanistan, even though Afghanistan made repeated overtures to do so. The U.S. was unresponsive to friendly Afghan efforts to initiate business dealings. The Afghans offered "oil exploration concessions, aviation development rights, and other investment opportunities."

(38:233) American refusal to help militarily proved to be more significant than the rejection of economic initiatives.

After WW II, Afghanistan's internal security became quite precarious. The central government was weak and all aspects of Afghanistan's development were hindered. The Afghan government sought surplus U.S. military equipment to help strengthen the central government's position. The United States refused to sell the arms to Afghanistan, so the Afghans bought Czech arms. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the Afghans repeatedly attempted to establish a military relationship with the United States. The Afghan Foreign Minister travelled to the U.S. in October 1954 to once again request U.S. military aid. The U.S. studied the request and formally rejected it in December 1954. "One month later, in January 1955, Daud approached the USSR regarding long-standing Soviet offers of military aid, which Afghanistan had previously rejected." Later in 1955, the Afghan government approved acceptance of Soviet military aid. Krushchev visited Afghanistan in December 1955 and vowed to re-equip Afghanistan's army and air force. It can be said that American failure to respond favorably to the valid economic and security needs of the pro-Western government of Afghanistan "set the stage for the stunning successes of Soviet diplomacy." (38:233-235)

The next lesson to be learned from the politico-military assessment of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is that

change of political leadership has a profound impact on a nation's resolve to continue unpopular military operations in the Third World where national interests are more perceived than substantive. Gorbachev inherited this war so it was not his legacy. He did not feel obliged to keep it going. (39:37) The U.S. experience in Vietnam was quite similar. Richard Nixon inherited Vietnam from Lyndon Johnson and elected "peace with honor". Nixon's initiatives resulted four years later in U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam without clearcut military victory. Though this can be explored in much greater detail, there is only a cursory mention of it in this study to show that there appears to be some correlation with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The fifth lesson to be learned from the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan is that American "predilection for negotiation and accommodation, rather than the use of force, to protect American interests abroad" will be exploited by adversaries of the United States. Despite the fact that the U.S. opposed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Soviets did not believe their actions "would provoke American retaliation or would cause permanent damage to Soviet-American relations." (40:403) The following passages from "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: Three Perspectives", a Center for International and Strategic Affairs Working Paper, highlight how U.S. foreign policy and

perceived weakness can precipitate destabilizing acts by others in the Third World:

The U.S. reaction to the Soviet interventions in Czechoslovakia, Angola, and Ethiopia was intense but brief, failing to have long-term or significant impact on U.S.-Soviet relations. If the reaction to Afghanistan's invasion is no different, those in the Soviet leadership who advocate military solutions to future conflicts will be encouraged.... Soviet decisions are influenced by a multitude of factors. Not to be discounted in the case of Afghanistan is a strong and continuous U.S. response to Soviet military operations there.... As we know from experience, U.S. inaction or vacillation will more likely encourage fresh attempts to exploit opportunities in the strategic areas of the Third World.
(41:19)

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

There are many politico-military lessons to be learned from analyzing the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. This study has addressed only those considered most critical when contemplating the use of military alternatives to achieve national policy.

A review of the background of Soviet relations with Afghanistan illustrated the evolutionary nature of international relationships. It is quite easy to understand how action or non-action now can lead to favorable or adverse international situations in the future. Isolationism in today's international arena is unthinkable and is a sure way to place a nation's vital interests hostage to those nations with a comprehensive foreign policy and the resolve to openly pursue that policy. Leon Poulada's conclusions in his 1982 World Affairs article, "The Failure of American Diplomacy in Afghanistan," summarized this point quite effectively:

... It took the Russians fifty years to prepare the ground in Afghanistan and the triumph of Soviet diplomacy in that country is tribute, not so much to its advantages of geography and contiguity as to its steadfastness, consistency, perseverance, opportunism, long-range planning, and astute exploitation of regional quarrels. Conversely, it is an indictment of the ignorance, vacillation, pusillanimity, incoherence, and appeasement of American diplomacy in this vital part of the world. (38:249)

Superpower use of military forces in the Third World can only be justified when the superpower is clearly acting in its own vital interest against a known threat. Any attempt to change the political orientation of a Third World nation through military means is futile. The premise that solutions to Third World conflicts can be resolved militarily through low-intensity conflict is ludicrous. Furthermore, Afghanistan suggests that there are few scenarios in the Third World when a scaled-down military force can be employed satisfactorily. Grenada should not be used as the basis for low-intensity conflict concept development. Afghanistan is a more realistic situation to use in the modeling of a typical Third World conflict.

The Soviet withdrawal does not mark the end to conflict in the region. The refugee problem created in Pakistan because of the Afghan war will serve as a destabilizing force in Pakistan. A similar refugee problem also exists in Iran, but to a lesser degree. Some believe Soviet actions in Afghanistan are part of a regional strategy. Henry Kissinger wrote the following in a September 1988 Newsweek article:

Once Soviet troops have been withdrawn from Afghanistan, congressional and public support for the resistance will surely decline. The Soviets will increase pressure on Pakistan to adhere to its agreement not to supply arms, and after the death of President Zia Pakistan will be preoccupied with domestic affairs for many months. It will thus be difficult to prevent the Soviet Union from implementing Lenin's

dictum of "one step backwards...two steps forward" by playing the various forces in Afghanistan against each other and exploiting America's short attention span. (42:38)

A February 1989 meeting between Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnaze serves as an indication of renewed Soviet-Iranian relations. (43:1) It is now time for the U.S. to ensure foreign policy objectives for the region are clearly defined and American long-term interests are protected.

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