**IMPACT OF SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN**

**Background to Afghanistan**

* Greatest defence is it’s terrain – mountains, valleys and the temperature that comes with the terrain
* Late 19th century – both Russia + Britain tried unsuccessfully to occupy Afghanistan
* As a result it became buffer state between Russia – occupying central Asia – and Britain in India

**Leading up and the Invasion**

* Nur Muhammad Taraki became Prime Minister early 1978
* Declared Afghanistan as a communist state + signed a “Treaty of Friendship” with the USSR that allowed the him to request Soviet military assistance
* takeover by the Communist party known as the Saur Revolution.
* Gov. faced many complications with the local Mujahideen
* During the first 18th months of Taraki’s rule he applied “soviet-style” reforms such as marriage customs and land reforms.
* But majority of population were strict Muslims + immersed in tradition – not happy with changes resulting in a rebellion
* This started Afghan Civil War
* war spread throughout the country by the end of year
* end of March 1979 - rebels had control of major cities
* rebellion led by Ismail Khan in Herat killed + wounded about three thousand civilians, including some Soviets
* Taraki repeatedly requested the Soviet Union to send assistance during the spring and summer of 1979
* asked the Soviets to assist with security + provide military assistance against the Mujahideen rebels.
* Finally, on April 14th 1979 - Afghan government asked the USSR to assist them by providing 15-20 helicopters accompanied with their crews to protect the capital and Taraki
* Soviets agreed + sent in tanks + also an airborne battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lomakin – few months later
* After a palace shootout resulting in Taraki’s death - Hafizullah Amin, deputy Prime Minister, seized power
* overwhelmed by constant rebellion + opposition so called Soviets to aid him with larger units
* late July, Amin requested the Soviets to send two motorized rifle divisions
* few days later Amin requested an additional airborne division
* Soviets didn’t grant this until December 1979, when they invaded.
* 24th Dec. 1979, seven-hundred Soviet troops inc. some KGB dressed in Afghan uniforms occupied major governmental, military, media buildings, + the Tajbej Traditional Palace
* That night - Kabul’s communications were destroyed to paralyse Afghan military command + an assault on the Presidential Palace assassinating Amin took place
* Soviet’s claimed that Amin had been “executed by a tribunal for his crimes" by the Afghan Revolutionary Central Committee
* Soviet ground forces entered Afghanistan from the north on December 27th + took control of major urban centres, military bases and strategic locations.
* Soviets placed Babrak Karmal as the new Afghan president
* Karmal demanded that the Soviets stop the rebellion as it had risen due to their invasion

**Why did the Soviets Invade?**

**Geopolitical Reasons:**

* Soviets wanted to protect their 2000 mile border with Afghanistan + not a civil war on it’s borders
* A war would be dangerous to stability of Central Asian Republic of USSR
* Also wanted Afghanistan to remain a buffer state – so they were protected from an invasion from the south
* Brezhnev says : “to have acted otherwise would have meant to watch passively the origination on our southern border of a seat of serious danger to the security of the Soviet state”
* This point is argued by GARTHOFFwho says Soviets didn’t attack to increase their influence but to ensure Afghanstan remain a buffer

Fear of Foreign Intervention

* Soviet’s knew America’s plot to destabilize communist gob
* America at the time denied involvement
* But Brzezinski says “ Carter signed directive for secret aid to opponents of pro-soviet regime July 3rd 1979”
* Jamgotch - Soviets aware rebels receiving outside military assistance incl. guerrilla fights in China
* Soviets believed Chinese trying to build of communist empire of their own
* Soviets believed Amin in contact with CIA
* Garthoff – soviet’s viewed him as unreliable + ambitious
* He lived in US + was highly sus. of Moscow
* He pursued radical reformts disregard Soviet adviced – leading Soviets to believe he was working with US to achieve “anti-Soviet conclusion
* This would mean Afghanistan become another capitalist country encircling Soviets along with China (although still communist was against USSR) + NATO countries

Desire to Protect Communism

* Although Amin’s request for help was the official reason for entry, it’s believe Soviets wanted to protect communism not Amin’s regime – Garthoff
* Soviet’s didn’t see Amin as “real socialist” but knew his failure would mean “a defeat for real communism to the world”
* Failure reflect negatively on image of communism in history + setback Soviet’s ability as seen by world to protect its communist neighbours + friends
* “failed socialist revolution would be worse than none at all”- major influence
* Didn’t want global community seeing communism as unsuccessful thus giving American’s upper hand on capitalism

**American perspective**

* Soviets wanted to expand their sphere of influence
* Scared Americans as much of their oil resources lay in same region
* Feared disruption + spread o communisn would be dangerous to economy, industry + way of life
* Spread of communism also endanger Pakistan + India
* US used Pakistan as military base + India as a port – had close ties with both
* Soviet intervention result in end to military security, end to Indian + surrounding markets + services
* Also America’s chance to let Soviet experience “their Vietnam”

**Impact of Invasion**

**End of the Detente**

* Soviet invasion “final nail in the coffin” of detente
* Rise in tensions + more open dislike between countries
* US places sanctions against USSR – grain embargo
* Although embargo was ineffective its shows how the relationships worsened as US withdrew the Soviet Grain Agreement Act
* Jamgotch – US placed economic sanctions to signal displeasure of Soviet behaviour
* Also defer SALT II and end to disarment talks
* “ dismantling of the entire set of American-Soviet relations developed over decade of detente”

**Carter Doctrine**

* Carter doctrine – return to original Cold War policy of containment
* increased naval patrols and bases in the Persian Gulf
* return to containment establishes the return of the cold war re-creating old tensions and resentment\
* Carter announced “punishments” for Soviet union including “tightened controls” on sale of technology and other items for the 1980 Moscow Olympics
* Some view boycott as unnecessary but some like Lacqueur say the move showed true cold war “games”

**America’s Decision to support mujahidin**

* support mirrored Soviet support of the Vietcong and also mirrored spiteful U.S. –Soviet relations from the 50’s and 60’s
* war by proxy meant that the U.S. provided billions of dollars worth of ‘aid’ to the mujahidin and supplied arms and other military equipment
* U.S. donated “$600 million in aid per year” + provided “F-16 aircraft... and extra $2.28 billion in weapons”
* Carter’s decision to increase arms spending, ending the era of arms limitations, signifies the tensions and hostility between the nations
* donations, aid, and support for the opposition also represent the poor relationship between the Soviets and Americans

**Soviet’s view on the impact**

* USSR + US saw detente differently
* US thought: Soviets would act as a stabling force in Eastern Europe
* Soviets believed it granted them equal superpower status
* As a result of this misunderstanding - Soviets were quite confused on the extreme American reaction + led the Soviets into believing that “the American government administration used Afghanistan as a pretext for doing what it desired” which was “an intensified arms race and an anti-soviet political line” - LeFeber