

# Why Did the Soviet Union Invade Afghanistan?

Written by Daryl Morini

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DARYL MORINI, JAN 3 2010

*“Strength, and not a little strength at that, is needed to defend socialist gains.”[1]  
Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev*

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was a costly and, ultimately, pointless war. Historical hindsight has made this evident. However, exactly *why* the Red Army wound up in direct military conflict, embroiled in a bitter and complicated civil war—some 3,000 kilometres away from Moscow—is a point of historiographical uncertainty. The evidence available suggests that geopolitical calculations were at the top of the Kremlin’s goals. These were arguably to deter US interference in the USSR’s ‘backyard’, to gain a highly strategic foothold in Southwest Asia and, not least of all, to attempt to contain the radical Islamic revolution emanating from Iran. The subsidiary goal of the invasion was to secure an ideologically-friendly régime in the region. Furthermore, the fateful Politburo decision was not conceived by Brezhnev, but by a small, cabalistic group of the Soviet Union’s most powerful figures. Little known and appreciated for its significance, the Soviet-Afghan War was one of the turning points of the late Cold War.

On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 1979, the Afghan government was effectively decapitated. During Operation Storm, a seven hundred-strong unit of Soviet special forces infiltrated the city of Kabul. They were disguised as regular Afghan soldiers, and had come to fulfil one objective: killing Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin.[2] Two days earlier, the Fortieth Army had moved in thousands of armed personnel and vehicles from the Soviet border town of Termez. Within several weeks, all of the country’s cities and major roads were under Soviet occupation. Upon receiving intelligence reports to this effect, Jimmy Carter’s National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, wrote to the President: “We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War. Indeed,” he could add retrospectively, “for almost ten years, Moscow had to carry on a war...that brought about the demoralisation and finally the break-up of the Soviet empire.”[3] The most basic, yet contentious question is that of *why* the army was brought in, to begin with.

Following the 1970s period of *détente* between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union, the latter seemed to be in an advantageous strategic position, compared to the post-Vietnam paralysis which plagued its main opponent. Scott McMichael, a military historian, argued that this “turned out largely to be an illusion,” although there is substance to the claim that the Soviet Union was ahead of the game in the lead up to 1979.[4] This is exemplified by Moscow’s increasing assertiveness in foreign affairs during this period. As a direct result of the so-called ‘Brezhnev doctrine’, the USSR asserted its “right and duty” to go to war in foreign countries “if and when an existing socialist regime was threatened.”[5] This accounts for the increased overseas military, political, and economic support being given at this time to pro-Marxist régimes in Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Yemen, etc. Such expeditions

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were in line with the twin geopolitical objectives of the Soviet Union. The first Soviet policy consisted of preparing the Red Army for a potential conventional and, probably, nuclear confrontation with the US. Secondly, Moscow pledged to continue supporting “wars of national liberation” abroad.[6] The latter resulted in what some analysts cleverly called the *Third World War*.<sup>[7]</sup> It would be decisively challenged in the deserts and mountains of Afghanistan.

The Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan was primarily motivated by geopolitical interests in the region. Another obvious factor in the decision was related to the soft power commitments of socialist ideology, which predisposed the Soviet Union to safeguard a friendly régime. After all, in the zero-sum game between both Cold War superpowers, one ally lost almost certainly meant an enemy gained. At this stage, however, a key historiographical problem arises. This is namely the profound difficulty of disentangling the two motives. Was *raison d’état* or ideology a more important factor in shaping the thinking of Soviet strategists in the late Cold War? It does not help that the Politburo was inherently secretive and opaque, leaving behind very few reliable records of the group’s conversations. In practice, however, both motives were inextricably mixed. Soviet foreign policy, as Stalin had designed it, embodied this ambiguous approach. Explained Ronald Suny: “In a circular way ideology was subordinated to state interests, but interests were understood in terms of ideology.”<sup>[8]</sup> It is imperative to note that the Soviet Union was ideologically-bound to the socialist régime in Kabul. At their core, the Politburo’s aims were primarily statist. But the Soviets acted as self-interested international players, concerned with advancing the USSR’s own position in the Cold War contest.

The People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was a Soviet-backed Marxist group. They had come to power through a putsch in April 1978. <sup>[9]</sup> Directly after their ‘April Revolution’ it became clear that the communist and, hence, atheistic island of Kabul—surrounded by an overwhelmingly Muslim ocean—would need Moscow’s support in order to survive. President Nur Mohammad Taraki understood this crucial fact. He made numerous desperate demands for his benefactors to send in direct military support to Afghanistan—up to six times in one recorded dialogue.<sup>[10]</sup> The conservative Islamic rebels, named *Mujahideen* (soldiers of God), increasingly threatened Taraki’s besieged government. For quite some time, the Soviet leadership was unwilling to commit itself to sending any more than token military advisors and some weapons to Afghanistan. This was probably due to Brezhnev’s much reiterated fear of nuclear escalation with the US, at a time when the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II (SALT II) had just been concluded. However, *détente* was by then moribund in all but name. Soviet assertiveness throughout the Third World was partly to blame, but Afghanistan was the last nail in the coffin.

The further deterioration of Afghanistan’s situation in early 1979 moved Moscow’s leadership out of its inertia, and directly into a trap.<sup>[11]</sup> For example, some twenty Soviet military advisers (out of 1,500 in the country) were publicly lynched and mutilated by angry mobs in the city of Herat. From then on, the attempt to create an Afghan satellite state was justified in Marxist-Leninist terms of the Soviet Union’s ‘internationalist duty’ towards friendly neighbours. In a telephone conversation to Taraki, Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin soothed his besieged counterpart thus: “We are comrades and are waging a common struggle and that is why we should not stand on ceremony with each other. Everything must be subordinate to this [relationship].”<sup>[12]</sup> The Soviet Union’s 1978 ‘Treaty of Cooperation and Good-Neighbourliness’ with Afghanistan served as the official pretext to intervene militarily in that country. Behind the comradely rhetoric, though, were the obvious strategic benefits of the deployment.

First of all, the Soviet drive into the heart of Southwest Asia coincided with an age-long, imperial Russian longing for a warm-water port.<sup>[13]</sup> Of course, acquiring such a facility would have required further expansion—potentially through Iran to the Persian Gulf, or into Pakistan—but this can only remain conjecture. The timing of the invasion of Afghanistan is also suspect. The fact that it came almost exactly one year after the 1978 Iranian revolution, which brought to power a government equally hostile to US as to Soviet interests, strongly suggests that the Politburo’s decision was based on a gamble of power politics. Moscow argued that it was pre-empting a possible ‘imperialist’ move in the region. This is certainly evidenced in the political education which Red Army units received prior to entering Afghan territory. When the airborne trooper, Yuri Tinkov, was ordered to hastily prepare for combat, he quite tellingly assumed that their destination would be Iran. Instead, he received the following mission briefing:

Our borders are threatened. The American Green Berets intend to conquer Afghanistan... [and] set up their missiles. We don’t have the military capacity that would enable us to repel an attack directed from the south... It’s possible that they will start shooting at us while we’re still in the air—that is, if the Americans notice us.<sup>[14]</sup>

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The scape-goating of imperialists reached absurd proportions during the Afghanistan war. For example, the opium addictions of many Red Army soldiers was rationalised by their officers in bizarre plots. The CIA and Hong Kong drug barons worked together, they maintained, to destroy the Soviet armed forces from within.[15] It was just discounted outright that the young conscripts could be abusing local produce. What this suggests is that, higher up the ladder, military and political leaders may have genuinely feared American involvement in Afghanistan. Soldiers on the ground were certainly bored by their political lessons, but the expectation of coming face to face with American and Chinese agents was pervasive. This was chiefly because, as Ellen Jones brilliantly put it, a Soviet soldier "like the American consumer targeted by a repetitive advertising campaign... may ridicule the medium but he seems to absorb the message." [16] Such propaganda, as always, contained a hint of truth to give it credibility.

In his 1993 memoirs, ex-Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Robert Gates revealed that direct CIA involvement in Afghanistan had commenced almost six months *before* the Soviet invasion. Jimmy Carter signed a presidential decree in July 1979 to covertly aid the *Mujahideen* insurgents. A memo for the President's eyes only later warned him of the probability that "expansion of its influence over Iran will rank at or near the top of the Kremlin's hierarchy of regional priorities." [17] These material and financial contributions from the US effectively propped up the guerrillas throughout their ten year war against the Red Army. However the argument of an imminent full-scale American invasion of Afghanistan was clearly a propagandistic exaggeration. [18] What is important to bear in mind, though, is that many contemporaneous Soviet leaders, soldiers and citizens actually perceived a credible threat to the USSR's long-term interests on its southern borders. Moscow's fear of Chinese involvement was also not unfounded. The CIA-directed program for supporting the 'soldiers of God' would eventually attract financial and advisory aid from such strange-bedfellows as China, France, Great Britain, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and, astonishingly, even the state of Israel.[19] A common enemy was the only thing that they shared. Although not officially admitted, another, and potentially more potent, threat to the Soviet Union's integrity was also targeted in Afghanistan. This was the threat of radical Islam tearing apart the USSR.

During the Cold War years, the Soviet Union hosted the fifth largest Muslim population in the world.[20] It is clear, then, that the holy Afghan *jihad* against communism presented a considerable challenge to the Soviet state's very territorial integrity. The Islamists were actively sponsored by revolutionary government of Iran, and that of Pakistan. Moreover, Islamic peoples worldwide protested the infidel's bloody venture into Afghanistan, a trend which the KGB attempted to contain in and outside the Soviet Union. According to the Mitrokhin Archives, Moscow's paranoia was evident in the Soviet secret service's fanciful linking of Iran's revolutionary brand of Islam, to CIA efforts to destabilise the predominantly Muslim Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR's) of Central Asia. [21] Nevertheless, it is a fact that a considerable segment of the Soviet Union's population "looked far more to Mecca than to Moscow." [22] In the frantic international diplomacy which took place in the months before the Soviet invasion, the East German Ambassador to Kabul assessed the precarious situation. Avoiding a war in Afghanistan would not only require protecting Soviet influence and the Afghan communists, he warned, but also "saving the face of the Muslims." [23] Ultimately, this would prove to be an unmanageable task. The sudden decision in early 1980 to replace Soviet Muslims (chiefly Central Asians) with ethnic Russian soldiers, on the Afghan battlefield, reinforces the picture of a Soviet leadership deeply frightened of radical Islam spreading beyond their own borders.[24]

All of this evidence draws a clearer picture of Soviet intentions in Afghanistan. It is clear that this Southwest Asian campaign was aimed at securing Moscow's geopolitical and, to a lesser extent, ideological position in the region. The two nightmarish scenarios of either American intervention, or the spread of radical Islam into the USSR, helped shape the Soviet Union's decision to invade Afghanistan. Interestingly, both possibilities originated in the Iranian Revolution. We must now turn to the vital question of personal responsibility for the invasion. Whose intentions among the Soviet élite led to the Soviet-Afghan War? And whose interests were served by it? Firstly, we should recall that Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, by then "looked eerily like a zombie" [25] Due to the Soviet leader's physically- and mentally-deteriorated state, an element of irrationality in the decision to occupy Afghanistan cannot be discounted. Following the dissolution of the USSR, some new evidence has surfaced, suggesting that the final decision was hatched by a small clique, and presented as a *fait-accomplie* to Brezhnev to be rubber-stamped.[26] The powerful trio, which shaped this policy, consisted of Defence Minister Dmitrii Ustinov, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and the head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov.[27]

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The aforementioned figure, Andropov, was the most influential in the decision making process. He had been the one to pressure Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 to invade Hungary and, once again in the late 1960s, was the foremost advocate of crushing the uprising in Prague. In the case of Afghanistan, Andropov was consistently “economical with the truth,” intentionally feeding the General Secretary misleading information on the actual military engagement. [28] In a semi-serious joke, his colleagues spoke of Andropov suffering from the ‘Hungarian complex’.[29] He was certainly one of the central driving forces behind the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. As part of the Politburo subcommittee to “coordinate actions” on Afghanistan (henceforth, the ‘Afghanistan Commission’), Andropov worked with Gromyko, Defence Minister Ustinov and, lastly, the junior and less-influential Politburo member Boris Ponomarev.[30] During the Gorbachev era, a hallway conversation in the Kremlin suggests that Gromyko had actually been the “initiator of the intervention”, emboldened by the enthusiastic support of Ustinov.[31] This recorded event is important in that it demonstrates the obfuscation surrounding the Politburo’s decision and, by extension, personal accountability. The Soviet Union’s final decision to send armed forces to Afghanistan should by no means be viewed as predetermined. Indecision and even the wholesale reversal of its members’ positions characterised the Afghanistan Commission’s deliberations.[32] It is clear, though, that they cannot be absolved of the disastrous policy which they finally agreed to in late 1979. In “a remarkably casual way,” Raymond Garthoff noted, the three main Commission members had the decision “signed in an infirm hand by Brezhnev and assigned a file number as a Decree of the Politburo of the Central Committee (P 176/125).”[33] For his role at the helm of the ship of the Soviet state—and despite his sickness—Brezhnev must also bade a share of guilt for having been unwittingly led into *asale guerre* (dirty war) against the Afghan people.

We can infer that Afghanistan, like so many battlefields before and since, served the interests of military advancements. For example, some eyewitness accounts of Soviet soldiers hint at the use of chemical warfare against the *Mujahideen*—ostensibly a substance resembling ‘Agent Orange’ used by Americans during the Vietnam War.[34] Another veteran’s account paints a more shocking picture of new hardware being tested on harmless Afghan villages in the last days of the war, out of no military necessity whatsoever.[35] The Red Army command perhaps assumed that they could—with such combat experience—gain the upper hand in the case of a conventional war with US or European forces. In all probability, military testing in Afghanistan developed from war-time opportunism. Military planners certainly did foresee the problems of sending a “limited contingent” of a mere 75,000 soldiers to pacify a veritable war zone.[36] In any case, the Soviet High Command was culpable of not voicing its arguments against an intervention in Afghanistan with enough resolve. A strong objection could have acted “to deter Brezhnev and his inner circle.”[37]

The Afghanistan Commission agreed to send Soviet special forces (*spetznaz*) months before the conflict erupted and—to President Boris Yeltsin’s great surprise in 1992—Soviet advisers remained behind in Kabul, after the last troops had supposedly withdrawn in 1989.[38] The road back to the Soviet Union, across the ironically-named Friendship Bridge, was one of untold misery. Ten years of war against a popular Afghan resistance stirred discontent within the USSR, and probably contributed greatly to the collapse and popular unrest of 1991. The initial intention of the invasion had been to secure the Soviet Union’s strategic position in the worldwide competition against the US. The fear of militant Islam affecting Moscow’s control over its Muslim population was also behind the Kremlin rationale for war. This particular mentality, whether right or wrong, continued in the guises of two full-scale Russian wars in Chechnya. Finally, the prestige of socialist ideology was also at stake in Afghanistan, a fact no doubt important in the decision-makers’ minds at the time. The tragic Soviet war in Afghanistan was not necessarily initiated with evil intentions, by an Evil Empire. It was the result of self-interest and miscalculation, only made worse by Brezhnev’s infirmity. But, as popular wisdom tells us, hell is paved with good intentions.

Officially, some 14,833 Soviet soldiers lost their lives during the conflict. However, the actual number may eclipse the latter by at least ten thousand.[39] The Afghan people were the war’s most obvious victims, with no less than one million civilians and combatants estimated killed during the conflict.[40] To this day, the Afghans remain the world’s largest single refugee group, as a direct result of the Soviet-Afghan War. An estimated six million people fled to neighbouring Pakistan and Iran during the war.[41] The “new thinking” associated with Mikhail Gorbachev’s policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* placed strong pressure on the leadership to end the draining commitment in Afghanistan. “It is obvious that there are no alternatives. We must pull out,” wrote Gorbachev’s policy adviser in a diary entry in 1985.[42] The Afghanistan Commission, and especially the powerful troika within it (Andropov, Gromyko and

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Ustinov) was primarily responsible for embroiling the Soviet Union in a costly, unjust and futile war in Afghanistan. This conflict bled the Red Army dry, as well as public support not merely for the war, but for the Soviet system itself. Above all, however, it is Brezhnev's signature which adorns Politburo Decree P 176/125—the signature responsible for the war's disastrous implications.

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[1] Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, *For Greater Unity Among Communists, For a Fresh Upsurge of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle: Speech* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1969), 15.

[2] The intrigue surrounding the Afghan leadership demonstrates Moscow's less-than-benign intentions: A highly-placed KGB spy, named Mitalin Talybov, was assigned to poison the Afghan leader two weeks earlier. This had failed, as Amin switched his food with his son-in-law, who became ill and had to be treated in a Moscow hospital. The radical Amin (too radical a socialist for the Kremlin's liking and, insult of all insults, *not* a Soviet agent) had recently ordered that the more moderate ruler, Nur Mohammad Taraki, be killed. Finally, the late Taraki had been plotting, with Soviet backing, for Amin's assassination, but was outmanoeuvred by his enemy. Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 401.

[3] Vincent Jauvert, 'Oui, la CIA est entrée en Afghanistan avant les Russes...' *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris), January 15-21, 1998.

[4] Scott McMichael, 'The Soviet-Afghan War', in *The Military History of the Soviet Union* (eds. Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan), (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 259.

[5] *Ibid.* 261.

[6] Ellen Jones, *Red Army and Society: A Sociology of the Soviet Military* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 41.

[7] Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks), 83.

[8] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (New York Oxford University Press, 1998), 299.

[9] Most historians agree that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had no direct role in bringing the Afghan communists to power. Even if the evidence is fragmentary, it is clear that Moscow's leadership was surprised by the PDPA's strange coup. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, Revised Edition (Washington, D.C. : The Brookings Institution, 1994), 987-988 (and relevant footnotes).

[10] 'Moscow-Kabul exchange: March 1979 call between Kosygin, Taraki', *CNN.com/ColdWar*, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/20/documents/moscow/> (Accessed 18 August 2008).

[11] Kristine Tockman, Doug MacEachin and Janne E. Nolan, 'The Soviet Invasion of

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Afghanistan in 1979: Failure of Intelligence or of the Policy Process?', in *Discourse, Dissent, and Strategic Surprise: Formulating American Security in the Age of Uncertainty* (Washington, D.C. : Georgetown University, 2005), 3-4.

[12] 'Moscow-Kabul exchange', *CNN.com/ColdWar*.

[13] (The Russian ports in the Black Sea were dependent on Turkey's goodwill, and those in the northern Pacific Ocean were not ice-free all year round). There is further evidence that the Soviet war in Afghanistan had deep historical roots. Following the 1978 communist coup in Kabul, the American embassy stationed there cabled a message home which read: "The Russians have finally won the 'Great Game.'" J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Russian Occupation* (Washington, D.C. : National Defense University, 1986), 3-5.

[14] Anna Heinämaa, Maija Leppänen and Yuri Yurchenko (Translated by A. D. Haun), *The Soldiers' Story: Soviet Veterans Remember the Afghan War* (Berkeley, U.S.A. : University of California), 1-2.

[15] *Ibid.* 69.

[16] Ellen Jones, *Red Army and Society*, 165.

[17] Robert Gates, *From the Shadows*, 146-148.

[18] It was later admitted that—with its assets in Iran lost due to the revolution—the CIA *had* been considering (somewhat naïvely) the use of Afghanistan as an intelligence collection centre. *Ibid.* 132.

[19] George Crile, *My Enemy's Enemy: The Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History: The Arming of the Mujahideen by the CIA* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), 142.

[20] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*, 369.

[21] *Ibid.* 378-380.

[22] *Ibid.* 380.

[23] Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 1001.

[24] "Eventually, over one hundred Muslim soldiers defected to the *Mujahideen*, not for religious or political motives, but because of the unbearable [living] conditions in the Soviet Army." The greatest amount of deserters, however, would come from the socialist government's own Afghan Army. Roger Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 172.

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[25] This observation was made by a doctor who examined Brezhnev during the Vienna summit (which formalised the SALT II negotiations) of June 1979. This was a bare six months before the invasion of Afghanistan. Gates himself witnessed Brezhnev being semi-carried around, in a Jesus Christ position, by KGB agents. Also of interest: the two influential characters Gromyko and Ustinov were present and corrected him when the infirm Soviet leader made a *faux pas*. Robert Gates, *From the Shadows*, 117.

[26] Archie Brown, *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 172.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*, 398-399.

[29] “Andropov was obsessed with the need to stamp out ‘ideological sabotage’ wherever it reared its head within the Soviet bloc.” His world view resembles what could be termed the polar opposite of McCarthyism. *Ibid.*

[30]. *Ibid.* 392.

[31] Anatoly S. Chernyaev, ‘The Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev’ (Translated from the Russian by Anna Melyakova, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya), *The National Security Archive*, 104-105, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB251/28.pdf> (accessed 22 august 2008).

[32] For example, Gromyko oscillated in the space of two days from proclaiming that “we can’t give up Afghanistan to the enemy” to ruling firmly against intervention because “this is [Afghanistan’s] internal affair, a revolutionary internal conflict...” Somewhat surprisingly, his speech even cited the UN Convention. Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 992-993.

[33] The Commission was missing Ponomarev, and Konstantin Chernenko was present as a secretary *Ibid.* 1016.

[34] Soldiers called it the ‘Pinocchio’. It was a tank-like vehicle which fired thermo-ballistic ammunition. Anna Heinämaa, Maija Leppänen and Yuri Yurchenko, *The Soldiers’ Story*, 36.

[35] “A person’s blood boiled instantly under their influence and froze immediately afterwards. Beryozov’s platoon shot right and left at villages that were situated beside the road... When the dust had settled, they went to the place to investigate what they’d accomplished.” *Ibid.* 118-119.

[36] Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 1015.

[37] Scott McMichael, *The Soviet-Afghan War*, 261.



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[38] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*, 419.

[39] In addition, the war created a highly disillusioned group of 642,000 Soviet citizens. Most shocking was the resulting 415,932 Afghanistan veterans who returned home riddled with serious diseases (i.e. hepatitis, typhus, malaria, dysentery, etc). This was mainly due to the lack of preparedness of the Soviet armed forces for Afghanistan's arid climate. The deplorable living conditions and hygiene in the Red Army only compounded the problem. Roger Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience*, 166.

[40] One scholar, M. Hassan Kakar, has charged the occupiers of perpetrating what he termed a "genocide" of the local population. The well-researched findings, especially on the Soviet mass killings of non-combatants are convincing. Soldiers' accounts also detail the unofficial Red Army policy of taking no Afghan prisoners. M. Hassan Kakar, *Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1995).  
<http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft7b69p12h;brand=ucpress>

[41] Rüdiger Schöch, 'Afghan Refugees in Pakistan During the 1980s: Cold War Politics and Registration Practices', in *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 157 (Geneva: Policy Development and Evaluation Service, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2008), 5.

[42] Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 'Anatoly S. Chernyaev Diary', 63.

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