

5HD450 Chapters in History of the Cold War

10. War in Afghanistan.



EVROPSKÁ UNIE
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Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání

MŠMT
MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY

Before the Soviet–Afghan War

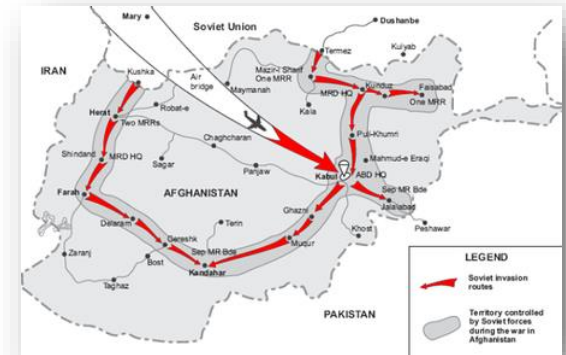
- **Afghanistan relied on support from the USSR for many decades, they were allies**
- **1978 communist coup** – government unstable, unpopular radical reforms, protest of traditional rural population, executions of thousands Afghans – **open rebellion**
- **USSR repeatedly asked for direct intervention by Afghan communist leaders, but reluctant** – not against locals, possible worsening of détente, little possible gain
- **1979 USSR was losing ground in Middle East** – peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, Americans sold missiles to Saudi Arabia, Iraq militarily supplied by France and Italy

Soviet intervention

- **America lost Iran due to islamic revolution, American Ambassador in Afghanistan murdered**
- **December 1979 Soviet intervention**
- another coup – installment of new Soviet-loyal president to calm down situation
- UN and 34 Islamic states protested against the intervention, demanding withdrawal of Soviet forces

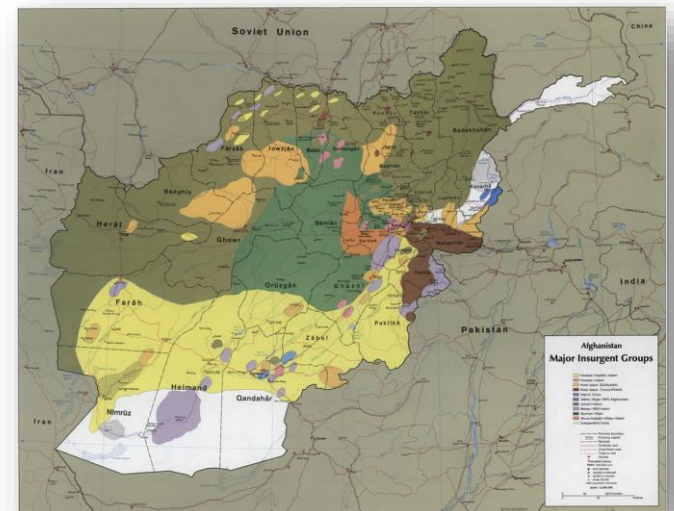
War begins ...

- December 1979 – February 1989
- Conflict (guerilla war) between Mujahideens x Soviet Army, allied Afghan forces
- Mujahideens supported by Pakistan, China, UK, the US, Saudi Arabia, Egypt
- Soviets the most in the northeast and west
- 80 % under Mujahideens' control (rural areas, mountains)
20 % under Soviet control (cities, infrastructure)
- Soviets accused by “their” new president Babrak Karmal of worsening the situation, opposition unified



Soviet Vietnam

- **1980–1985** 9 huge Soviet offensives into Mujahideens' areas with little success
- **Mid–1980s escalation of war** (over 100 ths. Soviets, more bombing, land mines) – no major change
- **Afghan Arabs** – volunteer-soldiers ready to fight holy war against atheist communists (Osama bin Laden, later involved into al-Qaeda)
- **Resistance** against communist government **very scattered**, generally in separate small units
- 1986 Stinger missiles brought **“Stinger Effect”**



Soviet need for exit and end

- **High costs for the USSR**
 - militarily and diplomatically, little gain
- **1986 New Afghan president elected**
 - policy of national reconciliation
- **Mid–1987** Soviets (reformer Mikhail Gorbachev) announced withdrawal of forces
- **February 1989** last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan
- **1–2 mil. civilians killed, 5–10 mil. Afghans left the country**



Impacts on (international) relations I

- **War made one of the poorest countries even poorer**
(huge deterioration in vital agriculture, loss of population, damage of infrastructure, buildings etc.)
- Conflict in Afghanistan continued as civil war until 1992
- **Weakening of the USSR** – Red Army not undefeatable, problems between Soviet military and communist party
- **The end of détente**

Impacts on (international) relations II

- **U.S. trade embargo** on Soviet grain and weapons
- U.S. not present at 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow, in 4 years Soviet Bloc countries not present at 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles
- Non-Aligned Movement countries divided
- Intervention not supported by former allies India or Romania



Readings & videos

- Documentaries

BBC Cold War – Soldiers of God

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bdE1D_fbV0

Cold War History Videos

- <http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history/videos>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/>

- Specialized Resources / Collections / Cold War Files

- <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project>
- <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collections>
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/themes/world_politics/cold_war/default.stm
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20080411004848/http://www.coldwarfiles.org/index.cfm?thisunit=0&fuseaction=events.list>
- <http://www.avclub.com/special/cold-war/timeline>



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