



Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 1980

Agenda: The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications on International Peace and Security.

Freeze Date: 10th January, 1980



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Chairperson's Address

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Soviet-Afghan Crisis. It is our privilege to host you in this committee at a time when the very base of global peace and sovereignty is being tested. This committee is convened under extraordinary circumstances where diplomacy is not just an option but a necessity. As the impact of the invasion reverberates throughout the world, the delegates are expected to be on their toes, with correct usage of international laws, as well as necessary actions for restabilizing peace in the region.

It is 10th January, The Soviet has stormed into Afghanistan on the pretext of "internationalist duty." What was framed as a "justified" intervention has now unfolded into a brutal occupation marked by airstrikes, killings, and a systemic assault on Afghan autonomy. The conflict has claimed tens of thousands of civilian lives and has displaced millions, causing instability across South Asia and the Middle East. The Cold War situation is more volatile than ever, as the power struggle between the superpowers has peaked to an all-time-high.

Delegates, you have before you the tools of international law, public opinion, sanctions, resolutions, and collective will. But beware: every action you take here will echo beyond these walls. A single mistake made by any one of you will cause destruction to nations, rebuild geopolitics, and impact millions.



Putting aside the theatrics, as your chairpersons, we can promise you that this committee is not going to be a quintessential semi-conventional committee; it is going to be a face paced committee with disruptive updates. (Spoiler: The committee can even change forms, or can it?)

Delegates, we expect more than rhetoric. We demand resolve. We urge you to draft powerful, binding resolutions, showcase your research using powerful speeches packed with research and well crafted paperwork. We look forward to being blown away (not literally).

Till June,

Kovidh Lulla and Rian Hariani,
Co-Chairpersons,

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Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly

General information about the General Assembly

The United Nations General Assembly is the main deliberative, policy making and representative organ of the United Nations. All UN member states are represented, and it serves as a forum for discussing a wide range of international issues. The General Assembly makes recommendations, adopts resolutions, and can take action on matters within the scope of the UN Charter. As of 1980 there were 154 members in the General Assembly and each of them had one vote.

It derives its authority from the UN charter, which essentially serves as a constitutional treaty binding on all UN member states.

The core powers and functions of the UNGA include discussing global issues, approving the UN budget, electing members to various bodies, and creating subsidiary organs. But what this committee is concerned with is UNGA's power to convene emergency special sessions to address urgent matters or conflicts which require immediate attention.

The Decisions taken in the UNGA are taken through a majority vote, and important matters (like that of security and financial concerns) require a two-thirds majority.

The exact scope of its power is envisaged in the chapter IV of the UN charter. (Every delegate should be properly equipped with the



knowledge of the specific powers which the UN charter envisages for the General Assembly and other bodies of the UN).

Mandate of the UNGA (Important)

The General Assembly can discuss any matter within the scope of the UN charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organ of the organization. The Assembly makes recommendations to States on international issues within its competence. It has also taken actions across all pillars of the United Nations, including with regard to political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal matters.

The most important thing to know about the General Assembly is that it only has powers of recommendation, i.e, it cannot enforce any action by the member states and only has the power to recommend appropriate measures to tackle the issue at hand. **The resolutions passed by the Assembly are purely recommendatory and not legally binding on the member states.**

Although the resolutions passed by the General Assembly are not legally binding, they do carry political weightage and contribute in shaping global policies. These resolutions have the potential to influence international law, set diplomatic examples, and lay the base for international treaties and regulations that could be highly useful to solve problems that plague our world.



Uniting for Peace Resolution:

On November 3, 1950, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 377A(V), often known as the Acheson Plan or the Uniting for Peace Resolution.

Its processes were meant to solve what seemed to be a major obstacle to the operation of the UN: The repeated misuse of the Veto by the Permanent Members of the Security Council, which would result in a crippling of the council due to a deadlock, and defeat its whole purpose.

The initial Charter designated the Security Council to handle threats to global peace and security by eventually deploying UN military forces against the guilty State or States utilizing the mechanism of collective security. But the UNSC, prior to the ESS amendment, was unable to address conflicts due to the excessive usage of veto powers by the permanent members (The United States of America, USSR, France, China, and The United Kingdom).

The Uniting for Peace resolution corrected this problem by giving additional powers to the General Assembly. Should the UN Security Council fail to act in response to a threat to a breach of peace, or an act of aggression, caused by the negative vote or veto of a permanent member. According to the resolution, the Assembly may immediately take up the subject to offer recommendations to Members on collaborative actions to preserve or restore international peace and security. The United Nations General Assembly should give the matter top priority and possibly convene Emergency Special Sessions (ESS) to present it before its Member States in search of a quick



solution to guarantee global peace and security. (Note: The resolutions passed in the ESS are also recommendatory in nature and can only entail solutions that are relevant to the conflict at hand)

As of 10th January 1980, the resolution has been called upon five times to allow the General Assembly to act immediately in the event of a deadlocked Security Council. The times when the Emergency Special Session was called before our freeze date:

- 1) The Suez Canal Crisis (1956)
- 2) Soviet Union's suppression of the Hungarian Revolution (1956)
- 3) Situation in Middle East regarding Jordan and Lebanon (1958)
- 4) Situation in Congo (1960)
- 5) The Six Day War (1967)

Through the provision of an orderly response mechanism in the case of the Security Council stalemate, the Uniting for Peace resolution made the UNGA a more active and constructive body in the UN system from a passive deliberating chamber. Not only did this give the Assembly a platform to respond to urgent global threats, it also enhanced its role in determining international norms and making a contribution to the development of customary law on collective security and peacekeeping.



Timeline Of The Events

1823: Dost Mohammad Khan, a member of the Barakzai clan, emerged as the ruler of Kabul and the surrounding territories, effectively establishing the Emirate of Afghanistan.

1838-42: The First Anglo-Afghan war took place between Britain and the Emirate of Kabul. This war ended in a British strategic and political defeat.

1878-80: The Second Anglo-Afghan war between Britain and the Emirate. This war was a strategic British victory with Britain gaining control over the Afghan foreign relations through the Treaty of Gandamak.

1919: The Third and final Anglo-Afghan war took place which ended in an Afghan political victory and gained full independence in foreign affairs with Britain recognizing Afghanistan's sovereignty.

1933: Zahir Shah becomes king at only 19 years after the assassination of King Nadir Shah

1964: A new constitution was adopted by the Afghani government which led to the introduction of limited democracy.

1973: King Zahir Shah is overthrown in a coup by his cousin, Mohammed Daoud Khan who abolished the monarchy and a republic is declared.



1978: The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a socialist and communist party, seizes power in a coup known as the Saur Revolution, overthrowing President Daoud Khan.

1978-79: Following the Saur Revolution, the PDPA government, under President Nur Muhammad Taraki, faces growing resistance and a civil war erupts. The government struggles to maintain control as various factions oppose the communist rule.

1979: The Soviet Army launches Operation Storm-333 and invades Afghanistan to prop up the communist government led by Babrak Karmal, who was installed after the assassination of Hafizullah Amin. This marks the beginning of the Soviet–Afghan War.

27 December 1979: Afghan leader, Hafizullah Amin is killed by Soviet forces

4th January 1980: U.S. President Jimmy Carter announced a grain embargo against the Soviet Union, with the support of the European Commission.

10th January 1980: The Emergency Special session of the United Nations General Assembly is called.



History of Afghanistan : Afghani Politics and Power Dynamics

Great Game and Anglo-Afghan Wars (Just a brief)

Afghanistan's Place in the Great Game:

During the 19th century Afghanistan was at an intersection of empires. The British and Russian Empires perceived the mountain kingdom as the most important buffer between Russian Central Asia and British India.

The main concern for the British was that a Russian advance southward would pose a threat to India; as one historian observes, London "made it a high priority to protect all approaches to India. Russia was in turn slowly conquering Turkestan and seeking warm-water influence, and resented British expansion in Central Asia.

This rivalry – the Great Game – was played out through diplomacy, spying, and occasional wars in Persia, Central Asia and Tibet, but never direct war between Britain and Russia.

The First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842):

It began when Britain feared that Afghanistan's ruler Dost Mohammad might ally with Russia, threatening British India. The British invaded through the Khyber Pass and installed a puppet



king, Shah Shuja, in Kabul. However, the occupation sparked massive resentment due to excessive taxation and cultural insensitivity. In November 1841, Afghan chiefs led by Akbar Khan revolted, killed the British envoy, and forced a catastrophic British withdrawal in January 1842. Of the original 16,000 British troops, only a few dozen survived the retreat through snowy mountain passes, making it one of the worst military disasters in British history. Britain was forced to withdraw completely, and Dost Mohammad regained power.

The Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-1880):

It broke out when an uninvited Russian mission came to Kabul and the Afghan leader Sher Ali would not permit a British mission in retaliation. Britain invaded with 40,000 soldiers from three fronts, easily defeating the Afghans and setting up Ya'qūb Khan as a more submissive leader. The 1879 Treaty of Gandamak made Afghanistan a British protectorate where foreign policy was in British hands but Afghan rulers held internal rule. Rebellions persisted, though, and the British resident was assassinated in September 1879. With further violence, Britain finally put Abdur Rahman Khan into power in 1880, who accepted British economic assistance and foreign policy direction for internal autonomy.

The Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919):

It took place when the reformist Amanullah Khan proclaimed total independence from Britain following World War I. When Britain denied giving up authority over Afghan foreign policy, Amanullah launched limited war in May 1919, mainly in the form of border raids.



This war differed from the earlier wars in being short and leading to Afghan success. The Treaty of Rawalpindi in August 1919 officially acknowledged Afghanistan's sovereignty over its own foreign affairs, bringing to an end centuries of British influence. Afghanistan was quick to look for new foreign relations, including a friendship treaty with Soviet Russia in 1921.



World War 1

Habibullah Khan's Neutrality and Assassination (1901-1919):

Habibullah Khan kept Afghanistan neutral in World War I in the face of pressure from the Central Powers (Germany and Ottoman Empire) who dispatched the Niedermayer–Hentig Expedition to get Afghanistan to wage war against Britain. Habibullah declined, citing Afghanistan's exposed position between Britain and Russia, and dependence on British subsidies for his finances. This neutrality angered the majority of Afghans, and Habibullah was assassinated in 1919.

Amanullah Khan and Independence (1919): After the assassination of his father, Amanullah Khan proclaimed the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919 to establish himself firmly in power and achieve complete independence. The Treaty of Rawalpindi (1919) gave Afghanistan full sovereignty over foreign affairs, and August 19 was declared Afghanistan's Independence Day.

Why this is important to your 1980 committee: This sets up the historical precedent of Afghan leaders being assassinated when they don't meet nationalist demands, and demonstrates how pronouncements of independence/sovereignty have been invoked by new Afghan leadership to legitimize their rule - pertinent background for explaining the political instability that preceded the 1979 Soviet invasion.



Afghanistan Post World War 1

Amanullah Khan began to lead Afghanistan with a very different ideology, not aligning with Afghanistan's history of being isolated. The Emir started finalizing trade deals with most of the powerful countries, and started trends to modernize Afghanistan along Western lines. He fought for the education of women, which alienated him from a number of tribal and religious leaders. His major support was Mahmud Tarzi, Amanullah's father-in-law and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Together, they fought to make elementary education compulsory under Article 68 of the Afghanistan Constitution. These modern and Western ideas led to the revolt of the Shinwari which resulted in the Afghan Civil War from 1928 to 1929.

The Shinwari had grievances with Amanullah's perception of the role of women and their education and revolted. Although the Shinwari Revolt had been brought under control, the true winners of this conflict were the Swaqqawists, an armed rebel group operational from 1924 to 1931. They captured Kabul in 1929 and thus, Afghanistan slipped into the control of Habibullah Kalakani, after Amanullah's defeat.

Kalakani's rule was marked by continuous disturbances. Anti-Soviet rebels, loyal to the Emir of Bukhara exiled in Kabul, launched raids into the Soviet Union. He himself had to secure his position against the Musahiban brothers, especially Nadir Khan.



Afghanistan's Stance during World War 2

Even though close to the Axis nations, Zahir Shah and his administrations never took sides in World War II and Afghanistan was one of the only nations in the world to stay neutral. Between 1944 and 1947, Afghanistan saw a series of uprisings by different tribes. In the aftermath of World War II, Zahir Shah appreciated the necessity for modernisation in Afghanistan and hired many foreign advisers to aid the endeavour. At this time the first modern university in Afghanistan was established. Under his rule several potential reforms and advances were thwarted due to factionalism and political strife. He also sought financial support from both the United States and the Soviet Union, and Afghanistan was one of only a few nations in the world to receive assistance from both Cold War rivals. He was a relatively tolerant leader in comparison to his predecessors; Zahir Shah had never once signed a warrant for the execution of anyone for political purposes throughout his reign. He also employed his authority on a number of occasions to pardon capital punishment sentences awarded to some convicted offenders. On the request of Zahir Shah, the new Constitution of Afghanistan in 1964 was implemented which transformed Afghanistan into a modern democratic nation by bringing free elections, a parliament, civil and political liberties, women's rights, and universal suffrage.



Post-World War II Geopolitical Situation

Following Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945, the United States and Soviet Union emerged as the world's dominant superpowers. The fundamental ideological conflict between Western capitalism and Soviet communism created a bipolar world order, with both superpowers competing for allies, resources, and strategic influence during the Cold War period.

Cold War

What was the Cold War about and its respective events:

The Cold War was an era of prolonged political, military, and ideological standoff between the United States (and its allies) and the Soviet Union (and its allies), from the conclusion of World War II in 1945 to the early 1990s. Its beginnings, however, extend earlier, to the Russian Revolution in 1917, when the world's first communist government was formed and planted seeds of mistrust between the new Soviet government and Western powers.

Following WWII, the U.S.-USSR alliance broke down rapidly as a result of differing visions for the post-war world. The U.S. advocated for democracy and open markets, while the Soviets wanted to extend their sphere of influence and install communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Poland was the first major test, where the U.S. advocated for free elections, and the Soviets demanded a pro-Moscow government.



At the 1945 Yalta Conference, Allied leaders pledged only to the idea of free elections in Eastern Europe, but to a vague one, open to interpretation. The July-August 1945 Potsdam Conference laid open further fissures, as America (now under Truman) and the USSR (Stalin) fought over Germany's future and the destiny of Eastern Europe. By that time, the Red Army had occupied most of Central and Eastern Europe, and Stalin aimed at taking control of Soviet interests in these areas

The rift between the Superpowers :

The U. S. The USSR and the United States stood as embodiments of two diametrically opposed systems: capitalism against communism. The ideological chasm between the two sides extended beyond politics into economic and cultural realms where each faction asserted the supremacy of its system which it sought to establish globally.

The Western Bloc comprising the United States and its allies pursued the promotion of liberal democracy alongside free market systems while seeking to contain communism.

The Eastern Bloc consisting of the USSR and its allies aimed to disseminate socialist ideology while defending against what it perceived as capitalist encirclement threats.

The Marshall Plan (1947) was a massive U.S. aid program for rebuilding post war Europe. The Soviets perceived the Western European reconstruction aid program as a strategic move to weaken



their geopolitical power. The Soviet Union responded by creating the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) to manage economic interactions among communist nations.

The Cold War in the Middle East

The Middle East was a critical arena in the Cold War due to its vast oil reserves, control of key trade routes like the Suez Canal, and its geographic proximity to the Soviet Union. Both superpowers sought to expand their influence, often by supporting rival states or factions.

Foreign Influence in Middle East

Soviet Strategy: The USSR sought alliances with nationalist and socialist-leaning Arab states, such as Egypt (under Nasser), Syria, and later Iraq. Soviet support included arms, economic aid, and political backing. The Soviets aimed to exploit anti-colonial sentiment and the vacuum left by departing European powers.

U.S. Strategy: The U.S. focused on containing communism, supporting conservative monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Jordan), Israel, and Iran (after the 1953 CIA-backed coup). The Truman Doctrine and later the Eisenhower Doctrine explicitly extended U.S. containment policy to the Middle East.

Brezhnev Doctrine: This was a foreign policy model of Leonid Brezhnev, the leader of the Soviet Union. The **Brezhnev Doctrine** was a Soviet foreign policy that proclaimed that any threat to "socialist



rule" in any state of the Soviet Bloc in Central and Eastern Europe was a threat to all of them, and therefore, it justified the intervention of other countries. This was a very aggressive foreign policy employed by the Soviets and this was used by the Soviets to justify military intervention in the socialist states.

Soviet-Afghan Relations and Economic Dependence

The USSR established Afghanistan as a key ally in South Asia through substantial economic assistance. From 1954 to 1977, Soviet financial and economic aid to Afghanistan exceeded one billion rubles. This relationship extended beyond economic support to military cooperation, with Afghan arms purchases from Czechoslovakia beginning in August 1955, including deals worth approximately \$20 million. The Soviet Union effectively became Afghanistan's primary arms supplier during this period.

Daoud Khan's Rise to Power (1953)

Mohammed Daoud Khan assumed the position of Prime Minister in September 1953, replacing Shah Mahmoud Khan through an internal royal family transition. Daoud's tenure marked a significant shift in Afghan foreign policy toward closer alignment with the Soviet Union. His domestic initiatives included the Helmand Valley development project and educational programs for women, which improved living standards for many Afghans.



People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan **(PDPA)**

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a Marxist-Leninist political organization, played a decisive role in reshaping Afghanistan's political trajectory during the Cold War. Formed during a time of political liberalization and ideological contestation, the PDPA sought to transform Afghanistan's feudal and tribal society into a modern socialist state. This ambition culminated in the Saur Revolution of April 1978, a military-led coup that overthrew President Mohammed Daoud Khan. The revolution drastically altered the socio-political dynamics of the country

Origin and ideologies

Ideologically, the PDPA adhered to Marxist-Leninist principles, advocating for land reform, women's liberation, secular education, and the eradication of tribalism. The PDPA's core belief was that Afghanistan, though still largely agrarian and tribal, was ready for a socialist transformation. The PDPA's secret constitution, which was adopted by the party during its founding congress in January 1965 but never publicly released to party cadres, described itself as "the vanguard of the working class and all laborers in Afghanistan" and defined its party ideology as "the practical experience of Marxism–Leninism". While PDPA's internal documents incorporated explicitly Marxist extremist ideology and terminology, the party refrained from formally branding itself as "communist" in public,



instead using labels such as "national democratic " and "socialist ". PDPA's public platform document published in April 1966 asserted that its political objectives involved the creation of a "democratic national government" as well as the long-term goal of establishing a socialist state. Four members of the PDPA gained seats in the 1965 elections.

In 1967, the PDPA split into two major rival factions: the Khalq(Masses) was headed by Nur Mohammad Taraki andHafizullah Amin who were supported by elements within the military, and the Parcham(Banner) led by Babrak Karmal. The Khalq-Parcham organizational split erupted within the PDPA in 1967. While the Khalqists adhered to rigid Marxist–Leninist dogma and toed a militant revolutionary line, the Parchamis wanted to establish a "common front" with other left-wing parties.

Deepening of the Rift between the two Factions:

After the Saur revolution, the PDPA government, now dominated by the Khalq faction, began implementing sweeping reforms. Land redistribution aimed to dismantle the power of traditional landlords, while women's rights initiatives sought to bring girls into schools and ban forced marriage and dowry. The PDPA also tried to enforce literacy campaigns and modernize agriculture. These initiatives, though ideologically sound to Marxists, were launched without regard for the tribal and religious sensibilities of rural Afghans. Land reforms often angered powerful tribal leaders, and attempts to educate women led to violent backlash in conservative regions.



Additionally, the PDPA was plagued by internal infighting. The Khalqis began purging the Parchamis, accusing them of ideological betrayal. Karmal and other Parcham leaders were sent abroad as ambassadors or imprisoned. Hafizullah Amin, who had taken control of the Ministry of Defense and the Interior, used these tools to consolidate his own power base and eliminate rivals. The infighting within the PDPA came to a climax in late 1979. Although Taraki remained the nominal head of state, Amin increasingly wielded real power. The relationship between the two deteriorated after Amin sought to marginalize Soviet influence and pursue an independent policy direction. This alarmed the Kremlin, who now viewed Amin as unpredictable and dangerously anti-Soviet. In September 1979, Taraki tried and failed to have Amin assassinated. Amin retaliated by arresting and killing Taraki. He then assumed full control of the government, becoming both President and Prime Minister. Amin's brief rule was marked by even harsher crackdowns on dissent and an aggressive attempt to centralize power. The situation alarmed not only domestic opposition forces but also the Soviet leadership, which began considering direct intervention.

Oppositions to the PDPA-

Herat Uprisings

The Herat Uprising in March 1979 was one of the most significant early revolts against the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and served as a stark warning of the instability the new regime was fostering. Herat, a historically significant city in western



Afghanistan known for its strong Islamic traditions and Persian cultural roots, became a flashpoint due to the PDPA's deeply unpopular reforms. One major cause was the PDPA's harsh repression of religious leaders and the undermining of religious institutions. Clerics were imprisoned or executed, and Islamic schools were closed or converted into secular institutions. This generated widespread resentment, especially in religious communities that viewed the new government as anti-Islamic and foreign-influenced.

On March 15, 1979, a popular insurrection erupted. Civilians, led by local mullahs, poured into the streets. They were soon joined by mutinous soldiers from the 17th Division, who provided the rebellion with military structure and access to arms. Together, they overran PDPA offices, killed government officials, and even executed Soviet advisors stationed in the city. The insurgents quickly gained control of most of Herat. For a week, the city was in chaos. Government symbols were defaced, communist literature was burned, and the presence of the PDPA in Herat was virtually erased.

The regime's response was swift and brutal. PDPA forces, under the command of Defense Minister Aslam Watanjar, mobilized armored divisions and launched a major counteroffensive. Air strikes were deployed without discrimination, targeting entire neighborhoods suspected of harboring rebels. The civilian toll was staggering. While exact figures vary, estimates suggest that anywhere between 3,000 and 25,000 people were killed. Following the military assault, mass arrests were conducted, and thousands were detained. Many of them disappeared, presumed to have been executed in Pul-e-Charkhi and other prisons. The Herat uprising thus demonstrated the deep resistance the PDPA was engendering and showcased the regime's utter reliance on force to survive.



The Bala Hissar Uprising (August 1979)

Another major challenge to the PDPA emerged in August 1979 with the Bala Hissar uprising, an insurrection centered in the historic fortress of Bala Hissar in Kabul. This event was unique in that it was spearheaded not just by civilians but also by defectors from the Afghan military, along with ideological opposition groups. The uprising was largely orchestrated by the Afghanistan Mujahideen Freedom Fighters Front (AMFF), a coalition of anti-regime forces that included Maoists, moderate Islamists, and disillusioned former military personnel. By this point in 1979, resistance to the PDPA had grown more organized, and there were increasing efforts to coordinate attacks that could spark nationwide revolt.

The insurgents chose the Bala Hissar fortress for both its symbolic and strategic value. Once the royal seat of Afghan kings, Bala Hissar represented resistance and national pride. The rebels' plan was to seize the fortress and use it as a base to galvanize further military defection and rally the masses. The attack on August 5, 1979, was intense. Heavy fighting broke out, and for a time it appeared the insurgents might succeed in holding the fortress.

However, the PDPA quickly moved to crush the rebellion. Troops loyal to the regime, supported by Soviet-supplied weaponry, laid siege to Bala Hissar. The government deployed air support and artillery, and the fortress was bombarded relentlessly. After hours of fierce combat, the PDPA retook control. Casualties were heavy, with estimates suggesting nearly 1,000 people were killed during the battle. As was



becoming the norm, the regime followed the suppression with mass arrests. Suspected sympathizers, including some civilians who had no direct involvement, were rounded up and disappeared. The Bala Hissar uprising was particularly alarming for the PDPA because it revealed dissent even within the military ranks and hinted at the potential for a coordinated national resistance.

Political Instability Culminating in Crisis (1973-1978)

In July 1973, Mohammad Daoud Khan toppled King Zahir Shah in a coup without bloodshed and set up the Republic of Afghanistan. The republic of Daoud was beset by economic challenges and ongoing political turbulence in spite of a new constitution adopted in 1977.

The Saur Revolution (April 1978):

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) took control on April 28, 1978, in a bloody military coup called the Saur Revolution. President Daoud and his relatives were murdered. The PDPA, under the leadership of Nur Muhammad Taraki, formed a Marxist-Leninist regime with close allegiance to the Soviet Union.

Radical Social Reforms and Popular Resistance:

The new PDPA government unleashed wide-ranging secular reforms that ran counter to Afghan traditional society and Islamic practice. These policies, accompanied by brutal repression and the killing of between 10,000-27,000, sparked general uprising throughout Afghanistan. By spring 1979, rebellion had erupted in 24 of 28 provinces, and more than half the Afghan army had deserted.



Soviet Military Intervention (December 1979):

On December 27, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan with more than 100,000 troops in a full-scale military invasion. The Soviets had killed PDPA leader Hafizullah Amin and put Babrak Karmal in power as the new leader, which was the start of direct occupation by the Soviets.

International Response:

The United States, at first giving modest aid to Afghan insurgents prior to the invasion, greatly increased support after Soviet entry. American and Saudi aid to the mujahideen ultimately amounted to an estimated \$40 billion, including sophisticated arms like Stinger missiles, funneled chiefly through Pakistan's intelligence agencies.



Main Causes of the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

1) Assisting the Failing Communist Regime in Afghanistan :

The USSR embraced Daoud Khan and the leftist shift, but their excitement was short-lived when the hard-line Daoud Khan steadfastly declined to be a Soviet puppet. In a private 1977 session, he informed Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev he would persist in utilizing foreign experts from nations other than the USSR.

"Afghanistan shall remain poor, if necessary, but free in its acts and decisions." Not surprisingly, Soviet leaders did not approve. In 1978, the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) toppled Daoud Khan in the Saur Revolution. Daoud Khan and 18 members of his family were killed. Even with nominally communist leadership in Afghanistan, Soviet leaders continued not to be able to unwind. The new, divided and unstable PDPA regime was confronted by strong cultural resistance from conservative and religious leaders, and opposition across much of the Afghan countryside to the communists' revolutionary agrarian reforms. During autumn 1979, revolutionary Hafizullah Amin staged an internal PDPA coup that assassinated the party's original leader and brought about his short-lived, but savage rule. National discontent reached an all-time high, and hand-wringing in Moscow reached a fever pitch.

Throughout its past, Russia's vast territory included a broad band of national and ethnic communities living in their historic homelands. Throughout the Soviet period, which overlayed an oppressive system



of centralized rule, communist leaders were concerned about internal upheavals breaking out in its satellite nations—specifically the rapidly expanding Muslim-majority Central Asian ones.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the Soviet Union's last foreign military intervention before it ultimately dissolved in 1991. Soviet forces invaded Kabul on December 25th 1979, at the behest from Moscow to install the Soviet-backed Babrak Karmal in place of the radical Hafizullah Amin as leader of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. On 31 December, the Politburo declared that by toppling Amin, they would slow the tempo of Afghanistan's communist revolution and thus save the communist (PDPA) regime from falling apart as a result of its own unpopularity within the country, and thus to Islamist and Western forces.

2) Strategic and Geopolitical Interests:

Afghanistan's location between the Soviet Union and other countries, particularly Pakistan and China, made it a strategically important buffer zone. Controlling Afghanistan would allow the Soviet Union to increase its influence in the region and also prevent other States from gaining a foothold in the region. The Soviet Union wanted to ensure Afghanistan remained a socialist state and to prevent the rise of any anti-Soviet regime on its border. The invasion was also seen as a way to enforce the Brezhnev Doctrine, which stated that once a country had become socialist, Moscow would not permit it to return to the capitalist camp. The United States viewed Afghanistan's geopolitical position with concern and feared the potential for Soviet expansion and the rise of a communist government in the region. The Soviet invasion led the US to support the Afghan resistance, turning Afghanistan into a large chessboard for the Cold War. While



propaganda portrayed Soviet life as a happy, multi-ethnic melting pot where different traditions thrived within the context of national unity, the reality for some groups included only purges, deportations and labor camps. To the Soviets, any dissent or shift in alliance by the Afghans, posed the risk of sparking similar moves in adjacent states, which all shared ethnic identity, religion and history with Afghanistan and were greatly influenced by it. A successful revolt by Afghanistan could start a chain of anti-communist revolt, which made it imperative for the Soviet to neutralise all movements within Afghanistan.



Agreements and Treaties relevant to the Middle East

The Middle East being a very dynamic zone, there were many treaties signed between various countries representing their respective stances. Moreover, these treaties governed the actions taken with the Middle East. although the effectiveness of these treaties have been debatable. It nonetheless had a profound impact on the Middle East. Delegates are expected to bring up these in their speeches as well as deliberate over violations of these.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I & II)

SALT I (1972):

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) marked a pivotal moment in Cold War diplomacy between the United States and the Soviet Union. Signed in 1972, SALT I comprised two key elements: the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the Interim Agreement on strategic offensive arms. The ABM Treaty restricted each superpower to two ABM deployment areas, later reduced to one, effectively limiting the development of nationwide missile defense systems and preserving the doctrine of mutually assured destruction. The Interim Agreement froze the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) at existing levels, preventing either side from gaining a decisive



numerical advantage. SALT I also established the principle of mutual surveillance, allowing both parties to use national technical means such as satellites to verify compliance, which was a breakthrough in arms control transparency. While SALT I did not reduce existing arsenals, it signaled a willingness to manage the arms race and paved the way for future negotiations. Its impact on the Middle East was indirect but significant: by reducing the risk of direct superpower confrontation, it allowed both the U.S. and USSR to focus on regional alliances and proxy conflicts, notably in the Middle East, without the constant threat of escalation to nuclear war.

SALT II (1979):

SALT II built on the foundations of its preceding agreement, sought to place more comprehensive and quantitative limits on the strategic arsenals of the United States and USSR. Signed in Vienna in June 1979, the treaty set strict ceilings on the number of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers) and imposed constraints on the deployment of multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs).

SALT II aimed to halt the development of new types of strategic offensive arms, thereby curbing the technological arms race.

However, the treaty faced a major setback: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 led the U.S. Senate to withhold ratification, reflecting the renewed tensions of the late Cold War. Despite this, both sides largely adhered to the treaty's terms for several years, recognizing the mutual benefits of restraint. In the Middle Eastern context, SALT II's failure to be ratified underscored how regional crises such as Afghanistan could derail global arms



control efforts, and it highlighted the interconnectedness of regional and global security.

Baghdad Pact / Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) **(1955)**

The Baghdad Pact (later EASTERN Pact or CENTO Organization), signed in 1955, was a politically motivated association between the United Kingdom, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan and a potential joint military pact with the United States for its military committee. It was drafted during the Cold War to create a means to try to contain the spread of the Soviet Union into adjacent areas of the Middle East and South Asia by a chain of purportedly pro-Western states along the Southern flank of the USSR.

CENTO provided for mutual defense and military cooperation, but it was hampered by internal divisions and lack of popular support. Iraq withdrew after the 1958 revolution, weakening the alliance. CENTO's effectiveness was limited, but it reflected the broader pattern of superpower competition in the region and the use of alliances to secure strategic interests.



Reaction of Countries to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan

United States of America:

The United States had been long aware of the Soviet involvements in Afghanistan. By mid-1979 Moscow was searching to replace Taraki and Amin, and dispatched combat troops to Bagram Air Base outside of Kabul. This move prompted the Carter administration. In August, a high-ranking Soviet military delegation arrived in Kabul to assess the situation. U.S. officials interpreted this mission as one last Soviet attempt to shore up the Taraki regime, and also an opportunity to devise a military takeover. Regarding the latter, most analysts in Washington believed that such a move remained possible but unlikely. to begin supplying non-lethal aid to Afghan *mujahedeen*, or Islamic insurgents. In response to the Soviet invasion, Carter wrote a sharply-worded letter to Brezhnev denouncing Soviet aggression, and during his State of the Union address he announced his own doctrine vowing to protect Middle Eastern oil supplies from encroaching Soviet power. The administration also enacted economic sanctions and trade embargoes against the Soviet Union, called for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and stepped up its aid to the Afghan insurgents. On **January 4, 1980**, President **Jimmy Carter** announced a series of retaliatory measures against the Soviet Union. The U.S. **canceled the sale of 17 million tons of grain** to the Soviet Union. This was one of the most significant economic actions. The U.S. tightened controls on the export of high-tech equipment and oil and



gas technology to the USSR. In sum, these actions were Washington's collective attempt to make the Soviets' "adventure" in Afghanistan as painful and brief as possible. This act by the Soviets basically ended the state of detente which existed between the United States of America and USSR.

Afghanistan:

The Afghan delegation represented the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan which was led by Babrak Karmal, the General Secretary of the party. Babrak Kamral was installed as the leader of Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion thereby leading to questions about his legitimacy. His government had a very pro-Soviet response and criticized any United Nations attempt to interfere in the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom being a strong ally of the United States followed the policy of their ally regarding the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In May 1979, Margaret Thatcher became the British Prime Minister, and had a reputation for being firmly anti-Soviet. The nickname 'The Iron Lady' was first coined in an article in the Soviet military newspaper Red Star. The UK's immediate reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was one of strong condemnation and a focus on international diplomacy to build a coalition against Moscow. The UK, along with other NATO members, actively sought to secure a UN



condemnation of the invasion. Additionally, the UK government proposed a neutral and non-aligned status for Afghanistan, aiming to create a pathway for a Soviet withdrawal without losing face.

France:

The French government, along with other Western allies, called for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion was widely condemned by the international community, including the United Nations, with France playing a role in the global effort to isolate the USSR. France also supported the Afghan people, offering humanitarian aid to those displaced by the conflict. Following the Soviet invasion in December 1979, France, like other Western nations, strongly criticized the move and imposed sanctions. These sanctions aimed to limit Soviet influence and pressure them to withdraw their troops.

China:

China publicly condemned the Soviet invasion, viewing it as a violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty and an act of aggression. China provided moral and material support to the Afghan mujahideen, who were fighting against the Soviet-backed government. China increased its military presence in Xinjiang, a region bordering Afghanistan, to counter the perceived Soviet threat. The Soviet invasion was seen by China as part of a broader Soviet strategy to encircle China and extend its influence into the region, particularly in the context of the



ongoing Sino-Soviet Cold War. The invasion also heightened concerns about the unresolved territorial disputes between China and the Soviet Union, particularly in the Pamir Mountains region bordering Afghanistan. China used the invasion as an opportunity to further distance itself from the Soviet Union and strengthen its relationship with the United States, which also condemned the invasion.

Pakistan:

Pakistan's immediate reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a combination of condemnation and a shift towards supporting Afghan Mujahideen rebels. The invasion, which began in late 1979, was viewed as a threat to Pakistan's security, as it brought the Soviet Union into closer proximity to its border. Pakistan, along with other countries, condemned the Soviet action. Pakistan supported the anti-communist and religious extremist Mujahideen forces who fought to overthrow the communist Afghan Government, which had usurped power in the Saur revolution in 1978, whereas the Soviets, ostensibly to support the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, entered Afghanistan, staged a coup, killed Hafizullah Amin, and installed Soviet loyalist Babrak Karmal as leader.

India:

India's initial reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was one of caution and a desire to balance its



non-alignment policy with its regional security interests. The Charan Singh government, while expressing disapproval of the invasion, did not publicly condemn it, preferring to focus on bilateral discussions with the Soviets. The sudden invasion by a superpower in a region considered within India's sphere of influence caused unease and a need for careful consideration. The Indian government, following its policy of non-alignment, sought to avoid being drawn into the Cold War conflict. The Charan Singh government communicated its concerns to the Soviet ambassador, emphasizing that India would not endorse the intervention.



International Law relevant to the conflict

This section is solely for delegates who are starting out and who need to know the most common international laws relating to conflicts. The delegates should have significant international law research to formulate their arguments which will be looked upon favourably by the Executive Board. This section just mentions a few relevant international laws but does not give out any arguments for the delegates.

1) United Nations Charter (1945)

Article 2(4)- Article 2(4) of the UN charter prohibits the threat or use of force in international relations and calls on all the members to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of other states.

Article 41- Article 41 of the UN charter gives the Security Council the power to employ measures not involving the use of armed force and to call upon states to employ those measures. This article essentially gives the United Nations Security Council to employ sanctions against states which they did in the resolution 661.

Article 51- Article 51 of the UN charter is one of the exceptions to Article 2(4). It allows the members to take up self defense measures against armed actions. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defense shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to



take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security. There are a lot of complications involved with article 51 which the delegates will argue about.

2) The Geneva Convention

The Geneva Convention is a part of International Customary law. It is also known as the humanitarian law of armed conflicts whose purpose is to provide minimum protections, standards of humane treatment, and fundamental guarantees of respect to individuals who become victims of armed conflicts.

Under the Geneva Convention, civilians are to be protected from murder, torture or brutality during armed conflicts.

The relevant conventions and protocols are given below:

Convention I:

This convention protects wounded and infirm soldiers and medical personnel who are not taking an active part in the war. This convention protects these soldiers from torture, assault and execution without judgement. It also makes provisions for proper medical treatment and care.

Convention II:

The 2nd Geneva Convention is essentially an extension of the first one. It protects the rights of shipwrecked soldiers and other naval officers and protects them from crimes laid out in the Convention I.

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Convention III:

This convention protects the rights of 'Prisoners of War' and defines it. A 'POW' is supposed to get humane and proper treatment as laid out in Convention I.

Convention IV:

The Convention IV of the Geneva Convention specifically protects the rights of civilians. The Convention lays out that the civilians are supposed to get the same treatment as sick and wounded soldiers who do not take active part in the war. The Convention specifically prohibits attacks on public civilian properties, especially civilian hospitals, medical transports, etc.

Protocol I:

Protocol I laid out new rules and further restrictions on the treatment of 'protected persons'

. It includes new rules regarding the treatment of the deceased, cultural artifacts and dangerous artifacts.

Protocol II:

The fundamentals of 'Humane treatment' was further clarified. The additional protocols are extremely important with regards to laws of war and civilian protection which is relevant in this current conflict.



3) Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969)

Vienna Convention on the law of treaties is an international agreement that regulates treaties among sovereign states. It provides regulations, rules, guidelines and procedures for treaties and how they are drafted and ratified.

It plays a major role in understanding the treaties that were signed between Iraq, Kuwait and the Kingdom of Great Britain

4) Jus ad bellum

Jus ad bellum is the title given to a branch of international law that defines legitimate reasons a state may engage in an armed conflict. It focuses on certain criteria that define a war as *just*.

The principles of jus ad bellum are:

- Having a just cause (most important)
- Being a last resort
- Being declared by a legitimate authority
- Possessing right intention
- Having a reasonable chance of success
- Ends being proportional to the means used.

5) Jus in bello

Jus in bello (Law in war) is synonymous with International Humanitarian Law. It regulates the way that war is conducted. It seeks to minimize the suffering caused by war by providing protection and assistance to its victims. It addresses the grim reality of war without



considering the reasons for or the legalities of the conflict. It applies irrespective of whether the reasons for the conflict or the cause upheld by either party in the conflict are *just*.

The principles of Jus in bello are:

- Discrimination:

The principle of discrimination concerns who and what are legitimate targets in war. For instance, civilians cannot be intentionally targeted in war but combatants or soldiers can. Houses, places of worship, and schools should be immune from attack as well. Basically, only military objectives are considered legitimate targets of attack.

- Proportionality:

The principle of proportionality concerns how much force is morally appropriate. Weapons must be used judiciously and as the situation be. Basically, excessive force must not be used to cause unnecessary suffering if the objective can be achieved using a lesser amount. Destruction and casualties must be reduced by as much as possible.



Committee Specific Paperwork Guide

The United Nations Historic General Assembly will have the following paperworks:

- 1) Position Papers
- 2) Communiques (Private and Public communiques)
- 3) Presidential Statements
- 4) Draft Resolutions
- 5) Press Release
- 6) Directives

(Note: All the formats for the specific types of paperworks are given in the conference handbook with the necessary deadlines. This is just a committee specific paperwork guide)

1) **Position Papers:**

Position Papers can be called specific policy statements where delegates will explain the crisis from their allotment's point of view. The format for the position paper is as follows:

- a) Statement of the problem- General overview of the allotment with historical facts and arguments.
- b) Policy of the allotment:
Specific policy of the allotment with regards to the crisis. (Note: Arguments which are supported by logic and international law will be appreciated by the executive board)
- c) Solutions: Specific and logical solutions which backs your allotment's policy with regards to the conflict.



The deadline to submit the position papers is **9th June, 2025**.

Communiques:

Communiques are messages from usually an allotment to another country, an organization, person or even the executive board. They are meant to facilitate dialogue with relevant actors in a crisis so that delegates can take action to resolve the various crises presented to them in the committee.

The executive board will appreciate communiques which are long and detailed and which backs the policy of the allotment.



Citations

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