



Committee: Historical Security Council
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The Situation in Afghanistan - December 1979

Introduction:

In the night between December 24th and December 25th of 1979, thirty-thousand Soviet troops were sent into Afghanistan, toppling and killing the short-lived President Hafizullah Amin. This event occurred after continued tensions between communist groups supported by the Soviet Union and anti-communist, largely Muslim groups within Afghanistan. The international community responded with mixed reactions.

During the first week of January 1980, the United Nations Security Council debated the issue, yet no consensus was reached as the Soviet Union **vetoed** any resolution compromising its military efforts in Afghanistan. Thus, on January 9th, the Security Council adopted a resolution (S/RES/462), calling for an emergency meeting of the General Assembly. Article 27(2) of the UN Charter states: “Decisions of the Security Council on **procedural matters** shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members”. This article allowed Resolution 462, considered by the Council to be a procedural matter, to pass, as it does not grant permanent members the power to veto. The Soviet vote therefore did not prevent the resolution from being adopted.

At LIMUN, delegates will debate the issue “The Situation in Afghanistan” in the context of the previously mentioned Security Council sessions on January 9th, 1980. Delegates may not use any facts, statistics or refer to any events which do not fit in with the proposed context. We do, however, recommend delegates to use the record of the Emergency Session to research their countries’ or allied countries’ position. This record can be found below.

Orientation in Space and Time:

The 1970s brought hope of a new and more stable world order after what had been a tumultuous 1960s. As the US slowly pulled out of Vietnam, America, the Soviet Union and China worked on improving bilateral relations. This period, known as the “**Detente**”, saw the beginning of easing Cold War tensions. It lasted in different forms throughout the 70s. Significant events during the “Detente” include notable visits such as Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972 and continued meetings between representatives of the USSR and the US. Furthermore, important security treaties like the **SALT** I and SALT II were signed. Lastly, symbolic acts of coming together like the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project and Ping-pong diplomacy were held across the decade. All of these events shine light on efforts building confidence and trust between these Cold War rivals.

Whilst the world was deescalating tensions, Afghanistan was about to head into one of its most difficult and convoluted decades yet. After continued conflicts with Pakistan under Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud Khan, the Soviets and the Americans engaged in a **proxy conflict** with the USSR supporting Afghanistan and the US funding and helping Pakistan in the conflict. However, after Daoud Khan’s hostile regime faced increasing resentment, King

Mohammed Zahir Shah forced his Prime Minister out of office and replaced him with Mohammad Yusuf who sought to foster relations with the US and the Soviet Union. After a few different Prime Ministers, Daoud Khan, supported by the Soviets and the Afghan military, staged a bloodless coup in 1973. This marked the end of the Kingdom of Afghanistan and the establishment of Afghanistan's first Republic. After this, hostilities with Pakistan resumed. The Soviet Union had great interest in this conflict as it would weaken Pakistan, an ally of China and the US, and it would push Afghanistan further into Soviet influence. After Pakistan started to support anti-Khan Afghani groups, Khan figured it would be best to befriend Pakistan, much to the disappointment of the Soviet Union. The marxist Party in Afghanistan grew in strength and after continued oppression by Khan's regime as well as the murder of Mir Akbar Khyber, a member of the marxist Party, riots erupted in Kabul. The Afghan Army overthrew Daoud Khan and killed him with other members of his family. These events are referred to as the Saur Revolution of 1978. The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was installed and a friendship pact with the Soviet Union was signed.

What happened in December 1979?

After continued tensions in the country, between the factions inside the socialist scene (**Khalq** and **Pachram**) as well as hostilities with the **mujahideen** (Jihadist rebel groups), the Soviets became concerned about their socialist ally unraveling. The Soviets began occupying Afghan territory on December 24th and in the following days continued their efforts targeting military and government facilities. On December 27th the Red Army assassinated then head of state Hafizullah Amin and replaced him with Babrak Karmal. The Soviet Union continues its occupation for the time being (Context of January 9th 1980) and proclaims the "liberation of Afghanistan" from Amin's hostile regime.

International Reactions

large parts of the world have opposed Soviet actions in Afghanistan, most notably the US, with President Jimmy Carter withdrawing from the SALT II treaty as well as recalling his ambassador from Moscow.

Statements made by Delegations to the United Nations General Assembly in New York:

"The violation of the sovereignty of a country ought to be a matter of the deepest concern to all the peoples of the world. [...] the fact that this action against the independence and self-determination of a country comes precisely from one of those countries [...] that is also a permanent member of the Security Council, is a scandal of incalculable dimensions"

Mr. ESQUEA GUERRERO (Dominican Republic)

“Israel joins all those nations from every corner of the globe that have condemned unambiguously the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. We cannot accept the explanations offered by the Soviet Union [...]”

Mr. BLUM (Israel)

“The sixth emergency special session of the General Assembly has been convened under the dubious sign of a pre-arranged fuss. [...]”

The Yankee chorus has been joined by the Pinochets, guilty of the genocide of their peoples; by the traitors of Peking, who recently shed the blood of heroic Viet Nam; and by others of the same ilk, well known for their reactionary and pro-imperialist stand.”

Mr. ROA KOURI (Cuba)

“Draft resolution A/ES-6/L.I and Add.I is designed to help to continue the slanderous campaign launched against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the USSR and the interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Practically speaking, this draft resolution is an attempt to render the Afghan people defenceless against imperialist machinations.”

Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic)

“What is really at stake in this matter are the fundamental principles which are proclaimed by all the States signatories of the Charter of the United Nations, and without respect for which there can be neither security nor development-principles which are also at the very heart of détente, and therefore of peace.”

Mr. Jacques LEPRETTE (France)

“In the view of the Chinese delegation, draft resolution S/13729 is inadequate in that it has failed to condemn squarely Soviet armed aggression and intervention against Afghanistan. However, in view of the fact that the wording of the text is clearly directed against Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan, the Chinese delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution and maintains that the Soviet authorities must withdraw all their invading forces from Afghanistan immediately and unconditionally as called for in that draft resolution.”

Mr. CHEN Chu (China)

Possible Solutions:

1. Diplomatic Solutions:
 - Multilateral Peace Negotiations
 - Afghan Elections
 - Economic or Political agreement ensuring Afghanistan remains open to multilateral cooperation
2. Demands: (Keep in mind that 5 member states do have the right to veto)
 - Demanding military action
 - Demanding particular Administration of Afghanistan
3. UN involvement:
 - Buffer zone between Afghanistan and Pakistan
 - UN emergency meeting

Glossary:

Veto: an official power or right to refuse to accept or allow something - Cambridge
In the UNSC 5 Member States can veto resolutions and amendments.

Procedural Matter: Securitycouncilreport.org says:

“During the UN’s early history, there have been divergences as to what constituted a procedural or substantive issue. In resolution 267(III) of 14 April 1949, the General Assembly recommended to the Security Council to consider as procedural several types of issues listed in detail in an annex. These included:

- submission to the General Assembly of any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security;
- request to the General Assembly that it make a recommendation on a dispute or situation the Council is seized of;
 - request to the Secretary-General for the convocation of a special session of the General Assembly;
 - approval of annual reports to the General Assembly;
 - holding of meetings at places other than the seat of the UN; or
- establishment of subsidiary organs the Council deems necessary for the performance of its functions.”

Detente: an improvement in the relationship between two countries that in the past were not friendly and did not trust each other - Cambridge

SALT: Strategic Arms Limitation Talks // Treaty between the US and the USSR concerning demilitarization

Proxy war: a war fought between groups or smaller countries that each represent the interests of other larger powers, and may have help and support from these - Cambridge

Khalq: Fraction of the marxist Party in Afghanistan

Parcham: Fraction of the marxist Party in Afghanistan

Mujahideen: Refers to those (groups and people) that take part in the Jihad // Opponents of the socialist regime in the Soviet Union

Useful Documents:

Delegate Resources

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