Why USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and what are the outcomes of invasion?

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Abstract

Afghanistan, a landlocked Country is located in the center of South Asia and Central Asia. Its population is about 37 million people (2019). The Country shares borders in the south and east with Pakistan, in the west with Iran, Turkmenistan in the north, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and China in the northeast. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has a structure based on the principle of separation of powers (Legislative, executive, Judicial). It consists of 34 provinces and 364 districts, and has different ethnic origins and cultures in Afghanistan. Civil wars that started with the occupation of the USSR in 1979 continued until 2001 a total of 30 years. Civil wars have damaged the country's economy by shaking the authority of a deep-rooted central state. After 2001, with the investments made in the public and private sectors significant improvements were observed in Education, Health, Transportation, Security and development in the country.

The aim of the Great Game, which started in the 19th century between Britain and the Tsarist Russia, was the competition between the two countries started over Afghanistan, Tibet and Iran in order to enter the warm sea. This competition, which continued until the 20th century, Britain removed Afghanistan from the Russian influence with the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907 and was left more formally as a buffer zone between the two countries. This status, which continued from 1907-1979, started the Great Game again between the USA and the USSR with the occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 by Soviet Union. Occupation of Afghanistan between1979-1989 weakened central government of Afghanistan and made millions of Afghan refugees. It has clearly big part in destabilizing and terrorizing the region in the upcoming years and finally USSR, after great economic, political and military deficiency withdrew from Afghanistan.

With the occupation of the USSR, Afghanistan tried to change the economic, political, sociological, and ideological structure of the traditional society in a short time, and as we can see, the result shook a strong central authority. When we look at the post-Soviet era, mujahideen from different parts of the world, funds, different sectarian thoughts, ethnic and linguistic differences within the country, and disputes in sharing large cake opened the 11-year civil war. With this civil war, the gaps between the different segments in the society have widened, thus becoming the area of contest and proxy wars of the regional states.
When we look at the Civil War of Afghanistan and its Effects on the International System between the years of 1989-2001, Afghanistan turned into a training and equipment arena of mujahedin groups gathered from different regions of the world. These terrorist groups within the country were now organizing terrorist attacks in different regions of the world and eventually, there was an attack of September 11, 2001. The article tried to explain the ten years of USSR invasion and the destructions of proxy war between two blocs inside Afghanistan. Last but not least it has a range of interviews, voices that were never heard before, suggestions, realities and perception that were never reflected in media and literature.

**Keywords:** Invasion, Mujahedin, USSR, Durand Line, Afghan Monarchy, Pashtunistan, PDPA, Refugees, Warlords, Afghan women.
Historical Perspective

Pre-Invasion of USSR in 1979

To briefly overview Afghanistan’s internal and external policy since gaining foreign affairs independence from Britain in August 1919. Afghan government introduced various economic, social, and constitutional reforms in the country to adapt to the changing world and to reduce dependence on foreign countries. While introducing reforms, the government sometimes faced resistances from ethnic, religious and feudal segments of the society.¹

Afghanistan faced new developments inside and outside the country while three (Western, Eastern, non-aligned) blocs emerged after WW2. First, when we look geographically, neighboring the USSR in the north, new independent states from the British colony (Pakistan, India and Kashmir dispute) emerged in the south. We can also add the independence of Pashtunistan to the geography, supported by the Afghan state in the South. Second, While 70% of the Country’s Economy stood by Agriculture still lack high technology and developed industry have made budget deficit, military spending, and public spending payments more difficult for the government. Third, The mosaic (Religious, Ethnic, Gender, and Class-based) structure of society at times influenced the decisions of the State.

The Afghan state started to implement some policies inside and outside the country as of 1953 in order to find suitable solutions to this picture. In 1953, King Mohammed Zahir

Shah appointed Mohammed Daud Khan, as prime minister to end traditional policies. In 1947 once Britain announced its withdrawal from India, the Afghan government demanded a historic right of sovereignty over the Pashtun tribes on the Indian side of the East and South Border (Durand Line). After Daud became prime minister, self-determination for Pastunistan was the cornerstone of his government's regional policy. But Afghanistan's advocacy for the unification of all Pashtun tribes on the Afghan - Pakistan border has led to a serious and prolonged conflict with Pakistan.²

The US wanted to encourage cooperation between the three countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, and create a strong front against potential Soviet aggression. However, the Afghan government refused to make concessions to the Pashtunistan case. This dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan caused a border conflict between the two countries, and thus the border between the two countries was closed and diplomatic relations were cut. USSR supported Afghan regional policy in Pashtunistan case and both countries came together for cooperation in this region.³

When we look closely Afghan state not only miscalculated regional and international foreign policies but also miscalculated her capacities and potential inside the country. To illustrate the above argument Afghanistan still lacked a modern military, bureaucracy, institutions, and more importantly an educated nation with a higher percentage. Thus lack of all these abilities makes a safer ground for foreign interference.

**Prime Minister Daud Era and 1973 Coup**

And from another angle a landlocked country like Afghanistan has a lot of conflict issues with his neighbors for example water conflicts, cultural heritage sharing and supporting of ethnical and religious minorities by regional actors are examples that must be taken to account while shaping foreign relations with neighbors. However afghan foreign policy during Prime minister Daud Khan Era clearly went against its neighbors and made itself dependent on Soviet support. With such actions Afghan ruling party slowly opened political

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³ The Great Game, 1856-1907: Russo-British Relations in Central and East Asia https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1611, e.t.(05.09.2020)
arena for Soviet sympathizers and those people were given high ranks inside Afghan core institutions.⁴

On the other hand, the increasing Soviet presence opened the door to the spread of Marxist-Leninist ideology, especially among military officers, students and ethnic minorities. Against Prime Minister Davud Khan's policy of social liberalization, Islamists took direct action by holding a series of public demonstrations that turned into direct violence. From this point on, Daud Khan became closer to collaborating with Marxist-Leninist circles in order to undermine his Islamic opponents. In short, the recent reforms in the country and their attitudes in foreign policy caused economic and political crises in the country. Finally, King Zahir Shah dismissed Prime Minister Davud and appointed Mohammed Yusuf as a prime minister.⁵

In 1964, with the new Constitution, the transition to the multi-party system in the country, the parliament and cabinet were removed from the influence of the royal dynasty; power sharing and socioeconomic changes such as women's and minority rights were introduced. With such radical changes, an ideological conflict between Islamist and Marxist-Leninist groups quickly broke out in the country. To eliminate these ideological conflicts and popular uprisings the state of Afghanistan banned parties and newspapers. Former Prime Minister Davud Khan and his entourage PDPA (Pro-Soviet) made a coup on July 17, 1973 as a result of close relations with the Soviet Union and eliminated the Monarchy.⁶

**Foundation of Republic of Afghanistan, 1973**

Although the footsteps of such coup was already realized from the implementation of 1964 constitution but still the dynasty and King Zahir Shah couldn’t find a more peaceful transition to a democratic republic and eventually coup happened. Afghan nation, historians, sociologists and intellects from different background usually argue about the pros and cons of the occupation and the end of monarchy, what fascinates me that all of them agrees in one

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⁴ PM Daud Khan https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mohammad-Davud-Khan, e.t.(12.09.2020)


point that is rapid and radical reforms to the society was a wrong policy and nations were let shock to that.\textsuperscript{7}

Once Pakistan's Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali, announced the Single Unit Plan, which abolished five provincial administrations, including West Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), and replaced them with a single unitary state. With this policy, traditional autonomy in the Pashtun region was eliminated. While the Afghan State opposed this reconstruction plan, Pakistan became a party to regional organizations and agreements such as SEATO and CENTO. SEATO officially recognized the Durand Line as the international border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, despite the protests of the Afghan government. Kabul realized that the US and Britain are beginning to rearm Pakistan with modern weapons. The US wanted to encourage cooperation between the three countries Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and create a strong front against potential Soviet aggression however, the Afghan government refused to make concessions to the Pashtunistan case.\textsuperscript{8}

The Soviet Union's investments in infrastructure projects of Afghanistan, close allies to Moscow in cabinet, large debts, and the purchase of Soviet weapons and technology products made Afghanistan dependent on Soviet interests. After President Davud Khan came to power, he once again cut off relations with Pakistan on the Pastunistan issue. In addition, recruiting of the Soviet Union's supporters in the cabinet, Armed and Air Forces, strained relations with the USA and the West. For Daud Khan, Pastunistan’s self-determination was the cornerstone of his government's regional policy. But Afghanistan's advocacy for the unification of all Pashtun tribes on the Afghan-Pakistan border has led to a serious and prolonged conflict with Pakistan.\textsuperscript{9}

The first revolt started in 1973 and most of the rebels took refuge in Pakistan. Afghanistan, on the other hand, was deeply indebted to the USSR with a $ 1.5 billion debt. President Daud has visited Arab and NATO countries but could not get enough help. The US

\textsuperscript{7}https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-confidential-documents/, e.t.(05.09.2020)

\textsuperscript{8} Daud Han, https://www.khaama.com/mohammad-Davud-khan/, e.t.(27.09.2020)

wanted to abandon Afghanistan's Pashtunistan case and form a tripartite alliance with Iran and Pakistan. From 1976, when Daud Khan started to establish relations with Iran and Pakistan, and western camp the pro-Soviet PDPA started to revolt. Daud Khan imprisoned most of the rebels, but could not prevent relations with the Soviet Union.10

When the tension between Moscow and Kabul reached a crisis point, Daud visited Egypt in early 1978 to win the support of his allies in the United States and the Arab world. Daud signed an agreement to train the Afghan army and police candidates in Egypt on Sadat's visit to Egypt, praising the peace agreement with Israel. Fearing that the protests were harbingers of a coup, Daud ordered the arrest of all PDPA (pro-Soviet) leaders. On April 27, PDPA (pro-Soviet) forces controlled most of Kabul center and cut off electricity and telephone connections to the palace. When President Daud did not surrender, he and his family were killed by revolutionaries. After killing Daud Khan and his family, the power of the Musahiban (Royal) dynasty has come to an end.11

As we mentioned before, the convergence of the Afghan state and ruling parties to the USSR and unnatural Constitutional reforms were not tolerated in the country. There are so many reasons of failure to implement the reforms and domestic and foreign policies but the most important ones were the lack of modern technology, the wrong measurement of the pulse of the society, the weakness of the political, military and economic infrastructure of the state. These resistances gathered in Pakistan with the occupation of the USSR and gained legitimacy in the Western camp, and to give a concrete example that gained all kinds of supports was the killing of US ambassador to Afghanistan Adolph Spike Dubs in Kabul on February 14, 1979. President Carter provided medicine and communication equipments to the mujahideens in Pakistan. In January 1979, the first major attack of the mujahideen took place in Nangarhar province, which marked the beginning of a jihad that would last more than ten years.12

Discussing USSR invasion and its impact on Afghanistan, Region and its Nation

Interviewer: Hello, I am Pashtoon Zirak. Today we have an interview with Hizbullah Kakar from Pashtunistan, Quetta. Before we begin the interview let our audience knows about the title which is USSR 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.

Interviewer: OK Kakar Sir, if we go back to the 20th century and search the internal and external affairs of Afghanistan there are plenty of different narrations regarding the invasion, so according to your point of view what happened to Afghanistan and its internal and external affairs?

Kakar: thank you very much Dear Zirak for giving us the chance to comment on this issue. You asked very important question and let me briefly explain world history after WW2. After WW2 the democratic system has been evolved and spread to hundreds of countries and Afghanistan was also affected by these changes happening around the world. Afghan monarchy and its rule of law was based on tribal and traditional way of governance, there were no active democratic institutions and political activism like voting and parliamentarian accountability. So Afghans and political activists were also impressed by the democratic system and their demand for a free society increased so their country could progress and become a member of global democratic region.

People Democratic Party or (PDPA) was one of those to eliminate the monarchy and build a republic so the power could transit form a one man rule to the Nation.

Interviewer: Kakar Sir you spoke about the democratic regime and intention of the political parties like PDPA to overthrow the monarchy, what do you think about the four communist presidents and their rivalry among each others? Were they unsatisfied with Government rule or were they having an intention to grasp power?

Kakar: when we look to the Communist regime back in 1978, one thing that we should consider in our research is that those leaders brought rapid reforms in the society which is abnormal for a region where thousands of years traditional laws governed. For example Nations mentality and perception was not ready, those who were governing the society were excluded for the power, and from the beginning when regime changed a parallel internal and
external war began. So based on these situations when we look to the regime these were the barriers for presidents to overcome. However let’s look from another angle to this era, the monarchy was eliminated and a new chapter has begun, reforms were brought to the Afghan society which has a huge impact on today’s liberty and democracy. We should agree on that two supers fought their war inside afghan soil and beside regional powers also fought their war such as Pakistan vs. India and Saudi Arabia vs. Iran.

**Interviewer: What were Intentions of USSR to Invade Afghanistan?**

**Kakar:** In my point of View the intention of USSR was Geostrategic, when we look to USSR influence area and it economic interest zone, it has so many problems with the sea trade and the access to Indian warm sea plus she wanted an access to Persian Gulf where she could transit all her trade ships. So here she could overcome the economic crises and trade deficit. Afghanistan was a corridor to south east Asia to cross all Indian sub continent and neighbor countries.

**Interviewer:** As a neighbor and friend country what was the intention of Pakistan during this era?

**Kakar:** I think when we to Pakistan role during this era, she should have cooperated with Afghan State and eliminated the Russian influence however Pakistan’s strategic interest is not parallel to the Afghan ones and Afghan developments are perceived as a threat to its national interests. So this was a chance for Pakistan to overthrow the Afghan government and lessen its power across the country. Durand line and Water Flows were a survival issues for Pakistan because already in 70s it has lost its part called East Pakistan in a War which later became Bangladesh. Pakistan perceived these liberal movements as threat from diplomatic and military angles and sought to support religious groups because according to religious scripts the border line concept is not accepted among Muslims, so she tried to weaponize and train all these groups against the new liberal movements.

**Interviewer:** As a young intellect what is your perception of those youths who were grown up in a war zone and let behind from all opportunities? And what is your message to those youths?
Kakar: the war is always an unwanted situation and nobody wants to be in such cases, when we look back we have millions of civil causalities, more than 18 thousands of Afghan army were martyred. This is not called life when a child is stopped from dreaming and a young from living the life. So I am totally disappointed for Afghan youths and their sufferings.

Interviewer: thank you so much Hizbullah Kakar for giving us time.
Kakar: Thanks for having me.

Broadcasting of Invasion in International and Regional media

Interviewer: Hello, I am Pashtoon Zirak. Today we have an interview with Hamid Waziri from Pashtunistan, who has a Bachelor degree in Political Science and he has been also an active member of political parties of His Homeland. Mr. Waziri has deep knowledge about the region. Before we begin the interview let our audience knows about the title which is Broadcasting of USSR Invasion 1979 in International and Regional Media.

Interviewer: Mr. Waziri my first question will be how to you define and perceive USSR invasion of 1979?

Waziri: thank you so much for having me and reflecting on this case of History. In my point of view is let’s find that USSR is invited for support by the Afghan government or does USSR intentionally came to Afghanistan? In My point of view USSR was invited by the communist regime which began its work on 1978 for support because in neighbor country Pakistan there were huge gatherings to operate against Afghan government. Second thing to focus is that international actors perceived this support as a threat to their interests and started calling this an invasion to bring together all its allies for counter-action.

Interviewer: Mr. Waziri, What was Pakistan’s role during this time?

Waziri: As I told you the two blocs tried to gather all their allies to support their stance in Afghanistan, similarly Pakistan also joined western bloc through CENTO cooperation in which Pakistan’s National Security were given guaranteed in western bloc. Another part of the strategy was when Mohammad Zia-ul Haq came to power and declared martial-law in 1977 so it could forcefully implement the laws and order. Mohammad zia-ul Haq were given religious titles to easily make his image acceptable inside Pakistan. From another side Iran also cooperated with western bloc to stop USSR entering warm sea.
Interviewer: How was this war broadcasted in Pakistan’s Media?

Waziri: As an ally through the CENTO strategic agreement Pakistan’s role was to assist the international media in broadcasting, she also broadcasted this case as an invasion and tried to shape public perception about this so she could justify her foreign policy in Afghanistan and the support to mujahedeen. To illustrate this with an example Afghan refugee kids and youths were taught war related words, concepts and stories and their school books had plenty of pictures and stories of weapons and Jihad (Holy War) to shape their ideology. Quetta and Peshawar radios daily broadcasted stories, news and Jihad related shows so it could be listened inside eastern and southern Afghanistan. Refugee camps were altered to training camps so they could go back to war and fight their government. Afghan government and its people were shown as an infidels or Atheists and jihad against them is obliged for everyone.

Interviewer: thank you so much for giving us time Mr. Hamid Waziri

Waziri: thanks for having me.

Afghan Diaspora

It is not an easy event to summarize with a single story. The death sequence that started with the assassination of President Daud Khan on April 28/1978 continues until today. The only truths of last 40 years are that millions of Afghans were killed, migrated from their homes and deprived of everything. Thousands of books and millions of articles have been written on dissolution of Soviet union in history, but the difficulties Afghan men, women and children have suffered in the last 40 years and the struggle for survival is still unknown to most. This story is about lost rights of girls, unfinished dreams of children and desperate world of boys. Imagine those Afghans who were doctors, engineers, pilots and teachers in the pre-occupation period have become waiters, sweepers and garbage collectors in the country of refuge. In the war that has been going on in the last 40 years, every Afghan family has fallen victim, but despite this bitter story, their struggle is unique and unprecedented source of inspiration for our young generations.13

With the Soviet occupation, millions of Afghans chose to exile instead of living under the occupation and Communist regime, and in the mid-1980s there were 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan and more than 1.5 million in Iran. Around 6 millions left their home during the war.¹⁴

**Interviewer:** Hello, I am Pashtoon Zirak. Today we have an interview with Doc. Tahir Yosufi from Kabul, who was a Lecturer in Agricultural department of Kabul University and Member of Peoples Democratic Party or (PDPA). Before we begin the interview let our audience knows about the title which is USSR 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.

**Interviewer:** Thank You so much for giving us time.

**Tahir Yousufi:** thanks for having me

**Interviewer:** Doc.Yosufi As a member of PDPA and as witness of that era my first question is why Afghan Regime changed from Monarchy to Republic and then eventually to a Communism?

**Tahir Yousufi:** let me go back to the history of Afghanistan, until late 1960s we had an absolute monarchy which means there were no democracy, free speech and political liberty to raise your voice. After that King Zahir Shah announced an open Assembly to change the Constitution and finally political parties and social activists were given permission to open their gatherings. Wesh Zalmian or (Aware Youths) was the first party to gather and take part in politics. Also after some time under the presidency of Noor Mohammad Taraki, PDPA was established, in this meeting Babrak Karmal, Dr Salih Mohammad Zehri, Dastagir Panjsheri was also there. The PDPA party established a gazette named Khalq or (People).

The PDPA divided into two groups named Khalq(people) and Parcham (Flag) under the leaderships of Noor ohammad Taraki and Babrak Karmal after the two sections again came together for a strong alliance. Mir Akbar one of the popular face of the PDPA was assassinated and the leading figures of the PDPA were arrested by government. With such decision of government the PDPA arranged a coup against the government and overthrew the republic with killing all family members of president Daud khan.

**Interviewer:** Do u believe that the revolution was welcomed by Afghans? And why USSR failed in Afghanistan?

¹⁴https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ae6a9d110.pdf , e.t. (01.10.2020)
Tahir Yousufi: I believe that the revolution was 97% welcomed by Afghans however 3% which consists of Bureaucrats, bourgeois class, and land owners resisted the revolution because it was against their interests. I think the disagreement that came inside the PDPA party and revolutionaries were a game of USSR to better control their interests in Afghanistan. The revolution was a basic right of Afghans and I as one of the member of the PDPA party criticize USSR invasion and disagree with USSR interference in Afghan sovereignty. One fault that we committed was that Afghans general mentality was not ready for such radical changes and we forced to bring these in the society.

**Interviewer:** *What were the latest figures of immigrants at the end of the war?*

Tahir Yousufi: during the war millions of Afghans were displaced inside and outside of Afghanistan, almost around one million migrated to Europe, USA and Canada. Around 3,5 million and 1,5 million migrated to Pakistan and Iran respectively.

**Interviewer:** *As one of the refugees of War what are the common problems of Refugees? Do Afghans have a Community in France?*

Tahir Yousufi: yes we have Afghan communities across France. I think Coming to Europe was so difficult in addition to this adaptation, employment, and language was the biggest challenges for refugees but still we managed to try our best.

**Interviewer:** *Mr. Yousufi according to you what is the Diasporas role in rebuilding the country?*

Tahir Yousufi: I call upon all Diaspora community to come together for rebuilding Afghanistan for example France has many prestigious educational institutions and excellent opportunities for self-developments. So all Diaspora community should try to invest back in (Health, education, business and infrastructure) of Afghanistan and build a great bridge between France and Afghanistan. They should not forget that they are Afghans and still have Afghan roots so don’t left behind the widows, orphans, victims of war and let’s support them financially and educationally.

**Interviewer:** *What is your opinion about President Najibullah?*

Tahir Yousufi: President Najibullah was a patriot and he was a true leader of Afghans.

**Interviewer:** *Thank you so much for giving us time.*

Tahir Yousufi: Thanks for having me.
Environmental aspect of war

The damage caused to the environment and health of society by the 40 years of War. Unfortunately the numbers and the graphs showed very negative results. Only around 3 millions of addicted citizens are now in the country. When you observe the reasons behind this, war is the primary reason. Citizens feel they are lost, forgotten, and invaluable and they fell to the bad behaviors.\(^{15}\)

The largest share of the National budget is spent on security and this led to the economic crises, unemployment, and lack of investments. Just imagine a young boy and girl who are just one second far from the rest of the world with one click, he/she watches and sees youths of the rest of the world and their comfort and fun life. Will there not be a discomfort in that society socially and psychologically? According to the social comparison theory, individuals and society usually compares their status and level to other individuals and society to realize weather they are in good condition or not. Here In point of view the same theory works and Findings shows that most youths and their addictions are related to their welfare and social status. When they are not satisfied from this they are addicted to bad behaviors and illegal works.\(^{16}\)

Second damage that is caused to our country is environmental. Uses of huge amounts of weapons and their damage to climate and agriculture are irreversible. As we discussed above large amounts of budget is spent on security and also the important part of political instability which has been corruption are the biggest barriers for the investment on environmental areas.

Afghan Women

With the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, a new Great Game started between the USA and the USSR. With the end of Occupation civil war started and then the Taliban regime came into power. The situation of Afghan women was improving like other women in the world until 1979, but after civil war even rights that were existed were removed. There are two questions that are tried to analyze in the study, the first is ‘There is no place for women due to Afghanistan’s social structure, traditional beliefs and rumors’ and the second is why in some regions women are still outside of all the scenes as if they are secondary citizens? An attempt has been made to examine all of them through historical process.

The birth of modern Afghanistan is attributed to Abdurrahman Khan, who ruled from 1880 to 1901. King Abdurrahman tried to change some of the traditional laws that damaged the status of women. For example, it removed the tradition of forcing a woman to marry the relatives of her deceased husband, raised the age of marriage, and granted women the right to divorce under certain conditions.17

King Amanullah Khan openly campaigned against veiling and polygamy and promoted the education of girls not only in Kabul but also in rural areas. In a public speech, Amanullah said Islam does not require women to cover their bodies or wear a special veil, and at the conclusion of the speech, Queen Soraya tore the veil in front of everyone, and the wives of other officials attending the meeting followed this example. In the early 1920s Kobra, Amanullah’s sister formed the Anjuman-I-Himayat-I-Niswan (Women’s Protection Organization) by This organization encouraged women to bring their grievances and injustices to the organization and bring them together to challenge oppressive institutions. Together with her mother, Queen Soraya founded the first magazine for women called Ershad-I-Niswan (Counseling for Women). Women were encouraged to receive education and in 1928 Fifteen young women were sent to Turkey for higher education.18

Amanullah tried to consolidate Islam and state policies, but drowned when he tried to implement rapid changes in women's status. Many conservative Afghans in rural areas thought that the reforms were too western for their society, and the forced changes were

against Religious teachings. In 1964, Afghanistan passed its third constitution, in which, for the first time in Afghan history, women were encouraged to participate in the country's political and legislative institutions. All Afghans, including women, had the right to vote, to be members of parliament and to participate in political decision-making.¹⁹

In the early years of the communist regime, very radical decisions were made, such as shaving men's beards, banning women from wearing burqa (veil), land reforms, mandating education for boys as well as girls, abolishing the bride price and changing the minimum legal age for girls to sixteen. Many of their reforms provoked enormous responses because they ignored the reality of Afghan society, the deep cultural and religious sensibilities of the Afghan people, the socioeconomic situation, and the existence of long-standing strong traditional structures. Women under the Soviet-backed regime continued to serve as active participants in the workforce, particularly teachers, doctors, and judges.²⁰

The End of Occupation and the start of Mujahedin and Taliban respectively closed all opportunities for women to receive education, work and even access to very basic resources. In this period, women did not have any rights, so all their rights were taken away from Afghan women which were achieved through whole 20th century.

An interview with Hela Saba about Women situations during 1979-1989. Hela Saba back in 80s lived in Afghanistan and now she resides in London, UK.

Interviewer: Hela Saba ma’am thanks for giving us time, my first question is tell us about the situation of women before the 1979 invasion of USSR?

Hela Saba: Thanks for asking the question. Well since I was living there in that time, the situation of women during that was very good, women had constitutional rights to have education, go to work, gym and vote. There were no forced marriages and women were satisfied and happy with their life.

Interviewer: what women lost during war?

Hela Saba: War affected a lot the women’s status during that time. One thing that we should stress upon is that women lost the facility of education and their schools were closed and

²⁰ Taliban, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan
burnt. They were left un-educational and gradually new generation couldn’t find their place in society and power.

*Interviewer: what is the situation of women nowadays in Afghanistan?*

**Hela Saba:** I believe Afghan women are brave and confident to stand shoulder to shoulder with Afghan men, women has a lot of achievements during last 20 years and this progress should be continued because women gave a lot of sacrifice during last 40 years of war and they deserve to be given priority. An educated woman can manage a whole family which means the next generation of Afghanistan. We should encourage women’s all rights across the country.

*Interviewer: what is the worst story you heard about women in Afghanistan?*

**Hela Saba:** There are a lot of stories that make feel very sad and emotional but to give an example there are two stories that every time I remind make me feel sad. One is that in Nangarhar province a women lost three sons to war and now looks after 22 family members in these critical times. And second one is that in Helmand province there are around of 10,000 widows who lost their loved ones to war. Just imagine in a society where women are not allowed to work and have education how could these women bring bread for their children? This is a horrific image of Afghan women in 21st Century.

*Interviewer: What is your message to Afghan women?*

**Hela Saba:** My message to Afghan women to stand against the oppressive traditions and get their education, educate their children especially girls because this is the only way they can achieve their rights.

*Interviewer: thanks for giving us time Hela Saba ma’am.*

**Hela Saba:** Thanks for having me.

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**Conclusion**
With the occupation of the USSR, the traditional state structure of Afghanistan tried to forcefully change the economic, political, sociological and ideological structure of the society in a short time and as we can see an unprecedented result, a strong central authority shocked. The post-Soviet Era began power sharing disputes between mujahideen from 1989 - 2001. At the same time Proxy wars between regional countries were also going and used Sectarian, ethnic and linguistic differences as fuel for the 11 year civil war. With this civil war, the distances between different segments of society were widened further, thus it became the area of survival and proxy wars of regional states.21

When we look at Afghanistan's Civil War and its Effects on the International System between the years 1989-2001, Afghanistan has turned into the training and equipment ground of the mujahideen groups gathered from different parts of the world. These terrorist groups in the country were organizing terrorist attacks in different parts of the world, and eventually the September 11, 2001 attack happened, thus transforming the international system. The invasion of Afghanistan by the USA and its allies has become a paradox for the world order and began to question the features and functioning of the new era. When we look at these developments, the concept of security has begun to question again and with questions like how much sovereign is a state within its internal and external borders in today's world and Does the traditional balance of power system still functional?22

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21 https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/soviet-s-begin-withdrawal-from-afghanistan
22 The Civil War in Afghanistan, A. Liakhovsky, https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/28765
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