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The Soviets in Afghanistan:

A Threat to American Security

Abstract

Securitization Theory is a leading critical theory in the field of Security Studies which offers many benefits to security research, yet it has concerning limitations. This theory allows for the study of individual elements of this securitization process in case studies, such as the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan of 1979, the subsequent Soviet-Afghan War of 1979-1988, and the role of the USA in this conflict. This thesis seeks to understand the conception, debate, and execution surrounding US security concerns about the Soviet presence in late 1970's Afghanistan. These events were conceived as an existential threat to US interests in the region. What these dangers were exactly, and how this security debate led to new foreign policy by the Carter administration, will be analysed through the conceptual framework of Securitization Theory. While the events of Cold War conflicts like this are well documented, there seems to be limited research done into the decision-making process. This thesis uses primary sources and secondary literature in the Securitization Theory framework to analyse this process. This approach might result in new insights and approaches to the Cold War, and other historical case studies, by highlighting the benefits and limitations to the Securitization Theory and reveal the decision-making process of US foreign policy during the Soviet-Afghan War.

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Introduction

After the chaos and brutality of World War II reduced many areas of the world to little more than battlefields, the world could only hope that the new peace would last. Some, like John Lewis Gaddis, would say the ensuing era was indeed, a 'Long Peace.'[1] This period started in 1947, and saw the new global superpowers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, compete for hegemony by trying to prove the superiority of either Capitalism or Communism as political and economic systems. It ended in 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union. But was this truly a period of 'peace?' It was after all a period of unprecedented growth of militaries and military armaments with a nuclear arms race. Rising international tension and incidents like the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the brink of a new global conflict. Furthermore, this was not a period without wars. The Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Soviet-Afghanistan War are just a fraction of the conflicts in this period. However, these wars remained regional conflicts, World War III never materialized. Conflict between the superpowers remained in the shadows, it never came to a full military confrontation, it remained a Cold War.[2]

Hesitant to go to war with each other directly due to the potential destructive power of nuclear warfare, the Cold War was a period of superpower détente, and of indirect conflict. To avoid war and ease tension, the superpowers agreed on this détente, opening up communication by installing a direct phoneline between the two leaders, and signing treaties limiting the number of missiles they held.[3] But while the superpowers opened up a dialogue and spoke of peace, the Cold War continued in the shadows. Espionage was rampant, and secret 'deniable' missions were carried out.[4] In this paper, I will focus on such a tactic. During the previously mentioned conflicts such as the Korean and Vietnam wars, and the Cuban Missile crisis, it was the US that was directly involved, and the USSR indirectly. The USA had boots on the ground, the USSR was supplying their enemy. It was this tactic of proxy warfare,

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[1] John Lewis Gaddis, "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System," *International Security* 10, no. 4 (1986): 100-101.
[2] Lewis Gaddis, "The Long Peace." 101, 139-140,
[3] Nancy Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 73.
[4] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the Cia, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 42-45.

that the USA used during the Soviet-Afghan war of 1979-1988. During this covert operation, *Operation Cyclone*, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan were backed by the USA and its allies, primarily Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The CIA supplied weapons and supplies to the Mujahideen through Pakistan, leading to the gradual attrition of Soviet forces and their eventual retreat from Afghanistan.[5]

Why did the US decide to interfere in Afghanistan in such a way? How did they view this particular war? To find out how they analysed this conflict and how they made the decision to indirectly interfere I will use an International Relations (IR) theory called the Securitization Theory. This theory tries to explain the conceptualization, realization, and debate around security in a nation, organization, or other entity.[6] I will use this theory to try to analyse the research, decision-making, and execution processes of the US government during the Carter administration as related to this conflict. Most research on such decisions revolves around the consequences of those decisions, but not the process leading up to them. The aim of this thesis is to try and unravel the process and discussion surrounding those decisions using Securitization Theory. Knowing how the security debate around this topic evolved gives us a new angle to not only understand the old conflict, but also the more contemporary consequences of the USA/CIA involvement in the Soviet-Afghan war. Thanks to the Freedom of Information Act there is an ever increasing amount of available primary sources on this topic, calling for more research to be carried out incorporating these new sources of information.

The Soviet-Afghan war greatly contributed to the crumbling of the USSR, but its aftermath, and its US involvement is still relevant to this day. After all, the US was one of the nations that supplied the Mujahideen, who after the war splintered into other well-known organizations, such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. While this does *not* mean the US is directly responsible for these organisations and their actions, these groups have (in)directly benefited from short-sighted US involvement in the region.[7] In hindsight, we can trace the steps of these events and groups just mentioned, but of more interest for this thesis, is the

[5] Moniz Bandeira and Pinheiro S. Guimarães, *The Second Cold War: Geopolitics and the Strategic Dimensions of the USA*. Translated by Lage Américo Lucena (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017), 8-10.
[6] Ole Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," In: *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 3-5.
[7] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 26-27.

decisions and decision-making that led to this involvement, this 'Operation Cyclone.' This thesis aims to find an answer to the question, *how was Soviet involvement in Afghanistan securitized in the foreign policy of the Carter administration?*

In the first section I will start by establishing a framework from Securitization Theory. I will give an overview of the literature of the theory, explain its uses for the field of History, and its benefits as well as its limitations. I will then try to overcome some of these limitations with newer additions to the theory. In the second section I will briefly give an overview of the events leading up to the Soviet-Afghan War, the invasion, and the war in its early years. I will then focus on the role of the Carter administration and their analysis of the conflict, and the debates and actions of the US government leading up to their involvement in the conflict. Then, in the third section, I will be analysing primary sources such as declassified CIA reports and government database articles, as well as historical news articles from the New York Times and the Washington Post, through the lens of this framework. Combining insights from these sources with secondary literature I will aim to answer our central question, as well as questions such as; how did the US government conceptualize 'security' during the Soviet-Afghan War? What did the debate look like in finalizing this concept, and what were the rationalizations for taking part in a covert war? To what extent did they consider their own citizens, or those of Afghanistan? Finally, I will finish with a conclusion of my findings and the use of Securitization Theory in analysing 'security' debates in historical contexts.

Securitization Theory

Introducing Security

'Securitized', 'Securitization', these may be unfamiliar concepts to many. They are not the same as the term 'security' that is used in daily life, but clearly it is connected to *a* concept of security. When the USA was deliberating on what to do about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, they were securitizing the issue. So, what exactly does this concept mean?

Security is a concept hotly debated in the field of Security Studies, with many definitions and theories competing in the field. *Securitization Theory* is a critical theory of security that emerged in this field and was first developed by the aptly named Copenhagen school, created at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde.[8] Inheriting elements of both realist and constructionist philosophies, the theory concerns itself with the process of securitization; the post-political process of combatting existential threats to the state.[9] Their definition of security can best be described as 'the anticipated state of being unharmed in the future.'[10]

It is not the only 'school' in the Security Studies field and other 'schools' have since adapted the theory. Most notable are the Paris school, and the Welsh (Abyrwyth) school. The Paris school draws on the ideas of Foucault, stating that security is a social construct, a deliberate and continuous process of securitization between government and its people.[11] The Welsh school, spearheaded by Ken Booth, is a more direct refutation of the Copenhagen school. It moves away from the realist approach to state-centred security and power and claims that security is emancipation. They claim the Copenhagen approach increases security, by decreasing that of another state.[12] The various schools, and indeed the whole Security Studies field, continue to debate the meaning of 'security.'[13]

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[8] Jonna Nyman, "Securitization Theory" In *Critical Approaches to Security*, ed. Laura J. Shepherd (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 51-52.
[9] Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization." 2-4.
[10] Beatrice de Graaf, and Cornel Zwierlein, "Historicizing Security - Entering the Conspiracy Dispositive," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 38, no. 1 (143) (2013): 52.
[11] Rita Floyd, "When Foucault met Security studies: A critique of the 'Paris School' of security studies." December 18, 2006. 10-11. https://www.academia.edu/11683813/When_Foucault_met_security_studies_A_critique_of_the_Paris_school_of_security_studies.
[12] Rita Floyd, "Towards a Consequentialist Evaluation of Security: Bringing Together the Copenhagen and the Welsh Schools of Security Studies," *Review of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2007): 330-333.
[13] Floyd, "Towards a Consequentialist Evaluation of Security," 333.

In this paper I will largely focus on a similar approach to the Copenhagen school and the work of Wæver and Buzan, but as we will see later on, there are problems with their original conception of the theory to be addressed. I will give an overview of the Copenhagen school, their conceptualisation of security, and the limitations of their initial theory as well as possible ways to overcome these limitations, in the rest of this section.

The Copenhagen School

The Copenhagen School started exploring the concept of security after they noticed that before the 1980's the term was being widely used, but never quite explained. Then, during the 80's, it was explored more, but always in a wider context and never truly on its own. Thus, these Securitization Theory pioneers such as Wæver and Buzan set out to define the concept, and the word, security.[14] Wæver claimed that security has an everyday meaning, that of being secure, safe, or not threatened, or in other words the everyday meaning of security is that of *safety*. Safety can apply to the individual, or groups of individuals, but as Wæver claims, security can only apply to the state. When we speak of security in academic or political terms, it is always *the existential security of the state* that we refer to, according to Wæver.[15] In his 1983 book, 'People, States, and Fear,' Buzan attempted to provide a three-layered concept of security consisting of; the individual, the national/state, and the international system.[16] However, he would later amend this to mean that the state level is always privileged, which led to what Wæver then called, the *Hourglass model of Security*. The individual and international levels were dynamics that provided the state with possible threats to its security.[17] But for the state to handle such threats, they need to be identified first. This insight gave Buzan, de Wilde, and Wæver several new avenues to pursue.

First, they focussed on the process of identifying a security issue or threat. If someone wishes to claim there is a security threat, they need to be able to convince those with the power to combat this issue. This led Wæver to two conclusions, first of all, for someone to be able to draw attention to this issue, or more succinctly, securitize an issue, they need to have

[14] Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization." 1-2.
[15] Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization." 2-4.
[16] Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (London: Wheatsheaf, 1983), 36-44.
[17] Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization." 3-5.

either a connection to political power or have it themselves. Thus, security can only be defined by elite actors. Furthermore, defining security through this process, according to Wæver, means it is a speech act. If an elite actor, or securitizing actor, defines a threat as a security issue, this act itself *is* security, moving the threat out of normal politics into the existential security sphere.[18]

Secondly, what exactly constitutes such a security issue or threat? Historically, this was mostly a special case of military or political upheaval, most often war. What discerns security issues from political issues, is the level of threat. According to Buzan, a threat or issue is either non-political, where it has no state involvement, or political/politized, where government decision making and resource allocation *is* necessary. A security issue then, is where a threat is of an existential nature, where emergency measures need to be taken to resolve the matter. This thus moves a security issue from the political sphere into its own category.[19] While security threats have historically been mostly concerned with matters of warfare, the Copenhagen School members created several 'security sectors.' The military, political, economic, societal, and environmental sectors all deal with differing (if often overlapping) security threats, but the state is always the is considered the only one with power to deal with these threats.[20]

The Securitization Process

To understand how this process works, from identifying a security threat through a speech act and unto implementing new security measures, Wæver et al. came up with a framework. It starts with a *Securitizing Actor*, who 'speaks' security by identifying the threat. This threat, the *Referent Subject*, can be anything from an impending war, financial collapse, or the outbreak of an epidemic. This Referent Subject is a threat to the *Referent Object*, that which needs to be protected. In the case of the Copenhagen School version of the theory, this is most often the national state, either its political unity or autonomy, its economy, or perhaps even its culture/identity. The final element of the framework is the *Audience*. The Audience needs to be convinced by the Securitizing Actor that the threat is indeed existential because the

[18] Nyman, "Securitization Theory," 52-54.
[19] Nyman, "Securitization Theory," 52-54.
[20] Nyman, "Securitization Theory," 52-54.

Audience has the power, or access to it, to start Security measures.[21] The Audience is one of the more problematic elements of the framework, as I will explain later on, but the Copenhagen School definition nearly always meant the political elite (such as Congress or the President).[22] Later scholars instead began to emphasize the role of the public as the audience in a modern democracy.[23]

Limitations and Problems with Securitization Theory & Possible Fixes

As stated before, there are some problems with the Securitization Theory as it was initially conceived by the Copenhagen School. It should be noted, however, that the initial limits of the Copenhagen School version of the Theory reinvigorated interest in the topic of security, and they have themselves been at the forefront of expanding the theory. I will discuss two of the main issues with the theory. Firstly, the limits on who can 'speak' security and thus functions as the Securitizing Actor. Secondly, who has the power to actually function as the Audience.

Securitization Theory as initially imagined by the Copenhagen School was far too limited in scope, focussing almost exclusively on the national/state security, with both Actor and Audiences being elites or with the power to make changes in the security policies. This of course deprives those *not* in power of the ability to 'speak' security and to call for changes, this would mean minority groups would be unable to securitize in the original framework. However, research has shown this is more a limitation of the initial theory than a reflection of reality.[24] Women are usually underrepresented in governments and other power structures such as leading functions in businesses or organisations. This would mean that women, half the population, would be unable to securitize. While admittedly a struggle, research has shown that they are capable of raising security concerns.[25] Furthermore, defining securitization as a 'speech' act is also unnecessarily limiting. Minorities who do not

[21]Thierry Balzacq, *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (Prio New Security Studies. London: Routledge, 2011), 7-8.
[22] Nyman, "Securitization Theory," 53
[23] Paul Roe, "Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UK's Decision to Invade Iraq," *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 6 (December 2008): 620-622.
[24] Sarah Bertrand, "Can the Subaltern Securitize? Postcolonial Perspectives on Securitization Theory and its Critics," *European Journal of International Studies* 3:3 (2018): 295-298.
[25] Lene Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 2 (2000): 304-305.

share the language cannot securitize? Can those without access to a medium such as television or the internet not speak up? What about non-speech communications such as images or photographs, research has shown they are capable of transmitting ideas of security as well.[26]

To reiterate, the problem is that in the initial framework there are groups of people who, supposedly, could not securitize. Mainly, women and subaltern/minority groups. In her article from 2000, Lene Hansen argues that the Copenhagen school suffers from two problems relating to gender in their theory. First there is the problem of 'Security as Silence,' where a security issue cannot be raised or 'spoken.' Either because there are no means to do so or it might increase the threat.[27] The second problem is that of 'Subsuming security,' where security issues related to gender identity are overtaken by other identities such as ethnic, national, or religious.[28] This often means that gender issues are relegated to individual 'safety' issues and not wider security issues. The example Hansen gives to show how the Copenhagen school is wrong in this assessment of the honour killings of females in Pakistan. Here, the mistreatment of (mainly, but not exclusively) women at the hands of men has become an existential threat to a large group of the population, but the state fails through its unwillingness, to protect them. Women who speak out against their rapists are often stoned for having had sex outside of marriage, they cannot speak security because of a lack of means, or fear of more pain.[29] Furthermore, many cases of rape are treated not as a security breach of female gender identity, but a breach of religious morality.[30]

In his forthcoming book chapter, *Creating Empire, Resisting Empire*, David Silbey points out another problem with the conceptualisation of security, the subaltern. In the initial conceptualisation of the framework, the Copenhagen School sets the state as central to the question of security and assumes it to be a democracy.[31] This of course makes the framework very Western- or Eurocentric. This not only exacerbates the problem that minorities and women already had in speaking security, but also highlights the issue that it

[26] Lene Hansen, "Theorizing the Image for Security Studies: Visual Securitization and the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis," *European Journal of International Relations* 17, no. 1 (2011): 54-57.
[27] Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma," 286-287.
[28] Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma," 286-287.
[29] Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma," 295-297.
[30] Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma," 298-299.
[31] Buzan, *People, States, and Fear*, 44-47.

is unclear how non-Western, non-state, and other subaltern groups can speak security for themselves.[32] In his analysis of the Boxer Rebellion in China (1899-1901), Silbey notes how many different groups acted in pursuit of their own idea of security. At first glance, it simply seems a war between Chinese and Imperial forces, but a closer look reveals that the Chinese Boxer rebels had very different security concerns than the Empress. Furthermore, the Imperial forces of France, Russia, Britain, Germany, Japan, and the USA were united against the Chinese, but had very different aims themselves.[33] Breaking down these groups and analysing them on their own as 'Communities of Security,' allows us to see not just how they envisioned and followed their own ideas of security, but also how they shared those ideas with other groups. The benefit of this addition to Securitization Theory is that we can now analyse individual groups, such as Afghan communists, the Mujahideen, the Soviets, and the US, and see how they followed their own security ideals, and how they (dis)regarded those of other groups.[34]

Onto the second point, modern society (most clearly in the West) is extremely connected. Within seconds, information can be accessed and shared through the internet, and news sources are readily available and (reasonably) free from censorship.[35] Most modern nations are also democracies, where citizens have some access to those in power. Finally, with the advent of the internet especially, the world is interconnected like never before, national borders do not mean much online. With this in mind, it almost seems absurd that the 'Audience' in the traditional Securitization Theory are *just* those in a position of (national) power. Does their power not derive from the people, who can through protest and voting influence politics? Thus the role of the audience is too limited, and I will use the findings of Roe to amend this part of the theory.

In his 2008 paper, Paul Roe set out to redefine the aspect of audience for Securitization Theory. He notes the lack of definition of the relationship between Actor and Audience, an interaction that has been described by the Copenhagen School as crucial yet

[32] David Silbey, "Creating Empire, Resisting Empire: The Boxer Rebellion in China, 1899-1901," in *Securing the World: Imperial Competition and Cooperation in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Beatrice de Graaf, Ozan Ozavci & Erik de Lange, 1-2.
[33] Silbey, "Creating Empire, Resisting Empire," 1-3.
[34] Silbey, "Creating Empire, Resisting Empire," 18-20.
[35] Reporters Without Borders, "2020 World Press Freedom Index," Accessed January 19, 2021, https://rsf.org/en/ranking.

has not been a focus of their research.[36] Building on the work of Balzacq, Roe argues that there are two types of Audience, formal and moral. The formal audience is that of the parliament or similar power structure, who have the means to enact security measures. The moral audience is the public, or the group(s) from which the authority of the formal audience is based on.[37] This means that to successfully securitize an issue, the Securitizing Actor needs the agreement of both audiences. According to Roe, securitization is thus not just a speech act, but a two-stage process. There is the identification stage, at which the threat is either accepted or rejected as existential, and the mobilization stage, where new security measures are enacted. In his case study, the British invasion of Iraq in 2003, Roe points out that Premier Blair as the Securitizing Actor successfully convinced both formal and moral audiences of the threat (Iraqi WMDs) but struggled to move parliament to declare war, only succeeding after months of debates. According to Roe, the securitization process can thus be halted, or repeatedly fail and be restarted, until it either succeeds or is shelved. That success is inevitably tied to the interplay between Actor and the Audiences, and between the various Audiences.[38]

Benefits of the Theory for research and 'Historicizing Security'

Now, why would we use this theory? In an age where people and nations are becoming more connected and involved with politics, so do the possible definitions and needs for 'security.' Securitization Theory offers us a framework that is relatively easy to use and can help us analyse political processes. It has become a tool that has moved beyond the confines of state-centric power politics and can be used in the fields of social sciences, criminal sciences, political sciences, and more.[39]

One of the newer concepts in the Securitization Theory debate is that of 'Historicizing Security' as coined by de Graaf and Zwierlein. What this means, is that they want us to use Securitization Theory to look at the processes and outcomes of security policies in their historical context. They claim doing so can help us understand the evolution of security

[36] Roe, "Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures," 617-618.
[37] Roe, "Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures," 618-620.
[38] Roe, "Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures," 630-633.
[39] De Graaf, "Historicizing Security," 47-48.

policies over time, and how or why some securitization processes succeeded or failed. [40] This is a contrast to the approach of the Copenhagen School, which mainly focussed on the very recent past, effectively still the present. Taking the Securitization Theory as a looser toolkit instead of a strict framework and using it to analyse the historical process of security policies, allows us to better understand the development, the debates, and outcomes of these historical security practices.[41]

Fitting the Framework

The model of the Securitization Theory that I am thus using consists of a *Securitizing Actor* who is alerted to an existential threat, which in our case is either President Carter or someone in his cabinet. This threat, the *Referent Subject*, Communism or Soviet influence, needs to be stopped to protect the *Referent Object*. This Object in our case is the American people, the citizens of the Western world, or simply Capitalism. To do so, those with the power to combat the threat, the *Audience*, or *Audiences*, need to be convinced of the severity of the danger. Furthermore, by using the 'Communities of Security' concept of Silbey, we can see what different 'Communities' thought of security. After all, what the Americans and Afghans saw as an invasion, the Soviets saw as something else entirely.

[40] De Graaf, "Historicizing Security," 50-51.
[41] De Graaf, "Historicizing Security," 50-51.

The History of the Soviet-Afghan War

Afghanistan's history pre-Invasion

Afghanistan has seen more than its fair share of conflict. In the last two centuries alone, there have been well over eighty wars, and violent conflicts in the area.[42] Thus, when we mention an 'invasion of Afghanistan' it is understandable that clarification might be needed. Clearly, in the case of this paper it is the Soviet invasion of 1979 that is meant, with the ensuing Soviet-Afghan war of 1979-1988. But, throughout history, the historical region of Afghanistan has been invaded by some of the greatest military names in history. From Darius the Great of Persia, Alexander the Great, the Arab Caliphate which started the conversion of the region to Islam, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, and the British Empire. Many might also think of the American/NATO invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 during the War on Terror, and the hunt for Osama bin Laden.

Why is Afghanistan such a contentious region? K.J. Baker states there are two main reasons. Firstly, the region is a crossroads between West and East, and not all those who travel between the two are peaceful. Secondly, Afghan society is a vast, complicated network of clan and tribal connections. Due to the geography of the region, tribes are separated by mountain ranges and valleys, giving each tribe a strong measure of independence. The tribe and clan basis of society is further divided by ethnic and religious considerations, this leads to differences in tribal and religious culture, and differences in language. The largest ethnic group is the Pashtun (about forty percent of the population) who have dominated Afghan political history. There are the Hazara (about nine percent) who are descended from the Mongols. The Tajiks (twenty-seven percent) and Uzbeks (eight percent) who descend from various steppe peoples, and many other smaller ethnic groups. About ninety-nine percent of the population is Muslim, with the vast majority being Sunni, and a smaller Shi'a population.[43] This combination of geography and tribal life, has led to a weak nation, but a strong society, with a culture of resisting outside influences. Thus while the tribes and clans may compete and fight among each other, they are united in resisting foreign invaders.[44]

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[42] K. J. Baker, *War in Afghanistan: A Short History of Eighty Wars and Conflicts in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier 1839 – 2011* (Dural Delivery Centre NSW: Rosenberg Publishing, 2011), 11-12.
[43] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 18-20.
[44] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 12-14.

The Cold War

In the late 1970's, the world was recovering from some of the most devastating events of the Cold War period. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 saw the world nearly engulfed in nuclear warfare, the Prague Spring and subsequent Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia saw tensions rise in Europe, and the US was licking its wounds after retreating from Vietnam. This would be a slow process; the war had been costly and the faith of the American people in its leaders was wavering. This was compounded by the earlier Watergate scandal that saw President Nixon resign, and the rising inflation crippling the economy. It would be President Carter who would win the presidency in 1977 and preside over the difficult years that saw the start of the Soviet-Afghan War.[45]

But while the US was slowly recovering from its defeat, the Soviet Union seemed to stabilize under the leadership of General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. Through political manipulation and a policy of détente the USSR saw a period of small growth between 1970-1974. With the victory of Vietnamese communists, the Soviets gained greater access to Southeast Asia. The economy grew slightly due to a focus on the military industry and threatened to overtake the US in military power.[46] However, with Brezhnev falling ill in 1975, leadership of the USSR became fragmented. The combination of unsteady leadership and a growing military led to what effectively became an imperial foray into Angola and increased economic support for allied regimes in the Middle East. These expenses would become a strain on the economic and political structures of the USSR, leading to a crumbling economy and a near-collapse of the agricultural sector.[47] This economic struggle would be further stressed by the Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the ensuing war. A war that would be compared to Vietnam in how it caught the Soviets in its quagmire, and a war that would be a major contributing factor to the fall of the USSR in 1991.[48]

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[45] Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," 66-70.

[46] Vladislav Zubok, "Soviet Foreign Policy from Détente to Gorbachev, 1975–1985." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 89-93.

[47] Branislav L. Slantchev, "National Security Strategy: The Rise and Fall of Détente, 1971-1980," January 1, 2014, 4-5, https://web.archive.org/web/20141023220026/http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/nss/lectures/detente-malaise.pdf.

[48] Zubok, "Soviet Foreign Policy from Détente to Gorbachev," 96-103.

It was this period between the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Soviet-Afghan War that was hallmarked by *détente*, an easing of political tensions.[49] During this period both superpowers were recovering, with some economic growth, but largely struggling both economically and politically. Under those circumstances, neither superpower could risk increasing Cold War tensions, leading to an increase in communication and cooperation. Hallmark achievements of this period were the SALT I[50] agreement under Nixon and Brezhnev, where both the US and USSR agreed to limit the number of missiles they stockpiled, and the Helsinki Accords, in which the USSR would allow more liberal elections in return for recognition of Soviet borders in Eastern Europe.[51] This relatively peaceful era would come to an end in 1979 with the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan.

From Revolution to Invasion

While the Soviet Union had considered Afghanistan in its sphere of influence for a long time, it had limited influence over the country due to its non-aligned status. This changed during the events of 1978, where a communist coup took over Kabul.[52] Afghanistan had been ruled by Daoud Khan from 1953 until 1963 as Prime Minister in the government of his cousin, King Zahir Shah. In a bloodless coup, Khan deposed his cousin in 1973 and became the first President of Afghanistan, with broad religious conservative support. Like his cousin, Khan would eventually make the mistake of alienating both the left, by filling government positions with family members only looking for a profit, and the right, by increasingly introducing more progressive reforms such as female education.[53]

More and more Khan inched to the left, which led to closer ties to the Soviet Union, allowing for trade and economic aid. It also led to an ever growing Afghan Communist Party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), under the leadership of Hafizullah Amin. When Khan made yet another shift in his political restlessness and build contacts in the West, his supporters, especially the communists, felt betrayed. As Khan started removing

[49] Olav Njølstad, "The Collapse of Superpower Détente, 1975–1980," In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 135-136.
[50] Slantchev, "National Security Strategy," 5-6.
[51] Zubok, "Soviet Foreign Policy from Détente to Gorbachev," 96-97.
[52] Zubok, "Soviet Foreign Policy from Détente to Gorbachev," 102-103.
[53] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 156-158.

communists and their sympathizers from political office, they retaliated by murdering his allies. The erupting violence led to the death of one of the founders of the communist party, which set off a full scale revolution. On April 28, 1978, Khan and most of his family were killed in an attack on the palace in Kabul. The revolution, called the 'Saur Revolution', after the name of the month in Persian, installed a communist regime in Afghanistan with Nur Taraki as President *and* Prime Minister. The new government was built with the aim to respect Islam, but mainly to modernize the country.[54]

Modernizing the country meant that secular law would now take prominence over Islamic law. Tribal structures would have to make way for national ones. The religious and tribal leaders were angered by these prospects, but even before real opposition could rear its head, the new communist regime started performing purges. As the violence became more and more exorbitant, the communist party fractured. There had already existed two main factions, the moderate Parcham faction under Babrak Karmal, and the more hardcore Marxist Khalq faction under Nur Taraki, but now the moderates were being purged as well. Karmal was exiled to Europe and the violence continued in Afghanistan, not only polarizing the country between two political extremes, Communists and Islamists, but also widening the ethnic divide between the Pashtun, which most of the Communist leaders were, and the other Afghan ethnic groups.[55]

While Soviet-Afghan relations had mostly improved over the year that the communists had been in power, it had largely been concerned with matters of economy, education, and construction. Some military aid had been sent during an ethnic revolt in the western Herat province, but Moscow elites were wary of the excessive violence Taraki and Amin used in repressing dissent, and when Taraki asked for more military support, he was denied. Brezhnev was initially more concerned with maintaining the détente with Carter and the West. When the relations between the superpowers became more strained during 1979 because of the US placing more missile installations in Europe, the risk of a hostile Islamist Afghanistan on the southern border of the USSR became difficult to ignore. The last straw was the assassination of Taraki by his second in command, the more extremist Hafizullah

[54] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 164-166.
[55] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 166-168.

Amin, who took complete control over the PDPA. Now the Soviets felt they had to intervene, to save communist Afghanistan from itself.[56]

In December 1979, on Christmas Eve, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Three days later, Amin had been liquidated by Soviet Special Forces, Kabul and the main cities were secured, and the moderate Parcham faction of the PDPA was put into power under new President Karmal. The invasion started off with a minimal level of violence.[57] The number of Soviet troops was, at around 50,000 men, not overbearing, and the Soviets assumed the new moderate government would help calm tensions. The removal of Amin was indeed welcomed all over Afghanistan, but the peace it created would not last. While the initial plans for the invasion had assumed that within a matter of months the PDPA would be secure in its control over Afghanistan and the Soviet troops could come home, this would not be the case. During a mutiny in January 1980, Soviet troops were drawn into battle. Once Soviet-Afghan combat had started, it was hard to put the genie back into the bottle, Soviet clashes with rebels and insurgents would become more regular. The tensions would continue to escalate, and anti-Soviet propaganda would start circulating. With the country slipping back into chaos, the Soviets had to stay. After all, they could retreat and risk Afghanistan becoming the same risk that had prompted them to invade to begin with. More and more, Soviet troops would be allowed to fight alongside the Afghan PDPA troops, and within half a year, were conducting full scale military operations independently.[58]

What followed were five years of brutal combat. The Red Army, initially struggling against the guerrilla tactics of the rebels, took time to adapt. The Soviets, used to assaults with infantry formations, air strikes, and tank battles, had to adapt to similar tactics as the US in Vietnam such as heavy use of attack helicopters.[59] While the Soviets never lost a battle, they could not claim a decisive victory either.[60] Eventually, most of the rural areas were under rebel, Mujahideen, control. These Mujahideen, literally meaning 'one who participates in Jihad', were not a unified army but rather operated as individual, often tribal or ethnic,

[56] Zubok, "Soviet Foreign Policy from Détente to Gorbachev," 102-104.
[57] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 174-176.
[58] Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 24-28.
[59] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 180-184.
[60] Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 36-38.

units. They eventually operated as a loose coalition of bands of fighters, unified in their fundamentalist Islamic ideals and opposition to the communist atheists but often still split among ethnic lines. They were not all Afghan either, as the war had truly become a Jihad, or, Holy War. Fighters, money, weapons, and other supplies were continually funnelled into the country to support the Mujahideen. The biggest of these suppliers were neighbouring Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.[61]

The Carter administration and the start of CIA involvement in Afghanistan

President Carter took over from Gerald Ford in 1977 and inherited a troubled presidency. After two year, these troubles had only increased. At home, Carter was facing a struggling economy and opposition from both Liberals and Conservatives. Abroad, the US-backed regime in Nicaragua was overthrown by the socialist Sandinista revolutionaries, US ally Shah Pahlavi of Iran was deposed in the Iranian Revolution which replaced the modernizing kingdom with an Islamic, hostile regime, and months later fifty-two Americans were held hostage in Tehran by that new regime.[62] As these events had been preceded by the retreat from Vietnam, and the collapse of the Nixon presidency in the Watergate scandal, as well as Soviet advances in Angola and Cuba during the Ford administration, the US was struggling with coming to terms that the USSR was now on seemingly even footing, perhaps aided by a failing strategy of détente.[63]

In dealing with these Cold War crises, Carter relied on his two primary advisors, the diplomatic Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and the Polish-born and belligerent National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski.[64] Vance advocated a strong diplomatic approach, as shown by his involvement in the Camp David Accords of 1978[65] which would lead to peace between Egypt and Israel, and the SALT II accords which were to succeed the previous agreement but was not ratified by the Senate.[66] As a believer in détente, he also suggested forming closer diplomatic ties to both the USSR and CCP, but the Soviet Invasion in 1979

[61] Bandeira, *The Second Cold War*, 7-10.
[62] Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," 66.
[63] Slantchev, "National Security Strategy," 8-9.
[64] Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," 77.
[65] Slantchev, "National Security Strategy," 9.
[66] Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," 73-74.

would see his influence wane dramatically.[67] Brzezinski, on the other hand, favoured a much stronger strategy of containment over détente. This was exemplified by his proposed strategy of a 'Green Belt.' Supporting an awakening of ethnic and religious Islamic identity in the Middle East to contain the Red Menace, cutting them off from this vital area of US interest and the source of most of its oil supply.[68] Even before the invasion, Carter had accepted a plan of Brzezinski to initiate a CIA mission in Afghanistan to counter the Communist regime of the PDPA by supporting the Mujahideen.[69] This was officially the start of Operation Cyclone and CIA involvement in Afghanistan. Brzezinski argued that Afghanistan could become the Soviet Vietnam, and by sending CIA personnel to train the Mujahideen, as well as funding them in cash and supplies, he speculated the Soviets would be forced to intervene. Carter, and Reagan after him, would continue this program, and continually increase the funding, which helped keep the Soviets bogged down in this war for years. Some former Soviet officials would later speak of falling in an American trap.[70]

[67] Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," 73-74.
[68] Bandeira, *The Second Cold War*, 5-8.
[69] Huw Dylan, David Gioe, and Michael S Goodman, *The Cia and the Pursuit of Security: History, Documents and Contexts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 212-213.
[70] Baker, *War in Afghanistan*, 174.

US Securitization of the Soviet-Afghan War

Applying the framework

In the final section of this thesis I will analyse the securitization and decision-making processes of the Carter administration in their assessment of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. To do so I will first apply the framework of the Securitization Theory to the context of the invasion and subsequent Soviet-Afghan war. This framework follows the securitization process that starts with a *Securitizing Actor*, who is alerted to an existential threat that needs to be handled outside of 'normal' politics. In this case, National Security Advisor Brzezinski seems to fulfil this role. Even before the invasion Brzezinski highlighted the importance of denying Soviet influence or control over Afghanistan. For instance, in an April 3rd, 1979 memorandum to Vice President Walter Mondale, Brzezinski notes that the US was already active in Afghanistan to counter Soviet influence.[71] In this memorandum he thus states that the CIA were active in Afghanistan *before* President Carter got directly involved. Tactics that he mentions here are supporting regional actors in Afghanistan, and curiously, alerting the hostile Iranian government to Soviet activities.[72]

The day after the invasion (December 26th, 1979), Brzezinski sent a note to President Carter about the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.[73] Strikingly, he does not call it an invasion, opting for the rather more neutral 'intervention.' In this memorandum, he lays out the details, dangers both abroad and domestic, and possible strategies forward. The second part of the framework, the *Referent Subject* or existential threat, thus seems rather clear, Soviet influence and Communism. The dreaded 'Red Menace.' But the combination of neutral terminology in this memorandum towards the invasion and the inclusion of domestic dangers due to this invasion, could indicate that Brzezinski saw the invasion not just as a spike in Cold War conflict, but an immediate danger to a second-term Carter presidency as well.

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[71] Zbigniew Brzezinski, Memorandum to Vice President Mondale, April 3, 1979. https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/government-official-publications/soviet-involvement-afghanistan/docview/1679095698/se-2?accountid=14772.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Zbigniew Brzezinski, Memorandum to President Carter, December 26, 1979. https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/dc.html?doc=5696260-Document-8-Georgy-Kornienko-was-the-top-deputy.

Therefore, what is this Referent Subject threatening? What *Referent Object* is at risk? Following from the previous source, the answer is not a 'simple' Cold War, Capitalism versus Communism, struggle. It is not simply the interests of the capitalistic or Western world that are at risk, but also the careers of the administration. According to Brzezinski, the invasion initiated a regional crisis, the US had lost Iran as an ally, and Pakistan was unstable after its 1977 military coup as well. Without a strong regional US ally or buffer, a Soviet victory in Afghanistan could see them gain influence towards the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, imperilling the US oil supply.[74] Soviet success in Afghanistan would thus hurt US interests in the Middle East, and domestically it would make the opponents to détente bolder. Brzezinski recommended both covert actions in Afghanistan, likely scaling up Operation Cyclone, and diplomatic action, such as petitioning the UN.[75]

Which *Audience*, or indeed, *Audiences*, did Brzezinski need to convince of the severity of this threat? Here, the addition to the theory by Roe could become very useful indeed. Carter, in his role as president, was required to sign off on any significant CIA operation, making him the primary 'formal' audience.[76] However, earlier CIA activity during the Ford presidency had resulted in increased oversight. And so, any plans Carter signed off on were also subject to oversight committees. Furthermore, if significant funding was required, Congress would become involved as well.[77] Thus, the US government in terms of Congress, the CIA, Oversight committees, and other agencies, could be considered a secondary formal audience. Finally, the public can play a 'moral' role as well in the security debate. In a December 26th, 1979, meeting ostensibly led by Brzezinski, Vance, and Admiral Stansfield Turner the CIA Director, it was concluded that the US government would take no action in controlling the domestic narrative in the news.[78]. Therefore, to try and gauge the reaction of the public to the Soviet Invasion and Soviet-Afghan War I will analyse a few articles from the Washington Post and the New York Times. This will be a limited approach as a full analysis lies outside of the scope of this thesis.

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[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 44-45.
[77] *Foreign Relations of the United States,* 1977-1980, Volume XII, Afghanistan, eds. David Zierler and Adam M. Howard (Washington: United States Government Publishing Office, 2018), Note on U.S. Covert Actions XL-XLIII https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1977-80v12/pdf/frus1977-80v12.pdf.
[78] *Foreign Relations of the United* States, Afghanistan, Document 95.

The Role of President Carter

As noted in an October 23rd, 1979 memorandum, Operation Cyclone had effectively already come into being on July 3rd, 1979, half a year before the actual Soviet Invasion.[79] Carter had followed the advice of Brzezinski, monitoring the closer Soviet-Afghan relationship after the Saur revolution. The initial CIA mission was relatively minor, it consisted mostly of radio propaganda focussed on stoking Afghan religious fury towards the atheist Soviets, and some shipments of military and medical supplies, with a budget of $695,000.[80]

Thus while the start of CIA activity in Afghanistan was essentially routine CIA Cold War activity, the invasion response required something more. December 28th, 1979, a mere three days after the invasion, Carter would sign off on increasing funding, to at least $10 million.[81] Aside from funding, the CIA now also had a larger mission. It could provide more lethal weapons and equipment, and especially important, provide training.[82]

Aside from giving the covert operations the green light, Carter also put more diplomatic pressure on the USSR. In a January 4th, 1980 speech, Carter announced several diplomatic and economic measures against the Soviets.[83] The US would halt exports and sales of high technology, grain, and would halt fishing privileges in US waters for the Soviets. He recalled the US ambassador to the USSR, condemned the Soviet invasion, and called upon other countries to stand with the US in support of Afghanistan. He further announced official aid initiatives to Pakistan to safeguard its border, and a boycott of the Olympic Games which were to be held in Moscow.[84]

The roles of the CIA, Congress, and other US governmental agencies

During the Ford presidency, the manner in which the CIA could conduct its operations changed drastically. In the wake of several investigations, it was revealed that previous oversight committees had only been involved in between fourteen and twenty-five percent of all operations.[85] As a result, Congress was informed on even less operations. This meant

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[79] *Foreign Relations of the United* States, Afghanistan, Document 76.
[80] Ibid.
[81] *Foreign Relations of the United* States, Afghanistan, Document 107.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Jimmy Carter, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," Address to the Nation, January 4, 1980, 21-22. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus/4732203.1980.001/40?page=root;rgn=full+text;size=100;view=image
[84] Carter, "Soviet Invasion," 22-23.
[85] *Foreign Relations of the United States,* Afghanistan, Note on U.S. Covert Actions XXXIX-XLI.

that high cost and high risk operations such as the CIA-backed coup in Chile were enacted without committee oversight or Congressional approval.[86] Under the Carter administration, CIA operations fell in two categories; routine, world-wide operations, and high-risk, specialised operations. The latter category, to which the Afghanistan case would belong to, needed to be coordinated with the State Department, it needed Presidential authorisation, and Congress needed to be notified. There was, however, no set time limit on this notification process.[87]

In a meeting on December 27th, 1979, a discussion between Turner, Vance, and Brzezinski revealed that none of them expected opposition in Congress.[88] It is however, difficult to find the mention of Operation Cyclone, or CIA covert operations in Congressional reports, while the diplomatic measures announced by Carter are often debated and mentioned in 1980 Appropriations reports.[89] This could mean that either Congress had not yet been notified of the covert operations, or the files have not yet been declassified. In a 1988 news article in the New York Times, it seems that Congress, and the public, had been notified of the existence of covert operations in early 1980, but were not given details. The article also seems to imply that if Congress was aware, they were not very involved in this program until 1983 during the Reagan presidency.[90] Thus, the initial securitization effort seemed to have succeeded, or perhaps even bypassed, the secondary formal audiences. The CIA and State Department had been involved and on board since the start, and Congress did not balk at the plans or costs of the operations.

[86] Ibid, XL.
[87] Ibid, XLIII.
[88] *Foreign Relations of the United States,* Afghanistan, Document 102.
[89] Congressional Record, Thursday 17,1980, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1980-pt1/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1980-pt1-5-1.pdf.
[90] Robert Pear, "Arming Afghan Guerrillas: A Huge Effort Led by U.S.," *New York Times*, April 18, 1988, https://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/18/world/arming-afghan-guerrillas-a-huge-effort-led-by-us.html.

The role of the Public, a 'moral' Audience?

As we have seen so far, the securitization process did not *need* the support of the public per se. However, as President Nixon experienced, it can be devasting when public opinion turns on you. To gage how the public viewed the Soviet Invasion I will analyse several newspaper articles from the Washington Post and New York Times, such as the previously mentioned 1988 article.

The New York Times continually covered the developments in Afghanistan. From the Saur Revolution,[91] the Soviet Invasion[92] to situation analyses during the occupation.[93] During all this coverage, the NY Times worded their reports rather neutral, with no firm criticism nor support for the administration.[94] Neither do they seem to report on covert operations from the US, which they do from states such as Iran.[95]

The Washington Post had a similar approach to the New York Times but was less neutral in their reporting. While front page news maintained a neutral tone,[96] they did also post articles more critical of the administration,[97] and on Carter himself.[98] They did not report on CIA activities in Afghanistan either, but hinted at the possibility of their existence in their reporting on CIA legislation in Congress that could give the agency more independence, the Post was critical and insisted on better oversight instead.[99]

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[91] William Borders, "Coup is Reported in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, April 28,1978, https://www.nytimes.com/1978/04/28/archives/coup-is-reported-in-afghanistan-rebels-say-they-killed-president.html?searchResultPosition=15.

[92] Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Reports Soviet Flying many Troops to Afghan Conflict," *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/1979/12/27/archives/us-reports-soviet-flying-many-troops-to-afghan-conflict-world.html?searchResultPosition=31.

[93] Graham Hovey, "Soviet Said to Act in Afghanistan to Protect Political-Strategic Stake," *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/1979/12/29/archives/soviet-said-to-act-in-afghanistan-to-protect-politicalstrategic.html?searchResultPosition=50.

[94] Bernard Gwertzman, "'Carter Calls Soviet Actions a 'Threat'," *New York Times*, December 29, 1979, https://www.nytimes.com/1979/12/29/archives/carter-calls-soviet-actions-a-threat-us-aide-flies-to-europe-to.html?searchResultPosition=56.

[95] Uncredited, "Afghan Rebels Said to get Guns Money and Food from Minority in Iran; Rumors of Russians on Border Soviet Attack 'Very Dangerous' Baluchis Range over Borders Aid poses Problem for Teheran," *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/1980/01/16/archives/afghan-rebels-said-to-get-guns-money-and-food-from-minority-in-iran.html?searchResultPosition=50.

[96] Robert G. Kaiser, "Afghanistan: End of the Era of Détente," *Washington Post*, January 17, 1980, ProQuest Web. Accessed 20 Jan. 2021.

[97] Jack Anderson, "Analysts Fault Carter on Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, January 10, 1980, ProQuest. Web. Accessed 20 Jan. 2021.

[98] Jack Anderson, "Carter had Warning on Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, January 28, 1980, ProQuest. Web. Accessed 20 Jan. 2021.

[99] Uncredited, "The Post-Afghanistan CIA," *Washington Post*, February 11, 1980, ProQuest. Web. Accessed 20 Jan. 2021.

Communities of Security: The International dynamic and the Afghan population.
I have discussed the security concerns of the US, or the Carter administration, several times now, regional stability, oil reserves, and political re-electability. Using the Communities of Security concept of Silbey, it becomes easy to compare this US view with that of other states and groups. Naturally, the Soviet Union constitutes such a Community. But for Afghanistan, it becomes more difficult. How do we split it up? This raises an issue with the concept. Which communities do we pick, where do we draw the line? To an extent, these groupings may feel arbitrary, but a more detailed analysis lies outside the scope for this thesis.

Afghanistan was fractured; thus I will make the distinction between the Communist PDPA government, and the Mujahideen. But as stated before, the Mujahideen were not a unified entity. I argue that their security concern is universal enough; drive out the Soviets and install an Islamic regime. The PDPA government on the other hand, was not concerned with religion, but in building a communist state allied to the USSR. They were thus diametrically opposed in their security, both in political organisation, as well as the role of religion in society.

Then, there are the US allies in this conflict, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and China. The objectives for Pakistan were manifold; safeguarding its border with Afghanistan, as well as its Indian border, and fighting the atheist communists.[100] Saudi Arabia had a simpler interest in the conflict, as the protectors of the Islamic holy places of Mecca and Medina, it wanted to project strength as leaders in the Islamic world.[101] China seems rather out of place, siding with the US against Soviet interests and a fellow communist country. But since the Sino-Soviet split they had vied for control of the communist bloc and thus were glad to help contain the USSR, as well as safeguarding their border.[102]

[100] *Foreign Relations of the United States,* Afghanistan, Documents 145.
[101] *Foreign Relations of the United States,* Afghanistan, Documents 194-195.
[102] Messages from Assistant Secretary George Vest to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, "Consultations with China on the Afghan Situation," February 5, 1980, https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/government-official-publications/consultations-with-china-on-afghan-situation/docview/1679095113/se-2?accountid=14772.

Conclusion

The US Securitization process of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the resulting Soviet-Afghan war consisted of Brzezinski as Securitizing Actor identifying the threat of Soviet control in Afghanistan. This endangered a struggling US hegemony and US interests such as oil reserves in the Persian Gulf region, as well as political upheaval closer to home. He successfully convinced President Carter of the threat, who authorized the CIA to increase their operations. There seems to have been little in the way of a security debate as other US governmental institutions seem to have had either little say in these proceedings or were quick to agree. Vance, as head of the State Department, seems to have had a rare moment of agreement with his rival, Brzezinski, in increasing covert operations. Congress debated the diplomatic efforts of Carter, such as boycotting the Olympic Games, but seems to have had little involvement in Cyclone in its early years.

The securitization process was successful likely because the CIA was already active in Afghanistan after the Saur Revolution increased Soviet ties to the country. This meant that the CIA was able to quickly provide detailed information on the Soviet presence in the country. This allowed Brzezinski to argue covert operations could lead to a 'Soviet Vietnam.' He would be proven right, though the cost would be high. The concept of security as championed by Brzezinski was a negative security, primarily concerned with decreasing Soviet influence and power, decreasing Soviet security. By arousing religious fervour in the Mujahideen, a Green Belt was formed, which became a Green Threat after the collapse of the USSR.[103] Of the fighters that joined the Jihad against the Soviets, many would later end up in terrorist networks, such as the Taliban[104] and Al-Qaeda.[105]

While some aid and non-military supplies were given to the Mujahideen, it was all in service of frustrating the Soviets, actually helping the Afghan people rebuild was not high on the agenda. Neither was the Carter administration concerned with the American people, as they were not informed of these operations until after the war, although this fits the nature

[103] Bandeira, *The Second Cold War*, 8-10.
[104] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 25.
[105] Dylan, *The Cia and the Pursuit of Security*, 214.

of covert missions, the knowledge of countermeasures to the Soviet threat could have given the American people the boost they needed.[106]

Securitization Theory proves to be a framework with substantial potential for analysing historical securitization processes. It does however, come with several limitations that are difficult, but not impossible, to resolve. As a looser toolkit, it helps to structure research, but further and quite more substantial research is needed to finetune its usage in analysing security in History.

[106] Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," 86-88.

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