

Afghanistan



Why do you think this country became so important during the Cold War? Discuss in pairs



Why was Afghanistan important?

START

In 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. This renewed tensions between the USA and USSR following a period of detente.



The USA feared Soviet naval control of the Arabian Sea and were concerned about an increase of Soviet power in the Middle East. This could pose a threat to their oil supplies.

Background to the invasion



The USSR had been giving aid to Afghanistan since the 1950's.

In 1973 the Afghan monarchy was overthrown and a Soviet-backed communist group came to power.

The communist government started to introduce Soviet-style communist reforms and this upset most of the Afghan population, many of who were Muslims.





The Carter Doctrine

President Carter was under pressure in November 1979 following the Iran hostage crisis. He was accused of being a weak leader. He took a firm and decisive approach to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This became known as the Carter Doctrine.



The Carter Doctrine: a policy that stated that the USA would use military force if necessary to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf region.



The Carter Doctrine

"Let our position be absolutely clear: an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force".

From President Carter's State of the Union speech on 23 January 1980



Main



Delayed the passing
of the SALT II treaty

Economic sanctions
imposed on the Soviet
Union

What other actions did President Carter take?

Formed an alliance
with China and Israel
to support the
mujahideen. The CIA
provided rebels with
weapons, funds and
training

The USA
boycotted the
1980
Olympics in
Moscow

Diplomatic
relations with the
Soviet Union
ended - Detente
was dead

Consequences of the invasion

Main

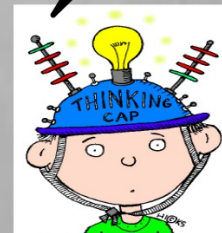


Although the Soviets quickly captured Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, they could not defeat the mujahideen, who remained in control of the countryside (over 80% of Afghanistan). They used the geography to fight a guerrilla war.

The Soviets had no training or experience fighting in mountains. In total the Soviets launched nine offensives between 1980 and 1985, with little success.

In 1988 Gorbachev announced a full withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Sound familiar?!



Exam Practice:

Question 1.

Study Source A.

Source A: From a school textbook, written in 2008. It is describing the impact of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

1 Give two reasons from Source A which show that 'the Soviet Union completely miscalculated the impact that its actions would have on the West'
(Source A lines 1–2).

2 marks.

The Soviet Union completely miscalculated the impact that its actions would have on the West. The invasion was seen in the West as evidence of Soviet expansion. President Carter stated that the invasion might pose the most serious threat to world peace since World War Two. He took steps to try to persuade the Soviet Union to remove its troops. After 1981, the USA took a more aggressive approach towards the Soviet Union and began to find ways to support the Mujahedin in its fight against Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

Exam Practice:

Question 2

Outline two steps that President Carter took to encourage the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan.

(4)

4 (a) Describe the key features of the "Carter Doctrine" introduced in 1979.
(6)

2 4–6 Developed statement(s).

(A developed statement is a simple statement supported by factual detail.)

- 4–5 marks for one developed statement, according to degree of support.
- 5–6 marks for two or more developed statements.

Question 5: Explain the importance of three of the following in international relations.

(15)

a) The invasion of Afganistan by the USSR in 1979 (5)

L3 4–5 Explains importance, with detailed factual support.
eg '...The formation of NATO was a really important event in international relations at this time. The Western European powers formed a military alliance in order to defend the West against communism. The Soviet Union was so concerned that in 1955 it formed the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance of communist states. So after various disagreements in the years immediately after the war, the formation of NATO had led to Europe being divided into two armed camps.