

# The Soviet-Afghan War 1979-1989: A Comprehensive Analysis of a Pivotal Cold War Conflict

The Soviet-Afghan War, spanning from 1979 to 1989, was a pivotal event in the Cold War era. It not only shaped the geopolitical landscape of the region but also had far-reaching consequences for the global balance of power. As part of the acclaimed Essential Histories series, "The Soviet Afghan War 1979-1989" offers a comprehensive and engaging account of this complex conflict.



## The Soviet–Afghan War 1979–89 (Essential Histories Book 75) by Gregory Fremont-Barnes

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 42517 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 96 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



## Background and Context

The roots of the Soviet-Afghan War lie in the political turmoil in Afghanistan after the 1978 Saur Revolution. The Marxist government led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) faced fierce resistance

from insurgent groups known as the mujahideen. Facing internal instability and external pressure, the PDPA sought support from the Soviet Union.

## **Soviet Intervention and Occupation**

On December 24, 1979, Soviet troops crossed the border into Afghanistan, ostensibly to provide assistance to the PDPA government. However, this intervention marked the beginning of a decade-long occupation that would profoundly alter the course of Afghan history.

The Soviet forces, equipped with advanced weaponry and airpower, initially enjoyed military superiority. They deployed a wide range of tactics, from conventional warfare to counterinsurgency operations. However, the mountainous terrain and fierce resistance from the mujahideen, supported by the United States and other Western powers, made it difficult for the Soviets to establish complete control.

## **Mujahideen Resistance and Western Support**

The mujahideen, a coalition of Afghan resistance groups, benefited from the rugged Afghan landscape and their knowledge of local conditions. They employed guerrilla tactics, using ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run attacks to inflict heavy losses on the Soviet forces.

Western powers, primarily the United States, provided substantial support to the mujahideen. This included supplying them with weapons, training, and financial aid. Western governments, particularly the Reagan administration in the United States, justified their involvement as part of the global struggle against communism.

## **Political and Economic Costs**

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan proved to be a costly endeavor, both politically and economically. The prolonged conflict damaged the Soviet Union's international reputation and strained its resources. The war also contributed to the economic stagnation that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

## **Negotiations and Withdrawal**

As the war dragged on, the Soviet Union began to seek a negotiated settlement. In 1988, the Geneva Accords were signed, paving the way for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The last Soviet soldier left the country in February 1989.

## **Aftermath and Legacy**

The Soviet-Afghan War had a profound impact on Afghanistan and the region. The country was left devastated by years of conflict, with widespread infrastructure damage, economic dislocation, and a shattered social fabric. The mujahideen emerged victorious but were quickly embroiled in a civil war that plunged Afghanistan into further chaos.

The war also had a significant geopolitical impact. The Soviet Union's failure to subdue Afghanistan eroded its superpower status and contributed to the rise of the United States as the sole global superpower. The conflict also radicalized the region, creating a breeding ground for extremist groups such as al-Qaeda, which would later launch terrorist attacks on the United States.

## **Essential Histories: A Comprehensive Look at Pivotal Events**

"The Soviet Afghan War 1979-1989" is part of the Essential Histories series, which provides concise and accessible overviews of key historical

events. Each book in the series is written by an expert in the field, offering a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the topic.

By exploring the political, military, and diplomatic aspects of the Soviet-Afghan War, "The Soviet Afghan War 1979-1989" provides readers with a deeper understanding of this pivotal conflict. The book is richly illustrated with maps, photographs, and other historical material, enhancing the reader's experience and comprehension.

The Soviet-Afghan War was a complex and multifaceted event that had a profound impact on Afghanistan, the region, and the world. "The Soviet Afghan War 1979-1989" offers a comprehensive and engaging account of this pivotal conflict, delving into the strategies, motivations, and consequences that shaped the course of history. Whether you are a student, a military historian, or simply someone fascinated by the Cold War era, this book provides an essential overview of a defining moment in global affairs.



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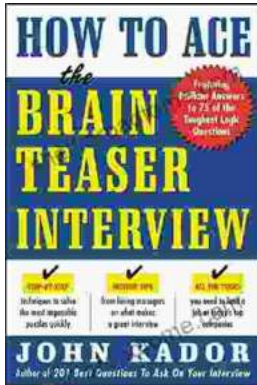
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