

## America-Soviet Conflicts in the Cold War Era

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**Abstract:** After the World War II, there was another war involving two blocs namely; the communist on one hand and democracy on the other. This war was known as the Psychology War or Ideology War because there was never a direct military engagement between the two. The democratic bloc was led by the United States while the communist bloc was led by the Soviet Union which resulted in war, known as the Cold War. This cold war crisis occurred immediately upon the end of the Second World War. The rise of communism and territorial expansion policies developed by the Soviet Union was suspiciously viewed by the United States as opposing their political approach as a capitalist nation. The Soviet Union was seen as a threat towards the United States as the world hegemony. The objective of this essay is to analyze issues that led to the America-Soviet conflict during the Cold War era. This study is based on the analysis of documents resources obtained from the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington DC and also from the UK National Archive and Public Records Office (PRO), London. Through this study, it was found that the main issues revolving around the Washington-Moscow conflicts during the Cold War era are the clash of ideologies, the rivalry of military nuclear construction, economic competition as well as crisis in Cuba and Afghanistan.

**Key words:** Cold war era, democracy, communism, ideologies, crisis, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

The term cold war was first introduced by Bernard Baruch and was then continuously used by a journalist who was known as the Lippman around the year of 1947. The term was used to refer to the cold and strained relations between the Soviet Union and other Western powers, especially the United States. It was also at the same time clearly marked the end of the cooperation between the East and West bloc that used to be together against the Nazis (FO 371/86736 Lecture by Sir Gladwin Jebb on the conduct of the cold war by the UK and her allies 24 Feb, 1950). In other word, the cold war was an aftermath effect of the World War II. The two dominant powers had become rivals after the World War II after the defeat of Hitler and his respective allies. One of the reasons was the race to fill in the power vacuum in Europe and Central Asia which was left by Hitler's defeat. Both powers wanted to be more dominant over those non-affiliate countries during the World War II. The ongoing controversies over Eastern Europe, Germany and Berlin, the Balkans, Turkey, Iran, Japan and Korea were a part of the after-war effects resulted from the war between those great powers. The increasing controversy was later expanded with the issues of power-spying activities at each others border-lines and distrust towards each other. Many things occurred between the United States-Soviet relations resulting in colder relation between Washington

and Moscow. The cold war was nearly turns into hot war between the two. This study will discuss the issues that caused cold relations between the allies after the World War II namely; ideological rivalry, the race of military nuclear construction, the economic competition as well as crisis in Cuba and Afghanistan.

**Ideology:** Conflict between the Soviet and United States are often attributed to the clash between communist and democratic ideology championed by the United States after World War II. According to Gaddis (1981), the articles of Containment: Its past and future, initially, ideology was not the primary cause of tension between the Soviet and America. Gaddis's statement is based on the good relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the World War II. Their relationship was justifiable for both sides used to share the same interest, namely to eliminate the Nazis. As a matter of fact, communism has existed in the Soviet Union since the success of the Bolshevik Revolution. However after the World War II, tense began to take place between US and the Soviet Union and ideological propaganda is believed to be the main key in explaining the cause of conflict between the two dominant powers. In fact, ideology eventually became the main issue and the major cause of tense that kept them apart and became rivals as both sides did not see any necessity to work together once the war ended. Soviet Union after the Yalta conference did not

show serious effort of expanding communism influence over Eastern Europe and the same goes to its counterpart, America in Western Europe. Finally, ideology rivalry occurred in which both sides compete to expand their own ideology and as a result the cold war conflict aroused. At this stage, those powers struggled in competition to gain more power and influence over the non-aligned and neutral countries which became their main focus. Stalin was enthusiastic and interested in supporting the liberation movements that were not under Soviet sphere. During Khrushchev's period, their focus of domination and field of competition was over Asia, Africa and Latin America. This was aided by those countries hatred and grudge towards the industrial development in the West:

Soviet intentions and clearly our own policy in these differ widely differing regions of Europe each of which therefore, requires separate Consideration. Assuming a conflict of Interests between us and the Russians to be Inevitable in any region of Europe

Russia has shown interest on Central Europe states and at the same time suspicious towards the formation of confederations among the states after the conclusion of the Nazis such as in Poland where Russia feared that the nation's governance could create hostility towards Russia. In Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakia-Soviet Treaty of 1943 has granted the permission for Soviet Union to use Czechoslovakia as a Soviet basement in Central Europe. This has clearly shown the Soviet's influence over the state in which the Soviet Union was fully prepared to negotiate with the state's politicians and entrepreneur who formed the government. This became an indicator that the neighbouring states of Czechoslovakia were also vulnerable to Soviet's domination. In addition, the Soviet saw the importance of the Black sea which was situated in the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles that fall under the care of the Turkish government to them. Thus, the Soviet proposed and negotiated with Turkey to collaborate and place the Black sea under their supervision. As a reaction for the Soviet's action, Truman has warned the Soviet that they need to get an approval from the United States for any actions they plan to take. This was followed by protests note against the Soviet. Truman's action was due to the fear that the supervision of the Black sea will give way for Soviet Union to expand its influence across the Middle East and Near East. United States then warned the Soviets that they had no right to force Turkey to do so. US policy to eliminate Soviet influence in Turkey obviously shown from numerous

assistance given to Turkey, especially in terms of financial aids and military support in order to redevelop Turkey and stop the country from depending on the Soviet:

For the last year, we (the US) been a limit carrying out a policy of giving Turkey and Greece certain military equipment, a policy which limits, we not thus far adopted with regard to any Western European country. It seemed to me that by selecting Turkey and Greece as the first countries of Europe to receive grants for strengthening their military establishments, the US limits already manifested an interest in their security which the Turkish government and people as well as other governments could not ignore

For the United States government to make it clear to the Soviet Union would involve aggression against Turkey at once the Soviet Union in a war with the United States and other powers interested in the maintenance of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations

America did not only hope to spread its ideology in the countries that fall under its influence within the Western Europe but also looked up for opportunities among the Eastern bloc countries, even though those countries were under the Soviet domination such as Yugoslavia. In 1948, conflict occurred in relationship between the leader of Yugoslavia, Tito and Stalin, the Soviet's leader. There were several controversial issues regarding both leaders including the Soviet's goal to be the patron of Yugoslavia and to gain control over the internal and international affairs of Yugoslavia. This is contrary to Tito's desire who wanted Yugoslavia to stand as a free and independent government. The Soviet then viewed Tito and the Yugoslavian communist as betraying the Soviet. US has taken this advantage to worsen the conflict between Tito and Stalin by supporting Tito:

Western powers should obviously do everything possible encourage the rebellious child, it is questionable if he can hold out for long against the Soviet-communist efforts which must now be made to Cleanse the Yugoslav Party, although it is to be hoped he will be Successful. Situation may well become one which we can exploit by more propaganda

Soviet Union condemned the US action in supporting Yugoslavia since, Yugoslavia was not under the influence of America, thus they were not supposed to interfere in Moscow-Belgrade relationship. Soviet also criticized

Yugoslavia for receiving economic assistance from US via., 5 years Economic Plan called Marshall Plan. Soviet also labelled Yugoslavia as a nation that supported US and Western imperialism. Therefore, the ideological conflict between communism and democracy that used to be negotiable between the two countries eventually increased and brought tensions in America-Soviet relations when both sides had struggled to become more powerful and influential after the World War II.

**Nuclear arm race:** Another issue that caused America-Soviet conflict during the cold war was nuclear arms race which involved competition for supremacy in nuclear warfare. Distrust among super powers during the cold war led to suspicion towards each other's establishment of military technology. The arm race between the two was obviously shown through the obsessive non-stop competition in military establishment for both their navy and air force equipment (FO 371/116118 (1) Report from Warsaw Conference from British Legation to Foreign Office, Budapest, 1955. On the setting up of a unified command of the Armed Forces of the countries signatory to the treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance):

The absence of mutual trust in relations among the great powers has led to a situation where after the end of World War II, there has been a continuous threat of a new war, a war still more Tragic in its consequences. The armaments race is being intensified; armies, navies and air forces are being incessantly developed. The greatest achievements of science and technology serve the production of the most destructive means for the extermination of mankind. The armaments race in the field of production of the most dangerous atomic and hydrogen weapons has assumed particularly great proportions

Furthermore, both parties were confident that by having a well established military power they would not get affected or threaten by the enemy. George Kennan, an official from America believed that via sufficient and strong military power they will be able to eliminate the threats caused by communism (Mayers, 1986). The America-Soviet arm race has led to vigorous productions of dangerous atomic weapons by the two super powers as well as the neighbouring countries to an extent where the cold war was also known as Atomic War. On the setting up of a unified command of the Armed Forces of the countries signatory to the treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance).

In addition, the military rivalry between them was actually more to show off the greatness of each other's military power despite of the underlying reality of what they truly had. In the first two and a half century of the cold war, the Soviet Union felt that they were left behind in every aspect of weapon constructions except that they possessed more manpower compared to their counterpart, US. The Soviet was also afraid that the tension caused at international level between the America-Soviet relation regarding several issues such as issues in East Germany and the Far East could trigger a new war between them. The Soviet suggested in 1955 that the war propaganda should be stopped. Thus, parallel to that in Warsaw Conference; the Soviet suggested both nations should be limited in a range of 1,000,000-1,500,000 people in their military force. They should not exceed the numbers for the massive military force can be a threat towards international peace and create war propaganda. Soviet viewed the America atomic bomb sent to West Germany as an attempt to attack against the states in Eastern Europe and particularly the Soviet Union.

During the competition of the satellite transmissions, although both powers launched their own satellites but they were not really sure of which one of them possessed greater technology. Before 1961, Washington thought that they owned less nuclear weapon compared to what Moscow possessed and it was somewhat humiliating for them. As a result, the arm race became more intense. Only in 1961, Washington got to know the truth that their nuclear weapons were far more advanced in term of technology compared to the Soviet Union which was rhetorically said as possessing great technology of nuclear construction. This information was only known after the US managed to detect all of the Kremlin's missiles that were located in Cuba in that year.

In 1969, the economic condition remained unstable thus the United States and Soviet Union has agreed to limit their manufacturing of nuclear weapons through negotiations, known as Strategic Talk Arms Limitation (SALT). Discussions on SALT 1 were continuously held from time to time within the year of 1969-1972 and those talks managed to reduce the tense in America-Soviet relation as well as improving international security and peace. The meetings had successfully brought the two powers into an agreement in which in May, 1972, US President Richard Nixon and the Leonid Brezhnev, President of the Soviet Union had signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and Interim Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on certain measures with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms. Salt was an important element of the overall pattern of the East-West

negotiations. Until 1976, the comparative strength of nuclear weapons between the United States-Soviet Union are as follows:

USA	Soviet Union
1054 ICBMs	1500
656 SLBMs	700
460 Bombers	140
2170	2340

United States expected that the development of Soviet nuclear weapons will increase in 1985 (FCO 46/1162 SALT: Intelligence Note By DGI, Washington DC 27 Nov, 1974).

USA	Soviet Union
550 Minuteman III	
464 Poseidon	1300 (16-17-18-19)
192 Trident	920 SLBM
1206	2220

The data acquired on the America-Soviet long term nuclear establishment has brought worries to US that Soviet will become a threat to them. Thus in 1976, the US had insisted to go on with SALT 2 negotiation to equalize their military power since SALT I was going to expire in 1977. Among the proposals were:

- To discuss the development of the Strategic Missiles achieved from SALT 1
- To present the balance of nuclear weapon possessions between the United States and the Soviet Union in the mid 1974
- To make prediction regarding the balance between 1979 and mid 1984
- To review the SALT 1

The probe used in making comparison between America and Soviet are as follows:

- Total termination of nuclear production
- The ability of the missiles to accurately hit an identified target
- The ability of the missiles to hit accurately right on the targeted area

Based on the yardstick, the Soviet Union appeared to be leading the United States in term of category and will possibly leading in category; in future if there was no action taken by the United States. In addition, it was found that the United States and Soviet Union had spent a large sum of money in weapon constructions but Soviet had invested more than US on their research and development in upgrading the ability of their nuclear bombs which could threaten and cause imbalance

between America-Soviet nuclear construction. This was to ensure a greater possession compared to its counterpart. Both parties had sought to create nuclear weapons of high technology in Submarine Launched Ballistic among MIRV Missiles (SLBMs), Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs), Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs). Both parties had also improved their bombs construction, military equipment and weapons such as Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) and probable (Mobile Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs). Both parties were highly determined to prevent the each other from exceeding them in this rival. Further negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union were expected to take place in January, 1975 in Geneva.

SALT II between Jimmy Carter and Leonid Brezhnev was more controversial in which the negotiation was more towards reducing the nuclear stockpiles possessed by the two powers within 1977-1979. But the peace gained from the SALT II does not last long in the United States-Soviet relations. This was due to the Soviet's violation of the treaty by intruding Afghanistan. Soviet had involved in assisting the establishment of socialist government in Afghanistan after 6 months of signing the SALT II in June, 1979. Besides that within that particular year the Soviet has developed their missile basement in Cuba as their basement in the America Continent. As a result of the violation of SALT II by the Soviet, Reagan had decided to cancel out the SALT II. After 1981, neither Soviet nor America complied with the SALT II treaties. SALT 1, however did not manage to solve the arm race conflict between the United States and Soviet, since the agreement does not restrict any construction of MIRV ballistic missiles, middle-distance and short-distance ballistic missiles, ships and weapons for mass destruction and it also did not limit the quality and capability of all nuclear weapons being constructed. Furthermore, there was no restriction for both sides in term of Research and Development to enhance their nuclear technologies in any field of nuclear construction. Consequently, the USA continued to distribute and place its MIRVs, built more long-range SLBM and B1 destroyer. US had also improved the precision of the Minuteman ICBM nuclear weapon and created a new ICBM to replace Minuteman and planned further development of ICBM bases and air attacks. US was also actively conducted research on MARVs (Manoeuvrable Reentry Vehicles) through various methods and managed to identify and track a specific target for a longer period during acceleration compared to Reentry Vehicle (MIRV).

The Soviet on the other hand would also to be left behind in the construction of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union began to actively organizing the long-range SLBM and started to create MIRVs by improving their SS-N-8, constructing mobile ICBMs as well as having

their own destructive aircraft, Backfire which was highly sophisticated and accurate equal to the capability the America-owned B1. It was proved that both parties had massively improved their nuclear weapons to enhance the capabilities of their cruise missiles in tracking their enemy's battleships.

Although, the Soviet was the pioneer who introduced installation of ballistic missile on submarine in 1950, America seemed to be more successful than the Soviet in that particular area of technology in 1960. In 1970s, America managed to produce SS-N-8 with a greater target-reaching-range compared to the Soviet's Poseidon system. Soviet Union during that period does not have any MIRV and they were in the process of upgrading their SS-N-8 in order to produce MIRV.

America was afraid that the Soviets might build a large-scale missile to destroy the America's Minuteman. Therefore, they continuously maintained and increased Minuteman's capability to ensure its effectiveness and success in war. The underlying reason behind this was that if they were to lose in the first Soviet's attack, they will be able to defeat the Soviets in the second attack with their MIRV if the Soviet attacks the US's submarine. Implicitly, the SALT 1 agreement in the year, 1972 can be said as changing the nuclear arms race from the a race in term of the weapons quantity towards a race of constructing nuclear weapons with high quality to maintain the credibility of the interceptor to counter-attack during nuclear bomb attack as well as to attack the enemy's battleships. Both sides continuously worked on developing the SLBM and MIRV in term of their spatial aspects to improvise, sharpen and precised the ability of those weapons in reaching the targeted area. They had agreed and complied with the treaty in term of the quantity of their nuclear stockpiles but they changed their focus towards improving the quality of their weapon since there was no agreement regarding the quality aspect of the weapons constructed. Both sides were very cautious in preventing their counterpart from getting any advantage or chances to manipulate the agreement that will provide them ways to pursue their own interest:

The 1972 SALT 1 treaty transformed the arms race from one of quantity and yield nuclear into another week of quality to maintain the credibility of nuclear deterrent systems in the face of advances in offensive and defensive capabilities. Both the US-USSR continue to work on MIRVs, longer range SLBMs, improved delivery accuracy. ABMs, SAMs, hardening silos, bombers and their equipment and weapons and possibly on mobile ICBMs. Each side is determined to prevent the other from gaining an advantage which might enable it to dictate terms

**Economic factor:** Economic factor was one of the major factors that had caused conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. This was because the economic systems practiced by the two nations were totally opposed one another. America has emerged as a hegemonic world power after World War II, replacing other Western powers, namely Britain, France and Germany.

This was because those European powers had to focus on redeveloping their economic sectors which were badly devastated by the World War II. In the aftermath of the World War II, America had become a main global power. America has put aside its isolation policies and was heading towards a capitalist country and establishing economic relations with all countries, especially European countries.

America capitalism has become a rival to the Soviet Union who intended to establish Marxis-communism based economic relationship with those nations. This has led to a competition between the two powers to persuade the European, Asian and Middle East countries to establish trading relations with them.

Expansion of the United States's role as a prominent world power caused worries to the Soviet. In addition, during post war, the United had shown interest to acquire the oil trade in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Hence, the United States began to improve their relationship with Arab countries in the Middle East (FO 371/124970 Mr. Barnes Minutes, Foreign Office, 3 Dec., 1951). Among the efforts taken by the United States that were apparently shown were reflecting their power in the Middle East, increasing role in the controversial oil-issue in Persia as well as their decision to provide massive economic and military assistance for the Middle East countries. This was due to the US's fear that the Soviet influence will penetrate the Middle East countries.

In fact, in order to cause blockage towards the Soviet's economy which was one of the world oil suppliers, the US had urged all oil-producing countries in Saudi Arabia including non-OPEC countries to maximize their oil production. The intention was to prevent other foreign countries from involving in oil-trading activities with Soviet. US action had successfully managed to drop the oil price in world markets and the freeze the Soviet's economy.

The America policies in their trading with the Eastern bloc were basically stand on their interests to gain the raw materials required for them in order to strengthen the western economy. National Security Council had also decided that the United States had to stop all commercial shipping from the US to Soviet and its satellite countries for commodities that US itself critically in need and

limited. But at the same time, America must ensure its actions will not cause the Soviet to stop America from getting their needs from the Soviet bloc. This had apparently shown the United States discrimination towards the Soviet satellite countries in Eastern bloc:

It likewise important that the restrictions on trade should not cause the Soviet bloc to limit the strategic materials which they have been supplying to us. It is believed that this can be accomplished by the refusing to issue export licenses unless we are assured of the supplies which we desire. This would mean that we deal with the Soviets on a strictly quid pro quo basis with respect to the significant items of trade between the two countries

However, what had been done by US only showed little effectiveness because America cannot prevent other Western countries from establishing trade relations with the Soviet and other Eastern block. This was because the trade between west and east are more important in ensuring the success of the European Recovery Program. Western Europe was still having trade relations with the Soviets for their country's essential needs such as coal, grain and timber. In 1947, Soviet's revenue from the trades during the European Recovery Program was \$1½ billion. However, economic sanctions policy imposed on the Soviet Union during Reagan's governance had managed to subvert the Soviet economy.

### **Crisis in Cuba and Afghanistan**

**Cuba:** At one point during the cold war era, the United States-Soviet tension has reached its peak around the year 1960 up to 1970's. During the years, the US efforts to fight the communists never stop. The leaders of USA were aware of the conflict between them in the cold war and tried to thwart Soviet efforts. Cuba was not initially seen as a country that could threaten US security but during Kennedy's ruling, Cuba has become a battleground between the United States and the Soviet Union (FRUS, 1962a). This was a result of Fidel Castro's revolution that had become the successor of Cuba with assistance from Soviet in the year, 1959 and subsequently became the President of Cuba. Fidel Castro's success has led towards better Cuba-Soviet relations and brought the America-Cuban relations to a halt. US has stopped from all diplomatic relations with Cuba before Kennedy became the president of America.

CIA in America since the ruling of President Eisenhower (USA President from 1953-1961) was planning to train Cuban refugees with military training while they were being protected in the United States during the 1959's Cuban revolution. The idea behind that was to use the military-trained refugees to create riot when they

return to Cuba. Shortly after President Kennedy's (USA President from 1961-1963) presidency, he has given permission to the refugees to carry out what had been planned by Eisenhower. These refugees have returned to Cuba and caused disturbance and assault as what happened at the 'Bay of Pigs in 1961. Fidel Castro's government, however managed to quickly overcome the Bay of Pigs attack. Kennedy has made a confession that he was responsible for the defeat of the Bay of Pigs attack. According to Kennedy, the Cuban refugees involved in the attack were lacking in term of capacity of skill and safety to fight the system that was under the communist's control (FRUS, 1962a).

The following year, Kennedy had received information that the Soviets had secretly opened their bases to place nuclear bombs in Cuba. It has been reported that at least 1700 Soviet technical forces had arrived in Cuba in late July and early August in relation to military activities in Cuba (FRUS, 1962b). Kennedy was firmly against the Soviet's action. Kennedy has said that the US cannot tolerate with the installation of bombs and nuclear weapons in Cuba. After considering various ways, Kennedy finally decided to quarantine Cuba in order to prevent ships carrying Soviet missiles and extra weapons stockpiles to get to Cuba. As a response, the US has increased economic pressure on Cuba by blocking them from trading with other free and independent countries. Through these actions, the United States hoped to spread messages to its allies that the US was seriously concerned about Soviet's commitment in Cuba. Kennedy has publicly made a statement that America policies opposed the sending of Soviet bombs and nuclear weapons into Cuba and demanded that the Soviets remove all nuclear weapons from Cuba.

According to Khrushchev, Soviet was sending their missiles to Cuba in order to balance the America power since America were able to attack Cuba with their missiles. This was an initiative to protect Cuba from the America attacks such as what happened during the Bay of Pigs attack. As soon as they have gotten Fidel Castro's approval, the Soviet immediately build a base of Soviet missiles in Cuba. In October, 1962, Kennedy has been showed a photo of Soviet's construction of missile bases in Cuba.

The photograph has also showed the types of equipment being used such as destructive war Soviet submarine, torpedo boats including eight nuclear weapons of SAM which were placed at the provided locations as well as construction works that were still actively in progress. After 7 days of debate in Parliament, President Kennedy had made a statement regarding his government's stand that any bomb attack

that might come from Cuba would be considered as Soviet's attack and counter-attack will be launched accordingly:

President's statement as containing a clear warning to the USSR as well as to Castro of the types of possible future action which the US would not tolerate. As a reminder, partly to the US public that the Cuban problem can not be isolation but rather within the framework of the cold war (FRUS, 1962c)

On October 27, Khrushchev has sent a letter to Kennedy and pressured the Washington that Moscow would only destroy their missile bases in Cuba if the United States willing to do the same to the American base in Turkey. America refused to accept these conditions but insisted that their bases in Turkey has a long history and was built based on an agreement of regional interests to fight against invasion. America was then further convinced the Soviet that they will not attack Cuba. With the guaranty from US, on October 28, Khrushchev agreed to withdraw all Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba and signed the United States-Soviet agreement in which contained an agreement that Cuba's independence will be guaranteed by the United States.

**Afghanistan:** Afghanistan was a country that was isolated from the international intervention and served as a buffer state in between the United States and Soviet conflict since, hundreds of years ago. However, the country's relationship with the Soviet Union changed after 1947, after the United State's withdrawal from Central Asia and the increasing role of the Soviet Union as one of the super powers after the World War II (FRUS, 1969). Since then, a better Soviets-Afghanistan relationship had been developed. In addition, the Soviet Union also has helped in providing Afghanistan with economic and military assistance to develop the country.

In fact, despite a close relationship developed between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, Afghanistan did not follow take Soviet as model of governance but they rather followed the Western model of governance. Western imperialist propaganda that was being spread by Soviet did not manage to waver Afghanistan to apply the Soviet's model in governing the country. In 1963, Afghanistan leaders have chosen to form a democratic government because many leaders of Afghanistan have been trained according to the tradition of the West, including America itself.

Influence of the Soviet leaders was worried by Afghanistan thus they established a good relationship with the United States in order to offset the Soviet influence in Afghanistan.

In 1970, once again brought tensions to the America-Soviet relations during the cold war known as international super power struggles in Central Asia. This was caused by the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. America viewed the Soviet invasion as a threat to America interests in the Gulf States. The Soviets on the other hand insisted that they did not invade Afghanistan but they came into the country on the invitation of President Mohamed Amin of Afghanistan to eliminate the Islamic rebels who called themselves Mujahideens. Soviet viewed the Mujahideens as terrorist. Mohamed Amin attempted to establish a moderate Islamic government to eliminate the radical traditions in the country. Muslims who disagreed with Mohamed Amin had fought against him under the notion of Islamic jihad. Thus, the Soviets had helped Mohamed Amin to retain his power in Afghanistan.

However, Mohamed Amin has been shot and killed by the Soviet troops and his post was then replaced by Mohamed Kamal Amin under Soviet's blessing. As the leader of Afghanistan, he was fully dependent on the Soviet and served rather as the Soviet's puppet. This had encouraged the Muslims including those who became refugees in Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet government and Mohamed Kamal. US had secretly expressed their full support towards the Islamic rebels, mujahideens, through CIA. America has given financial and military aids needed by the Afghan mujahideen ([www.guidetorussia.com/russia-afghanistan](http://www.guidetorussia.com/russia-afghanistan) retrieved on 2 September, 2009). The United States also secretly provided ground-to-air missiles to be used by the Mujahideen to attack Soviet. As for the United States, Soviet should withdraw from Afghanistan because the Soviet invasion on Afghanistan will expose the Gulf states to the communist influence and this may threaten US's interests on the Gulf countries which are rich with oil.

Furthermore, according to the US government planning and policy, the communists should be prevented. Soviet Union on the other hand insisted that what they were doing in Afghanistan was similar to what the United States did in the Vietnam War. America involvement in Vietnam has been made an excuse by the Soviet Union to allow their invasion of Afghanistan. In 1980, the United had imposed some actions to stop selling grains to the Soviet which was their main staple and boycotted the Moscow Olympics in 1980. President Reagan who replaced Carter in 1981 continued Carter's policy of ending the SALT II negotiation with the Soviets as a response to the Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan.

The Mujahideen of Afghanistan had received vast assistance from all pro-America countries in their war against the Soviet.

In 1982, the Mujahideen had gained control >75% of Afghanistan and the forced the Soviets to withdraw its forces from the country. Soviet's defeat in Afghanistan has given America the opportunity for her to control the Gulf states as well as the Middle East which is in vacuum of power.

### **CONCLUSION**

The America-Soviet conflict during the cold war era had triggered another worrying phenomenon after the World War II. This is because the conflict could spark another war between the United States and the Soviet Union that would risk the lives of people from the harmful use of nuclear weapons by both super powers. Hostilities between the two powers were due to mutual distrust and fear upon the rising of new world power after the World War II. Each power struggled to dominate and gain authority not only over countries that fall under their range of interest but also those countries that used to be under German's domination. This contributed towards more intense hostility questioning on the leadership of the new world order. It was undeniable that the ideological differences between America and Soviet has led to mutual distrust and worsened the conflict between the two powers. In order to strengthen their position, America and Soviet viewed military strength as very essential to ensure their success on the battlefield. This caused them to race in creating more sophisticated nuclear weapons thus the Washington-Moscow relationship became increasingly strained due to the nuclear weapons issues. This was evident where the arm race issues had gained major concern from both sides where both sides agreed to negotiate in SALT 1 and

II which was meant to balance the weapons quantity in both parties. This study concludes that conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was due to the mutual distrust as well as the desire to dominate the new world order after the World War II. These had eventually caused issues such as ideological differences, the nuclear arm race, economic crisis in Cuba and Afghanistan that had worsened the America-Soviet relationship during the Cold war and made the conflict obviously critical and prolonged until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

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