

The Origins and Impacts of Operation Cyclone and The
Stinger Missile transfer (1979-1994)

BA (History) degree

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Signed: Tom Clabon.

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Contents

Acknowledgments	3
List of abbreviations	5
List of Illustrations.....	6
Introduction.....	7
Chapter One	9
Origins of Operation Cyclone, (1979-1984)	9
Chapter Two	23
The Origins and Impact of the Stinger Missile Transfer, (1985-1988)	23
Chapter Three.....	37
Operation Cyclone: long and short-term evaluation.....	37
Conclusion.....	50
Bibliography.....	52
Primary Sources	52
Secondary Sources.....	57

List of abbreviations

AWAC- Airborne Warning and Control Systems

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

DOD- Department of Defence

Infrared-homing- A weapons guidance system using infrared light emissions to track and follow a target.

ISI- Inter-Services Intelligence

MIAS- Missing in Action Stinger recovery Operation

NSC- National Security Council

NSDD- National Security Decision Directive

RAND- Research and Development Corporation

SALT II- Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (2nd Round)

SAM/s- Surface-to-air missile/s

'Stingers'/ 'The Stinger'- FIM-92 Stinger Missile

The Blowpipe- British Surface to air missile

UNITA- National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

USAID- U.S. Agency for International Development

List of illustrations

Figure one: C12820-32, President Reagan meeting with Afghan Freedom Fighters to discuss Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan. 02/02/1983. Photo Galleries, *President at Work*, Ronald Reagan

Presidential Library & Museum. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/photo-galleries/president-at-work>

[Accessed April 25 2020].

P.9

Figure Two: First Sting by Stuart Brown. Donated Courtesy of Richard J. Guggenhime and Donald

Elster, *Explore the Collection*, CIA museum, (2008). [https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-](https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-museum/experience-the-collection/index.html#!/artifact/143)

[museum/experience-the-collection/index.html#!/artifact/143](https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-museum/experience-the-collection/index.html#!/artifact/143) [Accessed April 25 2020]. **P.22**

Figure Three: Mujahidin (mujahideen) of the Harakat-e Islami Party of Afghanistan stand beside the debris of a helicopter they had shot down with a stinger missile in Sanglakh valley, Maiden Province (west of Kabul) in Afghanistan at the end of June. AFP, Getty Images, 01 September, 1987.

<https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/mujahidin-of-the-harakat-e-islami-party-of-afghanistan-news-photo/93458770> [Accessed April 25 2020]. **P.35**

Introduction

With the help of recently made public primary documentation from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The Federation of American Scientists, The U.S. National Security Archives and national U.S. newspapers, I will chronologically display and critic Operation Cyclone and U.S. Afghanistan policy from between 1979 to 1994. Firstly, by deciphering the Carter Administration's motivations to cautiously intervene in Afghanistan from 1979 onwards, after the Soviet-supported Socialist government rapidly lost national popularity and became increasingly unstable. So much so that Soviet leader Brezhnev sent in Soviet troops to repress anti-Government demonstrations that threatened to remove their allies from Government completely. Furthermore, this dissertation will demonstrate how even under a President fervently opposed to transferring lethal weaponry en-masse, high-profile officials supported an aggressive U.S. policy, akin to Reagan's 'harassment' policy. This aimed to 'roll-back' regional Soviet expansion of territory and influence, while simultaneously damaging the Soviet's international political reputation and economy as much as possible.

With the additional help of well-respected secondary literature on the Soviet-Afghanistan war from U.S. 'Conservative' scholars including ex-journalist Steve Coll, ex-CIA director Robert Gates, ex-CIA counter-terrorism expert Bruce Riedel, Senior fellow with the National Security Archives, John Prados, and 'the liberal revisionist' scholarship of ex-diplomats Diego Cordovez, Selig Harrison, former U.S federal prosecutor, Philip Heymann and political scientist, Alan Kuperman. This dissertation will argue the Reagan Administration's decision to progressively provide the Mujahedeen with lethal hi-tech weapons, namely the infrared-homing FIM-92 Stinger Missile from 1986 onwards, was inevitable considering the strong Soviet opposition that receded in President Ronald Reagan and his Administration, justified by continued Soviet military aggression.

This dissertation will also forge its own path, arguing against both the revisionist assertion that the Stinger had little impact on the wars course and conclusion, and the Conservative belief that

the Administration were wholly aware of the inevitable impact the mass transfer of 'The Stinger' would have on Afghanistan's social and political stability, and took various measures to circumvent them. Congressional and Administrative caution and concerns regarding Soviet retaliation and re-engineering of 'The Stinger', will be detailed across Chapter One and Two, which will critically examine Administrative action between 1979-84 and 1985-1988, respectively. Chapter Three will dedicate itself towards assessing the overall success of 'Operation Cyclone' and further argue the Reagan Administration's conscious failure to prevent weapons flowing towards Pakistan's favoured fundamentalist tribes, coupled with the Bush Administration's sluggish, delayed and partial recovery of the Stingers from 1990 onwards, granted regional fundamentalist groups extensive influence and created an elusive and unpredictable threat to civil aviation that has globally spread through the international black-market, and remains present. The study of this topic is important as it clearly details how persistent short-term thinking at the top of successive U.S. Administrations achieved its immediate goal, while simultaneously creating new elusive and global problems for future generations. Problems such as regional instability and international civil aviation safety insecurity, that were doubtlessly integral to President Obama's hesitancy towards arming the Syrian Opposition with more advanced Stinger Missiles in 2012 during the Syrian Civil war.

Chapter One

Origins of Operation Cyclone, (1979-1984)



Figure one: C12820-32, President Reagan meeting with Afghan Freedom Fighters to discuss Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan. 02/02/1983. Photo Galleries, President at Work, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/photo-galleries/president-at-work> [Accessed April 25 2020].

The Carter and Reagan Administrations were highly tactful and cautious in their initial handling of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan between 1979-1984. Intelligently prioritising regional stability and moderate 'harassment' of the invaders via the transfer of foreign-imported adequate weaponry to rebel fighters that reduced possible global or regional retaliation. While continued moderate military support and economic assistance to ally Pakistan would doubtlessly have reduced threats to regional stability and international civil aviation after the war's conclusion. The Reagan Administration's fixation on 'rolling-back' Soviet influence coupled with Moscow's continued military aggression, made the progressive introduction of destructive high-tech weaponry which fixed today's problems, but created elusive, wide-reaching global threats for future Administrations, inevitable.

U.S. President Jimmy Carter proclaimed during his State of the Union Address on January 23, 1980, that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 was an aggressive geo-political decision strategically aimed at expanding Soviet influence over Middle-Eastern territory and vital oil supply routes such as the Indian Ocean and Straits of Hormuz¹. This invasion concerned Carter as it marked the first time the Soviets had formally invaded a Sovereign nation since 1968 and emphasised his own failure to deter U.S. adversaries from such aggression. This invasion further threatened to doom the U.S.' Middle-Eastern policy of 'regional stability' which was already damaged by the Iranian Revolution of early 1979, where U.S. ally, Mohammad Reza Shah was replaced by Islamic fundamentalists hostile to U.S. co-operation. The Shah's authoritative presence was vital for U.S regional interests as it provided military bases, intelligence facilities and safeguarded the aforementioned Persian Gulf oil supply routes to the 'free world', simultaneously deterring Soviet regional advances.

The invasion of Afghanistan, a country long-considered as the 'buffer zone' between the U.S. and USSR spheres of influence, made the U.S. rightly concerned their long-standing influence of the

¹ Jimmy Carter, 'State of the Union Address 1980', January 23, 1980, *Selected Speeches of Jimmy Carter*, The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum <https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml> [accessed April 10 2020].

Asian subcontinent was progressively being eroded and replaced by an anti-American, pro-leftist hegemony. These fears of Carter's Administration are encapsulated by a Defence Intelligence Agency report issued days after Soviet troops entered Afghanistan. This stated the Kremlin had re-defined the Brezhnev Doctrine from, 'protecting socialist allies', to expanding Soviet influence beyond the Warsaw Pact.² A theoretical doctrinal change which endangered regional ally Pakistan, and politically fragile Iran.³ As Reagan's Secretary of State, George Shultz later succinctly summarised, the invasion 'represented a deep and running sore in East-west relations'.⁴

While later acknowledged by U.S. officials in 1989 that the strategic threat to the Persian Gulf was not as serious as first feared, a strong response to Soviet aggression was vital for the interests of the United States and Carter alike. Carter sought re-election in 1980 and was under attack from Conservatives for failing to prevent 'Soviet gains'.⁵ These came from those including his successor, Ronald Reagan, who argued the Soviets were on a 'roll' in the Third World under Carter. Carter's attempts to combat this criticism is demonstrated by sharp-worded rhetoric that, '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 and will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force'.⁶ While this statement received widespread approval across the political divide, it's worth noting this was written by Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and was representative of his preferred policy.

² Intelligence Commentary, 7 January 1980, United States Defence Intelligence Agency archives.

³ Steve Galster, 'Afghanistan: The making of U.S. policy' 1973-90', *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archives, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁴ George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power, and the Victory of the American Deal*, (New York: Scribner publishing, 2010), p. 691.

⁵ Elaine Sciolino, 'To U.S., Afghanistan seems to move further away', *New York Times*, 12 February 1989, section 4, p.3; Steve Galster, 'Afghanistan: The making of US policy 1973-90', *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archives, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁶ M. Getler, 'Carter Would Fight for Persian Gulf; Seeks to Resume Draft Registration', *Washington Post*, 24 January 1980.

Brzezinski openly wanted the Soviets to pay for their action and supported using their invasion to create a 'Russian Vietnam' to make the USSR 'bleed'.⁷ As demonstrated by the part endorsement of military force in National Security Council Directive-63 which stated the U.S. will build up their capabilities to 'project force into the region' and develop 'a broad range of military and related response options' mostly pertaining to 'assisting allies in the region' and getting them to 'carry more of the burden'.⁸ While Carter was ultimately prepared to utilise the military option, he was a far stronger proponent of implementing a wide range of non-lethal actions namely political, diplomatic and economic sanctions.⁹ This therefore demonstrating that NSC Directive-63 was primarily worded, like all, to present the Administration's overall viewpoints, as well as unity and commonality over policy-making, culminating all differing and representative views from Carter's supporting Cabinet and National Security team.

Carter's preference towards sanctions is clearly demonstrated by his implementation of economic sanctions on Soviet gas and oil, the U.S. boycott of the Soviet Olympic games of 1980, deep cuts in bilateral U.S.-USSR grain sales, withdrawal of The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) treaty from the Senate and plans to bring Afghan partisans to testify at the United Nations.¹⁰ These actions were in-keeping with the dominate features of the 'Carter Doctrine', that a nation's foreign policy should represent it's highest moral values. He argued past Presidents, 'fought fire with fire, never thinking fire is quenched with water'.¹¹ This is typified by NSC-13, which details the

⁷ John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 2009), P.472; 'Afghanistan: The Soviet Union's Vietnam', *Al-Jazeera*, 23 April 2003.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2003/04/2008410113842420760.html> [accessed February 20 2020]; Interview with Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Episode 17, *Cold War Interviews*, 13 May 1997, National Security Archive,

<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/coldwar/interviews/episode-17/brzezinski2.html> [accessed February 20 2020]

⁸ Presidential Directive/NSC-63, 'Persian Gulf Security Framework', 15 January 1981, Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pd/pd63.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Steve Galster, 'Afghanistan: The making of U.S. policy 1973-90', *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020]; Robert D Worley, *Orchestrating the Instruments of Power: A Critical Examination of the U.S. National Security System*, (Nebraska: Potomac Books, Inc.,2016);Prados, P.473.

¹¹ Short History of the State Department, 'Carter's foreign policy', *Office of the Historian*, US Department of State,

Administration's Conventional Arms Transfer policy from May 13, 1977. This stated, arms must only be transferred to a foreign country 'in the instances that the transfer clearly contributes to our national security interests' and 'will promote and advance respect for human rights in recipient countries'.¹²

Carter's consistent support for this is further demonstrated by his later opposition towards militarily aiding the anti-communist and Islamic Afghani tribesmen, 'The Mujahedeen', conversely sending the rebels \$500 million-worth of humanitarian and non-lethal aid including propaganda, psychological operations, radio equipment, medical supplies and cash in 1980.¹³ Carter implemented this transfer with the aim of stabilising Afghanistan while the U.S. simultaneously sort a political settlement at a multilateral level.¹⁴ This decision was supported by the State Department's analysts who concluded in March 1980, Afghani rebels could 'probably tie up 85,000 or more troops' but were 'fragmented, lacked effective national leadership, linked only by Islam and could not force a withdrawal'.¹⁵

In spite of Carter's opposition towards transferring weaponry due to fears of regional de-stabilisation, primary and secondary material correctly argue Carter laid the foundations, be it begrudgingly, for the CIA-led covert 'Operation Cyclone', which did just that. Namely by his personal

<https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/carter> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹² Presidential Directive/NSC-13, 'Conventional Arms Transfer Policy', 13 May 1977, Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pd/pd13.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹³ 'The Soviets and the Tribes of Southwest Asia', 23 September 1980, Directorate of Intelligence, Office of Political Analysis, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (CIA Declassification Release) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us2.pdf> [accessed March 10 2020]; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 2001*, (New York: Penguin, 2004).

¹⁴ Steve Galster, 'Afghanistan: The making of U.S. policy, 1973-90', *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹⁵ 'Afghanistan: Ethnic Diversity and Dissidence', 1 March 1980, National Foreign Assessment Centre, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (CIA Declassification Release); <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us1.pdf> [accessed March 10 2020]; 'Afghanistan and Pakistan', United States Department of State archives, March 1980.

formation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task force on March 1, 1980.¹⁶ Carter and Reagan's Afghanistan policy between 1979-1980 and 1981-4 surprisingly showed multiple similarities, both were centred on 'harassing' the Soviets and seeking a multilateral political solution resulting in a Soviet withdrawal. Reagan demonstrated this in his first Afghanistan speech, on December 27, 1981, where he called upon the USSR to adhere to the demands of the UN General Assembly and withdraw, 'so an independent and nonaligned nation can be re-established with a Government responsive to the desires of the people'.¹⁷

Regardless of these similarities, U.S. historian Eric Alterman is right, Reagan's Afghanistan policy of 'rollback' was more decisive, aggressive and pragmatic than his predecessors.¹⁸ A necessary policy diversion considering the Soviet's relentless and continued military drive. As Reagan's Under Secretary of Defence, Fred Iklé re-affirmed, Reagan 'put his stamp on this important operation instead of just relying on the old decision memorandum'.¹⁹ Reagan's most obvious diversion from Carter's policy was to strengthen U.S.-Pakistani relations. As Shultz neatly summarised, 'the Soviet's cannot control Afghanistan unless Pakistan behaves'.²⁰ Previous relations between Pakistani President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and Carter were strained, as demonstrated by a State Department report on March 23, 1981 which concluded Pakistan 'expected a new appreciation in Washington'

¹⁶ Robert Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), p.178-9; Robert D Worley, *Orchestrating the Instruments of Power: A Critical Examination of the U.S. National Security System*, (University of Nebraska Press, Potomac Books Inc., 2016).

¹⁷ Ronald Reagan, 'Statement on the situation in Afghanistan', 27 December 1981, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administrative Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/122781a> [accessed February 20 2020]

¹⁸ Eric Alterman, 'Blowback the Prequel', *The Nation*, 25 October 2001. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/blowback-prequel/> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹⁹ Phillip B. Heymann, *Living the Policy Process*, (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011), p.39.

²⁰ Shultz, p.494.

after Reagan's election and prior rejection of Carter's \$400 million aid package in 1980 'due to suspicions regarding U.S. reliability'.²¹

Friction between Zia and Carter was motivated by fundamental and un-bridgeable political differences. Namely, Carter's opposition to Zia's progressing nuclear programme, Carter's unwillingness to provide weapons to the Mujahedeen and Zia's execution of political rival, Bhutto. Reagan however, sided with Zia's promise that Pakistan was not engaged in any nuclear weapons re-search programme.²² As demonstrated by Reagan's personal letter to the House Speaker on December 17, 1987, which conveniently commented only on whether Pakistan currently possessed a nuclear explosive device, concluding that continued U.S. aid was extremely important to prevent future Pakistani procurement.²³ As Reagan stated in a 1981 National Security Council meeting, 'we do not throw out our friends just because they can't pass the 'saliva test' on human rights'.²⁴

Reagan was correct. Continued U.S. economic assistance was vital to Pakistan's political and social stability. As emphasised in a State Department Intelligence and Research report of March 23, 1981, titled 'Pakistan and the US: Seeking Ways to Improve Relations', which stated, 'emphasising U.S. economic assistance to Pakistan would reduce opposition's opportunities to argue the U.S. is

²¹ 'Pakistan and the US: Seeking Ways to Improve Relations', 23 March 1981, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Department of State FOIA release, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114229.pdf?v=c4599156782409b287daa6aced8eb3d9> [accessed February 20 2020].

²² 'Pakistan Nuclear Issue: Meeting with General Zia', 17 October 1982, U.S. Embassy Pakistan Cable 15696 to State Department, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, State Department Mandatory Declassification Review release. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #6, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114254>

²³ Shultz, p.494; Letter, President Reagan to Speaker of the House, Enclosing Presidential Determination, 17 December 1987, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Digital National Security Archive. Obtained and contributed by William Burr for NPIHP Research Update No. 24, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118592> [accessed February 20 2020]

²⁴ 'NSC Meeting', 6 February 1981, box 91282, Executive Secretariat, *NSC: Meeting Files*, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, Digital Library Collections <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/digitalibrary/smof/execsec-meeting/91282/00001-2.pdf> [accessed April 10 2020].

interested only in securing Zia's authority' and 'if Islamabad does not receive a satisfactory level of economic aid, the regime will judge the U.S. as continuing to neglect Pakistan'.²⁵

It is foolish to assume Reagan ever contemplated halting U.S. economic aid to Pakistan, considering the vitality of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in arming and training the Mujahedeen against the Soviets. As emphasised by Deputy Director of the CIA, John McMahon who stated, 'we relied very heavily on the Pakistani's to be the interface to run it, and we were the implementers of the supply chain'.²⁶ Moreover, official CIA documentation admitted 'U.S. interests in aiding Pakistan are closely related to U.S. national security', as demonstrated by the U.S. providing Pakistan with \$1.7 billion in economic aid between 1981-7.²⁷ Zia strongly supported renewed U.S-Pakistan relations during the war, rightly stating to Ambassador Walters, 'destruction of U.S-Pakistani relations would defy rationality and likely see Zia replaced by a new Administration, less inclined towards friendly U.S-Pakistan relations'.²⁸

Reagan's desire towards a combative Afghanistan policy is articulated by National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 5. This declared the fundamental threats to U.S. interests and its allies, 'have grown significantly in recent years'.²⁹ It also rightly admitted the U.S. 'cannot defend the free world's interests alone', concluding conventional arms policy was the best way to deter adversarial aggression.³⁰ This policy was a clear departure from Carter's arms transfer policy with the U.S. concluding a five-year \$1.5 billion military assistance package with Pakistan in July 1981 and selling

²⁵ 'Pakistan and the US: Seeking Ways to Improve Relations', 23 March 1981, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Department of State FOIA release, copy courtesy of Jeffrey Richelson. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #6 The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114229> [accessed February 20 2020].

²⁶ Heymann, p.26.

²⁷ John McMahon telephone interview with Philip B. Heymann, 19 October 1998; *ibid*.

²⁸ 'Pakistan Nuclear Issue: Meeting with General Zia', U.S. Embassy Pakistan Cable 15696 to State Department, 17 October 1982, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, State Department Mandatory Declassification Review release. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #6, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114254> [accessed February 29 2020].

²⁹ NSDD 5, 'Conventional Arms transfer policy', 8 July 1981, Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-005.htm> [accessed February 29 2020].

³⁰ *Ibid*.

Saudi Arabia five Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWAC) airplanes in an \$8.5 billion deal in Autumn of 1981. Both countries being theocratic authoritarian states.³¹

In spite of assistance packages and Reagan's verbal commitment towards 'rolling-back' Soviets advances dating back to 1981, when he declared 'the heroic Afghan resistance will continue, and the U.S. will support the cause of a free Afghanistan', both primary and secondary evidence concur a fundamental shift to the mass transfer of high-grade weaponry was not instantaneously put into practice.³² As shown by a CIA memo from November 8, 1982, which demonstrates U.S. hesitancy towards attaching the advanced ALR-69 radar warning receiver to fighter jets sold to Pakistan due to fears of granting the Chinese government access to advanced U.S. military-grade technology.³³ These actions are bewildering considering the concern's menial nature, the earlier revival of U.S.-Pakistan relations and Pakistan's proximity to the Soviet menace.

This belief was nevertheless entrenched, as demonstrated by U.S. funding for Operation Cyclone remaining at \$60 million between 1981-3 and Pakistan officials remaining bemused by Mujahedeen fighters being equipped with predominately antiquated U.S. and Chinese arms' for the first three years of Reagan's Presidency.³⁴ While this claim is an exaggeration considering U.S cables

³¹ Cordovez, Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan: The Inside Story of the Soviet Withdrawal*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 66–67; Charles Mohr, 'Issues and Debate; AWACS for Saudi Arabia: in the national interest', *The New York Times*, 1 October 1981.

³² Gates, p.197; Ronald Reagan, 'Statement on the situation in Afghanistan', 27 December 1981, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administrative Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum. <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/122781a>

³³ 'Risk Assessment of the Sale of AN/ALR-69 Radar Warning Receiver to Pakistan', 1 1/8/82, Pakistan-US: Demarche on F-16 Equipment, 8 November 1982, with Memo from McMahan to Carlucci, Excerpt from Natl Intel Est on Pakistan, 8 November 1982, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, CIA Records Search Tool [CREST]. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #6, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114307> [accessed February 29 2020].

³⁴ Gates, p.321; 'Pakistan and the US: Seeking Ways to Improve Relations', 23 March 1981, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Department of State FOIA release, copy courtesy of Jeffrey Richelson. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #6, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114229> [accessed February 29 2020].

reveal Chinese and Egyptian AK-47 rifles and SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles arrived in Pakistan as early as 1980.³⁵ U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency reports from 1982 detail major rebel groups lacked heavy and machine-gun weaponry, partly due to tribes isolation in the Panshir Valley.³⁶

While Brigadier General Mohammad Yousaf, head of the ISI's Afghan Bureau recalls 10,000 tons of arms and ammunition were sent to Afghanistan by 1983, powerful lobbyists for the Mujahedeen, including the Heritage Foundation, rightly argued tribes received just 4,000 modern weapons by 1983 together with nearly 8,000 old Lee-Enfield rifles. While other rebel group secured 13 machine-guns in 1982 compared to 250 by the spring of 1984.³⁷ As Deputy-Director McMahon details, this laboured policy transition was largely due to sections of Reagan's Administration remaining fearful that selling high-tech weapons en-masse would make it impossible for the U.S. to plausibly deny direct involvement in the conflict. McMahon fittingly warned Congress that substantial military support for Operation Cyclone might provoke Soviet-led global or regional retaliation.³⁸

Bi-partisan Congressional support for expanded aid for Operation Cyclone however increased from 1982 onwards, in spite of corruption in U.S. aid programs and potential conflict escalation.³⁹ Democrat Senator Paul Tsongas, founded the Congressional Afghan Task Force to

³⁵ Steve Galster, *Afghanistan: The making of US policy, 1973-90, Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

³⁶ 'Afghan Resistance', 5 November 1982, Defense Intelligence Agency, *Directorate for Research, Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (DIA Declassification Release), <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us3.pdf> [accessed March 10 2020]; Steve Galster, *Afghanistan: The making of US policy, 1973-90, Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020]; Prados, p.478.

³⁷ Steve Coll, 'Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1992. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/258/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war> [accessed February 20 2020]; Prados, p.478.

³⁸ Steve Galster, *Afghanistan: The making of US policy, 1973-90, Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

³⁹ *Ibid.*

coordinate political activity on behalf of the rebels in 1982.⁴⁰ While Charlie Wilson successfully demanded the Pentagon increase the CIA's Afghanistan budget by an extra \$40 million, in 1983.⁴¹ This support towards the continued 'harassment' of the Soviets was largely motivated by the Soviet's decision to increase their overall Afghanistan troop deployment from 75,000 to 108,000 in 1982.⁴² Nevertheless in spite increased Congressional support for expanding Operation Cyclone, Congressmen were largely cautious of transferring high-tech U.S. weaponry such as the infrared-homing surface-to-air missile, 'the Stinger', in 1983, due to additional fears their deployment would threaten Israel's immediate national security.⁴³

The Reagan Administration's universal preference towards Soviet 'harassment' over direct attacks during 1981-84 is further displayed by NSDD 77 which aimed to coordinate U.S. government agencies to counteract anti-American propaganda through 'public diplomacy'. This directive saw the formation of inter-agency Afghan Working Group, which met twice a month to discuss ways of increasing the war media coverage and generating support for the Mujahedeen.⁴⁴ The directive's language makes reference to a 'closer relationship in diplomatic, political and military spheres' and promotion of 'U.S. ideals of democracy' to counter totalitarian aggression'. This demonstrates Reagan's preference for an ideological victory and political settlement.⁴⁵ This ran consistent throughout most government departments and Presidential speeches from 1982 onwards after the

⁴⁰ Heymann, pp.36-7.

⁴¹ George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Covert Operation that Changed the History of Our Times*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2007), pp.214–5.

⁴² Heymann, p.29.

⁴³ Memorandum to Jim Baker from Ken Duberstein, Subject: 'Arms sales to Jordan', 5 March 1983, *James Baker Collection*, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Collections, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/digitalibrary/smf/cos/bakerjames/box-004/40-028-6914302-004-014-2016.pdf> [accessed February 29 2020].

⁴⁴ Steve Galster, Afghanistan: The making of US policy, 1973-90, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁴⁵ NSDD 77, 'Management of public diplomacy relative to national security', 14 January 1983, Federation of American Scientists <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-1966t.gif> [accessed February 20 2020].

USSR and Pakistan sent delegates for bilateral negotiations in Geneva.⁴⁶ This premise was particularly supported by McMahon and Shultz who believed 'we need to be strong, we must be ready to confront Soviet challenges, and negotiate when there are realistic prospects of success'.⁴⁷

A political settlement was not however universally supported by all Administrative officials. CIA Director William Casey, saw the Soviet-Afghanistan war as a prime opportunity to extend the Soviet's military involvement and covertly strike at the overextended and economically vulnerable superpower.⁴⁸ As Mujahedeen operative Yousaf recalls, Casey was 'ruthless in his approach and had a built-in hatred for the Soviets'.⁴⁹ Casey's appointment and influence was integral to the formation of the 'Reagan doctrine's aggressive nature and acceleration of the USA's progressive mass transfer of moderate military aid to Afghanistan between 1981 to 1984, considering his personal preference for covert operations and support of their utilisation in Afghanistan which dated back to January 1982 and grew after his personal visit to the Middle East in April 1982.⁵⁰ Casey was not however overtly comfortable with arming the Mujahedeen with more than Russian AK-47s and Chinese rifles, or completely moving beyond the adopted policy of 'harassment' against the Soviets between 1981-4. Demonstrated by the Pentagon's deployment of the 'Lightfoot' device, which detected non-metallic mines, being delayed by two years after its development.⁵¹

Persistence and Persuasion towards more aggressive U.S. involvement came largely from Zia. He argued increased Soviet military involvement from 1984 onwards, which saw the Kremlin

⁴⁶ Heymann, p.31.

⁴⁷ Cordovez, Harrison, p. 103; Shultz, p.490.

⁴⁸ 'The Economic Impact of Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan', May 1983, Defense Intelligence Agency, Directorate for Research, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (DIA Declassification Release) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us4.pdf> [accessed March 10 2020]; Cordovez, Harrison, p. 103; Steve Coll, 'Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1992. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/258/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Gates pp.250-1.

⁵¹ Prados, p.487.

deploy what is estimated to be a total of 250 Mi-24 Hind Helicopters, 800 T-54/T-55 tanks and the elite 'Spetsnaz' military unit to Afghanistan was threatening to the Mujahedeen and the building refugee crisis on the Pakistani border which was internally dividing Pakistan along sectarian lines.⁵² The CIA took this increased deployment seriously, considering a 1982 report predicted the extensive presence of Afghan refugees would 'generate political unrest and retard economic development until the end of the century' and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), setting up the Afghan refugee aid program.⁵³ Reagan's Administration were rightly concerned by the refugee crisis considering the numbers fleeing to Pakistan had dramatically increased between 1984-85, superseding levels of the last three years, resulting in 3 million refugees on the Afghan-Pakistan border by 1984.⁵⁴

The Reagan Administration' correspondingly approved the transfer of the swiss heavy-machine gun, 'The Oerlikon 20 mm cannon' in the Summer of 1984. This was pragmatic, progressive decision-making compliant with 'plausible deniability' which gifted fighters with sophisticated weaponry to pierce Soviet armour that severely afflicted Afghan fighters and entered Pakistani airspace 100 times in 1984 and 275 times in 1985.⁵⁵ The Administration's scaling up was roundly supported by avid Congressional supporters of 'Operation Cyclone', including Congressmen Wilson and Humphrey. As staff director of Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Robert Simmons stated,

⁵² Lieutenant Colonel Denny R. Nelson, 'Soviet Air Power: Tactics and Weapons used in Afghanistan', *Volume. XXXVI No.2*, (Islamabad: Air University Review, January-February 1985)

https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/1985_Vol36_No1-6/1985_Vol36_No2.pdf [accessed April 10 2020]; Heymann, p.38.

⁵³ 'Pakistan: Population Problems and Political Stability', November 1982, Central Intelligence Agency; Heymann, p.40.

⁵⁴ 'Near East and South Asia Review', 1 August 1986, Directorate of Intelligence and operations, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, p.79
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87T00289R000301360001-6.pdf> [accessed February 29 2020].

⁵⁵ *Steve Coll*, 'Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1992.
<http://www.globalissues.org/article/258/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war> [accessed February 20 2020].

'in my seven years in Washington I never saw an individual Congressman lobby an issue as aggressively and personally as Wilson lobbied to supply the Afghan resistance with Oerlikon guns'.⁵⁶

Due to their persistence, Congress approved limited tests of Oerlikons and re-channelled another \$50 million from the Department of Defence to the CIA for the funding of 'Operation Cyclone', resulting in its total budget amassing to \$120 million in 1984.⁵⁷ This funding was further increased by the Saudis' who matched U.S. spending identically from the programme's inception.⁵⁸ The weapons mass introduction showed the Reagan Administrations emerging militaristic intention in reaction to Soviet aggression, with the transfer of similar weaponry after 'The Oerlikon' being inevitable considering the chief CIA officer of Islamabad, Howard Hart, stated it was 'too heavy and difficult to move in mountainous terrain'.⁵⁹

1979 to 1984 saw the progressive emergence of the aggressive Operation Cyclone aimed at indirectly harassing the Soviets through the Mujahedeen. While this policy's emergence was laboured due to well-reasoned fears of Soviet retaliation and regional destabilisation, its implementation was inevitable after President Reagan's election and the appointment of senior figures including Casey and Shultz who universally supported 'rolling back' the Soviets and repairing bi-lateral relations with their increasingly afflicted ally, Pakistan. As is demonstrated by the increased lethality of military aid, progressing from Lee-Enfield rifles in 1981 to Swiss heavy-machine guns in 1984. Progression showing Reagan steadily de-prioritised 'plausible deniability' and prior aforementioned concerns in response to continued Soviet military aggression that increasingly burdened its regional allies.

⁵⁶ Heymann, p.35.

⁵⁷ Margaret Shapiro, \$50 Million for Covert Arms, More Aid Voted for Afghan Rebels, *Washington Post*, 28 July 1984, p. A1.

⁵⁸ Prados, p.484.

⁵⁹ Richard Whittle and George Kuempel, 'Afghan Arms Inquiry Targets Friend of Ex-Rep. Wilson', *Dallas Morning News*, 21 October 1997.

Chapter Two

The Origins and Impact of the Stinger Missile Transfer, (1985-1988)



Figure Two: First Sting by Stuart Brown. Donated Courtesy of Richard J. Guggenime and Donald Elster, CIA museum, Explore the Collection, (2008). <https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-museum/experience-the-collection/index.html#!/artifact/143> [Accessed April 25 2020].

The Reagan Administration's clear movement from 'harassment' towards direct attacks against the Soviet military was triggered by National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 166 on March 27, 1985. As Coll rightly pinpoints, this directive and the ensuing actions of the U.S. government signalled an undisputable break from a Carter-like Afghanistan policy. U.S. objectives now centred on defeating the Soviet military on the battlefield until 1988.¹ The directive's language was bold, stating the United States would 'improve the military effectiveness of the Afghan resistance' and 'continue to resist low-level Soviet aggression' with 'increased effort on the systematic exploitation of Soviet sensitivities and vulnerabilities'.² As Phillip Heymann, legal scholar and assistant criminal Attorney General under President Carter, correctly details, NSDD 166 clearly endorsed attacks on the Soviets to damage troops morale and forced the Soviet's into withdrawal. Aggressive policy-making which threatened long-lasting regional stability.

While the newly appointed CIA chief of the Islamabad station, William Piekney was not overly convinced it brought substantial change to U.S. policy, considering the Reagan Administration still aimed to reach an arms-control agreement with the Kremlin.³ All evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that NSDD 166 marked a turning point where Reagan's team secretly decided to let loose in Afghanistan.⁴ As demonstrated by the introduction of the British surface-to-air missile, The 'Blowpipe', C-4 plastic explosives, long-range sniper rifles, targeted mortars and extensive satellite reconnaissance from 1985 onwards.⁵ Surprisingly, Brigadier General Mohammad Yousaf, head of the

¹ Steve Coll, 'Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1992. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/258/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war> [accessed February 20 2020].

² NSDD 166, 'US policy, programmes and strategy in Afghanistan', 27 March 1985, Federation of American Scientists. <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-1966t.gif> [accessed February 20 2020].

³ Heymann, p. 42; Iwan Morgan, *Reagan: American Icon*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016) p. 260.

⁴ Steve Coll, 'Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1992. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/258/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁵ *ibid.*

ISI's Afghan Bureau, claimed the latter was the most beneficial U.S. gifted assistance considering it utilised intercepted Soviet communications.⁶

This new U.S. aggression was readily endorsed by U.S. newspapers, who vied for more military aid to be sent to Afghanistan from 1985 onwards. S.J. Marty wrote in the *Washington Times* on 20 December 1985 the 'question is not whether or not their force can effectively harass the Russians. That question is largely up to us whether we'll give them the Stinger anti-aircraft missiles that they need to shoot down the air attacks that strike at them'.⁷ This was the first of many press articles from a variety of state and national newspapers which called for the introduction of the shoulder-fired FIM-92 Stinger Missile. Two months later, an editorial in the *Washington Post* on 14 February 1986 urged Reagan to go 'beyond rhetoric' and arm the Mujahedeen, with more than 'bow and arrows'.⁸

The Reagan Administration's decision to push beyond his 'harassment' policy and instead progressively supply the Mujahedeen with more lethal weapons after the 1984 election was advanced despite earlier lingering fears that an overly aggressive arms policy incompatible with 'plausible deniability' would result in regional escalation, risk international conflict and prevent Reagan's re-election. However now with only one term left to serve after his re-election in 1984, Reagan was emboldened, this having major implications for the Stinger decision. This was made more pressing by the repeated failure to reach the battlefield of the shoulder-fired Blowpipe missile, whose poor technical reliability and primitive optically tracking aiming systems forced shooters to

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *American Sentinel*, 'Eye witness report on the Afghan Freedom fighters', December 1985, P.4 <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/digitalibrary/smf/nsc-europeanandsovietaffairs/cobb/R2/40-198-40019781-R2-013-2018.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

⁸ Rowland Evans, Robert Novak, 'Waiting for Reagan', *Washington Post*, 14 February 1986 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00965R000504820028-6.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

keep the enemy aircraft in sight during the missile's flight, exposing them to enemy fire in the meantime.⁹

The likelihood of the United States sending Stinger missiles to the Mujahedeen increased greatly after the National Security Council's decision to send the anti-aircraft missile to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in February 1986.¹⁰ To send such weaponry to Angolan anti-communist rebels was more tolerable for the sceptical bodies of the foreign policy establishment because UNITA were a more coherent and structured force located in a less strategically important region. However, Shultz would recall a growing desperation within the Administration that the Soviet-Afghanistan war was turning in the Soviet's favour.¹¹

The U.S. government had a 'narrow window' of about two years within which to respond.¹² Director of the Bureau for Intelligence and Research in the U.S. Department of State Mort Abramowitz, a key player in the drive to deploy Stinger missiles, based his decision on the belief that Washington was 'not putting significant pressure on the Soviets'.¹³ Shultz would recount that key figures in the Administration roundly supported the move. 'Unless we hurt the Soviets in Afghanistan,' the consensus in the national-security bureaucracy ran, 'they would have no interest in dealing with us to end the war there'.¹⁴

In his memoirs, Gates presented the decision to deploy the Stingers in Afghanistan as having been made in spite of the Administration's awareness that these weapons could possibly fall into Soviet hands or those of regional fundamentalist groups.¹⁵ While available documentation of the Reagan Administration's unease remains incomplete, what sources are available reveal that aside

⁹ Prados, p. 484.

¹⁰ Gates, p. 347.

¹¹ Shultz, p. 692.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Gates, p. 561.

from a few fleeting warnings from the U.S. Joint Chief of Staff about the potential for Stingers to fall into the hands of Iranian revolutionaries, their threat to civil aviation was a relatively low-priority issue for the Administration.¹⁶

Its potential severity was raised almost exclusively via amendments and standalone bills such as ‘Senator DeConcini’s legislation S.2286’, requiring security measures be placed on all U.S. sold Stingers, presented May 1 1986.¹⁷ DeConcini articulated understandable anxieties for the weapon itself, calling it ‘the ideal terrorist weapon’ considering they ‘have long ranges, highly accurate, and can be carried and fired by one man or woman’.¹⁸ His concerns also pertained to the distribution of the Stinger by the United States, stating, ‘it seems nonchalant and cavalier, almost automatic, that democratic resistance efforts ask for Stingers and we provide them. We provide little thought as to the safety and totally neglect foreign policy goals’.¹⁹

DeConcini directly expressed worries that the Stinger’s mass deployment would specifically aid the ‘mad-dog of the Middle East’.²⁰ Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. This was a legitimate, proximate agitation considering the Libyan dictator’s involvement in the bombing of La Belle discothèque of April 5 1986. Nevertheless, legislation such as Amendment No. 2617, which aimed to introduce safety precautions to the Stinger’s distribution and housing, was roundly defeated, 63 votes to 37,

¹⁶ Heymann, p.50.

¹⁷ ‘Stinger missile and terrorists’, Congressional Record-Senate, 1 May 1986, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B00858R000600910004-6.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹⁸ ‘Stinger missile and terrorists’, Congressional Record-Senate, 1 May 1986, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B00858R000600910004-6.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020]; ‘Amendment No. 2617’, Congressional Record-Senate, 7 August 1986, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B00858R000600910001-9.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ ‘Qadhafi, Terrorism and the Stinger’, Congressional Record-Senate, 17 April 1986, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B00858R000600910009-1.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

on the grounds of practicality and opposing Congressional ‘meddling’ in the executive’s authority over U.S. foreign policy.²¹

While unease over the Stinger’s deployment in Afghanistan did not make their way into Congressional legislation, Congressional scepticism of the weapons deployment persisted more generally. This was most notable in regards to their sale to Saudi Arabia, the largest joint funders of the Mujahedeen throughout the war. This was demonstrated by Reagan’s decision to veto the Senate Resolution 316 which aimed to prevent the U.S. sale of all missiles including the AIM - 9L, AIM - 9P, Harpoon, and Stinger.²² This action followed the rejection of military aid packages to Jordan and Saudi Arabia in 1984 due to the Stinger’s inclusion, with Congressional calls for ‘the Sting’ to be removed before they were approved.²³ Elements of the U.S. media raised this same apprehensions, with Reagan parrying media inquiries lest they ‘help their enemies know what weapons they have or what weapons are being denied them’.²⁴

Heymann argues that while fears were expressed that the Stinger might fall into U.S. adversaries’ hands, little time was spent considering the later threat to regional stability and international civil aviation safety they would inevitably cause.²⁵ Anxieties over Soviet re-engineering of his infrared-homing technology deeply troubled the military branches of the Reagan Administration, especially Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who rightly stated in a 1994 interview, ‘I thought there was great risk in using that technology and believed we should not have

²¹ ‘Amendment No. 2617’, Congressional Record-Senate, 7 August 1986, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87B00858R000600910001-9.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

²² Ronald Reagan, ‘Letter from President Reagan to Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole on the United States Arms Sale to Saudi Arabia’, 21 May 1986, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administration Records, The Ronald Reagan Library & Museum <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/52186c> [accessed February 20 2020].

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ronald Reagan, ‘President Reagan’s News Conference on 9 April 1986’, 9 April 1986, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administration Records, The Ronald Reagan Library & Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/40986d> [accessed February 20 2020]

²⁵ Heymann, p. 21.

let it out. I was unhappy when some Stinger technology was lost'.²⁶ These were legitimate concerns considering Soviet Defence Minister Sergey Sokolov stated in 1986 whoever first acquired a Stinger missile would be made a hero of the USSR, with the Kremlin offering as much as \$3,000 to buy one, indicating this was a legitimate source of apprehension.²⁷

These concerns also added to the reasonable opposition within the Administration towards the Stinger's deployment in 1985 in spite of NSDD 166's introduction. Unease about compromising 'plausible deniability' remained, primarily within the U.S. Department of State, whose officers prioritized diplomatic considerations. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were surprisingly more opposed to the Stingers' introduction, anxious that the involvement of Department of Defence (DOD) would expose a small, well-run covert operation, which acted invisibly on behalf of the U.S. government by discussing confidential information on a need-to-know basis and without a paper trail.²⁸ This opposition was nevertheless largely a 'surface problem' considering Casey's opposition was primarily driven by the principle of institutional loyalty.²⁹

As Heymann articulates, the mass of U.S. foreign policy establishment officials still largely remained opposed due to their continued unease regarding possible Soviet retaliation, including the Administration itself. Here an un-named official warned in January 1985: 'Consider what they haven't done to Pakistan. You have to believe the Soviets could, if they chose, march in with sufficient troops to do the job'.³⁰ Departmental opposition to the proposal was also as much about personal opposition to one of its main advocates, Assistant Undersecretary for Policy Planning

²⁶ Harrison, Cordovez, p.197.

²⁷ Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979-89*, (London: Profile Books; Main edition, 2012), p. 204.

²⁸ Heymann, P.23.

²⁹ Rowland Evans, Robert Novak, 'Waiting for Reagan', *Washington Post*, 14 February 1986 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP90-00965R000504820028-6.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

³⁰ Heymann, p. 24; Bob Woodward and Charles R. Babcock, *Washington Post*, 13 January 1985.

Michael Pillsbury, as it was its practicality. Pillsbury had a reputation as a 'wheeler-dealer'. As Armitage highlights, there 'was a lot of distrust of Pillsbury. Had it been Joe Jones that was Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé's point person on the Stinger issue, then it would have gone down far easier'.³¹

While Iklé, Pillsbury, and then-Ambassador to Pakistan, Ronald Spiers had pushed for the introduction of the Stingers since 1983, and later assurances from Casey and Shultz assuaged Reagan's unease with supplying Stingers, arguing Afghanistan was a Soviet pressure point that could force the Soviet's into withdrawal.³² It was Pakistani President Zia's persistence that proved decisive.³³ While he somewhat shared the concerns of the Administration that the introduction of advanced weapons would compromise U.S. 'plausible deniability' and risk Soviet retaliation later in the war, his commitment to 'keep the pot boiling' trumped any anxieties, as demonstrated during a January 1986 meeting with Casey where he fervently spoke of turning up the heat in Afghanistan.³⁴ As Riedel points out, Zia's persistent pressure throughout the war was instrumental in the US-Pakistan success in reversing Soviet fortunes in Afghanistan, most of all by expanding the quantity and quality of arms transfers.³⁵

Zia was not the only Pakistani official integral to the success achieved by Pakistan throughout the war. Brigadier General Mohammad Yousaf, head of the ISI's Afghan Bureau, military officer from 1961 and effectively 'commander in chief' of the Mujahedeen and their supply of weapons, was a highly underappreciated official who completed important work in alleviating U.S. related fears that the ISI's Stinger training of the Mujahedeen would be over-complexed and

³¹ Heymann, p. 49.

³² Shultz, pp.691-92.

³³ David B. Ottaway, 'What Is Afghan Lesson for Superpowers?', *Washington Post*, 12 February 1989, p. A1.

³⁴ Gates, p.350; Prados, p.485.

³⁵ Bruce Riedel, *What We Won: America's Secret War in Afghanistan, 1979-89*, (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2014), Introduction- xiii.

ineffective. Additionally, regional CIA chief, Piekney had worries that a complicated training sequence might result in vital information being lost in translation.³⁶ Yousaf accordingly opened secret camps in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, to train the Mujahedeen with the Stinger system beginning in June 1986. Between 1978 and 1992, these camps trained 100,000 Arab volunteers.³⁷ They were also fitted with electronic simulators that calculated whether a missile would have hit its target, thus allowing Mujahedeen trainees to aim and fire at a large screen without wasting vital missiles.³⁸

Yousaf furthermore ensured a good level of unity across the Afghani resistance. This was a key goal of the U.S, as attested by NSDD 166, which sought to 'encourage greater political coordination among the Afghan Resistance groups. This was vitally important, as the Mujahedeen comprised many separate and often rival tribes. Yousaf helped to grow unity via sending ISI commando teams on special missions with the Mujahedeen to coordinate forces from different rebel groups for joint attacks on Afghan or Russian positions.³⁹ Telegrams between the U.S. embassy in Islamabad and the State Department on August 5 1987 showed both nations believed this goal had been largely achieved. As Zia indicated to Under Secretary Richard Armacost, 'the Mujahedeen are still highly individualistic but are increasingly working together', having agreed to project political unity to the outside world and develop more effective inter-tribe communication.⁴⁰

³⁶ Heymann, P.50.

³⁷ Jon. E. Lewis, *The Mammoth Book of Covert Ops: True Stories of Covert Military Operations, from the Bay of Pigs to the Death of Osama bin Laden*, (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2014).

³⁸ Steve Coll, 'Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1992. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/258/anatomy-of-a-victory-cias-covert-afghan-war> [accessed February 20 2020].

³⁹ Prados, p.476.

⁴⁰ 'Under Secretary Armacost Meeting with Zia', 5 August 1987, Embassy Islamabad Telegram 16556 to Department of State, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Department of State mandatory declassification review release. Obtained and contributed by William Burr for NPIHP Research Update No. 24. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118573> [accessed February 20 2020].

While the effectiveness of the training ultimately depended on the discipline and success of individual users, the Stingers' introduction significantly damaged the Soviet war-effort, crucially forcing them to immediately alter their strategies. Over the entire war, 2,000-2,500 Stingers were sent to Afghanistan, and their impact was swift.⁴¹ Stingers hit three out of four helicopters targeted during their first use at the Jalalabad airport in September 1986.⁴² Shultz's judgment that they had significantly suppressed Soviet helicopter operations, which he recalled 'wreaking havoc' against vulnerable Mujahedeen, was widely shared.

In March 1989, a Pentagon report found that the introduction of the Stingers resulted in 'more tactical and air support changes in the last quarter of 1986 and the first quarter of 1987 than in the previous 7 years of the conflict'.⁴³ While the Pentagon may have had a vested interest in justifying the program, the evidence was clear. The Soviets had adapted their military aviation by fitting their cargo planes with the flare based 'starburst' missile deterrent system, and only conducted bombing runs at night and above 12,500 feet in order to avoid the Stinger's range. A move which subsequently diminished their bombing accuracy.⁴⁴

There were estimates by U.S. intelligence that 150 to 200 aircraft were destroyed after the mass introduction of the Stinger in 1987 alone. This was more than had been downed by the Mujahedeen since the war began.⁴⁵ Reagan's overwhelming support for the Stinger's impact on the war's proceedings is clearly articulated by his repeated public praise for the weapons destructive power during speeches at the Californian Campaign Rally and a Presidential signing ceremony in 1988, where Reagan joked 'has anyone got a Stinger', when interrupted by nearby Helicopters.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Coll, pp.10-11.

⁴² Prados, p.488.

⁴³ 'Impact of the Stinger Missile on Soviet and Resistance Tactics in Afghanistan', March 1989, United States Army Archives.

⁴⁴ Coll, p. 194; Gates, p. 350; Coll, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Braithwaite, p. 203.

⁴⁶ Ronald Reagan, 'Remarks on the signing of the Family Support Act of 1988', 13 October 1988, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administrative Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/101388a> [accessed April 10 2020].

It is nevertheless facile to argue the Stingers were a 'silver bullet' that instantaneously made the Soviet defeat and withdrawal inevitable. For every Jalalabad there were numerous failures. A CIA report of June 6 1986 found that the Mujahedeen had on one occasion fired 16 Stinger missiles with only one confirmed hit.⁴⁷ Afghan resistance fighters had also had some success with the heavy machine guns, shooting down three aircraft since 1978. These primary accounts demonstrate that even U.S. observers acknowledged the Stinger was not the war's 'magic amulet'.⁴⁸ As supported by Gorbachev privately remarking in 1985 before the Stingers mass introduction, the USSR 'will lose' the war because the Mujahedeen's attrition-based destructive warfare now means 'we are already at the end of our tether'.⁴⁹

The Reagan Administration's decision to deploy the Stinger en-masse in Afghanistan was not without cost for its regional ally, Pakistan. As Shultz summarised, the war was 'a military threat and social burden' for Pakistan, with the Soviet Air Force entering Pakistani airspace a total of 380 times in 1986, an increase of 105 from the previous year.⁵⁰ Airstrikes also increased with the CIA reporting Soviet helicopters mercilessly strafed and rocketed the Pakistani airfield and nearby houses at Parachinar for an hour, with Soviet bombing missions including as many as 15 aircraft during one attack. This almost tripled the number of aircraft used during Soviet bombings of the Pakistani border two years prior.⁵¹

⁴⁷ 'Near East and South Asia Review', 6 June 1986, Directorate of Intelligence and operations, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, P.65
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87T00289R000301280001-5.pdf> [accessed February 21 2020].

⁴⁸ Morgan, p. 261.

⁴⁹ Anatoly C. Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*, Pennsylvania, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 83-4.

⁵⁰ Shultz, p.494.

⁵¹ 'Near East and South Asia Review', 6 June 1986, Directorate of Intelligence and operations, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, P.65

A CIA report of June 1986 entitled 'indications of instability in Soviet-supported Third World regimes' further demonstrated U.S. fears that the Soviet's replacement of the then universally unpopular Socialist, Babrak Kamal, who had fallen from Soviet favour, with Mohammad Najibullah, tasked with contacting rebel groups and implementing a policy of 'National Reconciliation' as the leader of the Afghanistan government, would strengthen regional Soviet power and place more military and sectarian pressure on Pakistan.⁵²

The Reagan Administration's awareness of the implications of 'turning the heat up' for Pakistan was clearly demonstrated by NSSD 187, published on January 22 1987. The directive explicitly highlighted U.S. intentions to monitor the 'objectives and effectiveness' of the Soviet military and decipher whether the most recent 'peace feelers' deployed by the Kremlin were legitimate or designed to turn Afghanistan's public opinion against the Mujahedeen who still fought. The document expressed desire to exacerbate both military and troop personnel losses and economic strains already afflicting the Soviets, as demonstrated by the stated intentions to 'maximize our influence on the current negotiations'.⁵³

While increased Soviet military aggression towards Pakistan was far from unreasoned considering Pakistan's recent approval of the Stinger's mass distribution to the Mujahedeen. NSDD 270, published May 1 1987, further illustrated serious U.S. Governmental anxieties that this increased Soviet pressure would force Zia into concluding a rushed seven-month withdrawal timetable with the Soviets to appease domestic pressure from 'The Pakistan People's Party,' after

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87T00289R000301280001-5.pdf> [accessed February 21 2020].

⁵² 'Indications of instability in Soviet-supported Third World regimes', June 1986, Directorate of Intelligence and operations, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, p.65
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87T00685R000300540002-6.pdf> [accessed February 21 2020].

⁵³ NSSD-1-87, 'Afghanistan', 22 January 1987 <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nssd/nssd-1-87.pdf> [accessed February 21 2020]; 'The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: Five Years After', May 1985, Directorate of Intelligence, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (CIA Declassification Release) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us5.pdf> [accessed April 10 2020].

reports of increased domestic sectarian violence between Afghan refugees and Pakistani civilians.⁵⁴ These concerns resulted in Reagan drafting contingency plans to ensure U.S. military funding to Zia's government would continue. CIA reports from January 1986 revealed Washington's prior reluctance to give Pakistan the allotted \$2 billion, computerised fire-control systems, and 100mm to 105mm artillery they had requested for fear that this U.S. 'armour and artillery' would be primarily used to bolster Pakistani forces against the growing Indian army.⁵⁵

This reluctance proved fleeting, with the U.S. government only reducing total military aid to Pakistan by \$400 million.⁵⁶ The later U.S. decision to continue military shipments to Pakistan into 1988 reinforced this trend of continued U.S. investment in anti-Soviet proxies, which the Soviet military incursions across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border justified in U.S. eyes.⁵⁷ Evidence CIA leadership viewed prior Soviet 'peace-feelers' as yet more compelling evidence that they were using withdrawal speculation as a ploy to decrease external pressure upon them.⁵⁸

The U.S.-Afghanistan policy between 1985 to 1988 was best summarised by Reagan's speech to the Heritage Foundation on November 30 1987, when he declared that 'once the Soviet Union shows convincingly that it is prepared to withdraw promptly and permit self-determination, the United States will be helpful diplomatically. In the meantime, the struggle against tyranny will continue'.⁵⁹ The commencing of high-level U.S.-Soviet negotiations multiple years after NSDD 166 testified to the huge impact the aggressive switch in U.S.-policy and the Stinger transfer specifically

⁵⁴ NSDD 270, 'Afghanistan', 1 May 1987 <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-270.pdf> [accessed February 21 2020].

⁵⁵ 'Near East and South Asia Review', 31 January 1986, Directorate of Intelligence and operations, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP05S02029R000300750001-1.pdf> [accessed February 21 2020].

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ NSDD 270, 'Afghanistan', 1 May 1987 <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-270.pdf> [accessed 21 February 2020].

⁵⁸ 'The Costs of Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan', February 1987, Directorate of Intelligence, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (CIA Declassification Release) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us8.pdf> [accessed April 10 2020].

⁵⁹ Ronald Reagan, 'President Reagan's Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation', 30 November 1987, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administrative Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/113087c> [accessed February 21 2020].

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epitomized on the Soviet-Afghanistan war, whether by strategically raising geo-political tension between the superpowers or tactically hindering Soviet operations and regional expansion. Impacts also having long-lasting consequences for global civil-aviation security.

Chapter Three

Operation Cyclone: long and short-term evaluation



Figure Three: Mujahidin (mujahideen) of the Harakat-e Islami Party of Afghanistan stand beside the debris of an helicopter they had shot down with a stinger missile in Sanglakh valley, Maiden Province (west of Kabul) in Afghanistan at the end of June. AFP, Getty Images, 01 September, 1987.

<https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/mujahidin-of-the-harakat-e-islami-party-of-afghanistan-news-photo/93458770> [Accessed April 25 2020].

Operation Cyclone (1979-89) was a partially successful operation when comparing the Reagan Administration's policy aims to its short-term results both during and after the Soviet withdrawal between 1988 and 1989. Reagan rightly saw the reaching of a political settlement and Soviet withdrawal as an absolute priority, demonstrated from his first Afghanistan speech where he called upon the USSR to adhere to the wishes of the international community and withdraw.¹ Reagan correctly believed the signing of numerous joint US-USSR global arms-restrictions coupled with a lethal covert operation, sending hi-tech lethal weaponry to rebel forces fighting Soviet oppression, was the perfect way to gain leverage in bilateral negotiations and 'roll-back' expanded Soviet influence. However, while beneficial in the short term, Operation Cyclone and 'Missing in Action Stinger' (MIAS) Recovery Operation not only showed the Reagan Administration's complete disregard for future repercussions of their reckless actions, but also displayed President George Bush's sluggish, lacklustre and delayed response to the growing, elusive threat to regional stability and civil aviation safety created by the U.S' previous carefree, mass transfer of 'The Stinger Missile'.

CIA documentation demonstrates the Reagan Administration clearly believed projecting Afghanistan's resistance movement as a 'national liberation movement' throughout the war was a key objective, as displayed by Reagan publicly holding a meeting with leading Afghani tribesmen in 1983. This same belief was held by major American television journalists who showed the Mujahedeen unbridled sympathy. These included The Columbia Broadcasting System's (CBS), Dan Rather, who used the war to attack the Soviets and even accuse them of committing 'genocide' against the Afghani people.² U.S. networks regularly drove this anti-Soviet agenda, showing footage of Soviet cruelty towards civilians, yet ignoring the same actions by the Mujahedeen.³ While TV coverage of the Soviet-Afghanistan war was nothing like that of Vietnam, CBS also recorded a

¹ Ronald Reagan, 'Statement on the situation in Afghanistan', 27 December 1981, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administrative Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/122781a> [accessed February 20 2020].

² Dan Rather, 'more Soviet killing looms in Afghanistan', *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 April 1980, <https://www.csmonitor.com/1980/0403/040360.html> [Accessed March 3 2019].

³ Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2008), p.120.

documentary of the conflict in 1987 and regularly embedded journalists within the conflict.⁴ The overall U.S. media coverage of the conflict received criticism from The Niemen Reports for what they called a biased presentation of a 'Ramboesque struggle of holy warriors against the evil empire'.⁵ However, while political motives were undoubtedly at play, Kaplan rightly argues there was no explicit 'rock-video quality' about U.S. coverage.⁶

Nevertheless, there is little doubt it helped achieve Reagan's objective of gaining public and Congressional support for the Mujahedeen. As demonstrated by the later lack of public and Governmental desire to dedicate the required time and effort towards ensuring the recovery of U.S. weaponry, namely 'The Stinger', from the Mujahedeen in the 1990s. As Coll rightly argues, 'in Washington there was barely a ripple regarding Afghanistan's unpredictable future. Unemployment was down, the world's nuclear arsenal was falling. The nation believed it was at peace'.⁷ This belief was firmly present in Bush's Administration, as demonstrated by the closure of the CIA's Kabul embassy and US-Afghanistan Operations being directed from Virginia and run by the near-east division of the CIA's Directorate of Operations in Islamabad from 1989, with the CIA's legal authority to administer covert operations pertaining exclusively to MIAS from January 1 1992 onwards.⁸ This lacklustre Administrative stance is further emphasised by the initial funding for MIAS amounting to \$10 million in 1990, this being 0.1% of the entire US-Saudi budget for Operation Cyclone.⁹ Nevertheless, it was inevitably going to be difficult to convince Congressmen and the wider public that the recovery of U.S. Stingers' was a national security priority, considering these fighters were

⁴ Jane Hall, 'Cameraman, CBS Deny Afghanistan Scenes Were Faked', *Los Angeles Times*, 5 October 1989, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-10-05-mn-926-story.html> [Accessed March 3 2019].

⁵ Paul Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Gould, 'A history of failed press coverage of Afghanistan', *Nieman Watchdog*, 27 October 2009, <http://www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=background.view&backgroundid=411> [Accessed March 3 2019].

⁶ Kaplan, p. 15.

⁷ Coll, p.15.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp.10-11, p.233.

⁹ John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, American and International Terrorism*, (London: Pluto Press, 2000) p.145.

not long ago presented as ‘down-trodden, oppressed farmers’, who were gifted these weapons by the U.S. themselves.

The Reagan Administration also expressed repeated desires for Afghanistan to be ‘an independent and nonaligned nation’ with a government responsive to people’s desires.¹⁰ While this objective had been achieved by 1989, insofar as Afghanistan was free from physical Soviet occupation, their withdrawal by no means guaranteed Afghanistan stability or neutrality in the long or short-term. The precarious nature of Afghanistan coupled with the actions of both the Pakistan and Soviet government’s, who aimed to cement their desired fundamentalist and socialist governments, was clearly demonstrated by a CIA intelligence report produced October 1988. This rightly predicted the Soviet Withdrawal would trigger national and governmental factionalism in Afghanistan and a contest for power between the ‘insurgents’ and the regime. The CIA correctly estimated ‘the insurgents will put enough pressure on the cities to topple the communist regime’.¹¹ These fears were eventually proven correct after a Civil War between the socialist, Najibullah and Islamic fundamentalist, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, which raged between 1992 and 1996, concluding in the formation of a new Taliban government.

The Bush administration nevertheless did little to de-escalate the sectarian violence or ensure Afghanistan’s self-determination and independence was retained. With the Administration deciding not to renew funding for the Afghan rebels for 1992, stating the package was ‘outmoded and hard to defend’.¹² Bush almost exclusively resorted to rhetoric, with his State Department

¹⁰ Ronald Reagan, ‘Statement on the situation in Afghanistan’, 27 December 1981, *Presidential Speeches*, National Archives and Administrative Records, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/122781a> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹¹ ‘Afghanistan: Regime military and political capabilities after the Soviet Withdrawal’, October 1988, Directorate of Intelligence and operations, CIA intelligence assessment, Central Intelligence Agency Library, Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP89S01450R000500510001-6.pdf> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹² Elaine Sciolino, ‘U.S., Deeming Policy Outmoded, May Cut Off Aid to Afghan Rebels’, *New York Times*, 12 May 1991. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/12/world/us-deeming-policy-outmoded-may-cut-off-aid-to-afghan-rebels.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

requesting those who still retained U.S. arms 'do not resort to violence' to avoid a power vacuum, typifying this.¹³ This naivete is consistent with the Department's previous estimates in 1989 that 'as long as Islam is not threatened, many Afghans will put away their guns and simply ignore the Kabul regime as they traditionally have done'.¹⁴ This near complete withdrawal of interest and investment from the Bush Administration resulted in Congressman Wilson, using his position on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defence, in control of CIA funding, to persuade the House Intelligence Committee to grant the Mujahedeen \$200 million for 1992.¹⁵ A figure matched by the Saudi's once more. While this amass of support was vitally needed, it was largely spent on weapons captured during the Gulf War which only destabilised the country further.

While Bush did little to stabilise Afghanistan post-Soviet withdrawal, questions must be asked of the Reagan Administration's decision to give the Pakistani government near exclusive control over the delegation of U.S. and Saudi Arabian funded weaponry.¹⁶ A former unnamed Pakistani military official, recalled the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad asked Pakistani military officials in April 1979 to recommend a rebel organization that would make the best use of U.S. aid. This saw Zia personally introduce CIA officials to Hekmatyar, a fervent anti-American, who headed what the Pakistani government considered the most militant and organized Islamic rebel group, Hizb-i Islami.¹⁷ This resulted in Zia disproportionately sending wartime aid to this rebel tribe, with the U.S. following suit until the early 1990s. This being in spite of primary documentation including a memo

¹³ Sid Balman Jr., 'U.S. calls for peace in Afghanistan', *UPI archives*, 16 April 1992, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1992/04/16/US-calls-for-peace-in-Afghanistan/7182703396800/> [accessed February 20 2020].

¹⁴ Shultz, p.1087.

¹⁵ Jon E. Lewis, *Charlie Wilson's Real War*, The Mammoth Book of Covert Ops: True Stories of Covert Military Operations, from the Bay of Pigs to the Death of Osama bin Laden, (London: Little Brown Book Group, 2014).

¹⁶ Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden*, (New York: 1st Touchstone edition, 2002), p.67.

¹⁷ Steve Galster, 'Afghanistan: The making of US policy 1973-90', *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (2001) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/essay.html> [accessed February 20 2020].

from the CIA's National Intelligence Officer of the Near East from June 29, 1988, demonstrating the U.S.' clear awareness of Pakistan's real intentions, that 'Zia will try to put Afghan fundamentalist insurgent leader Hekmatyar in power'.¹⁸

Gorbachev also saw the funding of fundamentalist tribes as rightly threatening to Afghanistan's national neutrality and stability, stating to Reagan during a bilateral meeting on December 9, 1987, 'you ought to cease financial support and weapons aid to the opposition', concluding 'If we agree to withdraw our troops and the U.S. does not stop financial and military aid to the opposition forces then the situation would only deteriorate further'.¹⁹ This language undisputedly shows this was a pertinent issue for Gorbachev and his Administration, as the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs Shevardnadze reaffirmed, 'a neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan is one thing, a reactionary fundamentalist Islamic regime is something else'.²⁰ The Reagan Administration conversely and legitimately argued as consistent with prior policy that 'we owed the Afghan's a continuing effort' and if the U.S., 'halt aid to the freedom fighters in Afghanistan, they would be disarmed before Afghan government troops, and would be unable to defend their right to participate in a future government', additionally fearful the Soviet's would covertly exploit this situation.²¹

¹⁸ 'Conversation between M. S. Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan on Afghanistan (Excerpt)', 9 December 1987, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow. Provided by Anatoly Chernyaev and translated by Gary Goldberg for CWIHP, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117244> [Accessed March 10 2020].

¹⁹ *Ibid*; 'Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan on Afghanistan (Excerpt)', 10 December 1987, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow. Provided by Anatoly Chernyaev and translated by Gary Goldberg for CWIHP, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117245> [Accessed March 10 2020].

²⁰ Shultz, p.987.

²¹ *Ibid*, p.1094; 'Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan on Afghanistan (Excerpt)', 10 December 1987, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow. Provided by Anatoly Chernyaev and translated by Gary Goldberg for CWIHP, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117245> [Accessed March 10 2020]; 'Afghanistan: The War in Perspective', November 1989, Special National Intelligence Estimate 37-89, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us12.pdf> [Accessed April 10 2020].

While Reagan's argument is logical and helped ensure relative political balance was temporarily retained, there is little doubt the continuation of arms transfers from the U.S. would fuel further instability and sectarianism, therefore directly damaging and contradicting the U.S' overall aims. This particularly being the case considering Shultz admitted the U.S. had 'taken steps to ensure resistance forces inside Afghanistan have ample stocks of equipment and weaponry', despite apparently having little control over arms delegation.²² Reagan alluded to this when asked to stop the continued transfer of arms and independent Mujahedeen-led attacks on the Soviet military, by Gorbachev. Reagan merely stated , 'we will try to exert influence on them'.²³ While the U.S. officially had no control of Hekmatyar and his followers, this doesn't mean the U.S. never had it or couldn't obtain it again, considering it is well documented that the CIA established direct bilateral communication with Hekmatyar in the war's infancy.²⁴

Pakistani Prime Minister and Secularist, Benazir Bhutto, was right when telling President Bush in 1989 that he and Reagan were 'creating a Frankenstein' in their decision to supply lethal hi-tech weapons in conjunction with the two Conservative Islamist governments of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.²⁵ This owing to a combination of their laissez-faire approach to weaponry delegation, and the lethality of weaponry heavily provided to extremist, Islamist, Afghani tribesmen.

While Operation Cyclone was undoubtedly a success insofar as it helped trigger a Soviet withdrawal, the manner in which this withdrawal was achieved, namely via the introduction of the Stinger, meant the creation of a neutral and stable Afghanistan was always unlikely. The manner of

²² Shultz, p. 1094.

²³ 'Conversation between M. S. Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan on Afghanistan (Excerpt)', 9 December 1987, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow. Provided by Anatoly Chernyaev and translated by Gary Goldberg for CWIHP, The Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117244> [Accessed March 10 2020].

²⁴ Mark Selden, *War and State Terrorism: The United States, Japan, and the Asia-Pacific in the Long Twentieth Century*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

²⁵ Evan Thomas, 'The Road to September 11', *Newsweek*, 30 October 2001. <https://www.newsweek.com/war-terror-road-september-11-151771> [accessed April 10 2020].

this 10-year war had created two strong, opposing sides, most notably a more unified Mujahedeen, ideologically driven to seek revenge and die for their cause.²⁶ As Coll additionally details, 'Iran, India, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were delivering pallets of guns and military aid to their preferred proxies in the region'.²⁷

Future national stability was made nearly impossible due to the introduction of 2,000 to 2,500 Stinger missiles that gave tribal commanders regional authority and capital when they were either sold back to the CIA or on the black-market for up to \$300,000.²⁸ Evidently demonstrated by an Afghan tribal chief kidnapping two engineers working with the Pakistani government and holding them captive in 1994, demanding his Stingers and \$200,000 from Pakistan as ransom. Moreover, Afghani tribal leader Abdul Salam became widely known in Urdu as 'Rocketi' because of the vast arsenal of surface-to-air missiles (SAM's), and Stingers he had accumulated from foreign sources during the war.²⁹ Fighters or descendants of the Soviet-Afghanistan war were also unwilling to part with their Stingers due to its reputation as the 'silver bullet' of the stalemated conflict. Tribesmen Hassan and Wakil demonstrated this when they refused to sell the Stingers to CIA operative Gary Schroen, stating they needed the Stingers for the 'inevitable war' against Iran.³⁰ This stubbornness, made the CIA raise their standard bargaining price to \$100,000 in 1994.³¹

²⁶ 'The Soviets and the Tribes of Southwest Asia', 23 September 1980, Directorate of Intelligence, Office of Political Analysis, *Volume II: Afghanistan: Lessons from the last war*, National Security Archive, (CIA Declassification Release) <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB57/us2.pdf> [accessed April 10 2020].

²⁷ Coll, p.4.

²⁸ Jon Boone, Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Wikileaks documents suggest Taliban has capacity to fire on aircraft', *The Guardian*, 26 July 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/26/wikileaks-documents-taliban-missiles-aircraft> [accessed March 10 2020].

²⁹ Molly Moore, 'CIA falters in recovery of missile', *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

³⁰ Coll, p.340

³¹ Molly Moore, 'CIA falters in recovery of missile', *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

C.I.A.'s Associate Director for covert operations from 1982 to 1986, Zalmay Khalilzad, a former Pentagon and State Department official involved in 'Operation Cyclone' stated in July 1993, 'The problem is you get in competition with Iran, and they can outbid you'.³² 'A lot of different Afghans have the missiles, and they are in bad economic shape. The price can go up when Iran and others compete for buying them'.³³ This issue has continued to rage on into the 21st Century and has only worsened, with Hekmatyar allegedly telling his followers in 2005, 'No matter the cost, \$150,000 or \$200,000, I will pay [for Stingers]'.³⁴ This being in spite Congress previously authorising another \$65 million towards their recovery between 1991-1994.³⁵

While there is little doubt the Bush Administration sought to rectify their prior sluggishness, the Stingers recovery would take more than just extra government funding for it to be successful. While during the early distribution, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence kept detailed and accurate records of the Stingers serial numbers, the continued supply of Stingers to the Mujahedeen after their initial successes saw the U.S. 'handing them out like lollipops', according to an un-named U.S. intelligence official.³⁶ This level of supply therefore correspondingly broke the U.S.-Pakistani accounting and monitoring system, with the CIA providing Stingers to seven different Afghan tribes

³² Tim Weiner, 'US increases fund to outbid terrorists for Afghan missiles', *The New York Times*, 24 July 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/24/world/us-increases-fund-to-outbid-terrorists-for-afghan-missiles.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Laura King, Paul Richter, 'Reference to missile-downed helicopter in leaked Afghanistan reports highlights a threat', *Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 2010, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2010-jul-28-la-fg-afghan-missiles-20100729-story.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

³⁵ Molly Moore, 'CIA falters in recovery of missile', *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

³⁶ Molly Moore, 'CIA falters in recovery of missile', *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

at once.³⁷ This directly contradicts the early assertion from Shultz that ‘The Stingers were parcelled out with care’ under Reagan.³⁸

The severity of this Administrative conduct was clearly demonstrated when observing primary documentation and secondary literature which note Operation MIAS was only able to recover a ‘fraction’ of the missiles sent to Afghanistan. This being an almost inevitable outcome considering one of Afghanistan’s fiercest warriors, Massoud, had only six of the 600 Stingers believed to be at large in Afghanistan during the early 1990s, and a mere 100 Stingers being later located by the CIA in 1998.³⁹ Concerns worsened when intelligence surfaced that the Taliban now held 100 Stingers in 2001, with more Stingers turning up in Iran, Qatar, North Korea and Tajikistan due to global reach of black-market weaponry.⁴⁰ As supported by former C.I.A. Associate Director for covert operations from 1982 to 1986, Edward Juchniewicz, who stated in 1993, ‘The Iranians have already captured or otherwise obtained some Stingers and continue to try to accumulate them’.⁴¹

As the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute correctly concludes, there is little doubt the MIAS, Stinger Recovery Operation was an abject failure. Firstly, because it was a covert

³⁷ Molly Moore, ‘CIA falters in recovery of missile’, *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

³⁸ Shultz, p.692.

³⁹ Leslie Caldwell, Defense Sentencing Memo, 19 October 2009, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6328605-Felix-Sater-Leslie-Caldwell-Defense-Sentencing.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

⁴⁰ Molly Moore, ‘CIA falters in recovery of missile’, *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

⁴¹ Tim Weiner, ‘US increases fund to outbid terrorists for Afghan missiles’, *The New York Times*, 24 July 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/24/world/us-increases-fund-to-outbid-terrorists-for-afghan-missiles.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

⁴¹ Molly Moore, ‘CIA falters in recovery of missile’, *Washington Post*, 7 March 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/03/07/cia-falters-in-recovery-of-missiles/73a9a4d7-2952-4077-9746-46bd2e5b81ca/> [accessed March 10 2020].

operation that became overt due to U.S. media coverage, and secondly due to its failure to recover a majority, if not all, of the first-generation Stingers from Afghanistan.⁴²

Much debate has nevertheless since circulated regarding whether the benefits of Operation Cyclone out-weigh the costs and whether the disappearance of a couple of hundred Stinger missiles should be considered a serious concern. The consensus in the U.S. intelligence community is that the Soviet loss in Afghanistan was a fatal blow to the USSR itself, with Former Secretary of State, Zbigniew Brezezinski, stating 'isn't the danger posed by a handful of Stingers worth the dissolution of the Soviet empire?'⁴³ Brezezinski is one of this arguments strongest proponents, stating the collapse of the USSR was geopolitically far more important than 'some agitated Muslims'.⁴⁴ Ultimately there is little doubt the fall of the USSR, was partly triggered by the Soviet's ten-year military campaign in Afghanistan which is estimated to have cost their damaged and poorly performing economy \$3 billion over ten years.⁴⁵

This damage was doubtlessly exacerbated by multilateral economic sanctions as approved by NSDD 75 in January 1983. This applied targeted and renewed economic pressure on vital Russian commodities, to limit the foreign policy budgets and overall military capacity of the Soviets.⁴⁶ Additionally, there is little doubt the USSR's dissolution was indisputably favourable for Eastern Europe, considering it saw the restoration of their identity and self-autonomy they had long been refused. However, while the USSR had fallen as a global geo-political threat, what replaced it was

⁴² 'SIPRI Yearbook 2007', *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, p. 636

⁴³ Tim Weiner, 'US increases fund to outbid terrorists for Afghan missiles', *The New York Times*, 24 July 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/24/world/us-increases-fund-to-outbid-terrorists-for-afghan-missiles.html> [accessed March 10 2020];

⁴⁴ Tim Weiner, 'US increases fund to outbid terrorists for Afghan missiles', *The New York Times*, 24 July 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/24/world/us-increases-fund-to-outbid-terrorists-for-afghan-missiles.html> [accessed March 10 2020]; David N. Gibbs, *Afghanistan: The Soviet invasion in retrospect*, *international politics* 37: 233-246, (Arizona: University of Arizona, Kluwer International law, 2000), <https://dgibbs.faculty.arizona.edu/sites/dgibbs.faculty.arizona.edu/files/afghan-ip.pdf> [accessed March 10 2020].

⁴⁵ Riedel, introduction-XI.

⁴⁶ 'Embargoes and Sanctions-Cold war sanctions', *American Foreign Relations.com* <https://www.americanforeignrelations.com/E-N/Embargoes-and-Sanctions-Cold-war-sanctions.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

undoubtedly harder to suppress, contain, predict and reason with. A threat that was now posed by many hundreds of Stingers that had spread across the globe with ease. These presented an elusive threat considering they were and still are easily smuggled, trafficked and hidden from U.S. intelligence services.

While this threat should not be equated with nuclear war, the Stinger's threat to civil aviation and correspondingly our way of life should not be dismissed either. As highlighted by a 2005 report from the Research and Development' corporation, a U.S. global think tank, which concluded a direct hit from a missing First-Generation FIM-92 Stinger missile, would result in the world economy losing \$15 billion over-night and cost hundreds of innocent lives, not to mention the inevitable psychological impact of this event on the global population's sense of security.⁴⁷ The likelihood of such an attack from these Stinger are high when considering the First-Generation Stinger has a vertical range of about 10,000 feet, features in-built infrared-homing technology to home in on an aircraft's engine and can be operated by almost any potential user according to the U.S. military factsheet.⁴⁸ A combination of factors meaning anybody armed with a Stinger, with or without experience, could potentially directly hit a passenger aircraft during take-off or landing.

While First-Generation Stinger's luckily have not downed an abundance of civil aviation, there has been plenty of examples showing the potential lethality of the Stinger and infrared-homing SAM's in the wrong hands. Such as the successful downing of Bakhtar Afghan Airlines Antonov An-26 in 1985 and 1987 by the Mujahedeen, the successful downing of a 1993 Transair Georgian Airline by an infrared-homing 'Strela-2' shoulder-fired SAM, the near downing of an Israeli airliner at a Kenyan airport in November 2002 by a Stinger missile and even the successful downing

⁴⁷ RAND Study Says Airliner Anti-Missile Systems Too Expensive and Unreliable, RAND Media Resources, 25 January 2005, <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2005/01/25b.html>

⁴⁸ Ken Sliverstein, 'Stingers, Stingers, Who's Got the Stingers?', *Slate.com*, 2001. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2001/10/stingers-stingers-who-s-got-the-stingers.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

of a U.S. military 'Chinook' helicopter by the Taliban in 2007.⁴⁹ These examples alone clearly demonstrate how the failure to retrieve these First-Generation Stingers has created additional, elusive threat to national and civil aviation security. A difficult threat to completely counteract considering that equipping the U.S' 6,800 commercial airliners with defence-systems to guard against attacks from infrared-homing, shoulder-fired missiles would cost the U.S. department of Transport \$11 billion to install, \$2.1 billion a year to maintain, and an estimated \$40 billion to develop, procure and operate.⁵⁰ These costs make the prospect of any universal safeguards unlikely, firstly considering the lack of recent SAM or Stinger attacks on civil aviation and secondly because the U.S. government only delegates \$4.4 billion annually on all transportation security.⁵¹

While there is little evidence to suggest the CIA directly aided future terrorist leaders and emerging terrorist groups during the Soviet-Afghanistan war, there is little doubt the introduction of the Stinger Missile to the fragmented tribal alliance of the Mujahedeen was a reckless decision which sought to inflict extreme damage on the Soviet military and their reputation, while simultaneously disregarding the inevitable threats to regional stability and civil aviation safety this would create. This thought process is evidently displayed by both Reagan and Bush, who neglectfully lost hundreds of high-tech infrared-homing Stingers in a volatile and divided nation, in the mists of an ideological and sectarian civil war that they helped to create via the disproportionate funding and

⁴⁹ Aviation Safety Network, Database, Antonov An-26, 4 September 1985, <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19850904-0> [accessed March 10 2020]; Aviation Safety Network, Database, Antonov An-26, 11 June 1987, <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19870611-0> [accessed March 10 2020]; Aviation Safety Network, Database, Tupolev Tu-134 accident, 21 September 1993 <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19930921-0> [accessed March 10 2020]; RAND Study Says Airliner Anti-Missile Systems Too Expensive and Unreliable, RAND Media Resources, 25 January 2005, <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2005/01/25b.html> [accessed March 10 2020]; Matthew Schroeder, Stop panicking about the Stingers, 'Foreign policy.com', 28 July 2010, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/07/28/stop-panicking-about-the-stingers> [accessed March 10 2020].

⁵⁰ RAND Study Says Airliner Anti-Missile Systems Too Expensive and Unreliable, RAND Media Resources, 25 January 2005, <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2005/01/25b.html> [accessed March 10 2020].

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

29333814

military training of fundamentalist tribesmen and Islamist volunteers which amassed to 35,000 trained warriors at the cost of \$800 million over ten years.⁵²

⁵² Sir Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan - A New History*, (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge and CRC press, 2013).

Conclusion

With the help of U.S. primary sources made publicly available from the archival databases of the most important and insightful U.S. Governmental bodies of the time, coupled with the most well-respected secondary literature on Operation Cyclone, I have displayed and concluded that the mass-transfer of 'The Stinger Missile' was an initially successful decision that shocked the Soviet military and Government into reform and withdrawal. Nevertheless, it created serious long-term elusive threats to regional stability and civil aviation safety that could have been circumvented if these Stingers were transferred with caution or not at all.

Chapter One and Two comprehensively articulates the Reagan Administration were somewhat driven towards the Stinger transfer by relentless calls from their regional ally, Pakistan, to provide them with more support that would hamper an increasingly aggressive and expanding Soviet War-machine, whose activities endangered their social, political harmony and airspace. These chapters also demonstrate the Stinger transfer was also ideologically driven by personnel throughout the Administration, from Casey to Ikle, who were insistent on 'rolling-back' previous Soviet influence wherever possible despite long-lasting concerns the Stinger's introduction would threaten the U.S' ability to 'plausibly deny' involvement in the conflict, risk regional or global Soviet retaliation, chance Soviet re-engineering of this technology or the weapons falling into the hands of global or regional adversaries. There is little evidence in the available Primary documentation from Governmental archives and memoirs from Administrative personnel that these fears were ever logically or fully dispelled before the Stinger's mass transfer. Evidence suggest these risks were increasingly downplayed and ignored to justify an ultimately impulsive decision, regardless of its well-intentioned goals.

Nevertheless, if the U.S. Government were serious about rolling-back Soviet influence, they had to provide some weaponry to do so, be it basic and low risk. It was idealistic and naïve for Carter

to assume a fragmented and tribally-based Mujahedeen would be able to halt or defeat Mi-24 Hind Helicopters, 800 T-54/T-55 tanks and a 150,000 strong Soviet army with only food, medicine and radio equipment.

The aftermath of the risks attached to sending between 2,000-2,500 Stingers is well documented in Chapter 3, where Bush's Administration failed in their aims to recover the missiles and limit the potential regional and global implications. The seeds for the rise of regional Islamic fundamentalist groups were already sown by the Reagan Administration considering the U.S. helped train an estimated 135,000 Arab volunteers during the war and gave Pakistan's ISI agency a near free-hand to transfer high-tech U.S. weapons to their preferred tribes of the Mujahedeen, the majority of which were intent on driving out any socialist or secularist influence and replacing them with brutal Islamist rule. A goal successfully achieved after their victory in Afghanistan's civil war between 1992-1996.

Gates' later admission is undeniably correct. Operation Cyclone had lingering and dangerous after-effects.¹ While Afghanistan's deep political split between Islamists and socialists was home-grown from the 1970s, the U.S. Governments' actions between 1979-1994 helped expand this threat to both Middle-Eastern regional stability and global civil aviation's security.

¹ Gates, p.561.

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Date & time	Type and nature of supervision (e.g. introductory, feedback on draft chapter)	Supervisor's signature
January 28th 4pm- 4:45pm	Introductory and brainstorming dissertation conversation over the phone.	
February 7th 3:30m- 4pm	Discussion regarding useful primary and secondary sources and how to use them effectively.	
February 15th 2:15pm- 2:45pm	Narrowing down of dissertation re- search scope, timeframe and overall focus.	
March 13th 3:30pm- 4:00	Discussion regarding the submission of the draft chapter, the way in which feedback will be returned, and what makes a good introduction and conclusion.	
April 3rd	Dissertation draft chapter review, feedback and discussion.	

4:00- 4:45pm		
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