

U.S. fear over Afghanistan puzzles USSR

by Eleanor Austin

Is it possible that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December symptomatizes the onslaught of Cold War?

Four local academics discussed this possibility and its justification Wednesday during a seminar sponsored by the Dalhousie Political Science Society.

David Jones, director of the Russian Research Centre of N.S., said the Soviet Union was surprised to see the Western world so concerned about their occupation in Afghanistan although Jones supposed the captivity of 50 American hostages in Iran heightened the West's excitement.

While unveiling the Soviet's history of "agonizing reappraisals" to influence events in the Middle East, Jones suggested that the background of Soviet-Afghanistan relations will resemble much of its foreground, pertaining to strategic concerns.

Where there is a power vacuum, the Russians fill it, Jones said, referring to 1914 when the Russians secured Afghanistan as their buffer state to prevent invasion from

Afghanistan people on the Afghanistan-Russian border spread the religious Islam fundamentalism.

McDonnell described another motive being that of "defensive aggression of reluctant Imperialism". He called it the "peculiar" way the Soviet regime identified itself with 1920 socialism of Stalin where the Soviet's structure of communist regimes was secured in the homeland of Socialist revolutionaries.

Soviet concerns cannot move against Socialism in viewing the Marxist norms of law, he said. They cannot be opposed to the revolutionary movement. The "custodian of historical doctrine" remains applicable here presuming that if one revolutionary comes to power, the Soviets must keep in power. This assumes the Brezhnev doctrine, McDonnell said.

Moscow is finding things harder than expected, McDonnell said. He suggested that since Russians do not know the number of Soviet casualties, any "drunk men" who get killed off-duty will be believed to have been killed in Afghani-

stan, trying to protect their nation.

goes beyond this, he said, "Ambitious potentialities" must have played a part in encouraging the decision to invade the country, not in deterring the decision.

The invasion may have also been a step toward oil resources. By supporting the independence of Baluchistan, the Soviets may be able to cash in on the natural gas reserves there, he added.

The fourth reason for the invasion could be that the Soviet Union will be in a more threatening position to invade Pakistan, Booth said. The Russians are interested in Economics.

Also, the invasion would extend the normalisation of Afghanistan under Russian rule. It is the first time since the Second World War the U.S.S.R. has used its own

troops to invade a country, Booth said.

If the motives of the invasion are defensive, the Russians will stay until the end, involving the life and death of the regime. If they are opportunistic they may lose, Booth said.

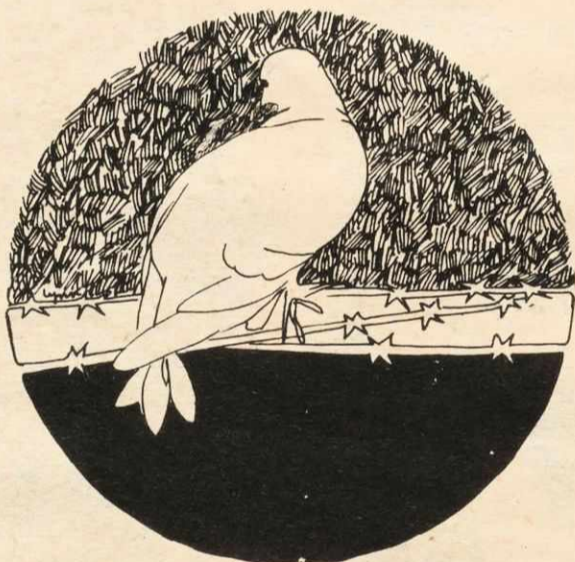
However the Soviets are used to seeing U.S. standing aside in a time of crisis, Booth said. It is a test of nerves. Inflation is receiving bigger headlines in the American papers, he added.

McDonnell also said that Washington is over the scare, evidence of this being that the draft proposal is lost among other legislative proposals. Thousands of American demonstrators marched from the White House to the Capitol earlier this month in Washing-

ton to protest plans to resume the draft regulation.

Booth thinks the Soviet Union will return to a peaceful détente after it secures a home front. It is more likely one would return to cold war after an unsecure peace. People will be more secure after spending time in a bomb shelter than having "their heads in the sand", he added.

"Total diplomacy" is needed said Arthur Andrew, former Canadian Diplomat for the foreign service. Diplomacy will need conventional means, he said, such as talking, using arms without force, agreements to limit arms, and eliminating words that are not accompanied by actions. This is the best assurance that the "garden tools" will stay in the bomb shelter, he added.



"outsiders".

Dating historical events, Jones revealed Afghanistan's flip-flop relations with the Soviet Union which described Afghanistan as a neutral state, a pro-Russian state and at other times an anti-Russian state.

John McDonnell, research fellow of Soviet Studies at Dalhousie University, said Moslems believe that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to find the government that invited them in!

McDonnell ruled out the possibility that Russia invaded Afghanistan because it needed a warm-water port on the Indian Ocean, saying that the Russians had nothing to take in or out of the port.

Afghanistan is not an "invasion route" to anywhere, not even to the Persian Gulf oil fields, he said. One explanation for the invasion was the historically obsessive concern of the threatened Soviet industry.

Another was that the Soviets fear that Afghanistan is a hostile neighbor. This phenomenon dates back to the Islam Renaissance when the Af-

stan, trying to protect their nation.

The people of the U.S.S.R. always assume the worst, McDonnell said. He suggested that if the Soviets want peace, they will have to be cautious to defend forces in an international regime.

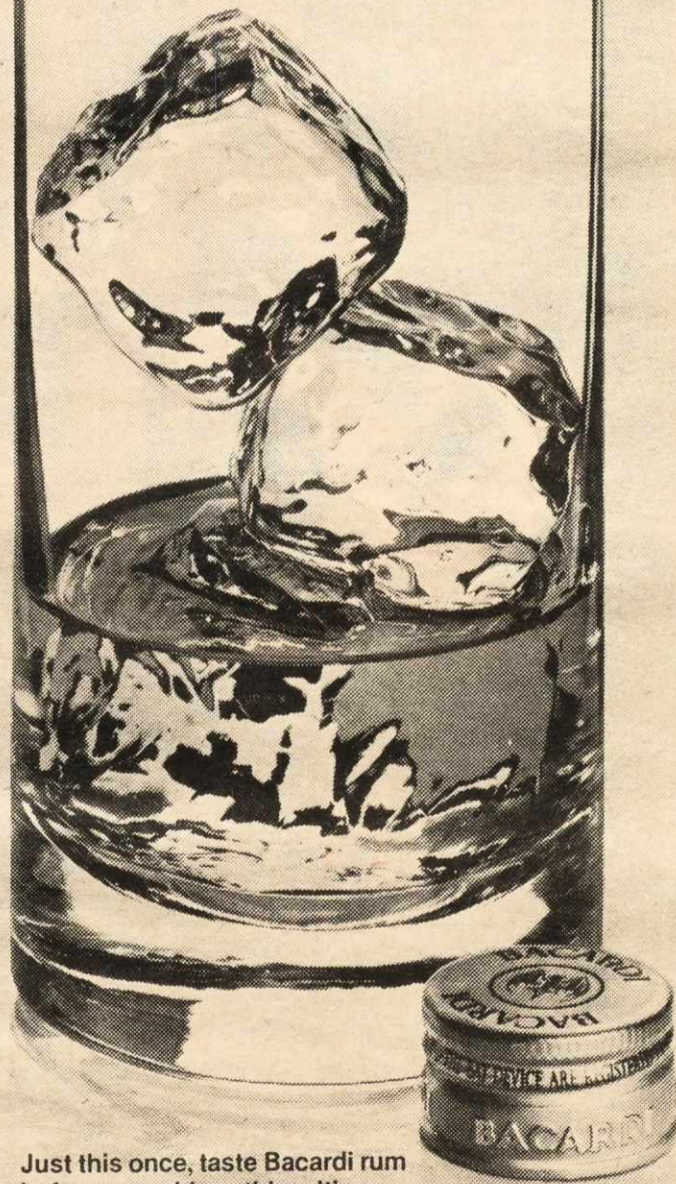
Ken Booth, Senior fellow in Strategic Studies at the Dalhousie Centre for Foreign Studies, said the Soviet Union is a "fairly ruthless" regime that does not deserve the "benefit of the doubt". It uses force; expedience not policy is its motto, he said.

Booth paralleled the Afghanistan invasion with the Soviet invasion of Finland in the 1930s-40s. It was necessary for the U.S.S.R. to borrow some frontiers to push the enemy back and so the U.S.S.R. broke peace with Finland and used force to further its foreign policy.

Booth called this "defensive expansionism". He said the Finland incident was less dangerous than the Afghanistan one since the Finland incident was "self-contained" to protect Leningrad.

The Afghanistan situation

Bacardi rum. Sip it before you mix it.



Just this once, taste Bacardi rum before you add anything. It's a beautiful way to see why Bacardi goes so well with soda, water, ginger and almost anything else.

BACARDI rum