

ZBIG'S BLOWBACK OUTLIVES HIM



Zbigniew Brezezinski passed away today of cancer at the age of 89. My condolences to his family.

I share(d) a birthday with him, and once slept in a room he used during the first cabinet meetings of the Carter Administration. So I've always had some curiosity about, if not quite affinity to, him.

Perhaps as a result I've always been acutely aware that he is the man who set off the chain of events, 38 years ago, that has led to the war on terror (without even – as he optimistically claimed in 1998 – ending the Cold War). Here's the 1998 interview where he boasted of the decision.

Q: The former director of the CIA, Robert Gates, stated in his memoirs ["From the Shadows"], that American intelligence services began to aid the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan 6 months before the Soviet intervention. In this period you were the national security adviser to President Carter. You therefore played a role in this affair. Is that correct?

Brzezinski: Yes. According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter

signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.

Q: Despite this risk, you were an advocate of this covert action. But perhaps you yourself desired this Soviet entry into war and looked to provoke it?

Brzezinski: It isn't quite that. We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would.

Q: When the Soviets justified their intervention by asserting that they intended to fight against a secret involvement of the United States in Afghanistan, people didn't believe them. However, there was a basis of truth. You don't regret anything today?

Brzezinski: Regret what? That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap and you want me to regret it? The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border, I wrote to President Carter: We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.

Q: And neither do you regret having supported the Islamic [integrisme], having given arms and advice to future terrorists?

Brzezinski: What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some

stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of
Central Europe and the end of the cold
war?

Of course, while the Cold War may have paused,
it's back in full swing now, and Sunni
extremists continue to wreak havoc on targets
within and outside of the Middle East.

Zbig's blowback has officially outlived the man.
May we remember the soldiers, of every country,
who have died as a result this Memorial Day
weekend. Rest in Peace.