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## PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION

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## PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION

### THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments in Afghanistan's relationships with the Bloc, Pakistan, and the West and the likely effects of these developments on Afghanistan's independence.

### SCOPE

This estimate is designed to supplement NIE 53-54, "Outlook for Afghanistan," dated 19 October 1954, and to bring up to date our assessment of Afghanistan's international prospects in the light of such developments as the deterioration in Pakistani-Afghan relations and the increasingly active Soviet policy in the area. Internal problems are discussed only insofar as they relate to Afghanistan's probable international policies. The primitive nature of Afghan economic and social institutions and the concentration of political power among a handful of leading members of the royal family were discussed in NIE 53-54. A summary of pertinent portions of this estimate is attached in an appendix, "The Nature of Afghan Society."

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Afghanistan is currently drifting closer to the Bloc. A continuation of this trend would seriously threaten Afghanistan's independence and its historic position as a buffer state. However, the USSR is likely to be content for some time to maintain close relations with and assist a "benevolently" neutral Afghanistan rather than to accomplish a clear-cut takeover either by recognizable subversion or actual force. (*Paras. 8, 14-19, 30-35*)

2. Afghan Prime Minister Daud's acceptance of extensive Soviet aid is motivated by his desire to strengthen Afghanistan in its controversy with Pakistan over the

Pushtunistan issue<sup>1</sup> and also to develop Afghanistan economically. Daud has won effective support for his policies in the limited circle of politically significant Afghans, and he is not likely to be ousted in the foreseeable future. So long as he remains in power he will probably continue to seek Soviet aid and support. (*Paras. 9-12, 14-17, 22-24, 34*)

3. Nevertheless, Daud and the Afghan ruling oligarchy almost certainly desire to avoid Soviet domination, and will prob-

<sup>1</sup> This issue results from Afghan demands that the Pushtu-speaking Pathan tribesmen in West Pakistan's western areas be given an autonomous state, Pushtunistan. These tribesmen are ethnically akin to the dominant Afghan tribal group.

ably continue to seek countervailing Western material aid and political support — attempting to use the threat of growing Soviet ties as leverage. Afghan leaders probably underestimate the degree to which economic connections, technical aid, intimate diplomatic and cultural contacts, and the like, can be used under Communist direction to tighten the bonds between Afghanistan and the USSR, and make an escape from the connection very difficult. The ability of the Afghans to make such an escape would depend not only on their own efforts but also on the timeliness of Western offers of countervailing support or Western willingness to bail them out if their independence is threatened. (*Paras. 20, 25, 34, 36-38*)

4. Meanwhile, as long as Daud continues dedicated to the Pushtunistan cause, the USSR will have a means, not available to the West, of making itself useful or even indispensable to him. Daud might reach the point where he would choose to accept Soviet support, at whatever political cost, rather than be ousted. (*Para. 35*)

5. So long as Daud persists in his Pushtunistan policies, Afghan relations with Pakistan will remain strained. However, neither side is likely to provoke hostilities deliberately. Pakistan's concern over growing Soviet influence in Afghanistan may lead it to seek some amelioration in its relations with the Afghans, but it is

highly unlikely to make any real concessions on the Pushtunistan question. (*Paras. 26-29*)

6. US capabilities to induce Afghanistan to alter its present policies are limited. Increased US aid might lead the Afghans to affirm their neutral benevolence toward the US as well as toward the USSR, but would probably also convince them that flirtation with the USSR was a good way to get US aid. A cut-off of US aid, or other evidence of US unfriendliness would be likely to drive the Afghans closer to the Soviet Bloc as their only source of economic assistance and political support against Pakistan. In neither event are the Afghans likely to abandon the Pushtunistan issue, and US could not support Afghanistan in this controversy without alienating Pakistan. (*Para. 37*)

7. If Western support of the "northern tier" concept should be stepped up, and particularly if the US should adhere to the Baghdad Pact, Soviet attempts to counter these developments probably would include increased efforts to insure Afghanistan's orientation toward the Bloc. Should US bases be established in Pakistan or Iran the Soviets would probably seek to gain control over Afghan foreign and military policy. However, the character of Soviet actions would be conditioned by the attitude of India and other neutral states of the Middle and Far East. (*Para. 30*)

## DISCUSSION

### I. THE PRESENT SITUATION

8. Developments in Afghanistan during the past year have confirmed our previous estimate that Soviet penetration of Afghanistan was likely and that Afghanistan might drift

toward the Bloc. Not only have Soviet attentions to Afghanistan increased during this period, culminating in the Khrushchev-Bulganin visit to Kabul in December 1955, but the Afghans themselves have become more receptive to Soviet lures. Moreover, the gov-

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ernment of Prime Minister Daud has shown itself increasingly reckless with respect to its relations with Pakistan and the West. A continuation of these trends would seriously threaten Afghanistan's independence and its historic position as a buffer state.

9. *The Pushtunistan Controversy.* Afghanistan's increased readiness to accept Bloc aid does not represent a deliberate decision to abandon its historic policy of noncommitment. Rather it stems principally from the Daud regime's desire to develop the Afghan economy as rapidly as possible, and from its estrangement from Pakistan. This estrangement has become serious during the past year. The Daud government has persisted in agitating for the creation, in Pakistani territory, of an autonomous state — Pushtunistan — for Pakistan's pustu-speaking tribesmen, who are ethnically akin to the dominant Afghan tribal group. Pakistan has refused to discuss this question, on the grounds that its own territorial integrity is involved and that the Pathan tribes themselves have little or no genuine interest in Pushtunistan. Both sides have sought the support of the US and other powers in the controversy.

10. Afghan-Pakistani relations have been strained periodically over this issue since the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The affair reached a serious crisis in 1955. Early in the year, Pakistan announced its intention to merge all the provinces of West Pakistan — including Pathan and other tribal territory — into a single unit. The Afghans regarded this as a direct threat to the Pushtunistan scheme, and in March an officially-inspired Afghan mob ransacked the Pakistani embassy in Kabul and the Pakistani consulate in Jalalabad. In April Pakistan, failing to receive satisfactory amends from the Kabul government, closed its consulates in Afghanistan, and in May imposed an embargo on trade with landlocked Afghanistan and on the transit of Afghan imports and exports through Pakistan. Pakistan's chief objective was to force the Afghan ruling clique to replace Prime Minister Daud, the leading exponent both of the Pushtunistan scheme and of closer ties with the Soviet Bloc. This embargo was

not lifted until September when both states agreed on amends for the original incident and promised also to refrain from propaganda excesses with respect to one another.

11. The agreements reached in September, however, scarcely touched on the real sources of Afghan-Pakistani tension, and relations between the two states remain extremely strained. Pakistan proceeded in October with the "one-unit" plan, which led the Afghans to make vigorous but unsuccessful efforts to enlist the aid of the US, the UK, and various Muslim countries in preventing or at least postponing implementation of the plan. When these efforts failed, Afghanistan withdrew its minister from Karachi; Pakistan, in response, recalled its ambassador from Kabul. Tensions along the Pakistani-Afghan frontier increased as both sides stepped up the tempo of propaganda recriminations. Pakistan repeatedly charged the Afghans with border violations and with attempts to create disturbances in Pakistan's tribal areas. So far, efforts to bring the two states together for talks, including President Eisenhower's offer to the Afghan King to do what was in his power to facilitate better understanding between Afghanistan and Pakistan, have failed, and the opposing nations have appeared to be at an impasse.

12. *Domestic Support of Prince Daud.* So far, Pakistani pressures have failed either to cause Daud to back down or to force his removal from office. Daud has obtained at least the acquiescence of the King in his policies and has strengthened his position over the past year. Those elements of the ruling oligarchy who have misgivings about his policy of accepting closer ties with the Soviet Bloc, and who are disturbed by his anti-Pakistan extremism, appear to have been silenced. In the recent *Loe Jirgah*<sup>2</sup> Daud succeeded in ob-

<sup>2</sup> Extraordinary assembly of tribal leaders and other notables. The *Loe Jirgah* is convened by the Afghan government only on rare occasions when questions of extreme national importance are to be decided. The *Loe Jirgah* enjoys a greater degree of independence and national prestige than does the puppet parliament in Kabul, and its decisions are of great significance in Afghanistan.

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taining a two-to-one vote of approval for his objectives. The assembly approved self-determination for Pakistan's Pathan tribes, and in effect upheld the policy of securing arms from the Soviet Bloc, on the grounds that Pakistan had been receiving arms from other "great powers." The result has been to endorse as "national policy" the two policies with which Daud has been most closely identified. Following the *Loe Jirgah's* action, Daud moved swiftly to remove the defense minister, whose first loyalty was to the King rather than to Daud, and assumed the post himself. Daud, who is a professional soldier with the rank of lieutenant-general, has consistently sought to place his supporters in key military command positions ever since he became prime minister. His recent assumption of the Ministry of Defense, as well, further increases his control over the armed forces.

13. *Afghan-Soviet Relations.* Increased Soviet attentions to Afghanistan are probably part of a general effort to counter Western moves in the Middle East-South Asia area — particularly in the "northern tier" group of nations (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan) which became members of the Baghdad Pact during 1955. In Soviet eyes, the "northern tier" defense system constitutes a potential Western military base area along the USSR's southwestern flank. Soviet objectives probably include: (a) countering Western influence in Afghanistan itself and winning the friendship of the Daud regime; (b) demonstrating to Asian nations the benefits of Soviet friendship as contrasted to that with the US; and (c) disconcerting the Pakistanis by enabling the Afghans to press their quarrel with Pakistan with greater impunity.

14. The continuance of Daud's extreme anti-Pakistan policies during the period of the Pakistani blockade was facilitated by the willingness of the Soviet Bloc to supply Afghanistan's trade and transit requirements on advantageous terms. The Pakistani blockade provided the Soviets with an unprecedented opportunity to develop the foothold they had already gained in 1953 and 1954. The Soviet share of Afghan trade has been growing in recent years. During 1955 it almost certainly

constituted substantially more than the 30-40 percent which we had estimated as the Soviet share of Afghan foreign trade in 1954. There has also probably been an increase in the volume of Bloc-Afghan trade, accompanied by a corresponding decline in Afghan trade with other countries. A significant example is that of petroleum imports, more than half of which had probably been supplied from Western-controlled sources before the Pakistani blockade. As a result of that blockade, and the USSR's longstanding willingness to supply Afghanistan's petroleum needs at prices substantially below those of the West, Afghanistan has become increasingly reliant on the USSR for its petroleum products. A Soviet-Afghan protocol signed in August 1955 calls for a significant broadening in barter trade of Bloc manufactured and capital goods for Afghan agricultural and animal products. There have been reports, which seem plausible, that the Soviets have offered to purchase one-third of Afghanistan's cotton crop and its entire output of karakul (Persian lamb) skins — traditionally Afghanistan's principal foreign exchange earner in trade with the West.

15. Afghanistan is now determined not to become dependent again upon trade routes through Pakistan and has been taking steps to reroute the bulk of its foreign trade through the USSR. A Soviet-Afghan transit agreement concluded in June 1955 grants Afghanistan transit privileges through the USSR — the only non-Bloc country to have received such a concession. The arrangements provide transportation at a price at least as favorable as through Pakistan. In addition, the Afghans are making efforts, with Soviet help, to improve routes to the Soviet border on a priority basis, and are also receiving Soviet assistance in constructing a new port, Qizil Qala, on the Oxus River (Amu Darya) which will facilitate trade with and through the USSR. Since the end of the Pakistani blockade, the government has continued to use various pressures to encourage import and export trade through the northern routes.

16. Soviet Bloc offers of economic, technical, and other assistance to Afghanistan have greatly increased during 1955, culminating in

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the sweeping agreement made by the Afghans with Khrushchev and Bulganin in mid-December for the equivalent of \$100 million of long-term Soviet credits for agricultural, irrigation, hydroelectric, and other development projects. The agreement also calls for improvement of the Kabul and possibly other airfields. It appears likely that the Afghans agreed, during the Soviet leaders Kabul visit, to prepare a 10 year economic development plan for implementation of the Soviet assistance program. Details of these projects and terms of repayment are not yet determined.<sup>3</sup> Several development projects financed by the more than \$11 million in Bloc credits extended during 1954-1955 have already been completed or are in process, and the Bloc is offering substantial assistance in a variety of fields. Afghanistan has granted the USSR a monopoly of sulphur exploitation, and is considering a Soviet offer to undertake development of important coal deposits. Bloc offers of economic aid are doubly attractive to the Afghans, since they allow repayment in Afghan goods instead of foreign exchange, and the projects so far carried out under them have been such as to yield quick and tangible results, such as paved streets in Kabul, gasoline storage facilities in Kabul and in the north, and an asphalt plant. These characteristics of Bloc assistance have led the Afghan government to make invidious comparisons with the US-sponsored project for development of the Helmand Valley — a costly, long-term scheme in an area remote from the capital, financed largely by loans repayable in dollars.<sup>4</sup> The Soviets have reportedly even offered to take over and complete the American-financed Helmand Valley project, and to pay off the US loans advanced for the project.

17. Finally, the Bloc has offered to supply arms to Afghanistan. Limited amounts of small arms may have been delivered from Czechoslovakia. Additional arms supplies,

<sup>3</sup> See attached map, "Development Projects Planned Under Soviet Aid to Afghanistan."

<sup>4</sup> US assistance since 1950 amounts to some \$45 million, including \$5 million in technical assistance and about \$40 million in Eximbank loans for the Helmand Valley project — about \$25 million of which has been expended to date.

possibly to the extent of \$15 million worth, may have been agreed upon during the Khrushchev-Bulganin visit.

18. In the political sphere the USSR has wooed Kabul by giving support to the Afghan position on Pushtunistan. The news bulletin published by the Soviet embassy in Kabul has indicated sympathy with the Afghan claims, and this was reiterated by Bulganin during his Kabul visit and again more strongly in his Moscow speech at the end of December.

19. The growth of Soviet-Afghan economic ties has resulted in certain political gains for the Bloc. By providing Afghanistan with alternative sources of economic and military assistance and trade outlets, the USSR has done much to reduce Afghan vulnerability to Pakistani and Western pressures or inducements. Moreover, the prompt and circumspect manner in which the Soviets have responded to Afghanistan's needs — there is little or no evidence of subversive activities in connection with Bloc assistance so far — has almost certainly worked to some extent to disarm Afghan suspicions of Soviet motives. Khrushchev and Bulganin were successful in securing Afghan agreement to a number of Soviet policies, such as the admission of Communist China to the UN.

20. For their part, the Afghans appear confident of their ability to retain their independence in spite of their ties with the Bloc. There is evidence that they have rejected a number of Soviet aid offers, and they are apparently still interested in Western aid as well. Prime Minister Daud, as well as Foreign Minister Naim, pointed out, following the Khrushchev-Bulganin visit, that the Afghans intended to remain neutral. Naim also stated that the government intended to refrain from any criticism of the Baghdad Pact. Finally, the Afghan ruling clique regards the threat of closer Soviet-Afghan relations as a useful instrument for extracting concessions from Pakistan and the West.

## II. PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS

21. *Potential Opposition to Daud.* Latent opposition to Daud and misgivings over the trend of his policies almost certainly exist within

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the royal family, among certain tribal leaders, merchant groups, and mullahs, and to some extent even within the armed forces. However, these elements lack organization and leadership and the apparent success of Daud's tactics so far have probably rendered such opposition powerless for some time to come. Daud may move to consolidate his position even more firmly by further changing his cabinet — as he has already done in the case of the Ministry of Defense — to exclude those whose first loyalties are to the King or members of the royal family other than himself. Moreover, any conciliation or softening in Pakistan's stand would appear to vindicate his tactics and would be exploited to the fullest by Daud.

22. In these circumstances, Daud is unlikely to be forced from power by the King or others of the ruling oligarchy, such as the two leading elder members, Shah Mahmoud Khan and Shah Wali Khan. The latter two are opposed to Daud's policies, but their efforts, if any, have been of the feeblest order. Moreover, the King, while rumored to oppose Daud, has always supported him in various public statements and in the deliberations of the parliament and the *Loe Jirgah*. Thus, while opposition to Daud exists within the ruling family, it seems to lack effectiveness and strength.

23. If the ruling clique became convinced that Daud's policies were leading to a loss of Afghanistan's independence, its sense of national and self-preservation might lead it to attempt Daud's removal. Daud would probably resist such efforts and would probably be successful in view of his present power over the armed forces, as well as the likelihood that the USSR would extend him at least covert support.

24. Tribal opposition to the Kabul government is endemic, but the army is probably capable of dealing with any tribal disturbances short of a concerted and widespread uprising. As Daud's policies vis-a-vis Pakistan and the USSR have been endorsed by the *Loe Jirgah*, no such uprising is likely.

25. *Afghan Foreign Relations.* We continue to believe that underlying Afghan foreign policy there remains a determination to pre-

serve the country's independence by avoiding complete commitment to either of the great power blocs. Daud himself would probably try to alter his course if he came to feel that it was jeopardizing Afghan independence. However, all present evidence indicates that he is confident that he can, without undue risk, use Bloc support to further his ambitions with respect to Pushtunistan and Afghan economic growth. Accordingly, we consider it likely that Afghan foreign policies will continue much as at present so long as Daud remains in control.

26. *Relations with Pakistan.* Daud probably will continue vigorously to pursue his agitation over Pushtunistan, particularly so long as he has Soviet support. Afghan-Pakistani relations are accordingly likely to remain strained, or at best subject to sporadic ups and downs. In addition to keeping up propaganda on the subject and attempting to enlist the support of other powers, the Afghans will probably foster disaffection among the Pathan tribes in Pakistan. It is unlikely that the Afghans will deliberately precipitate open hostilities with Pakistan, but the possibility exists of further "incidents" like the attack on the Pakistani embassy in Kabul last March. Such incidents could lead to a complete rupture of relations or even to hostilities, possibly in the form of border forays short of all-out war.

27. The Pakistanis, for their part, appear to recognize the danger of Soviet intervention which would result from Pakistani-Afghan hostilities, and will almost certainly refrain from attacking Afghanistan unless confronted with extreme provocation. Pakistan's concern over developing Soviet influence in Afghanistan may lead it to seek some amelioration in its relations with the Afghans. It might for example be willing to discuss problems of trade, facilitation of transit through Pakistan, reopening consulates, and restoration of ambassadors, and possibly the problems of policing the border. However, Pakistan is unlikely to compromise on the Pushtunistan issue. We believe it highly unlikely that it would make a bonafide offer to hold a plebiscite on the question.

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28. It remains unlikely that Pakistan will offer sufficient concessions to satisfy Daud, particularly as long as the latter feels assured of Soviet material and political support in his anti-Pakistan activities. Thus, even if Pakistan's gestures resulted in temporary improvements in its relations with Afghanistan, these would not be likely to prove lasting as long as Daud remains in power and Soviet policy continues as at present.

29. Despite the Daud regime's efforts to increase its trade with the USSR, Afghanistan is likely to remain dependent on Pakistani trade routes for the export of fruits and nuts from southern Afghanistan and imports required for the Helmand Valley project.

30. *Soviet Policy toward Afghanistan.* We estimate that the USSR will continue its efforts to exploit the situation in Afghanistan and to increase the latter's dependence on the Bloc. For some time to come, at least, the USSR is likely to continue to offer economic and technical assistance on favorable terms, to encourage Afghan efforts to develop trade and transit facilities with the Bloc, and to extend support through arms sales and limited political backing. Although the USSR could easily take over Afghanistan, we continue to believe that it will avoid such openly aggressive tactics, particularly since a move of this sort would alarm other Asian nations now being wooed by the Soviets. In present circumstances the Soviets are probably content to have Afghanistan remain formally uncommitted so long as its present tendency to lean toward the Bloc continues. If Western support of the "northern tier" concept should be stepped up, and particularly if the US should adhere to the Baghdad Pact, Soviet attempts to counter these developments probably would include increased efforts to insure Afghanistan's orientation toward the Bloc. Should US bases be established in Pakistan or Iran the Soviets would probably seek to gain control over Afghan foreign and military policy. However the character of Soviet actions would be conditioned by the attitude of India and other neutral states of the Middle and Far East.

31. The USSR would probably give Daud strong support against any efforts to unseat

him. It will almost certainly foster strains in Afghan-Pakistani relations, but not to the point of encouraging full-scale hostilities. Such a development would confront the USSR with the choice between allowing Pakistan to conquer Afghanistan or coming to Afghanistan's defense with Soviet armed forces — a course which would be likely to have unfavorable repercussions for the Soviets throughout free Asia and might lead to undesired complications with the West.

32. In the unlikely event of open Pakistani-Afghan hostilities, Pakistan could easily defeat the organized Afghan military forces although Afghan tribal elements might carry on guerrilla warfare against the Pakistanis for some time. However, before suffering defeat, the Daud regime would probably request Soviet assistance. Although the USSR would probably be reluctant to intervene openly, it might seek to block a Pakistani victory by covert intervention, possibly using Soviet "volunteers" ethnically akin to certain Afghan tribal groups. Any such Soviet intervention would draw Afghanistan still closer to the Soviet orbit.

33. While there is no evidence of a Communist party in Afghanistan and the number of Communist sympathizers probably remains small, Soviet Bloc subversive assets and opportunities are likely to increase through the introduction of Communist personnel in connection with Soviet trade and assistance activities. Soviet personnel are already acting as advisors to the government petroleum monopoly and possibly to other government activities. In addition, the USSR may elect to take payment in Afghan currency for certain Soviet goods and services, thus accumulating a reserve of local currency which could easily be used for subversive and political purposes. If the USSR should initiate subversive efforts, the most likely targets would be certain discontented minority tribes — particularly those in the north which are ethnically akin to groups in the USSR — and a small number of urban intelligentsia who are discontent with the backwardness of the country and the arbitrary methods of the government and to whom radical solutions are prob-

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ably increasingly attractive. For the foreseeable future, however, we consider that the USSR is not likely to make extensive use of these opportunities, and will probably scrupulously limit subversive activities in order to impress the Afghans and other Asians with the "benevolence" of Soviet assistance programs.

34. *Afghan Relations with the USSR.* Afghanistan is likely to welcome continuing Soviet political and economic support as a way of avoiding complete dependence on Pakistan and the West, as a means of extracting countervailing concessions from Pakistan and the West, and as a benefit to Afghan economic development. Moreover, since the USSR also constitutes a natural market and transit route for much of Afghan trade, Afghan-Soviet economic ties will probably continue to be close. And so long as Afghan-Pakistani relations remain strained by Daud's agitation of the Pushtunistan controversy, the Kabul regime will place particularly high value on Bloc support and cooperation. In these circumstances, Afghanistan will probably drift closer toward the Soviet Bloc. Afghan leaders probably underestimate the degree to which economic connections, technical aid, intimate diplomatic and cultural contacts, and the like, can be used under Communist direction to tighten the bonds between Afghanistan and the USSR, and make an escape from the connection very difficult. The ability of the Afghans to make such an escape would depend not only on their own efforts but also on the timeliness of Western offers of countervailing support or Western willingness to bail them out if their independence is threatened.

35. We believe it unlikely that Afghanistan will fall under direct Soviet control within the next few years. Nevertheless there is a danger that the Soviet Union, while refraining from actions to replace the present Afghan government with one subject to its authority, might come to exert a powerful voice in the Daud regime itself. As long as Daud continues dedicated to the Pushtunistan cause, the USSR will have a means, not available to the West, of making itself useful or even indispensable to him. Afghanistan's growing

dependence on Soviet diplomatic and economic support will place it under cumulative political and economic obligations to the Bloc unless these are counterbalanced by strengthened ties with the West. Such Soviet ties would be difficult to throw off without inflicting a sharp rebuff to the USSR (possibly including, for example, refusal to meet loan repayments) and in effect confessing the bankruptcy of Daud's Soviet policy. In these circumstances, Daud himself may become increasingly reluctant to offend the USSR. Despite his present almost certain desire that Afghanistan remain independent, he might reach the point where he would choose to continue to accept Soviet support, at whatever political cost, rather than be ousted.

36. *Afghan-US Relations.* Notwithstanding Prince Daud's present policy of increased reliance upon the USSR, we believe that he will continue to want support and assistance from the US, both for the economic and political benefits, and as a counterbalance to Soviet influence. Thoroughly schooled in the technique of playing off great powers against each other, the Afghan leaders almost certainly appreciate that a clear cessation of US interest in Afghanistan would reduce to negligible proportion both the latter's bargaining power vis-a-vis the USSR, and its chances of remaining independent. Indeed, Daud's present acceptance of Bloc support is probably in part designed to force the US and other Western countries to step up their aid to Afghanistan and to adopt more pro-Afghan policies on the Pushtunistan issue.

37. US capabilities to induce Afghanistan to alter its present policies are limited. Increased US aid might lead the Afghans to affirm their neutral benevolence toward the US as well as toward the USSR, but would probably also convince them that flirtation with the USSR was a good way to get US aid. A cut-off of US aid, or other evidence of US unfriendliness would be likely to drive the Afghans closer to the Soviet Bloc as their only source of economic assistance and political support against Pakistan. In neither event are the Afghans likely to abandon the

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Pushtunistan issue, and the US could not support Afghanistan in this controversy without alienating Pakistan.

38. *Afghan Relations with Other Countries.* Since the UK has sided firmly with Pakistan in the Afghan-Pakistani controversy, Afghan-UK relations are likely to remain cool. Afghanistan probably has little hope that the UK could be brought to exert effective pressure on a Commonwealth member for the sake of Afghanistan. In any event, Afghan interest in UK support is probably limited since the Afghans now regard the US as having replaced British power as a counterweight for that of the USSR.

39. India may in the past have given covert support to Afghanistan against Pakistan. However, Nehru would probably prefer to see

the controversy quieted rather than to see a continued growth of Soviet influence in Afghanistan, if he became convinced that the issue was leading to such a development. It is not likely, however, that India could exert decisive influence with the Kabul government either with respect to the Pushtunistan controversy or with respect to the acceptance of closer Bloc ties — particularly so long as India itself is accepting increasing Soviet aid and is also engaged in a quarrel with Pakistan over Kashmir. Afghan sensitivity to Moslem opinion affords various Moslem states, for example Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran, some influence in Kabul. However, since these states have little sympathy with the Pushtunistan scheme, their influence is not likely to increase significantly in Afghanistan.

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## APPENDIX

## THE NATURE OF AFGHAN SOCIETY

Afghanistan is a primitive tribal kingdom with a heterogeneous population and with undeveloped economic resources. Of Afghanistan's population, variously estimated at eight to 12 million, perhaps as much as one-third is nomadic or seminomadic, and the tribal system is strong. In common with other underdeveloped countries of the Middle East and South Asia, Afghan society consists of a great majority engaged in primitive agricultural and pastoral pursuits; a much thinner layer of small landowners, petty traders, lesser tribal leaders, and a few urban shopkeepers, professional men, and government employees; and a very small elite (probably not more than two thousand) comprising the royal family, big landowners, the principal tribal leaders, large-scale traders, and wealthy businessmen. Communications are poor, and there are few urban concentrations, the capital city of Kabul with a population of something over 200,000 being the largest.

As a result of the many invasions and migrations which have traversed the area, the Afghan population is ethnically heterogeneous and the various groups have little in common beyond adherence to Islam. Even in this respect, the tribes have sectarian differences as between the Sunni, Shia, and Ismaili sects. Loyalty to the tribe, clan, or family is usually stronger than loyalty to the nation. There is a lack of national spirit and a general dislike of the central government. National consciousness is further weakened by the fact that many of the tribes near Afghanistan's borders are ethnically akin to similar groups in adjacent areas of the USSR, Iran, and Pakistan. The dominant ethnic-linguistic group, both numerically and politically, is composed of the Pathan tribes (also called Pushtun and "true Afghans"), which are con-

centrated in southern and eastern Afghanistan. Afghanistan's ruling oligarchy stems from the principal Afghan Pathan tribe. Other ethnic groups, such as the Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkomen, and Nuristani, have little or no political power in Afghanistan and for the most part have been forced to accept a second class status within the nation.

The government, ostensibly a constitutional monarchy, is actually an autocratic oligarchy tightly controlled by the royal family. There are no political parties. The members of the royal family, who occupy the top positions in the government, also maintain their hold on the government machinery through appointment of lesser officials and flagrantly rigged elections to the rubber stamp legislature. There is complete state control of newspapers and other media of communication, and a large degree of state monopoly over the economy. While disputes do occasionally occur within the ruling family, they are normally settled within the group.

The only political forces of consequence other than the Pathan tribes and the ruling oligarchy are a few wealthy urban merchants and traders, and the religious leaders (mullahs). Religious opposition to former King Amanullah's attempts at sweeping modernization in the late 1920's was the primary factor in a successful revolt against him, and indicates the power potential of the religious leaders. Some merchant and trading interests with large financial resources are influential in urban areas but would probably assume political importance only in combination with army, tribal, or religious leaders. While certain minority tribal elements and some young reformists in Kabul and provincial cities are probably dissatisfied with the regime, they are not united and have little opportunity to make their influence felt.

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Although much of its total area is wasteland, Afghanistan's agricultural and pastoral economy is normally self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs, except for sugar. In the past, foreign trade has not been of major importance to the Afghan economy, which has depended on external sources to only a limited degree. With growing Afghan desires for economic development, foreign exchange requirements have expanded with a consequent increase in

the significance of foreign trade. Afghanistan's major export and foreign exchange earner has long been karakul (Persian lamb) skins, but cotton has increased in importance and, with recent declines in karakul sales, may replace the latter as the principal export article. Other exports are wool, fruits, and nuts. Major imports are sugar, tea, cotton cloth and other manufactured consumer goods, petroleum products, and materials needed for development.

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DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PLANNED UNDER SOVIET AID TO AFGHANISTAN



NOTE

Reliably reported projects planned under the announced \$100,000,000 Soviet credit to Afghanistan, which is to run for ten years, include improvement of airfields at Kabul, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Baghlan; improvement of the Oxus River port facilities at Qizil Qala; construction of a dam in the Ghazni area; and road construction in the Salang Pass area. Location of the US-sponsored Helmand Valley project is also indicated.

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