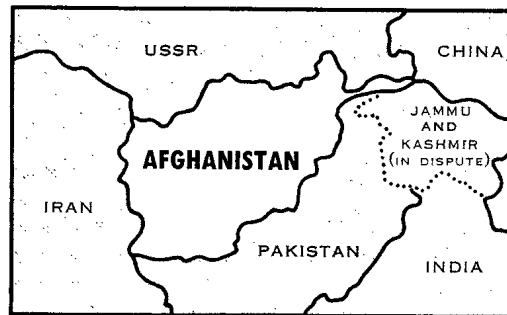


NIE 53-59 ADVCON
22 September 1959

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

THE OUTLOOK FOR AFGHANISTAN

NOTE: This is an advance copy of the conclusions of this estimate as approved by the United States Intelligence Board. The complete text will be circulated within five days of this issuance.



- Internal political situation:
short and long term outlooks
- Economic situation and outlook
- International position

Central Intelligence Agency

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Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 22 September 1959. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

22 September 1959

SUBJECT: NIE 53-59: THE OUTLOOK FOR AFGHANISTAN

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments in Afghanistan's internal affairs and international position over the next few years.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The prospect for political stability in Afghanistan is relatively good for the next few years. The royal family enjoys the support of the armed forces and its position appears secure. Prime Minister Daud will probably continue to exert a major influence in the country. (Paras. 8-10, 13, 15-17)

2. Over the longer term, some major change in the present political situation seems inevitable as the armed forces become conscious of their growing power, and as they and the

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literate urban element are affected by Communist and other foreign influences. (Paras. 18-19)

3. Modernization of Afghanistan's armed forces and the improvement of its primitive economy are being achieved at the cost of considerable dependence on the Communist Bloc. For the foreseeable future, Afghanistan will be almost entirely dependent on the USSR for support of its armed forces. The Soviets are also in a position to use their extensive trade relationships with the Afghans to put heavy economic pressure on the country. If the USSR were to cut off this aid and trade, Afghanistan would have difficulty even now extricating itself under its own power, and its chances of being able to do so will decrease as time passes. The Afghans could avoid severe economic hardship or capitulation to Soviet demands only if the West undertook to help meet their modest import and export requirements. (Paras. 12, 20-29)

4. The USSR will almost certainly attempt gradually to tighten its grip on Afghanistan but will exercise care to avoid provoking a crisis. Any move to take over control of the country would raise problems for broader Soviet strategy. Nonetheless, the Soviets would probably go to considerable lengths to protect their position if it were directly challenged by the West. (Paras. 37-38)

5. Afghanistan's neutrality seems likely to take on an increasingly pro-Soviet tone. Because of their pique at the US and reluctance to antagonize the USSR, the Afghans will probably continue to support the Soviet position on issues which they do not believe to be of direct interest to Afghanistan. We believe, however that Daud and his associates still consider the preservation of their country's independence to be the primary objective of their policy and that for some time to come at least they would resist any Soviet effort to infringe on their sovereignty. (Para. 36)

6. In view of the increased hostility between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the advent of the new military regime in Karachi, settlement of the Pushtoonistan dispute or any major improvement in relations between the two countries is improbable over the next few years. Sporadic violence in the border area is possible but is unlikely to lead to large-scale hostilities or to closure of the border. (Paras. 31-32)

7. The Afghan regime resents US support for Pakistan and considers the US aid program in Afghanistan to be limited and slow-moving. However, it will continue to welcome ties with the US as a counter to expanding relations with the Bloc and probably hopes that the US would bail Afghanistan out if the Soviet Union began to apply economic pressure. (Paras. 39-41)