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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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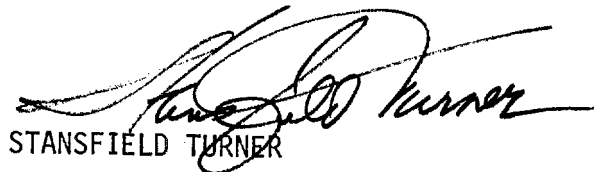
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MEMORANDUM FOR: The National Security Council

SUBJECT : Alert Memorandum on USSR-Afghanistan (U)

The Soviet leaders may be on the threshold of a decision to commit their own forces to prevent the collapse of the Taraki regime and protect their sizable stake in Afghanistan. Small Soviet combat units may already have arrived in the country. I am concerned that the Soviets may be underestimating the difficulties of shoring up the regime and may find themselves under growing pressures to escalate the scope of their intervention in the next few months. Moreover, the Soviets may now be more inclined to gamble on a substantial intervention in Afghanistan because of their perception of a downturn in relations with the US and the uncertain prospects for Senate approval of the SALT treaty.

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STANSFIELD TURNER

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

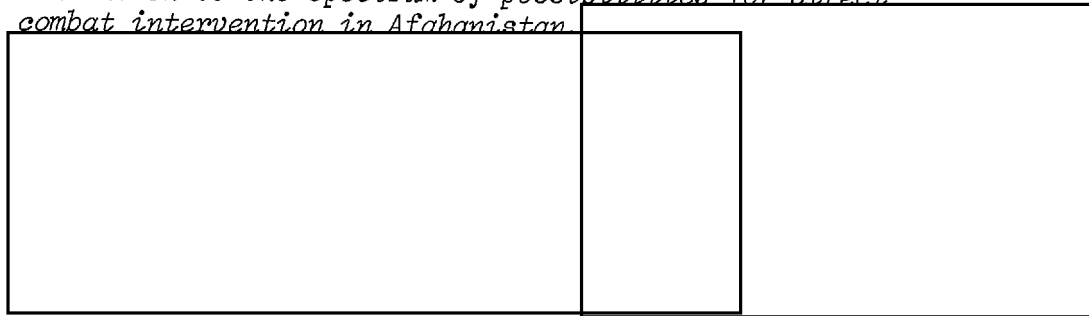
National Intelligence Officers



ALERT MEMORANDUM*

USSR-Afghanistan

The Soviets may have begun to give more serious consideration to the spectrum of possibilities for direct combat intervention in Afghanistan.



mid-August arrival in Kabul of General Pavlovskiy, Commander of the Soviet Ground Forces, and a high-level delegation which includes several other generals and colonels.

Pavlovskiy is probably charged with assessing the extent of the threat to the Afghan government and preparing contingency plans which will outline the amount and nature of Soviet military support needed to contain that threat, both in its current stage and if it worsens.

As opposition to the Afghan government has increased over the past year, the Soviets have gradually augmented their military advisory

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presence.

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the Soviet presence has grown

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the role of Soviet troops has increasingly changed from a mere advisory one to active participation

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the Soviets

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have moved up to 3,600 troops into Kabul within the past two or three weeks to protect Soviet facilities and personnel there.

Such a movement of forces

by the Soviets would suggest increased security precautions and an escalation of Soviet involvement beyond an advisory role. The Soviets might consider such a move into Kabul to be prudent in view of the uprisings that have occurred in Kabul this year and the continuing possibility of violence in the capital.

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In expanding the level of their own involvement in Afghanistan, there is a danger that the Soviets -- consciously or unconsciously -- will amplify their own stake in the ultimate outcome, making it increasingly difficult for them to resist raising the level of their participation still another notch should they feel it necessary.

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