

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505



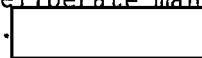
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ALERT MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Security Council

SUBJECT : USSR-Afghanistan

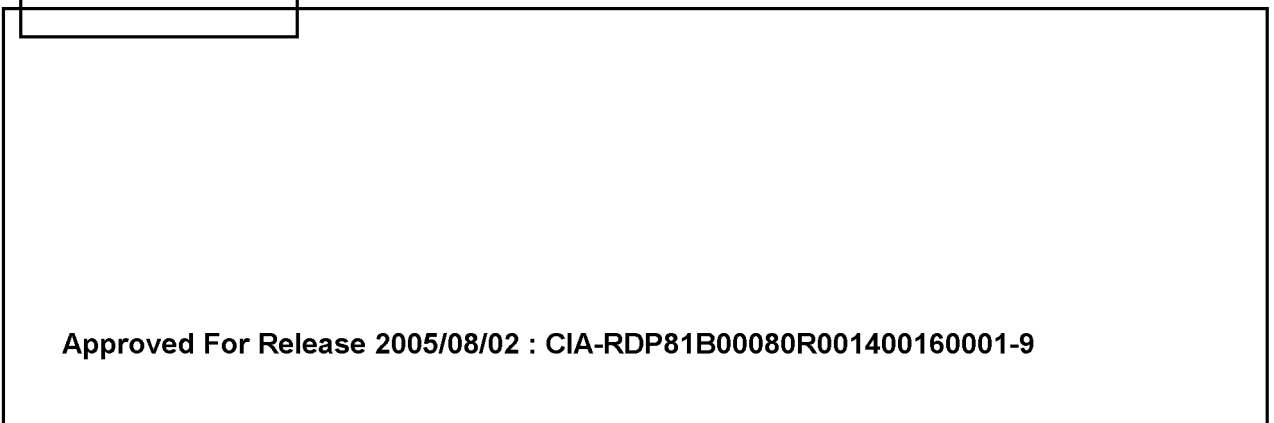
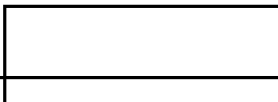
The Soviet leaders have crossed a significant threshold in their growing military involvement in Afghanistan. The airborne units they have already introduced into the country at Bagram airfield north of Kabul in the last two weeks are capable of conducting multibatallion combat operations, and the Soviets are building up other more substantial forces near the Soviet-Afghan border. While the Soviets may now be less concerned about the adverse consequences for their relations with the US of a major intervention in Afghanistan, they probably also wish to avoid deflecting onto themselves any of the militant Islamic hostility now directed against the United States. In seeking to balance their evident strong commitment to preserve a Marxist regime in Afghanistan against their probable concern to avoid a politically costly and militarily open-ended massive intervention, the Soviets are now ratcheting up the level of their direct involvement and may be positioning themselves in a deliberate manner to escalate further should circumstances require.



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