

13 March 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officers

(USSR-EE, NESA, CH/ETAP)

FROM : Assistant NIO for Warning

SUBJECT : Food for Thought

Attached are some comments and questions which may be of use to you in your monthly warning meetings next week.



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Attachment

I. USSR-Pakistan-Afghanistan

1. Has the possibility of Soviet military action against Afghan insurgent camps in Pakistan increased or diminished in the past month?

—The NID of 6 March, noting that the Soviet offensive in Konarha Province had forced more Afghan rebels to retreat across the border, judged that this "will increase the chances for Soviet cross-border incursions."

2. What effect will developments in Afghanistan during the past month have on the Soviets' assessment of their prospects for pacifying the country without resorting to harsh measures to intimidate Pakistan into terminating its own and foreign assistance to the insurgents?

—Can a case be made that the Soviets have managed at least to slow the pace of insurgent gains, if not to arrest or reverse them?

- a. The offensive in Konarha Province.
- b. Attempts to block major insurgent infiltration routes across the Afghan-Pakistani border in the northeast.

3. Soviet perceptions of Pakistan's intentions

—Zia's "appeasement" tactics:

- a. Private assurances that Pakistan is not pursuing an anti-Soviet policy
- b. Pakistan's rejection of the US aid package
- c. Agha Shahi's public expression of interest in improving Soviet-Pakistani relations.
- d. Pakistan's apparent intention to stop short of a complete break in diplomatic relations with Kabul.
- e. Zia's 6 March statement that he would allow international inspection of border refugee camps.

4. Possible Soviet/Afghan diplomatic initiatives.

—As a follow up to Brezhnev's 22 February call for guarantees by the US and Afghanistan's neighbors of termination of "all forms of outside

interference in Afghanistan," might Moscow announce an initiative aimed at undercutting US efforts to persuade its allies to apply "tangible" measures against the Soviet Union?

- a. A proposal for an international conference to negotiate guarantees against outside interference--on the assumption that the US would oppose such a conference but that the European allies, Pakistan, and India would be favorably inclined.
- b. Babrak's statement to an Indian journalist on 5 March that Afghanistan would welcome an invitation to a "Geneva-type" conference that would establish an "international police force" on the Afghan-Pakistani border.

II. Iran.

Implications of the failure of the UN Commission.

--Do events of 6-10 March signify a definitive failure of Bani-Sadr's attempts to achieve a compromise solution by decoupling the hostage and extradition issues?

- a. If the Islamic Republic Party wins a majority in the Majlis, will Bani-Sadr abandon his efforts to resolve the hostage crisis at least temporarily? Might he react to an electoral defeat by resigning?
- b. Did Khomeini's statements on 8 and 10 March mean that he has now sided unequivocally with the position of the embassy militants and the clerical right that extradition of the shah is the irreducible price for freeing the hostages? Beheshti claimed on 12 March that a majority of members of the Revolutionary Council share the view that extradition is the essential condition for release of the hostages.
- c. Was Khomeini's pre-election broadcast tantamount to an appeal for returning an Islamic Republic Party majority to the Majlis?
- d. How would the leftist parties and armed groups and the ethnic

minorities react to clerical rightist domination of the Majlis? What is the potential for violent backlash in the streets?

III. Syria

Assad has taken two major initiatives—withdrawal from Beirut and a crackdown on domestic opponents—which involve considerable risk of miscalculation and surprise.

a. If communal violence in northern Lebanon and the Beirut area escalates, will it spread to southern Lebanon? How would Haddad and the Israelis react? Would the August 1979 ceasefire survive? Weizmann to the US Ambassador on 14 February: "I may end up with no choice but moving in again unless you can do something to control (the PLO). I will not be able to sit by and watch Haddad's people being killed without protecting him!"

b. Is Assad overreaching in repressing his opposition? Have the chances increased that senior Alawite officers will move against him?

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V. Egypt-Libya

a. Aside from some diplomatic diversion, might Sadat try to deflect attention from his problems with Israel by a military move against Libya? Might Sadat seize upon another Libyan adventure in Tunisia as a pretext?

b. Qadhafi faces growing domestic dissidence and potential disloyalty in the military. Have the chances increased that he will see another attempt to bring down the Bourguiba regime as a means of easing his domestic problems?

—The Tunisian military in early March had information that the Libyans were planning to attack Qafsah and Bordj El Khadra, and that Tunisian rebels armed and trained by Libya were moving toward the Tunisian border.

—According to a Western technician in Libya, Libyan CH-47 helicopters since mid-February have been flying cargo into southern Tunisia, apparently in preparation for offensive operations.

VI. Vietnam-Kampuchea-China-Thailand.

1. How will Hanoi assess Prem's succession to Kriangsak? Will the Vietnamese view affect the nature and scope of their military operations along the Kampuchean-Thai border between now and the rainy season?

a. Prem reportedly believes Thailand should back away from a collision course with Vietnam and adopt a more neutral policy. Prem, moreover, is said to desire an early end to the refugee problem.

b. Foreign Minister Sitthi advocates withdrawing from the "monkey business" of supporting Pol Pot.

2. The Vietnamese would seem to have two options:

a. Attempt to exploit Prem's desire to disengage from cooperation with China in aiding Pol Pot by sharpening military pressure and threats of cross-border strikes.

- b. Avoid menacing actions in order to draw Prem into a dialogue to test chances of a political accommodation at the expense of China.
3. China's perceptions.
 - a. Chinese officials have expressed concern that Prem will be less receptive to China's efforts to contain the Vietnamese and will opt for negotiations with Hanoi.
 - b. If the Chinese come to believe they can no longer rely on Thai collaboration, what alternatives might they adopt? Will a Thai disengagement increase China's incentive to stage threatening military demonstrations and incidents on the Vietnamese border?