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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

25 February 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.
Deputy Director, National Foreign Assessment

Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : Arnold L. Horelick
National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE [REDACTED]
(Meeting held on 19 February 1980)

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1. The Soviets in Afghanistan. Analysts largely agreed that post-intervention developments in Afghanistan have disappointed Soviet hopes and have probably not conformed to Soviet expectations. The disintegration of the Afghan army, which all analysts believe to have been a critical factor in the timing of the Soviet intervention, has not only not been arrested, but proceeded at a rapid pace; the Babrak regime has not won any appreciable public support; and the adverse international reactions to the intervention have probably been harsher than the Soviets expected and show no signs of abating. A variety of reports indicate that some ranking Soviet officials failed fully to anticipate such outcomes and feel that the intervention has been poorly managed and may even have been ill-advised. [REDACTED]

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2. The prevailing consensus held that their disappointment with developments to date was not likely to lead the Soviets to alter their basic Afghan plan in the near future. If they could put together a more viable regime by jettisoning Babrak and allotting more posts to non-Communist leaders, they would probably not hesitate to do so. However, they are not likely to be receptive at this point to a face-saving formula for early evacuation of Afghanistan; Soviet withdrawal now would almost certainly lead to the collapse of whatever Soviet installed regime the Soviets left behind. In the near term, the Soviets are more likely to pour additional forces into Afghanistan and assign their forces a more aggressive counterinsurgency role than they are to make sizable troop withdrawals, scale down their initial objectives, and cast about for the best available suboptimal termination option. [REDACTED]

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3. No clear consensus emerged on the question of whether additional Soviet forces, suitably organized and deployed, would be able to reduce the insurgency to manageable proportions within the foreseeable future. Estimates of the number of Soviet troops that might bring this goal within reach ranged as high as 300,000 although there was general agreement that a much smaller number would suffice unless the insurgents received extensive outside support. A number of analysts were inclined to believe that without such support the insurgents could eventually be successfully contained by relatively modest -- 25 to 50 percent -- increments to the Soviet forces now on the scene. []

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4. Attention was called to the high rate of replacement of Soviet field commanders as an indicator of Moscow's dissatisfaction with trends in Afghanistan, and it was suggested that greater command stability could be taken as a sign of increasing satisfaction. []

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5. The Soviets and Post-Hostage Iran. It was agreed that the resolution of the hostage crisis would make the Soviets more apprehensive about a possible further improvement in US-Iranian relations. It was also agreed that the Soviets fear that their failure quickly to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan could lead to a further deterioration in Soviet-Iranian relations. Unless developments transform these concerns into acute anxieties, however, the Soviets are more likely to continue to court the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr regime than to support local separatist movements or to threaten military intervention. Although the Soviets will maintain contacts with separatist groups and will continue to upgrade their forces in the Transcaucasian Military District, we do not expect them to do so in a demonstrative fashion or to undertake the sorts of preparations that might prefigure a full-fledged attack. Precisely because we believe that Moscow would view such preparations as politically counterproductive, we would be inclined to interpret them as fairly strong indicators of an actual intention to intervene if they should be undertaken. []

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6. The Yugoslav Succession. The meeting agreed that the primary variable affecting the near-term future of Yugoslavia will be the degree of cohesion shown by Tito's heirs. The latter's conduct during the past weeks has increased our confidence that Yugoslavia is not on the verge of a bitter internecine succession struggle. If Tito survives for some time but remains largely incapacitated, however, the chances for a smooth interregnum could be somewhat diminished. In that event, the acquisition of information about Tito's condition, the frequency and focus of his periods of activity, and his accessibility to other members of the leadership would become especially important. []

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7. Recent Changes in the Polish Leadership. No dissent was registered to the proposition that these changes are likely to strengthen the immobilism of the Polish regime and thereby increase somewhat the likelihood of an eventual economic and political crisis.

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A.H.

Arnold L. Horelick

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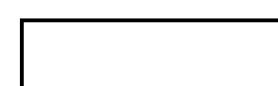
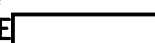
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