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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC 0672-80
28 January 1980

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

VIA: Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: Robert C. Ames
National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia

SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Assessment: Near East and South Asia

1. Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan. The possibility of Soviet military movement into Iran was discussed at the 22 January NESA warning meeting. Most analysts present felt that the time was not ripe for such a direct confrontation with the United States since the Soviets must feel that they will benefit in the long-run from the flow of events in Iran. The Soviet opportunistic approach currently has a plethora of potential opportunities to exploit in the region.

2. Egypt-Israel. The beginning of normalization at the end of the month makes another Baghdad-type Arab summit with additional sanctions against Egypt (e.g. cessation of Arab-Egypt direct air travel) a possibility. A resumption of terrorist acts, especially against Egyptian targets, must also not be discounted. The recent loss of political momentum by the PLO -- having been upstaged by events in Iran and Afghanistan -- makes a resumption of terrorism by the frustrated moderates a possibility. The unpredictable Sadat, with no more chunks of Sinai territory to show to his people every two months, could resort to a new tougher posture toward the Israelis in the autonomy negotiations.

3. Libyan "Intercept" Attempts Against US Reconnaissance Aircraft. The most recent MIG-25 "intercept" attempt, in which two MIG-25s approached to within 40 kms of the US aircraft, was analyzed. Although there was nothing peculiar about this particular episode and no hostile intent was indicated, the increased frequency of these tracking/harassment incidents was noted.



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4. Syria. In addition to the internal security situation which we have been following at the warning meetings for several months now, the recent tough, pro-Soviet political line (e.g. on Afghanistan) is of concern. Assad's lack of allies and a sense of vulnerability seems to be one of the better explanations for this.

5. Islamic Conference. The rift in the Arab world over Afghanistan and its importance relative to Camp David and the Arab-Israeli issue will probably temper the actions taken at the 25 January foreign ministers conference in Islamabad. Efforts to unify the Afghan exile organizations are likely. The additional step of creating an Afghan government in exile -- should that be taken -- would create additional incentives for Soviet border incursions.

6. Lebanon. Sniping and shelling incidents are again increasing. The risk of miscalculation on all sides (e.g. the Christians deciding to push the Syrians again or the Israelis preempting a perceived threat) is increased by the nervous post-Afghanistan mood in the region and by the presence of Iranian "volunteers" training in southern Lebanon.


for Robert C. Ames

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