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Strategic Warning Staff

Washington, D.C. 20301



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12 December 1979
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MEMORANDUM FOR: NIO/W



FROM : Director, SWS

SUBJECT : Afghanistan

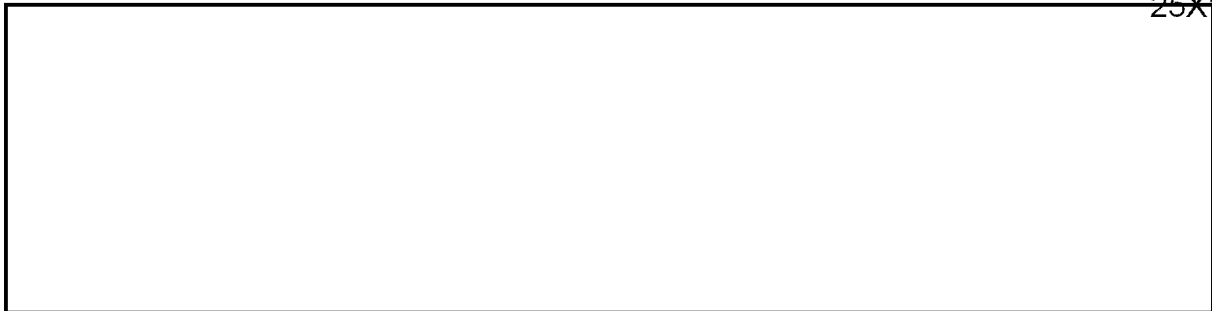
1. Our continuing analysis of Soviet activities in Afghanistan and at military bases in nearby areas of the USSR leads me to believe the Community should immediately produce a follow-up report to the 14 September Alert Memorandum. We believe the paper should convey explicit warning that the Soviets appear to be preparing to introduce sizable combat forces in to Iran and should assess the implications of such a move in the context of the overall situation throughout the Middle East and South Asia.

2. The only reporting we have seen on recent developments in Afghanistan has been limited to a description of the Soviet forces that have been moved to Afghanistan in the last week, a description of evidence that more may be about to be moved, and a statement that "we do not know whether this augmentation is intended only to upgrade defenses at Bagram or is indicative of a decision by the Soviets to increase their military commitment in Afghanistan substantially." We concede that we cannot rule out the possibility that the recent move is merely for improving security at Bagram. We believe, however, that the size of the force already moved to Bagram is inordinately large for this purpose, and that the amount of additional forces that appear to be preparing to move to Afghanistan indicate that something more than airfield security is in the offing. In any event, the totality of events indicative of a major Soviet military move in Afghanistan clearly merits stronger warning than has been given. The issue, as we see it, is not what has been introduced into Afghanistan, but what is likely to be introduced, probably in the next few days and why.

The Military Indications

Soviet Combat Units At Bagram

3. In the period from about 3 to 10 December the Soviets moved what appears to be two battalion-sized combat units to Bagram Airfield.



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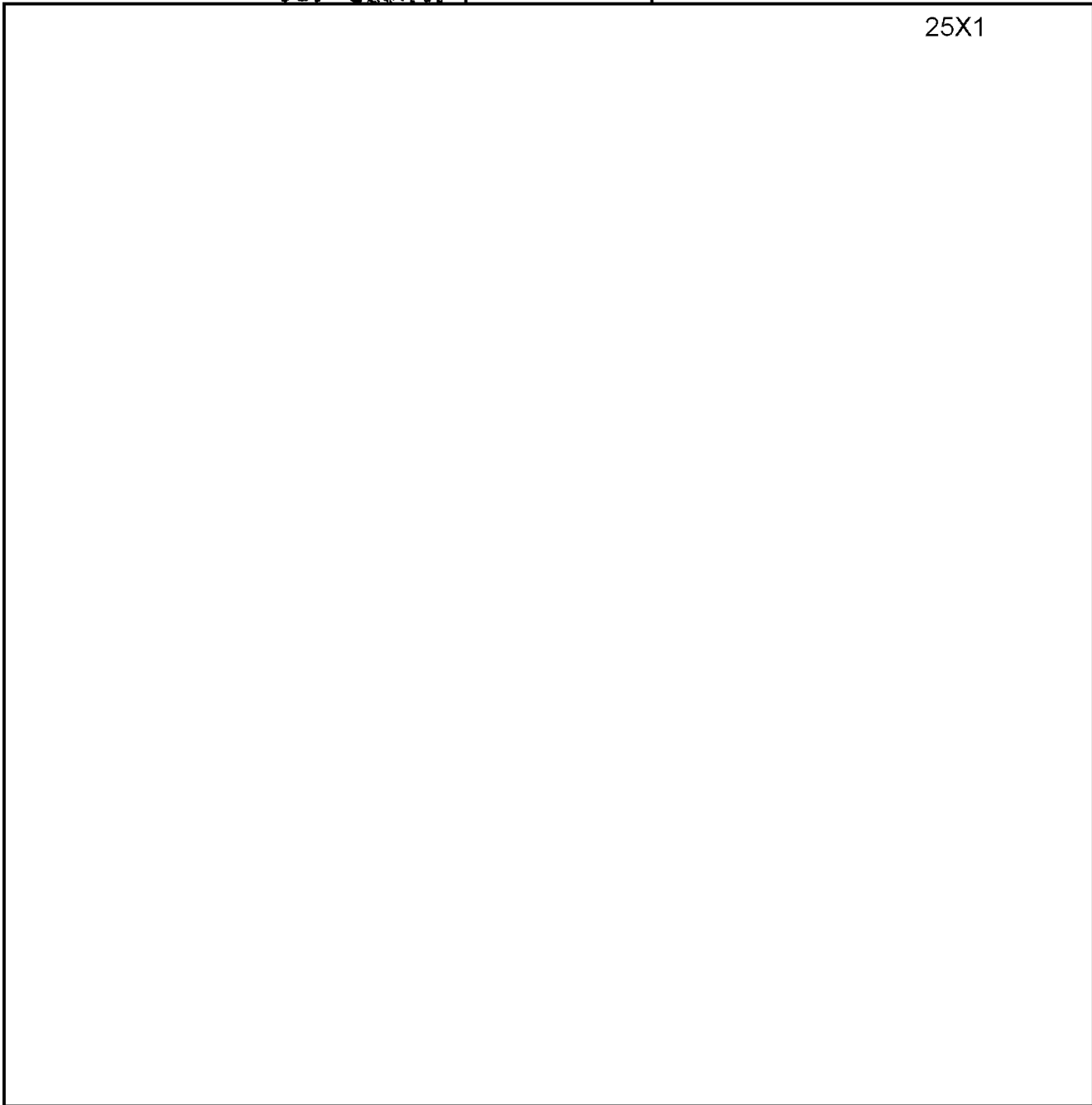
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Actions Possibly Related To Preparations To Secure A Movement Of Soviet Troops

11. One interpretation of the movement of the units to Bagram in recent days is that it is meant to insure the security of Soviet forces while they are in the vulnerable landing and debarking phases of their movement. We

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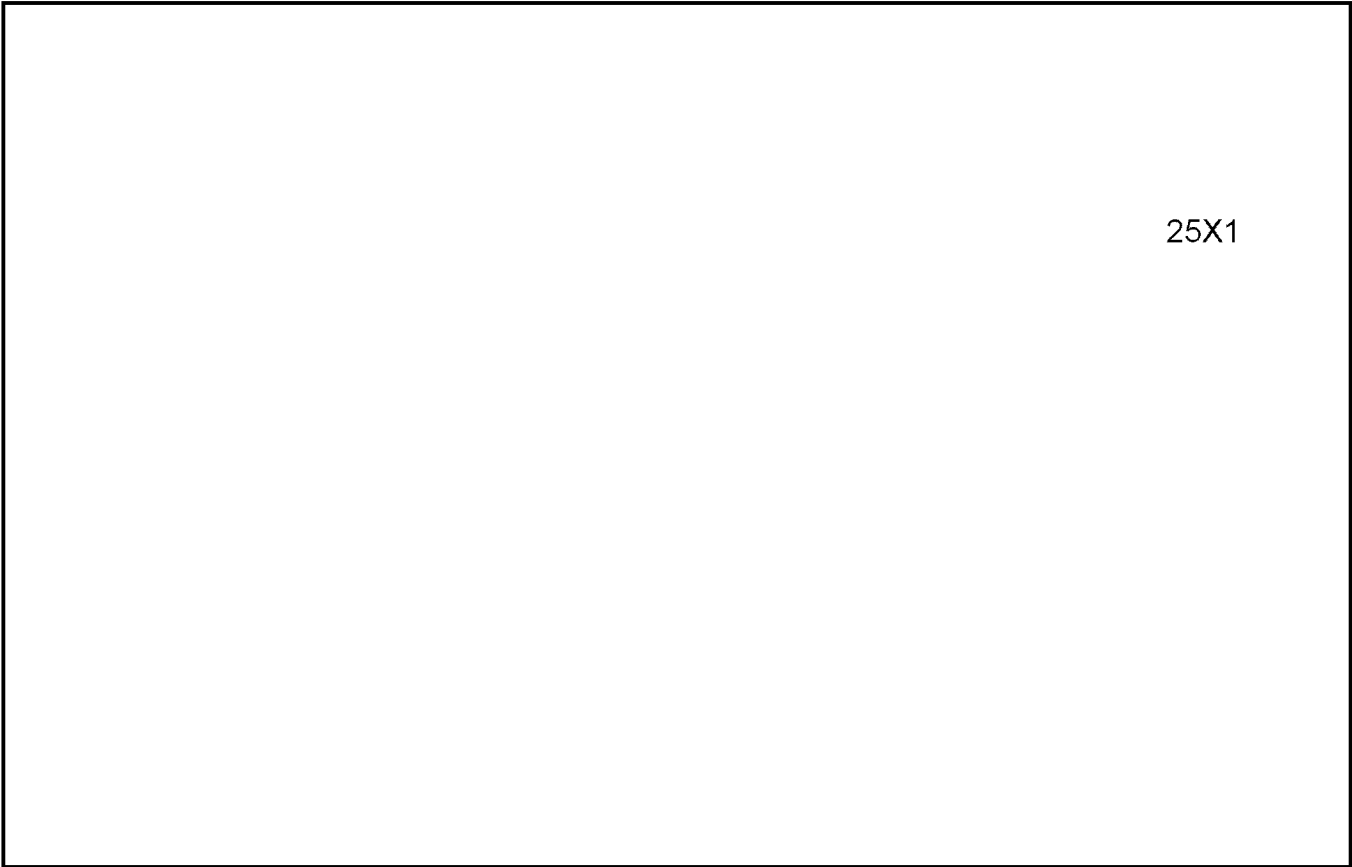
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have tenuous eviden that the Soviets may have take steps to insure the security and traffic capacity of other airfields.



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General

What we are seeing in implementation of plan, deliberate, step-by-step, for long term goals.

-- Does not bear marks of caution to turn of events, but steps as part of overall plan to deal with a situation which, without major change, could only continue to deteriorate.

Concern For Reaction Of Afghan Army

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