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NESA/SO/ [REDACTED] 7Dec820

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DCI WORLDVIEW BRIEFING: *Afghanistan*

- I. The Soviets can show little for three years of combat in Afghanistan.
- A. By the Afghan government's own estimates the insurgents fully control more than half the districts in the country.
- In another quarter, the government controls only the district capitals.
 - Insurgents are active even in the quarter of the country the government says it controls. (DISTRICT CONTROL GRAPHIC)
- B. Social, economic and political programs designed to win popular support for the communists have failed.
- II. The Soviets have too few men to deal effectively with the resistance.
- A. There are about 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan; we believe they need around half a million to make significant progress against the insurgents. (SOVIET OB MAP)
- B. They do not have the men to establish garrisons in most of the country.
- C. They have been unable to close borders with Iran and Pakistan.
- D. Attacks on road convoys are a major problem for the Soviets and account for the majority of their casualties.
- E. The Soviets receive little help from the 40,000-man Afghan Army--plagued with desertions and containing many insurgent sympathizers.
- III. We doubt that the leadership changes in Moscow will make much difference in Afghanistan.
- The cost in killed and wounded--less than 20,000--and in money--about \$10 billion in the past three years are tolerable. (SOVIET MONEY GRAPHIC)

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- The Soviets believe they would suffer a loss of prestige, if they were to let a communist government fall in a country bordering the USSR.
- They also don't want to forego the strategic advantages--such as greater influence in South Asia and the Gulf--that they would gain if Afghanistan were pacified.
- A small Soviet reinforcement is possible, but the likely international reaction, the difficulty of supplying a much larger force over Afghanistan's primitive road system, the greater economic costs, and reluctance to reduce forces in Eastern Europe or on the Chinese border make a massive augmentation unlikely.

IV. Reports indicate that some Soviets think they can win in Afghanistan by wearing down the insurgents.

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- A. In the past year, the Soviets have directed more of their military efforts at civilian supporters of the resistance--making mass arrests, bombing villages, and destroying crops.
- B. This seems to be aimed at breaking the morale of the people and splitting them from the insurgents.
- C. A few--5 or 10--of the hundreds of insurgent bands have given up because of such pressure, but even in areas where the Soviets have concentrated their anti-civilian activities almost everyone continues to resist and resistance morale remains high.

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