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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

10 March 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO 18-61 (Internal O/NE Working Paper-
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SUBJECT: "PUSHTUNISTAN"¹

1. The "Pushtunistan" quarrel between Pakistan and Afghanistan has smoldered ever since 1947.² This unlikely-sounding issue merits renewed attention at the moment for two reasons: (1) We believe that tensions have reached a point where there is about an even chance of substantial disturbances along the Pakistani-Afghan border in the current year, and (2) If a new flareup occurs, the US will probably be more directly involved than in the past.

2/ The quarrel centers on Afghanistan's insistence that the six million Pushtuns (Pathans) who live in Pakistan's North-West Frontier area, and who are of the same tribal group as the dominant element in Afghanistan, should be given an opportunity to opt for an independent state of "Pushtunistan."

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Prospects for a Clash

2. The "Pushtunistan" dispute has flared into small scale tribal fighting along the border several times in the past dozen years. Tension has grown rapidly during the last six months. Last fall a force of Afghan irregulars which entered Pakistan in support of dissident tribesmen was badly mauled by the Pakistanis, who took advantage of the disturbance to occupy the remote border area involved. Within the past month pro-Afghan tribal elements in an adjacent area have been bombed and strafed by the Pakistan Air Force.

3. There are clear indications that the Afghans plan to continue their agitation. Foreign Minister Naim (usually a moderate on the "Pushtunistan" issue) and his militant brother, Prime Minister Daud, have both made statements to this effect.

25X1

-2-

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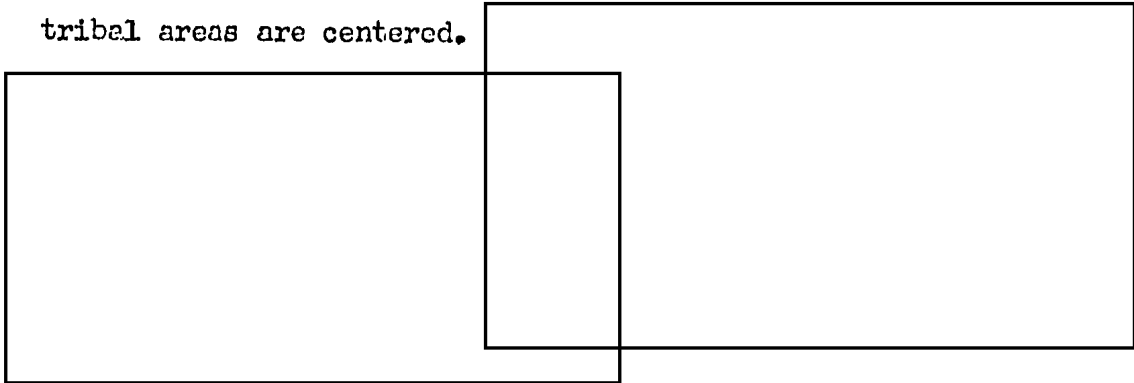
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4. Pakistani leaders, including President Ayub, have made no secret of their intention to hit back hard if the Afghans offer further provocation. Some of them have talked about occupying territory across the international boundary into Afghanistan in order to surround the border hills wherein the tribal areas are centered.

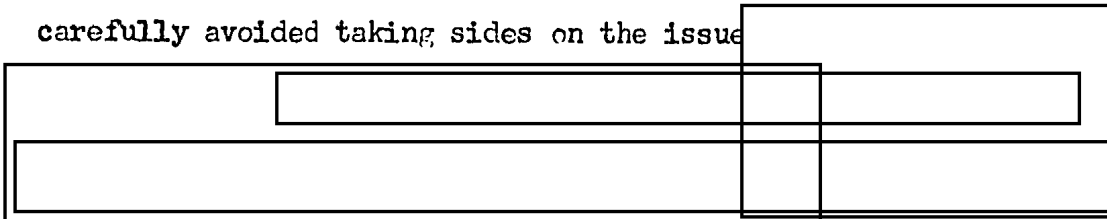
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International Implications

5. During the years that the "Pushtunistan" quarrel has dragged on, the US has expanded its relations with Pakistan while the USSR has come to have increasingly close ties with Afghanistan. Both the great powers have provided arms for the respective sides. The USSR has openly supported the Afghan position on "Pushtunistan." The US, on the other hand, has carefully avoided taking sides on the issue

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6. Additionally, the Afghans have condemned Pakistan's use of arms received under the US military assistance program against the dissident tribesmen. (The recent bombing attacks were carried out by F 86 Fs.) The Pakistanis can argue legitimately that they have a perfect right to use the MDAP weapons to maintain internal security or to repel aggression. The legal question would be less clear if they were to use the weapons in a countermove which violated the international boundary but this would be unlikely to deter Karachi in its present mood. The Afghans, whose main purpose is to inspire tribal warfare, will be reluctant to commit heavy equipment, but would almost certainly employ their Soviet-supplied aircraft and tanks as best they could in the event of a Pakistani raid into Afghanistan.

7. The US, through its ambassadors in Kabul and Karachi, has urged moderation on both sides, but there is little reason to believe that this will have much effect. Nor is any other way of preventing a clash immediately apparent. Afghanistan

-4-

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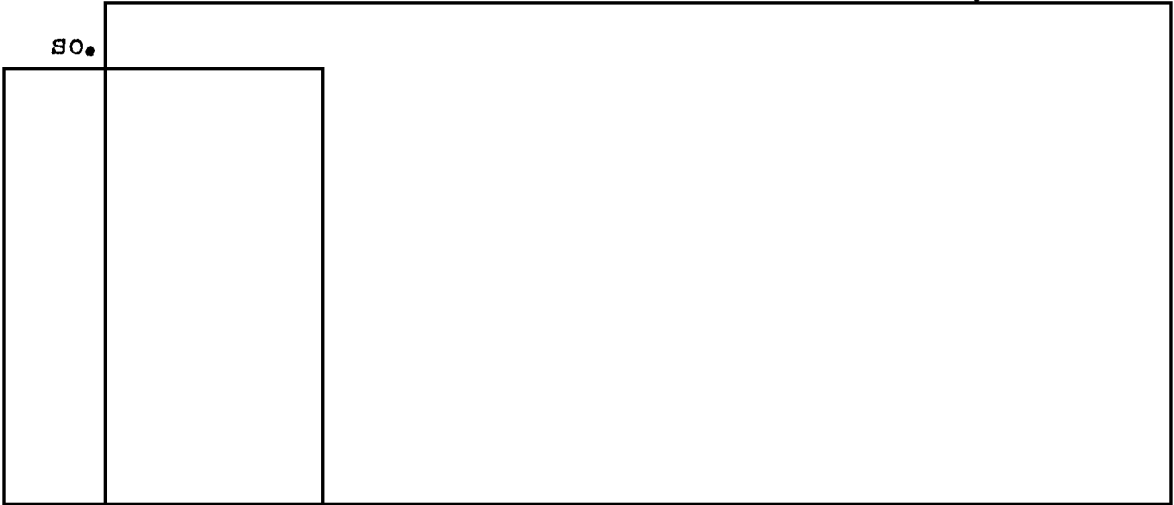
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has long wanted to get the "Pushtunistan" issue into the UN,
and would probably seize on any likely opportunity to try to do

so.

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-5-

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