

25 March 1985

NOTE FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : NSPG on Afghanistan

1. The purpose of this NSPG is to review a draft NSDD re US policy toward Afghanistan and hear various departments' and agencies' comments. (A copy of the NSDD is on the left side of this folder; the Agency has supported the draft as written.)

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2. Attached you will find the following:

TAB A Talking points from Fritz (partial)

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TAB B NESAs/DI sitrep re current situation in Afghanistan.

TAB C

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TAB D Memorandum from Fritz with some additional background on the NSDD and the NSPG.

TAB E

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TAB F Copy of your 16 March memorandum to Bud on Gorbachev's comments on Afghanistan, etc.

TAB G Copy of Monday's Washington Times front page article.

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State Dept. review completed

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25 March 1985

DCI TALKING POINTS FOR NSPG ON AFGHANISTAN POLICY

(RESPONSIVE TO ADMIRAL POINDEXTER'S QUESTIONS)

We believe the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan is stalemated for sure, and probably losing ground.

The resistance is growing in size and effectiveness.

Soviet casualties and equipment losses are increasing.

The territory over which the Soviet/Afghan government exercises control is shrinking.

Resistance activity is penetrating further into the cities.

Numerous sources show that the mid-level Soviet military perceive that they are not winning the conflict, and that their situation is deteriorating.

Why are the Soviets not winning in Afghanistan despite their overwhelming physical power and great desire to win?

Virtually the entire nation of Afghanistan is hostile to them.

To a degree greater than any other people the Soviets have sought to subjugate, the Afghans are willing to fight them, long and hard.

Traditionally warlike and armed, the Afghan resistance is increasingly better armed and skillful in fighting.

Local factors of terrain and the primitive, fragmented organization of the resistance make it hard for the Soviets to bring their kind of armed forces to bear.

National hostility to the Soviets and their quislings makes it very difficult for the Soviets to build any kind of political base or to broaden their social-political appeal

So far, the Soviets have been unwilling to make the massive resource and manpower commitment necessary -- in their own assessments -- to put the war on a winning path.

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Public reports to the contrary notwithstanding, the Soviets have not been willing nor had the resources to engage in truly nation-wide scorched-earth tactics to control the country by killing or driving out most of its people.

How serious are the threats that the Soviets are now making toward Zia, and otherwise?

[Shall get this to you tomorrow AM; need additional data]

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Afghanistan: Situation Update  
Talking Points for the DCI

Prepared by Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis  
25 March 1985

Soviet and Afghan operational activity will increase this spring, and the insurgents will renew their pressure on the capitol, major lines of communication, and Soviet and Afghan posts. Increases in guerrilla arms supplies and improved training and cooperation should help them deal with the small-scale Soviet troop increases observed to date.

Recent Insurgent Successes

Insurgent activity appears to be increasing as the weather improves. In eastern Afghanistan resistance forces continue to put heavy pressure on regime and Soviet units:

--On 11 March the guerrillas shot down a Soviet AN-30 turboprop reconnaissance aircraft near Bagram Airfield with a surface-to-air missile. [redacted] the Soviets are speeding up the installation of infrared countermeasures equipment on all fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters because of concern about increases in insurgent firings of surface-to-air missiles.

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-- Insurgents put so much pressure on an Afghan division at Asadabad in Konarha Province in early March that Soviet advisers said the entire division was in danger of being annihilated. The Soviets sent in a battalion to reinforce the Afghan unit, but insurgent pressure is continuing.

-- The insurgents captured at least three Afghan border posts in Nangarhar Province in mid-March.

-- [redacted] in the past week, the insurgents exploded three bombs in Soviet and regime shopping areas in Kabul. The bombings resulted in over 30 regime and Soviet casualties.

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-- Between 27 February and 10 March, the Soviets counted at least eleven incidents of fuel pipeline damage in western Afghanistan and as many as four attacks on the eastern pipeline on the first two days of March.

Increasing Soviet Interest in the Western Campaign

The Soviets have made a number of changes in the past few months to try to improve their counterinsurgency capabilities in the west:

[redacted] the Soviets have completed a new fuel pipeline to Shindand and increased their fuel storage capacity near Herat.

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-- The Soviets sent a new motorized rifle regiment from the USSR to Herat by late February, bringing the Soviet division stationed in western Afghanistan to full strength.

-- The Soviets have also brought in additional self-propelled artillery from the USSR, probably for a tank regiment at Shindand and have completed a new addition to a transshipment and storage facility.

### Operations in the East

The Soviets and Afghans have launched a number of operations in recent weeks in response to increases in insurgent activity in eastern Afghanistan:

-- Soviet and Afghan units mounted a large sweep near Qandahar, [redacted] the Soviets have had little success. Prior to the operation the regime controlled only about 20 percent of the city during the day and even less at night.

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[redacted] the Soviets launched a multibattalion operation in the Shomali area, north of Kabul, in mid-March. Early last week Soviet airborne units were preparing for another operation in the same area.

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-- On 10 March Soviet and Afghan forces began a large operation in Nangarhar Province. Soviet units also swept the Ali Khel area in Paktia Province but encountered little resistance and were unsuccessful in finding the insurgent ammunition depot for which they were searching.

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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #01612-85  
25 March 1985

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

THROUGH: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: Fritz W. Ermarth  
National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: NSPG on Afghanistan

1. Following our conversation on Saturday morning, I've checked with the NSC staff about the agenda for the NSPG meeting on Tuesday 26 March, and have been told that the draft NSDD on policy toward Afghanistan is the main topic. I've also reviewed the draft NSDD and find it, on the whole, a good and actionable statement of policy.

Some critics might argue that it should identify the point at which the risks and costs to us, as posed, say, by Soviet escalation against Pakistan, should cause us to shrink back. I believe we should not get into the business of setting hypothetical limits on our own goals and measures now because, compared with what the Soviets are doing, we are doing very little. If the actual threat of Soviet escalation should rise, we shall see it and be able to react.

The NSDD might have been a bit stronger on "bringing the news of the war home to the Soviet people," but this is strong enough to guide important political action and propaganda policies.

2. The question arises as to what this NSDD argues we should be doing differently than we have been doing, especially on the political and diplomatic fronts.

Mostly, it is a basis for continuing the present course of increasing support to the resistance. It also provides the policy basis for escalating if the Soviets do.

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I believe it is worth considering a more forceful representation to the Soviets of our view of Afghanistan, along the lines of the "Policy Implications" paper I gave you last weekend (attached).

3. As useful background prior to the NSPG, also attached is an Embassy Moscow cable which reinforces our view of the current Soviet commitment to eventual victory, rejection of retreat options, and conviction that popular passivity is important in Moscow's ability to stay the course. The last factor is extremely important. The Soviet strategy really counts on it. Therefore we must do everything we can to make it less reliable.

Increasing the cost of the war by increasing the effectiveness of the resistance is one necessary path.

4. But we must also increase the

[Redacted]

efforts to bring home the news and the pain.

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Fritz W. Ermarth

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Policy Implications

- These Soviet probes will cause nervousness and perhaps ill-founded interest in the payoff of "restraint" on the US side, particularly in Congress. One would hope that some weak-kneed comments will be countered by strong ones from the Administration and others on the Hill.

- We must keep going on the program. Now would be the worst possible time to ease off!

-- The Soviets are feeling the heat and must continue to.

-- The odds of some sort of escalation by them are high, but not catastrophic, because the most likely form is more of the same.

-- The chances that things will break in the direction of some sort of Soviet retreat are not trivial; they're good enough for us to keep the pressure on.

-- Meanwhile, the objectives of making them pay a high price and denying them victory remain sound and very feasible.

-- US hesitation or retreat now would hurt us with everybody whose perception of us is important, including the Soviets.

- The time may be approaching for some additional diplomatic initiative, however.

- Especially now it is important to get the Soviets to understand how important Afghanistan is to us.

-- We may have rather underplayed it in high-level contacts during the past year.

-- One has the sense that the Soviets perceive our motives as  
(a) we're trying to take a cheap shot at them in retaliation for the growth of their power over the last 15 years, and  
(b) displaying a potentially fickle ideological pique at them.

- They may not take our strategic and geopolitical interest seriously enough. They perceive it themselves, but rarely hear the US talking about it. We typically criticize them in moralistic terms, which they don't respect.
- At a private but high diplomatic level we should get across the following messages, and try to get the Chinese to reinforce what they can:
  - US interests and the security of the neighborhood cannot tolerate a Soviet victory in Afghanistan.
  - This is because the Soviet invasion and the people's war it precipitated have all but destroyed options for moderate political solutions.
  - Soviet success in suppressing the resistance and consolidating control would inevitably mean:
    - A satellite government in Kabul.
    - A large and indefinitely protracted Soviet military occupation of the country; otherwise the Kabul government would collapse.
    - The buildup of a Soviet military infrastructure in Afghanistan which would markedly raise the Soviet threat to the region (bases, pipelines, etc.).
    - But, given the nature of the terrain and the people, resistance activity across the borders would go on indefinitely which would constantly give the Soviets motives and pretexts to attack Pakistan and Iran from a stronger base.

- We are not going to accept this future under the guise of a "political resolution," and we don't have to.
- The only alternative to a continuing and possibly wider war is for the USSR to recognize--as many of its officials do-- that it made a big mistake and to signal its firm intentions to pull out, not matter what happens to the Kabul regime.
- Then various means can be found to make the Soviet pullout reasonably smooth.

- In addition to more blunt talk at the private diplomatic level, we might give some thought to the idea of an international conference on Afghanistan to include:

- The Soviets
- The DRA
- Representatives of the Mujahedin
- Pakistan
- India
- Iran
- China
- Saudi Arabia representing the Islamic World
- The US

- What we'd aim for is the kind of "peace process" that eventually got us out of Vietnam. To achieve this we'd have to maintain military heat on the Soviets and some political discipline among their adversaries.

- The Soviets would probably reject this because it would put them at a big disadvantage politically.



-- The danger would be, however, that they'd accept it and, as in arms control, try to persuade Congress to cut aid to the resistance, to "encourage progress," and also try to split their opponents.

- But it's worth a thought. The time is approaching when we have to come up with some "theory of the outcome" other than eventual Soviet victory.

The only one I can think of in practical terms is:

-- The Soviets decide they have to pull out and look for the best deal.

-- They concentrate on holding the cities and their LOCs.

-- They start removing their most valued communist allies to the USSR.

-- They put up a non-communist "reconciliation" government in Kabul which tries to negotiate ceasefires and a political settlement.

-- They try to get the US and Pakistan to stop aiding the rebels, but fail.

-- While continuing to put military pressure on them, the resistance lets the Soviets gradually pull out in good order.

- There are all manners of thing that make this scenario unworkable or implausible.

- Yet I can think of no persuasive alternative other than a war that goes on, a war that escalates to something much bigger which we could not stay out of, or eventual Soviet victory with all the global and regional consequences we must not and need not accept.

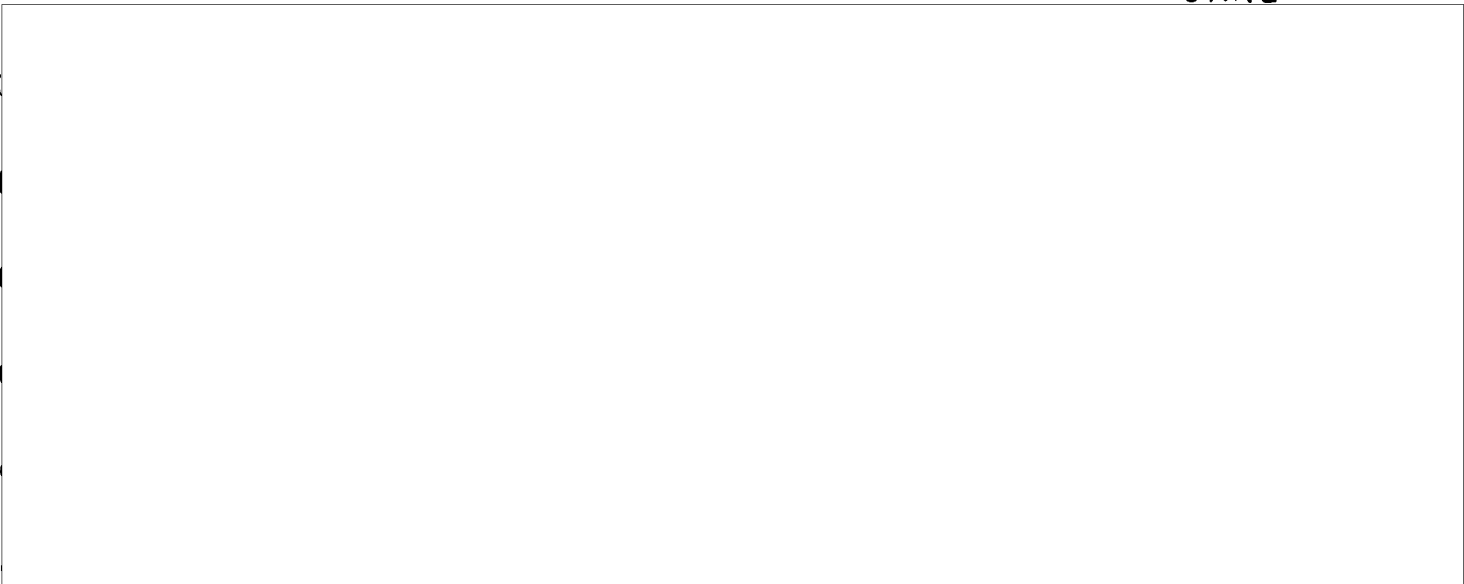
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 03646

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PREL, AF, UR  
SUBJECT: SOVIET ATTITUDES ON AFGHANISTAN; HOLDING  
-- STEADY AS GORBACHEV TAKES OVER

REF: MOSCOW 3241 (NOTAL)

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY: EMBOFF RECENTLY HAD TWO UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSESS SOVIET ATTITUDES ON THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN. THE FIRST WAS A CONVERSATION WITH ORIENTAL INSTITUTE SPECIALIST YURIY VLADIMIROVICH GANKOVSKIY. THE SECOND WAS A VISIT TO AN UNUSUAL, OFFICIALLY-SPONSORED EXHIBIT OF PAINTINGS DEPICTING THE STRUGGLE IN AFGHANISTAN. BOTH EXPERIENCES CONFIRMED OUR IMPRESSION OF A HIGH DEGREE OF CONTINUITY IN SOVIET ATTITUDES ON THE WAR. WHILE THERE IS LITTLE OVERT POPULAR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE WAR, THE REGIME CAN DOUBTLESS CONTINUE TO COUNT ON THE PATRIOTISM AND POLITICAL PASSIVITY OF MOST SOVIET CITIZENS. ALTHOUGH A TURNING POINT IS NOT YET IN SIGHT, SOVIET COSTS ARE MANAGEABLE AND IT REMAINS PLAUSIBLE TO ARGUE THAT TIME IS ON MOSCOW'S SIDE. FACED WITH THE ALTERNATIVES OF MASSIVE ESCALATION OR IGNOMINIOUS WITHDRAWAL, MOST POLITICALLY LITERATE SOVIETS SEEM PREPARED TO STAY WITH THE CURRENT COURSE: SUSTAINED MILITARY PRESSURE COMBINED WITH A LONG-TERM EFFORT TO BUILD SOVIET-STYLE AFGHAN INSTITUTIONS.

3. THE ONE NEW FACTOR IN THE AFGHANISTAN EQUATION IS GORBACHEV'S ACCESSION TO THE GENERAL SECRETARYSHIP. WE SEE NO EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS NOW PREPARED TO SET A NEW COURSE IN AFGHANISTAN. MOREOVER, THERE ARE NO INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL PRESSURES POWERFUL ENOUGH TO FORCE THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S HAND ON THIS ISSUE IN

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THE INITIAL STAGE OF HIS TENURE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER GORBACHEV'S REPUTED IMPATIENCE WITH TEMPORIZING AND IMMOBILISM WILL AT SOME FUTURE POINT DICTATE A DECISIVE SHIFT IN MOSCOW'S AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY. END SUMMARY.

4. EMBOFF RECENTLY CALLED AT MOSCOW'S PRESTIGIOUS ORIENTAL INSTITUTE TO DISCUSS AFGHANISTAN WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE'S DEPARTMENT FOR AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, AND IRAN YURIY VLADIMIROVICH GANKOVSKIY. ALTHOUGH GANKOVSKIY HAS IN THE PAST BEEN A WILLING AND INTERESTING INTERLOCUTOR FOR EMBASSY MOSCOW EMBOFFS, WE HAD NOT SEEN HIM IN MORE THAN A YEAR BECAUSE OF A GENERAL TIGHTENING ON CONTACTS WITH THE EMBASSY REPORTEDLY IMPOSED BY INSTITUTE DIRECTOR PRIMAKOV. HAVING AT LAST AGREED TO AN APPOINTMENT, GANKOVSKIY RECEIVED EMBOFF CORDIALLY AND SEEMED GENUINELY TO APPRECIATE RECEIVING GREETINGS FROM EMBASSY MOSCOW ALUMNI AND OTHER LONG-TIME FRIENDS IN THE US. GANKOVSKIY ASKED THAT HIS COMMENTS ON AFGHANISTAN BE KEPT "BETWEEN US," AND WE URGE THAT HE BE STRICTLY PROTECTED AS THE SOURCE OF THIS MATERIAL.

GANKOVSKIY ON AFGHANISTAN

INTERVENTION MAY HAVE BEEN ILL-CONSIDERED...

5. AFTER INITIAL PLEASANTRIES, GANKOVSKIY TURNED TO AFGHANISTAN AND APPEARED TO WARM QUICKLY TO HIS SUBJECT. HE ASSERTED THAT THOSE IN THE WEST WHO SAW EVENTS SINCE THE APRIL 1978 COUP AS A SOVIET-INSPIRED EFFORT TO INSTALL A COMMUNIST REGIME IN KABUL HAD MISREAD THE

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TAGS: PREL, AF, UR  
SUBJECT: SOVIET ATTITUDES ON AFGHANISTAN; HOLDING

SITUATION. ACCORDING TO GANKOVSKIY, SO LITTLE WAS KNOWN IN MOSCOW ABOUT TARAKI AND AMIN, THAT, WHEN THE COUP OCCURRED, FRIENDS IN MFA TELEPHONED HIM URGENTLY TO FIND OUT WHO THE NEW LEADERS WERE. AS AN EXPERT ON

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AFGHAN POLITICS, GANKOVSKIY KNEW BOTH TAPAKI AND AMIN AND DISCOUNTED ENTIRELY THEIR MARXIST PRETENSIONS. ACCORDING TO GANKOVSKIY, NEITHER OF THESE LUMINARIES COULD HAVE PASSED AN ELEMENTARY EXAMINATION ON SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY, AND THEIR MAIN POLITICAL ATTRIBUTES WERE STRONG PUSHTUN NATIONALISM AND A LARGE MEASURE OF PERSONAL OPPORTUNISM.

6. GANKOVSKIY MADE NO SECRET OF HIS CONVICTION THAT THE NEW "REVOLUTIONARY" REGIME HAD FROM THE BEGINNING PURSUED A DISASTROUS COURSE OF REPRESSION AND PSEUDO-SOCIALIST SCHEMES FOR OVERNIGHT TRANSFORMATION OF AFGHAN SOCIETY. IN GANKOVSKIY'S VIEW, THESE ILL-ADVISED POLICIES HAD SUCCEEDED ONLY IN CREATING FOR THE FIRST TIME A LARGE-SCALE FOLLOWING FOR THOSE REACTIONARY, ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST LEADERS WHO NOW DIRECT "EXTERNAL INTERVENTION" AGAINST AFGHANISTAN FROM THEIR SANCTUARY IN PESHAWAR. BY MID-1979, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WAS FACED WITH MAJOR UNCERTAINTIES ALONG THOUSANDS OF MILES OF ITS SOUTHERN BORDER AS AFGHANISTAN LURCHED TOWARD A VIRTUAL CIVIL WAR AND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION BEGAN ITS UNPREDICTABLE COURSE. ACCORDING TO GANKOVSKIY, THE OLD MEN IN THE KREMLIN FOUND THIS UNCERTAINTY INTOLERABLE AND ULTIMATELY DECIDED TO INTERVENE ON THE SIDE OF THE AFGHAN FACTION WHICH AT LEAST CLAIMED AN IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY FOR THE SOVIET UNION. IMPLICIT IN GANKOVSKIY'S VERSION OF THESE OFTEN-ANALYZED EVENTS IS THE NOTION THAT SOVIET LEADERS HAD LITTLE APPRECIATION OF THE THICKET THEY WERE PLUNGING INTO AS SOVIET FORCES LANDED IN KABUL.

(COMMENT: GANKOVSKIY'S DOWNPLAYING OF SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY AS A FACTOR IN MOSCOW'S DECISION TO INTERVENE IS BOTH UNUSUAL FOR A WELL-PLACED SOVIET ACADEMIC AND OPEN TO CHALLENGE ON HISTORICAL GROUNDS. IT IS HIS READINESS TO STATE HIS UNORTHODOX VIEWS BLUNTLY THAT MAKES GANKOVSKIY AN INTERESTING AND VALUABLE INTERLOCUTOR ON THIS SUBJECT. WE REPORT HIS VERSION OF AN OLD STORY BECAUSE IT SETS THE STAGE FOR HIS ANALYSIS OF MOSCOW'S CURRENT DILEMMA IN AFGHANISTAN. END COMMENT)

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...BUT "THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY"

7. WHETHER OR NOT INTERVENTION HAD BEEN THE BEST COURSE IN 1979, GANKOVSKIY ASSERTED THAT AFTER FIVE YEARS OF WAR, MOSCOW HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO PERSEVERE IN THE EFFORT TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES. GANKOVSKIY NOTED THAT IN SUCH THIRD WORLD CONFLICTS, GREAT POWERS CANNOT ACCEPT DEFEAT WITH IMPUNITY, NOR ARE THEY OFTEN FORCED BY EXTERNAL PRESSURES TO THROW IN THE TOWEL. POINTING TO THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE IN ALGERIA, GANKOVSKIY ASSERTED THAT IT WAS EROSION OF WILL WITHIN FRANCE, NOT EXTERNAL PRESSURE, WHICH FORCED PARIS TO WITHDRAW. IT WAS MUCH LESS LIKELY THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD, EVEN IMPLICITLY, ACKNOWLEDGE DEFEAT IN AFGHANISTAN, GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF ANY SUBSTANTIAL INTERNAL PRESSURE FOR WITHDRAWAL AND THE WELL-KNOWN FORTITUDE OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE. AS TO AFGHANISTAN'S FUTURE, GANKOVSKIY SAID THAT FOR A PERIOD FOLLOWING THE 1978 COUP, IT

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MIGHT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE TO MOVE TOWARD "FINLANDIZATION" OF KABUL'S RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. AFTER FIVE YEARS OF WAR, THE ONLY OPTION NOW AVAILABLE TO AFGHANISTAN IS "MONGOLIZATION."

8. EMBOFF RESPONDED WITH TWO QUESTIONS. HOW COULD ONE SPEAK OF "MONGOLIZATION" OF AFGHANISTAN GIVEN ITS TRADITION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE STRENGTH OF THE RESISTANCE ON THE BATTLEFIELD? SECOND, WAS IT NOT POSSIBLE THAT OUT OF THE CURRENT STRUGGLE, THERE MIGHT EMERGE NEW AFGHAN LEADERS WHO COULD MORE SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION THAN THOSE ALREADY ON THE SCENE? GANKOVSKIY ANSWERED THE SECOND QUESTION FIRST. THERE WAS NO USE IN SPEAKING OF POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES TO THE DRA; THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NEVER AGREE TO TURN OVER POWER TO THE CROWD IN PESHAWAR AND NO OTHER ALTERNATIVES

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WERE IN SIGHT. AS TO A SOVIET STRATEGY FOR THE "MONGOLIZATION" OF AFGHANISTAN, GANKOVSKIY CLAIMED (AS HE HAD IN MEETINGS WITH EMBOFFS MORE THAN A YEAR AGO) THAT MOSCOW RETAINED THE OPTION OF SEALING THE PAK/AFGHAN BORDER BY FIELDING A FORCE OF A HALF-MILLION SOVIET TROOPS, AS IF TO DISCOUNT THE MILITARY OPTION HE HAD JUST RAISED, GANKOVSKIY SAID THAT THE REAL WORK OF PACIFYING AFGHANISTAN WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH A SLOW BUT STEADY STRENGTHENING OF SOVIET-STYLE AFGHAN INSTITUTIONS. THIS, COMBINED WITH A PROPER SOCIALIST EDUCATION FOR YOUNGER AFGHANS, MANY OF WHOM WERE ALREADY STUDYING IN THE SOVIET UNION, WOULD EVENTUALLY TURN THE TIDE. IMPLICIT IN GANKOVSKIY'S LINE WAS THE NOTION THAT, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS IMPORTANCE OF THE MILITARY DIMENSION, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD IN THE END HAVE TO WIN A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL VICTORY IN AFGHANISTAN.

ART ON AFGHANISTAN: "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED"

9. MANY OF GANKOVSKIY'S THEMES ARE GRAPHICALLY PRESENTED TO A WIDER AUDIENCE IN AN UNUSUAL MOSCOW EXHIBIT OF PAINTINGS ON THE STRUGGLE IN AFGHANISTAN. THE EXHIBIT IS TUCKED AWAY IN ONE ALCOVE OF AN ENORMOUS COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II DISPLAYED IN THE BARN-LIKE MANEZH HALL ADJACENT TO THE KREMLIN. THE THOUSANDS OF PAINTINGS, POSTERS, AND MEMORABILIA OF THE SOVIET UNION'S "GOOD WAR" PREDICTABLY, BUT ALSO POWERFULLY, EVOKE THE IMAGES OF HEROISM, SACRIFICE, AND THE HORROR OF WAR WHICH DOMINATE SOVIET POPULAR ATTITUDES ON WORLD WAR II.

(\*)

TEN TO FIFTEEN PAINTINGS ON AFGHANISTAN ARE DIFFERENT. THERE ARE NO PORTRAYALS OF COMBAT, AND THE ONLY TWO PAINTINGS WHICH ACTUALLY DEPICT SOVIET SOLDIERS IN AFGHANISTAN SHOW THEM AS DISTANT, HAZY FIGURES AGAINST THE MOUNTAINOUS DESERT BACKDROP OF CENTRAL ASIA. ONE OF THE TWO PAINTINGS, A PORTRAYAL OF A BARELY DISCERNIBLE COLUMN OF SOVIET MILITARY VEHICLES DRAWN UP IN A SUNRISE OR SUNSET FORMATION, IS TITLED

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"MISSION ACCOMPLISHED" (PRIKAZ VPOLNEN). THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE GENERAL THEME OF THOSE PAINTINGS WHICH DEPICTED THE SOVIET MILITARY ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN, INCLUDING THE PORTRAIT OF A "HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION" CAREFULLY PLACED AT THE CENTER OF THE SMALL EXHIBIT.

11. THE PAINTINGS OF AFGHANS IN THE EXHIBIT LOOKED

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AS IF THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY GANKOVSKIY TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POINT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR COUNTRY. IN ONE, A GROUP OF AFGHAN YOUTHS PARADE UNDER A SEA OF RED BANNERS OBVIOUSLY EXTOLLING THE VIRTUES OF THE NEW ORDER IN KABUL. OTHER VIEWS OF YOUNG AFGHANS SHOW THEM WORKING OR STUDYING WITH LITTLE HINT THAT THEY LIVE IN A COUNTRY AT WAR; IN ONE PORTRAIT, A YOUNG AFGHAN ARMY OFFICER IS EVEN SHOWN AT LEISURE IN CIVILIAN DRESS. PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING, IF ARTISTICALLY ORDINARY, PAINTING IN THE EXHIBIT DEPICTS AN AFGHAN BAZAAR THROUGH WHICH A LINE OF DOWNCAST MUJAHADIN MOVES UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF A SINGLE DRA SOLDIER. THE AFGHAN SOLDIER, WITH RIFLE (MUZZLE DOWN) AT SLING ARMS, WATCHES AS EACH MUJAHADIN LAYS DOWN HIS RIFLE, OR ROCKET LAUNCHER, OR GRENADES ON A GROWING PILE OF WEAPONS OF OBVIOUSLY FOREIGN MANUFACTURE. THE PORTRAYAL OF THIS SIMPLE SURRENDER CEREMONY IS NOT SURPRISINGLY TITLED "TRANSFORMATION (PREVRASHCHENYE) IN AFGHANISTAN."

12. SOVIET VISITORS APPEARED TO ACCEPT WITH EQUANIMITY THE INCLUSION OF PAINTINGS ON AFGHANISTAN IN AN EXHIBIT DEVOTED TO THE SOVIET VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II. AT THE SAME TIME, FEW SOVIETS LINGERED IN THIS ALCOVE, AND EVEN THE MANY UNIFORMED MILITARY VISITORS SEEMED TO TAKE ONLY PASSING INTEREST IN THOSE FEW PAINTINGS WHICH ACTUALLY PORTRAYED SOVIET SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD. UNLIKE THE SCENES OFTEN REPEATED ELSEWHERE IN THE EXHIBIT, OLDER VISITORS RARELY PUT THEIR ARMS AROUND CHILDREN TO EXPLAIN TO THEM THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AFGHANISTAN

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PAINTINGS. WHILE REVERENT TONES AND HUSHED CONVERSATIONS PREVAILED THROUGHOUT THE MASSIVE EXHIBIT HALL, VISITORS TO THE AFGHAN ALCOVE SEEMED UNIMPRESSED BY THE EVIDENCE THAT FORTY YEARS AFTER V-E DAY, THE SOVIET UNION IS AGAIN AT WAR.

COMMENT

13. THESE TWO VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES UNDERSCORE OUR IMPRESSION OF A HIGH DEGREE OF CONTINUITY IN SOVIET ATTITUDES ON AFGHANISTAN. DESPITE THE HIGHER MEDIA PROFILE GIVEN THE CONFLICT OVER THE PAST YEAR, THERE STILL SEEMS TO BE LITTLE POPULAR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE WAR. AT THE SAME TIME, MOST SOVIETS -- WHETHER SCHOLARS LIKE GANKOVSKIY OR LESS SOPHISTICATED VISITORS TO THE MANEZH EXHIBIT -- APPEAR TO TAKE FOR GRANTED THE KREMLIN'S DETERMINATION TO PERSEVERE UNTIL "VICTORY" IS WON. GIVEN THE RELATIVELY LOW NUMBER OF SOVIET CASUALTIES THUS FAR, WE BELIEVE THAT THE REGIME CAN CONTINUE TO COUNT ON THE PATRIOTISM AND POLITICAL PASSIVITY OF MOST SOVIET CITIZENS TO COMPENSATE FOR THEIR LACK OF OVERT COMMITMENT TO THE WAR EFFORT.

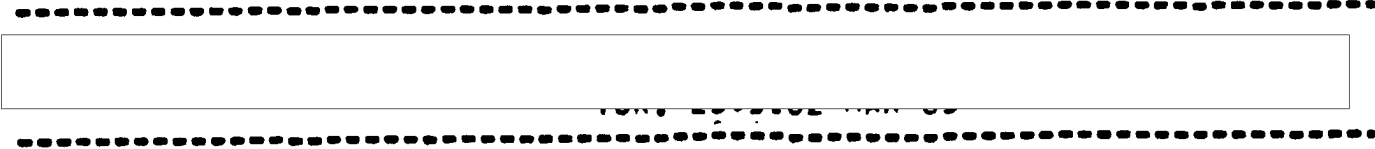
14. DESPITE RECENT SIGNS OF GROWING SOVIET FRUSTRATION OVER AFGHANISTAN, GANKOVSKIY'S LINE ALMOST CERTAINLY REMAINS THE PREVAILING WISDOM AMONG POLITICALLY ACTIVE SOVIETS. ALTHOUGH A TURNING POINT IN THE WAR IS NOT YET IN SIGHT, SOVIET COSTS ARE MANAGEABLE AND IT REMAINS POSSIBLE PLAUSIBLY TO ARGUE THAT TIME IS ON MOSCOW'S SIDE. IN ANY EVENT, WITHDRAWAL NOW WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO A RESUMPTION OF THE INSTABILITY WHICH, IN GANKOVSKIY'S VIEW, DREW MOSCOW INTO THE WAR IN THE FIRST PLACE. WHILE WE THINK IT PLAUSIBLE THAT THERE ARE ADHERENTS OF A NEW ALL-OUT EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PKEL, AF, UR  
SUBJECT: SOVIET ATTITUDES ON AFGHANISTAN: HOLDING  
MILITARY VICTORY IN THE SOVIET ESTABLISHMENT, PARTICULARLY

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AMONG THE MILITARY, THE POTENTIAL RISKS AND COSTS OF SUCH A STRATEGY PROBABLY STILL APPEAR PROHIBITIVE TO MOST SEGMENTS OF THE SOVIET ELITE. FACED WITH THESE UNPLEASANT ALTERNATIVES, MOST POLITICALLY LITERATE SOVIETS WOULD, LIKE GANKOVSKIY, TEMPORIZE BY COMBINING MILITARY PRESSURE WITH A LONG-TERM EFFORT TO BUILD UP SOVIET-STYLE AFGHAN INSTITUTIONS.

15. THE ONE NEW FACTOR IN THE AFGHANISIAN EQUATION IS, OF COURSE, GORBACHEV'S ACCESSION TO THE GENERAL SECRETARYSHIP. WITH APOLOGIES TO WINSTON CHURCHILL, WE THINK IT INCUNCEIVABLE THAT GORBACHEV SEES HIMSELF AS HAVING BECOME GENERAL SECRETARY TO PRESIDE OVER A SOVIET DEBACLE IN AFGHANISTAN. THAT SAID, DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED IS NOT A POLICY, AND GORBACHEV MAY AT SOME POINT DECIDE THAT A REVIEW OF SOVIET OPTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN IS NECESSARY. FOR THE PRESENT, HOWEVER, WE SEE NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT GORBACHEV IS PREPARED TO SET A NEW DIRECTION OR EVEN TO MOVE THE AFGHANISTAN ISSUE TO THE TOP OF AN ALREADY CROWDED FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA. MOREOVER, WE SEE NO INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL PRESSURES POWERFUL ENOUGH TO FORCE THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S HAND ON AFGHANISTAN DURING THE INITIAL STAGE OF HIS TENURE. IN VIEW OF THESE FACTORS, IT MUST FOR THE PRESENT REMAIN AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER GORBACHEV'S REPUTED IMPATIENCE WITH TEMPORIZING AND IMMOBILISM WILL AT SOME FUTURE POINT DICTATE A DECISIVE SHIFT IN MUSCOW'S AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY. HARTMAN

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16 March 1985.

The Honorable Robert C. McFarlane  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Bud,

I think this interpretation of Gorbachev's  
comments on Afghanistan at the funeral, together  
with Gromyko's discussions with the French Foreign  
Minister and Zia's reaction to all this, may be  
of interest to the President.

Yours,

/s/

William J. Casey

Enclosure

Soviet Stance on Afghanistan a la Gorbachev

- According to TASS, Gorbachev took a hard line with Zia on Afghanistan, charging aggressive acts against the DRA and stressing "most unfavorable effect" on Soviet-Pakistan relations.

- The Washington Post carries this story coupled with insinuations from Soviet officials to Dusko Doder that the Soviets might "link" Afghanistan and Nicaragua.

-- If the US goes after Nicaragua, the Soviets could, supposedly, go after Pakistan by arming the Baluch and otherwise trying to destabilize Zia's regime.

- Zia characterized the meeting publicly as "pleasant and businesslike," focused on Afghanistan, and including agreement that a "political solution" through the UN indirect talks must be found.

Further Relevant Information

- The Soviets did not raise Afghanistan with the Vice President. He alluded to it in a passing list of regional issues, but Gorbachev did not respond.

- What we have on other Gorbachev meetings with Western delegations shows little or no attention to Afghanistan.

-- Gromyko did discuss it with French Foreign Minister Dumas. He took a "hard line," said Moscow intervened reluctantly at DRA request, and would remain until stability is restored.

- There wasn't much discussion of Afghanistan when Shcherbitskiy was here. But what there was displayed a defensive, frustrated mood.

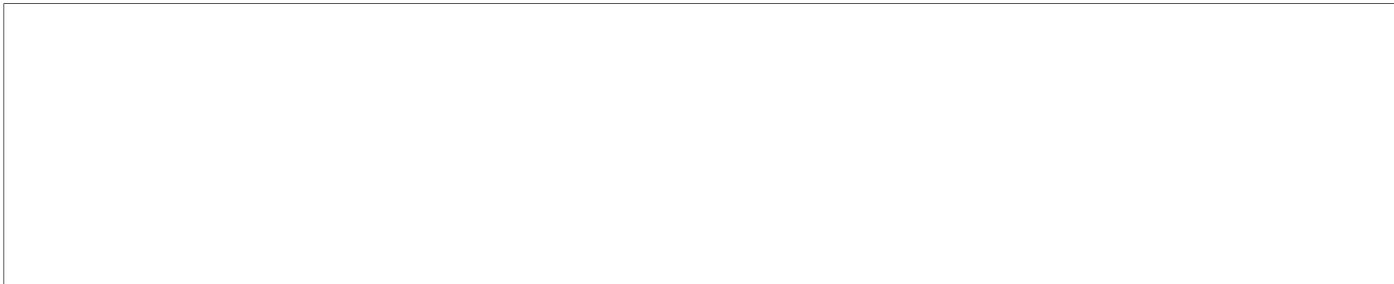
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-- In response to the President's challenge, Shcherbitskiy repeated the line that the Soviets intervened reluctantly.

-- In conjunction with Soviet charges about the US in Grenada, Shcherbitskiy said Afghanistan is a "more difficult" military problem.

-- On the margins of another discussion, General Cherov (The General Staff man on arms control) muttered that Afghanistan was the USSR's biggest post-war mistake.

- Zia's public comments on the Soviet pitch suggests he wasn't much rattled.



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### Interpretation

- The Soviets have raised the rhetorical ante, but not too dramatically. The charges are familiar. Note they don't go to the point, as some diplomatic messages have, of characterizing Pak actions as attacks on the USSR and its forces.

- The most important thing is that, while just short of a public speech, Gorbachev has personally and publicly associated himself now with the Soviet strategy and policy in Afghanistan.

- This is probably the opening of a somewhat more vigorous political/propaganda effort to spook Zia and the US. Even this the Soviets want to apply cautiously, however, listening for what resonance they get before trying more.



- The "linkage" to Nicaragua is a bit surprising only in how long it's taken them to get to this point.
- But the "threat" seems somewhat hollow.
  - Arming Baluch groups and seeking to destabilize Zia are options for which the Soviets have had strong motives all along, but weak practical means of effecting and controlling. They can't just turn this on at will, although they could try harder and thereby make more trouble.
  - The real Soviet motive for destabilizing Pakistan is not Nicaragua but Afghanistan. For the Soviets, however, to say so admits how much trouble they are having.
  - The Soviets probably want the US to start thinking about some sort of a tradeoff between Afghanistan and Central America. They know that, by showing even mild interest in this, the US could pull the political rug out from under Zia and demoralize the Mujahedin, plus all other freedom fighters who look to us, without getting anything solid in Nicaragua.
- I don't see anything yet that would oblige us to change the analysis in the forthcoming SNIE on the military side (more of the same but more), although we can forecast more vigorous propaganda action now.
- The net effect of all reporting in the last week is to heighten the impression of Soviet frustration and basic unhappiness with their Afghan strategy, their interest in some better approach, but their lack of good options.

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The Washington Times, Monday, 25 March 1985

# Pakistan-U.S.S.R. showdown

By Marin Strmecki  
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

PESHAWAR, Pakistan — Moscow's new campaign of intimidation against Pakistan has produced its first tangible success, forcing Afghan resistance forces to abandon a string of military posts along the Afghan-Pakistani border overrun just 10 days ago.

The Afghans yielded, and the Soviet Union re-established its control over a 15-kilometer stretch of the strategic Tur Kham Highway running from the Khyber Pass toward Kabul after threatening to bomb populated border areas in Pakistan.

In addition, an Afghan resistance group said yesterday that two of its leading guerrilla commanders were killed by mines scattered by Soviet

*Marin Strmecki has been in Pakistan for two months and has spent the last three weeks on the Afghan-Pakistani border. Earlier, he worked for three years as a research assistant for former President Richard M. Nixon on his books.*

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*In addition, an Afghan resistance group said yesterday that two of its leading guerrilla commanders were killed by mines scattered by Soviet troops during the sweep through rebel bases near the Pakistani border.*

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troops during the sweep through rebel bases near the Pakistani border.

At the same time, according to analysts in Washington, a 5,000-member Afghan army force assisted by Soviet special forces is chewing up permanent Afghan resistance bases stretching from the highway to the Khyber Pass.

"They're obviously going for the kill," an analyst said.

The Soviet campaign of intimidation against Pakistan was signaled less than two weeks ago, when Pakistani President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq traveled to Moscow to attend the funeral of the late Soviet Pres-

ident Konstantin Chernenko.

According to a report from the Soviet news agency Tass, Mikhail Gorbachev, the new Soviet leader, castigated President Zia for supporting "aggression" against Afghanistan from Pakistani soil, and warned that Soviet-Pakistani ties could be affected in a "most negative" way.

President Zia referred to that stern warning from Mr. Gorbachev when he addressed the new Parliament last week and pledged anew his support for the Afghan resistance.

Moreover, in Soviet academic circles, a major theme recently is the artificiality of Pakistan's borders,

characterized as a "colonial creation." The implication of such arguments is that in any overall settlement of Central Asia, there may be no place for Pakistan as a state.

There has been speculation recently that the Soviet Union, under an aggressive new leader, may be using threats against a U.S. ally in an attempt to encourage the United States to reduce its pressure on Nicaragua.

An analogous maneuver was attempted during the Cuban missile crisis, when Moscow demanded that Washington pull its nuclear missiles out of Turkey, a Soviet neighbor, in exchange for the removal of newly placed missiles in Cuba.

According to sources in the Peshawar-based Afghan political parties, the Soviet Union claimed that Pakistan was assisting the resistance forces holding the highway and that bombardment on the Pakistani side of the border would be

undertaken if the roadside posts were not evacuated.

In the past year, Afghan air force jets and helicopters have flown over 70 sorties across the border, killing more than 250 people.

Sources said that Pakistani authorities informed leaders of the Afghan resistance of the Soviet demand and insisted that their forces comply immediately. At the same time, border troops also began stopping supply trucks traveling toward the area and arresting resistance commanders who were returning to the front after consulting with military leaders in Peshawar.

As a result of ammunition shortages and in accordance with the orders of their parties' military committees, the resistance fighters withdrew from their positions on the highway within 48 hours.

The next day a major Soviet-Afghan government force, which witnesses said included some 200 tanks, reoccupied the area and assaulted resistance positions in nearby mountains for two days.

The crisis was precipitated 10 days ago, when resistance commanders in the field decided to mount a systematic attack on government posts along the highway in retaliation for recent heavy artillery bombardment.

Sources said that offensive, launched without consulting leaders in Peshawar, violated an informal

agreement between Islamabad and resistance organizations not to attack Kabul government posts near the border to avoid giving the Soviet Union a pretext to strike directly against Pakistan.

Sayed Mohammed, a commander from the area whose units are affiliated with the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), said local military leaders chose unanimously to ignore the agreement with Pakistan.

"We were being bombed by artillery fire from those posts, and so it was out of the duty of self-defense that we retaliated. Can the Pakistani authorities secure our lives?" he said.

After two days of sporadic but heavy fighting, resistance units had overrun 10 government posts —

including positions on strategic Sham Shat Mountain that control the Afghan end of the Khyber Pass.

Sayed Mohammed said 300 resistance troops were involved in the attacks. He said that more than 100 Afghan government troops were killed and that another 150 were captured. He also reported that casualties to the resistance forces included only five killed and about 20 wounded.

Lal Mohammed, another NIFA commander who returned from the area yesterday, said intelligence reports were received indicating that a large armored column was preparing to retake the area. As a result, resistance forces planted dozens of mines along the road.

*Gus Constantine contributed to this report from Washington.*