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-Dissatification of Soviet Leadership Over Course of Events in Afghanistan:

[redacted] recently reported that a very senior Soviet MFA official told his colleagues that he was very pessimistic about the trend of events in Afghanistan and that Soviet casualties were high. He added that the Soviet advantage in firepower was being eroded as the rebels became better equipped. Another Soviet official indicated that 10,000-12,000 soldiers had been killed in Afghanistan. [redacted] intelligence indicates the Soviet military leadership is very concerned about disciplinary and administrative problems with the troops in Afghanistan.

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-Soviet Aircraft Losses in Afghanistan:

We believe that as many as 300 Soviet helicopters have been shot down in the past four years. Recent evidence suggests the insurgents are becoming more effective in attacking Soviet helicopters and that the Soviet military leadership is very concerned over the increase in losses. In October 1983, for a brief time, the Soviets indicated they were losing one helicopter a day.

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-Soviet POWs:

There are different estimates on the numbers of Soviet POWs in insurgent hands. The State Department and we believe there are 50 to 200 Soviet POWs, most of whom are enlisted men, ethnic Muslims, deserters, misfits and generally people who can not be exploited for FI or CA purposes. The Pentagon has information from overt sources which indicate there are as many as 500 Soviet POWs, that many of them want to defect and that they have significant FI/CA potential. The Pentagon also believes the insurgents may soon murder all Soviet POWs but we consider these reports spurious. [redacted] recently came in with a report indicating that there were 70 to 75 Soviet POWs in

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insurgent hands. We have participated in inter-agency meetings to hammer out a secure exfiltration channel for Soviet POWs which will meet Pakistani approval. Ambassador Derwinski heads the inter-agency group.

-Insurgent Effectiveness:

In all provinces, the Soviets face increasingly better armed insurgents who are more numerous and competent than in the past. Civilian and insurgent morale remains high in spite of heavy Soviet air and ground offensives in the Kabul area and other cities. Over the course of the winter, highly effective insurgent ambush teams have staged numerous operations against convoys from the Soviet Union. These ambushes have compounded Soviet problems created by severe weather and have aggravated chronic shortages of supplies for Soviet and Afghan forces.

-Hunter-Killer Teams:

Insurgents are becoming more effective in the use of the SA-7 surface-to-air missile. Hunter-killer teams, trained by the Pakistanis, have downed several helicopters in the past few months including two that carried high-ranking Soviet and Afghan officers.

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