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HUMAN EVENTS  
5 January 1980

THIS WEEK'S NEWS FROM

## Inside Washington

### Afghanistan Coup

While the United States has been focusing its attention on Iran, the Soviet Union, according to U.S. intelligence sources, helped foster the Afghanistan coup last week which saw the even more pro-Soviet Babrak Karmal seize power from President Hafizullah Amin and then have Amin executed.

According to State Department officials, the Soviets, just prior to the coup, had quadrupled— from about 1,500 to 6,000—the number of combat troops and military advisers inside Afghanistan, using a massive airlift from bases in Russia. As many as 20,000 Soviet military of all kinds may be in the country, department sources say, and as many as 50,000 soldiers are said to be massed at the Soviet-Afghanistan border. The assessment of U.S. intelligence officials is that Babrak is “an explosive character, as close as you could ever get to the classic Moscow-lining Communist.”

Not since Czechoslovakia have the Soviets been willing to use their troops to impose their will on a sovereign nation, and military analysts note that the swift airborne movement into Afghanistan underscores the Soviet capacity to move significant number of troops in a relatively short time.

The big question now seems to be whether the new regime, with massive numbers of Soviet combat troops, will be able to eliminate the insurgent Moslem groups that threatened Amin's rule, and then use Afghanistan as a launching pad to expand the Soviet power base in this area of the world.