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U.S. ACCURACY RULES RELAXED OVER KABUL

Since Soviet's Action, State Dept. Seems Willing to Disseminate Rumors as Well as Facts

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 — The State Department spokesman, Hodding Carter 3d, said today that there were widespread rumors in Kabul that President Babrak Karmal, who was installed by the Soviet Union, might soon be replaced by another Soviet-backed Afghan politician.

There was no way to check on the report, which was offered by the spokesman at his regular news conference in response to a question about developments in Afghanistan, from which all American correspondents were expelled last week.

The spokesman is usually reluctant to discuss political developments inside another country and even more reticent to publicize rumors. But the old rules have been relaxed since the Soviet entry into Afghanistan.

Now the State Department and White House routinely publicize information about Afghanistan received here, even when its authenticity is questionable. Sometimes this is done by spokesmen and sometimes by officials who request anonymity.

U.S. Calls It Invasion

The objective is to underscore Washington's contention, which is shared by most countries, that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, is occupying it and has put Afghan "puppets" in charge.

Mr. Carter, asked about the situation in Afghanistan, said there were "rumors" that Mr. Karmal was to be dismissed soon for failing to enlist popular support or unify pro-Soviet factions in the Government. He said there were rumors about possible successors to Mr. Karmal, but he declined to name them.

The general American contention that Mr. Karmal was placed in office by Soviet forces seems indisputable. Mr. Karmal was living in exile in Czechoslovakia and only arrived in Kabul after a coup, apparently carried out under Soviet auspices, overthrew his predecessor, Hafizullah Amin. Mr. Amin was killed.

The vanguard of the 85,000 Soviet troops now said by American officials to be in Afghanistan entered with the approval of Mr. Amin. American officials, including President Carter, refer to the entry as "an invasion."

Hodding Carter often describes the Soviet activity in Afghanistan as an example of Soviet "imperialism" and "aggression."

No Evidence for Statements

Jody Powell, the White House spokesman, once said that Soviet troops near Herat, in western Afghanistan, were on the "historic invasion route to Teheran," even though there was no evidence that Soviet forces were planning such action.

Earlier in the week, Hodding Carter said that it was not possible to give an accurate estimate of Soviet casualties, but that he had seen reports of about 2,000 and that seemed "reasonable."

Yesterday, when asked if the Soviet Union had been using lethal chemicals in Afghanistan, Mr. Carter said the report could not be verified but that it would be "outrageous and inhumane" if it was so.

The result of these kinds of statements is to produce accounts suggesting Soviet actions for which the Administration itself has no solid confirmation.

Officials make no apologies for their statements, asserting that the Soviet Union has made false statements about the situation in Afghanistan that must be countered. Yesterday, for example, Mr. Carter was specifically instructed to deny a Soviet charge that President Amin had been an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Also yesterday, at a briefing for reporters, a senior Administration official was asked if the United States was aiding the Afghan insurgents.

He first refused to discuss the question and then said he did not know.

A reporter said it would make quite a story if was written that a senior aide "did not know if covert assistance was being given to Afghan rebels." The official smiled and said that the reporter was wrong, that what he should write was that "the official said he didn't know," with the emphasis on "said."