

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 3-0

WASHINGTON TIMES  
12 September 1985

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# What Afghan freedom forces seek

**T**here is no way, under present circumstances, that a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan could work. Anything acceptable to the Russians would be unacceptable to the Afghans, and vice versa.

The Soviets demand a settlement guaranteeing them a hand in the future government of Afghanistan, ensuring that they would be free to use that country to their own ends. Under the Brezhnev doctrine, Afghanistan's "Communist revolution" is irreversible.

The Afghans demand a total and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops and restoration of unfettered self-determination. The Soviet-backed "revolution" of May 1978 that overthrew the republican government of President Daoud and installed a Communist regime was universally and spontaneously rejected by the Afghan people. The devout, God-fearing, and fiercely independent Afghans will tolerate no Communist presence or influence in their nation.

Yet for several years now we have had the charade of "United Nations-sponsored negotiations" over the fate of Afghanistan. U.N. Secretary Javier Perez de Cuellar has claimed that 90 percent of the problem is solved — we just have to agree on a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal. Yet these "negotiations" have taken place between the quivering government in Kabul and the government of Pakistan. The freedom fighters and their leaders are not even consulted.

As Jim Phillips said in a Heritage Foundation report a couple of years ago, these "negotiations" are nothing

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more than a fig leaf for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan — a pantomime lending legitimacy to a genocidal occupation force. They're also buying time for Soviet entrenchment in that country.

The Soviets have no intention of quitting Afghanistan. They may have paid what to us would be a heavy cost for their aggression, but for them it is a cheap price to pay for the strategic staging base they have gained — not to mention an invaluable laboratory in which to blood an army and to develop weapons technology and tactics.

The Soviets are rapidly converting Afghanistan to a Soviet republic, changing the judicial system, the educational system, integrating the electrical grid, changing the very road signs to the Soviet mode.

They would get out only if the military and political costs of occupation became untenable.

But the mujahideen, the freedom fighters, have received precious little other than rhetoric — undying admiration for the admirable way they die.

The U.S. State Department appears to remain unalterably opposed to any effective, traceable, or visible aid to the Afghans.

If the Afghans had effective anti-aircraft defense — shoulder-fired heat-seeking missiles — it would be a different war. There wouldn't be a refugee crisis. There wouldn't be a famine. There wouldn't be a medical crisis. Those marauding helicopter gunships and carpet bombing MiGs would not be able to sow the death and destruction that they do today with impunity.

Other than some ineffective and defective beaten-up SAM 7s, however, the mujahideen have been denied effective anti-aircraft defense. They need Stingers, or even our obsolete Redeyes, or Blowpipes

if you insist on non-American stuff. But all they have are captured Dshakahs, some Zukuiaks, and a handful of guns that were supposed to have been supplied last year. You can't fight the Mi24D Hind armored helicopter gunship, the workhorse of the Red Army and the most lethal weapon system in the world today, with that sort of things.

Still, the Afghans have held on. With virtually no outside help, they fought the Russians to a standstill, liberated some 90 percent of their country, and made fools of all the smart guys who dismissed their struggle as hopeless and predicted it would all be over within a week.

They've done it at terrible cost. Fifty percent of the original population of 15 million has been destroyed in six years. Five million or more are refugees outside Afghanistan — Louie Dupree calls it migratory genocide. Another 2-3 million are dead in the carpet bombing, massacres, artillery bombardments, of famine, and war-related disease.

After such sacrifices, it is hardly likely that the Afghans would now consent to give the Soviets what they want, particularly through negotiations in which they have no part.

The Afghans have always said they were willing to negotiate an end to their bloody war. And they have four uncompromisable conditions for a settlement in which the Pakistanis have unfailingly supported them:

1. Unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops;
2. Non-intervention by foreign troops in Afghanistan or Pakistan and non-interference by any nation in same;
3. International guarantees for No. 2;
4. The honorable return of the ref-

ugees with the right to choose their own non-aligned government.

Until the past year, the United States also supported these conditions. Then, those who closely watch Afghan affairs began to detect a shift in U.S. policy. At an off-the-record briefing at the State Department, Afghanistan Desk Officer Phyllis Oakley (now detailed to the staff of Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr., R-Md., the lone Senate opponent of the Tsongas-Ritter resolution in support of the Afghan freedom fighters) stated that "we recognize that Afghanistan is in the Soviet sphere of influence."

Another line that began to emerge was that "we recognize that the Soviet Union has a right to a non-hostile Afghanistan on its southern border."

Who are we to arrogate unto ourselves the right to condemn another people to the Soviet sphere of influence? And what was Afghanistan, with a friendship treaty with the Soviets prior to the invasion, if not non-hostile?

In any case, the United States, which has provided precious little military or humanitarian aid to the Afghans, speculation and disinformation about alleged CIA support to the contrary, appears now to have wearied of this bothersome little war. Where once the State Department led the pack in florid rhetorical condemnation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, it is clearly trying to cool the issue.

Indeed, State has engaged in its own war of disinformation to convince Congress, the White House and the public that we are "doing all that is appropriate and necessary for the Afghans," in the words of various officials. And lately, they have been trying to convince us that there really isn't any problem in Afghanistan — that the Afghans have more

food, medicine, weapons, and ammunition than they know what to do with, that there really is no famine, no medical crisis, no big deal.

Is the State Department preparing to sacrifice Afghanistan on the altar of appeasement to the god of disarmament? Many fear so. Certainly our record as a faithless ally demonstrates our ability to sell out a people like the Afghans. Afghanistan would, to those officials committed to peace at any price, be a cheap coin for a disarmament treaty.

Did Rajiv Gandhi, devout disciple of the Soviets and apologist for the quisling government in Kabul, carry a message to Mikhail Gorbachev from the United States, as is rumored, offering the Soviets a settlement on their terms in Afghanistan? That message reportedly promised the Soviets that the United States will agree to a political solution at the Geneva talks, that Washington will agree to a "non-aligned" (presumably on the Cuban model) government in Kabul, and that the United States will agree to a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Was it a coincidence that Zbigniew Brzezinski in recent Senate testimony floated a new plan for a settlement in Afghanistan that would include a U.S.-Soviet guarantee of Afghanistan's "neutrality" along with other points that would render void the terrible sacrifice made by the Afghans?

So far, Pakistan, under incredible pressure from the Soviets, has stood firm behind the Afghans. If Pakistan can be forced to betray the Afghans, the Afghans will still fight, fight to the last Afghan. But they will fight without hope. And Pakistan should look with a wary eye in that case on more than a million disenfranchised Afghans who have taken refuge in their country.

We can do no less than to support to the hilt, unashamedly, the valiant Afghans and their Pakistani ally. We owe that to a people willing to pay the ultimate price for a value we also cherish: freedom.