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Old Enemies Unite Against Kremlin

The Kremlin's decision to invade Afghanistan was not reached without some serious misgivings, U.S. intelligence analysts report. One of the Soviet strategists' principal concerns was the possibility that the aggression might unite the long-hostile Moslems of Pakistan and Afghanistan — and this is precisely what has happened.

"Only such a military action could finally have pushed those diverse factions together," said one State Department expert who has monitored the situation for years. This may turn the possibility of a Vietnam-style quagmire for the Russians into a reality, he added.

There has been bitter enmity between Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, over Pushtunistan, the two Pakistani provinces that border on Afghanistan. As a secret CIA historical overview noted, the Afghans had "long claimed that these provinces, whose people are ethnically closer to Afghanistan's dominant Pushtun tribes than to most Pakistanis, should be granted autonomy or self-determination."

The Pushtunistan dispute was visceral, according to one source, and erected an emotional barrier that no Afghan or Pakistani leader could safely breach. The hostility between the two nations might have continued indefinitely if the Soviets hadn't marched into Afghanistan.

"Russia's aggression has cemented them in a way that nothing else could have done," a CIA analyst told my associate Dale Van Atta.

The Soviets' military aggression marked the failure of longstanding, heavy-handed attempts by the Kremlin to gain dominance over Afghanistan by indirect means, and the Pushtunistan issue was usually the sticking point in

these often clumsy diplomatic moves, as CIA reports illustrate.

Afghan Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud was ousted by his cousin and brother-in-law, King Zahir Shah, in 1963 because of his "authoritarian methods and the adverse economic effects of his tough policies toward Pakistan," the CIA review notes.

But when Daoud was recalled in 1973, the situation "began to worsen sharply," according to the CIA. "He began at once to increase sharply agitation on the Pushtunistan question."

Shortly after his return, the CIA began picking up reports that he "has trained and equipped Pakistani dissidents to carry out sabotage on the Pakistani side of the border." Though he denied this publicly, Daoud admitted to CIA sources that he would give "sanctuary and financial assistance" to Pakistani dissidents in the two disputed provinces.

Daoud's overtures to India further exacerbated this country's relations with Pakistan. So strong was the antipathy toward Pakistan that Daoud, and even the two Soviet puppets who succeeded him after he was assassinated in 1978, held back from the Russians' "pet concept," an Asian collective security system in which the Soviet Union was to be the dominant partner.

A bumbling Soviet diplomat, Alexander Pusanov, contributed to the Afghan-Pakistani differences when he suggested to the Pakistani ambassador in Kabul "that Pakistan make territorial concessions to Afghanistan in the interests of mutual harmony."

Word of this got back to Islamabad, and the Pakistanis were not impressed by Pusanov's attempt to blame the gaffe on an interpreter's mistake. "Pusanov

may not have realized that what goes down well in Kabul is likely to raise the roof in Islamabad," a CIA top-secret-umbra report observes.

The Soviets' clumsy attempts to bring their Moslem neighbors together in Soviet-dominated "collective security" failed. But their military aggression succeeded, ironically, in uniting the traditional enemies — against the Soviet Union.

Hello, Central — One of the CIA's most jealously guarded secrets is the unlisted "panic number" it maintains for selected personnel to call in an emergency.

Unfortunately for the dignity of the agency, practical jokers often give out the supersecret number for laughs or personal convenience. Women employees, for instance, have been known to give it out to unwanted, over-amorous dates as their home telephone number. The eager swain winds up talking to a CIA case officer, who answers "Security Force," and is coldly unsympathetic to the caller's complaint of passion betrayed.

Annoying drunks have also had it foisted off on them as a "hot number," and are told bluntly that not only is Lulu not back in town, she was never there at all. Occasionally, ordinary fumble-fingered citizens dial the number by accident.

They even answered when my reporter James Grady called at 11:30 one night. Grady assured the case officer and the CIA spokesman who called the next day that we had no intention of publishing the number. Obviously, the agency can't have the number changed. It wouldn't do for some poor spook out in the field to dial it in desperation ... and get a recording.

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