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'85 REAGAN RULING ON AFGHANS CITED

He Reportedly Told Congress Policy Is to Expel Russians 'by All Means Available'

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WASHINGTON, June 18 — President Reagan told Congressional intelligence committees around the New Year that the United States' covert program of military aid to the Afghan rebels was aimed at removing Soviet forces from Afghanistan "by all means available," according to Administration officials.

Officials said in interviews today that it was recognized at the time that the "all means available" language was ambiguous. But they said such presentations to the committees were normally in broad strokes.

This particular presentation, made in late 1985 or early 1986, was in the form of either a written memorandum or an oral briefing, and the ambiguous language served two purposes, officials said. It provided justification for supplying more and better arms to the rebels, and it signaled to those in Congress who wanted to do more that Mr. Reagan was on their side.

Other officials said the presentation, based on a Presidential decision of April 1985, was being interpreted more ambitiously by some people in the White House, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Maneuvering by Conservatives

These interpretations, in turn, are said to be at the root of maneuvering over whether to extend diplomatic recognition to the Afghan rebels and to cut relations with the Afghan Government.

The officials said that recognition could have the effect of undercutting United Nations-sponsored talks between Pakistan and the Afghan Government aimed at a nonaligned Afghanistan, Afghan self-determination, the return of refugees from Pakistan and the withdrawal of Soviet forces.

Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, reacted sharply today to reports that thought was being given to recognizing the rebels. He reiterated what he said Monday, that this would be "premature."

Charles E. Redman, a State Department spokesman, in endorsing the United Nations talks, said, "We have consistently supported the position and principles of the United Nations in bringing an end to this conflict."

No Stingers Reached Rebels

Meanwhile, Administration officials confirmed that Stinger shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles reportedly sent to the rebels two months ago had never reached them. Several days ago, rebel leaders visiting here said the missiles had never even been promised to them.

Officials said that a decision by Mr. Reagan in February or March to send the Stingers still stood and that the delay was occasioned by "temporary" problems such as the need to train the rebels, the need for assurances that the missiles would not be diverted to terrorists, and the need to make Pakistan's role in the delivery less visible.

A Pentagon official said there was also a problem of "other countries and groups who have asked for Stingers and been denied them saying to us, 'If the Afghan rebels get them, we are entitled, too.'"

One Administration official said there was a chance that the Afghan rebels would never get Stingers.

"Temporary problems have a way of becoming permanent," he said.

The Stinger missiles have been given mainly to the NATO allies, but also to Pakistan and the Angolan rebels. The Nicaraguan rebels have been denied these weapons.

Long a Matter of Debate

The issue of supplying Stingers to the Afghan rebels has been a matter of debate within the Administration for some time. For about a year, the United States has been supplying the rebels with Soviet-made SAM-7 portable anti-aircraft missiles, which are said to perform unevenly.

Today officials said that under the decision earlier this year to send Stingers, Mr. Reagan intended to supply 150 Stinger launchers with 300 missiles. This is less than the numbers hinted at by Administration officials at the time.

The officials also said that Mr. Reagan chose the original Stinger rather than the newer Stinger Post. The original Stinger is said to have problems in that helicopter gunships can deflect its heat-seeking guidance system by firing a flare. The Stinger Post is said to be able to overcome such defenses.

According to Administration officials, the Stingers were part of an aid package worth \$300 million to \$350 million for the current fiscal year. This, too, was well below earlier hints from officials. In the fiscal year 1985, the total was \$280 million. Most of the funds are spent on small arms, ammunition, support equipment and clothing shipped through Pakistan.

Need for Greater Aid Is Seen

According to officials, a Government study in April 1985 found that the Soviet forces were gradually wearing down the rebels, leading Mr. Reagan to broaden the objectives of the covert aid program. He issued a document, National Security Decision Directive 168, that called for driving Soviet forces from Afghanistan "by all means available."

The directive, in turn, became the basis of the presentation to Congress, and the Administration also informed the intelligence committees of its intention to provide Stingers.

Some legislators resisted on the ground that the missiles might fall into terrorist hands and might provoke an increase in Soviet activity.

But the hesitations are said to have been overcome by a coalition of senators including Malcolm Wallop, Republican of Wyoming, and Bill Bradley, Democrat of New Jersey. Since then, Mr. Bradley has been in the forefront of a group seeking diplomatic recognition of the Afghan rebels.