

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional) Special Warning Topic

FROM: Charles E. Allen
NIO for Warning
7B 42 HQS

EXTENSION NO. NIC 03262-88

DATE 4 November 1988

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

NO.		DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS
		RECEIVED	FORWARDED	
1.	VC/NIC			✓
2.	C/NIC	4 Nov 88		J/E /C.
3.				
4.	DI Registry			
5.	ER			
6.				
7.	DDCI			✓
8.				
9.	DCI		11/7	WHR
10.				
11.				
12.	NIO for Warning 7B 42 HQS			
13.				
14.				
15.				

① Copy sent to DDCI
 ② The NIO for Warning has asked for DCI concurrence to share this with the rest of the Intel community.
 EA/DDCI
 JE
 Telephoned CB

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C - 305A - TD

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	RECEIVED	FORWARDED		
1. DDCI	<i>4/11/88</i>	<i>[initials]</i>	<i>[initials]</i>	<p>In response to a request from the DCI (copy to DCI being forwarded separately). Charlie would like to share this paper outside the building and seeks DCI/DDCI concurrence to do so.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>John</i></p>
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DCI
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✓ C-305A-1R

~~SECRET~~

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 03262-88
4 November 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT: Soviet Intentions in Afghanistan

1. The attached Warning Memorandum spells out in greater detail the judgments contained in the Special Warning Brief that I sent to you on 30 October and responds to your request that I look further at the recent Soviet initiatives in Afghanistan. In my view, the Soviets' recent strident threats and military moves in Afghanistan indicate that Moscow made a major decision in mid-September to initiate new political and military actions in Afghanistan to halt the rapid deterioration of the Kabul regime's position--at least until the Soviets can withdraw without total humiliation--a decision not necessarily predicated on the 15 February 1989 withdrawal deadline.

2. The National Intelligence Officers for the Soviet Union and Near East/South Asia judge that the odds are very much against a reversal of the Soviet withdrawal decision and believe that the Soviets remain committed to completing the Soviet troop withdrawal on or about the 15 February deadline.

3. The National Intelligence Officer for Warning and his staff prepared this Warning Memorandum and are entirely responsible for its contents.


Charles E. Allen

Attachment:
As stated

CL BY Signer
DECL OADR

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S E C R E T

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SPECIAL WARNING MEMORANDUM

SOVIET INTENTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Background:

The Soviet leaders apparently decided in mid-September that major new political and military actions were essential to halt the rapid deterioration of the Kabul regime's position and prospects. This decision was signaled by an upsurge at the time in Soviet public and private charges that Pakistan and the United States were violating the Geneva Agreements. In addition, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in late September called attention to the pause in Soviet troop withdrawals since mid-August and implied they would not be resumed until the issue of compliance had been resolved. Shevardnadze also made an oblique reference to impending new military measures. Moscow's new, high-powered ambassador in Kabul, Vorontsov, stated privately on 24 October that there would be no further withdrawals unless there is a ceasefire in Afghanistan.

These statements set the stage for the announcement on 4 November that Soviet troop withdrawals are being suspended "for the time being," and would be resumed only when the military situation is "normalized" and Pakistan and the United States comply with Geneva Accords obligations. Vorontsov's remark that "the Soviet Union is a great power and it will not be humiliated by the mujahidin and Pakistanis" highlights Moscow's judgment that strong measures must be applied to avert a ruinous crisis for the Kabul regime and army, protect the Soviet Union's international standing and credibility, and reinforce the leadership's political authority at home and in Eastern Europe.

In Moscow's view, the most urgent requirement is to reverse the steady erosion of Kabul's power and stability, thereby refuting presumptions in Islamabad and Washington that the collapse or defeat of the Kabul regime is only a matter of time. Only then, according to the Soviet assessment, will Pakistan, the United States, and Afghan resistance leaders be prepared to consider a ceasefire and serious negotiations for a political solution that would preserve a Communist role in a new coalition government.

Military Initiatives

The Soviet air offensive is aimed at inflicting such heavy losses on resistance forces that mujahidin commanders will be compelled to accept a ceasefire. Although Vorontsov has warned that the Soviets may reinforce their combat forces in Afghanistan, they most likely intend to avoid this extreme option. The Soviet command will attempt to hold Soviet ground casualties to a minimum, but it will make selective use of ground force units in high-priority operations, such as strikes on mujahidin forces threatening Kabul.

The use of advanced aircraft and Scuds is meant to underscore Moscow's readiness and capacity to strike targets in Pakistan if Islamabad continues to

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provide military assistance to the Afghan resistance. It is unlikely that the Soviets will conduct air strikes against Pakistani military or civilian targets in the first stage of the offensive, but they probably will renew attacks on resistance camps inside Pakistan. The Soviets may also authorize intensified Afghan sabotage and terrorist bombings in Pakistani cities.

Political Initiatives

The military stick probably will be accompanied soon by political carrots, including offers to replace the communist regime with a coalition government including resistance leaders, military commanders and expatriate politicians such as former King Zahir. The Soviets' short-term goal will be to split the Peshawar Resistance Alliance along moderate-fundamentalist lines. Afghan Government leaders will emphasize their desire for an early ceasefire and for negotiations with the Resistance.

Vorontsov's agreement to hold secret talks in mid-November with the leader of the Resistance Alliance appears to be part a Soviet strategy to obtain at least a "partial ceasefire" by holding out the prospect of a cessation of the current "offensive" bombing in exchange for Resistance restraint from taking major cities and from attacking key Soviet facilities and departing Soviet troops.

The Soviets probably will renew Shevardnadze's September proposals for meetings of the Geneva signatories or of the permanent members of the UN Security Council to "discuss the question of compliance with the Geneva Accords." They will emphasize their desire for a political solution and their willingness to accept a significant reduction in the communist role and authority in a new government. Soviet denunciations of violations of the Geneva Accords will focus primarily on Pakistan, but they will also hold the US responsible for encouraging Pakistan and failing to honor Washington's obligations as a guarantor of the agreements.

Outlook

Soviet leaders are responding to a dangerous situation which they apparently had not anticipated, at least not so soon. Although heavy air and artillery strikes will have some effect on the pace of mujahidin military operations, they will not force major retreats, inflict lasting damage on the Resistance or coerce commanders into accepting a ceasefire. The Soviets again seem to have underestimated Resistance resolve.

Harsh military pressures instead may produce effects opposite of those intended. Heavier Soviet air strikes may make it more difficult to restrain the mujahidin, some of whom have been biding their time, waiting for the Soviets to withdraw before launching large-scale attacks. Individual commanders, as well as the resistance as a whole, could decide to extract vengeance upon the Soviets wherever they can be located, including Kabul.

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Such a decision would further endanger the Western diplomatic community in Kabul before the Soviets withdraw.

In sum, the Gorbachev leadership has embarked on a high-risk gamble in a desperate attempt to avert a humiliating defeat. If intensified air strikes and ground offensives fail to break mujahidin sieges and force a ceasefire, the Soviets will have enormously compounded their present predicament. Moscow would then face a stark choice between a major military escalation--including reintroduction of large numbers of ground troops--and even more ignoble retreat and withdrawal. Either outcome could have incalculable effects on Gorbachev's political authority at home and abroad. It would take all his considerable political skills to forestall irreparable damage to his domestic reform program and his "new thinking" in foreign policy.

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