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The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

March 2, 1988

Ms. Elizabeth G. Weymouth

[Redacted]

Dear Lally:

Thanks for sending me a copy of your Outlook piece on Afghanistan. I read it when it first came out and thought it a fine report. I note in this morning's Post that Bill Buckley cites it favorably and quotes extensively from it.

It was insightful of you to visit China. I personally believe the Chinese element plays a much larger part in Soviet calculations with respect to Afghanistan than has been noted in our press.

Again, thanks for sending it along.

Regards,

[Redacted]

Robert M. Gates

I thought you might find the attached speech of passing interest.

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DALLAS COUNCIL ON WORLD AFFAIRS
19 JANUARY 1988

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE SOVIET UNION
BY ROBERT M. GATES
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

INTRODUCTION

THE SELECTION OF MIKHAIL GORBACHEV AS GENERAL SECRETARY IN THE SPRING OF 1985 SIGNALLED THE POLITBURO'S RECOGNITION THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS IN DEEP TROUBLE -- ESPECIALLY ECONOMICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY -- TROUBLE THAT THEY RECOGNIZED WOULD SOON BEGIN TO HAVE REAL EFFECT ON MILITARY POWER AND THEIR POSITION IN THE WORLD. DESPITE ENORMOUS RAW ECONOMIC POWER AND RESOURCES, INCLUDING A \$2 TRILLION A YEAR GNP, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP BY THE MID-1980S CONFRONTED A STEADILY WIDENING GAP WITH THE WEST AND JAPAN -- ECONOMICALLY, TECHNOLOGICALLY AND IN VIRTUALLY ALL AREAS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

AS A RESULT OF THESE TRENDS, THE POLITBURO RECOGNIZED THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD NO LONGER RISK THE SUSPENDED ANIMATION OF THE BREZHNEV YEARS, AND COALESCED AROUND AN IMAGINATIVE AND VIGOROUS LEADER WHOM THEY HOPED COULD REVITALIZE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT ALTERING THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE OR COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Washington Post

ELIZABETH (LALLY) G. WEYMOUTH

TLOOK

Commentary and Opinion

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Does Moscow Really Plan On Leaving Afghanistan?

By Lally Weymouth

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—"I have never seen a test case like this," says French diplomat Jean-Francois Deniau of the proposed Soviet pullout from Afghanistan. "It's the only way we can see if Gorbachev can do what he says. It's so important for freedom and for hope. It's like D-Day . . . We can't accept that a question like this will receive a false solution."

A real solution, says the French special envoy on Afghanistan, would be the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops and the creation of a truly independent country—as friendly with Pakistan as with the Soviet Union.

The French diplomat is asking the right questions: Is Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement that the Soviets will withdraw from Afghanistan—trumpeted around the world this month—for real?

Does Moscow plan a "real solution," or just a cosmetic one that maintains a Soviet proxy government in Kabul? And will the Reagan administration, anxious for a foreign-policy success, accept a false solution?

Answers to these questions could begin to surface tomorrow, as Secretary of State George P. Shultz holds talks in Moscow on Afghanistan. Conservatives worry that he may accept a deal that would halt U.S. aid to the *mujaheddin* at the start of a 10-month period of promised Soviet troop withdrawal. Such a deal, made without the participation of the Afghan resistance fighters who waged the war, could well collapse—with the resistance fighting on and Afghanistan becoming a second Lebanon.

A clear picture of what's at stake in the current diplomatic debate over Afghanistan emerges from conversations with some of the key players—in the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China. What comes through above all is a sense of uncertainty about what

