

**Page Denied**

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

9 October 1987

India's Actions and Intentions on Afghanistan



25X1

Summary

Prime Minister Gandhi views the Afghan issue as an irritant in India's relations with the USSR and the United States, but he does not believe India can do anything that could significantly influence the outcome of the Afghan conflict. Given the signs that US-Soviet relations are improving, Gandhi likely will arrive in Washington with some optimism that in due course the Soviets will withdraw from Afghanistan and the United States will reduce its military assistance to Pakistan. Gandhi

continues to avoid public criticism of either Moscow or the Kabul regime. In fact, New Delhi's increasing diplomatic contacts with Kabul and official statements supporting Kabul's national reconciliation initiatives may assist the efforts of Kabul and Moscow to legitimize the Afghan government and weaken support for Pakistan's resolution on Afghanistan at the UN General Assembly.

25X1  
25X1

25X1

-----  
This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, at the request of the National Security Council. Information as of 8 October 1987 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA [redacted]

25X1

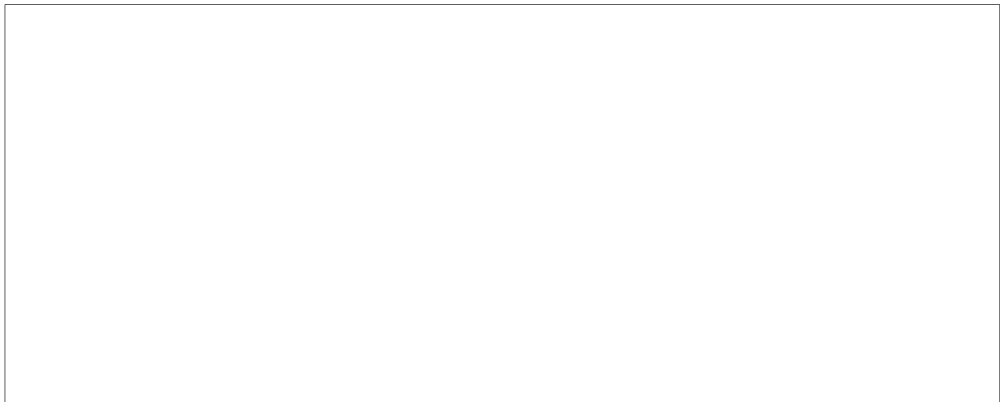
25X1

NESA M 87-20092C



25X1

Copy 16 of 35



25X1

Gandhi is unlikely to be receptive to any US effort to persuade New Delhi to criticize the Soviet presence in Afghanistan or to limit Indian diplomatic assistance to Kabul's Third World initiative. He probably believes the costs to New Delhi are manageable and that the policy keeps Indo-Soviet relations on track. Gandhi is likely to be receptive to US arguments that India encourage a role for former Afghan King Zahir Shah or non-sectarian political parties in an interim and post-settlement government. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

\* \* \* \* \*

Indian Prime Minister Gandhi's overriding interest in the Afghan situation is to reduce US and Soviet involvement in South Asia. India believes the United States sells Pakistan conventional weapons and subordinates its concerns about nuclear proliferation to advance US interests in supporting the Afghan resistance and in obtaining access to Pakistani military facilities. Gandhi is concerned about the Soviet military encroachment in Afghanistan and has continued his mother's efforts to distance New Delhi from Moscow--without losing the benefits of Indo-Soviet economic and military ties. Gandhi is also interested in limiting Islamabad's influence in a post-withdrawal Afghanistan so that a Pakistani-backed Islamic fundamentalist regime in Kabul does not cause problems for India. His concern is that India's 90 million Muslims could be more susceptible to the influence of an Islamic-ruled Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan after what could be perceived by Indian Muslims as an Islamic victory over the Soviets in Afghanistan. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

[redacted] Gandhi believes Gorbachev wants a political settlement in Afghanistan, albeit one that would leave a regime warmly disposed to Moscow. Gandhi may calculate that New Delhi can contribute to a political resolution of the Afghan conflict by promoting increased diplomatic activity. He likely approved the exchange of visits by Indian and Afghan foreign ministers earlier this year with this hope in mind--an expectation that probably was encouraged by Soviet officials. [redacted]

25X1

Gandhi would face some domestic opposition if he were to be more forthcoming with Washington on the Afghan issue. Leftist officials in his government and Congress Party, some opposition politicians, and media officials [redacted] are quick to take issue with US policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan. They regularly claim that cooperation between the United States, Pakistan, and the People's Republic of China on the Afghan issue is a cover for collusion against India. They assert that Islamabad trades on its aid for Afghan

25X1

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

refugees and insurgents to acquire modern military equipment from the United States for use against India. There is no comparable Indian lobby pressing for an Indian hard line against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

25X1

Moscow and Kabul Exerting Pressure

The Soviets and Afghans view India as key in their drive to increase the Kabul regime's international legitimacy primarily because of New Delhi's influential position in such organizations as the United Nations, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Nonaligned Movement (NAM). Moscow and Kabul almost certainly believe that even superficially warmer Afghan-India relations are useful for softening anti-Afghan sentiments in Third World-dominated forums. Since Afghan Foreign Minister Wakil visited India in February, two additional delegations have gone to New Delhi for talks: a high-ranking group from the Central Committee of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and a panel led by the Minister of Education.

[REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

### Gandhi's Response to Pressure

New Delhi will continue to listen to Moscow's and Washington's arguments on the Afghan issue, but is unlikely to undertake a dramatic move on either side's behalf in the near term. Indian officials probably consider restraint in their public statements about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and diplomatic introductions for Afghan delegations a small price to pay to help keep the military and economic pipeline from the Soviets open.

[REDACTED]

25X1

For now, Gandhi's involvement in Sri Lanka in July probably is about as big a gamble as he will be willing or able to take in the foreign policy arena. He is likely to be preoccupied with domestic issues, given continuing difficulties with the Sikhs, the aftermath of the drought, and the political challenge being mounted by the opposition.

[REDACTED]

25X1

Gandhi's willingness to increase Indian diplomatic activity on Afghanistan--thus far to the benefit of Kabul and Moscow--may reflect New Delhi's efforts to protect its interests in Afghanistan in anticipation of a Soviet withdrawal, but it may also provide an opening for the US. We believe Gandhi would be likely to permit Indian diplomatic activity to encourage a role for the former Afghan King or non-sectarian political parties in an interim and post-settlement government largely to limit Islamabad's influence. He would take a harder line in India's Afghan policy in the unlikely event that the Soviets made an incursion into Pakistan or Islamabad agreed to give United States forces permanent access to military facilities.

[REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

**SUBJECT:** India's Actions and Intentions on Afghanistan

25X1

**NESA M 87- 20092C**

25X1

**External Distribution**

**Copy 1 Ms. Shirin R. Tahir-Kehli  
National Security Council  
Room 392  
Old Executive Office Building**

**Internal Distribution**

Copy 2	DCI/DDCI Executive Staff	7D60
Copy 3	Executive Registry	7D60
Copy 4	DDI	7E44
Copy 5	ADDI	7E44
Copy 6	NIO/NESA	7E48
Copy 7	D/NESA	2G11
Copy 8	DD/NESA	2G11
Copy 9	C/PES	2G25
Copy 10	D/LDA	1H19
Copy 11	DDO/NE	6C40
Copy 12	NID Staff	7F24
Copy 13	PDB Staff	7F30
Copy 14	CPAS/ISS	7G50
Copy 15-20	CPAS/IMD/CCB	7G07
Copy 21	C/NESA/PPS	2G11
Copy 22	NESA/PPS	6G02
Copy 23	C/SO/D/NESA	6G17
Copy 24	DC/SO/D/NESA	6G17
Copy 25	C/SO/A/NESA	6G17
Copy 26	C/SO/PB/NESA	6G17
Copy 27	C/SO/S/NESA	6G17
Copy 28	C/PG/NESA	7G00
Copy 29	C/AI/NESA	6G02
Copy 30	C/IA/NESA	6G17
Copy 31	C/IA/I/NESA	6G17
Copy 32		
Copy 33		
Copy 34	Typescript File/NESA/SO/S	6G17
Copy 35	NESA/PPS Source Copy	6G02

25X1

25X1

25X1