

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Some Thoughts on Soviet Intentions in Afghanistan and US Policy

FROM:

Robert Blackwell
NIO/USSR

EXTENSION

NO.

NIC-00239/88

DATE

21 January 1988

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

DATE

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

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H. F. Hutchinson, Jr.

21 Jan '88

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3. Executive Registry

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 The Director of Central Intelligence
 Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC-00239/88
 21 January 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director Central Intelligence
 Deputy Director Central Intelligence

FROM: Robert Blackwell
 National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Some Thoughts on Soviet Intentions in Afghanistan and
 US Policy

1. The evidence regarding Soviet intentions about Afghanistan since the summit remains ambiguous. Recent Soviet words and deeds could represent either yet another attempt to reduce the international costs of Afghanistan or a genuine effort to signal their intent to find a way out of Afghanistan even if it means that their clients leave with them.

2. While logic and some evidence can be presented to support these two interpretations (a better case can be made that they will stay), we can't say with confidence which view is correct. Current Soviet activity could lead them toward either objective and, indeed, probably is intended to do just that, giving the leadership the flexibility to get the maximum political leverage possible from its rather weak cards and putting the onus on Pakistan and the US for brokering a solution.

3. This strategy has caused some disarray in US policy. The US has sent mixed signals about its assistance to the resistance and seemingly backed away from pushing the Soviets on formation of a new government to rule in Kabul. The Soviets have, moreover, been able to avoid making any unambiguous commitments to leave--getting mileage out of their stated intentions without taking any irreversible actions.

4. The policy implications of this for the US seem to be pretty straightforward. We don't have to do anything until we know for sure.

5. Soviet Seriousness?

A range of opinions exists within the Intelligence Community on this issue. State/INR is more inclined to see recent Soviet statements as indicating that the Soviets have decided to get out even if it means

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sacrificing the Afghan Communists; the only arguments at State are over whether they will do so unconditionally or whether they will try to get a deal that permits the USSR and its clients some role in a post-withdrawal regime. DIA and CIA/SOVA believe that there has been some movement in the Soviet position but aren't sure that the Soviets have made an irrevocable decision to get out. (See Attachment 1 for a brief discussion our most recent Community meeting on the subject and Attachment 2 for the Warning Report of our 1 December special meeting on Afghanistan.)

6. I lean more to the DIA and CIA view. Recent Soviet rhetoric on withdrawal has been stunning and is hard to dismiss out-of-hand. (See Attachment 3 for illustrative sample.) Yet, impressive as much of it is, the Soviet position is not logically consistent with my reading of Soviet interests. Withdrawal has been linked only to halting foreign assistance to the resistance; the composition of the new Afghanistan government, to judge from its absence in Soviet statements, is not a precondition for settlement.

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--However benign one's assumptions about Soviet policy and "new thinking", such a position does not reflect real Soviet interests and hence is not credible. Moscow cannot be agnostic on or uninterested in the composition of the Afghan government and its policy inclinations toward the Soviet Union.

--If the Soviets have really decided to sacrifice the Afghan Communists, Gorbachev will still want to know who he will be dealing with and get some commitments from them (and guarantees from Pakistan and the US) about maintaining friendly (diplomatic and economic) relations with the USSR.

--Without this, Moscow would run the risk of the "bloodbath" and "chaos" it says cannot be permitted and more importantly open up Soviet policy to the vicissitudes of the unknown--something no Soviet leader would do! Gorbachev and others can only calculate that the positives outweigh the negatives if they have a handle on how bad things could get.

7. Moscow's seeming lack of concern with this possibility suggests that the Soviet leadership is assuming that a Communist-dominated coalition (possibly including elements of the resistance) will be around for sometime yet and that Soviet policy remains in fact more smoke than fire. Acceptance of such a regime within or outside of Afghanistan is not in the cards.

--It does not accord with political or military realities inside Afghanistan;

--Such a solution would not produce what Pakistan requires above all--return home of the some 3 million refugees now living in Pakistan.

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8. Only when it is evident the Soviets will accept less than this outcome will their rhetoric about withdrawal have substance.

--The Pakistanis, in my view, are right in judging that the best test of Soviet intentions is whether or not Vorontsov travels to Islamabad to "talk turkey" about alternative regimes in Kabul.

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--If he does not go, or if he does and that is not an important item on his agenda, we can conclude that the Soviets have not yet made the hard decisions to get out.

--It will be almost impossible to put together any resistance-dominated coalition to govern and keep order in Kabul without Pakistan's assistance.

9. Background on Shifting US Position.

Until the last few months, it had been privately understood by all parties in the dispute that the US and Pakistan would not sign the Geneva accords until there was a new resistance-dominated regime in Kabul to rule during the period of Soviet troop withdrawals. Several months ago, however, we unilaterally changed our position, delinking Soviet troop withdrawal from the issue of who is in charge in Kabul.

--The change was motivated in part by a State Department judgment that Pakistan cannot create an alternative Afghan regime. (This judgment is arguable; the Pakistanis, who are much closer to the situation than we are, think they have to.)

--There was also concern that the Soviets would only use negotiations about an alternative regime to prolong its presence in Afghanistan or alternatively to try to win in negotiations what it had been unable to win on the battlefield. (These are, of course, legitimate concerns, if you assume Moscow is not serious about getting out.)

--The policy rests on an assumption (most in the community would accept) that the PDPA regime would inevitably unravel as soon as any serious withdrawals began whatever the formal commitments given about assistance to the resistance.

10. Our "new thinking", however, appears to have created more problems for us than it solved. Specifically,

--If we get the kind of a settlement we are asking for, the current Kabul regime would remain in place to preside over at least the beginning of Soviet troop withdrawals, even if aid cutoff and the withdrawal commenced at the same time. (We need to be alert to the possibility that the Soviets may calculate that their clients could hold their own when Soviet troops withdraw at least for a "decent interval" if outside aid was, in fact, cut off.)

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--Such an agreement, moreover, could trigger provisions for providing for a substantial flow of money for development and relief to the Soviet clients in Kabul by the UN and other relief agencies (this would be politically impossible to sell in the US) and would not provide any impetus for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan to go home.

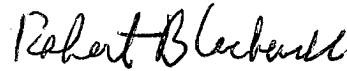
--It has placed us at odds with Pakistan which wants to get whatever hold it can on a new Afghan government to ensure that its interests (particularly concerning the refugees) will be protected. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This suggests that there isn't going to be any meeting in Geneva in February or, if there is, it won't be the final meeting.

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--The Soviets have taken advantage of the situation to make it appear that the US rather than the USSR is now the main obstacle to getting a settlement and ending the war. While this is not a new tactic, it seems to have more resonance now and, thus, could if not challenged effectively strain the Western consensus on Afghanistan.

11. Conclusion. Our task should be to get on the same note and avoid doing the Soviets' work for them. At present they are still able to "have their cake and eat it too"--talk withdrawal and keep their clients in charge. Only as they are forced to deal politically with those who have fought them to a standstill on the battlefield will the contradictions in their policy become evident and the hard choices (stay and fight for a long time or get out) unavoidable. If they have to assume the political costs of setting a date and negotiating over what is to follow the PDPA, they will not have many clients left to protect and the momentum for withdrawal will be irresistible. If, on the other hand, the rhetoric is all smoke, the failure to engage their opponents will be evidence enough, and it won't be hard for us to put the onus for lack of movement back where it belongs.



Robert Blackwell

Attachments As Stated

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NIC-00239/88
21 January 1988

SUBJECT: Some Thoughts on Soviet Intentions in Afghanistan and
US Policy

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Attachment 1

Excerpts from NIO/USSR January 1988 Warning Report

Afghanistan: There has been a further evolution in the thinking of at least some elements of the community since our special warning meeting on this subject in early December. Then, all agreed that while the Soviet position appeared to be evolving, we had no unambiguous indications that they had made the hard decision to settle for less and get out. Now State/INR believes, primarily as a result of what Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said publicly during his recent trip to Kabul, that the Soviets have made the decision to get out. They still disagree among themselves about whether the decision to do so is conditional or not: some believe that they will still insist on at least some role for themselves and their clients in an alternate regime, while others maintain that they will not. The rest of the community agrees that there appears to have been a further evolution in Soviet thinking since the summit, but continues to be skeptical that the Soviets are really intent on getting out. They read the significance of Shevardnadze's remarks in Kabul differently than State and cite developments like the Khowst offensive and Soviet efforts to establish new economic links to Afghanistan's provinces as evidence that the Soviets are still intent on consolidating Communist rule.

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

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NIC-04994/87
7 December 1987

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Robert Blackwell
National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Special Warning and Forecast Report on Afghanistan

1. The Intelligence Community's Sovietologists met on 1 December to discuss whether recent statements by Soviet officials signify a serious intent to abandon the Afghanistan Communists and will so signify at the upcoming summit. The community was virtually unanimous that there will be no major surprises in Washington because, rhetoric aside, Moscow has not made any decision to get out (some think they never will). Most analysts, nonetheless, are now more inclined than in the past to conclude that Soviet policy is evolving and a minority project that Moscow will eventually settle for less than a Communist dominated regime when it leaves. NIO/USSR leans more toward the latter view and believes there is a fair chance that Gorbachev will communicate a further evolution in Soviet thinking on Afghanistan during the visit.

2. BACKGROUND: Recent statements by high-ranking Soviet officials about Afghanistan--specifically, about Moscow's desire to be out of Afghanistan by the end of 1988, its alleged interest in an Austrian-type treaty to guarantee Afghan neutrality, its professed willingness to have former King Zahir Shah convene a Loya Jirga in order to create and lead an interim coalition government to rule during a year-long phased withdrawal of Soviet troops--have already created considerable interest in the policy community about Soviet intentions. Are the Soviets seriously looking for a way to end their military involvement, even if it means scaling back Soviet objectives there? And, how will they play this issue during summit discussions next week? In order to get some sense of where the intelligence community stands on this issue, NIO/NESA put the topic on the agenda for his regular November warning meeting and I convened a special meeting on 1 December. NIO/NESA will be reporting separately on the views held by the intelligence community's South Asian analysts. What follows in this report represents primarily the views of the intelligence community's Sovietologists.

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3. The intelligence community has addressed this issue before, when some senior policymakers concluded not long after the Geneva summit that the USSR wanted out of Afghanistan. In SNIE 11/37-86, Soviet Tactics on a "Political Solution" in Afghanistan, published in January 1986, the community judged unanimously that Soviet moves at that time were not authentic indications of increased interest in a settlement, but rather part of an effort to divide the coalition of countries and forces opposing them. While this is still the prevailing view, the community now seems more uncertain and divided in its views.

4. DISCUSSION: Most of the community's Sovietologists agreed with CIA/SOVA's assessment that the Soviets have not yet made the hard decisions necessary to leave Afghanistan. In the view of the clear majority, the Soviets are still trying to have their cake and eat it too--i. e., get out, but in a way that leaves a communist-dominated regime still in power. They think recent Soviet statements stem mainly from Moscow's desire to minimize the impact of its latest defeat at the UN and to create a better atmosphere for the forthcoming summit and subsequent INF ratification process. They do not anticipate any major surprises at the Soviet-US summit because they think Moscow will want to see how Afghan President Najib's efforts to forge a leaner, meaner Peoples Democratic Party (PDPA) fare and await the outcome of planned US-Soviet and Soviet-Pakistani consultations as well as the US-Pakistani controversy on the nuclear issue before undertaking any major policy reassessments. These analysts also stress the political risks at home for Gorbachev if he really pushes to get out, arguing that for any Soviet leader, the risks of getting out will never outweigh the costs of staying until the job is done.

5. At the same time, however, many community analysts believe that Moscow's position has evolved in the last 12 months and project that it could change further, to the point where the Soviets might eventually conclude that a Communist-dominated government is not essential to securing Soviet interests. In fact, all analysts agree that they will have to sacrifice the PDPA if they are ever to get any kind of viable political settlement, because the resistance will not agree to a settlement which gives the Communists any real power, even in an interim coalition regime. These analysts believe that the Soviets are not at this point yet, but in their view Soviet assessments of the problem are becoming more realistic and their pressure on their clients in Kabul to pursue "national reconciliation" is--whatever the intention--undermining the PDPA regime.

6. INDICATORS: How will we know? If the Soviets really want out, the community judges that the Soviets would do more of what they are already doing, but at a stepped-up pace. They might indicate in a more authoritative way that they could accept a neutral interim coalition in Afghanistan to rule during a period of Soviet troop withdrawals and begin negotiations toward that end. Alternatively, they could engage in open negotiations with the Peshawar seven,

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[REDACTED] Or they could announce and implement real, albeit, small troop withdrawals (as opposed to the sham withdrawal conducted last year). Finally, they could raise publicly their interest in an Austrian-style arrangement that would ensure the neutrality of a post-PDPA Afghanistan. Such moves would put the Soviets on the road to "going home" and make a reversal in course much more difficult.

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7. OUTLOOK: Whether, in fact, Soviet policy will move in this direction is unknown to us--and perhaps to them. NIO/USSR believes the Soviets are working their way through the problem of looking for a way out without knowing when, if, or how they might actually do it. The costs--political or most importantly military--are not so great that they have to leave. Their military position is far from weak, although increased difficulties have been encountered during the past year. The Soviets are in no danger of being driven out or under the gun to make a rash or risky political decision to leave.

8. Odds are the Soviets assess the situation this way as well. But NIO/USSR, however, would not be as categorical as the community view in judging that the Soviets have not decided to go home and signal this at the summit. Their statements [REDACTED]

and to some extent actions increasingly have the smell of putting the Soviets politically on the slippery slope of withdrawal, even if originally intended only as a tactical gambit. Continuing to play around with such gestures could leave the Soviets with no clients to protect and very little political position to defend. If their real intention is to stay until their ally can stand on its own feet (however improbable that might seem to us), it is poor tactics and strategy to be offering up--however hedged--a 12-month timetable, most of the government ministries, and even more forthcoming hints that will be hard to take back politically and propogandistically.

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9. Either way, Gorbachev by design or omission will probably use the summit to signal more clearly Soviet intentions. Even if a decision to get out and sacrifice the Afghan Communists (heretofore a cardinal Soviet interest) has been made, Moscow is not going to pull out precipitately, without some guarantees that its other (and possibly now more important) fundamental interest--an Afghanistan that cannot be used by the US for actions inimical to the USSR--will be preserved. The Soviets almost certainly would want to negotiate this with us directly. They would also want US support for any effort to negotiate a deal with the Pakistanis and the resistance, something they will in the end have to do if they want to create a semblance of order, in Kabul at least, after they leave and allow for some form of state relations with a post-PDPA regime. If, on the other hand, Soviet statements continue to be tantalizing but ambiguous, I would agree that the skeptics are right, and that we are seeing nothing more than a more sophisticated game of smoke and mirrors.

Robert Blackwell
Robert Blackwell

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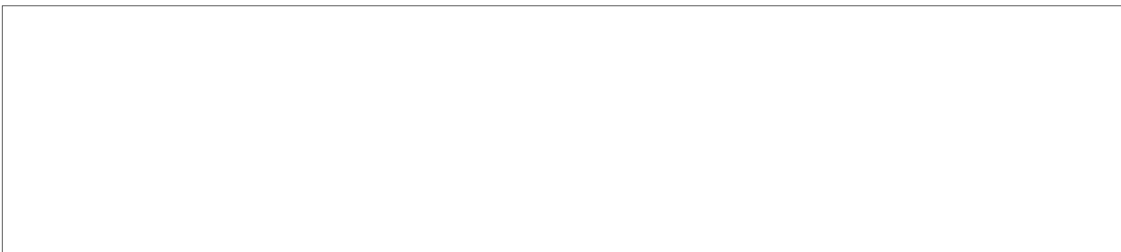
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 00843

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL US UR AF
SUBJECT: SOVIET EXPERT DISCUSSES AFGHANISTAN'S
- PAST AND FUTURE

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY

2. EMBOFF MET JANUARY 13 WITH ORIENTAL INSTITUTE
AFGHANISTAN EXPERT YURIY GANKOVSKIY WHO
WARNED OF THE DANGERS OF "LEBANIZATION"
OF AFGHANISTAN AND NECESSITY FOR BOTH
U.S. AND SOVIET UNION TO TAKE STEPS TO
PREVENT A BLOODBATH AFTER SOVIET TROOP
WITHDRAWAL. GANKOVSKIY NOTED THAT

-- SOVIET INTERVENTION HAD COME
. ABOUT BECAUSE "LEFT EXTREMISTS"
. HAD COME TO POWER IN AFGHANISTAN,
. BUT NOW THERE WAS A THREAT THAT
. "RIGHT EXTREMISTS" LIKE GULBUDDIN
. HIKMATYAR MIGHT SEIZE POWER;

-- THE U.S. HAD BEEN "RIGHT" TO CON-
. CENTRATE ATTENTION ON SOVIET
. TROOP WITHDRAWAL, BUT THAT "IN
. CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES" URGENT
. ATTENTION NEEDED TO BE DEVOTED
. TO THE PROBLEM OF REABSORBING
. UNPRECEDENTED NUMBERS OF REFUGEES
. AND CREATING A MECHANISM TO LIMIT
. "SETTLING OF SCORES";

-- THE BREAKUP OF AFGHANISTAN INTO
. FIEFDOMS WAS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY,
. WHICH WOULD LEAVE THE U.S. AND
. SOVIET UNION WITH "TEN PROBLEMS
. INSTEAD OF ONE."

END SUMMARY.

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AFGHANISTAN'S PAST: THE LEGACY OF THE "LEFT
- EXTREMISTS."

3. EMOFF MET JANUARY 13 WITH INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES, AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN DEPARTMENT HEAD, YURIY GANKOVSKIY. THE MEETING WAS PROPITIIOUS, GANKOVSKIY SAID, BECAUSE AN AFGHANISTAN SETTLEMENT SEEMED INCREASINGLY POSSIBLE. GANKOVSKIY, HOWEVER, WAS CONCERNED THAT THE TRAGEDY OF AFGHANISTAN'S PEOPLE WOULD CONTINUE. HE OFFERED SOME REFLECTIONS ON AFGHANISTAN'S RECENT HISTORY IN ORDER TO PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE. AFTER THE APRIL 1978 REVOLUTION "LEFT EXTREMISTS" HAD SEIZED POWER. THESE PEOPLE HAD PLUNGED AFGHANISTAN INTO TRAGEDY. HE HIMSELF HAD HEARD HAFIZULLAH AMIN PROCLAIM IN PRIVATE MEETINGS THAT THE AFGHAN PEOPLE OFFERED POOR HUMAN MATERIAL FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF THE COUNTRY. THEY WERE POOR, ILLITERATE, AND BADLY EDUCATED. AMIN HAD SAID "WE ONLY NEED FOUR MILLION (OUT OF A POPULATION OF SIXTEEN MILLION) AFGHANS TO CONSTRUCT SOCIALISM." GANKOVSKIY NOTED THAT UNDER THE TARAKI-AMIN REGIME PEOPLE HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND EVEN EXECUTED FOR REFUSING TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM CENSUS-TAKERS. MEMBERS OF SEBGHATULLAH MOJADEDDI AND SAYID AHMED GAILANI'S FAMILIES HAD BEEN MURDERED. IT WAS NO WONDER THEY HAD ENTERED THE OPPOSITION AND WERE NOW IN PESHAWAR. GANKOVSKIY SAID THAT THE "CRAZY POLICY" OF THAT ERA HAD SOUGHT TO "LIQUIDATE ILLITERACY BY LIQUIDATING THE ILLITERATES." IT WAS THIS INCIPIENT GENOCIDAL SITUATION THAT PRECIPITATED SOVIET INTERVENTION.

*At time any Sov ever offered
this explanation*

4. UNFORTUNATELY, "COMRADE BREZHNEV DID NOT THINK THROUGH THE FULL IMPLICATIONS OF SOVIET INTERVENTION." THE SOVIETS HAD A SIMPLISTIC NOTION THAT BABRAK KARMAL, A BETTER EDUCATED AND MORE POLISHED FIGURE WITH LEGITIMATE POLITICAL CREDENTIALS,
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COULD BE GIVEN A CHANGE TO SUCCEED. GANKOVSKIY SAID THAT THE POINT OF HIS REVIEW OF AFGHAN HISTORY WAS TO NOTE THAT THERE WERE GREAT DANGERS AHEAD FOR BOTH THE U.S. AND THE SOVIETS ONCE TROOP WITHDRAWAL BEGAN. THE SOVIETS HAD SOUGHT TO LIMIT THE NUMBERS OF TROOPS COMMITTED TO AFGHANISTAN AND THUS HAD BEEN ABLE TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN HOLD SOME CITIES AND ROADS. WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS THERE WAS A GREAT DANGER OF A BLOODBATH AND THE "LEBANIZATION" OF AFGHANISTAN.

AFGHANISTAN'S FUTURE: THE THREAT OF "RIGHT
- EXTREMISM"

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5. WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS, THERE WERE TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS. THERE WAS THE DISTINCT THREAT OF A "RIGHT EXTREMIST LIKE HIKMATYAR" TAKING POWER. THIS WOULD UNLEASH A BLOODLETTING ON THE SCALE OF TARAKI AND AMIN. THERE WAS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF IRANIAN EFFORTS TO "EXPORT" THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION TO AFGHANISTAN. (COMMENT: GANKOVSKIY DID NOT DWELL ON THIS AND SEEMED TO GIVE IT LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING. END COMMENT) ULTIMATELY, AFGHANISTAN MIGHT BREAK DOWN INTO A SERIES OF FIEFDOMS. SOME OF THE WARLORDS WOULD TURN TO THE CHINESE, SOME TO PAKISTAN, SOME TO THE U.S. AND SOME TO THE SOVIET UNION. THIS WOULD BE DISASTROUS. "IN THAT CASE WE WOULD BE FACING TEN PROBLEMS INSTEAD OF ONE." GANKOVSKIY OBSERVED THAT BRITISH POLICY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, WHICH HAD DEFENDED THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY OF AFGHANISTAN AS A BUFFER BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE EMPIRE, HAD BEEN VERY WISE. BOTH THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM THIS.

REFUGEES AND ETHNIC POLITICS

6. GANKOVSKIY NOTED THAT THE PROBLEMS POSED BY AN AFGHAN SETTLEMENT WERE IMMENSE. THE U.S., HE SAID, HAD BEEN RIGHT TO KEEP ATTENTION FOCUSED SQUARELY ON THE QUESTION OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL. NOW, HOWEVER, IT APPEARED REALIZATION OF THAT GOAL WAS IMMINENT. IT WAS URGENT THAT BOTH THE SOVIET AND U.S. SIDES BEGIN THINKING ABOUT WHAT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO PROMOTE STABILITY AND PEACE AFTERWARDS. IN THAT REGARD, HE NOTED THAT AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF REFUGEES WOULD BE RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN. "TO WHAT WILL THEY RETURN?" THE MECHANICS OF TRANSPORTING AND REABSORBING THESE REFUGEES REPRESENTED AN ENORMOUS UNDERTAKING. THE SOVIETS COULD PROVIDE A GOOD DEAL OF AID AND ASSISTANCE, BUT THIS WOULD INEVITABLY RAISE CONCERNS IN THE WEST ABOUT THE "SOVIET PRESENCE." THERE WOULD BE A NEED FOR OTHER COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED NATIONS TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION.

7. PART OF THE RECIPE FOR AVOIDING A BLOODBATH, ACCORDING TO GANKOVSKIY, WAS TO RECOGNIZE THAT AFGHANISTAN WAS A "MULTIETHNIC SOCIETY." UNFORTUNATELY, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES WERE BAD. THE LAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF AFGHAN HISTORY HAD BEEN DOMINATED BY PASHTOONS. IN PARTICULAR, THE DURRANI TRIBE. (BIO NOTE: GANKOVSKIY IS AN EXPERT ON THE DURRANI AND HAS WRITTEN ABOUT THEM. END BIO NOTE.) DURRANI PRE-EMINENCE HAD BEEN SHATTERED BY THE RISE TO POWER OF THE PDPA. GANKOVSKIY SAID THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME SCORE SETTLING BETWEEN AFGHANS. IN ORDER TO HELP PUT A BRAKE ON THE PROCESS, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO TAKE

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THE "ETHNIC AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL MAP INTO CONSIDERATION." GANKOVSKIY OFFERED NO FURTHER SPECIFICS, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A RANGE OF PERSONAL CONTACTS, FAMILY TIES AND TRIBAL CONNECTIONS, AS WELL AS SIMPLE WAR-WEARINESS MIGHT ALSO SERVE TO LIMIT THE VIOLENCE AFTER THE SOVIETS HAD LEFT.

COMMENT

8. AS IN OTHER RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS, GANKOVSKIY OPERATED FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AND LARGELY ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR. HIS FOCUS WAS MAINLY ON QUESTIONS WHICH HE FEARED WOULD THREATEN THE PROCESS OR CREATE DANGEROUS INSTABILITY AFTER THE FACT. THE POSSIBLE DANGER OF IRANIAN ACTIVITY AND MORE SERIOUSLY THE THREAT OF "LEBANIZATION" MAY BE THEMES THAT WILL INCREASINGLY FIGURE IN SOVIET PRESENTATIONS ON AFGHANISTAN. IT DOVETAILS WITH SHEVARDNADZE'S REMARKS THAT ALL SIDES WILL HAVE TO PLAY A PART IN PROMOTING AN ALL-AFGHAN POLITICAL DIALOGUE AFTER SOVIET WITHDRAWAL.

*or alternately - on questions
that must be dealt with
before Sov withdraw*

9. KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
MATLOCK

END OF MESSAGE

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