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DCI TALKING POINTS
SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE 37-89

Afghanistan: The War In Perspective

This Estimate updates SNIE 11/37-88: USSR: Withdrawal From Afghanistan, published March 1988. The current Estimate assesses developments in Afghanistan over the next 12 months. The Estimate was initiated by the National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia in preparation for the US-Soviet Malta Summit in early December.

- o The Kabul regime is unpopular, factionalized and dependent on Soviet support, but probably will remain in power over the next 12 months.
- o This war is best understood as an insurgency, not in any sense a conventional conflict.
- o Resistance infighting and the limited appeal of the Afghan Interim Government will continue to prevent the resistance from forging an effective political instrument.
- o A unilateral US cutoff of support would alter the military balance in favor of the regime and give it the upper hand in dictating political arrangements. A mutual cutoff by the US and USSR (negative symmetry) would ultimately be more damaging to the regime.
- o The Soviets will continue to search for a political settlement while providing support to Kabul. Pakistan will support the resistance regardless of the government seated in Islamabad.
- o The NIO will give you additional details.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE DCI'S USE ONLY

Intelligence Community Representatives completed coordination on the captioned Estimate the evening of 17 November. Although coordination was lengthy and intense, we anticipate no problems at NFIB.

We had two dissenting CIA footnotes. One concerns the tendency among some resistance commanders to reach local accommodations with regime commanders--and, of course, the subsequent effect on the conflict. Most analysts fear an increasing trend of accommodations. CIA, in its footnote, believes accommodations are inconsequential and may, in any event, be transitory. The second footnote, in effect, claims the one-year time frame of the analysis is moot since the more important results will likely occur beyond the scope of this Estimate.

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