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

7 January 1986

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Foreign Intelligence Board Principals

FROM: Harold P. Ford
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT: Fast Track SNIE 11/37-86 on Soviet Policy Toward Afghanistan

1. At the request of State/INR, the DCI has directed the preparation of a very short, very fast-track SNIE assessing the meaning, if any, of recently reported Soviet interest in a political solution to the war in Afghanistan. Since the task is quite straightforward, we shall dispense with TORs and proceed on the following outline:

Evidence of, or allegations about, new Soviet interest in a political solution from March 1985 to the present.

The assessed intent of Soviet political messages: To signal real interest or weaken the adversary coalition?

The effect of Soviet messages, so far and expected, on key parties to the conflict.

Outlook for Soviet policy, including the possibility and identifying features of future Soviet interest in a political solution.

2. NIO/USSR will run the SNIE. The drafter will be [redacted] of CIA/SOVA [redacted]. Please designate a representative to participate in this SNIE and have that person contact NIO or ANIO/USSR as soon as possible [redacted]. We intend to get agencies' substantive views by polling representatives in secure phone conversations, circulate a draft by Friday 10 January, coordinate on Monday 13 January, and go to NFIB on Thursday 16 January.

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SNIE 11/37-86, "Soviet Tactics on a Political Solution
in Afghanistan"

This estimate was requested by the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, informally through the DCI. The request asked us to evaluate reports of renewed Soviet interest in a political settlement short of complete victory in Afghanistan. The implicit policy issue, though not explicitly stated, was the position the US government should adopt on these reports in its diplomatic exchanges with the allies, the Soviets, and key countries affected by the war. The estimate judged that the reports were part of a new effort by Moscow to divide the coalition supporting the resistance, not an authentic indication of increased Soviet interest in a solution short of victory. In drawing policy implications, the estimate concluded that the US would need to show continuing support for the resistance and its backers and to assure them that we saw "no compromise short of Soviet withdrawal" in sight.

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