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New Afghan atrocities alleged by the CIA

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The US Central Intelligence Agency has revealed new reports of atrocities alleged to have been committed by Soviet-supported troops in Afghanistan.

In a letter to Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D) of Texas, CIA director Stansfield Turner listed the following until-now unreported events said to have occurred in Afghanistan in 1979:

- In retribution against a village that refused to cooperate with the Kabul regime, Afghan troops destroyed the village and killed 20 of its inhabitants. The children among the victims were mutilated in front of their parents before the entire group was slain.

- In another incident reportedly motivated by retribution, Afghan soldiers killed 300 villagers.

In addition, the letter from Admiral Turner said that there had been reports of several cases of rape perpetrated by

Afghan soldiers, some of which were alleged to have resulted in the victims' deaths.

The CIA director said details of all of these incidents had to be omitted in order to protect sources of information. He also said that there have likely been numerous unreported incidents of this kind.

The CIA reports coincided with one from a Cairo-based correspondent for the London Observer, who said he had recently seen the destruction of 80 percent of the villages along one of Afghanistan's main roads and with new reports from other US government sources that the Soviets have used nerve gas in trying to crush Afghan guerrillas.

Admiral Turner's letter to Senator Bentsen came in response to a letter from the senator asking for information about a report in The Christian Science Monitor Feb. 4 which quoted survivors as saying that Afghan troops, under Soviet orders, had murdered 1,170 unarmed men and boys last April in the village of Kerala in eastern Afghanistan.

The CIA director said in his response that the agency was "almost certain" that the alleged massacre did occur. He said CIA had no on-the-spot confirmation from its own sources but noted that a strikingly similar account appeared in a Pakistani newspaper on April 29, 1979.

As a result of Admiral Turner's report to him, Senator Bentsen has urged President Carter to seek a UN Security Council investigation of the alleged massacre at Kerala. In a letter to the President dated March 4, the senator said that if the Soviet Union were to veto such an inquiry, then "the veto itself would speak volumes about Soviet conduct, and the

debate leading to the veto will insure that the whole world will watch the debate and evaluate the charges."

He suggested that as alternatives, the President might want to consider an investigation by the full UN General Assembly or one by the International Red Cross.

On March 3, Shyam Bhatia of the London Observer, who was held captive by Afghan guerrillas, reported that 80 percent of the villages along most of the 220-mile main Kabul-Kandahar road "were just flattened" by rockets fired by Soviet-supplied helicopter gunships. According to a United Press International report, the correspondent further said that hundreds of civilians, including women and children, were killed in indiscriminate attacks by such gunships.

Carter administration sources, meanwhile, said reports on the use of nerve gas by the Soviets in Afghanistan were based not on "clinical evidence" but on numerous accounts from refugees gathered over a period of several months.

US State Department officials began reporting some weeks ago that the Soviets had taken chemical warfare and decontamination