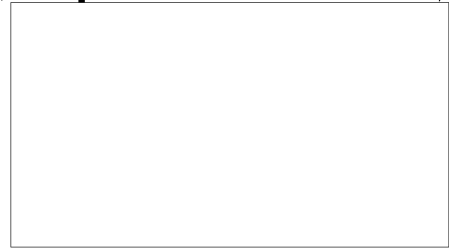




**Director of
Central
Intelligence**

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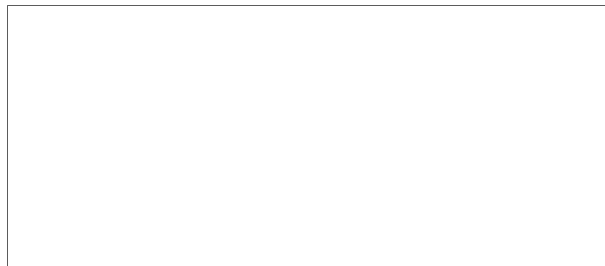


National Intelligence Daily

**Saturday
14 February 1987**



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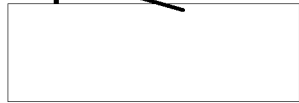
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USSR-INDIA-PAKISTAN:

Soviet Position on Border Tensions

There appears to be no foundation for Islamabad's fears that Moscow encouraged New Delhi to provoke the recent tensions along the Pakistani border in order to extract concessions on Afghanistan from Islamabad, but the Soviets have prevailed on India to provide public relations support for the Afghan regime's efforts at "national reconciliation."

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A Pakistani Foreign Ministry official has told the US Embassy that Islamabad now credits the Soviets with having worked to avoid war. Pakistani officials speculated earlier that Moscow had urged New Delhi to heighten tensions in order to increase pressure on Islamabad to soften its position on Afghanistan.

(b)(3)

~~The US Embassy in New Delhi reports an Indian politician unfriendly to the Soviets, but with a wide range of contacts, says Moscow urged restraint on both India and Pakistan, causing some resentment among Indians over what they regarded as Soviet "evenhandedness." The Embassy also notes that Soviet diplomats in New Delhi were discreetly silent during the crisis.~~

(b)(3)

Coverage of the border tensions by Soviet media was not inflammatory. An editorial in *Pravda* on 6 February hinted that Moscow had played a part in defusing tensions.

(b)(3)

Indian media and some Indian officials have reacted positively to Kabul's cease-fire and efforts at national reconciliation. The Indians lobbied the recent Islamic Conference summit in Kuwait to have these measures acknowledged favorably. Afghan Foreign Minister Wakil just concluded consultations in New Delhi; this was the highest level Afghan visit to India since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979.

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Comment: Moscow benefits from some degree of tension between India and Pakistan and frequently tries to play on India's suspicions on such issues as a Pakistani military buildup or Islamabad's alleged involvement with the Sikhs. The Soviets may hope that one byproduct of the latest tensions will be getting Pakistan to make concessions on Afghanistan.

(b)(3)

The USSR has provided misleading intelligence to its clients in the past to intensify and exploit conflicts. Conceivably, it might have passed false information to India in an attempt to increase the pressure on Pakistan—perhaps even to precipitate the fall of the Zia regime—or to reinforce India's waning reliance on Moscow.

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Moscow's reported attempts to reduce tensions would be consistent, however, with General Secretary Gorbachev's failure during his visit to New Delhi in November to give a specific commitment to the Indians to support them in their disputes with Pakistan—a development that occasioned some concern in New Delhi about Soviet intentions in the region. Indeed, an Indo-Pakistani war might hurt Soviet interests by disrupting Moscow's relations with both the US and China, especially if the Soviets were drawn in on India's side. A war could also foster Pakistani unity just as Moscow is trying to promote divisions within Pakistan over Islamabad's support for the Afghan resistance. Moreover, a war might undercut efforts by Moscow to improve its international standing by projecting itself as a peacemaker in regional disputes. [Redacted]

(b)(3)

Moscow is attempting to exploit India's standing in the Third World to encourage Pakistani concessions on Afghanistan by publicizing New Delhi's endorsement of Kabul's recent efforts at "national reconciliation." Soviet representations have convinced some Indian officials the Soviets will withdraw from Afghanistan if a face-saving settlement can be achieved there. New Delhi believes such an outcome would eliminate a principal reason for Pakistan's military buildup. [Redacted]

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14 February 1987

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