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AFGHANISTAN

BATTLE FOR KABUL: LESSONS OF SOVIET AFGHANISTAN INTERVENTION

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[Article by Wolfgang Berner: "The Battle for Kabul: Lessons and Perspectives of the Soviet Military Intervention in Afghanistan"]

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Summary

The Struggle for Kabul. Lessons and Perspectives of the Soviet Military Intervention in Afghanistan. By Wolfgang Berner

Preliminary Observations

The present report is an advance print of a chapter to be included in a detailed multidimensional presentation of the general setting and important topical aspects

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of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. The publication in question, which is at present in preparation and will appear in book form, is a compendium of studies and observations made by a number of particularly qualified authors, together with supporting charts and diagrams.

This book is due to appear under the title "Die sowjetische Intervention in Afghanistan. Entstehung und Hintergruende einer weltpolitischen Krise" (The Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan. Origins of and Background to an International Political Crisis) in mid-year 1980 as Vol 8 of the Federal Institute's "Eastern Europe and International Communism" series, published by Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Federal Republic of Germany.

Principal Aims and Focuses of the Analysis

The present study deals primarily with the problem of uncovering the main political motivations which provided the conceptional framework for the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet forces. Not even in the capitals of Eastern Europe does Moscow's endeavor to present this move as the externally provoked response to an American-Iranian-Pakistani-Chinese aggression against Afghanistan and the southern border of Soviet Central Asia obtain much credence. It is all too evident that such attempts to explain the invasion as a "defensive offensive" could, at best, supply a very scanty disguise for the incontestable reality of the serious use of force, contrary to all conventions of international law, of which the Soviet Union has made itself guilty vis-a-vis its — technically even now still nonaligned — smaller neighbor.

Thus it seemed even more expedient to raise the question of what kind of political strategy the Soviet leadership has actually been pursuing since the end of World War II with regard to Afghanistan. In this context, attention had to be given also to theories which are based on the assumption that Soviet policy toward Afghanistan during the 1970's must necessarily be seen as a part and component of a Soviet regional strategy, the main objective of which is said to be the systematic, step-by-step expansion of the Soviet sphere of hegemony to reach the Indian Ocean.

To find an answer to the question as to how much method there is behind the universally evident Soviet drive for expansion could become extremely important with regard to the ultimate feasibility of all efforts on the part of the West to contain such tendencies effectively without having to opt a priori for a posture of permanent military-political confrontation vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Here the investigation of the thesis that the putsch which brought the "People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan" (PDPA) to power in Kabul at the end of April 1978 was remote-controlled from the Soviet Union affords good starting points for a model analysis on the basis of a suitable "test case."

From this angle, the study also deals in detail with the relationship which existed between this crypto-communist revolutionary party and the CPSU in the years between the foundation of the PDPA in 1965 and its seizure of power. After all, there were indications enough to suggest that the Soviet leadership neither before nor since the coup regarded the PDPA as an absolutely reliable instrument of its own Afghanistan and regional policies. For any assessment of the nature of the conflicts which broke open again and again and ultimately led to the violent overthrow of the Hafizullah Amin regime by the Soviet military intervention, it is important to know whether the PDPA with its policies may not at times have been at variance with the general line of Soviet Afghanistan strategy. It must further be examined whether,

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by acting on its own initiative, the PDPA was in a position to bring about developments which confronted the Kremlin with situations of serious dilemma and which may possibly have given rise to policy revisions or even conceptual changes of strategy which had not originally been planned and might therefore have led to more or less improvised actions.

Findings

1. Since the mid-1950's, the Soviet Union has been pursuing an active policy on Afghanistan, the expansive objectives of which manifested themselves more and more plainly as time went by. Out of this policy there emerged in the early 1970's a strategy of inconspicuously progressing, multidimensional, economic-political integration of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere of hegemony. All indications suggest that the seizure of power by the crypto-communist PDPA came as a surprise to Moscow, a surprise which necessitated a conceptual change of Soviet strategy toward Afghanistan.
2. A closer analysis of the events within Afghanistan and of the evolution of Soviet-Afghan relations tends rather to support the assumption that the main motives behind the Soviet decision to intervene (which may well have been taken in September 1979) were based on considerations related to the specific bilateral situation at that time, while there are hardly any pointers substantiating the clue that these motives might have originated primarily from a schedule of stages or goals pertaining to any expansionist "overall plan" -- from any "grand design." At any rate, there is not sufficient evidence to discern, e.g., the expansion of the Soviet sphere of hegemony to the Indian Ocean as a main objective of any fully formulated political strategy for Western Asia on the part of the Soviet leadership. On the other hand, it must on no account be ruled out that the occupation of Afghanistan could trigger new deliberations in the minds of some Soviet politicians and military strategists, deliberations which could now set their sights more clearly on Iran or the Gulf region.
3. Although it is highly improbable that the successful communist putsch in Kabul at the end of April 1978 was staged or remote-controlled by the Soviet leadership or its "services," it must yet be observed that Moscow very soon expressed its most emphatic solidarity with the victors and did all in its power to exploit their triumph to the full for the purposes of its own interest policy. The fact that the Western powers failed to object energetically to this development was evidently interpreted in Moscow as signaling their tacit acquiescence to the integration of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere of hegemony.
4. From the very beginning, Soviet experts on Afghanistan suspected the crypto-communist PDPA of having been infiltrated by secret police, CIA and other secret service agents. Up to May 1978, the leaders of the CPSU and the coordinating organs of international communism of pro-Soviet orientation denied the PDPA any form of acceptance into the CPSU-controlled community of communist parties and of mutual inter-party solidarity. The mistrust on the part of the CPSU organs involved was so pronounced that even the publication of greetings and messages of congratulation from the leaders of the PDPA in the Soviet media and in the Moscow-oriented periodical publications of international communism was consistently prevented. Also, it would appear that care was taken as a matter of principle not to admit any representatives of the PDPA into the leadership organs of the Soviet-controlled auxiliary

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organizations of the international communist movement. There is no conspiratorial background to this practice of denial and discrimination to be discerned.

5. The allegation propagated by the Soviet media after the death of Hafizullah Amin, to the effect that the latter had been a CIA agent trained in the United States, can apparently be traced back to old insinuations communicated by Babrak Karmal and other "Parcham" leaders to their Soviet contacts after the splitting up of the PDPA into two parallel parties in the summer of 1967. On the other hand, there is evidence suggesting that Karmal was denounced to Soviet interlocutors by Taraki, Amin and other "Khalq" party officials, first as a royalist in disguise and an agent of the royal secret police and later as a collaborator of Daoud Khan and his police chief.

6. There are various indications and events to suggest that the Soviet authorities in charge attempted even at a relatively early stage to prevent Amin's advancement to a position as absolute ruler in Kabul. A number of attempts made with Soviet support to remove him from power or to physically liquidate him apparently miscarried. Since Amin's (and Taraki's) reign of terror had, besides, fully discredited the communist regime and brought it to the brink of self-destruction, the point had obviously come by mid-September 1979 at which the Soviet leadership could see no other way out of the embroiled situation than that of armed intervention. For an abysmal mutual distrust had built up between Amin, in the meantime risen to the position of dictator, and the Soviet Union, while, on the other hand, great haste appeared to be required if there was to be any chance of smashing the anti-communist rebellion of the Mojahedin movement at the last moment. In the light of the circumstances under which the Soviet decision to intervene was taken, the question as to who it was who was supposed to have requested the Soviet leadership to send in the troops, and when, becomes completely irrelevant.

7. Since the Kremlin has forced on the Karmal regime a treaty concerning the stationing of Soviet troops (presumably in mid-March 1980), it can hardly be assumed that there is any prospect of an early withdrawal of the Soviet armed forces from Afghanistan. Without doubt, the occupation of this neighbor country has brought about not only certain burdens and foreign policy problems for the USSR but also geostrategic advantages. The best way for it to consolidate these advantages in the long term is to integrate Afghanistan into the Soviet-controlled hegemonial system as a member of the "community of socialist states." This integration will probably be implemented after the pattern of the Mongolian People's Republic, which has long been incorporated into the Soviet empire.

1. Consequences of the Soviet Military Intervention

The occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet troops that has been going on since the last week of December 1979 has caused a shift in the balance of international political forces. This observation refers less to the military potential of the superpowers and their alliance systems than to the general makeup of the political spectrum.

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First of all in this regard, the objective effects and concrete results of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan are more important than the motivations that underlie this action. For regardless of whether the pertinent decisions by the Soviet leadership may have been based on wide-ranging expansionist objectives, perhaps worldwide strategic objectives, one fact is irrefutable: namely, that the southerly shift in the boundaries of the Soviet empire by 650-800 km, toward the Arabian Sea, necessitates a thorough examination by all neighboring states of their existing security policies and perimeters of security. It is equally indisputable that the changes brought about by this southward thrust must of necessity be perceived also by the Western industrial states that are dependent upon oil deliveries from the Gulf region as menacing in the sense of an added threat to their mineral oil supply.

A possible result of the Afghanistan invasion is that the Soviet leaders have now lost their last bit of credit in terms of the trust they still enjoyed among U.S. politicians involved in foreign policy decisions, so that those who still consider it best to negotiate constructively to reduce tensions step by step in the relationship between the United States and the USSR might have become a minority. But if the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan should have put an end to the willingness on both sides to adopt a nonconfrontational policy based on a common interest in survival, then the world must brace itself for a renewed period of serious, reciprocal threats of war by the superpowers.

The effects of the USSR's southward thrust have thus by no means been limited to the immediately adjacent regions of southern and western Asia. To begin with, it must be noted that extremely far-reaching changes have taken place in the ways in which many countries of this region perceive the threat. The primary ones to be considered are Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi-Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. But also affected are the vital interests of the Western Europeans, the Japanese and other large consumers of Gulf petroleum who are concerned for the safety of the tanker routes. And finally, processes of radical change are beginning to be noted in the most varied segments of the U.S. opinion spectrum -- in the executive branch, in Congress, in the mass media, in the public opinion polls. The outcome of this development is still a complete unknown.

The Soviet Union's grab for Afghanistan has produced certain geostrategic advantages at best. Nevertheless, the final verdict has by no means been reached as regards the price it will ultimately have to pay for these advantages. For instance, the Afghanistan occupation also set in motion significant shifts in the collective positions of certain large interest groups -- not only among the members of the Arab League and all the Islamic countries but also a great number of the nonaligned states. In general this process of revision adds up to the adoption of a clearly solid front in opposition to Soviet expansionism, though the final, tangible consequences cannot yet be foreseen.

2. On the Preliminary Decisions Taken in 1978

To be sure, in making an assessment of those shifts of forces that we are now observing so clearly, we must bear in mind that the Soviet operation that began at the end of 1979 was actually serving only to consolidate privileges of influence and positions of power which the Kremlin had secured for itself in Afghanistan following the communist coup on 27 April 1978. Though the Western media had indeed reported extensively on the overthrow, the world at large was not immediately aware

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of its import. A contributing factor may have been that the West's foreign ministries were generally hesitant to be "hasty" in sounding the alarm over events in Afghanistan. Many of the responsible politicians and officials apparently hoped that the plans of the new rulers would be dashed by internal resistance from the majority of the people and by the realities of Afghanistan's social structure -- expectations which were by no means groundless, as it turned out.

It must be recorded, however, that the change in regimes in April 1978 produced as an immediate result a substantial and qualitative change in Afghan-Soviet relations. From this point on, Afghanistan began to steer a course of close political and military dependence upon the USSR, a dependence that was also unmistakably reflected in the Soviet-Afghan "Treaty on Friendship, Friendly Relations and Cooperation" concluded on 5 December 1978. After this time the new communist government in Kabul could still claim at most but a few of the formal elements that define "nonalignment." In truth it had meanwhile long since abandoned its neutrality in the realm of foreign policy.

Brezhnev's comments in connection with the signing of the treaty included these remarks:

"The Soviet Union and Afghanistan are good neighbors. This has become a tradition... . But then came the events of April 1978. A true people's revolution brought an abrupt change in the centuries-old history of Afghanistan. Under these conditions it is not at all surprising that the traditionally close ties between our countries have taken on a qualitatively different character, so to speak. That which exists today is not simply friendly relations between neighbors but a profound, sincere and firm friendship, filled with the spirit of comradeship and revolutionary solidarity."

All indications are that the West was late in grasping the full significance of the political substance of the Soviet leadership's profession of "revolutionary solidarity" with the Afghan "progressive forces."

On the other hand, to the experienced observer it was inconceivable that the leaders of the Soviet Union would ever abandon the revolutionary regime with which they had declared their solidarity most emphatically despite its already obvious weakness at the time the treaty was signed, or that they would passively accept its liquidation by enemies or through self-destruction. Arguing against this were reasons of ideology and prestige as well as calculations involving power and interest policies. Moreover, Brezhnev and his colleagues in the Politburo had presumably made an irrevocable decision as early as December 1978 regarding the model to be used in the "building of socialism" in Afghanistan.

Their objectives were patterned essentially after the model of the Mongolian People's Republic, which has not only harbored airbases and missile bases for the Soviet armed forces for a long time but is also available to them at any time as a staging area (vis-a-vis the People's Republic of China). For at least 20 years, Soviet authors have been in the habit of pointing to the example of Mongolia as a way of refuting the -- Marxist -- argument that developing countries with a pre-industrialized social structure marked by feudalism and tribalism -- like Afghanistan, for example -- could arrive at socialism only via an intermediate stage of

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intensive industrialization (and the attendant "creation" of their own "working class." The Soviet counterthesis goes like this:

"The 'class alliance of Russia's victorious working class with the Mongolian peasantry' assured the victory of the people's revolution in Mongolia, a backward, livestock-raising country with no working class of its own. The historic experience of the Mongolian People's Republic thus confirmed that the peasant masses of a backward country (in which the national working class is either nonexistent or extremely weak) can, with aid and support from one of victorious socialism's working classes of a country or group of countries, successfully carry out the socioeconomic reforms that are fundamental, eliminate their backward condition and raise the level of their material and cultural welfare... . Consequently, the alliance of the working class and the peasantry can be realized successfully also on an international scale. This conclusion is of great importance for many developed countries that are weak economically."

Moreover, it is not only ideological significance that must be accorded to orientation along the lines of the Mongolian People's Republic pattern -- for instance, with reference to overcoming dialectically the problems of formation theory alluded to here. A glance at the history of the transformation of Outer Mongolia into a satellite state of the Soviet Union also brings to light a number of interesting as well as informative operational parallels with the procedure now being employed vis-a-vis Afghanistan.

Up to the time of the invasion by Soviet troops in June 1921, this country, which had never formally belonged to Russia, enjoyed an autonomous status within the framework of Chinese sovereignty. The intervention came as the result of a "request for help" that emanated from a so-called "Provisional People's Government of Mongolia" which had been formed shortly beforehand on Soviet soil with Soviet assistance. On 5 November 1921, the Soviets concluded with this government a treaty in which they recognized this body as the only legal government of Mongolia. Repeated promises that the Soviet troops would be withdrawn after they had wiped out Baron Ungern-Sternberg's White Russian units went unredeemed. Their withdrawal did not come until the spring of 1925, after the "People's Republic of Mongolia" had been proclaimed and the process of transforming Outer Mongolia into a Soviet protectorate had been concluded.

3. Causalities and Soviet Attempts at Justification

The question of motives behind the Soviet decision to intervene can lay claim to topical interest from two standpoints -- in other words, interest limited not only to clarification of the course of historical events. It can of course be assumed that the Soviet leadership would have preferred to forgo the use of military force in incorporating Afghanistan into its sphere of hegemony had it not appeared, for specific reasons, that the use of force was urgently necessary. The ascertainment or explanation of the main motivations and causalities pertaining to this action might thus permit conclusions as to important driving forces and other motives that exerted a determining influence on the outcome of the Soviet decisionmaking process. It also has to be considered politically relevant here to answer secondary questions concerning the timing of the decision to intervene, the significance of the date chosen for the intervention and the methods employed in carrying it out.

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In addition, questions must be posed regarding the overall conceptual framework into which the occupation of Afghanistan must be fitted. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that the decision to intervene arose out of a real dilemma and was primarily intended to prevent at the last minute the compromising failure of an expansionist plan that was limited strictly to Afghanistan. On the other hand, the possibility must not be overlooked that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan might be connected with more extensive goals — that they could be viewed as a stage in the realization of a "grand design," a concretely defined overall strategy that extends far beyond Afghanistan.

On the other hand, there is no need to explore further the fact that the Soviet Union has been guilty of a scandalous violation of international law and sovereignty with its massive military operation designed to remove a government that had become objectionable — the government of Hafizullah Amin — and to establish an occupation regime. In view of the situation, the Soviet decision to use force against the indeed cruel and incompetent government of Afghanistan — but nevertheless a legal one according to Moscow's criteria — cannot even be palliated, much less justified, by any arguments or allusions to motivation whatsoever. In light of the unilateral action by the Soviet leadership, an action whose obvious purpose was to remove from power the Afghan president and prime minister, Amin, the reference by Soviet representatives to Art 4 of the treaty concluded on 5 December 1978 is just as absurd as evoking the right of collective defense as set forth in Art 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Downright outrageous or brazen are the only words to describe the attempts at justification that refer to an alleged request for assistance by Hafizullah Amin, who was "executed" in the wake of the intervention, or to several earlier calls for help by his predecessor in office, Nur Mohammad Taraki, or to the requests for assistance coming from Babrak Karmal, Amin's successor installed by the Soviet occupiers. Brezhnev apparently responded initially to an inquiry from President Carter via the "hot line" on 28 December 1979 with the unqualified statement that the Soviet Union, in sending troops to Afghanistan, had been responding to an invitation from Amin. The CPSU general secretary later varied this response when he said in a combination interview and statement published in PRAVDA on 13 January 1980:

"In its defense against external aggression, the Afghan leadership turned to the Soviet Union while President Taraki was still in office and then repeatedly thereafter as well."

Brezhnev went on to say that in view of the popular uprising led by Babrak Karmal against the "Amin tyranny" and the continuing menace from "external forces, the moment had come "to accede to the request made by the friendly government of Afghanistan, since we could no longer do otherwise."

A TASS report in March 1980 — according to which the "leadership of Afghanistan" is said to have asked the Soviet Union for military assistance in a total of "14 instances," "4 times during last December alone" — presumably was chiefly designed to revalidate after all Brezhnev's original reference to an apparently suicidal request for intervention by Hafizullah Amin. But also worthy of attention is the Soviet version which asserts that although there had been earlier Afghan requests for support, they had not been complied with until Karmal had asked for military assistance once again after having seized power. The Soviet leadership had not

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responded to this call until a point "at which a lethal danger hung over the revolution."

Babrak Karmal finally undertook in a SPIEGEL interview to halfway reconcile these contradictory statements and intimations:

"Following the April revolution of 1978, Mohammad Taraki, in accordance with corresponding resolutions by the Revolutionary Council and the government, asked the Soviet Union — about 14 times — to send auxiliary troops. Foreign aggression was not yet so obvious at that time... . But after the assassination of Taraki, the need for assistance from the Soviet Union became essential... . Thus, a few days before 27 December [1979], Amin was forced by pressure from majorities in the Revolutionary Council and the Central Committee to ask the Soviet Union for limited contingents of troops to counter aggression on the part of Pakistan that was possible at any moment. Without my personal knowledge of this request and with no opportunities [on my part] to influence the decision, Soviet military units moved into Afghanistan."

According to this account, Amin's alleged petition for assistance would simply have been in reference to defending against a feared act of aggression (in other words, not yet under way) on the part of Pakistan, while Moscow apparently used this request as an excuse to topple Amin and replace him with Karmal in all his functions. It is also noteworthy, however, that Karmal expressly denies having asked for Soviet troops on his own initiative or having influenced in any way Moscow's decision to intervene.

The main considerations that tipped the balance in favor of Soviet military intervention were evidently those relating to the prospect of a collapse of the communist revolutionary regime and to the probable consequences for Soviet positions in Afghanistan. The extent to which additional motives and interests might have played a role remains an open question that requires further examination. Nevertheless, the Soviet juggling of alleged calls for help by Taraki, Amin or Karmal is completely irrelevant to an assessment of the facts relating to the use of force in violation of international law, and its role at best is that of diverting attention from this actual central issue.

No less irrelevant are the Soviet attempts to defend or minimize their own actions toward Afghanistan by countering with references to instances of intervention in which the United States or France took the initiative. Thus, the Vietnam conflict was a revolutionary war of reunification unleashed by North Vietnam, a war in which the United States did indeed support South Vietnam militarily but was repeatedly pushed by its allies into a more aggressive involvement not limited to defensive targets. Equally flawed is the comparison with the French-Belgian-Moroccan-American intervention in Shaba in May 1978. There are three reasons for this: (1) the relief operation was carried out at the request of Zaire's President Mobutu because it (2) came under the same OAU (Organization for African Unity) principle that also serves to justify the Cuban-Soviet presence in Angola or Ethiopia, and finally (3), because Mobutu was neither overthrown nor killed in the course of the intervention. As regards the violent overthrow of the Allende government in Chile, although the United States Government unquestionably shares responsibility for this act, neither was the change of governments effected by the use of American military forces nor did the Americans instigate the elevation of an imported puppet to the position of

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successor to Allende. At most, the Kremlin could point to France's participation in the expulsion of Jean Bedel Bokassa, the Central African dictator and butcherer of children; it has not yet done so, however.

4. On the Revolutionary Theory Aspect of the Revolution

In the light of later developments, special consideration should be given to those reasons behind the USSR's military intervention that are based on Leninist revolutionary theory in conjunction with Soviet military doctrine. Of primary significance here is the doctrine of the "war of liberation," which has recently been elevated to the level of a new main category in the Soviet book on the types of warfare. According to this doctrine, basically all socialist states (hence the Soviet Union as well) are obligated under the banner of "proletarian internationalism" to grant any and all support (including military assistance) to national or social revolutionary "progressive forces," or "popular masses," of other countries in their struggle against the "forces of extreme reaction" internally or against foreign "imperialists." It is left totally to the discretion of the socialist camp to determine who the "progressive forces" are; the same is true for the forms and methods of support (Russian: podderzka).

On the other hand, political or military intervention by foreign "counterrevolutionary forces" against the "progressive forces" always, according to this doctrine, constitutes interference (Russian: vmesatel'stvo) in the affairs of another state or "revolutionary people." It must therefore always be condemned and publicly scorned as a flagrant violation of international law — in contrast to support for the "progressive forces" themselves, which is legitimate at all times.

According to Soviet doctrine on the types of warfare, the pledge of "revolutionary solidarity" — given to the Afghan communists by Brezhnev on 5 December 1978 — constitutes grounds for the socialist states to provide "support" as follows in the aforementioned sense of the word:

- 1) For the "proletariat" in the event of civil wars ("wars of liberation") against the "bourgeoisie" in "capitalist" states;
- 2) For "oppressed peoples" in the event of "wars of national liberation" against "imperialism" in "colonial" and "semi-colonial" states;
- 3) For "progressive" or "social revolutionary" forces in the event of "civil wars in developing countries" (regardless of the political orientation of such developing countries) in their struggle against the "forces of extreme reaction."

There is every indication that the Soviet leadership saw the situation into which the Afghan revolutionary regime had maneuvered itself by the spring of 1979 as the test case of a "civil war of liberation" which, because of the way it was going, ultimately necessitated military "support" of the "progressive forces" by their Soviet neighbors. The intervention by Soviet armed forces — obligatory under the tenets of "proletarian internationalism" — presumably became inevitable at the moment it became evident that despite the most brutal terrorist measures the Amin regime was heading toward certain collapse, or at least would never again be capable of regaining control over Afghan national territory under its own power.

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5. Phases of Soviet Afghanistan Policy, 1945-1979

Within the framework of the policy of Soviet interests toward western and southern Asia, Afghanistan has always played an important role since the beginning of the 1920's. After World War II, the evolution of the relationship between the two states was marked by repeated changes in conception. As a rule, Moscow's course corrections took into account external impulses — specific changes in the regional situation or in Afghanistan itself. To that extent, most of them amounted to accommodation. With regard to the Soviet military intervention in December 1979, the analysis of motivations must not fail to examine the earlier phases of Soviet Afghanistan policy for visible objectives and elements of conflict or strategy.

The very first years after World War II saw the development of an obvious convergence of interests between Moscow and Kabul. In view of the tough offensive course which Stalin was steering against Turkey and Iran at that time, he was at the same time making a conspicuous effort to keep relations with Afghanistan on as even a keel as possible. Following the demonstrative abrogation of the 1921 friendship treaty (on 19 March 1945), Turkey saw itself confronted by the Soviet Union with far-reaching demands that ranged from control over outlets from the Black Sea on the one hand to old claims to Turkish border territories around Kars and Ardahan on the other. In the northwestern part of Iran that had been occupied by Soviet troops since 1941, an "Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan" (Tabriz) and a "Kurdish People's Republic" (Mahabad) had been established over the years; their protection by the Soviet Union was evidently motivated by separatist intentions — if not plans for annexation. The lengthy Soviet attempts in both cases at intimidation and blackmail, using a variety of means to exert pressure, ultimately resulted in Turkey's joining NATO in February 1952, while both Turkey and Iran joined the Baghdad Pact (later CENTO) in November 1955 (2 years after the Mossadegh intermezzo).

Afghanistan, on the other hand, courted the Soviet Union in the effort to keep open the "Pushtunistan question": Kabul had never recognized the "Durand Line" drawn in 1893 as the southeastern boundary of Afghanistan, but had always accepted it only as a provisional line of demarcation for the sphere of security policy responsibility and control belonging to British India's colonial administration (in Bombay or New Delhi). For this line cuts through the settlement and living areas of numerous tribes which belong linguistically and ethnically to the Pushtunis (or "Pathans") and thus to the real Afghanistan "nation." The dissolution of British India (in 1947) led immediately to conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, whose government for its part viewed the "Durand Line" as the definitive northwest border of the Pakistani successor state and had no intentions of acceding to any Afghan desires for revision.

Since these differences were having a negative effect on Afghan-Pakistani economic relations, and especially on transit traffic across Pakistani territory, Kabul saw itself forced in July 1950 to conclude an agreement with the Soviet Union on an exchange of trade in important basic materials and supplies as well as on Soviet development aid. The Soviet Union further granted the Afghans duty-free transit for their export goods across Soviet territory. Kabul received its initial Soviet credit commitment (in the amount of \$ 3.5 billion) for development projects (silos and large-scale bakeries) in January 1954, and as Afghan-Pakistani tensions increased to such an extent that Pakistan closed all border crossing-points in April 1955, Kabul found itself in the position of having to ask the Soviet Union to extend the

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transit agreement dating from 1950. This was arranged on 21 June; thereupon a new Soviet-Afghan trade protocol was signed on 27 August 1955, and in December of the same year Khrushchev and Bulganin took advantage of a stopover in Kabul on their way from India to put an even friendlier face on the Soviet-Afghan relationship by means of additional promises.

Bulganin declared publicly on 15 December 1955 that the Soviet Union would support Afghan demands for holding a controlled, nonpartisan plebiscite on the "Pushtunistan question" in the parts of Pakistan inhabited by Pathans. In addition, arrangements were made to extend the Soviet-Afghan neutrality and nonaggression treaty dating from 24 June 1931 (or 31 August 1926). The Soviet visitors also promised their hosts development credits amounting to \$ 100 million. This credit agreement was signed on 28 January 1956.

Up to that time, Soviet diplomacy had essentially pursued in regard to Afghanistan the main goal of lending a special quality to relations between Moscow and Kabul by means of various kinds of cooperation with the Muslim monarchy ruled by Mohammad Zahir Shah, and by taking skillful advantage of the ongoing Afghan-Pakistani conflict: Afghanistan seemed almost predestined to serve as a demonstration of the possibility of peaceful and prosperous collaboration by nonsocialist countries with their powerful neighbor, the USSR. Afghanistan, the traditionally neutral buffer state, was apparently meant to play the role of a "Central Asian Finland," an oriental test case for "peaceful coexistence" with the Soviet Union.

Moreover, beginning in 1955 the Afghanistan policy of Stalin's successors was apparently inspired by the more far-reaching intention of gradually binding this neighboring state ever more closely to the USSR and making it more dependent upon it by way of economic interdependence, aid to education and arms deliveries. The Kremlin was thus doubtless also reacting to the incorporation of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan into the SEATO and CENTO alliance systems which had sprung up along the southwestern flank of the Soviet Union during 1954 and 1955 at the instigation of the United States. Soviet specialists helped draw up a five-year plan for Afghanistan for the first time in 1956; they then gradually assumed responsibility for all Afghan economic planning. The Afghan economy became increasingly enmeshed with that of the Soviet Union as a result of large-scale infrastructure programs and industrialization projects that were paid for with long-term contracts covering Afghan natural gas deliveries.

That which emerged from this policy in the early 1970's can be described as a strategy of inconspicuously progressing, multidimensional economic-political integration of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere of hegemony. By the end of 1978, credit commitments from the USSR amounted to around \$ 1,265,000,000. Afghanistan at this time occupied fifth place (behind Turkey, India, Morocco and Egypt) on the list of countries which had received promises of Soviet development aid (measured by total commitments for the 1954-1978 period).

Most importantly, however, it shared first place when it came to per capita figures and — what is even more important — to actual transfers of funds. As of the end of 1977, the latter figures amounted to about \$ 740 million, or nearly 67 percent of the promised credits, a percentage that was unusually good (also in comparison with Soviet treatment of other partners).

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Since 1956, Afghanistan had procured its arms almost exclusively from the Soviet Union. As of the end of 1977, these deliveries had reached a volume of more than \$600 million. Approximately 3,700 Afghan officers and noncommissioned officers had been trained in the USSR by the end of 1977. Though it is true that President Mohammad Daoud — following the overthrow of King Zahir Shah in 1973 — is supposed to have reduced the number of Soviet military advisers from several hundred to 35 as an average figure for 1976 and 1977, Daoud nevertheless did engage increasing numbers of Soviet civilian advisers and technicians. There were 1,350 such personnel at the end of 1977, while a year later they already numbered 2,075.

Moreover, Afghanistan had been receiving technical and financial development aid from the United States as far back as 1946, chiefly in connection with the Hilmand water management project originally undertaken by private American companies. The first government agreement on this project was struck in June 1953. After it was announced that Khrushchev had promised credit in the amount of \$100 million, Washington likewise decided to increase substantially its involvement in American development aid in Afghanistan. By the end of 1978, the total volume of investment credits and gifts awarded Kabul by the United States amounted to around \$ 526 million.

Even though President Daoud sought in 1975 to check the progress of the Soviet pincer and penetration policy by turning for support to Iran, Saudi-Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in his continuing resistance, Brezhnev and his Politburo colleagues actually had little reason to be dissatisfied with the general course of events in Afghanistan. This by itself is reason enough to be skeptical of the thesis that Daoud was removed at Moscow's order in the coup of 27 April 1978. Moreover, there are numerous and generally quite solid indications that the Afghan communist party which played the major role in the overthrow — the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) — enjoyed any special store of confidence with either the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat's International Section or the KGB's Kabul headquarters. This impression will be substantiated even further in another context.

In light of the certainly unexpected total success of the violent act that led to the seizure of power by the communists (but which, given the circumstances, could very easily have ended as a total fiasco), a fundamental change took place in the Soviet position vis-a-vis the PDPA. While previously the party had for years been obstinately denied recognition as a full-fledged "fraternal party" of the CPSU, it and its leaders — chiefly Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, organizer of the uprising — were now overwhelmed with honors of all sorts. Moreover, their CPSU comrades did not leave it at declarations of solidarity but did all they could to help put into action the social revolutionary program proclaimed by the new regime.

But Moscow's top political figures were baffled and somewhat flustered not only by the surprisingly effortless and apparently total triumph of the revolutionary party, a triumph which embarrassed the skeptics and PDPA-doubters among the Soviet Afghanistan experts. Added to this was the fact that "official" Washington and the other Western powers accepted the change of regimes in Kabul with a placidity that was astonishing to the Soviets. It was almost like a long-awaited, past-due event over which they wanted to make as little fuss as possible instead of sounding a loud — but probably useless — alarm.

This, too, tended to cause the Soviet Union to draw erroneous conclusions. It is possible that during the summer months of 1978 it had succumbed to the twin illusion

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that the new communist rulers, supported by the armed forces, had permanently subdued the entire country and that the indifference of the Western governments could be construed to mean that they had tacitly resigned themselves to the incorporation of Afghanistan into the Soviet sphere of domination. Moscow's later options in several situations of dilemma that resulted from the Afghanistan development can in general be explained more plausibly if one assumes that wholly erroneous ideas on both of these important points still prevailed on the Soviet side for months after the communist coup of 27 April 1978.

However, by the time Brezhnev and Taraki signed the Soviet-Afghan cooperation treaty on 5 December 1978, the Soviet leadership had presumably perceived that increasing resistance was developing toward the PDPA policy of radical structural changes and modernization measures backed initially by the Soviets; this resistance was to be found among broad segments of the population, the officer corps and the armed forces at large. Emboldened by the sudden Soviet backing, the Kabul communists' top functionaries -- who had formerly not really been taken seriously by the CPSU apparatus, or had even been suspected of duplicity -- had engaged in a dangerous process of escalation, in the course of which they grew more and more dogged in their isolation the faster the numbers and the animosity grew among the enemies they had made through intolerance, brutality and disloyalty.

It was not long before old rivalries resurfaced within the group of PDPA leaders as well; bitter battles were fought over power and policy. These struggles in turn resulted in virtual crusades to purge the party, the officer corps, the ministries, the media and the government apparatus. Mass arrests and other repressive measures became routine. Soviet attempts to weaken the position and curb the striving for power of Hafizullah Amin -- who was considered the one chiefly responsible for this development -- had just the opposite effect.

According to their own testimony, the Soviet advisers had admonished Afghanistan's new masters as recently as the fall of 1978 to take pains to be more cautious and moderate in word and deed after the Taraki regime had in October replaced the black, red and green national flag with a red banner bearing a party star and a golden garland of wheat. Immediately thereafter, Amin had proclaimed the Afghan revolution to be the "continuation" of the Russian October Revolution of 1917. It was probably the result of a Soviet recommendation that President and Prime-Minister Taraki had been helping administer the Defense Ministry since the arrest of General Qadir on 12 August 1978. Then, when Amin assumed the office of prime minister on 27 March 1979, Taraki found (doubtless again at the instigation of the Soviets) a special formula for not turning over to him control over the armed forces as well: A Supreme Defense Council was formed with Taraki as its chairman; sitting on the council in addition to Amin and the new defense minister, M.A. Watanjar (an enemy of Amin), were six other members, including the pro-Soviet chief of state security (Aqsa), A. Sarwari.

To be sure, as the prime minister with direct authority over the state security service, Amin had finally gotten his hands on one of the most important instruments of domination and repression. Four months later, in July 1979, he felt strong enough in the wake of a cabinet shuffle to assume personal responsibility for the Defense Ministry and the Interior Ministry. From this point on, Taraki had essentially to perform only representational duties and to serve as a figurehead.

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The Soviet leadership could not watch without concern Amin's efforts to achieve an autocratic position, especially since it was becoming increasingly obvious that its regime's base in Afghanistan was growing shaky.

Particular moves that had caused unrest in many provinces were the resolution put through by Amin in November 1978 to substantially speed up implementation of the land reform program and the government's ensuing sanctions and punitive measures which also affected growing numbers of opposing mullahs, among others. "Changes must be carried out swiftly," was his motto, "while the counterrevolutionaries and imperialists are still too weak to prevent them." But by the summer of 1979 the greatest part of the country was in total turmoil, and for this reason it can be said with certainty that the question of Amin's replacement or overthrow was the focus of the talks which Taraki had with Brezhnev — and apparently with Babrak Karmal as well — on 10 September in Moscow (where Taraki stopped over on a return flight from Havana).

For, according to a later report by PRAVDA, it was with great concern that Soviet observers were watching at that time to see how "the counterrevolutionary ring of fire...was tightening around the capital [of Afghanistan] and drawing closer to the mountain peaks that surround it on all sides." Now coming home to roost was the extremely faulty assessment of Afghanistan's internal balance of forces that had been made by the responsible Kremlin officials in the light of the unexpected communist seizure of power in Kabul in the spring of 1978. Then in the summer of 1979, Brezhnev and his Politburo colleagues could no longer close their eyes to the realization that the consequences of this error in judgment — among which was Hafizullah Amin's go-for-broke policy — were suddenly threatening to jeopardize the fruits of decades of diplomatic spadework, systematic expansion of influence and considerable financial investment.

6. The PDPA: Party of Afghan "Progressive Forces"

Given as the official date for the founding of the PDPA is 1 January 1965, though from mid-1967 to August 1977 it was split into two separate, vigorously feuding, parallel parties. The two branches of the party named themselves for two short-lived publications (KHALQ = People; PARCHAM = Banner) with which they identified.

The larger Khalq faction, headed by writer Nur Mohammad Taraki, was essentially a party of teachers, students, government employees and journalists, with its supporters (probably no more than between 2,000 and 3,000 members in April 1978) concentrated almost exclusively in Kabul. Many Khalq supporters had previously distinguished themselves as Greater-Pushtunistan activists. The weekly journal KHALQ was able to put out five issues between 11 April and 16 May 1966. Most of the articles were written in Pashto; a few, however, were in Dari, the standard language of the court that is closer to Persian. The first issue, which included the PDPA program, is said to have sold 20,000 copies. Reflected in the program were social-revolutionary principles inspired by Marxism-Leninism, but there was also a passionately reformist all-Afghan nationalism. The intention was to realize the "national democratic revolution," it said — "the initial and necessary stage of the socialist revolution." KHALQ was ultimately banned because of the "unconstitutional and anti-Islamic" views presented therein.

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By way of comparison, the smaller Parcham faction enjoyed even better contacts than the Khalq group with tribal and court nobility, the ministerial bureaucracy, the officer corps and notable academic and provincial personalities; it was even said to have had quite close ties with the police. The PDPA program was the same in principle for both the Parcham and Khalq members, except that the Parcham spokesmen placed greater emphasis on using their latitude for legal, and especially parliamentary, activities during the period of the "national democratic revolution," and they expressed more clearly their willingness to conform to the constitution. This wing of the PDPA was led by Babrak Karmal, a lawyer and the son of a general. At times, however, he was overshadowed by the demagogue and party ideologue Mir Akbar Khyber until the latter's murder on 17 April 1978 under still unexplained circumstances (Khyber's death marked the beginning of the chain of events that escalated 10 days later into the Amin-Qadir putsch and to the seizure of power by the communists). Appearing on 14 May 1968 was the first issue of the weekly journal PARCHAM, which presented itself as more of a Dari publication than the Khalq organ was. The paper had to stop publishing in June 1969 during the parliamentary election campaign.

The Parcham group was regarded as a "royalist-communist party" into the early 1970's because of its advocacy of a reform-oriented constitutionalism and its excellent connections at all "command levels" of the Afghan establishment, including the royal court. Its leaders nevertheless agreed to enter into a conspiratorial alliance with Mohammad Daoud Khan, the former prime minister and cousin to the king. The coup of 17 July 1973, which led to the fall of King Zahir Shah and to abolition of the monarchy, was the work of this coalition. As it was revealed later, also among Karmal's and Khyber's Parcham friends was Abdul Qadir, an air force officer who played a leading role in the overthrow.

After having proclaimed the republic, Daoud formed a cabinet to which several Parcham representatives belonged (including Interior Minister M. Faiz Mohammad, for example). Daoud also adopted essential Parcham demands in his government program, the realization of which, however, did not get beyond the initial stages with regard to the promised land reform and the announced democratization plans. Meanwhile, the willingness of the Parcham leaders to collaborate with Daoud within the framework of his "republic of princes" resulted in a further exacerbation of the antagonism between them and the Khalq party, which was holding to a policy of stiff opposition. The Parcham representatives finally withdrew from the government coalition in the second half of 1975.

But it was not until the spring of 1977 that the cooperative relations still being maintained with Daoud's "National Revolutionary Party" were severed after the Parcham leaders' expectations for the newly convened Constituent Assembly were finally shattered. It was probably exasperation and indignation with Daoud — who had succeeded over and over again in catering to the political and personal ambitions of his Parcham partners without actually sharing power with them — that ultimately moved the Parcham leaders to enter into reunification negotiations with the Khalq party, negotiations that turned out to be difficult indeed. Then in August 1977 it was finally possible to seal the union of the parallel parties and restore the unity of the PDPA.

It was reported that Soviet mediators were also brought in to help overcome opposition to the merger in both camps. This is probably true, especially since permanent

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lines of communication had existed since the founding of the PDPA in early 1965 between the Soviet embassy in Kabul and some members of the PDPA leadership, particularly Babrak Karmal and the later Parcham wing. All the more puzzling has to be the observation that the Soviet press (including the Soviet news agencies, newscasters and television editorial staffs), as well as the media belonging to that segment of the international communist movement which is close to the CPSU, had for more than 13 years consistently pursued in their reporting the principle of virtually ignoring the existence of this communistic social-revolutionary party.

They neither took notice of the founding of the party nor reported the PDPA split or reconciliation. The Afghan communist leaders were apparently neither invited to the Third Moscow World Conference of Communist Parties (June 1969) nor asked to participate in the last three CPSU congresses (1966, 1971, 1976). What makes this all the more peculiar is that even representatives of noncommunist revolutionary parties and social-revolutionary activist organizations of the most varied Marxist and socialist shadings have long been welcome guests at the CPSU party congresses. The same is true for the CPSU's annual October celebrations, while all indications are that the Afghan communists were excluded from these festivities as well.

Apart from a few recent isolated exceptions that only confirm the rule, not even the greetings which leading PDPA organs certainly sent to the CPSU and other "fraternal parties" — as is customary on the occasion of party congresses, party anniversaries and other occasions — were published in newspapers or journals put out by these parties or announced by their news agencies, broadcasting stations and so forth. It would appear that the Soviet media, but also the editorial staffs of supranational communications organs within the international system of communist parties, systematically suppressed all news and information concerning the PDPA, Khalq and Parcham. Even quotations taken from the party literature of the Afghan communists or from statements by their most prominent representatives fell under this publication ban until the PDPA assumed power on 27 April 1978.

There is no precedent in the entire history of the communist movement since the establishment of the Comintern for this kind of disavowal or concealment with reference to a "fraternal party" that enjoys full internal recognition and respect. Neither consideration for neighborly relations of a special quality nor a particular need to protect or camouflage the recognized communist party of a certain country can be considered a sufficient motive. Otherwise the activities, messages of greeting or attendance at party congresses by the communist parties of Finland, or Turkey, or Iran or Iraq would also have to go unpublicized, something that by no means happens. The splitting into parallel parties can be regarded as no more of a decisive motive since in similar cases (for example, with the parallel parties of the Finnish, Swedish, Israeli, Egyptian or Indian communists) the CPSU leadership has traditionally maintained "normal" party relations with at least one of the parallel organizations — and sometimes with both.

Consequently, the final question to be examined is whether the PDPA could truly be considered a "fraternal party," fully recognized and respected by the CPSU at the time in question (January 1965 to April 1978), and perhaps why it was denied recognition and respect. There is some suggestion that the PDPA and the parallel parties that emerged from it were regarded in Moscow (in other words, chiefly in the Central Committee's International Section headed by the old Comintern functionary Boris N. Ponomarev) not as a "serious" revolutionary party and definitely not as a vanguard

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party of Afghanistan's "working class." Nevertheless, the publicity ban imposed on the PDPA with respect to all its activities and expressions of opinion points to a substantially more serious reason for the discriminatory stance: It appears that there existed in the CPSU apparatus a well-grounded distrust — presumably also based on the embassy reports from Kabul and on the dossier put together by the KGB headquarters there — of influential PDPA functionaries, if not of the entire group of this organization's leaders, with respect to their secret police and foreign contacts.

As for assessing the aggressiveness, political reliability and "class character" of the PDPA leadership, the responsible CPSU and KGB authorities probably viewed with rather a jaundiced eye these Kabul parlor-communists who had no real base among the masses nor any impact of note in the provinces. Workers and farmers were to be found among neither the leaders nor the membership. In Kabul (approximately 500,000 residents), the industrial workers constituted only an infinitesimal minority, and farmers or agricultural workers could be found only in the outlying districts, if at all. There were not even the beginnings of a trade union organization, let alone unions for industrial or agricultural workers. Though the Parcham agitator Khyber had occasionally been described in press reports as a "trade union leader," he could claim at best loose contacts with the communist World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). And this organization did not even issue an official statement at the time of Khyber's assassination.

The general impression made by the Parcham and Khalq politicians on the local Soviet observers who knew them fairly well was presumably that of a clique of restless and restive intellectuals who in reality themselves belonged to the establishment, but who expected from a change of systems the fulfillment of personal career ambitions. Of the 21 ministers in the first Taraki cabinet (consisting of 11 Khalq and 10 Parcham representatives), all but 3 had a university education; and these were military men who had undergone special training in the USSR. At the time of the coup, 5 of the 21 ministers had held a civil service post in the government, 3 were officers, 1 was an employee of the state broadcasting service, 2 were university instructors, 3 had worked as journalists or writers, 2 were doctors, 2 were lawyers, 2 were unemployed full-time academics in other fields and the last was a restaurateur. Most were charter members of the PDPA, and 13 of the 21 ministers had belonged to the party's first Central Committee as full members (7) or candidates (6).

The KGB emissaries and CPSU overseers must also have had their doubts about the fact that the Khalq party was essentially a Pathan organization whose Pathan nationalism repeatedly showed through beneath its Marxist veneer. By contrast, the Parcham spokesmen came across as progressively unitarian, nonexpansionist nationalists who would fight to overcome the traditional particularism of nationalities and tribes within the framework of a modern, secularized Afghan nation-state. Pashto was considered the party language among Khalq circles, while Parcham members made a point of preferring Dari on principle.

As a youth, Taraki had belonged to a literary movement that was pledged to Pathan nationalism, and after 1950 he made his reputation as a writer chiefly as the author of stories in Pashto. Hafizullah Amin, before his conversion to Marxism, had propagated a doctrine of Pathan supermen, while playing an extremely militant role in the government-inspired anti-Pakistani agitation for a militant solution to the "Push-tunistan question" beginning in 1953. On the other hand, in the early 1970's the "Setem-i-Meli" movement (against national oppression) separated from the Parcham communists. This was a militant alliance of Tadzhik, Uzbek and other non-Pathan

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Parcham members who charged their own leaders with clinging to the principle of Pathan hegemony — just like their Khalq competitors and in conflict with their affirmation of a unitary system. In 1975 — during the period of Parcham cooperation with Daoud Khan — their intrigues gave rise to rebellions in the Tadjik region northeast of Kabul (Panjeri) which were put down with the help of the army. The Setem-i-Meli movement represented in a particularly pronounced form a conviction held by Afghanistan's entire left: It was not class differences that constituted Afghanistan's main and central problem; it was the ethnic and tribal antagonisms.

It is readily apparent that the Soviet observers had reason enough to advise the Central Committee apparatus in Moscow to act with restraint toward these would-be Afghan communists. Nevertheless, the top CPSU officials would hardly have imposed a publicity ban regarding the importunate Kabul people's party members on all the media subject to the Kremlin's influence unless there had been other, more compelling reasons to discriminate. There was truly no lack of suspicious facts that could lead the notoriously suspicious KGB specialists to believe that the PDPA — which essentially enjoyed little credibility as the "vanguard party of the Afghan working class" — had from the beginning served as a front for a number of police, CIA, Savak and Mossad agents. There is much to indicate that the rival Parcham and Khalq leaders were in the habit of taking turns denouncing one another as police or CIA spies to their Soviet contacts. It is therefore more than probable that the KGB headquarters in Kabul might for a time prior to the surprise communist victory on 27 April 1978 have regarded the entire PDPA as a kind of CIA "Trojan horse." The International Section of the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat would then logically have been anxious to deny this suspicious organization admission to the solidaristic community of CPSU-oriented communist parties under any circumstances.

Clues to the general framework of reservations, but also to the nature of individual suspicions and incriminating conjectures, are afforded by an analysis of the educational backgrounds of the PDPA leaders, by biographical data on the best-known PDPA political figures and by charges or insinuations that became known at a later point. Undoubtedly having a long history within the PDPA was Babrak Karmal's assertion — spread with the help of the Soviets at the end of December 1979 — that Hafizullah Amin had in reality been a CIA agent. But Karmal himself had apparently been similarly assailed previously by the Soviet-supported suspicion that he had played a dubious role as a confidential informant to the chief of the secret police under Daoud Khan and possibly even under the monarchy.

The Soviet observers must have been annoyed from the very outset by the fact that many of the PDPA leaders could show evidence of a European or American education at the secondary and university levels, as befitted the general standard of the Afghan educational upper crust and the real elite power groups. By contrast, very few of them had a knowledge of Russian or had gained foreign experience in the states of "actually existing socialism." Of the 21 members of the first PDPA cabinet, 10 had studied in the United States, 1 in France, 1 in the FRG and 2 in Egypt. Of the four ministers who had received no foreign schooling, most of them had attended elite schools in Kabul where the curricula were patterned after European models and where Europeans and Americans were on the teaching staffs. The same was true at many of Kabul's advanced educational institutions as well.

A reminder should be inserted here that this first Taraki cabinet consisted of 11 Khalq ministers and 10 Parcham ministers, that it was practically identical with the

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PDPA leadership at that time and that without exception these ministers also belonged to the 35-man Revolutionary Council. Only the three military men in the cabinet (Colonel Abdul Qadir, Major Mohammad Rafi, Major Mohammad Aslam Watanjar), who all belonged to the Parcham faction and had joined the party at a comparatively late stage, had received some of their education in the Soviet Union. Only these three and one other minister knew Russian. On the other hand, there was scarcely a single member of the cabinet who did not have a command of English; moreover, some of them could even offer French and German skills. Like Taraki, who was most likely to be called a "man of the people," all the PDPA leaders had established in their checkered careers notably extensive and enduring ties to the Anglo-Saxon world and its cultural milieu.

Nur Mohammad Taraki (born in 1917 in a village in Ghazni Province, southwest of Kabul), came into the world as the son of a sheep farmer from the Pathan Ghilzai-Taraki tribe. At the age of 18 he went to work for a trade firm which sent him to Bombay where he learned English at night school and was later taken on by the British Chamber of Commerce; he was also trained as an English-Pashto and English-Dari translator. Back in Kabul in 1937, in addition to his career in business he devoted himself to the study of political economics, finishing with a degree in 1941. The next steps in his career came in government service as an official in the Economics Ministry, editor with Kabul Radio, commissioner with the state Bakhtar news agency, staff member in the government press office and then, until November 1953, press attache with the Royal Afghan Embassy in Washington.

In 1947 he had joined the "Awakened Youth" literary movement that was inspired partly by Pathan nationalism and partly by demands for democratization. In 1950 he was among those who put out the militant journal ANGAR (Blaze), which was banned after a few months. Two highly regarded Pashto short stories written by him appeared in 1951 in the magazine which had printed the "Awakened Youth" manifesto in 1947. Fired by the government because of an attack on the monarchy that was published in Washington in 1953, Taraki opened his own translation bureau in Kabul in 1954, working mainly for the U.S. development aid program (AID) and for Kabul's U.N. delegation. In 1962-63 he was employed as a translator with the United States Embassy before he decided to become a professional revolutionary. In 1957 he had taken an extensive tour of several East European countries and the Soviet Union. Following the founding of the PDPA on 1 January 1965, he was immediately elected general secretary of the party that had emerged largely as a result of his efforts.

Hafizullah Amin (born in 1921 in Paghman near Kabul), was especially close to the PDPA general secretary because of their common tribal origin (Ghilzai-Kharoti) and close family ties: Taraki was married to one of Amin's daughters. Having completed secondary school in Kabul, Amin subsequently studied mathematics and physics, also in Kabul. As a teacher of these subjects, he quickly rose to the position of director of the school from which he himself was graduated. Before this, however, the good offices of a friend who was a minister made it possible in 1957 for him to obtain a master's degree in education from Columbia University in New York. Upon his return he then became director of a teacher-training facility and also was active as a "Greater-Pushtunistan" activist; not the least of his activities were carried out among the teachers and students of his own school. He became acquainted with Taraki before returning to the United States, where he continued his studies from 1962 to 1965 at the University of Wisconsin and Columbia University.

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While in the United States, he was very active in the association for Afghan students and was ultimately elected chairman. Karmal later maintained that at that time no one could be the "head of a foreign students' organization" in the United States "without kowtowing to the CIA." It was alleged that the CIA trained him at that time as a prospective agent for infiltrating the PDPA.

In fact, Amin returned to Afghanistan shortly after the party was founded. Elected a Central Committee candidate in absentia, he was immediately taken into the leadership where, as organization secretary, he soon gained a dominating influence. After having been a losing candidate for parliament in 1965, he entered that body as a deputy in 1969. The rivalry between him and Karmal was a major reason for the separation by the Parcham faction in the summer of 1967.

It is now being said of Amin that he consciously split the party (on orders from the CIA, of course) and sought through intrigue to prevent its reconciliation. Moreover, he is said to be the one who gave "the names of the underground leaders to the Americans"; the latter "had passed them on to Prince Daoud, who planned to have all those on the list shot in April 1978 — this triggered the revolution." The Khalq leadership had always been linked with the assassination of the chief Parcham theoretician, Khyber (while Khalq spokesmen held Daoud's secret police responsible). Karmal's supporters meanwhile openly maintain that Amin "had a hand in the affair" (a statement that should be nothing new to the Soviets).

In reality there is no doubt that Amin was the one who, after the arrest of all the influential Khalq and Parcham leaders, ventured to escape house arrest on 25 April 1978, who got together the next day with Parcham officers Abdul Qadir, Rafi and Watanjar to design a plan to free the imprisoned PDPA leaders and who ultimately had to answer politically for this operation which led to the "liquidation" of Daoud Khan and his "republic of princes." Amin's reward came in the form of appointments as deputy prime minister (beside his colleague of equal rank, Deputy Prime Minister Karmal) and foreign minister in the first Taraki cabinet. Moreover, he was from the beginning the revolutionary regime's "strong-man," and presumably for that reason he had to endeavor early on to eliminate the Parcham faction (which he succeeded in doing within 2 months) because he knew that Karmal had denounced him to the Soviet comrades as a "CIA agent."

Babrak Karmal (born in 1928 near Kabul), grew up in Kabul as the son of an Afghan Army officer from the Pathan tribe of Kakar; the father is said to have risen to the rank of general and also to have served as governor of Paktia Province. Karmal attended the elite Amani School, which was considered a "German" school. Upon graduation from this secondary school, he began to study law. He drew public attention for the first time as a "Marxist" student leader and was sentenced to 5 years in prison for political agitation, a sentence which he served from 1952 to 1955. After completing his studies and serving his time in the army, he worked from 1960 to 1964 in the Education and Planning Ministry.

He was one of the charter members of the PDPA on 1 January 1965 and was for a time (until the split in the summer of 1967) "second-in-command" after Taraki as the political secretary — a position which he reclaimed after the schism was healed in the summer of 1977. This demand was evidently among the main points of dispute which delayed the reconciliation. In exchange for concessions on the issue of parity, Karmal finally succeeded in gaining a "united leadership" made up of Khalq

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and Parcham representatives. Nevertheless, his attempt to force Amin out of all positions of leadership by means of censure proceedings provoked a massive counter-attack by the organization secretary. Amin's revenge came in the form of the expulsion of Karmal and his most trusted Parcham followers, Anahita Ratebzad (Karmal's wife), Mohammad Baryalay (Karmal's brother), Nur Mohammad Nur and Abdul Wakil. In July 1978 they were shipped off to embassy posts in Prague, Belgrade, Islamabad, Washington and London.

Karmal had won a seat in parliament for the first time in the 1965 spring elections (entering the lower house with him were Parcham representatives Khyber and Anahita Ratebzad, while Khalq representatives Taraki and Amin failed to win seats). Of the four PDPA deputies, three managed to retain their seats in 1969, particularly because Karmal and Khyber were considered especially persuasive parliamentary speakers. Of all people, Amin was added as the new fourth PDPA deputy in 1969. Despite this, a joint faction was maintained -- with Karmal as its spokesman -- until the end of the legislative session in the spring of 1973. Then, however, in opposition to the Khalq policy, Karmal and his supporters helped Daoud Khan overthrow the monarchy (on 17 July 1973) and served in the first coalition cabinets of the "republic of princes" in the period leading up to the fall of 1975. Karmal's contacts among the younger, Soviet-trained army officers and the police organs contributed in large measure to the success of the operation.

This was a time when Karmal could consider himself the clear favorite of the CPSU and KGB officials stationed in Kabul -- because of his good connections in many different places, because of his participation in the Parcham cabinet and because of the abundance and reliability of his reports. Nevertheless, only a few years later he was unable to win the crucial test of strength against Amin, a fact which permits certain conclusions as to the original limited extent of Soviet involvement. In any event, in April 1978 it was Amin, not Karmal, who was the organizer of the surprising PDPA triumph. And because the Soviet leadership had previously not been prepared to give the PDPA its full support, it could ill afford to withhold its approval of the victorious Taraki-Amin team after its seizure of power (regardless of all the warnings and apprehensions expressed by Karmal); instead, it was forced initially to accept the team as an actual leadership duo without objection.

7. On the Thesis of Remote Control of the Coup in April 1978

Of considerable importance is the question of whether the communist coup on 27 April 1978 was staged by a Soviet secret service and remote-controlled from the Kremlin. Should the evidence require an affirmative answer, the hypothesis could hardly be upheld that Moscow suspected the PDPA of being riddled with police stool-pigeons and CIA, Savak and other foreign agents. Moreover, in the event of probable remote control, greater weight would also have to be accorded the conjecture that the coup in 1978 and the occupation of Afghanistan at the end of 1979 must be viewed as pre-established stages in an overall strategic plan envisaging specific, imperial, expansionist goals and calling in general for expansion of the Soviet sphere of power as far as the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

If, on the other hand, the question of remote control or Soviet orchestration should have to be answered in the negative, the military intervention coming at the end of 1979 could also be interpreted more plausibly as a "reactive" undertaking brought about chiefly as the result of internal Afghan developments, an undertaking that

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quite literally dates back to errors made much earlier by the Soviet leadership: errors in assessing the PDPA leadership, errors in assessing the balance of political forces within Afghanistan at the time power was seized by the PDPA and, consequently, probably errors as well in weighing competing options with reference to different aspects of Soviet interest policy.

At the same time, one could continue to use the working hypothesis that the Soviet leadership was anxious because of deepseated distrust of the PDPA leadership to keep its distance politically as well as in matters of publicity. The reverse conclusion would thus also be permitted: The less trust Moscow had in the PDPA, the more disconcerted the responsible CPSU officials must have been later on by its seizure of power and excess of social-revolutionary zeal. It is also from this point of view that the Afghanistan occupation might ultimately prove to be an originally unwanted consequence of mistakes made when charting a course directly following the overthrow in April 1978.

As has already been mentioned, the assassination of Parcham leader Mir Akbar Khyber on 17 April 1978 was the key event that set in motion the process which then very rapidly — but via a remarkably bizarre chain of coincidences and individual decisions — toppled the Daoud regime and brought the communists to power. The assassins have thus far not been identified, but as a "detonator" the assassination itself performed a function so incapable of substitution that the actual masterminds would have to be sought in the Soviet embassy in Kabul if it should be proved conclusively that the coup that came 10 days later was based on a Soviet plan or order. Khalq secretary Hafizullah Amin could of course have organized the operation, but it is known that the Soviet "services" had hitherto maintained considerably closer ties to the Parcham faction, while avoiding as much as possible any dealings with the Khalq leaders, particularly Amin. If those around Karmal have of late actually been accusing the meanwhile executed Amin of complicity in the murder of Khyber, it is certainly not with the intention of ultimately exposing their own Soviet protectors as instigators of the crime.

Then there assembled at Khyber's funeral on 19 April a large crowd of people who — led by Taraki and other leading PDPA representatives from both factions — moved through Kabul in a massive demonstration, chanting anti-American and revolutionary slogans. An estimated 10,000-15,000 people took part in these rallies, most of them young people, especially schoolboys and university students. Indeed, within remembrance Kabul had up to that point never experienced such a large mass gathering, the size of the group astonishing even the PDPA leaders because their own membership rolls numbered at most only one-fourth of the crowd. Altogether, this occasion revealed the maximum potential which the PDPA would have had at its disposal for a "people's revolution." This certainly seemed alarmingly large to President Daoud Khan and his state security organs, but from an objective standpoint this "mass base" was totally inadequate as the mainstay for a revolution — whether from "below" or from "above." By Soviet definitions, the actually modest mobilization result from the angle of revolutionary intentions would more likely have had to lead to the discontinuance of putsch preparations that might already have been initiated.

All the same, however, the shock which the rally generated for Daoud and his police apparatus was so severe that they did precisely that which Taraki, Karmal, Amin and the other PDPA leaders must have anticipated because it is the closest thing at hand

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in a state like Afghanistan: They organized a large-scale roundup — though not until 24 April — in the course of which the most important PDPA functionaries were arrested, with some being jailed and some placed under house arrest. Curiously enough, exempted from arrest were the military men associated with the Parcham wing of the PDPA — Qadir, Rafi and Watanjar — the same officers who had provided crucial support in Daoud's takeover of power 5 years earlier, but who had then been given the cold shoulder (air force officer Abdul Qadir found himself banished to the post of chief of military slaughterhouses, for example).

It can be assumed with certainty that it would have been impossible to seize the entire group of PDPA leaders (excluding the military) in the roundup on 24 April if even only a few of them had possessed Soviet orders for preparations for a coup or insurrection. Open to them as a refuge in just such a situation at any time — at least temporarily — was the Soviet embassy, an opportunity which individual PDPA leaders were to take advantage of repeatedly later on. Equally curious is the fact that the Parcham military men — whose willingness to undertake a putsch had been general knowledge in the past, and who had reason enough to seek a "reckoning" with the Daoud regime — had been spared or simply "forgotten" in the roundup. Moreover, even though they had taken training courses in the USSR, they could by no means be considered pro-Soviet; rather, they were first and foremost nationalistic Afghan patriots, and their initial response was to do absolutely nothing.

They apparently did not make their first move until contacted by Hafizullah Amin, who had succeeded in escaping from the building in which he had been under house arrest. Amin informed them that the lives of those who had been arrested were in extreme jeopardy, since Daoud was planning to have them all killed. Thereupon the decision was made to take the offensive, the primary goal being the immediate release of the imprisoned PDPA leaders. But considering Afghan customs and traditions, it would probably have been tantamount to absolute suicide for the officers if they had tried to limit their planning to an operation designed to rescue the prisoners. Consequently, from the very outset the operation had to be focused on the radical elimination of any resistance and on the unconditional assumption of power. The three officers assumed responsibility for carrying out the hastily improvised operational plan, while Hafizullah Amin accepted responsibility for the organizational aspects of the political changeover.

The armored, air force and infantry units mobilized by the insurrectionists launched their attack on the morning of 27 April. In a little less than 24 hours they had gained all their objectives in Kabul and had brought the entire country under their control. President Daoud and about 30 members of his family, including women and young children, were put to death. The total number of victims probably amounted to about 1,000. The military, however, evidently turned power over to the PDPA leadership without delay. Thus, the new regime led by Taraki (with Amin in the "strong-men" position) was already seated firmly in the saddle on 30 April 1978.

On 8 April 1980, the U.S. Department of State made public a summary of official investigations into the Soviet intervention and the events leading up to it. It can be assumed from this that the occupation was carried out with great thoroughness after every piece of available information had been evaluated. This published report says of the "Marxist coup d'etat" of April 1978 that the Soviet Union played "only a minor role" in it, "if any at all." One can probably even believe Aleksandr

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M. Pusanov, Soviet ambassador at the time, when he says with regard to 27 April 1978: "On the day the balloon went up, I had gone fishing."

The 1 May issue of Moscow's foreign policy journal NEUE ZEIT was still very guarded in its report that "military forces" — not further identified — had assumed power in Afghanistan on 27 April 1978. There was no mention of participation by a communist or revolutionary progressive party. The PDPA also went unmentioned in the 2 May issue, and neither Taraki nor other members of the new government were presented or their party functions identified. It was not until the issue that appeared on 3 May that NEUE ZEIT noted with a quote from Taraki that "the revolution on 27 April" was not the "work of a small group of army officers"; rather, it had been carried out "at the call and under the leadership of the People's Democratic Party," which "had been formed as long ago as January 1965 and advocates a progressive, national and democratic program."

Thus, even though the PDPA had meanwhile risen to a position as the "ruling" communist party, it took 3 weeks for the special journal for foreign policy and international relations — which always maintains the closest of working relationships with the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat's International Section (and the KGB's Central Bureau for Foreign Information) — to come around to acknowledging the leadership role actually occupied by this party. This was truly unusual aloofness on the part of the CPSU in its dealings with a victorious revolutionary party; it should have immediately been accorded at least the status of a "national-democratic progressive force," for which there were numerous precedents. The top CPSU leaders in Moscow apparently needed a certain amount of time to regroup — and herein lies the essential difference compared with most of the comparable cases involving Madagascar, Nicaragua and the Philippines — in order to arrive at a new and more positive attitude toward a would-be communist party that had for decades been avoided and suspected of alleged agent infestation.

S. Armed Intervention as a Last Resort

Hafizullah Amin, who of all the Khalq leaders exhibited without question the greatest staying power and the fewest moral inhibitions, was the real driving force behind the waves of purges and terror that followed the seizure of power, waves which little by little — through the destruction of the Parcham wing of the party, decimation of the officer corps and a "reorganization" of the machinery of government — were to nip in the bud any opposition to the absurd policies of the PDPA leadership regarding changes in the system, but which simultaneously isolated to an extreme degree the already weak Khalq forces. Though Amin did manage to rise to the position of prime minister on 28 March 1979 and also to seize responsibility for the spheres of defense and the interior — for the armed forces and all police forces, in other words — he had nevertheless been unable to prevent the movement of the Islamic tribal and religious rebels from spilling over into most of the 28 provinces by that same time.

In the meantime, of the three military leaders of the April 1978 coup, Amin had had Abdul Qadir sentenced to death and Mohammad Rafi to 20 years in prison; he did not have Qadir executed, however. Similar things happened to Chief of the General Staff Shahpur Ahmadzay and hundreds of officers of all ranks. The totally demoralized army was threatened with collapse. Soldiers and officers, even entire troop units, were deserting in increasing numbers; mutinies were the order of the day. It

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happened more and more frequently that the Soviet military advisers, whose numbers had been increased to around 5,000, were themselves forced to assume the duties of leadership to prevent a general debacle.

There are many indications that Taraki, in view of this situation, was won over by the Soviets to the plan of forcibly removing Amin and subsequently replacing him with his archrival Karmal, who was being kept at the ready in Moscow. This has already been reconstructed essentially from a secret report which describes events from Amin's vantage point and which was apparently deliberately leaked to the Western press. Meanwhile, however, there are also reports and supplementary information from the Karmal camp which do indeed narrow down and in some ways place a new interpretation on the facts as they are known, but basically confirm them as far as substance is concerned.

In any event, the plot against Amin — in which Soviet Ambassador Pusanov was personally involved — misfired, and the decisive test of strength ended on 14 September 1979, as is generally known, not with Amin's removal from office or elimination but with Taraki's downfall. Following 3 weeks of imprisonment, the latter finally had to pay with his life for his role in this Shakespearean tragedy. Amin had him strangled and buried at an unknown location.

It is most likely that the preparations for the Soviet intervention began to shift into high gear immediately after it had been learned in Moscow that Amin had once again escaped with his life on 14 September 1979. The power-hungry and bloodthirsty Afghan himself must have known right at the moment when he captured the office of the presidency that for him there would be no further accommodation with the Soviet leadership. The latter's representatives went so far as to remove from the grasp of the Afghan authorities four prominent co-conspirators who had participated in the Taraki-Pusanov plot against Amin — ministers M.A. Watanjar, Sh. Mazdurjar, S.M. Gulabzoi and Taraki's Security Police chief, Azadullah Sarwari; this was accomplished by placing them "under Soviet protection."

In early October Amin's foreign minister, Shah Wali, summoned 11 East bloc ambassadors for the express purpose of making known these and other grievances. They also learned that Amin had demanded that the Soviet leadership recall its ambassador immediately. Pusanov was thereupon replaced by Fikryat Tabeyev on 8 November.

The Soviet ambassador's four charges probably found refuge at a quasi-extraterritorial base established by the Soviets at the Bagram military airfield (50 km north of Kabul). By all accounts, Karmal was also flown from the USSR to this refuge a short while later. He himself maintains that he returned to Afghanistan exactly "15 days after...Taraki was killed" — in other words, on 20 October. A similar Soviet statement is on record.

According to Karmal's account, "in cooperation with friends" (like Sarwari, Watanjar, Mazdurjar and Gulabzoi, for instance), he then "organized the forces of resistance from an underground base" (presumably located at the Bagram airfield). In particular, he "established contact with the majority of the Revolutionary Council members, who were officially in the government but were our comrades." The members of the leadership who supported him — Karmal — had formed "the majority in the government and also in the party's Central Committee." His main argument probably concerned the number of victims of Amin's mass terror campaign; Karmal puts this

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figure at "1.5 million people" ("ruthlessly annihilated through mass murder"). Karmal adds: "All members of the government and Central Committee were of the opinion that Amin belonged before a tribunal and ought to be punished."

Thus it appears that Karmal sought from his secure haven on Afghan soil to establish a counter-government and a counter-Central Committee of a new sort, with most of the members being the same ones as those in Amin's government and Central Committee. According to a source close to Karmal, his "underground activity" followed the pattern of the coup carried out on 27 April 1978 by Amin and the three Parcham officers, Qadir, Rafi and Watanjar. For while he was the one who was doing "the political organizational work," there was also "a military committee" (presumably chaired by Watanjar) which established contacts with all troop commanders, sought to bring them over to Karmal's side and developed precise action plans for a military operation designed to end the Amin regime. It appears that the order to storm the Darulaman Palace -- in the process of which Hafizullah Amin was killed on 27 December 1979 -- came from this committee and was carried out by an Afghan army unit.

The Karmalists are characteristically spreading the claim that Amin had usurped Taraki's top offices without ever having been a candidate for elective office. This charge doubtless refers mainly to the positions of PDPA general secretary and chairman of the Revolutionary Council. A report from Kabul by the Moscow correspondent of the Indian Communist Party newspaper NEW AGE has this to say on the matter:

"I was told that there was never any meeting of the leadership organs for the purpose of replacing Taraki with Amin through an election. Only a false report on a meeting and his election was spread via radio, television and the press."

The aim of such reports is obvious: Amin is made out to be a usurper, lacking any legitimacy deriving from an election process. This was designed to impugn especially his authority and qualifications as the legal chief of state and prime minister, as chairman of the Revolutionary Council and as head of the party. By eliminating Amin the "usurper" with this strategem, it becomes easier for Karmal to pass himself off as Taraki's legitimate immediate successor in office and his political heir.

These problems of legitimacy are only marginally important to the specific situation in Afghanistan itself, however. For the occupation of the country by Soviet airborne and armored units -- an operation carried out in grand style on 25 December of last year and one which, incidentally, also arranged to a certain extent for Amin's "liquidation" together with that of the Amin era -- marked the opening of a new chapter in Soviet-Afghan relations. It had become necessary to acknowledge that the method of cooperative Soviet participation in government -- with the aid of party diplomacy and a many-pronged advisory and control apparatus entitled to a voice in all areas of importance -- had failed. An occupation regime was therefore ordained for the country, one whose direct dominion would be backed only extremely superficially by the existence of a new Afghan head of state and government.

The main reason for the change of method can be seen in the fact that Karmal, Moscow's "quisling," possesses neither sufficient personal authority and political backing in the country nor the necessary "national" means of power to keep the Afghan "progressive forces" at the helm on the basis of his own sovereignty, let alone

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the ability to bring the rebellious provinces back under the control of a functional central authority without direct intervention by the Soviet military. Since Taraki and Amin totally wrecked not only the PDPA but also the machinery of government and the Afghan army, an occupation regime was in the Soviet view the only remaining alternative if Afghanistan were not to be surrendered to the "mullahs and ayatollahs" -- in other words, lost to the Islamic counterrevolution.

9. Afghanistan: Stepping-Stone or Problem Colony for Moscow?

Brezhnev was doubtless speaking the truth when he said in the combined interview and statement published by PRAVDA on 13 January 1980 that the "decision to send military contingents to Afghanistan" had "not been an easy one" for the Soviet leaders, since the occupation decision simultaneously constituted an admission of political failure. Revelations such as this automatically pose serious problems of legitimation for representatives of a system which is allegedly guaranteed protection by "scientific communism" from making aggravating misjudgments.

A noteworthy clue as to motivation is to be found in Brezhnev's main argument that the Kremlin could not "look on passively" at the approach "of a serious threat to the security of the Soviet state." But the Soviet leadership was doubtless alarmed not so much by the alleged efforts of an unidentified brand of "imperialism" to transform all of Afghanistan into a "military bridgehead along the southern border" of the Soviet Union. Without a doubt, substantially more concrete are the Soviet fears that Afghanistan could become the bridgehead for the Islamic risorgimento and for a liberation movement actively supported from Iranian as well as Pakistani soil; both of these countries are regarded as "terra irredenta" -- or a subjugated region to be delivered from foreign domination -- by those parts of Soviet Central Asia that are still Islamic.

Thus, in reality it appears not that the Soviet Union is threatened by imperialism but that Soviet imperialism sees a part of its colonial territory directly threatened by the dynamics of the Islamic (counter-)revolution and its emancipation demands. Gromyko's specialists on the Near and Middle East have probably also recognized that this set of problems is totally beyond influencing in the international dimension. This offers a plausible explanation of why Moscow is accepting with apparent-- but in reality well-calculated -- indifference the acts of solidarity by most of the Islamic governments with the Afghan resistance fighters (Mojahedin) in their "holy war" (jihad).

It is understandable that the Soviet Union itself tends to view the occupation of Afghanistan as a "defensive occupation." Incidentally, it might also feel on the defensive with regard to those radical elements of the international communist movement which have long been accusing it of neglecting its world revolutionary mission in favor of Soviet national interests, charging it in general with an exaggerated fear of taking risks. For this reason alone it was out of the question for the CPSU leaders to give up Afghanistan, a developing country bordering on the Soviet Union and already half belonging to its sphere of hegemony. It was impossible for them to leave the field to the "forces of extreme reaction" (and Islamic "counterrevolutionaries" into the bargain) right at their own back door.

If they had permitted the Mojahedin to gain a victory over Afghanistan's "progressive forces," there would be no stopping their decline of authority within the

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"socialist camp" that began with destruction of the Stalin myth on the occasion of the 20th CPSU Congress in 1956. For the list of Soviet setbacks and defeats is no less extensive than that of its gains and expansionist successes. One has only to recall the instance of breaking off the Cuban missile venture and the schism with the Chinese, the challenge of reformist communism in the CSSR, the expulsion from Egypt of the Soviet expeditionary corps, the abrogation by Egypt and Somalia of cooperation treaties concluded with the Soviet Union and the trends toward autonomy that are gaining ground in many communist parties of Western Europe and other regions. If the Soviet leadership had given Afghanistan up for lost instead of intervening resolutely and with massive troop deployments, this would have had great significance for other countries belonging to Moscow's sphere of influence, such as Angola, Ethiopia or South Yemen. For the regimes in those countries believe they can rely at any time on emergency Soviet intervention for assistance in defending against foreign and domestic enemies. A Soviet retreat from Afghanistan involving the sacrifice of "revolutionary achievements" would certainly have permanently shaken this conviction.

Also addressed in this regard are the most important elements that point to a long-term occupation of Afghanistan. Meanwhile -- probably in mid-March 1980 in Moscow -- a Soviet-Afghan agreement was signed on the stationing of troops, an accord that had already been ratified by the beginning of April. Nothing is known of the contents as yet, but in any event the treaty only puts a somewhat more attractive face on the occupation while not being able to change anything with regard to the real state of affairs. As long as the Kremlin has to assume that the Karmal regime would be playing a losing game without the protection of the occupation troops, they will remain in the country.

It can by no means be ruled out that the Soviet leadership might use the period of occupation to pursue the integration of Afghanistan into the "community of socialist states" (perhaps after the pattern of the Mongolian People's Republic). Accordingly, the principles of the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine on the limited sovereignty of socialist states in relation to the Soviet Union would be fully applicable to Afghanistan. In the meantime, as experience with the Afghanistan intervention teaches, Soviet ideology today can justify, in a manner satisfactory to Leninists, armed intervention under the banner of socialism in any country in the world by simply pointing to the obligation contained in the principle of "proletarian internationalism" for socialist states to provide "all manner" of support -- thus military as well -- for "progressive forces" in all parts of the globe.

Nevertheless: There are no indications at the moment that the Soviet Union is planning further interventions (directed toward Iran, Turkey or Yugoslavia, for instance). Indeed, as has been suggested, the results of a closer analysis of events in Afghanistan tend rather to support the assumption that the main motivations behind the decision to intervene were based on considerations strictly related to the situation instead of the supposition that they might have originated from a schedule of stages or goals pertaining to an expansionist "overall plan." This observation does not preclude the possibility that the occupation of Afghanistan might lead many a USSR political figure or military strategist to new reflections focusing on Iran or the Persian Gulf region, for example. But in general it is more likely that the problems resulting from the quasi-annexation of Afghanistan will be the ones on which the Soviet leaders will have to concentrate their attention.

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TUNISIA

SIGNIFICANCE OF OLIVE PRODUCTION IN ECONOMY VIEWED

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French 5 Dec 80 p 3332

[Text] The new olive growing season which began last month, looks good in Tunisia. In fact, national production of olive oil for the 1980-1981 campaign is expected to be between 145,000 and 160,000 tons, as opposed to some 85,000 tons during 1979-1980. Also noteworthy is the fact that initial estimates, which were in the 180,000 ton range, had to be lowered following the lack of rainfall during the last months of the season in the governorate of Sfax, the principal olive-growing region of the country. Regional information given last October by the daily national paper LE TEMPS also emphasized the fact that quantitatively, the olive industry of Sfax only represented one ninth of the overall Tunisian olive production; however, from a qualitative standpoint, it was the most productive because of the methods used in growing (spacing, pruning, care). Evaluated at 6.5 million olive trees, this region furnishes, on the average, one half of the country's production.

It may be remembered that, on a national level, the number of olive trees, which numbered approximately 27 million and covered 500,000 hectares at the beginning of Tunisia's independence in 1956, rose to more than 55 million trees covering an area of more than 1.4 million hectares, or nearly one third of the country's arable land in 1976. It is worthwhile to note that, worldwide, olive groves contain close to 800 million trees, covering some 10 million hectares, of which 98 percent are on the Mediterranean coast, and that the world production of olive oil is around 1.5 million tons.

As mentioned above, jobs created by the Tunisian olive oil industry equal the total number of those created by large agricultural enterprises, and surpass those of market-gardening and forestry together (MTM 28 March 1980, p. 739). In fact, one million Tunisians, or around one sixth of the population, live either directly or indirectly from the olive oil industry, which entails 25 million days of work per year, or nearly one fourth the total number of work days in the agricultural sector.

The fourth largest producer of olive oil in the world, after Italy, Spain, and Greece, and second in exports of this product, after Spain, averaging around 70,000 tons yearly, Tunisia has always paid special attention to the olive oil industry (MTM 6 June 1980, p. 1345, and 13 June 1980, p. 1430).

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Production varies, like in other countries, from one year to the next, depending on both weather conditions and the olive cycle, which usually has a strong harvest every two years (106,500 tons in 1975-1976, 85,000 tons in 1976-1977, 130,000 tons in 1977-1978, 85,000 tons in 1978-1979). Besides the favored place it is guaranteed in Tunisian exports, the olive oil industry also plays an important role in the social sector since it permits farmers to settle down, thereby improving their revenues and stopping the rural exodus. It is easy to understand the Tunisian authorities' concern over the prospect of an expanding European Community and, in the near future, over the official entry of Greece into the Common Market on 1 January. During his visit to Tunis at the end of October, Raymond Barre, the French Prime Minister, gave assurances in this regard. (MTM 31 October, p. 2654).

This year, just before the new olive oil campaign 1980-1981 got underway, President Bourguiba decided to sizably increase the leading price index for olive oil production, fixing it at 450 millimes per kilo for 4 degree refined oil and 530 millimes for 0.3 degree super extra oil. Making the announcement last October at the Carthage palace, Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali added: "This sizable increase in the leading index, which will be given to all farmers, constitutes an encouragement for farmers by the chief of state, that they might become more interested in the olive oil industry, and that they might both quantitatively and qualitatively improve the production of olive oil during upcoming agricultural campaigns."

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