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**SUBJECT: USSR-Afghanistan: Implications of a Partial Soviet Withdrawal**




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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

7 March 1986

USSR-Afghanistan: Implications of a Partial Soviet Withdrawal



Summary

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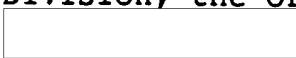
We believe the Soviets have more to lose than to gain if they sign a Geneva-type peace agreement and then abrogate it, claiming that the United States and Pakistan had not lived up to their end of the bargain. Moscow, however, may perceive the situation differently and may proceed with one of several possible scenarios. The political and military costs to Moscow would vary marginally from one scenario to another but, in our judgment, are fundamentally similar and risky under any plausible scenario. International reaction, in particular, would depend on how and when the Soviets halted their troop withdrawal. In circumstances where the Soviets renege, however, we would expect the resistance forces to resume country-wide attacks as soon as the Soviet withdrawal ended, and Pakistan to resume support for the Afghans.



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This typescript was prepared by the CIA's Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis, in conjunction with the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State. All comments and queries should be directed to Chief, South Asia Division, the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis,



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\* The Intelligence Community judged recently that the prospects for a serious Soviet initiative on Afghanistan are slim and that their seeming hints to the contrary are part of a political effort aimed at dividing the countries and forces opposing them.



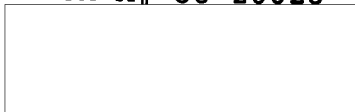
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The Scenarios

This memo examines the consequences for the United States, Pakistan, and the Afghan resistance of a Soviets move in Afghanistan to negotiate a settlement in which they agree to a phased withdrawal of their military forces from the country over a six month period, but then renege, citing isolated acts of resistance as evidence that outside support is continuing. The memo also assumes that the settlement is based more or less on the existing four draft instruments from the Geneva talks; the settlement would include a US guarantee on non-interference.

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We also assume that the insurgents for the most part will lie low during the first few months of the Soviet withdrawal. Nevertheless, resistance disunity, disinterest in the peace negotiations among some groups,

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will almost certainly result in scattered resistance attacks against Soviet forces even after an agreement is signed.

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Soviet renegeing could take several forms:

--The Soviets might make only a token troop withdrawal of up to 5,000 men;

--The Soviets could draw down their forces to a level of about 80,000 men over three to four months before terminating the withdrawal;

--The Soviets might not only terminate the withdrawal process after drawing down their forces to 80,000 men, but also reintroduce military units that had previously been withdrawn, perhaps even increasing the total number of troops.

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How Would the Resistance Fare?

Under all the scenarios, we believe the insurgents would quickly resume fighting once it became obvious that Moscow had halted its withdrawal. In our view, insurgent groups would be able to sustain the fighting at current levels without resupply in many parts of the country--especially in the Panjsher Valley and northern Afghanistan--for at least six months to a year using weapons from stockpiles, captured weapons, and acquisitions through the black market in Pakistan.

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Afghan resistance groups are establishing arms caches and training camps within Afghanistan, both to defend themselves against prolonged Soviet-Afghan attacks and to prepare for the possibility of a political settlement that ends external material support for the insurgency.

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[redacted] three of the seven parties in the Peshawar-based resistance alliance have established separate training camps inside Afghanistan, some replete with arms depots.

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Based on limited data, the forces of Jamiat commander Ahmad Shah Masood appear to be in the best shape with respect to stocks.

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[redacted] Masood decided to decentralize his arms supply system in 1984 by making each of his 30-man groups responsible for cacheing its own supplies.

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[redacted] Masood stores a 12-month supply of weapons in caves--which provide protection against Soviet air attacks; [redacted] Masood's Panjsher Valley forces did not lose any supplies of concealed weapons to Soviet forces in 1985. Elsewhere, [redacted]

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[redacted] Hizbi Islami insurgents in Kabul Province store heavy weapons in caches until needed for operations; in Nangarhar Province, according to a fairly reliable source, insurgent commanders have secreted stockpiles, including a 20-30 day supply of ammunition.

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The Soviets usually claim to have seized insurgent arms caches after launching major operations. Although the Soviets probably have had some major successes--they reportedly captured a huge insurgent arms cache near Qandahar several months ago--we believe many of their claims are exaggerated.

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The insurgents, as in the past, will also be able to acquire captured weapons to supplement their stocks. During the destruction of the Afghan garrison at Peshghowr last June, Masood captured enough small arms to supply his forces for a year,

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Even if major suppliers to the resistance cut off arms deliveries, the resistance will still be able to smuggle arms purchased illicitly through Pakistan's border areas into Afghanistan. We believe it will be impossible for Pakistan or the Soviets to seal the border because of the numerous trails and passes, including new routes that have sprung up to support resistance logistics since the war began. The resistance's most significant problem, in our view, would be acquiring heavy weapons, such as heavy machineguns, mortars, and air defense weapons--the most difficult arms to purchase in Pakistan's illegal arms market.

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Sympathetic Arab countries, Iran, and China would probably continue to supply the resistance through alternate routes along the Iranian-Afghan border as well as, where possible, through Pakistan. Tehran would almost certainly view a negotiated agreement as a sellout of the resistance. Continued financial support for the resistance [redacted] is also likely.

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The Pakistan Factor

If the USSR reneges on its withdrawal agreement, Pakistan would probably reestablish covert support for the Afghan resistance. Indeed, we believe Pakistan would work out contingency plans for such a scenario with the resistance leadership before actually signing a political settlement.

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Factors underlying Pakistan's current Afghan policy--concern about the Soviet threat to Pakistan's national security and Pakistan's strong desire to have the refugees return to their homeland--would help Zia revive support for the resistance. Because most Afghan refugees would probably stay in Pakistan until after a Soviet withdrawal was completed, Pakistan would once more be under pressure from the refugees to resume support.

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Assuming, as seems likely, that President Zia and Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan will continue to be in control of vital foreign policy issues for the foreseeable future, a resumption of support could probably be achieved fairly expeditiously. Nevertheless, with the transition to civilian rule, Zia can no longer act as independently as he did in the past. He would have to secure the consent of the army--which harbors some highly-placed critics of the current Afghan policy--and of Prime Minister Junejo, who is clearly sensitive to opposition by some of Pakistan's political parties, including the dominant opposition People's Party. To help gain public support for a renewed program, moreover, Zia and Junejo would almost certainly expect upgraded US financial and strategic assistance.

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Risks for Moscow...

...Military. We believe Moscow has more to lose than to gain by beginning and then cutting off a troop withdrawal. The military risks under the first scenario would be slight, but a significant Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan--to 80,000 men--would severely weaken Soviet capability to maintain their lines of communications, sharply reduce offensive operations, increase the risks to remaining units, and allow the insurgents to strengthen their military and political structure in many areas. The Soviet withdrawal, moreover, might precipitate the collapse of the Kabul regime and the defection of many Afghan Army personnel to the resistance, although it could also cause stresses and perhaps some internecine struggle among the resistance as well.

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...and Political. The withdrawal agreement, followed by removal of large numbers of troops would give Moscow some significant foreign policy gains, but reneging would, in our

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view, more than negate them. Stopping the withdrawal and breaking off the agreement would be interpreted in most international quarters as proof of Soviet duplicity. Condemnation would be especially strong if Moscow reintroduced troops. Our assessment of political costs to the Soviets under all three scenarios assumes that they not only halt troop withdrawals, but also declare the entire agreement no longer valid. If Moscow were to halt troop withdrawals and ask to reopen the negotiating process to discuss the purported violations, international reaction would, in our view, be relatively milder. [REDACTED]

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Soviet attempts to place the blame on the United States, Pakistan, and the insurgents are unlikely to be very successful unless Moscow could point to a major insurgent atrocity, such as shooting down a civilian airliner. In our view, Moscow would find it difficult to stage an incident of this magnitude, which would have to result in large-scale casualties to be believable. Pointing to captured insurgent weapons of US-manufacture could be done fairly easily--Vietnam-vintage US M-16s have appeared in Pakistan's tribal areas, but this would be viewed by most international observers with great suspicion. The Soviets are thus likely to be immediately condemned by China, the West Europeans and Japanese, the nonaligned movement, Islamic organizations, and at the UN. Virtually no foreign policy gains would accrue from only a token troop withdrawal or a situation that gave the Soviets a stronger military position than they now have. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets would probably calculate that reneging--under any of the scenarios--would risk progress on arms control, trade and other areas with promise of real benefits to Moscow, as well as a resumption of US and other support for the insurgency. Any future Soviet attempts to negotiate a political solution to the war would be viewed with even greater skepticism. [REDACTED]

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#### A Soviet Withdrawal Scenario

In order to execute a highly visible withdrawal while minimizing security risks, the first Soviet units to be withdrawn, in our view, would probably be airborne forces because they could be reintroduced quickly if the Kabul government and its security forces began to disintegrate.\* The Soviets would then probably try to reduce their forces by 'thinning out' units

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\* Soviet air support might be augmented initially during the withdrawal while selected units throughout the country moved back to the Soviet Union. Some protection for the lines of communications to remaining units would be necessary, although for a limited period smaller units might be supplied primarily by air. [REDACTED]

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[redacted]

in various parts of the country--by removing subunits from each division--rather than abandoning whole sections of the country to the insurgency. The withdrawing force might comprise about 40 combat maneuver battalions--about one third--of the already very limited combat fighting force of 110 battalions. [redacted]

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The primary goal of the remaining forces would be to maintain security in and around Kabul and other major cities and secure adequate lines of communications from the USSR. All current Spetsnaz units would probably remain and some new Spetsnaz units might be added; all Spetsnaz units would probably be equipped with their own helicopters to improve their ability to operate independently. Some isolated Soviet units would probably be relocated to more secure garrison areas. [redacted]

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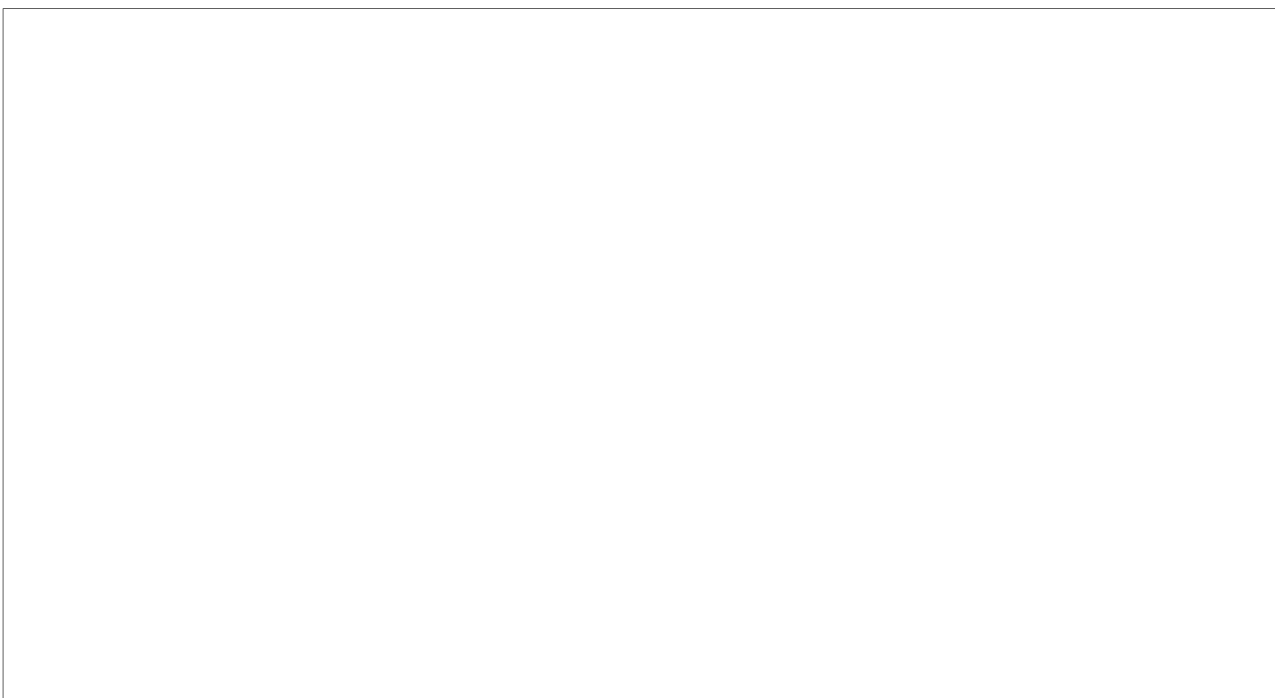
Implications for the United States

Because scenarios of the type outlined above would involve significant political and military risks for Moscow, we do not believe they are realistic. Nevertheless, should Moscow agree to a Geneva-type accord and then back out, the United States would face several immediate policy decisions:

- Because the circumstances of the collapse of the agreement probably would be somewhat ambiguous, the United States, Pakistan, and the resistance may find it difficult to revive the current high level of international support for the resistance cause. This would be particularly true if

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[REDACTED]

the Soviets could point to a resistance atrocity--the shooting down of a civilian airliner or an attack on civilians--as the reason for their ending the withdrawal.

--The Soviets would likely immediately blame the US and Pakistan for the failure of the peace agreement. They will argue in international fora and in the media that their reintroduction of troops was forced by Washington's and Islamabad's failure to implement guarantees of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

--Islamabad most likely would expect a large US aid commitment as a quid pro quo for reviving support for the insurgents. [REDACTED]

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