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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

14 April 1986

Afghanistan: Soviet and Pakistani Intentions



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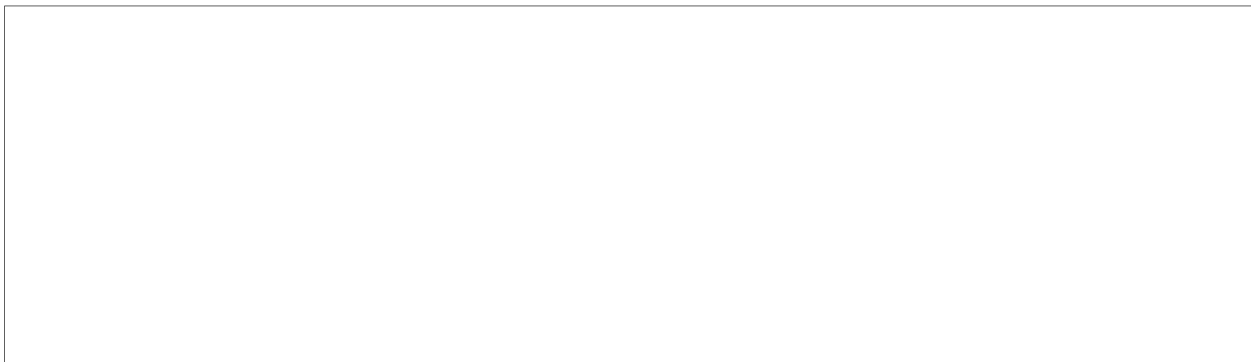
Summary

With the seventh round of negotiations on a settlement in Afghanistan convening in Geneva next month, the Soviets probably calculate that their diplomatic and military pressures are placing Islamabad under increasing pressure to compromise. We believe, however, that Pakistan will remain committed to its two fundamental goals in any peace settlement: the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the return of some 3 million refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan. We perceive several modifications in Pakistan's negotiating strategy, but we believe its basic tactic of not negotiating directly with the Kabul government and insisting on an acceptable timetable for Soviet withdrawal before a settlement can be signed remain unchanged.



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Soviet Negotiating Policy: What Is Moscow Up To?



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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Pakistan/Bangladesh branch, South Asia Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis with a contribution from [redacted] SOVA. Information as of 8 April 1986 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments should be directed to Chief, South Asia Division, [redacted]

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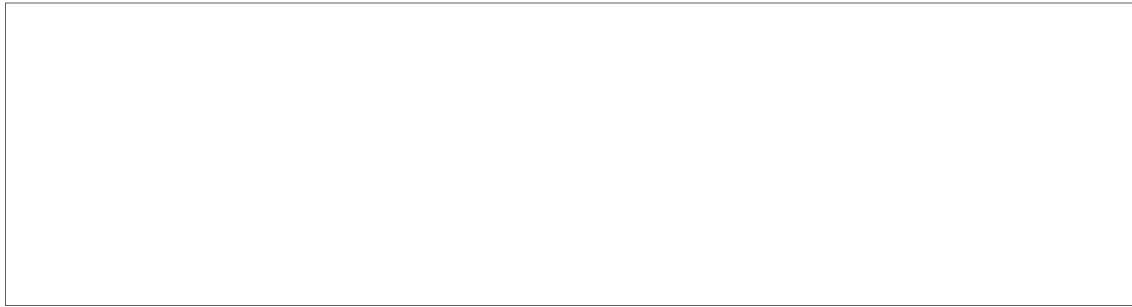
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Whatever Moscow's intentions, it has lost little by having Kabul submit a timetable. While it can no longer be offered as a quid pro quo for direct talks, the timetable, however extended, can be presented by Moscow as evidence of Soviet-Afghan reasonableness, especially in conjunction with Kabul's agreement to return to the proximity format for the Geneva talks.



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Moscow probably hopes that Islamabad will find itself under increasing pressure to demonstrate comparable flexibility--perhaps by agreeing to a lengthier timetable--and conclude that the time for compromise has arrived. Meanwhile, the Soviets' diplomatic maneuvers in no way inhibit their concurrent military effort in Afghanistan or their and the Afghan regime's subversive activities in Pakistan, which they probably see as complementary means of wearing down the will of the resistance and Islamabad to continue the fight.



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President Babrak Karmal knows that he is dependent on Soviet support and, though he may squawk and stall, ultimately he has no choice but to do Moscow's bidding. Indications that the Soviets are dissatisfied with Karmal and rumors that they mean to replace him abound and might account for his reported reluctance to resume indirect talks. He may well fear a Soviet sellout. Awkward though his removal would be at a time when the Soviets are attempting to cultivate an image of the Kabul regime's stability, popularity, and independence, there can be little doubt that Moscow would drop him should he obstruct a settlement that the Soviets want.



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The New Pakistani Civilian Government and Afghanistan

We believe that the new civilian government of Pakistani Prime Minister Junejo basically agrees with the goals and strategy for Afghanistan set forth earlier by President Zia al-Haq. We believe that Junejo, however, is cautious, especially about overt efforts to support the insurgency; he has dragged his feet on cross-border humanitarian aid. According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, he has again postponed a cabinet meeting to discuss Afghanistan--last scheduled for 6 April.



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[redacted] there is no significant opposition in Parliament to Zia's Afghan policy. [redacted] acceptance of this policy would erode if Soviet or Afghan regime-sponsored terrorism was instigated in Pakistan's urban areas.



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In our view, the Pakistanis probably believe their policy of refusing to talk directly with Kabul during the negotiations, demanding a Soviet/Afghan timetable for Soviet withdrawal, and providing material aid to the Afghan insurgency is paying off. The Pakistanis likely regard Kabul's showing of a timetable for Soviet withdrawal to Cordovez as vindication of their negotiating strategy, even though Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan told the US Embassy that the timetable which was shown to him by Cordovez was unacceptable. Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials told the US Embassy that the Afghan-proffered timetable would not be the basis for negotiations at Geneva VII. 

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In our judgment, Islamabad believes its agreement last month to meet directly with the Afghan regime once an agreement is finalized and ready to be signed is only a minor concession; a Pakistani Foreign Ministry official told US diplomats that a face-to-face meeting between the two governments would last only long enough to sign a completed settlement on Afghanistan. The Pakistanis have rejected the suggestion of Cordovez that Pakistan and Afghanistan form a bilateral commission on reconciliation--which might be interpreted as recognition of Kabul--in Islamabad before a settlement has been reached, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad. 

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Pakistani Attitudes Towards A Post-Settlement Afghan Government

Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials have told US diplomats that Islamabad's thinking on a post-settlement government in Kabul is in a "very preliminary stage." Yaqub Khan, according to press reports, has acknowledged that a new Afghan government must not be seen as hostile to the USSR. Pakistani officials have also said that Islamabad would probably try to hold separate, direct talks with Moscow on the composition of the Afghan government. 

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We do not believe that Islamabad would allow the resistance veto power over any settlement that the Pakistanis would accept. The insurgents clearly could play a spoiler role, however, if they are unsatisfied with its terms. The Pakistanis told the US Embassy that they have briefed the resistance alliance three times on the proximity talks since December and have promised to consult the resistance before any agreement is reached. 

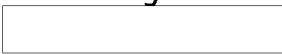
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The Pakistanis realize that most Afghan refugees and insurgents would not return to Afghanistan if the present government is still in power in Kabul--and return of the refugees remains a major objective of Islamabad. President Zia's speech in February which suggested that Pakistan could assimilate the Afghan refugees was, in our view, an attempt to prepare the Pakistani public for the possibility of at least some the refugees staying indefinitely in the country, even if a settlement is reached. 

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What if the Soviets Renege?

The possibility exists that the Soviets will present a seemingly reasonable timetable for withdrawal, induce the Pakistanis to sign a comprehensive settlement, and then halt troop withdrawals after removing a token contingent. If this happens, we believe that the present government in Islamabad would resume aiding the resistance; Pakistani acquiescence to a Soviet betrayal would invite reprisals inside Pakistan from embittered Afghan insurgents and refugees and pose a threat to internal security. Such acquiescence would also antagonize states that have currently close relations with Islamabad or the insurgents, most importantly Saudi Arabia and China. At the same time, a Pakistani decision to revive aid to the insurgency would almost certainly be quickly followed by requests for material and diplomatic support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and China.



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Pakistan has previously insisted that if one of the four settlement instruments is violated, the others should remain intact because it feared that the insurgents would break a ceasefire that would lead to the Soviets halting their withdrawal. Pakistani officials have now told the US Embassy that they are "reconsidering" that position because they realize that it could be used against them if the Soviets unilaterally decided to halt their withdrawal from Afghanistan. By dropping their previous stand, it would enable the Pakistanis to resume, or threaten to resume, aiding the insurgency if Moscow halted its troop withdrawal.



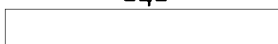
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We believe that most insurgents would be able to regroup and resume fighting relatively quickly, given the porous nature of the Afghan-Pakistan border, lack of central authority over many parts of Afghanistan, and the abundance of weapons in the area. Indeed, many insurgents are suspicious of Pakistan's intentions and have been building arms caches inside the country in case an unfavorable peace settlement is reached. Some of the Pakistan-based resistance leaders have only loose authority over their forces in Afghanistan and would probably be unable to force their fighters to lay down their arms.



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