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**The Soviet Invasion of
Afghanistan: Implications
for Warning**

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

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THE SOVIET INVASION OF
AFGHANISTAN: IMPLICATIONS
FOR WARNING

Information available as of September 1980 was
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PREFACE

This Interagency Intelligence Memorandum was commissioned by the Director of Central Intelligence in response to a request by the National Security Council for an assessment of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to determine if there were any general implications for the US warning system or any particular implications for the system's ability to warn of a Warsaw Pact move against NATO. No information cutoff date was specified for this project; information available through September 1980 was used.

The memorandum was produced under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. [

] It was coordinated with the intelligence components of the Departments of State and Defense and within the National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency.



Figure 1

Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

The USSR's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 provided a rare opportunity to test the efficacy of the US warning system in situations involving substantial movements of the Soviets' armed forces outside their borders. Moreover, it afforded a chance to examine the behavior of the Soviet military in preparing for such an undertaking and to determine what implications this might have for the Intelligence Community's capacity to provide warning in other situations, especially one involving a Warsaw Pact move against NATO.

From the outset, it was recognized that the conclusions of this study could not be pressed too far. Both the performance of the Intelligence Community in providing warning of the invasion of Afghanistan and the applicability to other theaters of the lessons learned in that situation are very much affected by the particular circumstances involved. In contrast to a Soviet move against NATO, the situation for which the US warning system is largely designed, the invasion of Afghanistan required only a fraction of the USSR's military assets, was not opposed at the outset, did not involve a certainty of confrontation with US forces, and occurred in a region where US intelligence collection capabilities were limited.

These limitations notwithstanding, the examination of the Soviet approach to invading Afghanistan and the Intelligence Community's success in giving prior notice of this event have yielded some valuable lessons:

- Despite the unique circumstances surrounding this operation, the Soviets' behavior was essentially in keeping with US estimates of their doctrine for mobilization and the initiation of hostilities. This finding is important because the success of any warning system is dependent on the extent to which an adversary's behavior conforms to expectations.
- The system of warning indicators that is set up to detect potentially important changes in the Soviet/Warsaw Pact military posture provided a structured approach to and a sound evidentiary base for the Intelligence Community's conclusion that the USSR was preparing to introduce substantial forces into Afghanistan. The fact that the system worked in this unique

situation provides increased assurance of its usefulness in other theaters, particularly in the NATO area.

- The US intelligence collection system proved equal to the task of providing analysts with sufficiently detailed, accurate, and timely data to allow them to reach essentially correct conclusions about the military activities in the Soviet Union with respect to Afghanistan. Of particular note was the synergy of signals and imagery intelligence in this collection effort and the quality of the data collected, despite limitations on the resources available.
- The Intelligence Community's analysts met their basic responsibility in a situation of this sort by providing sufficient prior reporting to assure that no key policymaker should have been surprised by the invasion. The analysts were unable to forecast precisely the timing or the size of the Soviets' move, but gave warning at least 10 days beforehand that the USSR was prepared to invade.

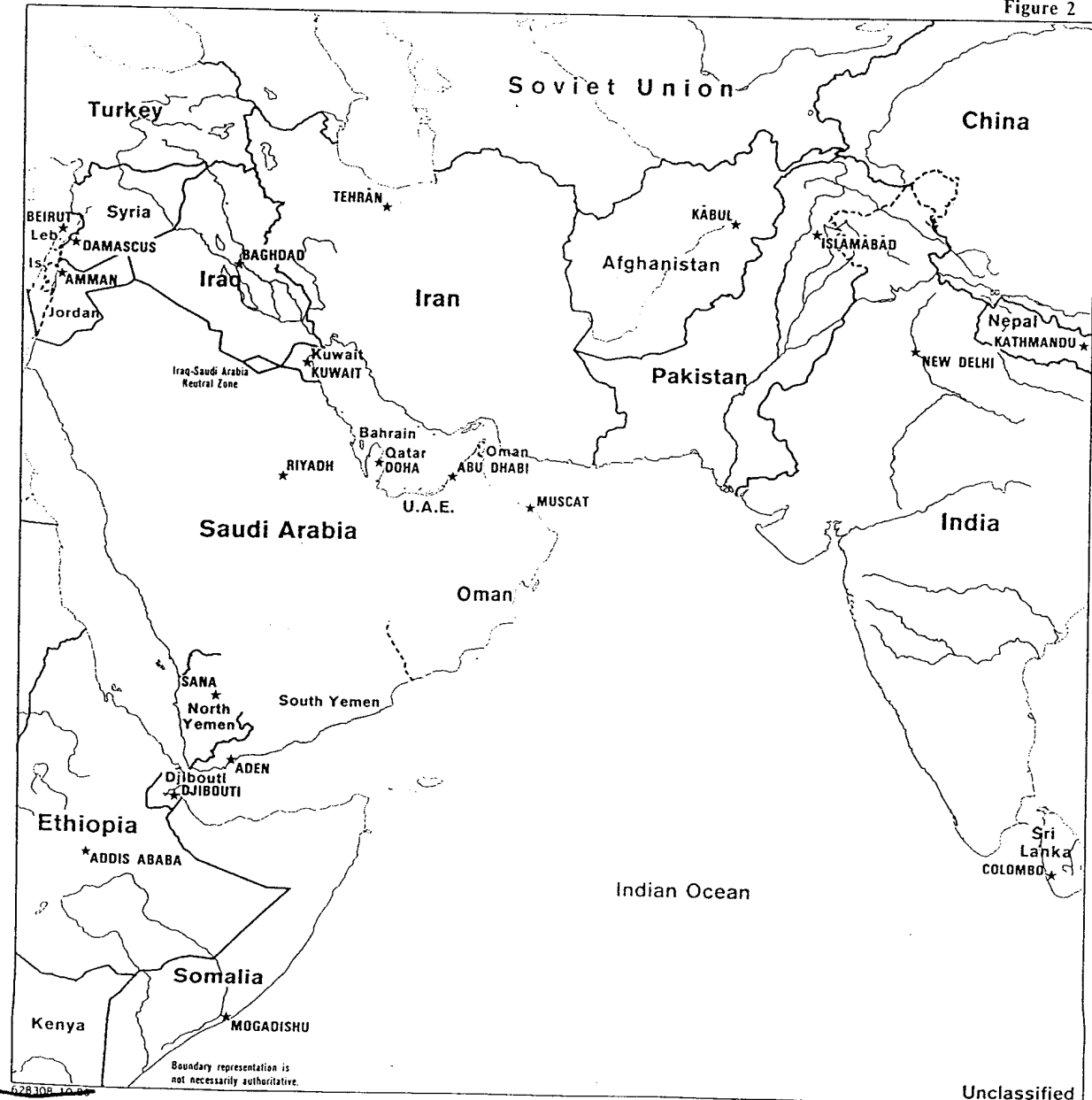
In conclusion, the examination of the early phases of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan provides a basis for greater confidence in US intelligence estimates of Soviet doctrine with respect to initiating hostilities and in the capacity of the US Intelligence Community to provide warning of such hostilities.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The invasion of Afghanistan was the first major operational movement of Soviet ground forces outside the USSR since the unopposed invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. As such, it offered a unique opportunity to compare US estimates and studies of Soviet

doctrine and procedures for going to war with an actual combat operation. In addition, the preinvasion period, during which the Soviet Union placed sizable forces on a wartime footing, gave the US Intelligence Community an opportunity to examine the efficiency

Figure 2



of its warning system—including the validity of the indicators that are monitored, the operation of the collection systems, and the accuracy of the reporting and assessments that were made.

2. The initial sections of this memorandum describe political-military developments in Afghanistan from April 1978, when the Marxists took power, through December 1979, when a coup toppled Amin. There is also a discussion of how those events were being interpreted in US intelligence publications at the time. The description of the developing situation includes a history of the increasing involvement of the Soviet armed forces, with particular attention to those aspects of the invasion of Afghanistan that might improve our understanding of how the Soviets would mobilize and deploy their forces in a war against NATO.

3. The next sections of the paper deal with Soviet preparations for combat and with the US problem of warning. The discussion of combat preparations deals with the principal components of the Soviet armed forces that were involved and focuses on aspects of the invasion and initial operations in Afghanistan through January 1980 and their usefulness in providing warn-

ing. In addition, the discussion compares the operations of Soviet forces in Afghanistan with what the Soviets are expected to do in a war against NATO. The major warning indicators used to monitor Warsaw Pact preparations for a war with NATO are considered individually to determine if they were evident in the Afghan situation and if not, why not. The paper then examines the performance of various intelligence collection systems and makes a judgment about those which proved to be most productive under these circumstances. Finally, the usefulness of the intelligence reporting on Afghanistan is considered in terms of its conveying warning to the policymaker. For this purpose the examination of the performance of analysis was confined essentially to the written record of all-source assessments published by NFIB member agencies. Included is a discussion of the various kinds of warning as specified in DCID 1/5; it identifies which were issued by the US Intelligence Community and which were not. The paper concludes with a series of observations about the implications of the Afghan experience for the capacity of the US Intelligence Community to provide warning in other theaters.

II. PREINVASION DEVELOPMENTS AND RELATED INTELLIGENCE REPORTING

A. April - December 1978

Developments

4. On 27 April 1978 the pro-Moscow People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) staged a coup in the capital city of Kabul. The President, Mohammed Daoud, was executed along with members of his family and other senior officials of the regime. Nur Mohammed Taraki assumed the offices of president and prime minister (see figure 3). Although there was no evidence that the Soviet Union had participated in the coup, it moved quickly to exploit the situation. The USSR had invested heavily in Afghanistan since 1956 (it was among the top 10 recipients of Soviet aid), and Soviet political involvement and military assistance increased sharply after the coup.

5. In May 1978 [

[

] an increase in the size of the Soviet MAG, which by the end of May had increased from 350 to 500 personnel. Many of these advisers were concentrated in the Ministry of National Defense in Kabul. A Moscow-level delegation headed by Lt. General Zotov, from the General Staff's Operations Directorate, signed a new military assistance protocol with the Taraki regime on 31 May.

6. In June 1978 the long-simmering rivalry between the two factions of the PDPA flared into the open. The PDPA had been founded in 1965 but split into two factions—Parcham and Khalq—in 1967 and had only been reunited, at Soviet urging, in 1977. The Parchamists, led by Babrak Karmal, drew support from a small segment of the educated upper classes in the Kabul area and advocated a gradualist approach to building socialism in Afghanistan (see figure 4). They

]

Table 1
Chronology of Key Events

27 Apr 1978	Marxists stage coup in Afghanistan. Taraki becomes President.
May 1978	Soviets increase sharply their military assistance.
5 Dec 1978	Treaty of Friendship, Goodneighborliness, and Cooperation between Afghanistan and USSR signed.
15 Mar 1979	Fighting breaks out in Herat. Twenty Soviets are killed.
[] 1979	Soviets deploy an AN-12 squadron to Bagram Airfield.
[] 1979	Soviets deploy first combat troops to Bagram.
16 Sep 1979	Amin stages coup and becomes President. Taraki is killed.
[] 1979	Soviets begin introduction of three additional units to Bagram.
[] 1979	108th Motorized Rifle Division vacates its garrison at Termez.
[] 1979	5th Guards Motorized Rifle Division vacates its garrison at Kushka.
[] 1979	Military Transport Aviation (VTA) units stage to Turkestan Military District.
25 Dec 1979	Airborne troops land at Bagram and at Kabul.
27 Dec 1979	Soviet airborne troops seize Afghan Government installations in Kabul. Amin is killed. Babrak Karmal becomes President.
28 Dec 1979	Major elements of 5th and 108th Guards Motorized Rifle Divisions cross border into Afghanistan.

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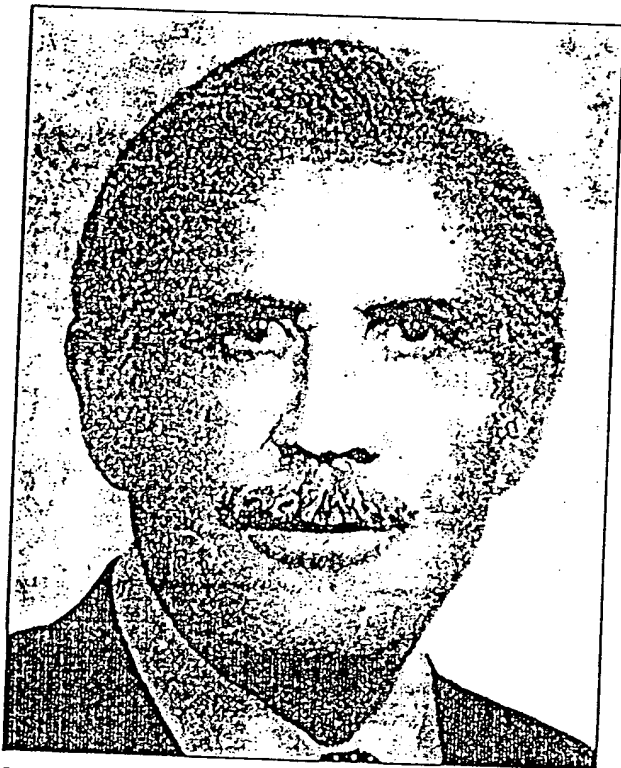


Figure 3

Nur Mohammed Taraki became President of Afghanistan in a coup in April 1978. Was killed in a coup in September 1979.

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Figure 4

Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parchamist faction; exiled in July 1978; became President in a coup in December 1979.

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participated in the free elections that were held in the late 1960s in the period of the monarchy and even won a few seats to Parliament. The Khalqis, led by Taraki, drew their support from the newly emerging middle class in Afghanistan and favored a more conspiratorial approach to seizing power. They concentrated on seeking clandestine recruits among the Afghan military.

7. In late June and July 1978 Taraki, relying on the support of the military, moved to exile most of the leaders of the Parcham faction; Babrak Karmal was named Ambassador to Prague. The Soviets acquiesced in his power play and simultaneously signed a major military assistance agreement and increased their MAG representation to 700. The Soviets also sent large numbers of civilian advisers to Afghanistan to help the government consolidate its hold on power.

8. The Soviets also acquiesced a month later when Taraki moved to eliminate potential rivals in the military as well as the few remaining Parchamists still in the government. When Taraki ordered the exiled Parchamists home in early September 1978 to face certain imprisonment and possibly even death, however, the Soviets gave them safehaven in Eastern Europe.

9. Tribal opposition to the new government began immediately after the leftists' takeover among Pathan tribesmen in the east, and by late summer it had spread to non-Pathan tribes in the northeast (see figure 33, appended). Despite growing Soviet assistance, the Afghan Army was unable to suppress the insurgent bands. During this period, Soviet advisers reportedly were assigned to Afghan brigades committed to operations against the insurgents. Soviet advisers also were assigned to each of the two commando battalions. In November 1978 the fighting escalated. Insurgents were said to be in control of large areas of the northern and eastern parts of the country and to have captured large quantities of military equipment. The Army corps commander in Qandahar was arrested for supporting the insurgents, and Taraki was alleged to believe that the government did not have the resources to subdue them. At this time, a former Soviet military adviser in Afghanistan assessed the Afghan armed forces as having serious deficiencies and estimated that a large Soviet military advisory presence would be required for several years.

10. On 5 December 1978 the USSR and Afghanistan signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship, Good

Neighborliness, and Cooperation, which obliged both sides to consult with one another, to take appropriate measures to ensure their security, independence, and territorial integrity, and to continue military cooperation. There was, however, no mutual defense agreement. A Soviet-Afghan treaty signed in 1931 prohibited Afghanistan from allowing its territory to be used for actions inimical to the USSR and the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to the 1931 treaty on this occasion. The new treaty was somewhat unusual because it contained a clause specifically endorsing Afghan nonalignment and because it did not call for closer political cooperation.

Intelligence Assessments

11. US intelligence reporting in the immediate aftermath of the coup that brought Taraki to power dealt with whether or not the government would survive and with the probable nature of the USSR's relations with the new regime. It was estimated that Moscow would help the new, pro-Soviet regime consolidate and retain power, but it was thought unlikely that Moscow would support any Afghan adventures against Pakistan or Iran. Although [

] and the increased Soviet presence in Afghanistan were both noted as enhancing Moscow's ability to intervene in Afghanistan to protect a pro-Soviet regime, it was stated that Moscow would seek to avoid a situation in which it would need to send its own troops to Afghanistan. Finally, it was noted that Afghanistan's relations with its neighbors, Pakistan and Iran, and with the United States would almost certainly decline.

12. By the fall of 1978 the purges of Parcham elements and suspected military dissidents led to estimates that Taraki's political base in the country was being excessively narrowed. Questions were raised about the reliability of the Afghan Army in view of the political instability in Kabul and the growth of hostilities by the insurgents. The signing of the new Friendship Treaty in December 1978 was interpreted as a gesture of support by Moscow for the new pro-Soviet regime.

B. January-June 1979

Developments

13. In January 1979 another high-level Soviet military delegation headed by General Kuznetsov visited

Kabul, presumably to discuss further Soviet aid. In February the US Ambassador, Adolph Dubs, was kidnaped by Moslem rightwing antigovernment terrorists and killed during an attempt by the Afghan Government to rescue him. The Afghan security forces involved were accompanied by Soviet advisers. (S NF NC OC)

singled out as targets by the mobs and as many as 20 of the Soviet advisers were reportedly killed. (C)

14. On 15 March 1979 an insurrection broke out against government forces in Herat, a western provincial capital and Afghanistan's third-largest city. The fighting was believed to have been spurred by the declaration of a *jihad* or holy war against the Taraki regime made by three Afghan opposition groups based in Pakistan on 12 March 1979. Civilians carrying Islamic and prerevolutionary flags attacked the Army garrison in Herat, while insurgent activity picked up in other parts of the country. The fighting in Herat continued for over a week before the uprising was quelled. During the fighting, Soviets apparently were

Figure 5



16. [] March a motorized rifle regiment and a tank regiment of the 108th Motorized Rifle Division (MRD)—a Category III unit²—were detected in increased activity [] near Termez in the Turkestan MD [] being assembled into convoy formations (see figure 6). At the same time, elements of another Category III division of the Turkestan MD, the 5th Guards MRD at Kushka, also were unusually active. At Kushka, convoys of trucks, tanks, personnel carriers, and support units left garrison and moved toward the border (see figure 7). A motor transport unit, a chemical defense battalion, and an air defense battery also deployed to within a few kilometers of the Afghan border. In addition, [] a high level of personnel and truck activity at two Soviet airborne regiment garrisons in the Turkestan MD. It could not be determined whether this airborne unit activity was connected with Afghanistan []

[] The MRDs returned to garrison [] Information received later from an ethnic German resettler indicated that reservists from units other than the divisions at Kushka and Termez had participated in the callups of March and April 1979 in this area.

17. In response to the growing disturbances in Afghanistan, Moscow issued a series of public statements warning against foreign interference in Afghan internal affairs. In articles in *Pravda* and in *Izvestiya*, the USSR accused Pakistan and China and, to a lesser degree, Iran and Egypt of assisting the anti-Taraki forces. In later articles, the United States and the

¹ Also known as the 360th MRD.

² Category III divisions are manned at cadre strength with manpower levels ranging from about one-tenth to one-third of authorized wartime personnel. They apparently have most of their essential combat equipment, except armored personnel carriers (APCs), but have less support equipment than Category II divisions. Category III divisions generally would require 72 hours or more to mobilize reserve personnel and equipment and begin movement. Their combat effectiveness would be lower than Category II divisions for several weeks after mobilization

United Kingdom also were accused of training Afghan rebels.

18. On 5 April 1979 General Yepishev, chief of the Main Political Administration in the Soviet Ministry of Defense, visited Kabul, heading a high-level delegation which included five other "political" generals. Yepishev rarely travels outside the Warsaw Pact countries and when he has done so, it has been to bolster troubled Communist regimes with political and organizational advice and offers of military assistance. On this occasion, Yepishev probably had the mission of reassessing the Afghan political-military situation, of providing guidance on the political indoctrination of the Afghan armed forces, and of evaluating their capabilities and reliability. Yepishev warned President Taraki that Soviet aid to assist in combating the insurgents was not open ended and that the Afghans must take steps to increase their own capabilities. After a one-week visit, Yepishev returned to Moscow and apparently reported that Afghan military officers had a poor ideological outlook. As a result of this visit, there was an increase in the level of political education and party work both in the Afghan Army and among the general population.

19. []

20. By mid-May 1979, relations between the Afghans and the Soviets had become somewhat strained as the Afghans ignored Soviet advice to go slowly in their efforts to build socialism in Afghanistan. Hafizullah Amin, the organizer of the coup and Foreign Minister since the invasion, was particularly headstrong in this regard (see figure 9). Moreover, he was moving gradually to edge out Prime Minister Taraki, having added the title of Vice Prime Minister in the end of March 1979.

21. By the end of May there were increasing signs that the Soviets already were considering alternatives to the Taraki-Amin regime. Their public statements in

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support of Afghanistan began to refer to the Afghan Government or to the Afghan people and to make no specific reference to Taraki or to Amin. Afghan military officers reported that the Soviets were becoming dissatisfied with the Taraki regime because it had alienated such a large segment of the population. According to these sources, the Soviets planned to install a more moderate socialist government in the hope this would lead to a reduction in antigovernment activity. Exiled Afghan leftist political leaders living in Eastern Europe also reported these alleged Soviet plans. The exiles claimed East German and Czechoslovak support and said that the Soviets had promised a return to power of the exiled Parcham faction of Babrak Karmal.

22. At the end of June, Minister-Counselor Safronchuk was quoted as saying that the Afghan situation had become very difficult for the Soviets. He said that Moscow had been unable to persuade Taraki and Amin to bring new people into the government and to create a national front, attributing this failure to Taraki's stubbornness and reluctance to share power. Taraki apparently had been so thorough in eliminating potential rivals that the Soviets could not identify a single dominant leader of the opposition. Safronchuk said that religious zeal was the single most important cause of the insurgency, since much of the Afghan population assumed that Communism was opposed to Islam.



Figure 8

Marshal S. L. Sokolov, Soviet First Deputy Minister of Defense, visited Afghanistan in May 1979; supervised Soviet military operations after the invasion.



Figure 9

Hafizullah Amin, Foreign Minister under Taraki; became Vice Prime Minister in March 1979; deposed Taraki in September 1979 and became President; was killed in a coup in December 1979.

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23. Throughout the first six months of 1979, the level of insurgency continued to grow, particularly in the east and northeast. The Konar Valley, Urgan, Khowst, and locations east of Jalalabad were the most critical areas. In May, and again in June, insurgents became active in the vicinity of the capital. The performance of Afghan Army units began to decline as their casualty rates grew and as the insurgents developed their capacity to cut the Army's lines of communication. Afghan helicopter pilots also became reluctant to fly low-level combat missions because of insurgent ground fire. The decline in air operations further reduced the effectiveness of the Afghan Army. In June the US Embassy estimated that the government controlled no more than one-half of the country. (S NF NC)

24. In response to the deteriorating situation, the USSR once again stepped up its military assistance to the regime. Included in the increased flow of supplies

were MIG-21 fighter aircraft, MI-24 Hind combat assault helicopters, MI-8 Hip helicopters, tanks, artillery, small arms, SA-7 Grail surface-to-air missiles, and ammunition. The influx of all this equipment soon began to tax the capabilities of the Afghan military and to deepen its dependence on Soviet technical assistance. This dependence was already substantial as a result of the regime's wholesale promotion of junior officers if they were sympathetic to Taraki and Amin. This practice had weakened the military control structure and had increased the need for Soviet assistance in training Afghans in the maintenance and operation of modern weapons. By the middle of 1979, the number of Soviet military advisers and technicians was believed to have grown to almost 3,000. In mid-June eight AN-12 Cub aircraft from the transport regiment at Fergana deployed to Afghanistan, where they conducted internal shuttle and resupply flights from Bagram Airfield (see figure 10). (S S NF NC)

25. Despite all this assistance and new equipment, the Army's performance remained lackluster, primarily because of its poor leadership and ineffective troop training, inadequate transportation, and shortages of spare parts. The Air Force was similarly plagued and also suffered from having primitive communications, inadequately trained operational and maintenance personnel, and a shortage of adequate airfields. Soviet

Counselor Safronchuk acknowledged the deteriorating situation in a conversation with the US Charge on 24 June 1979, but insisted that the USSR had no intention of sending Soviet troops to Afghanistan. He explained that such a move would harm the prospects for SALT and the position of the Soviet Union in the world. Safronchuk added that a Soviet intervention also would be bad policy in terms of Afghan internal affairs.

Intelligence Assessments

26. Intelligence reporting during the first six months of 1979 followed the growth of the insurgency, the deterioration of the government's position, and the increase in Soviet involvement. It was estimated that the growing feeling of the Afghan people that Marxism, particularly as represented by the Taraki-Amin government, was anti-Islam and would probably lead to an accelerated deterioration of the morale of the Afghan Army. It was noted that the growth of Soviet aid would entail an increase in the Soviet military presence but that the Soviets still would prefer to achieve a political solution to the government's problems. It was judged that their first choice would be to broaden the base of support for Taraki by including more elements of Afghan society in the regime. Failing that, it was believed that the Soviets would sponsor a takeover of the government by a new leader who would be more acceptable than Taraki. Consideration of a takeover figure acceptable to the Soviets ranged from military officers to a member of the purged Parcham faction (such as Babrak Karmal), but the latter option was believed to be unlikely since a Parcham leader would have no more broad-based an appeal than Taraki or Amin.

27. The possibility of Soviet military intervention was addressed and through June 1979 was considered to be unlikely. An article in the *National Intelligence Daily* (NID) on 23 March 1979 stated:

The Soviets would be most reluctant to introduce large numbers of ground forces into Afghanistan to keep in power an Afghan government that had lost the support of virtually all segments of the population. Not only would the Soviets find themselves in an awkward morass in Afghanistan, but their actions could seriously damage their relations with India, Iran, and—to a lesser degree—Pakistan. As a more likely option, the Soviets probably could seek to reestablish ties with those members of the Afghan opposition with whom Moscow has dealt profitably in the past.

A NID article on 16 June 1979, however, observed that there were arguments that might prompt some Soviet leaders to recommend moving combat troops into Afghanistan. Chief among these arguments were:

- Taraki and Amin were ideological brothers to the Soviet leaders.

- The loss of Afghanistan, coming so soon after Soviet inactivity during the Sino-Vietnamese conflict, would be a severe blow to Moscow's international prestige.
- A failure to respond might lead to the creation of an arc of militantly Islamic states on the USSR's southern borders and might threaten Soviet control of its Central Asian republics.
- The political and economic costs of intervening would not be great, certainly less than the cost of supporting far-off Cuba and Vietnam.

28. On the other hand, the article included counterarguments which, on balance, led the consumer to the conclusion that a military intervention would be unlikely. Among these were the assertions that:

- An intervention would make the insurgents more determined and would therefore require a prolonged military involvement.
- Airborne divisions might be able to seize Kabul, but eventually additional forces would be required to stabilize the situation elsewhere in the country.
- Afghanistan's mountainous terrain and limited road system would complicate large-scale ground operations. Routes from the USSR to Afghan cities passed through territory where the insurgents were active.
- The political costs would be too high. It would threaten the prospects for ratification of SALT II in the US Senate. It could cause Moscow to lose substantially in the Muslim world and in India. The Chinese would have a field day exploiting such convincing proof of Soviet "expansionist hegemonist" objectives.

29. Although the possibility of a Soviet military move was not ruled out, Intelligence Community assessments generally shared the view that, from Moscow's standpoint, the risks of an intervention would outweigh the gains. This judgment, coupled with ongoing Soviet statements that the USSR would not intervene, probably led to a general consensus among US intelligence consumers during the first half of 1979 that a military intervention was still unlikely.

C. July-September 1979

Developments

30. In early July the Soviet Union deployed its first known combat troops to Afghanistan. A unit of about 400 men was sent to Bagram Airfield north of Kabul, probably to provide base security (see figure 11). Bagram was a major supply point for Soviet arms shipments and the location of a Soviet AN-12 squadron. The force, which was believed by most to be an airborne infantry battalion, was not known to be involved in operations against the insurgents. [

31. From July to September 1979 the level of insurgent activity continued to grow and the area of the country controlled by the government continued to

shrink. The principal insurgent pressure was exerted in the east and northeast. The insurgents routinely cut major roads, causing serious resupply problems for the Afghan Army, and many units became dependent on resupply by air. Several major towns were surrounded by the insurgents with little government effort to relieve them. Mutinies occurred among Army units in Kabul, in the Konar Valley, and other locations. Morale among government forces continued to decline because of the increasing success of the insurgents, distrust of their Soviet advisers, severe shortages of weapons and munitions, the purges of officers, and the unstable situation in Kabul. The insurgents were able to capture large quantities of weapons and ammunition destined for Afghan Army units.

32. In response to the deteriorating security situation, the Soviets continued to increase their shipments

of arms and to take a more direct role in the fighting. In addition to the visits of high-ranking officers, the Soviets moved a lightly equipped airborne battalion to Bagram and increased their flight activities. The Soviets became more deeply involved in guiding Afghan combat operations, as well as in logistics and administration. Soviet helicopter pilots, for example, reportedly flew with Afghan copilots to conduct strike missions against the insurgents. The role of the Soviets reportedly was changed from a mere advisory one to active participation in a wide variety of activities, including logistics and combat planning as far down as some regimental and battalion-level units. Soviet tank personnel also were reported as participating in combat operations. This did not halt the decline in the performance of the Afghan Army, although the presence of the Soviet advisers apparently provided an essential measure of continuity and stability to the Afghan command structure.

33 [



Figure 12

General I. G. Pavlovskiy, Chief of Soviet Ground Forces, visited Afghanistan from August to October 1979.

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time that a visit by such a prestigious delegation suggested that the Soviets were near a decision regarding further support for the Taraki regime. More specifically, Pavlovskiy's mission was thought to be to provide an on-the-spot assessment of the Afghan Government's viability and to make recommendations concerning Moscow's next move.]

34. On 5 August elements of an Afghan Army unit at the Bala Hissar garrison in Kabul mutinied against the government. Although the mutiny was soon put down by troops loyal to Taraki and Amin, the development, coming on top of the decline in security elsewhere in the country, apparently prompted Moscow to dispatch yet another high-ranking military delegation to Kabul. On 17 August 1979 Gen. Ivan Pavlovskiy, Commander in Chief of Soviet Ground Forces, arrived in Kabul as the head of a large Soviet military delegation including 12 other generals and six colonels (see figure 12). The group remained in Afghanistan for two months and, according to Afghan sources, its purpose was "to study the situation" and to sign agreements with Afghan officers. US intelligence reported at the

35. During the last week in August and the first week in September, increased military activity was noted again in Soviet units stationed in the Turkestan MD (see paragraph 16). The garrison of the Headquarters of the 5th Guards Motorized Rifle Division (CMRD) at Kushka, 6 kilometers north of the Afghan border, was unusually active and equipment from the division was seen on railcars and at a nearby railyard.

Portions of this Category III division, including elements of one tank battalion, an antiaircraft artillery regiment, a mortar battery, and trucks, had apparently left the garrison. It was assumed the unit was heading north to conduct field exercises in training areas within the Turkestan MD.

36. [] September 1979 artillery pieces with prime movers and a battalion of BMD armored personnel carriers [] Fergana Airfield (see figure 13). The BMD is a relatively lightweight vehicle which up to that time was exclusively associated with airborne forces, and the

palletization of these vehicles suggested preparation for air movement. The equipment probably belonged to elements of the 105th GAD, stationed nearby. [

[] it was estimated that the activity represented training on specific techniques for loading the IL-76, a larger and more advanced trans-

port than the AN-12s that normally supported the 105th GAD.

38. [

37. On 11 September President Taraki stopped off in Moscow en route home from a nonaligned summit in Havana and reportedly discussed with President Brezhnev his plans for replacing Amin. On 16 September 1979 Prime Minister Amin, foiling plans to replace him, emerged as the new leader of the Afghan Government and the People's Democratic Party after a coup in which President Taraki was killed. By seizing power and eliminating the pro-Taraki elements in the Khalq faction, Amin further narrowed the regime's base of support. [

[105th GAD] [September] []
regiment had been moved into convoy formation in probable preparation for deployment. [] [] September a formation of 100 BMDs and 10 ASU-57s—lightweight assault guns also associated with airborne forces—were seen at Fergana Airfield. Significant activity was also observed at the Fergana, Chirchik, and Osh regimental garrisons of the 105th GAD (see figure 15). At Chirchik, 60 BMDs were in convoy formation and the airborne artillery battalion, whose equipment was normally in storage, was in the open with its artillery pieces attached to prime movers. At Osh, equipment was moved from its normal location to a more central area of the garrison. The 104th GAD []

[]

[]

[]

[]

at Kirovabad in the Transcaucasus MD, and the 98th GAD in Bolgrad in the Odessa MD, were also noted as being involved in increased activity. There was a flurry of Soviet reaction immediately following the coup. Reports, which later proved to be unfounded, were received that up to 3,600 Soviet troops were in Kabul with the mission of providing security for Soviet facilities and personnel.

39.

40. The increased activity at the 105th GAD, and possibly the 104th and 98th GADs, continued

* Also known as the 54th GMRD.

October confirmed that units had returned to normal postures and that the alert had been terminated.

Intelligence Assessments

41. Intelligence reporting during the third quarter of 1979 dwelt primarily with the future of the Taraki-Amin regime, the Soviets' possible political and military options, and the significance of the September alert of the 105th GAD. The Soviets were described as being dissatisfied with the regime's inability either to cope with the insurgency or to consolidate power in Kabul, and there was speculation that the Soviets would attempt to replace the still uncooperative Amin. It was reported that if the Taraki regime was unable to broaden its control by organizing a "United National Front," the Soviets would seek a new leader—either a military man or a member of the exiled Parcham fac-

tion. The Cabinet shakeup at the end of July, in which Taraki had assumed direct command of the armed forces and Amin had become Minister of National Defense, was interpreted as evidence that Taraki and Amin had become aware of Soviet intentions and had taken steps to strengthen their hold on the Afghan military. By the beginning of September it was reported that the Soviets apparently had given up their previous efforts to replace Taraki and Amin and had decided to bolster them by infusions of aid and advisers.

42. The Intelligence Community continued to estimate that the chances of a major movement of Soviet military forces into Afghanistan were unlikely in the near term. There was a shift of emphasis in its reporting, however, as the continuing deterioration of Afghanistan's internal security situation and the apparent ineffectiveness of Moscow's political and economic assistance led analysts to examine the range of direct military options open to the USSR.

43. The increased military activity in the garrisons of the 105th CAD in the Turkestan MD in September prompted the first intelligence assessments that the Soviet Union might be preparing to commit airborne forces to Afghanistan. A NID item on 7 September 1979 assessed the activity at Fergana as possibly being related to [] It went on to say, however, that "We cannot categorically rule out the possibility of a paradrop into Afghanistan, although an airlanding would be much more likely."

44. []

[]

45. The growth of Soviet activity from June to September was a matter of growing concern to a number of intelligence analysts. As a result of their efforts, the Director of Central Intelligence published an Alert Memorandum entitled *USSR-Afghanistan* on 14 September 1979. The Alert Memorandum warned that the Soviets may have been giving serious consideration to the introduction of small combat units into Afghanistan. The key pieces of evidence supporting this judgment were the visit of General Pavlovskiy, the increased number of Soviet advisers, the direct Soviet

involvement in combat, combat support, and combat service support operations, and the unconfirmed reports of 3,600 Soviet troops in Kabul. []

[] Although analysts saw no evidence of preparation for a large-scale ground force intervention, the Alert Memorandum concluded:

In expanding the levels of their own involvement in Afghanistan, there is a danger that the Soviets—consciously or unconsciously—will amplify their own stake in the ultimate outcome, making it increasingly difficult for them to resist raising the level of their participation still another notch should they feel it necessary.

46. An Interagency Intelligence Memorandum (IIM), *Soviet Options in Afghanistan*, published on 28 September 1979, contained a discussion of the ways in which the Soviet leaders could increase their military support:

- Increased equipment and advisers. The shortage of trained Afghan manpower would require Soviet advisers to take a more extensive role in combat and air support activities.
- Introduction of combat support and combat service support units. This would provide the Afghan Army with Soviet-manned attack helicopter and additional logistic and maintenance units to enhance the Afghan combat reach and effectiveness.
- Limited intervention with Soviet combat units. This option would involve deployment of a limited number of units, such as a few battalions, up to and including one or two airborne divisions to help stiffen Afghan Army resolve or to provide security for key cities or critical points. Before taking this option, the Soviets would have to weigh whether their increased combat presence would alienate rather than bolster the Afghan armed forces.
- Massive Soviet military intervention. Anything beyond the securing of Kabul or some other key city and a few critical points would require the commitment of large numbers of regular ground forces in a potentially open-ended operation. An overland move to Kabul, particularly with the

possibility of Afghan Army and insurgent opposition, would be a multidivisional operation exhausting the resources of the Turkestan MD. An operation of this magnitude would therefore require the redeployment of forces and their supporting elements from western and central military districts, in addition to those near the Soviet-Afghan border.

47. The alert of the 105th GAD after the Amin coup in mid-September was judged in the IIM to be a Soviet contingency preparation for a move into Afghanistan. It stated:

At the same time, the Soviets have seemed ready to act decisively to preserve security in Kabul if the new situation there should rapidly deteriorate. [

] The Soviets may fear that Amin's coup might provoke fighting within the Afghan Army and a breakdown of control in Kabul. In this event, the Soviets are probably prepared to deploy one or more Soviet airborne divisions to the Kabul vicinity to protect Soviets already there as well as to ensure continuance of a pro-Soviet regime in the capital. We believe it likely that we would promptly detect a deployment of Soviet forces on this scale. We do not believe that the Soviets would intend such a deployment for use in fighting against the Muslim insurgency, although it is not impossible that, once in Afghanistan, such Soviet airborne forces could eventually be drawn into fighting.

48. The IIM concluded that the Soviets would continue their efforts to assist the Afghan regime in defeating the insurgents. It stated that if more military steps were needed, Moscow would be likely to take them incrementally rather than dramatically. It noted that the USSR would be unwilling to pay the political and military costs of a major military intervention, but that the chances of such a move would be increased under the following situations:

- Prolonged political chaos.
- The prospect or advent of an anti-Soviet regime.
- Foreign military intervention.

D. October–November 1979

Developments

49. During the months of October and November, the Afghan regime continued to be buffeted by an increase in insurgent activity and concerned by a progressive weakening of the armed forces. The insurgents conducted operations throughout most of the country, but concentrated on interdicting supply lines to cities and garrisons. Attacks along the major highways increased and traffic on the roads linking Kabul with Herat and Qandahar had to travel in convoys protected by armored vehicles. Even these convoys were attacked, however, and the government was forced to rely more heavily on resupplying isolated garrisons by air. In addition, insurgent activity within Afghan cities became more widespread and the fighting in northeastern Afghanistan was particularly heavy.

50. The insurgents' successes in the countryside and their growing ability to mount harassment attacks inside cities worsened the already low morale of government forces. Continuing purges of the officer corps and replacements of key personnel resulted in severe leadership problems. As a consequence, the government was forced to reinstate some junior officers who had been purged after the April 1978 coup. The Army was also faced with a potentially serious manpower shortage, as the area from which the government could draw recruits grew smaller.

51. The government was able to make progress against the insurgents only in those areas where the Soviets took complete control of combat operations and moved in massive amounts of weapons. At the end of October the Afghan Army launched an offensive in several areas, probably with the hope of improving its position prior to the onset of winter. The operation was successful in Paktia Province, where the threat to two beleaguered garrisons was reduced, and over 10,000 insurgents, according to Pakistani sources, were driven across the border. [

] the success of this operation was attributable to extensive Soviet involvement in both combat and combat support units down to the battalion level.

52. An article in DIA's *Weekly Intelligence Summary* on 26 October 1979 described the Soviet role in Afghanistan in this way:

Without Soviet support, the Army would have collapsed long ago. Some 3,000 Soviet advisers are

responsible for recent improvements that have begun to stabilize the security situation in some areas. The Soviets largely control Bagram Air Base, and they probably have some security personnel as well at Bagram and Kabul. In addition, they are the backbone of Afghanistan's logistics system, as they maintain all technical equipment and provide massive quantities of supplies and other equipment. Training has been provided both in Afghanistan and the USSR. Although the USSR's warmth for the political leadership has ebbed and flowed, its support for the revolution remains strong.

53. The increasing importance of the Soviet military commitment to Afghanistan was reflected by the upgrading in November of the positions of chief of the MAG and military attache. Col. Gen. Magemetov replaced Maj. Gen. Corelov as the chief of the MAG and Maj. Gen. Krakhamakov replaced Colonel Baranaev as the military attache. Magemetov and 10 other advisers conducted seminars at the presidential palace between 11 and 20 November for senior Afghan officials to discuss counterinsurgency operations during the winter.

54. The Soviet Union continued to be dissatisfied with Amin. In October a Soviet official told a Middle East diplomat that Amin was despised by his people for his past excesses and that he was too ruthless in trying to establish a viable regime. The official indicated that, although the USSR would continue to provide military advisers and materiel to Afghanistan, it was trying to identify an alternate leader, possibly someone not associated with the present government. Amin was aware of this effort and he feared that Moscow, which had tried to eliminate him in September, would try again. Amin attempted to adopt a more moderate stance on domestic and foreign policies in order to gain Soviet support.

55. On 15 October 1979 elements of the Afghan 7th Infantry Division at Rishkor, 15 kilometers south of Kabul, mutinied and engaged in intense and prolonged combat with loyal military forces. This was the first major test of Amin's control of the armed forces since his coup in September. After several days of serious fighting, the mutiny was defeated. The revolt had been caused by an announcement of the involuntary extension of the term of service of Afghan conscripts. The mutiny so near Kabul seemed to alarm the Soviets, and a number of major steps were taken shortly thereafter.

56. []

57. The mutiny also may have been the reason for another alerting of elements of the 105th GAD. [] October, [] regiments at Chirchik and at Fergana were in a higher state of readiness [] armored personnel carriers and supporting equipment were in convoy formations. Although the units may have reduced their posture somewhat for a few days in mid-November, they remained at an overall increased readiness level from mid-October through December. []

58. Increased activity was also noted in some of the ground divisions in the Turkestan MD during October. []

Intelligence Assessments

59. There was a sharp reduction in intelligence reporting on Afghanistan during October and November. The Intelligence Community's preoccupation with events in Iran may have been responsible for the decline. But in view of the substantial number of articles dealing with likely Soviet actions or options in Afghanistan published in prior months, and since the situation in the country had not changed to any great degree, there may not have been any compelling reason to restate these previous assessments. Despite the reduction in intelligence estimates, current intel-

ligence reporting did contain a number of assessments of developments during October and November. This reporting continued to reflect the Soviet interest in finding a replacement for Amin. It also noted that if the coming winter were mild, the insurgents probably would be able to continue to cut supply lines, to mount harassment and propaganda operations inside cities, and to increase their hold in the countryside. It also was reported, however, that the effectiveness of the insurgents would be limited by the lack of coordination among various insurgent groups and by their failure to receive external assistance. With its growing problems, the Afghan Army was seen as being likely to continue to suffer from disaffection, mutinies, and desertions.

60. US intelligence reports contained judgments that the serious revolt by elements of the Kabul garrison on 15 October had given the Soviets grave concern over the stability of the Amin regime and the safety of Soviet personnel in the country. [

]the alerting of the 105th GAD, and possibly the increased activity in three of the divisions of the Turkestan MD (5th, 108th, 58th MRDs) were linked in a general way to the mutiny in Kabul and to subsequent Soviet actions. This linkage, however, was not made strongly. The most widely shared explanation for the Soviets' actions was concern for the safety of their personnel. It was also suggested that the hostage situation in Iran and Soviet apprehension about some US military reaction might have been the reason for the increased activity.

E. December 1979

Developments

61. During December, insurgent activity against the government continued at a high level. Some of the heaviest fighting occurred in the east, where the government conducted frequent bombing missions. The insurgents again mounted operations in Paktia Province, less than two months after the government's much-publicized offensive there. Insurgent activity continued throughout most of the rest of the country, particularly along major roads and in the area surrounding Herat, Qandahar, and Bamian. The insurgents operated freely around Bagram Airbase, some 25 kilometers from the capital, despite government offensives in the area. Elsewhere, insurgents controlled

most of Badakhshan Province on the Soviet border and threatened the government's hold on the provincial capital. Army units there were seriously under strength, morale was low, and some forces refused to fight. The insurgents, evidently with the help of some former Army officers, used heavy weapons captured from retreating government forces.

62. The insurgents also threatened provincial capitals in western and central Afghanistan. Fighting moved closer to the capital of Badghisat Province, and most of Chowr and Oruzgan Provinces reportedly were controlled by the insurgents. A shortage of transport helicopters hampered reinforcement of critical areas. The government tried to stem desertions by ordering Army units throughout the country to provide information on the families of deserters so that action could be taken against them. The Army also transferred some troops out of their home districts to keep them from returning to their villages. In an effort to increase the manpower pool from which the Army could draw, the government lowered the draft age from 22 to 20 early in December and stopped issuing passports to draft-aged males. Kabul also began to offer increased salaries to discharged servicemen to protect their own villages. This program apparently was designed to free regular Army units for combat elsewhere and to discourage former soldiers from joining the insurgents.

63. [] December [] elements of a second Soviet airborne battalion had been moved to Bagram Airbase. Nineteen BMDs, the lightweight armored infantry vehicles used by Soviet airborne forces [

] had been airlifted to Bagram, probably in six AN-22 Cock heavy transports. [

] suggested that the unit at Bagram had come from the 105th GAD and that additional forces were being prepared for movement.

64. []

December [] yet
another airborne battalion had been introduced (see
figure 16). Later assessments indicated that the air-
borne troops were from the 105th GAD []

65. The movement of the airborne battalion to Bagram in early December and the preparation of additional forces north of the border was assessed in a NID article of 8 December as constituting either a Soviet response to a greater threat at Bagram or a move to provide better security if Soviet personnel had to evacuate the country. DIA produced a Defense Intelligence Note (DIN) that pointed to a major rebel offensive in the valley north of Kabul and to the probing of Bagram's defensive perimeter in late November as possible reasons for the Soviet move. The DIN also included the judgment that although a battalion-sized

force would have little overall military significance, the movement of the unit would probably be viewed as Soviet intervention when it became known internationally. It concluded:

This significant escalation suggests the rebel threat is perceived in Moscow and presumably Kabul as being greater than our reporting indicates, or perhaps that long-term Soviet planning is only now coming to fruition. Most importantly, however, it demonstrates Moscow's resolve in pursuing its interests in Afghanistan despite the obvious pitfalls and at a time when the Kremlin might consider the US preoccupied with events in Tehran.

66. [

be overthrown by Marxist or military opponents with little warning . . . it is also possible, although much more speculative, that the Soviet airborne and motorized rifle elements now at Bagram are merely the first increment of a much larger combat force that may be deployed to Afghanistan during the coming year. Such a force, which could eventually include several Soviet combat divisions, may be called for under long-term plans worked out by Army Gen. Pavlovskiy during his prolonged visit to Afghanistan this summer. It is not certain whether Moscow has actually embarked on such a plan, but the possibility cannot be discounted. For the present, it is clear the Soviets have made a qualitative increase in their military presence and capabilities in Afghanistan, enabling them to carry out any or all of the four missions outlined above.

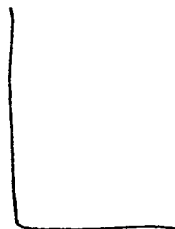
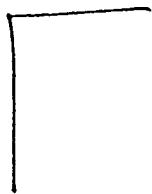
Establishment of Command and Control Communications

[On 11 December the NID carried a report that the move of forces to Bagram could be intended to upgrade the defenses at Bagram, or it could be "indicative of a decision by the Soviets to increase their military commitment in Afghanistan substantially." On 13 December a DIN included an assessment that the mission of Soviet units at Bagram was to provide security for the base, undertake a limited combat role in the vicinity to improve the security of the area immediately surrounding the base, provide a quick-reaction force for meeting limited combat and security requirements elsewhere in the country, and assist in the evacuation of Soviet personnel, if required. The DIN also offered the view that:

The arrival of these units signals greater Soviet concern for developments in Afghanistan than previously noted. Over the past several months, unusual military activity by Soviet units north of Afghanistan has been a reliable indicator of conditions of instability in Afghanistan, even in the absence of additional information. [

[Political instability is chronic in Kabul and has intensified since President Amin's takeover. Although no such move is known to be imminent or under way, Amin could

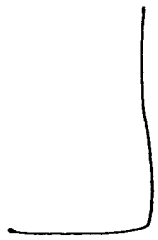
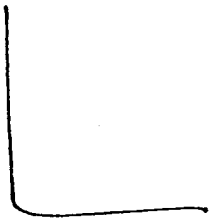
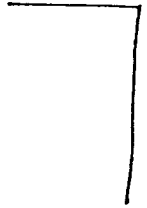
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Mobilization of Ground Forces

70. During the spring and fall of 1979, the two Category III motorized rifle divisions closest to the Afghan border in the Turkestan MD (5th GMRD and 108th MRD) had been engaging in an increased level of battalion- and regimental-level training. Toward the end of November and the beginning of December, both divisions started mobilization activity. Although they probably engaged in their mobilization and pre-deployment activities for at least 30 days, the period of concentrated mobilization, including the raising of manning levels to wartime strength and the preparation of vehicles and equipment, occurred from 15 to 25 December

71. [] December [] the 108th MRD at Termez [] had left garrison, with only the FROG surface-to-surface missile (SSM) battalion remaining []

* There are two types of mobilization divisions. Those collocated with active divisions are called second-generation mobilization divisions. Those not collocated are called independent cadre mobilization divisions

72. [] major elements of the 5th GMRD also had deployed from their garrisons to dispersal areas in the foothills surrounding the city of Kushka (see figure 20). Two tank battalions plus support units were observed. Of particular interest was []

[] petroleum bladders, which [] could supply the division with sufficient fuel for 10 days of combat operations.

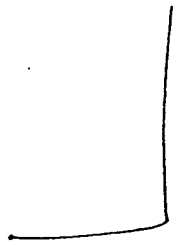
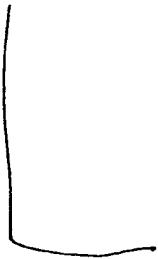
73. In other activity, []

[] train was reported to be carrying river-crossing equipment [] train carrying the bridging equipment was unloaded at Termez [] SA-2 surface-to-air missile (SAM) battalion []

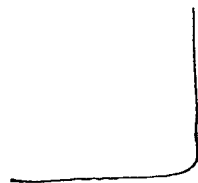
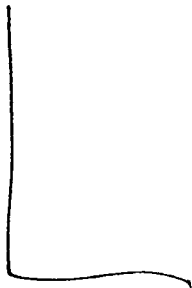
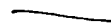
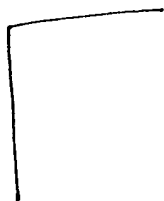
[] deployed to an area north of Termez. Other troop movements []

[] were airborne contingents outfitted and tailored to specific operational tasks. []

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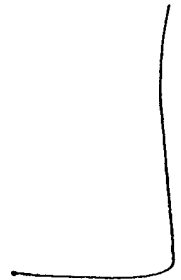
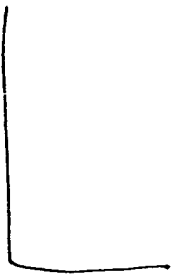
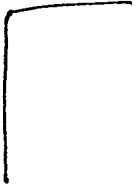


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74. [] December mobilization of Soviet forces on the Afghan border clearly was under way, and the assembling of airborne troops and equipment at three airfields in the Moscow and Belorussian MDs was in progress. []

[] analysis indicated that it was in fact a ground attack unit, elements of which later deployed into Afghanistan. []

[] Another indication that activity by the airborne troops was under way, or soon would be, []

77. []

Air Activity

75. Prior to the invasion of Afghanistan, Soviet tactical air assets north of the Afghan border normally consisted of only one fighter regiment of MIG-21 Fishbeds, one ground attack regiment of SU-17 Fitters and MIG-21 Fishbeds, and one helicopter transport regiment of MI-6 Hooks and MI-8 Hips. The first indications that the Soviets were planning to deploy tactical air assets into Afghanistan were noted on [] December. []

[] The involvement of VTA assets in the western and subsequently eastern USSR was necessary because the Soviets normally had only one regiment of AN-12 Cubs deployed near the Afghan border.

78. As previously noted (see paragraph 63), one airborne battalion, probably from the 105th Guards Airborne Division at Fergana (Turkestan MD) was airlifted into Bagram []

[] helicopter strength grew by at least four attack and transport squadrons at Kokayty Airfield. DIA took note of this development on 19 December and estimated that preparations were under way for possible heliborne combat operations into Afghanistan. Fixed-wing assets for ground attack were also increased [] when 20 Yak-28 Brewer light bombers, normally based at Iliysk in Central Asia, were deployed to Karshi-Khanabad. [] An SU-17 Fitter fighter-bomber regiment from Zemi-Kedi in the Transcaucasus MD deployed to Mary North Airfield. []

[] 79. By mid-December, VTA support for the next phase of the mobilization was under way. []

76. [] December the single MIG-21 Fishbed regiment normally based at Kokayty Airfield was augmented by a second. The new regiment probably came from Chirchik and was previously assessed to have a training mission. []

[Substantial transport flight activity in the border area continued

] This activity included all three aircraft types associated with the VTA, the AN-12 Cubs, AN-22 Cocks, and IL-76 Candidids (see figure 22).

Intelligence Assessments

80. The movement of Soviet forces into Bagram and the preparation of additional forces north of the border were interpreted by the US Intelligence Community as preparations for possible Soviet combat operations in Afghanistan. On 17 December, after the discovery of the third airborne battalion at Bagram, DIA briefed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

The present upsurge in Soviet ground and air activity probably reflects a high-level decision to deploy Soviet combat forces to Afghanistan for the following reasons:

- Augmentation of the Afghan military effort to assist in stabilizing the situation.

- Provide security for Soviet nationals and Soviet support operations.

- Establish a Soviet military infrastructure to support Soviet combat forces.

To date, Moscow perceives it has exhausted options short of military intervention and has now moved to establish an increased military presence with combat forces in Afghanistan to stabilize the situation.

81. DIA [

] *Daily Indications Status Report (DISR)*, a warning summary disseminated to all commands, the various Soviet moves were characterized in these terms: "All of the above suggests the USSR is expanding the size of its military force in and near Afghanistan."

82. On 18 December a NID article on the Soviet buildup contained the following judgments:

The Soviets continue to build up their military forces in and opposite Afghanistan, suggesting that the USSR is preparing to mount combat op-

erations in Afghanistan. . . . The Soviet buildup appears to be following a planned deployment program, possibly a result of the 60-day mission to Afghanistan by Soviet Chief of Ground Forces General Pavlovskiy this fall. . . . These Soviet military moves appear to be in reaction to the continuing deterioration of the military situation in Afghanistan. We have no evidence that the units have engaged in combat operations as yet, but the Soviets clearly are getting into position to conduct such actions. We continue to believe that for the moment, the Soviets are resigned to working with President Amin, even though there are signs of strain in the relationship.

83. In the 20 December NID an article prompted by the discovery of further logistic preparations at Kushka and related developments contained these judgments:

Continued Soviet military activity in the Turkestan Military District and the pre-positioning of gasoline and other fuel stockpiles near the Afghan border suggest that the Soviets are preparing a multidivisional force for possible combat operations in Afghanistan. . . . The presence of such a large stock of petroleum products along one of the few good roads in Afghanistan also suggests that Kushka may be used as a staging area for additional military forces. Kushka is linked by rail with most of the divisions in the Turkestan Military District.

84. On 19 December the DCI published his second Alert Memorandum on Afghanistan. (The first had been issued on 14 September.) It warned:

The USSR has significantly changed the nature of its military commitment in Afghanistan and is now capable of conducting multibattalion combat operations. . . . The buildup of additional airborne, tactical air, and ground forces and logistic stocks near the Soviet-Afghan border suggests that further augmentation there is likely soon, and that preparations for a much more substantial reinforcement may also be under way.

The Alert Memorandum also estimated, however, that the Soviets were not in any great rush to mobilize their forces:

The pace of Soviet deployments in recent weeks does not suggest that the Soviets are

responding to what they perceive as a time-urgent contingency, but rather that they are reacting to the continuing deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan. The deployments and buildups may reflect the recommendations of the August-October 1979 mission of Soviet General Pavlovskiy to Kabul implemented in the light of an updated assessment of the situation.

85. After assessing the probable mission of the forces at Bagram and on the border, the memorandum concluded with the judgment that if the Soviets planned to engage the insurgents throughout the country, a much greater force would be required:

At a minimum the Soviets have now established a capability to defend Bagram as an airhead. They could hold other key points, engage insurgents in selected provinces, or free Afghan Army units for operations elsewhere if they introduced forces of the size now being built up near the border. To conduct extensive anti-insurgent operations on a countrywide scale would require mobilization and commitment of much larger numbers of regular ground forces drawn from other military districts in a potentially open-ended operation.

Political Developments

86. Soviet public statements during the month of December reaffirmed Moscow's support for the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul, if not for Amin personally, and denied any Soviet plans to introduce combat forces into Afghanistan. On the occasion of the first anniversary of the Soviet-Afghan friendship treaty on 5 December, the USSR acknowledged that it was honoring the military commitments encompassed in the treaty. It rejected Western charges of Soviet military intervention and participation in operations against "counterrevolutionaries" in Afghanistan. A TASS commentary on the anniversary promised continued military cooperation based on the previous agreements and went beyond the treaty in referring to "conducting joint measures" to ensure the security, independence, and territorial integrity of both countries. The statements again raised the question of Moscow's reservations concerning Prime Minister Amin's political future. They failed to make any mention of specific aid or support as might be appropriate to the occasion. In contrast, in September when Brezhnev had re-

ceived President Taraki, the Soviet favorite, in Moscow, he had offered assurances that the "Afghan people" could count on the USSR's "all-round and unselfish aid." In an 18 December broadcast to Kabul, the Soviets indirectly responded to Western media reports of increased Soviet military activities in and near Afghanistan. They branded Western "propaganda" as hostile, claimed that Afghan-Soviet relations were based on complete noninterference, denied "imperialist propaganda" or "imaginary Soviet units," and accused other foreign powers of interfering in Afghanistan.

87. On 20 December a Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, in an attempt to mislead international opinion, said that reports of a recent Soviet buildup in Afghanistan were fabrications by "some people" who opposed the Afghan revolution. He claimed a decline in Soviet press coverage of Afghanistan in recent months, repeated charges of interference by Pakistan and other countries in Afghan affairs, and noted an "improvement" in Afghanistan's relations with its neighbors. According to this official, there had been no change in Soviet-Afghan relations since Taraki's fall, and the Soviets would accept any leaders chosen by the Afghans. A *Pravda* article on 23 December echoed the same themes:

Western, and particularly American, mass media have recently been disseminating deliberately inspired rumors about some sort of Soviet "interference" in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Things have even gotten as far as allegations that Soviet "combat units" have been introduced in Afghan territory. Of course these represent the most transparent fabrications.

Final Preparations

88. By 22 December the mobilization of the ground and air units in the Turkestan MD and of the airborne elements in the European USSR apparently had been accomplished.

89. By this time, the airborne troops assembled at Smolensk, Shatalovo, and Seshcha also had completed their preparations.

90. By 23 December the Soviets probably began to notify forces other than those expected to be directly involved in the invasion.

By 24 December the flagship of the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron had begun to deploy to the northern Arabian Sea. It had probably reached its intended position by midday on 25 December.

91. The airborne forces assembled for the airlift included elements from the 103rd GAD at Vitebsk and the 105th GAD at Fergana.

[] Apparently, the Soviets decided to conduct the airlift of troops to the staging areas in the Turkestan MD from the airfields at Vitebsk and Seshcha. The equipment accumulated at Shatalovo and Smolensk was probably to be flown from these airfields.

The Invasion

92. The large-scale airlift of Soviet combat forces into Afghanistan began []

December. By the early morning of 25 December [] on 24 [] VTA transports had staged from bases in the western USSR to the Afghan border area (see figure 23). A smaller number of transports, []

[] flew into Kabul and Bagram during the night of 24-25 December. By the time these first transports began arriving in Afghanistan there already was a sizable Soviet force deployed at these airfields. It consisted of at least two battalions of the 105th GAD and []

[] which had previously deployed to the Kabul and Bagram areas.

93. []

94. [] on 25 December, large numbers of VTA transports, escorted at least as far as the border by fighter aircraft, began flying troops and equipment into the area of Kabul and Bagram (see figure 24). A similar, but smaller, airlift may have been occurring at the same time in western Afghanistan at Shindand. The airlift of troops and equipment continued through



Figure 24

Soviet troops and equipment being unloaded at Kabul Airport in late December 1979.

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26 and 27 December, though in smaller numbers than on 24-25 December. There was a significant reduction in the number of transports going into Afghanistan by 28 December. In all, we believe there were between 250 and 300 VTA flights during the 24-27 December period

Intelligence Assessments

95. [

[US intelligence accurately tracked the final buildup of Soviet forces which culminated in the airlift into Kabul and Bagram. It was not immediately clear, however, when, how, or where in Afghanistan the Soviets would utilize the forces they had assembled. By 24 December, however, a NID article estimated that the Soviets "may have completed most of their preparations for further military involvement in Afghanistan." It [

] stating that this "suggests that the Soviets are planning an operation that would protect Soviet forces moving south toward Kabul."

96. [] on 25 December NSA issued a report entitled *Major Soviet Move Into Afghanistan Possibly Imminent*. It [

] concluded that a major movement of Soviet forces into Afghanistan was imminent. On 25 December the DCI issued the third Alert Memorandum of 1979 on Afghanistan. It warned that the Soviets had completed preparations for a major move into Afghanistan and that the move had probably already begun

97. The movement of airborne forces was not assessed as the beginning of an invasion. On 26 and 27 December, the activity was interpreted in the NID and in DINs as another step in the augmentation of Soviet forces already in the country. The primary mission of the new troops was believed to be one of providing security for Soviet personnel in the Kabul area. In addition, the movement of these airborne forces, reported on 26 December to consist of about 800 men, was interpreted as only another step in the process of preparing for the introduction of a major Soviet ground force into Afghanistan. DIA [

] *Daily Indications Status Report* contained this appraisal from 26 to 29 December: "All of the above reflects the continuing expansion of Soviet forces in and near Afghanistan, probably in preparation for major military operations in that country."

98. Just before nightfall on 27 December, elements of the five battalions of the 103rd GAD and 105th GAD, together with elements of the three battalions that had been moved to Bagram in early-to-mid-December, participated in a coup that resulted in the death of Amin and his replacement by Babrak Karmal. Soviet forces assaulted both Amin's residence at the Duraleman Palace southwest of Kabul and the Radio Afghanistan building in the center of town. Within hours, the major buildings were under Soviet control and a defensive perimeter was established around the capital (see figure 25). Soviet forces encircled and subsequently disarmed the Afghan I Corps which had been responsible for capital security.

99. Since mid-December, [] the 5th GMRD at Kushka and the 100th MRD at Termez had deployed from garrison to dispersal areas. The 5th GMRD was in the valleys

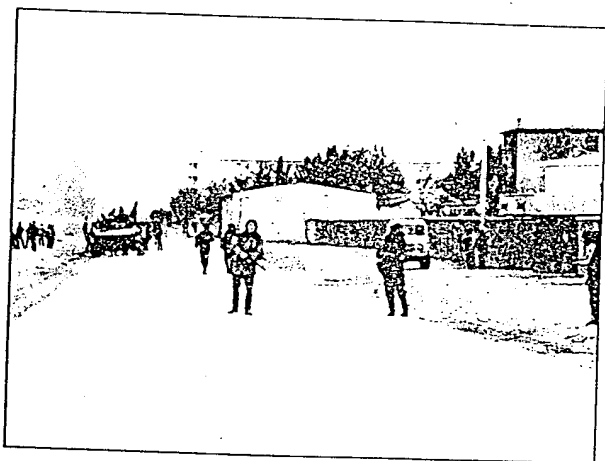


Figure 25

Soviet airborne troops seizing Afghan Security Service Headquarters in Kabul 28 December 1979.

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surrounding Kushka and the 108th MRD was in the foothills 20 kilometers north of Termez. These divisions were kept under surveillance]

[revealed the establishment of field petroleum depots capable of holding 160 metric tons at Termez and slightly less at Kushka. This development was reported in a 26 December NID article as suggesting that the Soviets were likely to use Termez and Kushka as staging bases for additional forces moving into Afghanistan. A special analysis in the 28 December NID further estimated that if the Soviets moved the two ground divisions into Afghanistan, they would have enough forces to garrison the key cities and control the important communications routes between them. The introduction of these units was also judged to be sufficient to free Afghan forces for counterinsurgency operations and to maintain Karmal in power. The analysis noted, however, that the two Soviet divisions would not give Moscow enough forces to counter the insurgents across the country but estimated that the Soviets in any case would want to avoid such an involvement. In addition, the NID piece noted that the USSR had not yet established a public justification, such as a threat to a fellow Marxist regime or to Soviet security interests, that would be expected to precede any commitment to undertake a wider combat role. (TS R U C)

100. Major elements of the 5th GMRD and the 108th MRD started to enter Afghanistan on 28 December. The 5th GMRD moved into the western part of the country from Kushka and took up positions near Herat, Shindand, and Qandahar. The 108th MRD moved from Termez to Pol-e-Khomri, through the Salang Pass and on to Bagram and Kabul (see figure 26). Most of the overland deployments of ground forces began about 28 December as airlift activity was being reduced. The first indisputable evidence that Soviet ground (as opposed to airborne) forces had entered Afghanistan came on 29 December, when the US defense attache observed Soviet ground forces in large numbers coming down into Kabul from the direction of the Salang Pass.

101. Reporting during the invasion was largely limited to a description of the events as they unfolded. The coup came as a surprise to US intelligence. Some intelligence assessments questioned the wisdom of Moscow's decision to install a regime headed by Babrak Karmal. Although it was acknowledged that he would be completely under Soviet control, his background made him no more suitable than Amin to unite the rebellious segments of Afghan society under a Marxist regime. Although there were many credible reports of clashes between Soviet and Afghan Army units, reports of fighting between Soviet forces and Afghan insurgents were treated with a high degree of



Figure 26

Soviet convoy moving down Salang road into Kabul 29 December 1979

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skepticism. A 31 December NID item, which mentioned Pakistani press reports of Soviet counterinsurgency operations, concluded that the reports probably

were exaggerated since "the insurgents rarely attack heavily armed Afghan garrisons and they almost certainly would not engage crack Soviet forces."

III. COMPARISON OF SOVIET DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE IN THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

102. Success in warning depends to a considerable degree on the attacker's behaving largely according to expectations. A warning system is designed to recognize those steps that experience and analysis have indicated an attacker will take before an invasion—on the basis of common prudence and the doctrine the attacker has developed for going to war. As a result, it is vitally important to understand a potential adversary's doctrine for initiating hostilities and to check that understanding, whenever circumstances allow, against actual practice. For these reasons, the US Intelligence Community has for many years conducted detailed examinations [

] that could shed light on Moscow's doctrine governing the nature and timing of those operations that it deems necessary in the process of going to war. These studies have served as the basis for estimating which of these operations could reasonably be expected to be perceived by Western intelligence and, therefore, for determining how much warning would be available for US and NATO commanders.

103. The invasion of Afghanistan offered a rare chance to compare US estimates of Soviet doctrine for going to war with an actual operation and, on the basis of this comparison, to glean whatever lessons may be applicable to the problem of warning of war in Europe. The task is complicated, however, by the many differences between the kind of operations that were undertaken to invade Afghanistan and those that could be expected in the event of a Warsaw Pact attack on the NATO countries. This problem notwithstanding, any nation undertaking a relatively large-scale military operation must make substantial preparations, and these measures are likely to be governed by standard operating procedures and to have certain common characteristics irrespective of the target. Accordingly, this portion of the memorandum focuses on some of the major aspects of Soviet doctrine for going to war, looks at how Soviet forces were actually employed in preparing for and carrying out the invasion of Afghanistan and in operations through January

1980, and provides a basis for assessing whether this comparison of doctrine and practice warrants any adjustment in our present approach to the problem of warning.

A. The Command and Control Structure

Doctrine and Practice

104. The decision to invade Afghanistan undoubtedly was made at the highest level in the Kremlin, probably by the Defense Council. The Defense Council is an inner grouping within the Politburo which defines the principles of Soviet military strategy acceptable to the Communist Party and the government agencies concerned. The Council convenes to make major political-military decisions within the general policy framework already laid down by the Politburo. The Council's primary function is to deal with questions of national security and strategy, notably those involving significant military actions. It sets the course of Soviet military policy and serves as a coordinator between influential sectors within the party and the armed forces. The Soviet Defense Council is composed of the top leadership of the party and the government.

105. Although we have no specific evidence confirming when the decision to invade was made, there are indications that a decision to prepare for this contingency may have been reached by the Defense Council in mid-October 1979, following the mutiny at Rishkor and the two-month visit to Afghanistan by the Soviet Ground Forces Chief of Staff. [

] The final decision may have been made in late November or early December 1979. This decision may have been prompted by the insurgents returning to the offensive in this period after what had appeared

to be an effective series of sweep operations by the Afghan Army. Shortly after this, Soviet military activities across the border from Afghanistan increased. About the same time, Ambassador Dobrynin returned to Moscow from Washington for consultations.

106. The Supreme High Command is the highest operational authority responsible for the conduct of Soviet military operations. [

] General Secretary Brezhnev, who chairs the Defense Council, is also Supreme Commander in Chief and in that capacity is or would be the leader of the Supreme High Command. Conclusions regarding additional membership must be more speculative. They almost certainly include the Defense Minister [

] the three first deputy ministers of defense, the five force commanders, and perhaps others.

107. Marshal Sokolov, a first deputy minister of defense and supposedly a member of the Supreme High Command, apparently was in overall command of operations in Afghanistan. [

] Marshal Sokolov's presence in Afghanistan could be considered analogous to the Soviet practice during World War II of sending a representative of the Supreme High Command to oversee critical operations. [

] Marshal Sokolov's dispatch to Kabul was consistent with the centralization of control that is characteristic of Soviet operations. [

] Marshal Sokolov's involvement [

] clear indications that Moscow regarded the operation as warranting the special attention of a member of the Defense Council

108. The next level of strategic and operational control below the Supreme High Command is the General Staff. This organization is the executive agent and operational arm of the Supreme High Command and, as such, coordinates military planning, directs functions common to all services, and provides centralized control of all combat forces. The General Staff was fully engaged in preparation for the Afghanistan invasion and exercised close control over the entire enterprise.

109. [

] 110. The major point of operational control within the staff was the Chief Operations Directorate. This directorate was responsible both for strategic military planning and for the coordination and implementation of these plans. [

] 111. Soviet doctrine for the command of large-scale military operations customarily calls for another echelon under the General Staff known as the theater of military operations (TVD). A TVD would encompass several fronts and perhaps long-range aviation, rocket forces, and naval units as well. Doctrinally, a Soviet front consists of a headquarters and several field armies, requisite naval and air elements and supporting logistical units, depending on the nature of the mission. In the case of Afghanistan, however, the Soviets did not establish a TVD or front. Instead, they decided to exercise control from the General Staff through the Turkestan MD Headquarters to the next echelon below the front, the army

112. In the Soviet system there is considerable flexibility in structuring theaters, fronts, and armies. They are tailored for particular missions and their size and composition can vary widely. The combined-arms

army which controlled the operations in Afghanistan demonstrates this practice. Designated the 40th Army, it was unique in being a composite of units that subsequently were identified as subordinate to numerous armies throughout the USSR. It had a staff responsible for operations, intelligence, cryptographic communications, training, air defense, and administration. It also had a series of directorates, including a political directorate responsible for ensuring the political education of all ranks in accordance with party guidelines. In the case of Afghanistan, there was no evidence that this directorate interfered with military decisions. The arms directorates (tank, artillery, air defense, signal, and chemical troops) were responsible for the technical aspects of their own arms. The supply directorates (tank armament, artillery weapons, and communications) were responsible for procurement and distribution of technical equipment. The rear services staff was responsible for coordinating logistics services and for liaison with other directorates and the supply organization. Control of subordinate combat and support elements was exercised through a series of command posts (CPs). Thus, the 40th Army was organized and operated generally along doctrinal lines.

113. Organization of command at division level and below also followed established doctrinal lines. Each division headquarters had a staff, political directorate, arms directorates, tank armament, artillery weapons and communications directorates, plus a logistic staff. The motorized rifle divisions in Afghanistan generally had five types of command posts—main command posts, rear control points, and alternate command posts, plus forward vehicle command posts and airborne command posts. The motorized rifle regiments usually operated with a main command post controlled by the regiment's chief of staff, a rear control point under the direction of the deputy commander in charge of rear services and logistics, and a forward command vehicle which was commanded by the regimental commander when he was not at the main command post. The motorized rifle battalions had highly mobile main and forward command posts. The main command post, usually an armored command vehicle, was normally controlled by the battalion chief of staff. The forward command post was occupied by the battalion commander during movement and combat operations.

114. Aircraft operating in support of the ground forces were controlled through combat control centers

and groups. The normal Soviet practice is to assign combat control posts, centers, and groups to front, army, and division headquarters respectively.]

Evaluation

115. The command and control structure activated for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan differed somewhat from what we would expect for a war in Europe. These differences can be attributed largely to the far smaller scope of the forces required for Afghanistan and, presumably, to Moscow's assumption that these forces would not face substantial opposition. With minor exceptions there was no evidence of commands ordering increases in combat readiness. Among the unique features of the organization developed for this contingency were:

- A front was not formed; evidently the Soviets did not believe the forces committed to the operation were numerous enough to justify forming this command echelon.
- An MD headquarters was used for organizing, supporting, and supervising the operations, normally the responsibility of a front headquarters.
- The operating forces were organized in an unorthodox fashion, including the extensive use of independent units to augment the 40th Army and its divisions, the tailoring of units for specific missions, and the designation of regiments as independent.
- Once in Afghanistan, army and main division CPs were set up in a static configuration; in a war in Europe, these would be highly mobile and re-deploy often.

— An air arm was established for the 40th Army; this arrangement was unusual, but not without foundation in doctrine and exercises

119. [

116. Despite these unique features, the command and control structure as observed by US intelligence in the invasion and immediate postinvasion period was essentially in keeping with previous estimates of how the Soviets would conduct themselves in a wartime situation. The differences were relatively minor and could be explained by the limited size of the operation in comparison to that required by a European conflict and by the geographic remoteness and undeveloped nature of Afghanistan.

B. The Communications System

Doctrine and Practice

117. The Soviet Union has developed a complex, multilayered communications system with which to exercise command and control of its armed forces. Reliable, redundant, and secure, it affords the Soviet Defense Council and the Supreme High Command both military (General Staff) and political (KGB) channels by which to reach key commanders so as to ensure compliance with strategic political and military directives. In addition, they can make use of a multitude of other governmental communications networks under the cognizance of the Ministry of Communications.

118. [

120. Soviet communications activities in Afghanistan tended to confirm the Western understanding of Soviet doctrine and practice with respect to command and control of tactical units. The Soviets recognize that success in tactical operations depends to a considerable degree on having reliable, efficient, and uninterrupted radio communications and on making use of landlines where their use is feasible. Soviet doctrine calls only for establishing certain bases of communications, leaving implementation to the judgment of the commander. Basic operating principles evident during operations in Afghanistan included the establishment of communications from supporting to supported units, strict operator and security discipline, and command nets providing direct communications with subordinate units two echelons down in a "skip echelon" manner.

Evaluation

123. Generally, the communications system used by the Soviets in Afghanistan conformed to Western expectations, based on the US understanding of Soviet doctrinal principles. The system was highly redundant, to ensure that command posts could accomplish their missions and be kept under centralized control. Communications nets were preplanned and installed in army command posts as the troops moved in, prior to the arrival of the command and staff. The facilities were expanded when the need for increased traffic handling arose. Additionally, there was some evidence that automated data-handling equipment was introduced for administrative, logistics, artillery fire control, and air defense purposes.

C. Airborne Forces

Doctrine and Practice

124. The Soviet Union maintains eight airborne divisions, seven in a ready status and one for training. These forces are centrally controlled by the VDV Headquarters in Moscow and are considered strategic reserves of the Supreme High Command. Their preparations and movements are considered to be a good warning indicator because Soviet doctrine suggests that they would be used in the opening phases of a wide variety of military operations, ranging from a full-scale war in Europe to intervention in Third World areas. Prior to the intervention in Afghanistan, the last operational use of Soviet airborne forces was in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, when VDV units seized the airport at Prague, occupied key government facilities, and arrested government leaders.

125. Although the airborne forces were placed on alert in several periods of international tension during the 1970s, they were never deployed. In the few cases in which the Soviets intervened, their forces were composed of combat and support units taken from nonairborne formations. For example, the SA-3 surface-to-air missile regiments sent to Egypt in 1970 to salvage President Nasser's "war of attrition," were drawn intact from the USSR's National Air Defense Forces, and the MIG-21 squadrons sent to Egypt during that same crisis were taken from Soviet Frontal Aviation units.

126. US intelligence estimates of Soviet power projection capabilities have said that a decision by the Soviets to employ their airborne forces would turn on scenario-related factors, of which two were probably the most important—the expected level of opposition and the location. Airborne troops were estimated to be appropriate chiefly in situations where the opposition would be light and where the mobile and lightly equipped nature of such units would facilitate their transport to the area of conflict. US estimates have not considered the time needed to prepare Soviet airborne forces to be a significant constraint in a long-distance operation. An airborne regiment could be ready for an airlift within three to six hours and a division in about 24 hours after an alert was given. If the operation called for an airdrop, a Soviet airborne regiment was estimated to require eight to 12 hours to prepare, and a division about 48 hours. Although it was assumed that there would be numerous indications of the preparations for a deployment of a large airborne force

US estimates stated that once these steps were accomplished, deployment could begin on very short notice.

Evaluation

127. The employment of airborne forces in Afghanistan adhered closely to these estimates. They were used to establish and maintain an airhead in the country; to provide a show of force in support of pro-Soviet elements; to maintain security in and around key urban, government, and military areas; and to conduct limited combat operations to eliminate or effectively control opposition to Soviet supported elements.

128. More specifically, the 103rd GAD, garrisoned in the Belorussian MD, displayed a high state of preparedness and flexibility.

The performance of the 105th GAD was at least equally impressive though it had had a prolonged opportunity to come to the requisite state of readiness for the invasion.

the division's deployment into that country could well be viewed as more administrative than tactical, because of the nonopposed nature of the move and the division's proximity to the border.

D. Military Transport Aviation

Doctrine and Practice

129. The primary combat mission of the Military Transport Aviation (VTA) is to lift Soviet airborne forces. Other missions include the movement of nonairborne troops, equipment, supplies, and nuclear weapons. In addition, it is used for the delivery of economic and military assistance materiel to Soviet client states in the Third World. VTA operates some 665 medium and heavy transport aircraft, of which approximately 555 are the medium-range AN-12 Cubs. The long-range transports include about 50 AN-22 Cocks (which can carry all ground force divisional equipment) and 60 IL-76 Candidids. Most of these aircraft have been based in the western USSR. Civil aircraft from Aeroflot could provide supplemental support to VTA and add about 1,300 medium- and long-range transports to the inventory. These aircraft are configured primarily for personnel or light cargo airlift, but Aeroflot's 160 AN-12s could be used to lift heavy equipment. Aeroflot routinely transports some 130,000 military personnel over a period of about three to four weeks during the semi-annual rotation of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe.

130. Military Transport Aviation devotes considerable training time to its primary mission of transporting airborne assault troops, including night drops, close formation flying, and low-level navigation. US intelligence has estimated that the VTA has demonstrated in exercises and training activities an adequate level of competence to transport airborne assault troops, but that in an actual operation success would depend upon a favorable air environment. It has also estimated that the entire lift capacity of VTA would be required to move all the equipment and the 7,300 personnel assigned to one airborne division. Assuming an aircraft availability rate of about 85 percent, this would mean that VTA probably would prove inadequate for a full division lift. Offsetting this assumption, however, is the fact that Soviet airborne units would probably leave behind their administrative personnel and some equipment in a combat situation. Accordingly, US

intelligence has estimated that VTA could lift the assault elements of two airborne divisions simultaneously, including their essential combat and combat support equipment with some transport, supplies, and other logistic elements.

131. With its large force of cargo-configured transport aircraft, VTA also was estimated to be well prepared to transport equipment and supplies, especially the types of equipment found in Warsaw Pact airborne units. On the other hand, US estimates have concluded that the low ratio of aircrews to operational aircraft (1.3 to 1) would be a limiting factor on Soviet air transport capabilities. With such a ratio, they estimated that crew fatigue would become a critical factor during sustained operations. Moreover, with nearly all VTA airlift assets and airborne divisions normally deployed in the western USSR, it was believed that this factor would be particularly important in operations not targeted primarily toward Central Europe and NATO's flanks. On the basis of these factors, US intelligence has estimated that the VTA would have serious problems in intensive airlifts of long duration requiring heavy payloads over distances greater than 2,000 nm.

Evaluation

132. In the Afghanistan operation, from 24 to 27 December 1979, the USSR employed some 50 percent of VTA's AN-22 Cocks and IL-76 Candids and 35 percent of its AN-12 Cubs. Overall about 40 percent of VTA airlift assets participated in supporting the intervention during the period from late November through the end of December. The operation was carried out smoothly with no major difficulties reported. As in the case of the VDV, the Afghan operation was not a good case to test US estimates of VTA surge capacities. VTA assets were prepared well in advance of the major operation on 25 and 26 December. Substantial numbers of VTA aircraft had been deployed to the Turkestan MD since early December

[VDV forces to be moved had been assembled at airbases beginning in mid-December]

133. When the invasion finally was launched, VTA operations were well coordinated and a high sortie rate was sustained. These operations placed much less of a strain on the force than an operation to a more distant location would have caused. The flights were able to refuel within the USSR, and the final leg into Afghanistan involved distances of less than 650 nautical miles. Therefore, potential problems with overflight rights, suitable landing and refueling points, aircrew fatigue, and aircraft availability were not encountered. In addition, the flights were conducted in a benign air defense environment. Although there is no question that the VTA performed well, the USSR used 50 percent of its airlift assets to move a force of five to six BMD-equipped battalions over a relatively short distance under nearly ideal conditions. Although this is not proof that larger operations to greater distances could not be carried out, it does suggest that such airlift requirements could be executed only in the absence of other competing requirements. Even then, the capability to respond would be strained.

E. Ground Forces Divisions

Doctrine and Practice

134. US assessments made prior to the invasion of Afghanistan credited Soviet ground divisions with the ability to mobilize within the following time frames:

- Category I—within 24 hours
- Category II—within 48 hours
- Category III—72 hours or more

Mobilization was defined as the callup of reservists and predesignated common-user equipment (primarily transport and engineer vehicles) and their integration into understrength units. Most Category I divisions were not expected to require much reinforcement prior to being committed to combat. This applied particularly to Soviet Category I divisions garrisoned in Eastern Europe, which had all their essential personnel and equipment. Category II and III divisions were judged to have significant shortages of personnel and support equipment (especially transport vehicles) and to need to be mobilized prior to commitment. In addition to mobilizing, these divisions—especially Category III divisions—would be expected to participate to the extent possible in other pre-deployment preparations, including individual refresher training and unit maneuvers. The duration of these predeployment preparations would depend on operational considerations and other planning factors,

especially the degree of urgency dictated by battlefield requirements. Under extreme circumstances (for example, reaction to a surprise attack or the unavailability of other units) freshly mobilized divisions might be moved into combat with little or no preparation. (S)

135. All three motorized rifle divisions committed to Afghanistan, the 5th (Kushka), 108th (Termez), and the 201st (Dushanbe), were assessed as Category III divisions. A fourth MRD, the 58th (Kizyl Arvat), was also mobilized and began moving to the Afghan border in late December but was not committed. US intelligence carried the 58th MRD as a Category II division. The 108th and 5th MRDs had cleared their garrisons by 15 and 19 December, respectively. They remained in the general vicinity of their garrisons, however, through 26 December and were not committed until 28 December. Major elements of the 201st MRD had cleared garrison by the end of the first week of January but apparently were not intended for early commitment; instead, this division moved to Termez and remained there for about one month before moving into northeastern Afghanistan. (TS R U NF NC G)

136. On the basis of estimated peacetime manning levels, as many as 35,000 reservists could have been called up to fill the 5th, 108th, 201st, and 58th MRDs. It appears that selective mobilization began in late November or early December. The most intensive and extensive phase of mobilization, however, appears to have occurred in mid-to-late December. Consequently, the two MRDs initially committed into Afghanistan—the 5th and 108th—had at least 10 days and perhaps considerably longer (up to 30 days) to mobilize and make other predeployment preparations. Many reservists were also called up subsequent to 1 January; these reservists served primarily in non-divisional units. There are indications, though the evidence is not conclusive, that at least one MRD—the 5th—may have increased its manning level and readiness posture in the months preceding the invasion. Higher-than-usual battalion- and regimental-level activity was observed within this division during the summer and fall of 1979. Some reservists were probably called up to participate in this field training, including officers and senior NCOs. It is not known how many reservists were called up, how long they served, and when they were released, or how many (if any) remained on active duty until the division was mobilized to its wartime strength in December (see figure 27). It is also possible that some mobilization



Figure 27

Soviet Central Asian reservists in Kabul on 11 January 1980.

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occurred within the 108th, 201st, and 58th MRDs in the months preceding the invasion; however, the evidence is less persuasive than in the case of the 5th GMRD. It cannot be determined precisely when these divisions initiated and completed mobilization. It appears, however, that most reservists integrated into these divisions were called up during the 15-25 December time frame. (TS R U NF NC G)

137. Despite the rather lengthy mobilization and preparation period, the 5th and 108th MRDs were committed before they were completely combat ready. The 5th, for example, entered Afghanistan with only about half of its wheeled transport vehicles; the most serious vehicle shortages being in the division's four maneuver regiments. These shortages were corrected after the division was committed. The Soviets also chose to upgrade the equipment holdings of these divisions after they were moved to Afghanistan. It should be noted that these two divisions did not participate in significant tactical operations for several weeks or more after they arrived. Older models of armored personnel carriers such as the BTR-40 and BTR-152 were replaced with the BTR-60, BTR-70, and the BMP infantry combat vehicle (see figure 28). Some older artillery equipment models such as 85-mm/100-mm field guns, the 122-mm howitzer (M30), and the 152-mm towed artillery piece were replaced with the 122-mm howitzer (D-30). Self-propelled artillery (122 mm and 152 mm) was also introduced, and



Figure 28

Soviet BTR-60 in Kabul.

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the S-60 AAA Regiment of the 5th GMRD was replaced by an SA-8 SAM regiment. It is clear that these postcommitment equipment upgrades would not take place on a European battlefield, at least not with forward area forces. (TS R U NF NC G)

138. There is little doubt that the Soviets learned some hard lessons in their introduction of combat forces into Afghanistan. Their motorized rifle divisions are organized and trained to operate on a conventional or nuclear battlefield against an opponent using conventional or nuclear weapons and tactics. Soviet ground forces doctrine calls for the commitment of armor-heavy forces and mounted infantry at high speed along multiple axes. The forces used in Afghanistan, however, were confronted with an entirely different situation and therefore with a number of operational problems. These included the terrain which limited equipment usage and mobility, extremes of weather, limited and low-quality lines of communication, an elusive opponent, and a hostile population. (S)

Evaluation

139. The length of time that the Category III divisions took to mobilize was far in excess of the minimum of which they have been deemed capable in US intelligence estimates (72 hours). This minimum, however, is not considered to be the norm, but an option to be employed in response to an emergency. The situation which confronted the Soviets in Afghanistan, however, did not present the need to meet any such

deadline. Although we do not know the precise date of the decision to invade, there is evidence that the divisions that were to be involved took steps in the fall to increase their manning and readiness postures. (TS R U NF NC G)

140. Despite this earlier activity, these divisions experienced some difficulty in mobilizing. For example, the 108th MRD at Termez]

some of the division's stored equipment was unusable. Comparable shortcomings plagued the 5th GMRD. Despite the use of civilian trucks (see figure 29), its four maneuver regiments were 50 percent short of wheeled transport by the time they entered Afghanistan. The evidence of these problems suggests that the US estimate that Category III divisions could be mobilized in a minimum of 72 hours requires reexamination. It should be remembered, however, that the situation in Afghanistan did not present the Soviets with any need for rapid mobilization and thus may not provide a basis for altering the US estimate. On the basis of their Afghan experience, however, the Soviets are likely to embark on a program to upgrade the training and equipment levels of their Category III divisions, particularly those located along strategically important axes. (TS R U NF NC G)

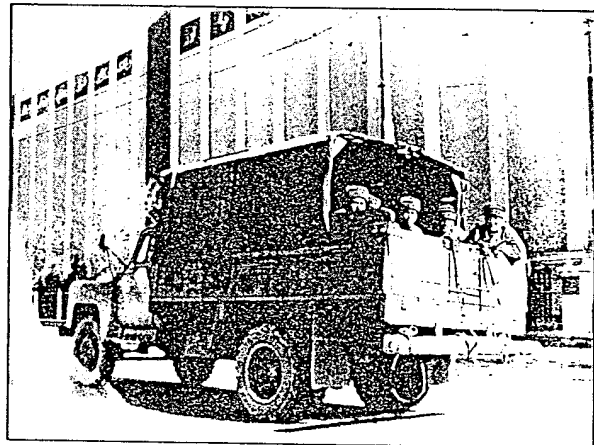


Figure 29

Soviet civilian truck carrying Soviet Central Asian reservists through streets of Kabul on 16 January 1980.

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F. Other Forces

141. In a general war against NATO, we would expect to see widespread alerting and deployment of Soviet air, naval, and strategic forces not only in theaters contiguous to areas of potential operations, but also in theaters remote from the action. This judgment presumes a Soviet desire to have all forces prepared in case the opponent or a potential adversary in another area, for example, China, attempted to take action in other theaters. US studies also assume that in the case of an attack against an opponent in a flank area, the readiness of all Soviet forces would be raised to guard against a NATO or Chinese response and, moreover, that this heightened readiness would apply to strategic as well as theater forces. In the case of Afghanistan, however, forces not directly involved were for the most part not placed on higher readiness levels. The following sections provide a description of what transpired in each of the major elements of the Soviet armed forces other than those already described.

Tactical Aviation

142. The Turkestan MD traditionally was something of a backwater in terms of the numbers and sophistication of offensive aircraft assigned. For this reason, it was not surprising that the Soviets had to augment their resources in this district to support the invasion. As of 1 December 1979 the Soviets had the following aircraft in the Turkestan MD: 120 Fishbed fighters/fighter-bombers; 30 Fitter fighter-bombers; 12 Brewer reconnaissance aircraft; and 60 Hook, Hip transport helicopters.

143. Most of the tactical aircraft movements in preparation for the invasion occurred within a 10-day period prior to the surge of transport aircraft activity from 24 through 27 December. [

last week of December the tactical air order of battle in the Turkestan MD had increased by 55 percent, with the following aircraft ready: 120 Fishbed fighters/fighter-bombers; 75 Fitter fighter-bombers; 40 Brewer reconnaissance aircraft and tactical bombers; and 110 Hip, Hook, Hind transport and combat assault helicopters. Two airfields that normally did not have tactical offensive aircraft based there, Mary North and Mary Northeast, handled large numbers of these temporarily deployed fighters and tactical bombers. The Fishbeds at Chirchik had moved south to Kokayty and were sharing the airfield with another Fishbed regiment, normally based there, as well as helicopter and transports.

144. Despite the movement of substantial numbers of tactical aircraft into Afghanistan, the Soviets did not use these fixed-wing assets extensively in the immediate postinvasion period. [

]one of the principal reasons for moving the high-performance aircraft into Afghanistan had been to protect Soviet forces in case of a move against them by Iranian aircraft. This threat never materialized.

145. In contrast to the situation in Afghanistan, Soviet air forces opposite NATO would require no substantial reinforcement before hostilities. Soviet air armies in support of the Groups of Soviet Forces in Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia are well equipped with sophisticated aircraft. In addition to these forces, the air forces of East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia would also be available. If reinforcements from the USSR were required, they could be moved to the forward area on very short notice.

Long Range Aviation

146. From 25 December 1979 through 5 January 1980 at least 99 Soviet Long Range Aviation TU-16 Badger medium bombers, comprising over 20 percent of the LRA Badger force, deployed to bases in the south-central USSR. These deployments, which consisted of 29 aircraft to Dolon, 48 to Engels, and 22 to Krasnovodsk, were probably associated with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The bombers did not participate in combat missions and probably were intended as a show of force or for contingency operations, if necessary. By mid-January, most of the aircraft had returned to their home bases. [

]By the

]Since the TU-16 is primarily a peripheral

strike aircraft, its deployment to bases in the south-central USSR for possible utilization in Afghanistan was consistent with the US understanding of the role of that aircraft. With the exception of the deployment to Krasnovodsk,

LRA activity was in line with US estimates of what would occur in this type of operation

Strategic Rocket Forces

147. There was some Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) activity, particularly by SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missile forces, during the preinvasion period.

At the SS-4 medium-range ballistic missile or SS-5 IRBM launch sites, there was no discernible increase in activity or readiness.

Soviet Naval Forces

148. The Soviet Navy apparently did not undertake operations in support of the invasion of Afghanistan.

Evaluation

149. The invasion of Afghanistan provided few, if any, fresh insights into the way Soviet Frontal Aviation, Long Range Aviation, Strategic Rocket Forces, and Navy would be used in a war against NATO. This is primarily because none of these forces were significantly involved in the Afghanistan operation and because their circumstances in a European involvement would be different. For example, the reinforcement of tactical air assets, which occurred over a period of weeks before the invasion of Afghanistan, would not be required before a move against NATO. This is because large numbers of Soviet and other Warsaw Pact tactical air units are already in place opposite NATO. The relatively short distances between the USSR and Western Europe mean that additional reinforcements could be moved in only a short time before they were required. In addition, there can be no doubt that in a NATO war, the LRA, SRF, and naval forces would be heavily employed during the conflict.

G. Logistics

Doctrine and Practice

150. The US Intelligence Community estimates that the Soviet logistic system is planned to support a series of short, fast-moving campaigns in a European environment. For this support, US analysts believe that Soviet doctrine permits rear service elements of units above division level to be committed before complete preparations are made in order to increase the odds of achieving surprise. At division level and below, however, it is estimated that appropriate logistic preparations have to be completed before the forces are committed in combat. Those logistic units at army level and above that were committed before being completely prepared would be brought up to full strength shortly after an invasion by the addition of rear service units mobilized to augment peacetime formations. For wartime operations, it is estimated that the Soviets would use a "push" system in which supplies are moved from higher echelons to lower over multiple supply routes. Some of the roads would be dedicated for use solely by logistic elements. Rail transport would be used as much as possible, particularly for the movement of bulk items. To support operations in a

European-type conflict, the estimated priorities for combat supplies would be: ammunition, POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants), technical supplies, rations, and nontechnical supplies. Local resources would be exploited as much as possible, and Military Transport Aviation would be used to move only the most critical supplies.

151. The contrast between what Soviet logistic doctrine calls for in a war against NATO and the situation that developed in Afghanistan is marked. Although Soviet doctrine allows the commitment of forces with less-than-complete logistic preparation at division level and above, Soviet army-level units in Afghanistan were not brought up to full strength even after the invasion was accomplished. This deficiency led to numerous supply and maintenance problems in the early days of the operation, although none of these were known to have impacted on Soviet operations. Soviet logistics doctrine was also not employed in the case of some units at division level. As previously noted, the 5th GMRD at Kushka was sent into Afghanistan with up to a 50-percent shortage of general purpose vehicles. Soviet forces were unable to establish multiple lines of communication with dedicated supply routes. There are a limited number of roads and total lack of railroads in Afghanistan. The two main roads from Termez to Kabul and from Kushka to Herat and Qandahar were used for both operational and logistic purposes. This resulted in frequent bottlenecks, which were made more serious by poor weather conditions and by frequent insurgent efforts to cut the roads.

152. Through January 1980 Soviet logisticians supplied items to field forces in the priority order called for in Soviet doctrine for operations against NATO, that is, ammunition, POL, technical supplies, rations, and nontechnical supplies. The Soviets did not adapt their priority system to match the requirements imposed by the tactical, physical, and economic conditions

of the country. Moreover, the designed-for-Europe re-supply system kept producing excessive amounts of artillery and tank rounds when the situation demanded small caliber munitions. Because of these difficulties, the VTA was called upon to assist in the movement of routine supplies from the USSR in contravention of Soviet logistic doctrine.

Evolution

153. The Soviets seem to have given their logistic forces much less preparation for the movement and subsequent operation into Afghanistan than presumably they would for an invasion of Western Europe. This may have been due to a low estimate of the opposition that the Soviet forces would encounter. In addition, Soviet divisions in the Turkestan MD did not possess full logistic structures before the invasion. Moreover, because the 40th Army was essentially an ad hoc force organized for this operation, it had no established logistic element. By contrast, all of the divisions, armies, and fronts earmarked for early deployment in Europe have a full complement of organic motor transport assets. Army rear services in the European Theater are also maintained at a high level of readiness in peacetime and would require minimal augmentation to become combat ready.

154. The lack of a railroad and multiple lines of ground communications forced the Soviets to operate at variance with their logistics doctrine. The problems they encountered in establishing priorities for supplies, however, did reflect an inflexibility in adapting a system designed for a conventional war against NATO to the Afghan situation. A lack of flexibility has often been thought to be a Soviet weakness, in view of their highly centralized operational procedures. Finally, aside from planning, there was also some evidence of general inefficiency in the operation of the logistic system and a lack of initiative at army and higher levels of command.

IV. INDICATIONS AND WARNING EVALUATION

155. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the first offensive movement of Soviet ground forces into a foreign country since the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. As such, it offered a unique opportunity to test the effectiveness of the US indications and warning (I&W) system. The US approach to I&W includes a set of indicators keyed to the readiness of Soviet military forces

and other organizations and capabilities expected to be activated in preparation for war; a comprehensive intelligence collection system to monitor the state of each indicator; and a capability to analyze the implications of the data collected and report them, if appropriate, to those in the US Government authorized to take action in response to the perceived threat. The I&W system is

focused primarily on the greatest potential threat to the United States and NATO, that is, the forces of the Warsaw Pact concentrated in Eastern Europe and the western military districts of the Soviet Union. The indicator lists are keyed to monitor Soviet preparations for a full-scale war in Europe, and the US collection capabilities on these indicators are strongest in the European Theater.

156. For these reasons, the situation that developed in Afghanistan in late 1979 does not lend itself directly to answering the question, "How effective is the I&W system?" The USSR did not declare war on Afghanistan. It did not place its armed forces or its economy on a war footing. It committed a small force across a contiguous, undefended border to help to support a friendly regime. It anticipated no major military obstacles to the move and experienced none. It apparently did not expect reactions in other geographic areas and kept uncommitted forces at routine readiness levels. All of these characteristics of the Afghanistan operation are in contrast to what US intelligence authorities would expect if the Warsaw Pact undertook a war against NATO (when most, if not all, of the indicators of war preparations would become active). In short, the peculiar circumstances of the Afghan situation permitted the Soviets to conduct an offensive operation without activating many of the organizations and capabilities that the US warning system is designed to detect.

157. [

A. Performance of the Indicator System

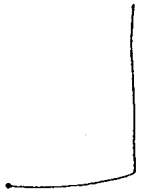
158. Despite the circumstances that made the invasion of Afghanistan much different from an attack against NATO, there were aspects of the operation that coincided with the mobilization measures the US expects the Soviets would take in preparing for war in Europe. In the following sections we will examine [] indicators of Soviet preparations to attack NATO []

[] to determine which were activated in the Afghanistan situation. This list was prepared as a guide or reference for collectors and analysts to assist them in identifying and interpreting the significance of a broad variety of Warsaw Pact activities. It is not assumed that all indicators would become active in every case, but that enough would so that the Intelligence Community would recognize changes in Soviet capabilities and intentions and provide warning as appropriate.

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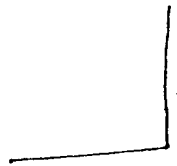
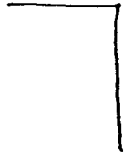
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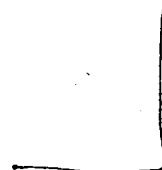
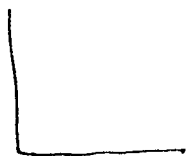
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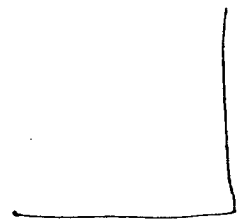
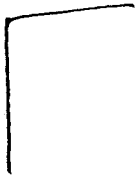
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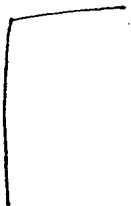
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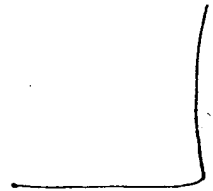
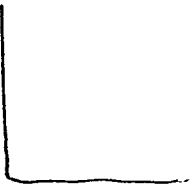
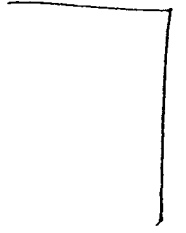


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187. *Evaluation.* Table 2 shows that [] major indicators of USSR-Warsaw Pact preparations for hostilities were activated before the invasion of Afghanistan. In view of the nature of the operation, it was not surprising that those indicators associated with the preparation of the population and economy for war and those dealing with strategic forces and other military forces not involved in the operation never became active. The indicators that did become active included []

[] These were sufficient to alert the Intelligence Community that the Soviets were increasing their military capabilities in the Turkestan MD; they were convincing enough to serve as the basis of the Alert Memorandum that was issued on 19 December (see paragraphs 84-85.)

B. Performance of the Collection System

188. As indicated previously, collection coverage of the Turkestan MD and Afghanistan was much more sparse than the capabilities focused on the areas opposite NATO. Despite this limitation, collection assets of various kinds provided sufficient coverage quickly enough to allow intelligence analysts to follow and report on Soviet activities in a timely manner

189. []

194. *Evaluation.* The combination of collection assets targeted against the Soviet buildup was adequate to provide enough information to allow analysts to follow the developments in sufficient detail to cause an Intelligence Community Alert Memorandum to be prepared.

It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that the better collection capabilities in Europe and the vastly greater scope of the preparations the Warsaw Pact would have to undertake to start a war with NATO would provide more than ample evidence to the US Intelligence Community of the developing situation.

C. Performance of Intelligence Analysis

195. It is the responsibility of the US Intelligence Community to provide warning to decisionmakers of foreign events that may be harmful to the interests of the United States. To meet this responsibility, intelligence analysts must accurately interpret the myriad

bits of evidence provided to them by the intelligence-collection system and report their findings to those with the authority to direct action appropriate to the threat. Therefore, the focus of this section of the paper is on the performance of the Community's analysts and on the question of whether their reports provided adequate warning of the Soviet move into Afghanistan.

196. In order to make such an assessment, it is first necessary to understand the official definition of warning, that is, the standard by which the intelligence analysts' performance can be fairly judged. The single, most authoritative source for these standards is the Director of Central Intelligence Directive (DCID) No. 1/5, dated 23 May 1979, entitled *National Intelligence Warning*. It contains these definitions:

- Warning encompasses "those measures taken, and the intelligence information produced, by the Intelligence Community to avoid surprise to the President, the National Security Council, and the Armed Forces of the United States by foreign events of major importance to the security of the United States. It includes strategic, but not tactical, warning."
- Strategic warning is "intelligence information or intelligence regarding the threat of the initiation of hostilities against the United States or in which US forces may become involved; it may be received at any time prior to the initiation of hostilities. It does not include tactical warning."
- Tactical warning is "notification that the enemy has initiated hostilities. Such warning may be received at any time from the launching of the attack until it reaches its target."
- Warning of attack. The Directive also gives the Department of Defense "unique and specific responsibilities for warning of attack. . . ." DIA has defined *warning of attack* as: "an intelligence judgment clearly conveyed to national decisionmakers and to military commanders that a country intends to launch an attack. The judgment includes to the extent possible an estimate of when, where, and with what forces."

197. In meeting its responsibility to give warning according to these definitions, the Intelligence Community relies both on routine current intel-

ligence publications and on the special warning intelligence publications that are the end product of the US I&W system described above (see paragraph 155). In addition, warning can also be conveyed in the numerous oral briefings and point papers produced for "in-house" purposes, as well as memorandums and in-depth studies produced by each intelligence agency and military headquarters for its principal consumers. At the highest policy level, warning is conveyed to the President in printed form by means of the *President's Daily Brief* (PDB). In judging the Intelligence Community's performance with respect to warning in Afghanistan, the evidence examined in this study was confined essentially to the written record of all-source assessments as they appeared in the current intelligence and warning reports published by NFIB member agencies. It is acknowledged that there were numerous briefings of senior government officials regarding the Soviet buildup and the likelihood of a Soviet invasion of Afghanistan well before the invasion took place. In reaching a judgment about the performance of intelligence analysis, however, these briefings were not cited since many were not recorded and most were not disseminated outside individual agencies.

Current Reporting

198. The situation leading to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was reported in a wide variety of current intelligence publications. Those with the widest readership at an all-source level were the *National Intelligence Daily* (NID), published by the DCI, and the daily summary of *Defense Intelligence Notes* (DIN), published by DIA. The publication with the most direct impact at the highest level was the PDB. An examination of the intelligence reporting in these publications shows that the details of the 1978 coup, the internal People's Democratic Party struggles, the growth of Soviet involvement, the deterioration of government control, the growth of insurgency, and the preparations by the USSR for intervention were well covered. The assessments contained in these documents also projected the growing isolation of the Kabul regime and the possibility of an intervention by the Soviets if it continued to weaken. Until mid-December 1979, however, they suggested that the Soviet response would be in the form of an increase in advisers, security forces, and materiel and that a large-scale military effort would be unlikely

199. These assessments accurately forecast the many operational difficulties that the Soviets would encounter if they invaded Afghanistan and cited these problems to buttress a conclusion that a large-scale intervention was possible, but unlikely. It was estimated that such an intervention would make the insurgents more determined, that the Soviets would need a major force to subdue them, that the danger of becoming bogged down in an extended conflict would be high, and that the difficult terrain and poor roads would make operations very difficult. In addition, analysts judged that the impact on the Afghan Army would likely be adverse.

200. In addition to citing these military problems, the current intelligence publications generally took the line that the political costs to Moscow of such an intervention would be too high. It was judged that a massive Soviet military presence in Afghanistan would have a negative effect on Soviet relations with the West as well as with Iran, India, Iraq, and Pakistan. The use of a Soviet military force against an Asian population was also seen as a political gift to the Chinese which Moscow would not wish to make. In addition, it was reported that an intervention would harm the chances of ratification of SALT II by the US Senate. In mid-1979, official Soviet statements that denied any intention of interfering in internal Afghan affairs also were cited as supporting assessments that a military intervention was unlikely.

201. In mid-December, however, the assessments carried in the current intelligence publications began to give significant weight to the possibility of an invasion. This shift was prompted by the indications of increased military activity in the Turkestan MD which made it clear that the USSR was increasing the preparedness of its forces. Even then, however, the reporting conveyed the view that if force were used, it would most likely be, at least initially, in a small-scale operation designed to improve the security of Soviet citizens and to assist the Kabul regime in retaining its dwindling authority. This concept that any Soviet intervention would be on a limited scale was carried over in current intelligence assessments even after 24 December. As was noted previously (see paragraph 97), the early reports of the move of airborne troops to Afghanistan did not describe the event as the beginning of a Soviet invasion, but rather as an incremental increase in the Soviet security force in Kabul. It was not until 28 December, when the magnitude of the airlift became clear, when the news of the Soviet-

engineered coup had been received, and the movement of the motorized rifle divisions occurred, that it was recognized in these publications that a large-scale military intervention had started late in the evening of 24 December.

Warning Reporting

202. Reporting designed specifically for warning intelligence is not prepared as routinely or disseminated as widely as is current intelligence reporting. In view of the overlapping nature of the two types of reporting, much data that would be pertinent to warning is routinely published in current intelligence documents. The only national-level intelligence publications devoted specifically to warning are the Alert Memorandums published by the DCI. During the preinvasion period there were three such memorandums produced, one in September and two in December. The only other all-source warning intelligence publication published regularly by an NFIB agency is the *Daily Indications Status Report* (DISR). It reports the status of warning indicators by geographic region and offers appraisals of their meaning. Although the DISR is prepared by DIA, it also contains inputs from the unified and specified commands (USEUCOM, PACOM, and others). [

203. In addition to these publications, but not routinely reaching policymakers, was a series of memorandums on Afghanistan produced by the Strategic Warning Staff, a joint DoD-CIA warning element. These evaluations were sent to the National Intelligence Officer for Warning and were the subject of discussion at the monthly meetings of the interagency Warning Working Group.

204. The DCI's Alert Memorandums served a useful purpose in sensitizing policymakers to the potential for Soviet activity. They accurately reported the steps the USSR was taking to increase the capability of its forces. If the Alert Memorandums had any failing, it would be that they too were cautious in estimating the Soviets' willingness to intervene and the scope of the forces they eventually introduced. The 14 September memorandum warned that the Soviets might be giving serious consideration to the introduction of small combat units into Afghanistan (see paragraph 45). The 19 December Alert Memorandum warned that the Soviets had achieved the capability to conduct multi-battalion operations in the country and that activities in the border areas suggested that preparations for a much more substantial reinforcement might also be under way (see paragraph 84). The third Alert Memorandum, sent to key decisionmakers on 25 December, warned that preparations for a major move into Afghanistan essentially had been completed and that the move had begun (see paragraph 96). This judgment was correct, but it left unclear what was meant by "a major move," especially since other warning reports and subsequent current intelligence reporting described the move as preliminary.

205. The DISR reporting of the development of warning indications opposite Afghanistan was explicit. As shown in table 2, the key indicators of potential Soviet moves were activated in mid-December and remained active through the invasion period. Figure 31 shows that indicators were activated, in general, shortly after an event was reported. From 15 through 26 December, however, the DISR appraisals of what was portended by these indicators was limited to a statement that, "All of the above suggests the USSR is expanding the size of its military force in and near Afghanistan." This conclusion did not assess the growing capability of Soviet forces nor did it touch upon the question of intent. It was much weaker than those contained in the DINs and the derivative briefings presented to military authorities during the same period. The activities on 26 and 27 December, including

the movement of airborne forces, were assessed in the DISR in this way: "All of the above reflects the continuing expansion of Soviet forces in and near Afghanistan, probably in preparation for major military operations in that country." This judgment reflected the opinion, common to most intelligence reporting at the time, that the movement of airborne forces was only preliminary to the introduction of major ground forces

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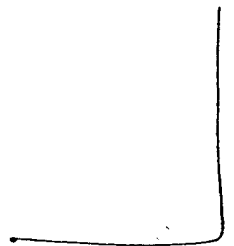
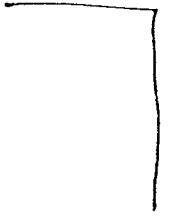
207. Evaluation. This evidence of delays and misperceptions notwithstanding, it is apparent that in the Afghanistan situation the Intelligence Community met the most basic requirement for warning. That is, it met the standard specified in DCID 1/5 to provide "intelligence information produced . . . to avoid surprise to the President, the National Security Council,

Table 4
Significant Warning* Dates

Event/Development	Date Reported
Marxist takeover in Afghanistan	27 Apr 1978
Soviets initiate increase in military assistance	18 May 1978
Insurgency threat to regime	22 Nov 1978
Fighting in Herat, 20 Soviets killed	15 Mar 1979
Alert Memorandum warns of possibility of introduction of small Soviet combat units	14 Sep 1979
Introduction of small Soviet combat units to Bagram	[] Dec 1979
108th MtD (Termez) garrison vacated	[] Dec 1979
5th CMRD (Kushika) garrison vacated	[] Dec 1979
Alert Memorandum warns of buildup on border	19 Dec 1979
Soviets may have completed most of their preparations for a move to Afghanistan	24 Dec 1979
Alert Memorandum warns of movement of Soviet airborne forces to Kabul	25 Dec 1979

*These include both perceived events that marked increased potential for Soviet involvement and the principal warning report responses by the US Intelligence Community.

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and the Armed Forces . . . by foreign events of major importance to the security of the United States." As has already been discussed, intelligence reports had conveyed through the summer of 1979 that the situation in Afghanistan was increasingly unstable. By September, this reporting warned that the deteriorating situation could compel the Soviets to increase their military activity in the country. By mid-December, it was observed that the Soviets had dramatically increased the preparedness of their forces in the Turkestan MD. These activities led to a series of intelligence reports, including a second Alert Memorandum, which described the buildup and warned that the Soviets "were preparing forces to conduct combat operations in Afghanistan" (see paragraphs 80-85). By 20 December, although the reports did not include estimates of when, how, or where the Soviets could intervene, they noted that "most . . . preparations for . . . military involvement in Afghanistan" had been completed (see paragraph 95). Accordingly, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Intelligence Community had warned that there was a situation developing in Afghanistan that could be "of major importance to the security of the United States" and had met the basic requirement not to allow the national leadership to be surprised.

208. The performance of the Community with regard to meeting the standard for giving Strategic Warning is less clear. Although intelligence warned that numerous military preparations had been completed by Soviet forces, it did not warn "of the initiation of hostilities against the United States or in which US forces may become involved." Since it is not within the province of the Intelligence Community to judge whether US forces will become involved in foreign hostilities, it can be argued that it would have been presumptuous to issue a strategic warning. In any case, it seems apparent as a practical matter that in the Afghanistan situation such a warning would have been inappropriate.

209. According to the definition of Tactical Warning provided by DCID 1/5, it is evident that "notification that the enemy has initiated hostilities" was given in intelligence reporting on 25 December and in the Alert Memorandum published on the same day. The potential impact of this warning was diminished somewhat, however, since the full scope of what was occurring was not clear until four days later.

210. As was noted earlier, the Defense Department has unique and specific responsibilities for warning of attack. In the Afghanistan situation, no such warning was issued.

To do so, it would have had to "clearly convey to national decisionmakers and military commanders that a country intends to launch an attack" and, "to the extent possible, include an estimate of when, where, and with what forces." The fact that a warning of this sort was not given probably was due to a number of factors. The most significant is that since the Soviets did not expect to meet opposition, they did not take all the preparatory steps that could be expected in a full-fledged invasion and therefore did not provide all the indicators on which US intelligence depends to furnish the level of specificity required by the definition of warning of attack. It is also relevant to note the dependence of analysts on the quality and quantity of the information they are provided and to observe that the collection assets available in Afghanistan were limited compared to those available in Europe.

211. Finally, it is important to understand that warning in its broadest sense involves not only the US Intelligence Community—the warners—but also the national decisionmakers, the warnees. It is their judgment of the credibility of the evidence and the cogency of the accompanying analysis provided by the Community that determines whether they will act, and how. More directly, intelligence can give what it thinks is adequate warning, but unless those who are warned, "the warnees," understand the warning and decide to take action or not, the effort to warn has accomplished nothing. During the late fall of 1979, the hostage situation in Iran was the major foreign crisis affecting the US Government. As was noted earlier, many of the preliminary Soviet actions in the Turkestan MD were interpreted as contingency moves in case of a US retaliatory venture against Iran. In addition to Iran, operations in support of refugees in Southeast Asia were also absorbing a great deal of attention, particularly with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

212. Despite these competing situations, the majority of decisionmakers apparently felt that the flow of intelligence during the fall and early winter of 1979 had given them warning that the Soviets could make a move into Afghanistan. They did not get specific advance word of the Soviet intention to introduce significant forces but, with the previous reporting, were not surprised when the initial warning of an imminent major Soviet move was given by NSA on 25 December 1979. It did appear that the key staff officers of most decisionmakers relied on their own review of individual SIGINT and IMINT reports to determine that the Soviets were getting ready to intervene. Evaluations of this and other data by the intelligence agencies were used to confirm what they had already concluded.

D. Implications for Warning in Other Theaters

213. The lessons learned about the performance of the US I&W system with respect to the invasion of Afghanistan may prove to be directly applicable only to that experience. It is possible, however, that they may have implications for the system's capacity to detect threatening events in other theaters and for the Community's ability to provide warning of such moves. The following paragraphs deal with these subjects.

Western Europe

214. The Intelligence Community has estimated⁶ that the Warsaw Pact could attack the NATO Central Region with two fronts after a minimum of four days of preparation. Moreover, it is estimated that under these circumstances, NATO would have three days' warning. This attack option is not considered likely, however, mainly because command echelons and support forces would not be adequately prepared. It is also estimated that the Warsaw Pact could attack with three fronts after eight days' preparation and, in this case, that NATO would have seven days of warning. If the Warsaw Pact attacked with five fronts after 14 days' preparation, NATO probably would have 12 days of warning.

215. The invasion of Afghanistan was so different from what is expected of the USSR in a European operation that it provides no grounds to change the estimates either of Warsaw Pact attack options or of the US ability to provide warning of the preparations for such operations. In comparison with an invasion of NATO, the move into Afghanistan was a small-scale operation. As opposed to the 90 Soviet and East European divisions plus the army and front organizations which would be brought up to full combat readiness in a five-front move against NATO's Central Region, the Soviets readied only five divisions plus a few supporting elements for the move into Afghanistan.

216. The mobilization of the two Category III divisions (at Kushka and at Termez) was conducted over at least a 30-day period with intensive activity only during the last two weeks of December. This was a much longer period than the 72 hours estimated to be the minimum Soviet requirement for such a division to mobilize. Presumably, however, this requirement pertains only under emergency conditions and the Soviet

⁶ See NIE 4-1-78: *Warsaw Pact Concepts and Capabilities for Going to War in Europe: Implications for NATO Warning of War.*

military leaders would prefer a longer period to prepare their Category III divisions. The Afghan experience seems to confirm this presumption. The poor performance of some elements of the mobilized divisions does raise questions about their combat efficiency once committed. We believe that the Afghanistan experience would tend to support the conclusions found in NIE 4-1-78 that the Soviet leaders would be reluctant to commit on short notice against NATO three or five fronts (made up largely of Category II and III divisions, many of them non-Soviet), unless they saw no other way out.

217. The sharp increase in Soviet military capability opposite Afghanistan was reported in national-level publications at least 10 days before the invasion. This was achieved despite the fact that US collection assets targeted against Afghanistan were limited in comparison to those targeted against the Warsaw Pact forces opposite NATO. Soviet preparations were concentrated chiefly in the Turkestan MD. The mobilization of forces throughout the USSR, and other political and economic indicators that almost certainly would precede a major conflict, did not occur. Despite these limitations, [

] warning was given well before the move into Afghanistan. It is reasonable to assume that in preparing for a war in Europe, the Warsaw Pact's activities would be so extensive and unusual [

] that the Afghanistan operation gives us no reason to doubt the judgment expressed in NIE 4-1-78 that indicators of Warsaw Pact preparations for combat versus NATO would be available to the United States shortly after they started and that NATO would be warned of the increase in Warsaw Pact military capabilities shortly thereafter.

Other Theaters

218. In addition to an assault on the NATO countries, Soviet or Warsaw Pact ground attacks are conceivable against the following countries: Finland, Austria, Yugoslavia, Iran, Pakistan, and China. We believe that the Community's ability to warn of major

⁷ The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, believes that this is not an identifiable conclusion of NIE 4-1-78, and that the view is contradicted by the first sentence of paragraph 215 of this Memorandum.

moves into Finland, Austria, or Yugoslavia would be essentially equivalent to its ability to warn of Warsaw Pact moves against adjacent NATO countries. The following paragraphs assess the US I&W capability with respect to Iran, Pakistan, and China. (S)

Iran

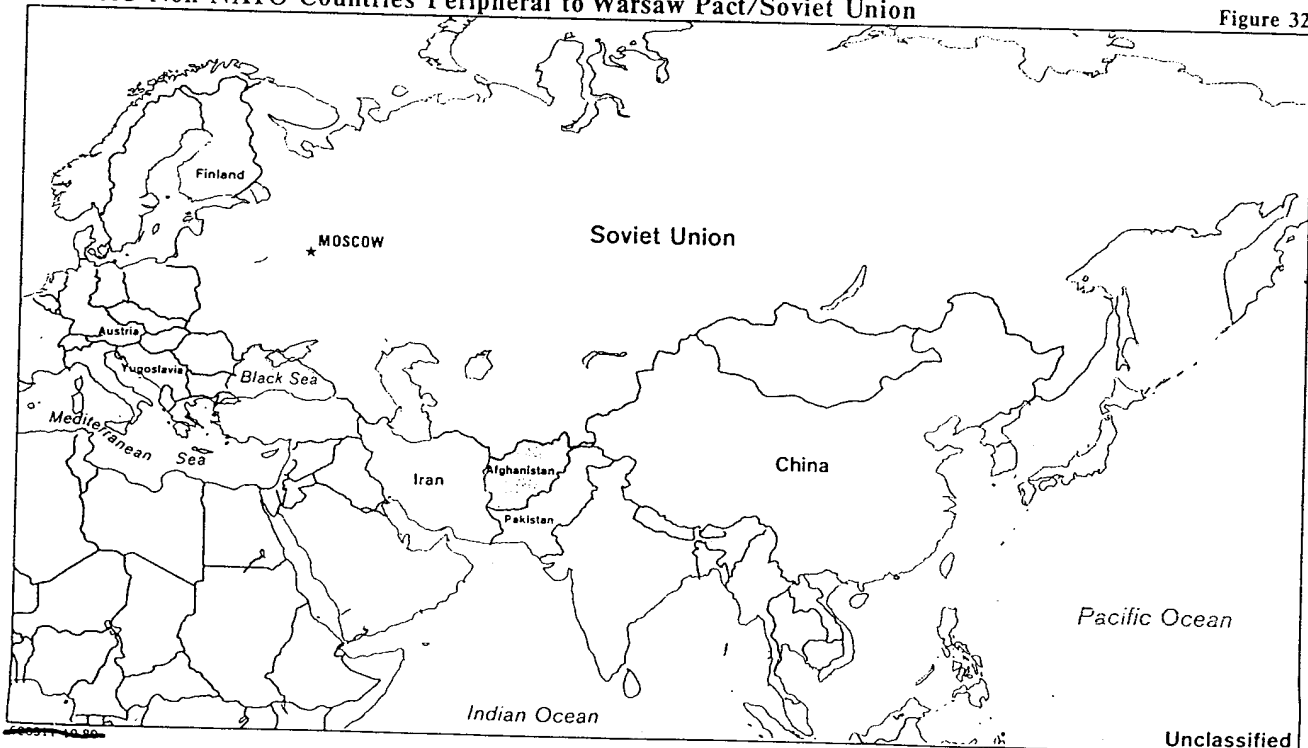
219. Since the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviets have taken a number of steps to improve the capabilities of their forces in the two military districts north of Iran. The improvements have been concentrated in equipment, in command, control, and communications, and to a lesser degree in unit readiness. New equipment has been introduced in a few units including the latest wheeled armored personnel carrier, the BTR-70, and improved surface-to-air missiles. In addition, new communications equipment suited for operations in mountainous regions and for links with the General Staff has been brought in and exercised by army and front echelons.

The pace of the deliveries has been consistent with the generally low priority with which new equipment has been introduced into these districts. In general, ground forces equipment in the Transcaucasus MD is poorer than that in other border districts. As a result of recent upgrading, however, it has become better than the equipment found in most interior military districts. (TS R U)

220. Although the military capabilities of the Soviet forces located north of the Iranian border have been improved, they still have not reached the stage where they could initiate an invasion of Iran without extensive preparations. Soviet military leaders would have to prepare invasion forces much more extensively for an operation into Iran than they did for their invasion of Afghanistan. They would have to plan to face an unknown level of resistance from Iranian ground, air, and paramilitary forces while they attempted to move through very difficult terrain. This alone would make the air defense and engineer functions much more

Selected Non-NATO Countries Peripheral to Warsaw Pact/Soviet Union

Figure 32



significant than they were for Afghanistan and, consequently, the preparations for use of these forces would be that much more apparent. Besides an indigenous threat to the invasion forces, the USSR would likely be forced to prepare strategic and general purpose forces, at least to some degree, in case the West made good on its threat to retaliate if the USSR moved against Iran.

221. If the Soviets made a calculated decision to invade Iran under conditions in which they believed they could choose the time, such an operation probably would include 16 to 20 divisions and would be preceded by at least one month of activity to improve the preparedness of the forces. We would be able to see much of this activity within a week of its beginning, and probably would interpret it as preparations for hostilities, but determining whether the Soviets had actually decided to attack would be more difficult.

222. A Soviet decision to seize northwestern Iran probably could be implemented with three to five divisions within two weeks. If the mobilization were limited to only those units that would take part, we might be able to provide only a few days or at most a week of warning.

223. If the Soviets perceived a situation threatening their security interests—such as an intervention in Iran by US forces—they probably could hastily assemble a force of some 10 to 12 ill-prepared divisions and launch an attack directed at seizing major objectives in Iran, including some on the Persian Gulf littoral, within about two weeks of a decision to do so. We probably could provide at least a week, and perhaps 10 days, of warning of such an attack.

Pakistan

224. The USSR could invade Pakistan through Afghanistan. In order to do so, an invasion force would have to be mobilized and moved through the Turkestan MD to points along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Alternatively, forces already engaged in Afghanistan could be used to cross into Pakistan. In contrast to the uncontested move into Afghanistan, a Soviet invasion of Pakistan would meet with strong resistance. Because of this, the Soviets would need to employ tactical air assets to defeat the Pakistani Air Forces and gain air superiority. Airborne forces would not be committed in any strength until at least local air superiority had been achieved and landing zones secured. To support either of the invasion options, the

Soviets would have to assemble units drawn from the Central Asian, Turkestan, Ural, or other MDs. Most units that could be used are normally maintained at low combat preparedness levels and would have to be mobilized and probably trained before being moved. Their passage through the already congested lines of communication into Afghanistan would likely disrupt operations in that country. If the forces were committed, they would have to be supported from Afghanistan, further hampering operations in that country. The bulk of the forces already in Afghanistan could be moved into Pakistan, but probably would prove insufficient in number to defeat the Pakistani armed forces. In addition, if the majority of Soviet forces left Afghanistan, the Muslim insurgents would likely cut the Soviet line of communications and liberate many of the major Afghan towns and cities.

225. If the Soviets decided to invade Pakistan, we believe it would take at least 30 days to mobilize and position an invasion force and that the US I&W system would be able to give 20 to 25 days' warning of the increase in Soviet combat capabilities in this area. If the Soviets decided to move the bulk of their forces in Afghanistan into Pakistan, they could assemble the force in about 10 to 14 days. Again, we would probably detect the movement and concentration of these forces within one or two days after it had begun.

China

226. The Soviet Union has devoted considerable resources since the mid-1960s to building up its forces in Asia. As a result, one-fourth to one-third of the USSR's ground and air forces are now deployed there. The bulk of these forces could be used in operations against China. They are well equipped, well trained, and, in general, already stationed along probable attack axes.

227. These forces, however, are not kept at as high a readiness level as forces opposite NATO. Almost one-half of the Soviet ground divisions in Asia are Category III divisions. These forces, along with army and front units, would have to be mobilized before being used in a conflict with China. In addition, those divisions maintained at higher levels would also need to be fleshed out and brought from a peacetime posture to full combat readiness. For a war against a major opponent like China, the USSR would likely make widespread preparations and would place its economy and military forces on a general war footing. We believe

the USSR would require two to four weeks to prepare forces for a multiple-front offensive against China. In view of the probable widespread indicators of these

preparations, we believe warning of the increased military capability in this area could be provided 10 to 12 days before a Soviet move into China.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

228. The main findings of the examination of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are: (a) US estimates of Soviet doctrine for mobilization and initiation of hostilities were proved valid, thereby increasing confidence that the US I&W system is properly focused to provide warning, and (b) the US Intelligence Community's assets were adequate to the task of providing warning in this remote location at least 10 days before the invasion.

A. Doctrine and Practice

229. The Soviet forces that were used in the invasion of Afghanistan were employed in a manner in keeping with Western estimates of their doctrinal procedures and capabilities. In a number of cases, forces were employed differently than would be expected in a European environment. In each case, the differences could be explained by the unusual character of the Afghan operation. Soviet forces were able to plan for an unopposed move across a common border at the invitation of a friendly government. The forces used were relatively few in number. The motorized rifle divisions were committed with their ranks filled with recently mobilized reservists using old equipment. It appeared that the Soviets believed that all that was required in this case was an ad hoc grouping of newly formed and newly mobilized units to move into Afghanistan to establish a loyal regime in Kabul. The forces used appeared to have been adequate to this mission.

230. Despite the unique circumstances surrounding this December 1979-January 1980 operation, a number of observations can be made about its essential consistency with the way we would expect the Soviets to operate in any situation.

231. The command and control structure generally was organized in accordance with doctrinal principles. The establishment of the 40th Army to control several divisions was typical of Soviet operational procedures.

232. [

233. Airborne troops were used as was expected. They established an airhead, provided a show of force in support of pro-Soviet elements, conducted limited combat operations against dissident forces, and prepared the way for the introduction of ground forces (see paragraph 127).

234. Military Transport Aviation (VTA) forces moved five to six airborne battalions, plus combat support and combat service support personnel, in the surge period from 24 to 28 December. This VTA operation was carried out efficiently, but was conducted under nearly ideal conditions. The VTA had been operating into Afghanistan for some time and had already established command and control facilities in the country. The VTA flew in a permissive air environment from bases 650 nautical miles from its destinations. It did not encounter the potential problems with overflight rights, suitable landing and refueling points, aircrew fatigue, and aircraft serviceability that could have been experienced in operations to other more remote Third World areas. The VTA used a large percentage of its assets to move a relatively small force over a short distance. Although this is not proof that a larger operation could not be mounted, it suggests that such operations could be mounted only in

the absence of competing requirements and would likely place maximum stress on the VTA (see paragraphs 129-133).

235. The two ground divisions that were moved into Afghanistan were mobilized in accordance with expected procedures. We had estimated that the Soviets, if given the opportunity, would prefer to give these types of units as much training as possible before committing them to battle. We continue to believe that in an emergency Category III divisions could be mobilized and committed after 72 hours. In this operation, the divisions were given at least 15 days for mobilization preceded by up to 15 days of preliminary preparations. Despite this, they experienced considerable difficulties in mobilizing. Although the fact that the cadre divisions took up to 30 days to mobilize does not prove that they could not be mobilized in three days, it suggests that the combat efficiency of such units after such short preparation would be low (see paragraphs 71 and 134-140).

236. Tactical air forces were increased in the Turkestan MD by 55 percent in the weeks preceding the invasion. This increase was required in part by the relatively low number and sophistication of offensive aircraft normally assigned to the military district compared to aircraft assigned in other border districts. Despite the increase, the Soviets did not use their fixed-wing assets extensively during the invasion or immediately after. In a war against NATO there would be no necessity for such a massive reinforcement, since the air armies of the Soviet groups of forces and the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact air forces are large and well equipped. Reinforcements from the USSR could be moved to the Forward Area if needed in a relatively short time (see paragraphs 142-145).

237. Logistic operations were in many respects different from what we expect the Soviets would do in a European environment. In some cases, circumstances forced these changes. Soviet doctrine calls for divisions to be committed with completed logistic preparations. Units above division can be sent into combat without complete preparations, but are expected to complete their preparations shortly thereafter. In this case, probably because of the unopposed nature of the move, the Soviets committed both the divisions and the 40th Army without complete preparation. This situation led to numerous difficulties and was not corrected for several weeks. The Soviets were unable to use the multiple supply lines called for in their logistic doctrine,

because the necessary roads simply did not exist. The Soviets showed poor planning in not adjusting their supply priorities to suit the nature of the Afghan campaign. As a result POL and rations were in short supply in the early days of the operation. Although problems were encountered, there was no known impact on Soviet operations because of these difficulties. (see paragraphs 150-152).

238. We believe that Soviet operations during and immediately after the invasion were carried out in keeping with general doctrinal and procedural principles. We have noted differences in the details of many of the operational aspects of the campaign, but believe these changes were chiefly because of the absence of a conventional opponent and to the undeveloped nature of Afghanistan. We have seen no changes in basic procedures that would cause us to modify our estimates of how the USSR would conduct operations against a major foe such as NATO or China.

B. Warning Aspects

239. The key organizations and activities of the Soviet armed forces which are monitored to provide indicators of increased military capabilities did show enough changes in this situation to provide warning. Because of the lack of a general mobilization and the limited nature of the invasion, those indicators associated with placing the society and economy on a war footing did not become active. In addition, indicators of increased preparedness by strategic forces and general purpose forces not associated with the invasion did not become active. This lack of activity probably was because of a Soviet judgment that there would be no reaction by the West, by China, or by any states in Southwest Asia. [

Although the number of indicators activated was small in comparison with what we expect to observe in preparation for a war against NATO, it was sufficient to cause warnings to be issued of the increase in military capabilities at least 10 days before the invasion occurred. (see paragraphs 187, 207).

240. The situation that developed in Afghanistan, because of its limited scope, could not be considered a full-fledged test of the warning system. It did, however, contain many elements which illuminate the capabilities of that system.

241. The operation showed that the indicator list used to monitor Soviet preparation for war was a useful tool in helping analysts to follow changes in Soviet military capabilities.

The indicators associated with military forces became active. Political and economic indicators did not. Whereas we would expect the Soviets to prepare their society and convert their economy and transportation system to a wartime configuration for any major war, these steps may not be necessary in anything less than a major conflict. In even the most minor military movement, however, certain military steps must be taken. A close monitoring of indicators of military activity would be essential, even if no political or economic indicators were active. Although political and economic indicators should not be ignored, the Afghanistan experience suggests that their absence should not be used as the basis for a judgment that no military actions are contemplated. The monitoring of indicators of military activity should continue to be the focus of the US I&W system (see paragraphs 158-187).

242.

243. The analysis of the collected information accurately portrayed the buildup in Soviet involvement. Assessments never totally discounted the possibility of a major military move, although until mid-December 1979 such an action was considered highly unlikely. These assessments projected that the political costs for the Soviets would be too high, that they would not risk their relations with the West, the passage of SALT II, and their standing in the Third World, particularly in India. It was also estimated that Moscow would deem the military costs too high; that their intervention would stiffen the will of the insurgents and demoralize the Afghan Army; and they would suffer from the poor roads and from terrain that would make operations by conventional forces very difficult. Although most of the costs described did indeed cause difficulty, the USSR, when faced with the collapse of a pro-Soviet regime on its border, felt more compelled to move than US analysts had estimated. Intelligence Community assessments did not give significant weight to the possibility of this move until mid-December when the indicators of military activity made it clear that the USSR was increasing the preparedness of its forces. Even then, the idea that the Soviets would actually pay the price of invading seemed so outrageous, that it was estimated that only a small force would be committed. This idea persisted through the beginning of the invasion, when the initial assessments viewed the airborne troops at Kabul and Bagram as merely additional security forces (see paragraphs 198-201).

244. The DIA *Daily Intelligence Status Report* the only all-source warning intelligence document published daily by an NFIB agency, accurately listed those indicators which were active.

Although the DISR coverage of the activation of indicators was good, the assessment of what the activations meant was not as impressive, merely stating that the USSR was building up its forces opposite Afghanistan. Judgments in other DIA reporting at the time were much stronger. The three Alert Memorandums published by the DCI also accurately warned of the Soviet

buildup. These memorandums, too, however, somewhat underestimated the size of the Soviet force that might be used (see paragraphs 202-206).

245. In the Afghanistan situation the Intelligence Community met the basic requirement for warning. Intelligence reports had conveyed through the summer of 1979 that the situation in Afghanistan was increasingly unstable. By September 1979 this reporting warned that the deteriorating situation could compel the Soviets to increase their military activity in the country. By mid-December it was observed that the Soviets had dramatically increased the preparedness of their forces in the Turkestan MD. These activities led to a series of intelligence reports, including an Alert Memorandum on 19 December 1979, which described the buildup and warned that the Soviets "were preparing forces to conduct combat operations in Afghanistan" (see paragraphs 80-85). By the 20th of December, although the reports did not include estimates of when, how, or where the Soviets could intervene, they noted that "most . . . preparations for . . . military involvement in Afghanistan" had been completed (see paragraph 95). Accordingly, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Intelligence Community had warned that there was a situation developing in Afghanistan that could be "of major importance to the security of the United States" and had met the basic requirement not to allow the national leadership to be surprised.

246. The definition of "strategic warning" contains the concept that this type of warning should be issued if there is a threat of hostilities "against the United States or in which US forces may become involved." This threat is implicit in the NATO area, but in situations involving Third World countries it is difficult for intelligence analysts to determine whether or not US forces may become involved. Intelligence analysts are not normally aware beforehand whether the United States would commit forces in Third World areas. In the Afghanistan situation, analysts received no formal or informal notification from policymakers that US forces might be committed to counter potential Soviet moves in the region. As a result, they assumed the

United States would not become involved and no "strategic warning" was issued (see paragraph 208).

247. Tactical warning, that is, notice that a major Soviet move was in progress, was given by NSA and by the DCI's third Alert Memorandum (see paragraph 209).

248. No "warning of attack" was given. We had no specific information on Soviet intentions to move forces across the border, nor did we know when, where, or with what forces a move would come. This probably was due to the remoteness of the area and to the unopposed nature of the Soviet move (see paragraph 210).

249. Although the Intelligence Community gave warning in various NID and DIN articles that the USSR was increasing its military capabilities opposite Afghanistan, the terms "warning" or "strategic warning" were not used in these publications. This may have been partly because the Intelligence Community lacks specific guidelines spelling out how and when warning should be issued (see paragraphs 207-208).

250. Decisionmakers, "the warnees," felt that they had received adequate warning of the Soviet buildup. When the move occurred, it was not a surprise (see paragraphs 211-212).

251. Although the scale of the operation was small and collection against it was limited, at least 10 days' warning was given. In a faster operation against NATO, not as much time might be available, but the enormous scope of the preparations plus a vastly improved collection capability should give NATO adequate warning. We see nothing in the Afghanistan operation that would affect the judgments of Warsaw Pact capabilities and associated warning times found in NIE 4-1-78 (see paragraphs 214-217).

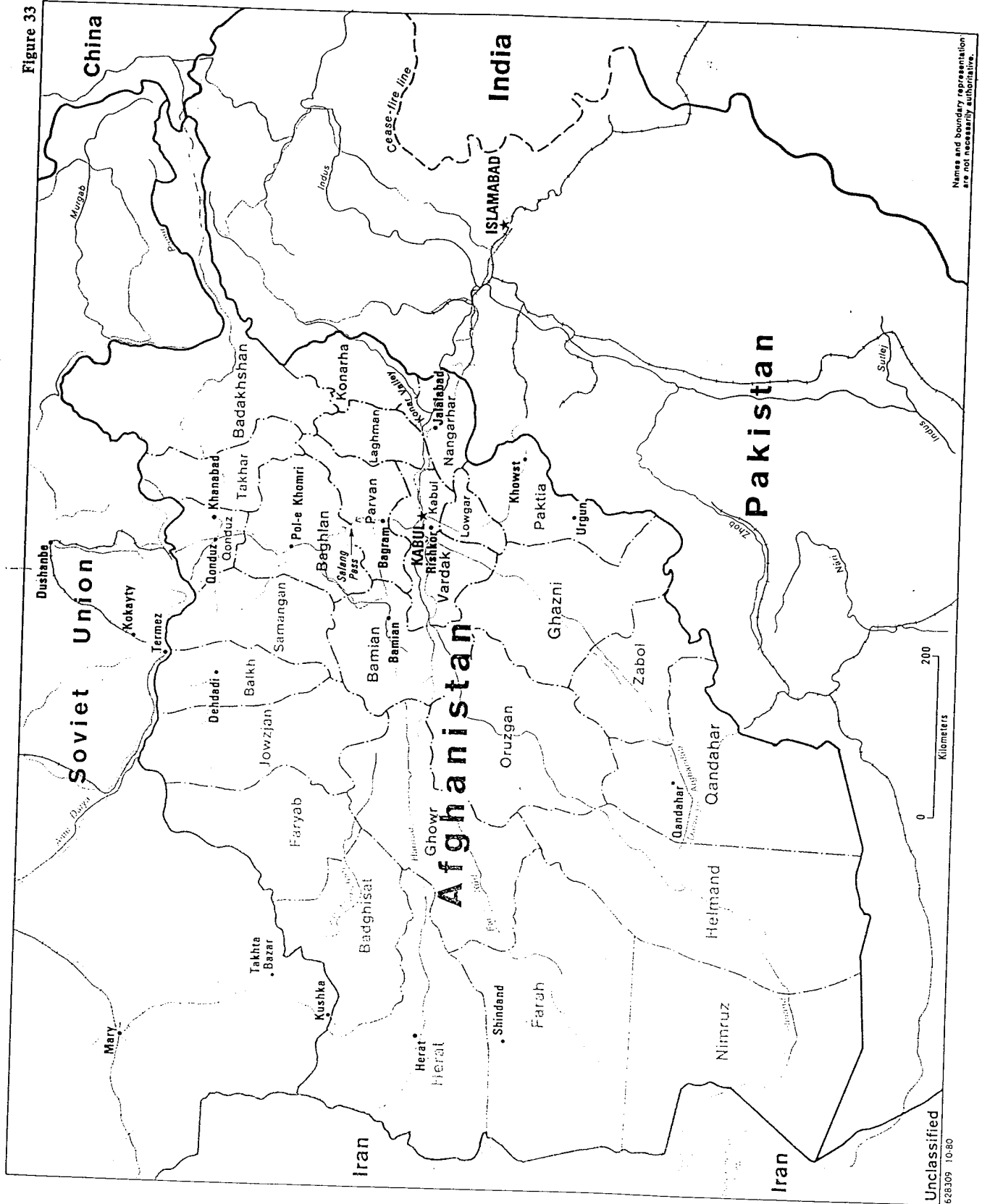
252. We believe that if the USSR decided to move into Iran, Pakistan, or China, it would conduct preparations of its forces on a much greater scale than the preparations it made for Afghanistan. We believe these activities would come to our attention within several days and that warning would be issued shortly thereafter (see paragraphs 219-227).

Glossary

COMINT...	Communications intelligence
COMSAT...	Communications satellite
CP.....	Command post
DCID.....	Director of Central Intelligence Directive
DIN.....	<i>Defense Intelligence Note</i>
DISR.....	<i>Daily Indications Status Report</i>
GAD.....	Guards airborne division (USSR)
GMRD.....	Guards motorized rifle division (USSR)
GS.....	General Staff (USSR)
HF.....	High frequency (communications links)
HUMINT...	Human intelligence
I&W.....	Indications and warning
IMINT.....	Imagery intelligence
IRBM.....	Intermediate-range ballistic missile
LRA.....	Long Range Aviation (USSR)
MAC.....	Military Advisory Group (USSR)
MD.....	Military district (USSR)
MRBM.....	Medium-range ballistic missile
MRD.....	Motorized rifle division (USSR)
NID.....	<i>National Intelligence Daily</i>
PDB.....	<i>President's Daily Brief</i>
PDP.....	People's Democratic Party (Afghanistan)
POL.....	Petroleum, oils, and lubricants
SIGINT.....	Signals intelligence
SRF.....	Strategic Rocket Forces (USSR)
VDV.....	Soviet Airborne Forces
VTA.....	Military Transport Aviation (USSR)

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Figure 33



Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative.

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