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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 270

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AFGHANISTAN (C)

ASSESSMENT

After seven years of military stalemate in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has engaged in a more comprehensive approach to the issue of its future involvement in Afghanistan. It has embarked on a sophisticated political strategy which has captured headlines and generated hopes for a settlement. However, Soviet proposals have been accompanied by stepped-up military activity, particularly along (and across) the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. We remain skeptical that Moscow has made the hard political decisions necessary to a settlement. At the last Geneva round of negotiations in February-March 1987, the Soviets reduced the withdrawal timetable for their forces from Afghanistan to 18 months (from an initial offer of four years). The Soviet move is designed to persuade the world that Moscow is serious in searching for a solution in Afghanistan, yet clearly aimed to allow Soviet military operations against the resistance with decreased external support. (S)

Attempts at appearing reasonable toward a political settlement have been coupled with a stepped-up Soviet campaign of air raids, sabotage, and terrorist bombings in Pakistan which has begun to exacerbate relations between resident Afghan refugees and their Pakistani hosts. Ethnic violence in southern Pakistan also worries the Pakistani leadership. While President Zia remains committed to a strong stand on Afghanistan and believes that Pakistan must resist Soviet pressure, he faces growing domestic pressures to adopt a less confrontational approach on Afghanistan. Such pressures may have been responsible for Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan's too-hasty willingness to make a seven-month withdrawal timetable counter-proposal at the recent proximity talks in Geneva. (S)

Thus, we are entering a critical period and need to maintain strong pressure on the Soviets if we are to have a chance of a suitable negotiated settlement. We must renew our efforts to encourage more active international support for both the Afghan resistance and for Pakistan. At the same time, we must carefully examine each Soviet proposal, taking care not to appear routinely dismissive of Soviet initiatives. We must also remain ready for opportunities arising from increased tensions within the Kabul regime which stem from Moscow's recent political moves. Soviet courting of Pakistan, although intermittent, has greatly enhanced nervousness within the PDPA. (S)

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We should remain in close touch with the Pakistani leadership, alert to the possibility of subtle shifts in the GOP position and ready to raise concerns when we perceive them. At the same time, in our larger interest, we should be mindful of -- and sympathetic to -- the pressures on Pakistan as we proceed to implement our enhanced political strategy. (S)

Pakistan remains the key to our ability to implement a policy of opposition to Soviet aggression in Afghanistan. Critical to Pakistan's ability and willingness to play this role is Islamabad's confidence in our support, as manifested in the short-term by passage of the proposed follow-on program of security and economic assistance. Any lessening in our commitment could add to the pressures on Pakistan and cripple our broader policy objectives regarding Afghanistan. While there is strong bipartisan support for the Afghan struggle, there are many in the Congress who appear to underestimate the relationship of Pakistan to our Afghanistan policy, or who are so strongly motivated by other issues that they are prepared to put Afghanistan second. (S)

Given the importance of the post-1987 assistance for Pakistan to the Afghan strategy, we have been working to sustain Congressional support while moving forward on the non-proliferation agenda with Pakistan. Additionally, recognizing the inter-relationship between Indian and Pakistan nuclear capabilities, we have also been pressing India on a nuclear dialogue with Pakistan. We must continue to address the evolving attitudes of key members of Congress toward the South Asian nuclear dilemma in the face of developing Pakistani and Indian nuclear programs, by setting the stage for a more rational, effective, and long-term approach to obtaining greater restraint by both Pakistan and India on nuclear matters. Such an approach will also require the cooperation of other governments. (S)

U. S. OBJECTIVES

o Raise the military and political costs to the Soviets of their occupation of Afghanistan as a means of pressuring them into a comprehensive political settlement that results in the prompt, complete, and irrevocable withdrawal of Soviet troops and genuine Afghan self-determination. (S)

o Continue economic and security assistance to Pakistan; specifically, ensure passage of U.S. follow-on program. This will require effective management of Congressional concerns, inter alia, about the Pakistan nuclear program. (S)

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- o Continue support for the negotiating track with Pakistan in the lead. (C)
- o Encourage a more effective resistance political front. (C)
- o Provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan refugees and to free Afghans remaining inside their own country. (C)
- o Encourage more active international support for Pakistan and the Afghan resistance. (C)
- o Increase international public awareness of the war and support for a free Afghanistan. (U)

U. S. ACTIONS

Assistance

- Develop a comprehensive Congressional strategy to ensure full funding of the proposed follow-on assistance program for Pakistan. (C)
- Augment Pakistan's military capability to defend itself against blatant and repeated Soviet/DRA air violations. (S)
- Consider increasing existing resources in humanitarian (cross-border) programs. (C)
- Assess how support for the cross-border humanitarian assistance program by other governments, international organizations and PVOs could be increased in such areas as food and agriculture, medicines and health care, education and public administration; solicit such support. (U)
- Produce plan for long-term approaches to other concerned governments to help meet Pakistan's military and economic needs. (S)

Public Diplomacy

- Set up an interagency Afghanistan Public Diplomacy Working Group to provide better political focus and consistency for USG public diplomacy efforts. The Working Group should also develop plans for maximizing publicity favorable to the Resistance in foreign media outlets. (C)
- Consider various possible Presidential initiatives that would contribute to our public diplomacy efforts and underscore U.S. commitment to Pakistan and the Afghan cause. (C)
- Review USIA global programming with a view to enhancing Afghanistan profile and costs of Soviet actions inside Afghanistan and cross-border bombings in Pakistan. (C)
- Consider concentrating and increasing USIA public affairs and cultural resources targetted on the Afghan resistance and refugees both inside Afghanistan and abroad. (C)
- Consider ways in which we can involve other governments in enhancing support for Pakistan and pressuring the Soviets toward a rapid and total withdrawal of troops and self-determination for the Afghans. (C)
- Push forward with Afghan media project, including development of contingency plans for achieving goals in the absence of a GOP decision on an Afghan director. (C)

Political Strategy

- Work to increase the political and diplomatic pressures on the Soviets to negotiate a prompt and complete withdrawal of their troops, including pressures upon the PDPA. (C)
- Intensify Afghanistan-related consultations with friendly governments with specific policy focus on diplomatic strategy and enhancement of resistance alliance political development. (C)

- Develop concept paper on Afghan Alliance institutional development to provide basis for dialogue with the Alliance, specific action recommendations to USG agencies, and action-oriented consultations with GOP, Saudis, and other governments. (C)
- Develop a gameplan for encouraging resistance peace proposals and other political activity to counter Soviet and PDPA political efforts. (C)
- Examine possible new approaches to Congress, Pakistan, and other concerned governments on Pakistani and regional nuclear problems. (S)

Ronald Reagan

14

14