

## **June 18, 1978**

### **Record of Conversation, Soviet Ambassador A.M. Puzanov and Taraki**

#### **Citation:**

"Record of Conversation, Soviet Ambassador A.M. Puzanov and Taraki", June 18, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Notes of O.A. Westad, TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 75, d. 1181, ll. 22-27. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/113256>

#### **Summary:**

Record of Conversation, Soviet Ambassador A.M. Puzanov and Taraki on possible disunity within the Afghan Communist Party, rebutted by Taraki claiming that the party is unified

#### **Original Language:**

Russian

#### **Contents:**

Translation - English

The meeting took place in connection with the arrival in Kabul of a group of [Soviet] Party advisors headed by V.I. Kharazov.

[The Ambassador] informed N.M. Taraki about the arrival in Kabul on July 27 of the first group of Soviet advisors for work in the Afghan ministries and departments.

[...] Further Taraki requested that only the Soviet Ambassador and V.I. Khazarov remain and said that B. Karmal had arrived, and wants to express a number of thoughts.

Coming into the office, B. Karmal said the following.

Recently more frequently it has been heard that there is no unity in the PDPA. This, without doubt, reflects negatively on the Party itself, on the state apparatus, the army, the revolution, on the prestige of the Soviet Union and might lead to difficult consequences. People are different, and this distinction might be used for provocative goals. Unfortunately, our position (the Parchams) in the Party, state apparatus, and army is subject to a number of provocations. But insofar as I am sure that the Party, state and army, under the leadership of N.M. Taraki and [First Deputy Prime Minister] H[afizullah]. Amin, with the great assistance of the Soviet Union, are building socialism in Afghanistan, then, feeling a debt to the revolution, I do not intend to create problems, so that neither a friend nor an enemy can take advantage of my situation. Regarding the June 17 decision of the CC PDPA Politburo to send a number of comrades to foreign countries as ambassadors, I and N.A. Noor . . . also consider it useful to go abroad as ambassadors or under the pretext of medical treatment, so as not to give grounds for provocations against noble and honest people. In such a way, N.M. Taraki and H. Amin may be able to fulfill the mentioned program. Unfortunately, said B. Karmal, I have no possibility either in the Party or in the army to defend my thesis -- it is difficult to fulfill the May 24 resolution of the Party on unity and the directives of the Politburo, they remain paper, nothing more.

[. . .] Further, B. Karmal in a condition of extreme excitement said the following.

In both the Party and in the government I occupy the second post after N.M. Taraki. Despite this, I do not know what is going on in the country -- they have isolated me, I am not engaged in either domestic or foreign policy issues, I live as if in a gilded cage. For me, as a communist, this is a heavy tragedy. In the presence of N.M. Taraki, PDPA Politburo member H. Amin said that to provide unity it is necessary to carry out extremely decisive measures. N.M. Taraki really wants unity. However, for this to happen, thousands of honest communists in Afghanistan will be subject to terror, persecutions, their names will be slandered. I myself live under the threat that they will subject me to persecution. In conclusion, B. Karmal declared that the matter is moving towards a split in the Party, everything is moving into the hands of the government and army.

N.M. Taraki declared decisively that all issues in the ruling organs of the PDPA are decided on the basis of democratic centralism, and nobody threatens anyone. There is no split in the Party, unity is being strengthened, although certain people are demonstrating against it. If someone moves against the revolution and the unity of the Party, then there will be a purge of the Party. There is no terror, however, if it will be reckoned that this or some other person presents a danger for the revolution, then decisive measures of punishment may be applied to him, right up to capital punishment.

On this N.M. Taraki interrupted the conversation and let it be known that he does not wish to continue the discussion with B. Karmal. B. Karmal said good-bye and left.

Remaining with N.M. Taraki, [the Ambassador and Khazarov] once again noted the necessity of taking into account when making some or other appointments the political resonance and consequences which they might prompt. They stressed that enemies must not be given grounds for using similar issues for their own goals.

N.M. Taraki said that the Party is united and its unity is becoming ever stronger, but as to those who will demonstrate against unity "we will crush them as if with a steamroller [proidemsia zheleznym katkom]. Such measures will only strengthen the Party."

Sent to Kozyrev, C.P., Ponomarev, B.N....