

November 1988
**Memorandum by Soviet First Deputy Foreign
Minister Yuli Vorontsov, General Valentin
Varennikov, V. Zaitsev, V. Yegorov, November 1988
(Excerpt)**

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Summary:

Report on the degrading political and military situation in Afghanistan.

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On the Situation in Afghanistan □□

The military-political situation in Afghanistan has a tendency toward further deterioration and exacerbation.

...The RA leadership is implementing measures of a military-political nature within the framework of the policy of national reconciliation to counter the extremist part of the opposition. The process of the transformation of a single-party regime into a multi-party one and the restructuring of the state political structure of the country on the basis of political pluralism and coalition rule continue. Of course, to successfully carry out the policy of national reconciliation Najibullah's regime should ensure, from a position of strength, not of weakness, that the most irreconcilable opposition factions are driven back which, relying on the aid and support of Pakistan and the US, are rejecting peace initiatives of the Afghan government to reach compromise agreements and are increasing military pressure on government positions in a majority of provinces of the country.

At the present time the rebels control four of the 32 provinces of the country (Takhar, Bamian, Paktika, and Kunar), and have sealed off the provincial capitals of Kapisa, Wardak, Laghman, Uruzgan, and Ghazni. Rebel activities in the provinces of Herat, Farah, and Nimruz, which border Iran, have recently been stepped up.

The rebels are whipping up tension and trying to undermine the population's faith in the viability of the current regime by increasing the shelling of administrative centers, military and civilian facilities and attacking them; sealing off roads and seizing automobile convoys with freight; penetrating the Party and government bureaucracy and the RA Armed Forces to demoralize them from within; and disrupting VS conscription and increasing desertion.

Along with the incitement of malicious activity by the rebels in the central provinces of Kabul and Parwan, the armed opposition has recently increased attempts at setting up an economic blockade of the capital. The rebels are trying to impede the delivery here of freight to here via the roads from Soviet-Afghan border to Kabul and [from] Kabul to Jalalabad and to interrupt the power supply of the Afghan capital.

...Against the background of a systematic increase of activity by the armed opposition, with the start of the withdrawal of the OKSV from Afghanistan the passivity and declining morale of the RA Armed Forces have become distinctly clear, which has found its reflection in their incapability in many instances of organizing effective resistance to the rebels. The events in the provinces of Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, and Kandahar (the capture of areas south of Kandahar, including the population center of Spin Buldak) are witness to this. The Afghan military leadership has not taken decisive and effective measures to increase the level of military, psychological, and morale reliability of the Armed Forces. The capabilities of existing training centers and courses for the training of military specialists are being poorly used. This negatively reflects on departmental attitudes and the lack of coordination of the activity of the military ministries.

The remaining partisan and factional differences in the PDPA leadership, which, although some were muted after the recent PDPA CC plenum, have not yet permanently removed and are also leaving a serious negative imprint on the political morale and military condition of the RA Armed Forces.

...Many representatives of the Party and state bureaucracy in the provinces [na mestakh] are all the more often taking passive, temporizing positions, ignoring orders and demands coming from Kabul to strengthen government positions and implement the policy of national reconciliation, and in a number of cases, under the influence of demoralizing propaganda, are entering into deals with the opposition to capitulate to ensure their personal security.

...The measures recently carried out to reorganize the governmental structure of Afghanistan in accordance with the principles of coalition government and a multi-party system have not yet had a serious stabilizing influence on the domestic political situation. The activity of the government of M. H. Sharq to a certain degree is hampered by the CC PDPA staff, but governors without party affiliation among local authoritative figures, for example, in Nangarhar province, [are being hampered] by the heads of several PDPA provincial committees. The national council (parliament) of Afghanistan, the majority of whose members are without party affiliation (more than 70%), are still pursuing a waiting game and not seriously looking for ways to more actively transform the policy of national reconciliation into reality, although they have declared it to be their main task. The activity of the bloc of leftist democratic parties as before does not go beyond the bounds of formal episodic meetings of their representatives and declarations of support for the policy of national reconciliation.

Taking the above into account, Soviet military aid continues to remain the most important stabilizing factor in the development of the situation in Afghanistan and largely thanks to it the armed opposition has not managed to seize key positions in the country, in spite of their efforts.

...Objectively, the present RA regime has considerable military and political potential (superior to the forces of the opposition). The task of the leadership of our Afghan friends is to ensure its maximum effective use. Special attention in this regard needs to be paid to organizing political propaganda work by all RA organizations...

□□□Yu. Vorontsov, V. Varennikov, V. Zaitsev, V. Yegorov □□

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