

NNNNRXXVV ESA 140MJC649
RR RUQMHR
DE RUSBLK #5433/1 1990605
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 180525Z JUL 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4753
INFO RUQMGU/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3663
RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 621
RUSBD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9021
RUQMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 339
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1683
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1743
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7075
RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3152
RUQMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 324
RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 15
RUHQHQA/CINCPAC
RUSNAAA/CINCEUR

18 JUL 79 13 03z

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BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 5433

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR POLAD
CINCEUR: ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12065: GDS 7-17-85 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OR-P
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, PINT, AF, UR
SUBJECT: (LOU) SOVIET EFFORT TO URGE DRA TO FIND A POLITICAL
RESOLUTION OF DOMESTIC CONFLICT MAY BE UNDERWAY

REF: (A) KABUL 5092; (B) KABUL 5088; (C) KABUL 5146;
(D) KABUL 5288; (E) KABUL 5360; (F) KABUL 4695 (ALL NOTAL)

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN
SUGGEST THAT A SOVIET CAMPAIGN MAY BE UNDERWAY IN KABUL,
AIMED AT "HELPING" THE EMBATTLED DRA LEADERSHIP FIND A POLI-
TICAL, RATHER THAN STRICTLY MILITARY, MEANS TO COUNTER THE
GROWTH OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN OPPOSITION. STEPS TAKEN SO
FAR, WHILE PERHAPS BUYING THE REGIME AND MOSCOW
SOME BREATHING SPACE, ARE PROBABLY INSUFFICIENT IN THEMSELVES
TO GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLUTION, AND CONSIDERABLY
MORE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY. OPTIONS
ALONG THESE LINES ARE FEW, HOWEVER, AND THE "VOLUNTARY" DE-
PARTURE OF ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE TOP DRA LEADERSHIP
MAY BE MANDATORY IF MOSCOW WANTS TO AVOID FACING A DRA SOS
FOR DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ORDER TO HELP THE
KHALQIS STAY AFLOAT. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT SOVIET "ADVICE"
WILL BE HEEDED BY THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP, AND MUCH MAY
DEPEND ON THE PERSONAL DIPLOMACY OF
VASILY SAFRONCHUK, THE RECENTLY ARRIVED
"TROUBLESHOOTER" AND SENIOR DIPLOMAT WHO COULD WELL HAVE BEEN
CHARGED WITH SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINDING A VIABLE EXIT
FROM THE CURRENT MAZE. PITFALLS AND UNKNOWNNS REMAIN NUM-
EROUS, BUT CONTINUED SOVIET ASSURANCES TO THE AFGHAN "PEO-
PLE," AND RECENT INDICATIONS OF INCREASED SOVIET INVOLVE-
MENT IN THE MILITARY FIELD HERE, SUGGEST THAT A SOVIET
"GUARANTEE" OF THE REVOLUTION MAY BE THE INDUCEMENT OFFERED THE
KHALQIS IN RETURN FOR THE SACRIFICES WHICH MAY BE NECESSARY
TO REVERSE THE TIDE OF CURRENT EVENTS. END OF SUMMARY.

*pretty accurate
except must
Khalq, bring
in Parcham*

*→ right about Sfronchuk
role?*

*Soviets urging drawdown
of confrontation, stability (Am. & FA)
Attributes to
Soviet*

3. A SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL RESOLUTION OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS MAY BE UNDERWAY: OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTS WHICH SUGGEST THAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, PROBABLY AT SOVIET URGING, MAY BE SEEKING A POLITICAL RATHER THAN STRICTLY MILITARY, MEANS TO COUNTER ITS DOMESTIC OPPOSITION. THE REGIME HAS BOLDLY, ALBEIT PERHAPS DISINGENUOUSLY, DECLARED ITS LAND REFORM PROGRAM "SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED" (REF A), THEREBY AT LEAST AVOIDING THE CREATION OF FURTHER OPPOSITION ALONG THE LINES THAT PARTICULAR REFORM MEASURE APPARENTLY HAS PROMPTED SINCE ITS INCEPTION. LIKEWISE, ACCORDING TO RECENT HINTS BY PRIME MINISTER AMIN, THE DRA'S LITERACY CAMPAIGN, WHICH HAS PROVOKED HOSTILITY IN THIS EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE SOCIETY BECAUSE MOST AFGHANS DO NOT WISH TO SEE THEIR FEMALES EDUCATED EVEN TO RUDIMENTARY LEVELS, OR "EXPOSED" TO MALE TEACHERS, MAY SOON BE DECLARED A "SUCCESS." A DRA ANNOUNCEMENT ON JULY 11 PROMULGATING SEVERAL "CONCESSIONS" TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY REPRESENTED, INTER ALIA, ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO MOLLIFY ANY OPPOSITION STEMMING FROM FEAR OF THIS REGIME'S FUTURE ECONOMIC POLICIES. THUS, THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY HAS BEGUN TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM A NUMBER OF ITS MORE AMBITIOUS AND GRATING REFORMS, NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE THEY WERE ILL-CONCEIVED, OR UNNECESSARY, BUT PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY WERE OVERZEALOUSLY INITIATED -- AND APOUSED SERIOUS RESISTANCE.

4. REPORTS OF "NEGOTIATIONS" AMONG THE REGIME, THE SOVIETS, AND SEVERAL LEADERS OF FORMER GOVERNMENTS WOULD ALSO POINT TO AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH SOME SORT OF "NATIONAL FRONT" (REF B). COMMENTS BY USUALLY WELL-INFORMED EASTERN EUROPEAN AND SOVIET DIPLOMATS HERE LEND A CERTAIN CREDENCE TO THIS PARTICULAR THESIS (REF C). IN THIS CONNECTION, THE REPORTED RELEASE FROM PRISON OF PARCHAMISTS (REF D), AND THAT GROUP'S SUBSEQUENT PRINTING AND WIDESPREAD DISTRIBUTION OF "UNDERGROUND" LETTERS (REF E) ATTACKING, INTER ALIA, AMIN AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE REGIME, REINFORCE THE CONTENTION THAT CERTAIN FORCES ARE WORKING TO PROVIDE SOME FORM OF LEADERSHIP AND PARTY MORE BROADLY BASED THAN THE PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA).

5. ON THE FOREIGN POLICY FRONT AS WELL SOME SIGNS HAVE BEEN DETECTED THAT SUGGEST A DEVELOPING PROGRAM TO AVOID OR DRAW BACK SELECTIVELY FROM CONFRONTATION. THE EARLY JULY VISIT TO ISLAMABAD BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DOST HAS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT ALONG THESE LINES, ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE HAS BEEN RECENTLY A SLIGHT MODERATION IN THIS GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-

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3VV ESA150MJC664
RR RUQMHR
DE RUSBLK #5433/2 1990700
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4754
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RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3153
RUQMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 325
RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 16
RUHQHQA/CINCPAC
RUSNAAA/CINCEUR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 KABUL 5433

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR POLAD
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E.O. 12065: GDS 7-17-85 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OR-P

PAKISTAN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. MOREOVER, WE HAVE BEEN IOSED
A FEW MINOR OLIVE-TWIGS LATELY -- RELATIVELY HIGH-LEVEL
ATTENDANCE AT OUR JULY 4 RECEPTION, A FIRST-EVER MEETING,
AT AFGHAN INITIATIVE, BETWEEN AMIN AND A VISITING USICA
LECTURER -- WHICH COULD INDICATE THAT THE DRA MAY BE IN-
TERESTED IN LIFTING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP FROM THE NADIR
IT HAS REACHED IN RECENT MONTHS.

18 Jul 79 14 10z

6. HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET DIPLOMAT COULD BE THE RASPUTIN BEHIND THESE DEVELOPMENTS; ALL OF THESE SIGNS HAVE EMERGED SINCE THE EARLY JUNE ARRIVAL IN KABUL OF SOVIET DIPLOMAT VASILY SAFRONCHUK, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO GHANA, FORMER DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AND A CAREER DIPLOMAT WITH APPARENTLY SOLID POLITICAL CONNECTIONS, WHO IS OBVIOUSLY OVER-QUALIFIED TO SERVE AS THE THIRD-RANKING MAN IN THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN KABUL (HIS PROTOCOL RANK WHICH NO ONE HERE BELIEVES). PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL, STORIES CIRCULATED IN KABUL AND IN MOSCOW THAT SAFRONCHUK WOULD SERVE AS SOME SORT OF "ADVISOR" TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, STORIES WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN BORNE OUT BY SUBSEQUENT EVENTS. GIVEN SAFRONCHUK'S EXPERIENCE, WE BELIEVE IT SAFE TO CONCLUDE THAT HE MAY HAVE COME TO AFGHANISTAN WITH ORDERS TO TRY AND FIND A POLITICAL, RATHER THAN PURELY MILITARY, RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC STRIFE, PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANTLY IN ORDER TO PRECLUDE A DRA APPEAL FOR DIRECT SOVIET MILITARY HELP IN STAYING AFLOAT. IN THIS CONNECTION, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT SAFRONCHUK HAS NO NORMAL FUNCTION IN THE SOVIET EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE SURMISES ABOUT SAFRONCHUK'S MISSION ARE SPECULATION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SUDDENNESS OF, AND THE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING, HIS APPOINTMENT, HIS STATUS SINCE HIS ARRIVAL, AND THE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS NOTED ABOVE, CLEARLY INDICATE THAT MOSCOW IS URGING, IF NOT PRESSURING, THE DRA TO TAKE STEPS TO REVERSE THE TIDE OF EVENTS, AND TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE REVOLUTION.

7. LOCAL CONDITIONS WHICH COULD HAVE PROMPTED SOVIET PRESSURE ON THE DRA TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION: THE AFGHAN REGIME'S APPARENT INABILITY -- OR UNWILLINGNESS -- TO UNDERTAKE, ON ITS OWN, STEPS WHICH WOULD STABILIZE THE DETERIORATING SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, OR BROADEN THE GOVERNMENT'S BASE OF SUPPORT, WOULD PROBABLY CONSTITUTE THE GREATEST IMPETUS FOR ANY SOVIET DECISION TO URGE, CAJOLE, OR PRESSURE THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP TO SEEK POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO ITS PROBLEMS. LIKEWISE, MOSCOW MAY WELL HAVE WANTED TO DEFLECT THE DRA'S WILLINGNESS TO BUILD TENSIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS (ESPECIALLY PAKISTAN), A TREND WHICH COULD HAVE LED TO AN AFGHAN APPEAL FOR SOVIET HELP TO COUNTER FOREIGN "AGGRESSION" (REF F). MOREOVER, THE CHILL IN AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS, AND THE DRASTIC REDUCTION OF OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ESPECIALLY SINCE THE JULY 13 VOTE BY A SENATE-HOUSE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE TO CUT AID), COULD ALSO HAVE BEEN VIEWED BY THE KREMLIN AS COUNTER TO SOVIET LARGER INTERESTS, SINCE MOSCOW OR ITS SURROGATES WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO TAKE UP THE ASSISTANCE SLACK IF OTHER FREE-WORLD DONORS DEPART FROM THE AID FIELD HERE, AND BECAUSE AND EVEN GREATER PERCEIVED DEPENDENCE BY THE DRA ON THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY EXACERBATE THE DOMESTIC UNREST, RATHER THAN AMELIORATE IT. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, A CONCERN THAT AN AFGHAN SOS WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE LIKELY, AS WELL AS "JUSTIFIED" IN TERMS OF THE 1978 BILATERAL TREATY, AT A TIME WHEN MOSCOW HAD LARGER INTERESTS WHICH IT PROBABLY DID NOT WANT TO THREATEN BY PURSUING A DECISION TO INTERVENE, MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE BOTTOM-LINE CONSIDERATION IN DISPATCHING SAFRONCHUK ON HIS MISSION TO KABUL.

8. A POLITICAL RESOLUTION WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE MORE "CONCESSIONS" THAN HAVE SURFACED HERETOFORE: BASED ON OUR READING OF WHAT MAKES THE INSURGENT'S FIGHT, WE BELIEVE THAT THE DRA LEADERSHIP WILL HAVE TO SWEATEN THE POT CONSIDERABLY MORE BEFORE THE TIDE CAN BE TURNED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE VARIOUS REFORM PROGRAMS DID INDEED CONTRIBUTE A GREAT DEAL TO THE GROWTH OF DOMESTIC HOSTILITY TOWARD THIS REGIME, BUT, NEVERTHELESS, THE OVERWHELMING MOTIVATION FOR MOST AFGHAN PEASANTS WHO HAVE TAKEN UP ARMS HAS BEEN THEIR PERCEPTION THAT THE KHALQIS ARE ATHEISTS, COMMUNISTS, AND SOVIET PUPPETS. TO DISPEL THESE DEEPLY-HELD BELIEFS WILL CLEARLY REQUIRE GREAT SKILL AND SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS WELL EXCEEDING WHAT THE REGIME HAS DONE SO FAR. WHETHER THE SOVIETS AND THE DRA LEADERSHIP CAN COME UP WITH AGREED AND NECESSARY NEXT STEPS REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THEIR TASK IS FORMIDABLE.

9. AVAILABLE OPTIONS ARE NOT PLENTIFUL; IF, IN FACT, THE GROWTH OF THE OPPOSITION HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY STUNTED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S REPRESSIVE MOVES SO FAR, THERE STILL ARE NOT MANY MORE STEPS AVAILABLE TO CREATE AN ALTERNATE REGIME WHICH WOULD CARRY ANY GENUINE POSSIBILITY OF TURNING THE TIDE, YET STOP SHORT OF THREATENING THE INTEGRITY OF THE REVOLUTION.

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NNNNVV ESE041MJC673
 RR RUQMR
 DE RUSBLX #5433/3 1992725
 ZNY CCCCC 2ZE
 R 182525Z JUL 79
 FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4755
 INFO RUQMG//AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3665
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 RUQMR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 326
 RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 17
 RUHQHQA/CINCPAC
 RUSNAAA/CINCEUR

* U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1977-125-373

BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 KABUL 5453

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR POLAD
CINCEUR: ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12065: GDS 7-17-85 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OR-P

10. THE MOST PROBABLE, AND PERHAPS THE MOST NECESSARY, WOULD BE A CHANGE IN THE DRA'S TOP LEADERSHIP, ENCOMPASSING THE DEPARTURE OF AMIN OR TARAQI -- OR BOTH. BASED ON SOME INDICATIONS (THE RECENT SPATE OF UNDERGROUND TRACTS, MOST OF WHICH HAVE BITTERLY ATTACKED AMIN), AND ON A GENERAL "FEEL" AMONG VIRTUALLY ALL OUR AFGHAN CONTACTS, TARAQI IS INCREASINGLY VIEWED AS A FIGUREHEAD WHO SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THE REAL VILLAIN IS AMIN, WHO IS CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE FOR, INTER ALIA, THE DRA'S OPPRESSIVE POLICIES OF ARREST, TORTURE, AND EXECUTION, AS WELL AS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE GRATING DOMESTIC REFORM PROGRAMS, AND AFGHANISTAN'S ARDENT EMBRACE OF THE USSR. THEREFORE, ANY SINCERE ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE FORCES LOOSE IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH A LEADERSHIP CHANGE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO INCLUDE THE DEPARTURE, OR -- BETTER YET -- THE DEATH OF AMIN (IN THIS LAND OF THE BLOOD FEUD, SOME KHALQI LEADER HAS TO PAY THE TRADITIONAL PRICE FOR THOUSANDS OF DEATHS). WE COULD FORESEE A SCENARIO IN WHICH TARAQI WOULD REMAIN AS THE POLITICALLY IMPOTENT "GREAT LEADER." IN THIS REGARD, THE CONSTANTLY BUILDING TARAQI "PERSONALITY CULT" (SYMBOLIZED MOST RECENTLY BY THE LAVISH CELEBRATIONS SURROUNDING HIS 62ND BIRTHDAY ON JULY 14), SUGGESTS THAT TARAQI'S DEPARTURE WOULD BE A WRECKING ONE FOR THE REVOLUTION, AND WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ONLY AS

A DISPERATE LAST RESORT. INCIDENTALLY, TARAKI IS STILL RESPECTED BY ELEMENTS IN NON-KHALQI SEGMENTS OF AFGHAN SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY IN THE RANKS OF THE EDUCATED.

11. THE SALIENT QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER THE SOVIETS CARRY SUFFICIENT WEIGHT THAT THEIR "ADVICE" COULD CONVINCE TARAKI AND/OR AMIN TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR THE SAKE OF THE REVOLUTION. EVERYTHING WOULD DEPEND ON HOW SUCH ADVICE WAS COINED. PROBABLY THE MOST VIABLE APPROACH ALONG THESE LINES WOULD BE THE THESIS THAT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS FOR THIS GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED THE POINT THAT THE SHEER EXISTENCE OF THE REVOLUTION MANDATES THE "HONORABLE AND VOLUNTARY" RETIREMENT OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE DRA LEADERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME, MOSCOW WOULD THEREAFTER "GUARANTEE" THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLUTION THROUGH PLEDGES OF INCREASED MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT. RECENT STATEMENTS BY THE SOVIET ELITE PROMISING SUPPORT FOR THE AFGHAN "PEOPLE," AND THE ARRIVAL IN AFGHANISTAN OF DOZENS OF SOVIET HELICOPTER PILOTS, INDICATES THAT MOSCOW IS PROBABLY REASSURING THE DRA LEADERSHIP OF CONTINUED SOVIET BACKING, DESPITE THE SIMULTANEOUS CAMPAIGN TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

12. SOVIET MISCALCULATION OR HEAVY-HANDEDNESS, OR A TARAKI-AMIN DECISION THAT THEY TRULY HAVE NO OPTION, BUT TO FORGE AHEAD ALONG CURRENT PATHS, COULD VERY POSSIBLY SCOTCH ANY SEARCH FOR A NON-MILITARY APPROACH TO THE INSURGENCY. WE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE WILLING OR ABLE TO FORCE THE REMOVAL OF ANY OF THE DRA LEADERSHIP, ALTHOUGH MOSCOW MAY EVENTUALLY DECIDE TO LEND "SUPPORT" TO ANY ELEMENTS WHICH DISPLAY AN INCLINATION TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT SHORT OF AN APPEAL FOR DIRECT SOVIET MILITARY HELP. THIS COULD INCLUDE A COUP D'ETAT BY THE AFGHAN MILITARY.

13. INTRANSIGENCE ON THE PART OF TARAKI AND AMIN, OR AN ABORTED SOVIET CAMPAIGN WHICH MAY NOW BE UNDERWAY, WOULD PROBABLY SIGNAL "MORE OF THE SAME" FROM THE DRA, A STANCE WHICH WOULD LEAD TO FURTHER CONFLICT, BLOODSHED, AND INSTABILITY. THIS LOWERED THRESHOLD OF VIOLENCE WOULD, OF COURSE, CARRY SERIOUS SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR FOREIGNERS STATIONED IN THIS COUNTRY.

14. CONCLUSIONS: WE MAY BE IN THE MIDST OF A SOVIET ATTEMPT TO NUDGE OR PUSH AFGHAN POLICIES IN DIRECTIONS WHICH WOULD REVERSE THE GROWTH OF DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, AND DEFUSE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN HOSTILITY TO THIS REGIME, SO THAT, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, MOSCOW WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE AN AFGHAN APPEAL FOR DIRECT MILITARY HELP. AT THE SAME TIME, STATEMENTS BY THE SOVIET ELITE AND INDICATIONS OF INCREASED SOVIET MILITARY INVOLVEMENT SUGGEST A

PARALLEL POLICY AIMED AT INSURING THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLU-
TION, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS WITHOUT THE PRESENT COMPOSITION OF
THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP.

15. SAFRONCHUK COULD BE THE LOCAL BEHIND-THE-SCENES DIRECTOR
OF THIS PARTICULAR DRAMA, BUT THE PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS CON-
FRONTING EIM AND THE DRA LEADERSHIP ARE FORMIDABLE, AND THE
UNKNOWN REMAINING IN THE EQUATION ARE STILL NUMEROUS. AMSTUTZ
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