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I was wrong. I did not believe the Russians would invade Afghanistan. In my opinion, they had little to gain and much to lose. For years, the Soviets maintained an official (if sometimes fictitious) posture of noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations. In doing so, they gathered “brownie points” in developing countries generally and in the Islamic world specifically.

At nonaligned conferences and other international gatherings, delegates would buttonhole Afghan representatives and ask the ultimate questions: “Is it true that you are independent? Are you genuinely nonaligned? Do the Russians dictate your policies? Do the Russians control your armed forces?”

Afghan delegates could truthfully answer: “The Russians never interfere directly in our internal affairs—well, hardly ever.” But, as a next-door neighbor, Afghanistan seldom did anything to antagonize the hovering, patient giant across the Amu Darya (the classical Oxus River). Therefore, a direct Russian invasion of Afghanistan would shatter the myth of noninterference. At the very least, widespread condemnation would follow the initial shock waves, and détente and SALT II, already fragile, might suffer irreparable damage. A new escalation in the Warm Water War could occur. The Americans would probably beef up their air and naval forces in the Indian Ocean-Arabian Sea-Persian Gulf, with a concomitant Soviet response.

Also, the Russians were well aware of growing dissatisfaction among their Central Asian Muslim peoples, who would probably not appreciate being the springboard for a Soviet invasion into a brother Islamic nation. Few anticipated violent uprisings in the Central Asian Socialist Republics, but a Russian intrusion into Afghanistan would intensify, not diminish, Soviet Muslim cultural and political dissidence.

More important, Russian intervention in Afghanistan would be the first direct Soviet aggression outside its “recognized” sphere of influence (Eastern Europe), the first piece of virgin real estate physically occupied and dominated by the Soviets since World War II, a potentially dangerous precedent. Why, then, did the Soviets invade Afghanistan?

The answer is best approached through a little ancient history.

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA)
The period between the accidental coup of April 27, 1978 to December 24, 1979 can be characterized in terms of six Rs: rhetoric, reforms, repressions, refugees, revolts, and Russians. Briefly stated: The rhetoric of the new leftist leadership was Marxist-Leninist, although the Taraki-Amin regimes consistently insisted they were not Communists (i.e., dictated to and dominated by Moscow). They claimed to be nationalists and home-grown socialists. Their ultimate demise through Soviet machinations gives their contentions some credibility.

The reforms ran counter to major Afghan cultural, social, and economic institutions: too much was attempted too fast, without adequate preparation, qualified personnel, or a broad base of popular support. The resulting revolts embraced all classes and regions in Afghanistan. Those dissidents who could not—or would not—fight, either fled the country or waited for the inevitable. Midnight-to-dawn arrests and executions became the favorite sports of the secret police. By July 1980, about a million refugees camped in Pakistan and Iran. Thousands more sought asylum in India, Western Europe, and the United States.

The Russians sent increasing numbers of military advisers and weapons into Afghanistan. By early summer 1979, however, the mujahideen (Afghan freedom-fighters) controlled most of the countryside and interdicted the main roads at will. The major urban centers remained in the hands of the central government, and the mujahideen had learned their lessons the hard way after they had seized (temporarily) Herat and Jalalabad. Lightly armed guerrilla forces can take towns but seldom hold them long against regular forces supported by armor, artillery, and air strikes.

At this juncture, the Soviets apparently had two options: to cease aiding the DRA militarily and let the guerrilla war run its natural course or to intervene to prop up an unsuccessful regime. The sensible first option probably would have been interpreted by the Afghan battalion commanders around Kabul as an invitation to overthrow the DRA regime, release political prisoners, and form a primarily civilian interim government. One would expect formation of an Islamic Democratic Republic, but with the traditional “special relationships” with the U.S.S.R. intact. (That is, Afghani-
stan would not publicly oppose, though not necessarily support, the U.S.S.R. on international issues, in return for flexibility in trade and aid relationships and noninterference in Afghan internal affairs.) Most Afghan insurgent groups had already agreed to these principles by summer 1979.

Third, a Loya Jirgah (Great National Assembly) of regional and religious leaders (including the mujahideen commanders) would be convened, and a new constitution written, based on modernist, liberalized Islamic principles. In effect, these steps would return Afghanistan to the movements begun during the second prime ministership of Mohammad Daoud (1973-1978).

The Soviets could have justified their nonsupport of the DRA leadership with several reasons. First, they could argue that the Khalq Party's government was deviationist. The Khalqi land reforms, for example, did not even mention collectivization, but theoretically redistributed land directly to the peasants, and encouraged a system of cooperatives suggestive of the Yugoslav pattern.

Also, the Soviets could have justifiably refused to support an unpopular regime in a country not ready for "scientific socialism," the euphemism used for Communist rule. Therefore, it stood to reason that if the Khalqi regime could not control its people (with the assistance of several thousand Soviet military advisers), it certainly did not deserve the support of other socialist states.

In addition, the Soviets could take credit for the lack of substantial material support to the mujahideen from Pakistan, Iran, the Chinese, the Arabs, and the West, particularly the United States. The Soviets constantly accused these countries of training and arming the freedom fighters, and threatened to retaliate if such "interventions" did not cease. The Soviets could claim the threats had succeeded.

Ironically, the Russians seem to have turned some of these same arguments upside down, given them a positive stamp, and intervened to overthrow Hafizullah Amin, occupy Afghanistan, and establish a puppet government. As the Afghan proverb says: "Blessed is he who beats both sides of the drum."

**The First Russo-Afghan War: 1979 - ??**

If the leftist coup of April 27, 1978 had been a surprise, the Russian invasion of late December 1979 was a shocker. The Soviets dumped at least 50,000 troops into Afghanistan within 50,000 troops. Hafizullah Amin, the prime minister, who had deposed and killed former prime minister Nur Mohammad Taraki in September 1979, received his deserts, just or otherwise, only three months later.

Babak Karmal, leader of the Parcham faction of Khalq, returned to Afghanistan as a Soviet puppet. The Russians claimed the DRA invited them into Afghanistan to counter outside interference, under the terms of the Afghan-Soviet friendship treaty signed in Moscow by Prime Minister Taraki and Leonid Brezhnev on December 5, 1978. But which DRA government? Certainly not Amin, who had been frantically attempting to contact the U.S., as well as Pakistan and other Muslim states for approval. Of the major European Communist Parties (Italian, Spanish, British), even the Japanese Communist Party condemned the aggression. The U.S. Communist Party, led by Gus Hall, expressed approval. Of the major European Communist Parties, only the French supported the aggression; Jean-Paul Sartre condemned the Russian invasion, and called for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Fidel Castro, president of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was embarrassed, for, along with Amin and Taraki, he had been playing the tune: "The U.S.S.R. is the natural friend of the NAM."

Amin's attempts to seek outside support met with failure, for his frenetic anti-American, anti-Pakistani statements could not be whitewashed overnight. So another opportunist bit the dust.

To argue whether Babak Karmal called in the Soviet troops— he became head of state only after the Russians had overthrown Amin and seized Kabul—is academic, legalistic, and as inconsequential and unimportant as most rhetoric in revolutionary situations. The important fact is that a whole new ball game had begun. The first Russian aggression into nonaligned, virgin territory had taken place. A stunned world asked two questions: "Why?" and "Where is Afghanistan?"

All the things I had predicted would happen if the Russians invaded did occur. Détente and SALT II moved farther back on the burner, and despite contrary pronouncements by some in the U.S. government, the linkages are there. The Soviet aggression in Afghanistan cannot be divorced from détente, SALT II, Russian trade with the West, or international relations as a whole. Aggression cannot be isolated; it can, however, be identified.

Most nations (except hard-line Soviet supporters) condemned the action, including (in their own way) several East European countries (Poland, Hungary, Rumania) and Communist Parties (Italian, Spanish, British). Even the Japanese Communist Party condemned the aggression. The U.S. Communist Party, led by Gus Hall, expressed approval. Of the major European Communist Parties, only the French supported the aggression; Jean-Paul Sartre condemned the Russian invasion, and called for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Fidel Castro, president of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), was embarrassed, for, along with Amin and Taraki, he had been playing the tune: "The U.S.S.R. is the natural friend of the NAM."

Soviet dissident physicist Andrei Sakharov (1975 Nobel Peace Prize), now exiled to Gorky, a military-industrial city 260 miles east of Moscow, openly criticized the invasion: "The situation is so tragic, dramatic and dangerous that we must all concentrate on how to prevent a chain reaction that could have unpredictable consequences for mankind in this nuclear age."

President Carter, stung personally because Brezhnev had "lied" to him, called the Russian move the greatest threat to world peace since World War II, and he was right. But
The United Nations Security Council condemned the Soviet action by a vote of 13 to 2, the U.S.S.R. and East Germany opposing. An emergency session of the UN General Assembly on January 14, 1980 demanded "immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the foreign troops [unidentified] from Afghanistan by a vote of 104 to 18, with 18 abstentions and 12 absentees. The resolution had been sponsored by Pakistan and 23 other nonaligned and Third World countries. Other international organizations, with the exception of those dominated by the U.S.S.R., followed the UN lead.

The most important condemnation was the unanimous resolution of the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference, held in Islamabad, Pakistan (January 27-29, 1980). The resolution demands the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Soviet troops stationed on Afghan [sic] territories," suspended the membership of Afghanistan in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), invited OIC members to withhold recognition of the "illegal" regime in Afghanistan, asked OIC members to assist the Afghan refugees, asked all nations to stop all aid and assistance to the DRA, called on OIC members to consider boycotting the Olympics unless the Soviets evacuated Afghanistan, and, finally, authorized the Secretary-General of the OIC to find practical ways and means of implementing the resolution and report to the 11th regular session to be held in Islamabad in May 1980.

President Carter chose this inopportune moment to ask the Security Council to endorse economic sanctions against Iran. The Pakistanis, Saudis, and others were aghast at his poor timing, but were able to keep the resolution on Iranian-American relations milder than anticipated. Libya and Iraq wanted a strong condemnation of U.S. aggressive intentions toward Iran and the Islamic world in general. Led by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia, the foreign ministers agreed to a watered-down final resolution. Even the PLO went along, but specifically requested that its delegation not be asked to commit. The chief argument that won the day was that the Extraordinary Session had been called by Bangladesh to consider the Russian aggression in Afghanistan.

The resolution expressed "its sincere wish that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States would resolve the outstanding problems between themselves by peaceful means." It further declared "its firm opposition to any threat or use of force or any kind of intimidation or interference or imposition of economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran or any other Islamic country."

Quite possibly, the Russians did anticipate some adverse reaction, and proposed to meet the static with a political offensive of their own, primarily based on the theme that they had come to the assistance of a fellow socialist state beset by foreign aggression. They stepped up their charges that the Pakistanis, Americans, Chinese, and Egyptians were training Afghan guerrillas in the refugee camps. They also accused the Iranians of intervention from the west. All accused nations denied the charges. Until the Russian invasion and the friendly Arab countries doctrine, there was relatively small amounts of financial assistance to the mujahideen. Russian accusations of massive aid were totally without foundation.

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Afghan Proverb: Words cannot stop bullets—but bullets cannot stop words.

In planning the invasion of Afghanistan, the Russians probably reasoned that the scattered, uncoordinated antigovernment insurgencies would evaporate before a massive military intervention. A gross miscalculation. Prior to the Soviet Christmas "present" to Hafizullah Amin, only a small percentage of the Afghan population actively resisted the pacification efforts of the Soviet-advised and equipped Afghan army, greatly reduced by defections and defections. Almost all Afghans opposed the Russian invasion, however, and the guerrilla war intensified overnight in all areas.

Also, evidence exists that Soviet specialists on Islam, the Middle East and South Asia recommended against the intervention, and drawing on their studies of Afghan historical and cultural patterns, predicted Afghan resistance would escalate.

We are still too close to the event to really understand why the Russians invaded Afghanistan. In discussions with Western, Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani specialists on the U.S.S.R., I can find no real consensus. According to Doonesbury

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Chart I

Alignments among Nonaligned Nations
(as interpreted by Louis Dupree)


Nonaligned toward China: Kampuchea.

Nonaligned toward the West: Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia, Central African Republic, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, Togo, United Arab Emirates, North Yemen, Zaire.

Nonaligned: Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burma, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde Islands, Chad, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Iran, Jamaica, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Trinidad, and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Upper Volta, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
Cover of Urdu monthly Sayyarah Digest, February 1980, Lahore. Russia wants the world.

cartoonist Gary Trudeau, Soviet spokesman Viktor confessed, off the record, that “We want to rule the world.” I suspect the answer is a great deal more complex, but there are clearly some who find it sufficient.

Others have devised labyrinthine plots to account for the invasion, but early on Russian leadership stated its position clearly and has never deviated. Leonid Brezhnev, speaking to the Supreme Soviet on February 22, 1980 said:

I want to state very definitely that we will be ready to commence the withdrawal of our troops as soon as all forms of outside interference directed against the people of Afghanistan are fully terminated. Let the United States together with Afghanistan’s neighbors guarantee this, and then the need for Soviet military assistance will cease to exist.17

On May 28, 1980, Brezhnev repeated his statement in more oblique language: “We say to those who call for an end to the Soviet military assistance to Afghanistan...it is necessary first to insure that the reasons which necessitated this assistance be removed.”

Georgi Arbatov, a nonvoting member of the Communist Party Central Committee and Director of the prestigious Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences (rumored to be the world’s best think-tank on the U.S.), made several interesting observations in an interview with the Washington Post which was published in Dawn (Karachi, June 20, 1980). Mr. Arbatov listed six reasons why the Soviets had “temporarily” sent troops into Afghanistan:

1. U.S. dumping of SALT II;
2. U.S.-China moving toward an arms deal;
3. U.S. upgrading its nuclear arsenal;
4. Moscow’s exclusion from the Middle East peace talks;
5. U.S. massing its naval forces in the Indian Ocean;
6. Concern of the U.S.S.R. over its security in relation to the survival of the “legitimate” Afghan government against “external aggression and internal subversion” by counter-revolutionaries.

Five out of six revolve about security.

Security Beyond the Fringe Syndrome. According to all Kremlinologists, a major concern in Soviet foreign policy is the security of its borders. This obsession dates back to the Allied intervention (U.S., Britain, France, Japan) in northern Russia after World War I, an episode conveniently ignored in American textbooks, but with a prominent role in Russian schoolbooks. Probably, the Soviet Union’s softest underbelly extends from Turkey through Afghanistan. American activities along this southern fringe have always upset the Soviets, just as the Russian presence in Cuba disturbs the Americans. Turkey is linked to the West through NATO, and bilateral American-Turkish military agreements have just been renegotiated. Iran had been an American satellite since the overthrow of Dr. Mohammad Mosadegh by the CIA in 1953. With the downfall of the Shah in early 1979, Iran withdrew from CENTO and the Iranian Islamic Revolution has been seeking a way out of its instability. Throughout, the Russians have followed the U.S.-Iranian confrontation with increased interest, and could have fears that the Americans might actually invade and occupy southern Iran, thereby increasing instability in the region. If the Americans do move, the Russians would probably occupy northern Iran, as they did during World War II, under the terms of the 1921 Soviet-Iranian
treaty. The Khomeini regime unilaterally revoked the treaty in November 1979, but the Soviets have announced they consider this unilateral move illegal. The occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet troops makes a move into northern Iran easier, because the Russians now flank Iran to the east as well as having lengthy common frontiers west and east of the Caspian Sea.

Afghanistan, however, had its "special relationship" with the U.S.S.R. from the time of the first prime minister of Mohammad Daoud (1953-1963), despite its professions of nonalignment and periodic attempts by the United States to penetrate and control the highest levels of the Afghan government. Still, until the accidental coup of April 1978, Afghanistan had been a zone of stability. After the coup, however, the countryside rose in revolt and threatened the existence of the DRA. Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran contributed to the instability, and the Russians accused the U.S., China, Pakistan, and others of aiding the freedom fighters. This "internal intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan" is a major reason cited by the Soviets for their "temporary military assistance to Afghanistan."

Reaction to the Islamic Political Resurgence. The recent Islamic political awakening around the rimlands of the U.S.S.R. compounds the security syndrome. The Soviets feel this resurgence might infect their Central Asian Muslims, who now constitute about 20 percent of the total population of the U.S.S.R. and by the year 2000 will be about one-third of the total. As noted earlier, there is dissatisfaction in the Central Asian provinces over Soviet discriminatory treatment of non-Russian minorities.

Turkey, partly revitalized by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s and '30s, has been rediscovering its Islamic heritage in the modernist, not the fundamentalist, sense. Iran is attempting to shape its own brand of Islamic Revolution. So is Pakistan. Even the Afghan mujahideen are fighting under a loose Islamic umbrella. Thus the Soviet invasion may have been partly a "pre-emptive strike" to warn all Islamic states that the Russians will not tolerate another militant Muslim state on its borders.

The reverse reaction occurred, as can be seen from the resolution emanating from the Islamabad Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference (IFMC) held in January 1980. At the regular Eleventh IFMC, also held in Islamabad (May 17-22, 1980) the resolution condemning the Russian invasion and continued occupation of Afghanistan was just as strong as the previous one, despite vigorous opposition from the Steadfastness Front (Algeria, South Yemen, Libya, Syria, and the PLO). The overall impact, however, diminished by the April 24-25 CIF (Carter's Iranian Foulup) in the Dashti-i-Kavir, the disastrous attempt to rescue the American hostages in Tehran.

Both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. were condemned as aggressors in separate resolutions. The IFMC reaffirmed its January stand on the Russian aggression, and reiterated its demand for the "immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops stationed in the territory of Afghanistan." The conference went one step further, however, and appointed a three-man standing committee to hold meetings with Moscow, Kabul, and the mujahideen in order to seek a political solution to the Afghan problem. This move was precipitated by an April 17 statement from the Babrak government, obviously prompted by the Russians, which contained,

1. a proposal for bilateral talks between Afghanistan and Iran, and between Afghanistan and Pakistan (the old Soviet trick of one-on-one), instead of bringing all concerned parties to a single table. The purpose of the bilateral talks would be to "normalize relations" (i.e., recognize the Babrak regime).

2. a call for Afghan refugees to return home under the political amnesty announced on January 1, 1980.

3. omission of any preliminary conditions to the proposed bilateral talks.

4. a request that others concerned (i.e., U.S.S.R., U.S.) guarantee the integrity of the Babrak regime. Both countries must agree not to carry out subversive activities from their own territories, or from third countries, against Afghanistan.

5. a statement that Soviet troops would be withdrawn only if terms could be reached "to guarantee that neither invasions nor any other forms of interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs will be resumed, and the nations concerned would eliminate the causes which made Afghanistan turn to the U.S.S.R. with a request to bring in the above-mentioned contingent [of Soviet troops] into its territory."

6. a demand that the U.S. build-up of forces in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf must cease. [No mention was made of the Russian build-up.]

7. a suggestion that Cuba act as go-between to lay groundwork for the bilateral talks.

Although paragraph 5 insisted on no preconditions, an important one already existed in the text of the document. "Normalization" meant recognition of the Russian-sponsored, Russian-dominated Babrak regime. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie called the proposals "cosmetic and ambiguous." Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary, saw justification for his earlier appeal for the "neutralization" of Afghanistan. The IFMC decided to explore the possibilities through its three-man standing committee, which met twice in June. The first meeting in Tehran was procedural, and invitations were issued to Kabul, Moscow, and the mujahideen. The Russians and Babrak refused the invitations because they did not wish to be associated with the freedom fighters. The mujahideen sent a delegation to talk to committee members in Switzerland. The mujahideen delegation had called for all Muslim nations to withdraw their embassies from Moscow, and asked for assistance in their struggle to drive the Russians from their country (see Appendix A for the verbatim report.)

The IFMC resolution on Iran-Afghanistan relations was milder than many expected, considered in the light of U.S. actions at the time which antagonized much of the Muslim world. These moves included the announcement of economic sanctions against Iran, the ill-fated attempt to rescue the hostages by force, and reneging on the UN Security Council vote condemning illegal Israeli settlements in
occupied territories. The IFMC "strongly" condemned "the recent military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as threats of use of force of any other form." (Note the U.S. was not specifically mentioned in this context, but neither was anyone in doubt.) The text also "condemned interference or imposition of economic sanctions by any country, individually or otherwise, against the Islamic Republic of Iran." (Again, note no specific reference to the U.S.) In the final paragraph, however, the U.S. is mentioned: "While appealing to the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its efforts for seeking a peaceful solution of the hostage problem in the spirit of Islam, the Conference calls upon the United States not to do anything which could hamper the peaceful resolution of the issue." All things considered, very mild, even though the Steadfastness Front fought to have it stiffened. The PLO chief delegate, Abdul Muhsin Abu Meizer, went so far as to call the U.S. the "number one enemy of every Muslim country." He went along with the final version, however.

All in all, the IFMC passed 104 resolutions in six days, which must be some kind of a record. Naturally, several dealt with Arab-Israeli problems, but others ranged from the difficulty of collecting dues from OIC members to supporting the Moro National Liberation Front.

The Warm Water Complex. Did the Russians drive into Afghanistan to begin final fulfillment of Peter the Great’s dream — access to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea — and ultimate political domination of the regime, now made important by the oil in the Persian Gulf? Many claim so. Again (according to Doonesbury’s Russian spokesman Viktor, "Most of us [Russians] still have our hearts set on a warm water port, where our kids can comb the dunes for pectens, or suck ice lollies beneath the boardwalk." (Viktor’s interlocutor then exclaims, "Oh, Viktor, not France," and he is reassured: "No, no, Pakistan.")

But, in 1979, did the Russians really need to occupy Afghanistan (with Pakistan to come later?) to have commercial outlets to the south? The answer is no, because, before the invasion, Soviet and East European goods flowed overland through a friendly Afghanistan and Pakistan to India and elsewhere, or reached the area through Indian and Pakistani ports, via the Black Sea, the Dardanelles, and the Suez Canal. In the military sense, the Soviet Asiatic Fleet could move additional task forces into the Warm Waters as easily as the Americans.

The Brezhnev Doctrine Moves East. When the Soviets decided to salvage the new socialist DRA they effectively extended the Brezhnev Doctrine to the borders of China, far beyond the region of original intent, Eastern Europe. In early May 1980, the Soviet Ambassador to Paris, Stepan Chervonenko, stated: "A friendly country has the full right to choose its allies and, if it becomes necessary, to be helped in repelling the threat of counterrevolution or foreign intervention." 24 Closely following Chervonenko’s statement, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko flew into Paris to attend a conference of European Communist Parties, specifically to denounce the NATO proposal to introduce a new generation of missiles into Western Europe, and, not just coincidentally, once again to bless the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. (The Communist Parties of Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, and Romania were conspicuously absent.) Gromyko indicated that the "temporary" Soviet military presence in Afghanistan would remain as long as needed to counter "foreign intervention." To withdraw, he said on May 7, would be "a waste of time and a waste of energy." 25
East Europeans—Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968—accepted Soviet domination after a brief initial resistance; the Afghans will not accept Soviet hegemony. They can be destroyed, but not dominated.

**Babak Karmal and His United Front.** Taraki and Amin alienated practically all segments of Afghan society with their rhetoric, reforms and repressions. Before the Russians invaded, Amin's support had dwindled to a few military units around Kabul and a coterie of friends and relatives in the Khalq government. The pseudo-class struggle, proclaimed by Taraki and Amin, had failed, partly because Afghan society is basically egalitarian.

Babak Karmal, the Parcham leader living in exile in the Soviet bloc, had always favored a United Front of all anti-Mohammadzai (lineage of the former royal family) socialists and liberals, so the Soviets decided to give him a chance. On December 27, three days after the Russians began their invasion, the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), (re-)constituted, of course) "elected" Babak as Secretary-General of the PDPA, Prime Minister, and President of the Revolutionary Council, positions formerly held by Taraki and Amin. Flown into Kabul by the Russians, Babrak did try to form an effective United Front government. He released most political prisoners, and actually conned some into working with his government, but most either refused, or, at the first opportunity, fled the country or joined the mujahideen.

Babak still wears the mantle of Russian puppet. Facotions within his government still fight for power. The war for national liberation has escalated, even to the remotest parts of Afghanistan. The cities are unstable and schoolchildren have been killed in antigovernment demonstrations. Periodic strikes in the bazaars make life uncomfortable for the cityfolk.

The United Front, like Taraki, like Amin, has failed. Babrak's days are probably numbered, and then the Soviets, as a last gasp before taking over direct control, might even try to find and use a tame mullah (religious leader) to form an Islamic government. That, I predict, will also fail. Security concerns, the "warm water complex," the "second chance" offered by Karmal—all these partly account for the Russian decision to intervene in Afghanistan. In addition, the Russian army has not fought a major action since World War II, with the exception of a few skirmishes with China in the Ussuri Basin and a little mopping up in Eastern Europe. It has not really tested its tactics, weapons, or men. On the other hand, the U.S. and its allies have gained combat experience in a number of small wars: the U.K. in Kenya, Malaysia, Brunei, South Arabia, Aden, Northern Ireland; France in Vietnam, Morocco, Algeria, Chad; the U.S. in Korea, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic. Therefore, a safe campaign in Afghanistan must have appealed to the Soviet military.

However, I believe another factor played a major role in the Russian decision to march.

**Carter's Confrontation.** The Russians may or may not believe their accusations that the U.S., China, Pakistan, and others are aiding the mujahideen. Whatever assistance has been given has had little impact on the overall guerrilla effectiveness. No matter what the truth (and I, for one, would like to see the Russians find new ways to give arms and ammunition, not men, to the mujahideen), I believe that the Russians have thrown down the gauntlet to President Carter. Since World War II, each successive American president has been tested at least once by the Soviets: the Berlin Blockade; Korea; the Cuban missile crisis; Vietnam; Angola; Ethiopia; Yemen; Afghanistan. At times, the crises were Soviet-inspired; other times, they simply took advantage of an already existing crisis to harass the U.S.

At no time has the Carter administration appeared to have a cohesive, coherent foreign policy. A few examples will suffice; they are not in chronological order, and are listed without value judgments: failure to support the Shah of Iran, then admit the Shah to the U.S. for medical treatment; support for Somoza, which failed; announce that Russian combat brigades in Cuba was unacceptable, and then ignore it; announce development of the neutron bomb, then decide against it; cancel a campaign promise to withdraw ground troops from Korea; reverse U.S. vote on Security Council Resolution 465; failure to pass SALT II; failure of president to attend Marshal Tito's funeral; launch the abortive attempt to rescue hostages in Iran; announce economic sanctions against Iran; harass Iranians in the U.S.; refuse to permit Americans to travel to Iran. Some administrations successes are also tinged with controversy: the Panama Canal treaty; the Camp David agreements; normalization with the People's Republic of China at the expense of long-time ally, the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The Soviets have been known to describe President Carter as "dangerous," "unpredictable," "unstable," "reckless," "inconsistent." In my opinion, however, the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences may have advised in favor of the Russian invasion because they reasoned that the U.S. is at its lowest in will, capability, and credibility since World War II.

The Russians did not have to move into Afghanistan to keep a "special relationship" with successive Afghan governments. The move into Afghanistan may have been caused by the factors discussed previously, but it is also a direct confrontation with the U.S. Unless the leadership felt assured of 100 percent success, I believe the Kremlin would not have moved.

Added to the above, Soviet analysts must have found evidence to justify their theory in the lack of positive U.S. reactions to the murder of Ambassador Adolph (Spike) Dubs in Kabul on February 14, 1979, and the November 1979 burning of the American Embassy in Islamabad and other U.S. installations elsewhere in Pakistan.

So, presumably Russian analysts proved correct in their assessments of both American and Afghan reactions to the planned invasion, ignoring the advice of their Islamic specialists, the Afghans will fight, with or without outside help.

**American Reaction to the Russian Invasion.** Presidential options to react to crises (short of a surprise nuclear attack) have been seriously curtailed by the War Powers Act and the leashing of the Central
Intelligence Agency. Therefore, what the president should do and what he can do in any given situation may be miles apart. When President Carter heard that the Russians were landing at Kabul airport by the thousands on Christmas Eve 1979, and other thousands pouring over the Amu Darya, his potential options ranged from doing absolutely nothing to ordering the Russians to leave immediately—or else face American retaliation.

Many believe the president should have exercised the latter option. But, under the War Powers Act, would this have been possible? Senators and Congressmen have said no. The question then is: If the president could have called Brezhnev (or whomever) on the hot line and simply said: “Get the hell out of Afghanistan—or else—because I have just put the U.S. armed forces on 100 percent alert,” would he have? Personally, I am convinced he should have done this. The question then is: What he can do in any given situation? Personally, I am convinced he should have despite the threat of American retaliation. Madame Gandhi has made several rather inconclusive statements about the invasion, although she has not hesitated to swing a massive $1.6 billion arms deal with the Russians (June 1980), to the surprise of most observers.

The Americans did react in a number of ways, mainly cosmetic. The administration refused to honor some of the Russian wheat sales for the next two years, and cut back on the delivery of high technology items, in spite of several unfulfilled multimillion dollar contracts. The economic moves primarily hurt American farmers and businessmen. Argentina and other grain-producing countries stepped in to help make up the Soviet wheat shortages. Also, on June 21, President Carter weakened his own sanctions when he announced that U.S. grain companies could sell non-U.S. grains to the U.S.S.R.

Carter’s one sensible move—laughed at by some, and criticized by others as introducing politics into sports—was boycott of the 1980 Olympics. Anyone who thinks politics and sports do not mix should be around when India defeats Pakistan in cricket, or Pakistan clobbers India in field hockey. The Carter boycott disturbed the Russians that they flew to Islamabad their major experts on every Islamic country that attended the Extraordinary Session of the IFMC held there in January 1980.

Carter’s boycott call proved to be at least partly successful, and the quality of the Olympic gold medals was downgraded by the absence of many of the world’s top-flight individual performers and teams. To re-emphasize the reasons for the boycott, President Carter announced that the week July 21-27 would be the Afghanistan Relief Week to help the Afghanistan Relief Committee reach its $10 million goal. Governors of most states also declared Afghanistan Relief weeks.

The cries of the Afghan mujahideen for arms and ammunition largely went unheard until after the Russian invasion. They particularly wanted shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and antitank weapons. It must be emphasized that until the Russian aggression the Americans did virtually nothing to assist the mujahideen.

Now, however, U.S. government officials have admitted sending some small arms to the mujahideen since the middle of February 1980, and, in a New York Times interview (May 31), an unnamed government official said: “We are seeking ways to help them [the mujahideen] in every way we can—not all the ways that we can pursue are ways I can discuss.” This must be heartening news to the hard-pressed freedom fighters, who have repeatedly stated that they want none of “America’s Indira Gandhi wooed by Brezhnev—while India starves. “Arms before Bread.” Published in Mishriq, May 30, 1980, Lahore.
sons" to fight for them. All they want is the hardware to, as they put it, "make the Russians uncomfortable." Russian casualties continue to rise.

* * * * *

Under jokes that should never have been made, include: "If you want to destroy the Soviet Union, give it Afghanistan." (LD, AUFS lecture, 1960).

* * * * *

Will the Soviets pull out of Afghanistan? Are they seeking ways to withdraw without losing face? Are they playing a diplomatic game, waiting for the Olympics (and possibly the American elections) to pass? Or, even if they wish to withdraw, what price will they try to extract from the West? 32

The Russians did withdraw from northwest Iran after World War II, but reluctantly, under pressure from the UN and the U.S., which at that time had a nuclear monopoly. The Soviets also thought the two People's Republics they had established, Azerbaijan and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, could survive: a revitalized Iranian army, assisted by tribesmen from the south, smashed the republics. The U.S. then became the dominant force in Iran and remained so until early 1979.

Soviet troops also withdrew from Austria, along with French, British, and American occupying forces, in 1955. All parties guaranteed the "neutralization" of Austria, and that status was then incorporated into Austria's constitution. In effect, however, the Soviets enjoyed a buffer zone between itself and the West.

The Russians have even proposed the "neutralization" of Afghanistan, after "the external interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan has ceased." The problem becomes academic when we realize that the Russians themselves were the original "interferers." After all, Afghanistan was independent, and was formally nonaligned before the Russian invasion.

Several vague proposals for "neutralization" have come from other sources: Lord Carrington, the British Foreign Secretary; Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany; the Babrak Karmal government (discussed earlier). On March 6, 1980, the Pakistanis came up with the following proposals to defuse the border problem:

1. The ORA should seal the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. (A task which has proved impossible throughout history.)

2. A peace-keeping force should be formed to patrol the border. The troops would either be under the sponsorship of the United Nations or selected Islamic nations.

3. The Pakistanis would permit any recognized international organizations to visit the Afghan refugee camps at any time to prove that no training and arming of guerrillas takes place. (Any training would obviously be conducted outside the camps.)

On his recent trip to Yugoslavia, President Carter proposed consideration of "a transitional arrangement, to be implemented along with the prompt withdrawal of all Soviet troops in Afghanistan." 33 A supplementary White House statement indicated the president's proposal related to his suggestion in February 1980 that a transitional peace-keeping force from Muslim countries supervise the Soviet withdrawal to help prevent a bloodbath.

The next day (June 25), the Russians rejected the proposal as "too vague," but several Islamic countries expressed interest.
Except for a few hard-core Russian supporters, however, the rest of the world continues to demand the "immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops" before any serious negotiations can begin over the future status of Afghanistan. For their part, the Russians have repeatedly stated they will not withdraw until the conditions which precipitated their intervention no longer exist (i.e., the U.S., U.K., China, Pakistan, and Egypt stop training and arming guerrillas to fight inside Afghanistan). In their latest broadsides, the Russians did not mention Iran, although the Iranians have openly announced that they are aiding the mujahideen. Possibly, the Russians wish to drive the Iranians and the Americans farther apart, and, in addition, conclude their deal with Iran to buy natural gas, now hanging fire.

Brezhnev's withdrawal at the end of June of about one Russian division (8-10,000 men) and a hundred or so tanks changed nothing. In fact, in the two weeks before the symbolic withdrawal, about 10,000 fresh troops (elite parachute and commando battalions) arrived. Current estimates place about 130,000 Russian troops in Afghanistan and along the Russo-Afghan border. Because tanks have proved virtually useless in Afghanistan's mountainous terrain, the Russians are withdrawing some armored units and replacing them with smaller combat outfits of first-rate troops, paratroopers, and commandos.

Already bloody, the First Russo-Afghan War will get bloodier. If it continues at the present rate for another year or two, the population of Afghanistan will be cut in half, to seven or eight million people. Already more than a million refugees have fled, from a quarter to a half million people have been killed or executed, and many valleys sit starkly deserted, with bombed-out villages standing mute witness to this new episode of genocide.

To fill the population gap, the Soviets will probably transplant surplus Russians and possibly some Central Asian Muslims in Afghanistan. The forcible shifts of population that worked in the 1930s and '40s, however, could well be more problematic in the '80s, particularly the Central Asian Muslims.

The Afghan refugee camps in the long run may also produce another situation like that of the Palestinian Arabs. Both Pakistan and Iran will be faced with growing threats to their internal security if the mujahideen continue to be frustrated in their efforts to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan. The free world must act now, making plans to rehabilitate the Afghan refugees in Iran, Pakistan, and elsewhere.

The price of the invasion has been higher in lives (about 8,000), money, and loss of international prestige than the Russians anticipated. Russian wives and mothers may ultimately object to their men being killed and wounded in Afghanistan, but it is doubtful that Russian public opinion will mobilize to condemn the First Russo-Afghan War, or that many young Russians will desert, dodge the draft, or flee to Sweden in protest.

In the unlikely event that the Soviets are brought to the negotiating table, I suspect their demands could not be met by the West. The Soviet negotiators would probably insist on "neutralization" of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and the Indian Ocean, along with equal access to Persian Gulf oil. At the very minimum, the Soviets might accept the "neutralization" of Afghanistan, guaranteed by the U.S., U.S.S.R., China, Pakistan, and Iran. But this would mean recognizing an Afghan regime left behind by the Soviets, and the Afghan people would probably not accept that. Revolts would continue, and the Soviets would return, charging "interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan" by (you've guessed it) the U.S., China, Pakistan, etc.

In conclusion, a personal opinion: Afghanistan, a landlocked, Muslim country, formerly independent and nonaligned, situated halfway around the world from the U.S., is fast becoming a symbol for the 1980s, quite possibly a decade of Russian expansionism, the breakup of NATO, and a retreat to Fortress America. A Fortress America of the mind is already being created. The challenges are there, and have been defined. The gauntlet lies in the open. How will the U.S. respond? I do not have the answer, but I do have some suggestions on how to approach the problems.

First, the U.S. and other free world nations should find ways effectively to assist the Afghan mujahideen.

Second, the U.S. should guarantee the territorial integrity of both Pakistan and Iran, with or without their consent. The guarantee need not be made public, but it should be clearly conveyed to the Kremlin. Third, President Carter should acknowledge past American mistakes in Iran.

American misdeeds, by Iranian calculations, stretch back to 1953, when the CIA helped overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mosadegh. President Carter has been in office only three and one-half years, so he need not personally take all the blame. The impasse over the hostages continues, and the U.S. elections approach.

Elections or no elections, the world sits at a crossroads, and unless the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan is effectively countered, not just contained, the 1980s may be a decade of disaster.

(July 1980)
NOTES

1. L. Dupree, "Afghanistan under the Khalis," Problems of Communism 28 (July-August 1979): 34 ff.; L. Dupree, "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, 1979," AUFS Reports, Asia, No. 32, 1979. While my overall assessment was wrong, I did not believe that the Russians could support independent-minded Hafizullah Amin and was right, I was guilty of thinking like an Afghan; now I try to think like a Russian.


3. No one can ignore the American intervention in Vietnam and the disastrous effects it produced on all concerned.

4. All have been discussed in a series of AUFS Reports entitled: "Red Flag Over the Hindu Kush," AUFS Reports, Nos. 44, 45, 1979; Nos. 23, 27, 28, 29, 1980.


6. Full name of party: Jamiyat-i-Demokratik-yi-Khalq-i-Afghanistan, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).


11. Security Council vote to condemn the aggression for this resolution Bangladesh, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Malaysia, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, and the United Nations. Voting against: East Germany and the U.S.S.R. General Assembly vote: For the resolution to condemn: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Kampuchea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Gabon, Gambia, Federal Republic of Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Surinam, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire. Voting against: Afghanistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, German Democratic Republic, Grenada, Hungary, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, Poland, U.S.S.R., Vietnam. Abstaining: Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Congo, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Guinea, Guine-Bissau, India, Madagascar, Mali, Nicaragua, Sao Tome and Principe, Syria, Uganda, South Yemen, Zambia. Absent: Bhutan, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Dominica, Libya, Romania, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan.

12. The following Islamic nations attended the Extraordinary Session: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bangladesh, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States, and the United Nations. The original membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was 42, Egypt had been expelled earlier for its participation in the Camp David talks, and Afghanistan was expelled at the Extraordinary Session. Four states did not attend: Guinea-Bissau, Syria, South Yemen, and Upper Volta. Mr. Brezhnev chose to drop into Damascus for a surprise visit while the OIC was meeting, and rumors were that the session ended before South Yemen realized what the invitation was all about. Turkey is now the only country in the OIC to retain membership in a military pact (NATO), all others are in the Non-Aligned Movement. (See Chart on page 3 for alignments of the so-called nonaligned nations.)


14. It should be remembered that only about 15 percent of the world's billion Muslims are Arabs, although most in the West tend to identify Islam only with Arabs, oil, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

15. Other resolutions dealt with the usual Arab-Israeli problems i.e., Zionist racism, the liberation of Al-Quds al-Sharif—the Arab name for Jerusalem—the liberation of all other occupied territories, the Camp David Accord, the "inalienable rights of the Palestinian people") condemned the armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of Somalia, and called for the withdrawal of Soviet and other "foreign troops" (Cubans) from the Horn of Africa. A separate resolution condemned "the efforts of certain great powers to exert various forms of pressure on Islamic states."

16. Personal communications with various Asian scholars who have close contacts in the U.S.S.R.

17. This statement and the next were quoted in The Muslim, Islamabad, May 19, 1980, and May 29, 1980.


19. Only Chad (in the middle of a civil war) did not attend the Seventh Session of IFMC.

20. The Standing Committee: Ayub Shah, Chairman of the IMF and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Secretary General of the OIC, Habib Chaib of Tunisia, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Foreign Minister of Iran. Incidentally, under Iranian law representatives of the Afghanistan mujahidin official members of the Iranian delegation during the May 1980 IFMC.

21. For complete text, see The Muslim, May 21, 1980. The DRA Embassy in Islamabad sent letters to the major Paki-
stani newspapers during the May IFMC, quoting Habrak's proposals in full for the edification of the delegates.

22. For a complete list of the 104 resolutions, see The Muslim, May 23, 1980.

23. The importance of Persian Gulf oil to the West and Japan can be seen from the following statistics: Through the Strait of Hormuz (which divides the Persian Gulf from the Arabian Sea), flows 20% of the oil used by the U.S., 60% of Europe's and Australia's needs, and 90% of Japan's.


26. One result of such challenges is that the U.S.R. gained eight "friends" since 1974, while losing three. The eight: Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen, Afghanistan, Laos, Kampuchea (2). The three: Egypt, North Yemen, Somalia.

27. President Carter on September 7, 1979: "We consider the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba to be a very serious matter and that the status quo is not acceptable." To my knowledge, no one changed the status quo.

Willis' article stated that the Russians do not want Carter to-elected. I disagree.

29. We have all been frightened by some U.S. computer hacking claims in the past six months.

30. The Indian-Soviet arms deal reportedly includes T-72 tanks, MiG-23s, and other sophisticated weaponry. The Indians have 17 years to repay the Russian loan, at a low 2.5 percent. India is in the market for a total of $2.5 billion, excluding the $1.5 billion deal to purchase and produce the highly touted Anglo French Jaguar aircraft. Pakistan is hoping to get about $2 billion from sympathetic Arab states to modernize its armed forces.

31. On July 3, Lord Carrington (British Foreign Secretary) told a Parliamentary Committee: "It is important that freedom fighters there in Afghanistan should have arms." He refused, however, to indicate where the arms should come from: 'I doubt whether it would be helpful to talk about it.' The Pakistan Times, July 4, 1980


34. Inside Afghanistan: 73,000 ground troops; 7,000 aircraft; plus 4,500 military advisers for the dwindling Afghan army of 20,30,000 men (down from 110,000 in April 1978).
APPENDIX A

Text of Islamic panel's statement

June 26, 1980. The following is the full text of the statement issued in Mont Pelerin, Switzerland, at the conclusion of the second meeting of the ICFM Standing Committee on Afghanistan:

"The Standing Committee of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, comprising of the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, established by the resolution of the 11th session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers to seek ways and means for a comprehensive solution of the crisis in Afghanistan, held its second meeting at Mont Pelerin, Switzerland, on 20 and 21 June 1980.

"Pursuant to its mandate in the above mentioned resolution to seek ways and means, including appropriate consultations with the parties concerned, for a peaceful solution the Standing Committee welcomed the participation in the meeting of the delegation of the Mujahedeen of Afghanistan.

"The Standing Committee listened with care and attention to important, wide ranging and informative statements made at the meeting by the representatives of the Mujahedeen. It heard, with deep concern and sympathy, the representatives description of the sufferings and plight of the people within Afghanistan and of their urgent need for humanitarian assistance, especially food, medical and other aid which is urgently needed for the sick and wounded. The Afghan Mujahedeen stressed that in view of the increasing hardships and deprivation of even basic necessities of life, material help for their cause was more urgent than ever. They called for adequate and timely support from the Muslim world and all other peoples for their just struggle. The

Committee assured the Mujahedeen representatives of the political and moral support of the Islamic Conference as pledged in the resolution of the Conference. The Standing Committee noted with deep concern the widespread suffering inflicted on the people of Afghanistan, including women, children and the aged, and the increasingly grave shortages of food, clothing, medical aid and essential necessities of life caused by the wholesale destruction of entire villages and crops, the poisoning of water supplies and other such actions resulting from military action by foreign forces. The Standing Committee took note of the affirmation by the Mujahedeen leaders of their determination to persevere in the resistance against foreign intervention and occupation, until the liberation of their country and the restoration of the independent and non-aligned status of Afghanistan in the comity of nations.

"The Standing Committee explained to the leaders of the Mujahedeen that its mandate, as provided under the resolution of the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference, is to explore a peaceful solution of the Afghanistan crisis within the framework of the following fundamental principles: i.e., the immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal of all Soviet troops stationed on the territory of Afghanistan; Respect for the political independence, sovereignty and non-aligned status of Afghanistan and its Islamic identity; Respect for the inalienable national right of the people of Afghanistan to determine their own form of Government and to choose their own economic, political and social system, free from outside interference, or coercion, and the creation of the right conditions that would permit an early return of the Afghan refugees to their own land in security and honour. The

Standing Committee assured the Mujahedeen of its scrupulous adherence to these basic principles in the Committee's search for a peaceful solution of the Afghanistan crisis through consultations with all the parties concerned.

"The representatives of the Mujahedeen expressed their willingness to cooperate with the Standing Committee strictly within the framework of the above mentioned principles.

"The Standing Committee noted deep concern that in the wake of the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan, the military and naval presence of the super powers in the region of South West Asia and in the Indian Ocean has sharply increased, posing a threat to the security of the countries in the region, especially the Islamic countries.

"The Standing Committee decided, while pursuing a peaceful solution along the above mentioned lines, to make every effort to mobilize and obtain all possible humanitarian assistance for the suffering people of Afghanistan, including the supply of food, clothing, medical aid and other necessities of life of which they are being deprived, as one of the consequences of the intensification of military operations by foreign forces in Afghanistan.

"The Standing Committee decided to meet from time to time in the pursuit of a peaceful and honourable solution in accordance with the terms of its mandate. To this end it expressed the hope that the other parties concerned will also enter into consultations with the Committee.

"The Committee will submit a report on its activities to the emergency session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in September 1980. The Standing Committee expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of the Swiss Confederation for the facilities provided for the holding of the meeting at Mont Pelerin."