

Moscow's Endgame in Afghanistan

by
Richard Weitz

INTRODUCTION

The USSR's strategy in Afghanistan almost succeeded. Following the withdrawal of their troops in February 1989, Soviet officials sought a negotiated settlement that would have provided their local allies with a significant chance to remain in power yet would have reduced the USSR's economic and diplomatic costs. By withdrawing its forces, Moscow purposefully transformed a war of liberation against an occupying power into a confused civil conflict between a seemingly flexible government and an increasingly divided opposition. The insurgents' foreign backers, disappointed by their poor military performance, wavered in their support. Only the unexpected collapse of the Soviet central government undermined Moscow's endgame in Afghanistan.

THE INCOMPLETE GENEVA ACCORDS

On 15 April 1988, in Geneva, Switzerland, various parties to the Afghan conflict signed four pacts: a Bilateral Agreement Between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-Interference and Non-Intervention; a Declaration on International Guarantees Between the United States and the Soviet Union; a Bilateral Agreement Between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Voluntary Return of Refugees; and, an Agreement on the Interrelationships for the Settlement of the Situation relating to Afghanistan, also signed by the Afghan and Pakistani governments. As part of this set of accords, Soviet officials consented to remove their military units from Afghanistan by 15 February 1989.

The Geneva accords were incomplete in several respects, and these gaps ensured fighting would continue. First, before the treaty signing Soviet officials had rejected an American proposal that both superpowers terminate their military assistance to their Afghan allies after the Red Army's withdrawal. Unable to obtain an agreement on such "negative symmetry," the US administration insisted on its right to arm the resistance as long as the USSR provided weapons to Kabul. Although Soviet officials never explicitly agreed to such "positive symmetry," they signed the accords fully cognizant of the American position. Not only had US officials previously explained their views to their Soviet counterparts, but the State Department also had submitted an official statement to the UN Secretary-General which asserted that "the U.S. retains the right, consistent with its obligations as guarantor, to provide military assistance to parties in Afghanistan." Second, none of the various resistance groups (commonly referred to as the *mujaheddin*) had participated directly in the negotiations, and many opposition leaders expressed open hostility to the resulting accords. Third, both the American and Pakistani

governments previously had dropped their demands for the establishment of an interim Afghan government before the Soviet troop withdrawal. Instead, they merely agreed that Diego Cordovez would continue his UN-sponsored mediation efforts. The failure of the accords to specify the nature of Afghanistan's future government, combined with Cordovez' inability to make much progress in his diplomatic rounds, meant that the Afghan disputants sought to resolve this question by force of arms.¹

It is of course questionable whether the peace agreement could have been any better from the West's point of view. Gorbachev had refused to involve the USSR in attempts to alter the composition of the Kabul government, which he maintained on 9 February 1988 was "a purely internal Afghan issue." He added that, "When it is hinted to us that the Soviet Union should take part in talks on the issue of a coalition government, or even talk to third countries, our answer is firm and clear: it is none of our business. Or yours, for that matter."² In addition, Soviet officials repeatedly had indicated their intention to withdraw their troops even without an international agreement, so fighting would have continued in any case unless the resistance or President Najibullah's Kabul government had changed their policies.

Before leaving, the Red Army had turned over large quantities of military supplies to the Afghan government, fulfilling Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's vow to the Kabul government that the USSR would "not leave it in need."³ Soviet military forces also stepped up their attacks against the guerrillas using advanced weaponry which they had failed to employ previously in Afghanistan, including long-range Scud missiles, Mig-27 airplanes, and Backfire bombers.⁴ Even after the departure of their forces, Soviet advisers continued to train the Afghan military.⁵ Soviet and Afghan officials concluded that if they could prevent a quick guerrilla victory, their fortunes would steadily improve. An Afghan government official correctly observed that, "Najibullah wins by not losing, and the mujaheddin lose by not winning."⁶

THE UNEXPECTED MILITARY STALEMATE

After the Soviet withdrawal, Afghan government troops proved unexpectedly successful at attaining their minimum objective of retaining control of the cities. The insurgents, so skilled at guerrilla warfare, were unable to defeat government forces in large-scale conventional warfare such as that surrounding the city of Jalalabad in the spring of 1989. With a few minor exceptions, such as the defection of the garrison at Tarin Kot in October 1990 and the seizure of Khost in March 1991, they sought in vain to force the surrender or desertion of major government positions through sieges and rocket attacks. Their inability to capture a major city prevented them from moving their Pakistani-based interim government, established in February 1989, to Afghanistan. Such a transfer would have assisted the government's quest to gain official recognition from such countries as the United States. The insurgents' failure to attain decisive military victories both alarmed their external backers and improved the government forces' morale. Yet, despite their air superiority, the latter felt compelled to abandon much of the countryside to the various guerrilla groups.⁷

The resistance organizations' inability to resolve their political and religious differences hampered their operations. Not only did divisions widen between the Iranian-based Alliance of Eight and the Alliance of Seven operating from Pakistan, with the Seven's provisional government in Peshawar refusing to join with the Shi'ite groups allied to Iran, but even the Pakistani-based Sunni groups disagreed on such fundamental issues as the structure of the future government and the role of religion in Afghan politics. Field reports indicated that guerrilla forces persistently failed to coordinate their operations and, more seriously, ambushed and assassinated one another's members. Frequent endeavors to form joint councils or other lasting alliances consistently failed. The insurgents confronted a collective action problem. Although it was in their common interest to depose the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), each faction preferred that its rivals bore the brunt of accomplishing this debilitating task. Guerrilla commanders also regularly ignored instructions from their nominal political leadership in Peshawar. These divisions within the resistance strengthened the government's hand. A leading guerrilla commander remarked that, "Najibullah is not surviving because he is strong, because people like him, or because people are willing to fight and die for him. . . . It's only because there is no political alternative."⁸

Although the Kabul government also suffered from factionalism, Najibullah succeeded, particularly after an unsuccessful coup attempt in early March 1990, in removing important officials in the PDPA opposed to his moderate line.⁹ The government also reached local agreements (mostly truces) with many guerrilla commanders, thus further dividing the resistance.¹⁰ In late November 1990 Najibullah even held direct exploratory talks in Geneva with unidentified moderate resistance leaders — as well as representatives of the former Afghan King, Zahir Shah — in an obvious effort to further exploit fissures within the opposition. The President observed after the meeting that, "Such talks will continue, and I am satisfied with those I had."¹¹

IMPROVEMENT IN THE USSR's REGIONAL POSITION

Moscow's diplomatic position in the region strengthened significantly after the Red Army's withdrawal. For example, even before the pull-out's completion, Indian officials had expressed their support for the USSR's view that only a coalition government, not force, could resolve the Afghan conflict. Alarmed by the prospects of a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul, in June 1988 former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi openly indicated his preference for a continuation of the PDPA regime rather than the rule of "the sort of fanatical fundamentalists who are the alternatives."¹² After the completion of the Soviet military withdrawal, Indian officials strengthened their relations with the Kabul government. According to one regional expert, "They went out of their way to befriend Afghan President Najibullah in early 1989, at a time when the Soviets seemed ready to write him off."¹³ They also repeatedly criticized Pakistan and the United States for providing military assistance to the Afghan guerrillas.¹⁴

Although they continued to aid various resistance groups, in part to counterbalance the influence of Saudi Arabia,¹⁵ Iranian officials moved towards

the USSR's viewpoint on the Afghan question shortly after the Soviet troops withdrew. According to Soviet sources, the Iranians expressed support for a nonaligned Afghan government which included elements of the PDPA.¹⁶ A Western analyst maintains that when they met in Moscow in June 1989, Gorbachev and Iranian leader Ali Akbar Rafsanjani "made an informal deal to ensure territorial stability in Central Asia."¹⁷ Editorials in the government-controlled *Tehran Times* subsequently praised Najibullah and suggested direct talks between Iran and the Afghan government.¹⁸ Najibullah remarked in November 1990 that Iran's policy had seen a "very positive change toward a political solution."¹⁹ The Iranian government's position accorded with its desire to improve relations with the USSR, reduce American influence in the area, and constrain resistance groups supported by Saudi Arabia.²⁰

The USSR's relations with Pakistan, the resistance's strongest regional supporter, also improved. Realizing the centrality of Pakistan's support for the insurgents, Moscow continued to provide the country with significant economic assistance despite criticizing its government's policy towards Afghanistan.²¹ The Soviet government's relatively benign policy, combined with the guerrillas' military failures, resulted in a hesitant but noticeable moderation in Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan. The head of the Pakistani army said in September 1989 that the resistance should negotiate with the PDPA if Najibullah resigned.²² Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif warned in April 1991 that the reduction in Western assistance to Pakistan compelled his government to reevaluate its regional policies.²³ At approximately the same time senior intelligence officials from Pakistan met in Geneva with their Afghan counterparts to discuss a possible settlement.²⁴ The Pakistani government subsequently endorsed a five-point peace plan proposed by UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in May and supported by the USSR. The scheme envisaged a cease-fire, the termination of foreign arms shipments, an "intra-Afghan dialogue," and a transitional administration to supervise elections leading to a nonaligned Islamic government.²⁵ A Pakistani envoy visited Moscow at the end of May to discuss the peace process with Soviet officials. Nikolai Kozyrev, the senior Soviet diplomat assigned to the Afghan question, ebulliently remarked that, "The mere fact that such talks were held after a three-year break can be regarded as a sign of the changing attitude of Pakistan towards unblocking the Afghan conflict."²⁶ Although the Pakistani government (more precisely, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate) persevered in directing the resistance's military campaign, many officials evinced increasing interest in a political solution to the Afghan conflict and were patently disturbed by recent American policies in south Asia (particularly heightened American pressure in the area of nuclear nonproliferation).²⁷

Many West European governments also wavered in their support for the resistance. During the final stages of the Soviet troop withdrawal, they had followed the American lead and recalled their diplomatic staff from Kabul, allegedly to guarantee their personal safety. Shevardnadze criticized the move as a "deficit of responsibility or a political demarche."²⁸ Despite strong US objections, the French and Italian governments decided in 1990 to return

their diplomats to Kabul.²⁹ Their decisions lessened the Afghan government's diplomatic isolation and strengthened its international legitimacy.

Support within the United States for the guerrillas also waned. Faced with a recession at home, the end of the Cold War, the support of many resistance groups for Iraq during the Gulf War, a rise of drug trafficking in guerrilla-controlled areas, and a military stalemate in Afghanistan, even some of the resistance's strongest Congressional backers began to endorse a reduction in US military assistance to the guerrillas. An official in the Bush administration explained "that the voices calling for an end to the program are getting louder and that every year it gets harder and harder to justify assistance in the absence of results."³⁰

RESOLVING DISPUTES OVER EXTERNAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Soviet officials continued to decry American aid to the resistance. One commentator observed in *Izvestia* that, "Washington's present policy with respect to Afghanistan is another manifestation of the chronic 'disease' of the thinking of some right-wing figures [there]. One can call it an 'imperial mentality.' It displays itself in pretensions of trying to impose on other countries and peoples arrangements pleasing to Washington."³¹ Soviet officials claimed that Pakistan and the United States were violating the Geneva accords by continuing to provide the insurgents military support.³²

With respect to their own policies, Soviet officials initially insisted that the many bilateral understandings existing between the USSR and Afghanistan, as well as the Geneva accords, granted them the right to continue supplying the Kabul government with military assistance.³³ Once the government's success in the ground war became clearer, however, Soviet officials concluded that "negative symmetry" would best promote their interests. As soon as the USSR had completed its military withdrawal, and had finished delivering large stocks of weaponry to government forces, Gorbachev personally wrote to Bush to request that both countries terminate their military aid to their Afghan allies.

In a sharp policy reversal, US officials now rejected the idea of a mutual arms cut-off, though American negotiators had originally proposed the concept. The administration claimed it had to match the ordnance the USSR's departing military units left government forces, as well as the military advisers and additional defense assistance the USSR continued to supply Kabul. Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 1990, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf observed that, "People have been asking how Najibullah could be holding out so long. Well, he's holding out because he's getting an absolutely unbelievable amount of Soviet aid."³⁴ Although analysts might doubt whether Moscow actually had much of an independent impact in sustaining the regime when other factors (such as divisions within the resistance and rivalries among their external backers) also bolstered it, an on-the-spot observer stressed the importance of Soviet policies in upholding the Afghan government and thereby justifies this article's focus on the USSR. "Moscow's commitment in economic and military aid to the Kabul regime has been vastly underestimated

by the West and by Pakistan," Ahmed Rashid wrote in late 1989. "The flow of Soviet food, fuel and weapons has played a determining role in sustaining the Afghan economy and allowing President Najibullah to conduct his political strategy of maintaining public morale and winning over the mujahideen."³⁵ In 1990 observers gauged the level of annual Soviet economic and military assistance to the Afghan government at about two to six billion dollars, and they estimated that the United States provided approximately 300 million dollars a year in defense support to the insurgents.³⁶ They believed that Saudi sources supplied an amount roughly comparable to that of the United States.³⁷

American officials also acknowledged that they initially had opposed a superpower arms cut-off because it would have inhibited the guerrillas from obtaining their expected military victory. As one of them explained to *The Washington Post*, "If you favor negative symmetry, you favor a coalition government approach. Negative symmetry would assure that the Kabul government becomes a permanent factor."³⁸ Once they concluded in late 1990 that the guerrillas were unlikely to soon achieve a military triumph, American officials reversed their position yet again and agreed in principle that the superpowers should terminate their defense assistance programs. By this time, however, Soviet officials had upped the ante. Also noticing the improvement in the Kabul government's military position, they maintained that other countries, particularly Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, should halt military shipments to the insurgents.³⁹ In addition, they indicated that they expected a cease-fire and an intra-Afghan dialogue to accompany such an arrangement. Subsequent negotiations focused on these and other issues, including the effective date of the cut-off and verification procedures.

SOVIET-AMERICAN NEGOTIATIONS ON OTHER ISSUES

Aside from the question of arms deliveries, the most divisive point requiring resolution was what to do with Najibullah and the PDPA. Until 1990 US negotiators maintained that, as a condition for commencing negotiations, the President and his party had to leave office.⁴⁰ The resistance also refused to join a coalition government with the PDPA, participate in any elections organized by the regime, or hold direct talks with PDPA representatives. The farthest they would proceed in public was to talk with UN and Soviet mediators who were also in contact with the Afghan government.

Soviet officials rejected such demands. They termed a proposal by the British Foreign Secretary that Najibullah and the PDPA surrender their positions "gross interference in the affairs of a sovereign country."⁴¹ After Soviet troops had completed their withdrawal, Shevardnadze indicated at a press conference in Pakistan that the PDPA was prepared to accept a "far-reaching compromise" but it "did not intend to capitulate."⁴² Soviet representatives expressed support for a coalition government or council, composed of "all strata of Afghan society, including the PDPA."⁴³ They termed the Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan "the most outstanding and well-organized force in Afghan society."⁴⁴ In December 1989 the USSR dispatched a delegation to Kabul to help overcome splits within the PDPA.⁴⁵ Soviet officials supported

Najibullah's endeavors to win over the moderate opposition through a policy of "national reconciliation." For example, the Foreign Ministry openly hailed his November talks at Geneva.⁴⁶ They also encouraged the Afghan government to continue its domestic reform program which, if successful, could garner the regime further support among the population. In 1990 the Afghan government modified its constitution to permit other political parties to contest elections (and hence renounced the PDPA's monopoly of power). Najibullah also appointed individuals who were not PDPA members to a majority of cabinet posts (including the Prime Ministership). The PDPA itself was rechristened the *Hezb-i Watan* ("Fatherland Party") in July 1990, and now required its members to practice Islam. The Afghan government introduced reforms in the economy and other areas as well.⁴⁷

Soviet officials also repeatedly called for a cease-fire, which of course would have left their allies in control of Afghanistan's urban core, and urged a greater role for the United Nations in the resolution of the conflict.⁴⁸ In addition, they apparently considered granting the former king a role in any settlement. In late November 1989 Shevardnadze met with the monarch in Rome.⁴⁹ The following November, according to Afghan sources, Gorbachev was in personal contact with the king during his own visit to Italy.⁵⁰ Soviet officials claimed to desire "an unallied and neutral Afghanistan, hostile to no one."⁵¹ They proposed international talks among the USSR, Pakistan, Iran, and other countries to resolve the war and help determine the country's international status.⁵²

Although seeking a negotiated settlement, Soviet officials promoted an outcome favorable to their local clients. This trend became particularly evident after Najibullah successfully overcame the March coup attempt and clearly became the stronger local power.⁵³ Najibullah now appeared capable of maintaining stability in Afghanistan. Soviet officials did not want to lose him unless a comparable stable government, enjoying a wider base of support, could emerge. After Secretary of State James Baker indicated during a trip to Moscow in February 1990 that the United States had accepted Najibullah's temporary continuation in office, Soviet representatives affirmed that the Afghan people should determine their future government in national elections supervised by the United Nations and the Islamic Conference. But they initially balked when American representatives demanded that Najibullah transfer during the electoral process much of his powers, including control over the armed forces, the media, and the secret police, to an interim authority consisting of representatives from diverse sectors of Afghan society.⁵⁴ In April a senior Soviet official, alluding to the Afghan government's superior military position, stated that the failure of the resistance and Washington to negotiate directly with Najibullah showed they had not yet appreciated "present realities."⁵⁵ Kozyrev said in June that, "The American demand for Mr. Najibullah to resign and hand over power to an interim government is totally unrealistic. It would be capitulation, and that would be impossible."⁵⁶ In August 1990 Soviet and Afghan officials yielded on this issue and agreed to the establishment of a coordination body to implement the elections, but did not want to delegate the extensive powers Washington desired. (Although Yuli M. Vorontsov, Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations, reportedly had proposed in July to his US counterpart that Najibullah

relinquish control of the military, the media, and the secret police to another authority, Soviet officials never formally repeated what perhaps was the diplomat's personal suggestion.⁵⁷) After Najibullah met in August with senior Soviet officials (including Gorbachev) in Moscow, a TASS account reported that,

The Soviet spokesman pointed to the importance of the fact that President Najibullah confirmed his intention to create a coordinating body, which will function during the transition period and in which all Afghan political forces will be represented. In addition, the Afghan government has announced its agreement to transfer to this coordinating body some ministerial functions and even subordinate to it some units of the Afghan army and Interior Ministry troops on condition that armed rebel units will be subordinated to it, too.⁵⁸

Soviet officials continued to maintain that a cease-fire should precede a military aid cut-off, and that the termination of arms shipments should occur before the formation of the interim authority. They argued that the latter had to include Najibullah.⁵⁹

Diplomatic progress during the rest of 1990 and the first part of 1991 was minimal. Although Baker and Shevardnadze discussed the Afghan conflict at their meetings in August and December 1990, American officials were distracted by events in the Middle East while their Soviet counterparts were preoccupied with domestic issues. The sporadic direct talks between Soviet and resistance representatives succeeded neither in determining a future Afghan government nor in freeing the USSR's prisoners of war.⁶⁰ The shuttle mission of Benon Sevan, Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General, also proved fruitless. The guerrillas' unexpected seizure at Khost encouraged the Bush administration to stand fast. A State Department official, euphoric over the insurgent victory, justified maintaining a firm position: "If the Soviets see they are throwing good money after bad, we hope the Soviets will come to see that a political settlement is necessary."⁶¹

Soviet officials advanced a similar logic. Kozyrev argued that Moscow's arms deliveries actually promoted the attainment of a political settlement: "The opposition respects strength and, seeing that its attempts to settle the problem by military means are futile, it will have to agree to compromises and peaceful negotiations."⁶² The USSR intensified its arms deliveries.⁶³

THE COLLAPSE

The failure of the August 1991 coup attempt in Moscow broke the impasse. Many of the Soviet officials subsequently purged were closely associated with Moscow's hardline policy in Afghanistan.⁶⁴ As in so many areas, even before the foiled coup Boris Yeltsin had adopted an independent policy toward Afghanistan by meeting directly with resistance leaders and by vowing to curtail arms deliveries from his Russian republic to the Kabul government.⁶⁵ He and the Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyryev, repeat-

edly indicated they wanted to reexamine Soviet policies in Afghanistan, particularly the aid program.⁶⁶

Soviet officials now made several important concessions. They agreed in mid-September to a cessation on 1 January 1992 of "lethal material and supplies" to the Afghan combatants from the United States and the USSR. Although the superpowers urged other countries to follow suit, the termination of Soviet and American arms deliveries was not conditional on their participation. The USSR in effect curtailed all weapons deliveries to the Afghan government while permitting countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to continue to arm the resistance. In addition, while still insisting that "neither we nor the Americans can force Najibullah to resign until he decides this himself,"⁶⁷ Soviet officials stopped insisting that a cease-fire precede and the establishment of an interim authority follow the arms cut-off. Instead, the Soviet-American agreement merely called for a cease-fire and indicated that the United Nations should take the lead in supervising free elections and the transition to "a new broad-based government," a process which should reflect "an intra-Afghan dialogue."⁶⁸ UN officials are currently seeking to hold a multinational conference to resolve the conflict.

The issue that presently preoccupies Russian officials is the fate of the estimated 75 to 300 Soviet prisoners-of-war in resistance hands.⁶⁹ Some resistance leaders refuse to release their POW's until certain conditions are met. Stipulations cited in the media include a halt to all Russian military aid to the Kabul regime, the release of guerrillas captured by the government, the resignation of Najibullah, official Soviet recognition of the *mujaheddin*, and postwar reparations to compensate Afghanistan for the damage inflicted by Soviet policies.⁷⁰ Representatives from four of the seven resistance parties based in Peshawar visited Moscow from 11-15 November 1991. The two sides issued a joint communique in which, in return for a commitment by the participating resistance organizations to commence releasing groups of Soviet POW's by 1 January 1992, the Russian government reaffirmed its pledge to curtail its arms shipments after this date, denounced the 1979 Soviet invasion, expressed support for an Islamic transitional government to implement the UN peace plan, called on the Islamic Conference and the UN to supervise the anticipated national elections, and pledged to withdraw its military personnel from Afghanistan.⁷¹ (Resistance leaders subsequently accused the Russian government of violating the agreement.⁷²) Financial assistance from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the ruling *Watan* party also ended after the coup attempt.⁷³ In an largely unsuccessful endeavor to free Soviet POW's, Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi visited Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in mid-December. In what surely foreshadows a growing role for the Central Asian republics in the Afghan conflict, Rutskoi called for a joint commission consisting of representatives of all the countries in the region (including Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazhakistan, Tadjhikistan, Turkmenistan) as well as the Afghan resistance to monitor the implementation of the UN peace plan.⁷⁴ In his meetings with Afghan officials, the Russian Vice President pledged continued economic and technical aid for the government and stated his intention to urge Afghani-

stan's neighbors to block all military assistance to the Afghan combatants. But their joint communique made no reference to any future Russian military cooperation with the Kabul regime, regardless of other governments' policies.⁷⁵

EXPLAINING MOSCOW'S POLICY

Soviet policy towards Afghanistan between 1989 and early 1991 is puzzling. During this period the USSR gracefully abandoned Eastern Europe, dismantled much of its conventional military establishment, and wrote off its clients in Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. Yet, the USSR vigorously exerted itself to sustain its Afghan allies.

The reason for such odd behavior is that Soviet officials were torn by conflicting objectives. On the one hand, they desired to reduce the economic burden of propping up the Kabul government with military assistance and especially food aid, most of which arrived by costly air transport. The Soviet public had expressed increasing hostility towards the provision of economic assistance to Moscow's Third World allies. One Western diplomat based in Pakistan observed, "I can't see that the Soviets are going to keep pumping in food and fuel to Kabul when there's not bread on the table in Leningrad and Minsk."⁷⁶ A negotiated settlement would have reduced the USSR's costs by prohibiting additional arms transfer to Afghanistan and by increasing the prospects that international agencies and foreign governments would have provided economic assistance to the Kabul government.

Soviet public opinion also affected Moscow's policies towards the conflict in other ways. Even for reasons unrelated to the economic cost of sustaining their Afghan allies, many Soviet observers seemed dissatisfied with the USSR's continued involvement in the war despite the removal of the Soviet expeditionary force. Some authors evinced cynicism when describing the conflict. For example, a Soviet analyst in *New Times* observed that,

People in the Soviet Union may think that the war in Afghanistan is one between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries, between progressive and conservative forces, between those who want to keep the nation in the past and those who steer it towards a brighter future. This impression has nothing to do with reality. The war in Afghanistan is a struggle for power waged by different clans. Few people believe in the ideological banners, be they red or green, which are used as a camouflage of this struggle.⁷⁷

Other authors expressed bitterness: "No matter how we try to explain our military supply line to the Najibullah regime, the main victims of 'made in the USSR' [weapons] are women and children, ordinary citizens."⁷⁸ For many, the war no doubt rekindled horrendous memories of the death of numerous Soviet soldiers in senseless battles.

An additional factor motivating Moscow's desire to reduce its presence in Afghanistan was that Soviet officials desired to remove this troublesome

reminder of an era of East-West confrontation, a conflict which still aroused anti-Soviet sentiment among some Western circles. *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, complained in July 1990 that, "It is preposterous for the Soviet Union to be pouring billions of dollars worth of military supplies into Afghanistan while pleading with the West for aid."⁷⁹ At practically every meeting between senior Soviet and American officials since 1979, Afghanistan was a topic of negotiations.

A complete end to the fighting would have further improved the USSR's image in the West and increased its chances of obtaining additional economic assistance at a time when, because of the perceived conservative reaction preceding the August coup, doubts were increasing about the Soviet government's commitment to domestic reform.

Although the above considerations pushed Soviet officials towards a negotiated settlement of the Afghan conflict, other factors prevented them from abandoning the Najibullah regime completely. They correctly perceived that the United States eventually would lose interest in the conflict. Shortly after the Soviet troop pull-out, a commentary in *Izvestia* laid out a preferred scenario whereby the United States, "having lost faith in the opposition's possibility of winning a military victory, adjusts its policy with respect to Afghanistan to the opposition's detriment."⁸⁰ Soviet officials also may have hoped to neutralize the resistance's other main external supporters, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia, by diplomatic means.

Another trend which encouraged Soviet officials to hold fast on Afghanistan was the increasing possibility that moderate resistance leaders and their foreign backers would reach some kind of agreement with the government. In meetings with Soviet observers, Najibullah stressed his commitment to reform his regime to make it more acceptable to the Afghan people and the international community.⁸¹ The Geneva meetings and other government-resistance contacts, combined with changes in Iranian and Pakistani attitudes toward the conflict, suggested that Najibullah could convince some of his domestic and foreign opponents to deal with him.

Soviet officials might have hoped the Afghan government would gain additional popular support once Soviet troops departed the country. A diminution in the USSR's overt presence should have made Afghans perceive Najibullah less as a Soviet puppet and thus enhanced his popular support. Indeed, a major factor differentiating Afghanistan from Eastern Europe was that the Afghan government enjoyed the support of some sectors of the population. Technocrats, women, communists, and others fearful of a resistance committed to an Islamic government seemed to prefer, if not Najibullah himself, at least his policies.

Soviet officials also desired to preserve a forward defense against the spread of Muslim fundamentalism in the USSR's Central Asian republics. They repeatedly stressed that, given Afghanistan's proximity, the USSR had a legitimate interest in its domestic situation. As Shevardnadze explained,

We are not indifferent to the fate of Afghanistan and the Afghan people. . . . That country is our neighbor, a traditional and close partner. . . . Therefore there is nothing strange in the fact that, although we have withdrawn our forces, we are by no means indifferent to future developments in Afghan affairs. . . .⁸²

When Baker pointedly asked Shevardnadze in July 1989 why the USSR continued to supply the Afghan government with such assistance, the Soviet Foreign Minister replied: "Because Afghanistan is next door."⁸³ Kozyrev told TASS in February 1991 that an "extremist regime" in Kabul would present a serious threat to the stability of Soviet Central Asia.⁸⁴ Tadziks, Turkmens, and Uzbeks are found in large numbers along both sides of the Soviet-Afghan frontier. The Soviet media frequently complained about the alleged efforts of Afghan agitators to proselytize Islam on Soviet territory.⁸⁵ In June 1991 an Afghan pilot inadvertently revealed the vulnerability of the USSR's southern border to military attack when he mistakenly bombed a village in Soviet Tadzhikistan.⁸⁶ The incident caused Tadzhik representatives to demand stronger border security from the Soviet KGB.⁸⁷ Nor was the perceived threat from Islamic fundamentalism linked just to Soviet Central Asia. Following increased tension with Armenia, Azerbaijani demonstrators displayed portraits of Iran's Iman Khomeini to symbolize their identification with radical Islam.⁸⁸ Najibullah himself pointed out to Soviet observers that a guerrilla victory would produce instability on the USSR's southern borders and encourage anti-Soviet agitation among Soviet Muslims.⁸⁹

Soviet officials also were concerned about damaging their credibility. They reportedly expressed apprehension that discarding Najibullah would tarnish their relations with other allies.⁹⁰ Unmatched concessions also would have further undermined the USSR's already weak negotiating position with the United States. One writer in *Pravda*, though acknowledging that the USSR possessed an interest in a quick end to the Afghan conflict, hastened to add "so that our foreign-policy department more decisively and convincely [sic] conducts its negotiations with the American side on this issue," that a superpower agreement is not a "one-way street."⁹¹

Unlike in Eastern Europe, where Western countries made clear they would not seek to exploit the Soviet withdrawal to undermine the USSR's legitimate security interests, in Afghanistan the United States and its regional allies seemed determined to establish a stringently anti-Soviet government adjacent to the USSR's vulnerable southern border. Reacting to American insensitiveness in this regard, as well as a desire to sustain a friendly buffer state, Soviet officials resolutely pursued what they perceived as an equitable outcome to the conflict.

Another factor encouraging continued support for the Afghan government was that, before the failed coup, some Soviet officials probably feared that additional concessions on Afghanistan would have caused hardliners at home to suggest they were not adequately caring for Soviet interests. One of the reasons Shevardnadze resigned as Foreign Minister in December 1990 was allegedly his

frustration with the Soviet military's insistence that the USSR persist in backing Najibullah.⁹²

The power of the Afghan veterans in this respect should not be underestimated. While many soldiers wanted nothing more than to forget the conflict, others were concerned that their sacrifices were not rendered worthless by a Soviet decision to abandon Afghanistan to the insurgents. In the USSR Supreme Soviet, whose ranks included a number of Afghan veterans, a lobby claiming to represent the half-a-million soldiers who fought in Afghanistan insisted that their members desired continued "internationalist aid" to Kabul.⁹³ Such sentiments were particularly strong among the sixty thousand officers who had served in Afghanistan.⁹⁴ Defense Minister Dimitri Yazov and the other former Afghan veterans participating in the First Army Conference of Internationalist Fighters in Moscow on 22 May 1991 called for additional Soviet military and economic aid to prevent the victory of Islamic fundamentalism.⁹⁵ The last commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Boris Gromov, exploited his position as Deputy Interior Minister to promote continued Soviet assistance to the Afghan government.⁹⁶

Finally, the analyst should not overestimate the cost to Moscow of sustaining the Afghan regime. Compared with the economic and diplomatic burden of propping up its East European allies, the Afghan regime's needs were minimal. The most extensive deliveries involved conventional weapons, a commodity of which the USSR enjoyed a rare healthy surplus. Indeed, Schwarzkopf told the Senate that a substantial portion of the military equipment Moscow delivered to Kabul came from Eastern Europe.⁹⁷

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

The problem facing efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan is that so many groups can veto a potential settlement. Although the focus of this article is on past Soviet policies in Afghanistan, in the future local and regional actors will have the greatest impact on the outcome. As one US official lamented, "They can't deliver their Afghans, and we can't deliver ours."⁹⁸ Despite the Soviet-American agreement to halt arms deliveries to their Afghan allies, and the subsequent collapse of the USSR, experts believe that the local combatants could continue to fight for at least several years thanks to their extensive stockpiles.⁹⁹

Najibullah certainly will seek to remain in power. Downplaying the Soviet-American agreement and the increased contacts between the Russians and the resistance, he told *Agence-France Presse*: "Let the Afghans decide their own destiny without outside interference."¹⁰⁰ Pointing to the pattern in Nicaragua, where the *Sandinistas* remained in office during the campaign, Najibullah also firmly dismissed proposals that he relinquish his post unless defeated in an election.¹⁰¹ In his own peace proposals, he has repeatedly called for a cease-fire, consultation among all Afghan groups (perhaps extending to the temporary incorporation of resistance leaders into his government or a joint commission/transitional council), the return of the approximately five million Afghan

refugees, a termination of *all* foreign military assistance to the combatants, free elections under United Nations supervision, and the holding of a multinational conference to review Afghanistan's international status.¹⁰² Since the failed Soviet coup, his government has received aid from other countries, including India, Iran, and perhaps China.¹⁰³ Government officials also hope that the West, replicating their policy shift toward Cambodia, will soon reassess its strategy and embrace their regime as a bastion against Islamic fundamentalism in the region.¹⁰⁴

Resistance leaders for their part continue to insist in public that they will neither negotiate with Najibullah, agree to a cease-fire with the Kabul regime, nor enter into a joint government with PDPA members. They have explicitly dismissed peace proposals that would permit Najibullah to remain in power during the election campaign, even if he transferred important powers to some other authority such as the proposed coordination body. Pir Syed Ahmed Gailani, a leader of one of the moderate resistance factions, stated in mid-January 1992 that he would meet directly with the Kabul government "for the sole purpose of arranging a transfer of power. Other than that, we have nothing to talk about."¹⁰⁵ Even if the current regime should collapse, it is questionable that a stable order would soon emerge throughout the country. Local field commanders, heads of government militias, and regional governors have established powerful satrapies and would probably vigorously resist a resurgence of central control. The king, often seen as a compromise transition figure, is old and perhaps out-of-touch because of his long exile in Italy. In addition, hostile divisions along ethnic affiliation have intensified since the Soviet withdrawal. As a European diplomat wryly observed, "The problem with Afghanistan is that everyone wants to be king but the king himself."¹⁰⁶

The international environment is also not very propitious for peace. Despite the suspension of Soviet and American arms shipments, private sources (perhaps with discreet official backing) in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have not halted their deliveries, and the Iranian government still sends weapons to its Afghan allies. Furthermore, the secular leaders of the newly-independent Central Asian republics have expressed concern about the prospect of an Islamic fundamentalist government in Kabul.¹⁰⁷ They might back Najibullah or other anti-resistance forces to prevent such an outcome. The foreign ministers of several of these republics visited Kabul last fall and trade between Central Asia and Afghanistan is increasing.¹⁰⁸ Afghan government officials now stress the historic and ethnic ties between Afghans and Central Asians, and suggest they are prepared if necessary to develop military ties between their government and their northern neighbors.¹⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

The USSR's strategy in Afghanistan proved remarkably successful. The Soviet government's decision to withdraw its troops, but still provide extensive aid to the Kabul government, redefined international perceptions of the conflict. For many observers, the USSR's military removal of support transformed a struggle for self-determination against an occupying power into a civil war

between a flexible government and an intransigent, foreign-sponsored, guerilla movement. Because Moscow's call for a coalition government appeared more reasonable than the resistance's insistence on total victory, other governments were forced to modify their position and accept an electoral solution in which Nadjibullah could participate. The military stalemate and the changing attitudes of other countries resulted in the USSR's influence in Afghanistan becoming more secure with each passing month. Only the unplanned collapse of the Soviet central government's authority after August 1991 undermined the strategy.

Endnotes

1. The accords are reprinted in Jiri Valenta and Frank Cibulka, eds., *Gorbachev's New Thinking and Third World Conflicts* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990), pp. 321-33. For evaluations of the settlement see: Rosanne Klass, "Afghanistan: The Accords," *Foreign Affairs*, 66 (Summer 1988), pp. 922-45; William Maley, "The Geneva Accords of April 1988," in Amin Saikal and William Maley, eds., *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 12-28; and Zalmay Khalilzad, "Soviet-American Cooperation in Afghanistan," in Mark N. Katz, ed., *Soviet-American Conflict Resolution in the Third World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1991), pp. 72-78.
2. Cited in J.L. Richardson, "Conclusions: Management of the Afghan Crisis," in *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, p. 168. The Soviets repeated this view to the Pakistanis the following day ("Moscow TASS," 10 February 1988, Foreign Broadcast Information Service [hereafter abbreviated as FBIS], *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 11 February 1988, pp. 24-25).
3. Cited in Charles P. Wallace, *Los Angeles Times*, 16 January 1989. According to the article, Shevardnadze also declared: "If a war is imposed on the Afghan government despite the common sense and logic of national interest, [the Soviet Union] will be forced to counter this with a force of arms, and it has this force. The present regime has every opportunity to withstand, and in case the war goes on, the Soviet arms supplies will also be continued."
4. AP, *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 1988; and Afghan Information Centre, *Monthly Bulletin*, no. 93 (December 1988), p. 9. Claiming that Pakistan and the United States were violating the Geneva accords by supplying arms to the guerrillas, then USSR First Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh acknowledged that "the Soviet Union is now delivering to the military forces of Afghanistan additional and more powerful means of destruction." Cited in AP, *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 1988.
5. For a discussion of the role of Soviet military advisers after the USSR's troop withdrawal see: Theodore L. Eliot, Jr., "Afghanistan in 1989: Stalemate," *Asian Survey*, 30 (February 1990), p. 158; Anthony Hyman, "Soviet Advisers and Help for Afghanistan," *Report on the USSR*, 2 March 1990, pp. 3-4; AFP, 14 April 1990; and Novosti, 15 April 1990.
6. Cited in "Winning by not Losing," *The Economist*, 2 September 1989, p. 44.
7. For a review of military operations after the Soviet troop withdrawal see: Gowher Rizwi, "The Endgame in Afghanistan," *The World Today*, 47 (February 1991), p. 25; J. Michael Luhan, *New York Times*, 16 April 1991; "The Unsuccessful Mujahedeen in Afghanistan," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, 15 May 1991; and Olivier Roy, *The Lessons of the Soviet/Afghan War*, Adelphi Paper no. 259 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Brassey's, Summer 1991), pp. 24-25.

8. Cited in Steve Coll, *Washington Post*, 6 August 1990. For additional information on divisions within the resistance see: Afghan Information Centre, *Monthly Bulletin*, no. 87 (June 1988), p. 21; Bernard E. Trainor, *New York Times*, 16 July 1989; Salamat Ali, "Bloody Rivalry," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 August 1989, p. 25; Ahmed Rashid, "Gang Warfare," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 September 1989, p. 23; Barnett R. Rubin, "The Fragmentation of Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, 68 (Winter 1989/90), pp. 158-59; The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey: 1989-1990* (London: Brassey's, 1990), p. 159; John F. Burns, *New York Times*, 29 April 1990; "A Descent into Anarchy," *Asiaweek*, 22 June 1990, pp. 22-24; Olaf Ihlau, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 July 1990; Ahmad Taheri, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 August 1990; "Before Winter," *The Economist* 20 October 1990, pp. 70-71; Theodore L. Eliot, Jr., "Afghanistan in 1990: Groping Toward Peace?," *Asian Survey*, 31 (February 1991), pp. 128-30; "The Mujahideen: A House Divided," *Asiaweek*, 31 May 1991, p. 40; and Shah M. Tarzi, "Politics of the Afghan Resistance Movement: Cleavages, Disunity, and Fragmentation," *Asian Survey*, 31 (June 1991), pp. 479-95. For helpful tables outlining the major Afghan political parties see: Robert L. Canfield, "Afghanistan: The Trajectory of Internal Alignments," *Middle East Journal*, 43 (Autumn 1989), pp. 642, 643.
9. Roy, p. 30; "Najibullah Claims the Day," *The Economist*, 10 March 1990, p. 35; and "New Questions about Afghanistan," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, 6 February 1991. For a discussion of the decline of factionalism in the PDPA see: Afghan Information Centre, *Monthly Bulletin*, no. 88 (July 1988), p. 8; Afghan Information Centre, *Monthly Bulletin*, no. 93 (December 1988), p. 4; Mark Fineman, *Los Angeles Times*, 10 March 1990; Edward W. Desmond, "Who Will Rule the Cemeteries?," *Time*, 16 July 1990, p. 23; "What are They Fighting For?," *Izvestia*, 2 September 1990; and Rizwi, p. 26. See also an interview with Najibullah in *Die Tageszeitung*, 27 June 1990.
10. For additional material on the government's successful policy in this area see: "A Little Kingdom in Afghanistan," *The Economist*, 16 December 1989, p. 31; *Strategic Survey: 1989-1990*, p. 160; Olaf Ihlau, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 July 1990; Ahmad Taheri, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23 July 1990; Julian Gearing, "Afghan Rebels: Running Out of Time?," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 4 August 1990, p. 162; Leonid Mlechin, "Who Briefed Kabul?," *New Times*, no. 48 (1990), p. 29; interview with Najibullah, *Die Welt*, 31 December 1990; and Robert Adams, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 July 1991.
11. Cited in TASS, 26 November 1990. For information on these discussions see: Reuters, 21 November 1990; Ahmed Rashid, *The Independent*, 22 November 1990; "A Strange Sort of War," *The Economist*, 1 December 1990; "Friedensgesten im Konflikt um Afghanistan," *Neue Zurichser Zeitung*, 1 December 1990; Tim McGirk, *The Independent*, 5 December 1990; Ahmed Rashid, "Feeling the Squeeze," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 December 1990, p. 26; "Najibullah's Appeal to the Opposition," *Izvestia*, 7 December 1990; "Almost Home," *The Economist*, 15 December 1990, pp. 54-55; Walter Rueb, *Die Welt*, 27 December 1990; interview with Najibullah, *Die Welt*, 31 December 1990; and Reuters, 2 July 1991.
12. Cited in Amin Saikal, "The Regional Politics of the Afghan Crisis," in *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, p. 63.
13. Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Pakistan and Afghanistan: The Strategic Relationship," *Asian Survey*, 31 (June 1991), p. 505.
14. AFP, 8 June 1990.
15. For a description of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry in Afghanistan see: Barnett R. Rubin, "The Fragmentation of Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, 68 (Winter 1989/90), p. 155; Ahmed Rashid, "Scramble for Influence," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 January 1990, pp. 19-20; Sheila Tefft, *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 June 1990; Edward W. Desmond, "Who Will Rule the Cemeteries?," *Time*, 16 July 1990, pp. 23, 26; Barbara Crossette, *New York Times*, 4 December 1990; Weinbaum, "Pakistan and Afghanistan," pp. 507-8; Khalilzad, p. 80; and Salamat Ali, "Reason Together," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 September 1991, p. 17.

16. TASS, *Pravda*, 22 May 1989; and "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989. See also: *Strategic Survey: 1989-1990*, p. 165.
17. Roy, p. 43.
18. Ahmed Rashid, "The Tug of Tribalism," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 August 1989, p. 11.
19. AP, 21 November 1990.
20. For additional material on Iran's recent policy toward the Afghan conflict see: Stephen Foye, "Soviet Union Launches Diplomatic Offensive to Settle Civil War in Afghanistan," *Report on the USSR*, 8 September 1989, p. 17; Anthony Hyman, "Soviet-Iranian Relations: The End of Rapprochement?," *Report on the USSR*, 26 January 1990, pp. 17-18.
21. Hyman, "Soviet-Iranian Relations," pp. 17-18; and TASS, *Pravda*, 9 January 1989.
22. "Mujaheddin Misery," *The Economist*, 23 September 1989, p. 37.
23. Ahmad Taheri, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 8 April 1991.
24. Roy, p. 72; AP, 1 July 1991; and *Bulletin du CEREDAF*, no. 69 (May 1991), p. 4, cited in William Maley, "Soviet-Afghan Relations After the Coup," *Report on the USSR*, 20 September 1991, p. 12.
25. AP, 27 May 1991; Salamat Ali, "Opening Moves," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 June 1991, p. 17; and AFP, 30 May 1991.
26. Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 18. See also: AFP, 26 May 1991.
27. For additional information on Pakistan's recent policy toward the Afghan conflict see: John Jennings, "Never Say Die," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 November 1989, p. 31; Roy, 39-41; Marvin G. Weinbaum, "War and Peace in Afghanistan: The Pakistani Role," *Middle East Journal*, 45 (Winter 1991), pp. 71-85; and Weinbaum, "Pakistan and Afghanistan," pp. 496-511.
28. TASS, *Pravda*, 9 January 1989.
29. Elaine Sciolino, *New York Times*, 10 January 1990; and Ahmed Rashid, *The Independent*, 1 August 1990. French officials argued that the security situation in Kabul had improved since February 1989 and that they needed to look after the activities of French charitable organizations in Afghanistan (AFP, 5 January 1990, *FBIS: Daily Report: West Europe*, 8 January 1990, p. 7).
30. Cited in Elaine Sciolino, *New York Times*, 12 May 1991. See also: Robert Pear, *New York Times*, 14 January 1990; David Rogers, *Wall Street Journal*, 19 July 1990; Lionel Barber, *Financial Times*, 26 July 1990; Ahmed Rashid, *The Independent*, 1 August 1990; Carroll J. Doherty, "Wars of Proxy Losing Favor as Cold War Tensions End," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 25 August 1990, pp. 2721-22; Clifford Krauss, *New York Times*, 16 October 1990; Sheila Tefft, *Christian Science Monitor*, 15 November 1990; and V. Skosirev, *Izvestia*, 20 November 1990.
31. V. Matveev, *Izvestia*, 30 April 1989. All Russian translations are my own unless otherwise noted. See also: TASS, 22 January 1990, *FBIS: Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 25 January 1990, p. 12.
32. See for example the accusations cited in *The Soviet Union and the Middle East*, 14, no. 1 (1989), p. 26; and 14, nos. 3-4 (1989), p. 35; TASS, *Pravda*, 9 January 1989; and "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989.
33. See for example: "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989.
34. Cited in Patrick E. Tyler, *Washington Post*, 9 February 1990. Senior US official Richard N. Haass was moved to remark that, "The Soviets have only departed Afghanistan in form, not fact." Cited in Robert Pear, *New York Times*, 14 January 1990. For other US complaints

- see: Masha Hamilton, *Los Angeles Times*, 18 February 1989; and *Report on the USSR*, 8 September 1989, pp. 47-48.
35. Ahmed Rashid, "Highway Lifeline," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 October 1989, p. 22.
 36. For diverse estimates of the level of Soviet and American military assistance provided in 1990 to the Afghan combatants see: *Strategic Survey: 1989-1990*, p. 163; Novosti, cited in *Report on the USSR*, 27 April 1990, pp. 23-24; Clifford Krauss, *New York Times*, 5 June 1990; Martin Fletcher, *The Times*, 16 July 1990; Gabriele Venzky, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 28 July 1990; Editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, 31 July 1990; Editorial, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 31 July 1990; Francois Sergent, *Liberation*, 1 August 1990; Lothar Ruhl, *Die Welt*, 1 August 1990; Steve Coll, *Washington Post*, 6 August 1990; Carroll J. Doherty, "Wars of Proxy Losing Favor as Cold War Tensions End," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 25 August 1990, p. 2722; Walter Rueb, *Die Welt*, 7 September 1990; Emily MacFarquhar, "Praise Allah and Pass the Ammunition," *U.S. News & World Report*, 12 November 1990, p. 54; Saul Friedman, *Newsday*, 10 December 1990; Gabriele Venzky, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 27 December 1990; Khalilzad, p. 82; and David C. Isby, "Soviet Arms Deliveries and Aid to Afghanistan, 1989-91," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 3 (August 1991), pp. 348-354. The USSR apparently provided approximately the same amount the following year. Robert Adams, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 July 1991; and "Moscow Warms up to the Rebels," *Asiaweek*, 6 December 1991, p. 30.
 37. *Strategic Survey: 1989-1990*, p. 163; Yu. Tissovskiy, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 25 August 1990; Saul Friedman, *Newsday*, 10 December 1990; AP, 12 December 1990; and Gabriele Venzky, *Die Presse*, 27 December 1990.
 38. Cited in David B. Ottaway, *Washington Post*, 11 June 1989.
 39. See for example: "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989; and P. Timofeev, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 13 January 1990. See also: Ahmed Rashid, "Losing their Grip," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 June 1990, p. 32; Sophie Quinn-Judge, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 October 1990, p. 19; "Khost Lost," *The Economist*, 6 April 1991, pp. 56-57; Elaine Sciolino, *The Guardian*, 13 May 1991; and Doyle McManus, *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1991.
 40. AP, 31 July 1989, cited in *Report on the USSR*, 11 August 1989, p. 38.
 41. "At the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *Izvestia*, 2 April 1989. See also: Moscow TASS, 22 January 1990, *FBIS: Daily Report: Soviet Union*, 23 January 1990, p. 7.
 42. TASS, *Pravda*, 7 February 1989.
 43. TASS, *Pravda*, 9 January 1989.
 44. This is Shevardnadze's description at his press conference in Pakistan (TASS, *Pravda*, 9 January 1989).
 45. "Najibullah Claims the Day," *The Economist*, 10 March 1990, p. 35.
 46. "Statement of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson," *Izvestia*, 29 November 1990. See also: "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989.
 47. For a description of the various reforms see: Remi Favret's interview with Najibullah, *Le Figaro*, 5 June 1990; Reuters, 5 June 1990; Reuters, 12 June 1990; "Intensiviertes politisches Ringen um Afghanistan," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 21 June 1990; "A Descent into Anarchy," *Asiaweek*, 22 June 1990, p. 25; Mostafa Danesch's interview with Najibullah, *Die Tageszeitung*, 27 June 1990; AP, 28 June 1990; Edward W. Desmond, "Who Will Rule the Cemeteries?," *Time*, 16 July 1990, pp. 23-24; AFP, 14 September 1990; and Rizwi, p. 26.
 48. See for example: TASS, *Pravda*, 9 January 1989; and "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989. Starting in April 1988 Soviet

- and United Nations officials — led by Benon Sevan, the UN Secretary-General's special representative to Afghanistan — held many rounds of talks. Ahmed Rashid, "Feeling the Squeeze," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 December 1990, p. 26.
49. Anthony Hyman, "Towards a Settlement in Afghanistan?," *Report on the USSR*, 5 January 1990, p. 5.
 50. AFP, 20 November 1990. Senior Soviet officials frequently met the King last year. Richard MacKenzie, *Washington Times*, 17 July 1990.
 51. "E. A. Shevardnadze's Interview with the Afghan Bakhtar Agency," *Pravda*, 8 August 1989. Shevardnadze uses comparable language in his 1990 peace plan, which is laid out in *Izvestia*, 14 February 1990.
 52. *Report on the USSR*, 30 June 1989, p. 39. Shevardnadze repeated such a suggestion in his peace plan. *Izvestia*, 14 February 1990.
 53. For diverse opinions of Soviet attitudes towards the coup see: "Najibullah Claims the Day," *The Economist*, 10 March 1990, p. 35; UPI, *Los Angeles Times*, 16 March 1990; Anthony Hyman, "Afghanistan's Uncertain Future," *Report on the USSR*, 23 March 1990, p. 15; and Steve Mast, "Last Chance for Afghanistan?," *National Review*, 30 April 1990, pp. 23-24. According to one source, the USSR doubled its weapons deliveries to Kabul after the coup attempt. "Intensiviertes politisches Ringen um Afghanistan," *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 21 June 1990; on this point see also: Salamat Ali, "Confused Loyalties," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 March 1990.
 54. For a description of the evolving US position see: Thomas L. Friedman, *New York Times*, 5 February 1990; John F. Burns, *New York Times*, 29 April 1990; Clifford Krauss, *New York Times*, 5 June 1990; Gabriele Venzky, *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 28 July 1990; John-Thor Dahlburg and Jim Mann, *Los Angeles Times*, 1 August 1990; "L' Avenir de l' Afghanistan," *Les Echos*, 1 August 1990; Clifford Krauss, *New York Times*, 16 October 1990; Reuters, 4 November 1990; and "Najibullah's Appeal to the Opposition," *Izvestia*, 7 December 1990. The term for the interim authority comes from a TASS report cited in John Rettie, *The Guardian*, 3 August 1990.
 55. Soviet News, 11 April 1990, cited in *Soviet-Third World Briefing*, 1 (April 1990), p. 7. For similar language see also: P. Timofeev, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 13 January 1990; and Veniamin Shuririn, *Pravda*, 19 November 1990.
 56. Cited in Ahmed Rashid, *The Independent*, 11 June 1990.
 57. For more on this episode see: Martin Fletcher, *The Times*, 16 July 1990; David Rogers, *Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 1990; Michael Dobbs, *Washington Post*, 1 August 1990; Lionel Barber and Leyia Boulton, *Financial Times*, 1 August 1990; and Francois Sergent, *Liberation*, 1 August 1990.
 58. TASS, 28 August 1990. See also: Daniel Sneider, *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 August 1990; and TASS, *Pravda*, 24 August 1990.
 59. Reuters, 4 November 1990; Salamat Ali, "Hopeful Symmetry," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 January 1991, p. 27; and Salamat Ali, "Opening Moves," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 June 1991, pp. 17-18.
 60. For a review of this dialogue see: Anthony Hyman, "Towards a Settlement in Afghanistan?," *Report on the USSR*, 5 January 1990, p. 5; and Barbara Crossette, *International Herald Tribune*, 21 April 1990.
 61. Cited in H.D.S. Greenway, *Boston Globe*, 5 April 1991. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Robert Kimmitt said "that the time has come to move beyond the current phase to get to a point where there can be a legitimate act of self-determination of the Afghan people themselves." Cited in Clifford Krauss, *New York Times*, 2 April 1991.
 62. Cited in TASS, 25 February 1991.
 63. AFP, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 June 1991.
 64. Robin Wright, *Los Angeles Times*, 5 September 1991.

65. *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, 14 July 1990, cited in *Report on the USSR*, 27 July 1990, p. 24.
66. Ruslan Budrin, "The Endless War," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 August 1991, p. 21; and William Maley, "Soviet-Afghan Relations After the Coup," *Report on the USSR*, 20 September 1991, p. 13; and Ruslan Budrin, "The Turkestan Card," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 January 1992, p. 21.
67. Cited in AP, 4 October 1991. Seeking to dispel rumors that Soviet officials were prepared to replace Najibullah as President with a leader from the resistance, the Soviet Ambassador to Kabul, Boris Pastoukhov, insisted that Najibullah and the Kabul regime had a role to play in the peace process, AFP, 14 October 1991. For sources referring to the alleged Soviet proposals see: AP, 4 October 1991; Reuters, 8 October 1991; "No Friends for Najibullah," *The Economist*, 12 October 1991, p. 34; and Ahmed Rashid, "Mujahideen Muddle," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 October 1991, p. 24.
68. David Hoffman, *Washington Post*, 14 September 1991.
69. For various estimates of the number of Soviet prisoners of war held by the resistance see: Yuri Gankovsky, "People from Peshawar," *New Times*, no. 41 (1990), p. 21; Reuters, 15 July 1990; AP, 25 July 1990; N. Burbiga, *Izvestia*, 26 October 1990; V. Skosirev, *Izvestia*, 2 November 1990; V. Bol'shakov and V. Baykov, *Pravda*, 4 November 1990; and Stanislav Babayev, *Sovietskaya kultura*, 23 November 1991. The uncertainty results from the presumed death or conversion of some former POW's, and the guerrillas' lack of a central command structure or information clearinghouse.
70. See for example the interview with Afghan commander Ahmed Shah Massoud in *TASS, Krasnaya zvezda*, 26 December 1991; Irina Lagunina, "Mujahedin in Moscow, Najibullah thus far in Kabul," *New Times*, no. 47 (1991), p. 17; Reuters, 19 December 1991; Kathy Evans, *The Guardian*, 19 December 1991; and AP, 21 December 1991. The leaders of the moderate resistance deny any link between political questions and the release of Soviet POW's; see for example the interview with the head of the Afghan delegation to Moscow, Burhanuddin Rabbani, in *Krasnaya zvezda*, 15 November 1991. For recent discussions of the POW issue in the Soviet press see: V. Andreev, *Pravda*, 19 November 1991; V. Pritula, *Pravda*, 30 November 1991; and Stanislav Babayev, *Sovietskaya kultura*, 30 November 1991.
71. For descriptions of the agreement see: A. Ivan'ko, *Izvestia*, 16 November 1991; V. Snegirev, *Trud*, 19 November 1991; "Moscow Warms up to the Rebels," *Asiaweek*, 6 December 1991, p. 30; Reuters, 21 December 1990; AFP, 21 December 1991; and AFP, 24 December 1991. The declaration also called for a cease-fire, stated that the transitional government would continue to accept the 1978 treaty between the USSR and Afghanistan, and announced that the two sides would form a joint commission to implement the agreement. Reuters, 24 November 1991 says that Afghan officials expressed concern at the dialogue, but Najibullah endorsed the meeting. V. Pritula and A. Pravov, *Pravda*, 18 November 1991.
72. AFP, 26 December 1991.
73. AFP, 19 October 1991.
74. For reviews of Rutskoï's visit see: Kathy Evans, *The Guardian*, 19 December 1991; AP, 19 December 1991; AP, 21 December 1991; AFP, 21 December 1991; AFP, 23 December 1991; and AFP, 24 December 1991.
75. AFP, 24 December 1991.
76. Cited in Steve Le Vine, *Washington Times*, 4 December 1990. See also: V. Skosirev, *Izvestia*, 20 November 1990.
77. Leonid Mlechin, "Who Briefed Kabul?," *New Times*, no. 48 (1990), p. 29.
78. A. Ivanko, *Izvestia*, 11 August 1989. *Izvestia*, 9 November 1990.
79. Editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, 19 July 1990.

80. M. Yusin, *Izvestia*, 30 July 1989.
81. See for example: Leonid Mlechin, "The Islamic Factor," *New Times*, no. 47 (1990), pp. 14-15.
82. Eduard Shevardnadze, *Izvestia*, 14 February 1990.
83. Cited by an unidentified US official, interviewed in Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Moscow's Third World Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988, 1990), p. 306.
84. TASS, 25 February 1991.
85. See for example the articles in *Izvestia*, 15 April 1990; *Rabochaya Tribuna*, 6 September 1990; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 2 October 1990; and *Izvestia*, 20 November 1990. See also: Jean-Claude Pomonti, *Le Monde*, 16 February 1990; Ahmed Rashid, "Losing their Grip," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 June 1990, p. 32; Salamat Ali, "Cause and Effect," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 May 1991; and Roy, pp. 48-49.
86. "Afghan-Soviet Border Incident," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, 8 June 1991.
87. TASS, 27 July 1991, cited in William Maley, "Soviet-Afghan Relations After the Coup," *Report on the USSR*, 20 September 1991, p. 13.
88. Milan Hauner, *The Soviet War in Afghanistan: Patterns of Russian Imperialism* (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, University Press of America, 1991), p. 48.
89. Leonid Mlechin, "The Islamic Factor," *New Times*, no. 47 (1990), p. 15. See also the observations of Afghan General Mohammad Djoma Atsak, reported by Novosti, 10 September 1990; and the warnings of Afghan officials outlined in Sophie Quinn-Judge, "Saving the Afghan Buffer," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 October 1990, p. 28.
90. Steve Coll, *Washington Post*, 6 August 1990.
91. Veniamin Shuririn, *Pravda*, 19 November 1990.
92. Ahmed Rashid, *The Independent*, 24 January 1991.
93. Russian Budrin, "The Endless War," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 August 1991, p. 21.
94. Hauner, p. 104. See also: Roy, p. 48.
95. Russian Budrin, "The Endless War," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 August 1991, p. 21.
96. Ahmed Rashid, *The Independent*, 24 January 1991.
97. Patrick E. Tyler, *Washington Post*, 9 February 1990. See also: "Afghanistan's Deciding Battle," *The Economist*, 15 June 1991, p. 34; and Roy, p. 34.
98. Cited in Doyle McManus, *Los Angeles Times*, 13 May 1991.
99. Steve LeVine, *The Guardian*, 30 September 1991; AP, 1 January 1992; and Reuters, 2 January 1992. For evidence the the Kabul government's arms cache may be lower see: Christopher Thomas, *The Times*, 24 December 1991.
100. Cited in AFP, 8 December 1991. See also his remarks in Remi Favret, *Le Figaro*, 5 June 1990; Imre Karacs, *The Independent*, 1 August 1990; Reuters, 21 November 1990; and TASS, 26 November 1990.
101. AFP, 30 September 1991. See also: AFP, 8 December 1991.
102. The compilation comes from elements presented in: Ahmed Rashid, "Fragmented Foes," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 March 1990, p. 24; Reuters, 12 June 1990; "Intensiviertes politisches Ringen um Afghanistan," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, 21 June 1990; TASS, 23 July 1990; Imre Karacs, *The Independent*, 1 August 1990; V. Shuririn, *Pravda*, 25 August 1990; AFP, 14 September 1990; "Friedensgesten im Konflikt um Afghanistan," *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, 1 December 1990; Tim McGirk, *The Independent*, 5 December 1990; "Nadjibullah's Appeal to Opposition," *Izvestia*, 7 December 1990; Walter Rueb, *Die Welt*, 27 December 1990; AP, 12 July 1991; and Rizwi, p. 27.

Winter 1992

103. Sayed Naim Majrooh, *Wall Street Journal*, European edition, 5 September 1991; AP, 31 December 1991; AFP, 12 January 1992; and AFP, 14 January 1992.
104. Christopher Thomas, *The Times*, 24 December 1991.
105. Cited in AP, 16 January 1992.
106. Cited in AP, 31 December 1991. For a review of the resurgence of ethnic tension see: Roy, pp. 61-63.
107. AP, 18 January 1992.
108. Ahmed Rashid, "Central Asian Ties," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 October 1991, p. 30. See also: Barbara Crossette, *New York Times*, 2 January 1992.
109. AFP, 18 December 1991; and Reuters, 30 December 1991.