

November 13, 1986

**Memorandum from KGB Chief Viktor M. Chebrikov,
Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze,
Defense Minister Marshal Sergei L. Sokolov, and
Central Committee International Relations Secretary
Anatoly Dobrynin to CPSU Politburo**

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"Memorandum from KGB Chief Viktor M. Chebrikov, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Defense Minister Marshal Sergei L. Sokolov, and Central Committee International Relations Secretary Anatoly Dobrynin to CPSU Politburo", November 13, 1986, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Boris Gromov, "Ogranichenny Kontingent ("Limited Contingent")", Progress, Moscow, 1994, p. 230-233.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112470>

Summary:

This document highlights the efforts of the PDPA leadership to increase its membership among Afghan mullahs, landowners, and the aristocracy in order to legitimize the party among the Afghan people. It also reveals possible UN involvement in affairs surrounding Afghanistan after a possible Soviet withdrawal.

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CC CPSU

Some positive movement in the activity of the Afghan leadership and the PDPA noted after the election of Najib as General Secretary of the CC PDPA continues to develop. The party organs have begun to work more actively, the forms and methods of propaganda are being reexamined, and new ways are being more intensively sought to influence broad sectors of the population. There are certain positive changes in the condition of the Afghan armed forces and the level of their combat ability.

Nevertheless no noticeable improvement in the military-political situation in the country has been achieved. Cde. Najib is objectively assessing the situation and understands the complexity of the problems which lie before him.

Najib described his assessment of the situation in the country in conversations in Kabul with Cde. Yu. M. Vorontsov from 18 to 22 October 1986 (telegrams from Kabul N^o 1179, 1182, 1188, and 1190).

In particular, Najib noted that of the 31,000-35,000 villages in Afghanistan the government has only 8,000 formally under control and they managed to hold elections to local bodies in a still smaller number of villages near cities, in only 2,000. In Najib's words, the urban population actively supports the Revolution, but there is no such support in the villages and the PDPA itself is at fault for not having explained the essence and the goals of the Revolution to the population. Cde. Najib thinks that at the present time the mission of the Party is to go from the city to the village.

Cde. Najib noted that the military activity of the counterrevolutionaries is not slackening. He said that at the present time 5,017 rebel groups are operating on DRA territory, which include 183,000 men, eighty thousand of which comprise the active combat force of the counterrevolutionaries. The tactics of the counterrevolutionary forces are changing and improving. Part of the caravan routes along which the supplies of the counterrevolutionaries travel are generally not covered at all. This requires a further stepping up of efforts to close the border.

Cde. Najib stressed that if we proceed from the position of solving all problems by military means then it will take 20-30 more years to normalize the situation at the present rate of strengthening and expanding government authority. In this regard he considers the stepping up of efforts directed at achieving national reconciliation as a pressing task.

In the opinion of Cde. Najib, they ought to enter into talks with those Islamic parties and organizations inside Afghanistan and beyond its borders who are ready to compromise and do not bear responsibility for bloodshed to such a great degree. A dialogue could also be held with monarchists. Cde. Najib thinks that they will never compromise with the aristocracy, feudal interests, large private landowners, and reactionary mullahs - the "fundamentalists". Nevertheless it's possible to establish contacts with representatives of some of these individuals. When the PDPA achieves national reconciliation he considers it necessary to keep the posts of Chairman of the State Council, Chairman of the Council of Ministers; the Ministers of Defense, State Security, Internal Affairs, Communications, and Finance; the management of banks, the Supreme Court, the procuracy, and military justice bodies. Representatives of the other side could get the posts of Deputy Chairman of the State Council and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and also the posts of Minister of Agriculture, Health, Irrigation; Deputy Minister of various ministries, and governors. The former king, Zahir Shah, could be given the post of Chairman of the National Patriotic Front

or Chairman of Parliament. The political organizations of Islamic groups could become collective members of the National Patriotic Front and legitimize their activity on this basis. Cde. Najib expressed the completely reasonable opinion that they ought not to be hasty in adopting the DRA constitution, keeping in mind that much contained in it will depend on how the process of national reconciliation develops.

Cde. Najib is considering the possibility of a public announcement concerning questions of national reconciliation with a simultaneous proposal to the counterrevolutionaries for an armistice, let's say, for six months.

Cde. Najib views the issues of a political settlement and the withdrawal of Soviet troops as linked with national reconciliation. He said that he considers a reduction of the period of Soviet withdrawal from the DRA to two years is possible after a settlement is reached and expressed several ideas about the number of troops to be withdrawn during the first and second years. In connection with the other aspects of the settlement, he expressed an opinion about the advisability of international monitoring within the framework of a settlement without UN involvement; he suggested several versions of Iranian involvement in the settlement; he has a favorable attitude toward a possible increase in our contacts with the Pakistanis regarding the issues concerning the situation around Afghanistan.

Cde. Najib understands that until the present time little has been done in practice toward national reconciliation. It is evident that he is inclined to search for real approaches to this problem. He needs our support in this, especially since indeed far from everyone in the PDPA accepts the idea of reconciliation. Of great importance in this regard would be the organization of an official visit to the USSR by Cde. Najib before the end of this year in the course of which the questions of national reconciliation and a political settlement around Afghanistan could be discussed. The visit could further facilitate the strengthening of the position of this energetic, can-do Afghan leader.

Cde. Najib thinks that several personnel questions need to be decided to increase the effectiveness of the activity of the Afghan leadership.

In conversations with Cde. Yu. M. Vorontsov and also in other conversations in Kabul in the last few days he has especially stressed that B. Karmal ought to be removed from the PDPA Politburo and the position of Chairman of the DRA Revolutionary Council as soon as possible. Cde. Najib said that B. Karmal has abandoned Party and government work, occupies himself with faultfinding, and speaks against the policy of national reconciliation. Cde. Najib is afraid that B. Karmal's ambitiousness, aggravated by illness and alcohol abuse, could lead him to unpredictable acts. Quiet actions could remove him from his present posts if he were first convinced to do this.

For Cde. Najib's part, he raised the issues of replacing Minister of Defense N. Muhammed with Politburo member M. Rafi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sh. M. Dost with A. Wakil (Dost would meanwhile continue to handle questions of national reconciliation but as a Minister for Special Assignments and simultaneously DRA Permanent Representative to the UN).

Najib's ideas concerning personnel issues are well-founded. The observations of Soviet representatives in Kabul, in particular, confirm that B. Karmal has not drawn the necessary conclusions on his own and his selfish opposition and lack of self-control displayed in ever more abrupt forms are paralyzing the activity of Cde. Najib and seriously impeding his work in the CC PDPA Politburo and the Party as a whole.