



May 31, 1978

**Political Letter from USSR Ambassador to
Afghanistan A. Puzanov to Soviet Foreign Ministry,
"About the Domestic Political Situation in the DRA,"
(notes)**

Citation:

"Political Letter from USSR Ambassador to Afghanistan A. Puzanov to Soviet Foreign Ministry, "About the Domestic Political Situation in the DRA," (notes)", May 31, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Based on notes taken by Odd Arne Westad on materials at the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD), fond (f.) 5, opis (op.) 75, delo (d.) 1179, listy (ll.) 2-17
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/113255>

Summary:

Political Letter from USSR Ambassador to Afghanistan A. Puzanov to Soviet Foreign Ministry, "About the Domestic Political Situation in the DRA," (notes) expressing the need to support the new Afghanistani government in order to strengthen it

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

It is noted that the "basic preconditions" for the overthrow of [Mohammed] Daoud in April 1978 "flowed from the objective domestic political and economic development of the country after 1973." Daoud expressed the interests and class position of bourgeois landowners and rightist nationalist forces, and therefore was not capable of carrying out a reformation "in the interests of the broad laboring masses," primarily agricultural reform.

In conditions of a worsening economic situation in the country and Daoud's departure from the programmatic declaration of 1973, which led to "a constant growth in the dissatisfaction of broad strata of the population," Daoud huddled ever more closely with the "domestic reaction," which was supported by the "reactionary Islamic regimes" and by "American imperialism," and followed a course toward the "strengthening . . . of a regime of personal power."

This led to an "abrupt sharpening of the contradictions between the Daoud regime and its class supporters and the fundamental interests of the working masses, the voice of which is the PDPA."

Daoud's order to arrest the PDPA facilitated the fall of his regime.

The Taraki government's program (declaration of 9 May 1978) is worked out on the basis of the PDPA program of 1966. The main task, is providing for the interests of the working population on the basis of fundamental perestroika of the social-economic structures of society, and "the liquidation of the influence of neocolonialism and imperialism."

In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on April 29, Taraki said that "Afghanistan, following Marxism-Leninism, will set off on the path of building socialism and will belong to the socialist camp," but it is necessary to conduct that line "carefully" and of his true goals the PDPA will inform the people "later."

In foreign policy the DRA is oriented toward the Non-Aligned movement, but it will give its priority to cooperation with the USSR.

About the reaction of the West: the overthrow of Daoud was "a total surprise," and in the press of the Western and "reactionary Moslem countries" a "campaign of falsehoods" was deployed against the new government.

At the same time, "according to information which we have" the embassies of the USA and other Western countries received instructions to search out all means to hold on in Afghanistan, including promises to provide economic assistance.

The Afghan leadership "is not showing haste" in concluding economic agreements with the West, "proceeding from an intention to reorient its foreign economic relations primarily towards the USSR and the socialist camp."

The measures which have been undertaken by the new government in the month it has been in power bear witness to its "firm intention" gradually to create the preconditions "for Afghanistan's transition to the socialist path of development."

The coming to power of the PDPA and its actions "were met with approval by the peoples' masses." At the same time the "internal reaction, while so far not deciding on an open demonstration," is activating "underground efforts" (propaganda, the dropping in of weapons, and diversionary groups which are being prepared in Pakistan).

The friction between the Khalq and Parcham factions is having a negative influence.

The main point of disagreement is government posts. The representatives of Khalq, especially in the army, are dissatisfied with the naming of Parcham representatives to a number of leadership posts. The leader of Parcham, B[abrar] Karmal, in his turn, objected to the widening of the Revolutionary Council for the benefit of military officers. The Ambassador and "advisors on Party relations" in conversations with the new leadership stressed the necessity of "overcoming the tensions" and "strengthening the unity" of the leadership and the party. As a result, on 24 May 1978 the Politburo of the CC PDPA made a decision to eliminate the names Khalq and Parcham and to affirm the unity of the PDPA.

The Afghans asked the USSR to send a "large group of advisors and consultants" to work in the state apparatus, and also to help in putting together a five year plan. The USSR has "favorably" resolved these issues.

This will facilitate "the growth of sympathy for the USSR, the further fortifying and strengthening of our positions in Afghanistan."

Conclusions: The situation in the country "overall is stabilizing more and more," the government is controlling all its regions and is taking measures "to cut off...the demonstrations of the domestic reaction."

The most important factor for the further strengthening of the new power will be the achievement of unity in the leadership of the PDPA and the government. But "the tension so far has not totally been cleared away." The embassy jointly with a group of Party advisors is undertaking measures to overcome the disagreements in the Afghan leadership.