

**February 26, 1987**  
**Notes from Politburo Meeting, 26 February 1987**  
**(Excerpt)**

**Citation:**

"Notes from Politburo Meeting, 26 February 1987 (Excerpt)", February 26, 1987, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow. Provided by Anatoly Chernyaev and translated by Gary Goldberg for CWIHP  
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/117233>

**Summary:**

Gorbachev and his advisors discuss whether to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

GORBACHEV. Material aid. The expenses are enormous and they are justified if they solve the Afghan problem.

□SHEVARDNADZE. We will have made a mistake again if we haven't foreseen what awaits us. To withdraw troops now is the only correct solution.

□GORBACHEV. And we won't let the discussion get diverted on the topic of who was at fault. Right now, about material aid.

□GROMYKO. But they asked us to deploy troops 11 times. We turned them down. There was, of course, the simplistic idea that the presence of our troops would put Afghanistan on the correct path. But I do not now believe for a second that Afghanistan could have created their own army no matter how many resources we invested there. Nevertheless, we have no alternative-nothing is left [but] how to supply it.

□GORBACHEV. There is an "alternative"! For example, if we deploy another 200,000 [troops] but then that is the collapse of our whole cause. So the withdrawal of troops is the only correct decision. But other decisions might be required at a given moment. Take something from what [Najib's Chief Soviet Advisor] Polyanichko suggested. And don't be hasty with the withdrawal of advisers: everyone will see that we're running away.