

**February 23, 1987**  
**Notes from Politburo Meeting, 23 February 1987**  
**(Excerpt)**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Gorbachev describes issues with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

GORBACHEV. The situation is not simple. Now we're in, but how to get out racks one's brains. We could leave quickly, not thinking about anything and making reference to everything which the previous leadership started. But we can't act that way. India would be concerned, and they would be concerned in Africa. They think this would be a blow to the authority of the Soviet Union in the national liberation movement. And they tell us that imperialism will go on the offensive if you flee from Afghanistan.

But the domestic aspect is important, too. A million of our soldiers have been to Afghanistan. And all in vain, it turns out. The matter has not been brought to an end. We're not answering to our own people. They will say: they've forgotten about the sacrifices and the authority of the country. It provokes a bitter taste-for what did you lay down [the lives of] people?

...Don't exclude America from an agreement, even as far as making a deal with the Americans. And we need to rub Pakistan's nose in it, letting them know that the Soviet Union isn't going anywhere. Could [President of Pakistan] Zia ul-Haq possibly be invited to Tashkent to meet with me and even "pay" him in some way? We need flexibility and resourcefulness, for otherwise there will be a slaughter and Najib will fall right away. Continue talks, don't let them be broken off. And possibly we'll have to make concessions about the withdrawal periods.

Are there doubts about what I have said right now (voices: No! No!)? Then let's act accordingly.