

February 17, 1989
**Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the
Current Situation in Afghanistan**

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Summary:

A report on the political-line of the USSR, attributing perestroika to the removal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The document offers support for solving intra-Afghan conflicts.

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Report on the Current Situation in Afghanistan
(Comrade J. Lenart)

In connection with the completion of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan we wish to share several views with you. First, we are grateful to you for the assistance and support you have provided both unilaterally and as part of the coordinated policy of the countries of the socialist commonwealth in solving a difficult problem we inherited in this difficult period of international relations, a period of growing tension and conflicts in the world arena.

Practical implementation of the line of a political settlement of the Afghan problem became possible only in the conditions of perestroika, new political thinking, the course of the fundamental recovery of the international situation, of unbiased, realistic approaches to the resolution of regional conflicts. We are firmly convinced that a solution by force to the situation that has arisen in Afghanistan is not only impracticable but also dangerous for the country and its people.

That is why the Soviet Union, in strict compliance with the Geneva Agreements, has completely withdrawn its troops from Afghanistan by the assumed date. Together with the Republic of Afghanistan the USSR has honourably and dignifiedly gone its share of the Geneva road. We have withdrawn our troops regardless of the fact that the other participants in the Geneva Agreements broke the arrangements that had been reached. Under these circumstances the Soviet troops could have remained in Afghanistan, indeed even had the right to do so. Nevertheless, the Soviet side, in the interest of an Afghan settlement as well as of regional and international security, has met its obligations. At the same time, its principal positions and activities have been fully understood by the Afghan leadership.

The political line of the USSR is, as before, oriented towards achieving a general Afghan settlement, towards resolving the intra-Afghan conflicts by peaceful means, at the negotiating table. After the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union expects that the absence of foreign troops on Afghan territory will stimulate the peace process in Afghan society, and activate efforts to find mutually acceptable solutions to problems. For our part we believe that the road to an internal Afghan settlement consists in the creation of a broad-based representative government, with the participation of all mutually belligerent

[p. 2] Afghan groups. The Soviet Union fully supports the efforts of the Afghan Republic in this sense. Nevertheless, to form a government that would truly reflect the will and interests of all strata of Afghan society is obviously possible only in a situation where fighting ceases in the territory of Afghanistan, thus ensuring the truly free expression of the will of the Afghan people. Concerning the future of this country, the Soviet Union, as we have stated on more than one occasion, supports the idea of an independent, neutral, non-aligned, demilitarized Afghanistan.

The situation in Afghanistan is at present very complicated; there is even a danger that military operations will intensify, at least in the initial period, as a result of the irreconcilable positions of individual extremist groups of the armed opposition. The future development of the situation, either along the path of national concord and the formation of a broad-based coalition government or along the path of an escalation of hostilities and tensions within the country and around it, will depend in many respects on how the other parties to the Geneva Agreements - the USA and Pakistan, who have direct access to, and influence on, the armed opposition, whom they support with supplies of arms and financial assistance -, and how actively the world community contributes to the implementation of the Resolution of the 43rd Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of the UN on Afghanistan.

The constructive line promoted by the Soviet Union and the Afghan Republic, which

corresponds in spirit and letter to the Geneva Agreements, has created all the conditions for a cessation of the bloodshed in Afghanistan, so that the future course of events could extricate itself from a military solution and move to a solution along the path of peaceful negotiations and the search for mutually acceptable compromises.

The government of the Afghan Republic starts from the only correct assumption, that is, that attempts by anybody to take all power in the present conditions condemns a priori the Afghan nation to a long, bloody, civil war, to further victims, material losses, and the ruin of the country. It is precisely to ward off such a course of events that the proposals of the Afghan

[p. 3] government - for the commencement of an intra-Afghan dialogue, the creation of transitional structures for the eventual formation of a broad-based representative government and a general, complete cease-fire - are to serve. It is characteristic that these proposals point the way to the free self-determination of the Afghan people, which has been so vehemently demanded by the opposition, and enables the solution of problems facing the Afghan talks, without force and the use of arms. The call for peace is not a sign of weakness of the leadership of the Afghan Republic; rather it is the voice of political reason, an admission of the priority of nation-wide interests over all others. It would be absurd, however, to assume that the Afghan leadership, which is giving up its monopoly on power, is prepared to capitulate, to leave the state structures and political life of the country voluntarily. If the extremist part of the opposition tries by force to gain advantage from the present situation, the Afghan Republic and its armed forces will have all they need, including the most effective modern weapons, to repel its forces, which will be counting exclusively on a military solution.

The Soviet Union has provided, and will continue to provide, great assistance to the people of Afghanistan. The traditional friendly relations, good neighbourliness and cooperation between the USSR and Afghanistan has in recent years been supplemented with a whole series of treaties and agreements, whose aim has been the provision of continuous, long-term assistance to Afghanistan in the development of its national economy and in healing the wounds suffered in the long war.

Afghanistan now requires the general assistance and support of the world community. We are determined to do everything necessary to develop our bi-lateral collaboration even more effectively in the interest of the Soviet and Afghan peoples, both in the current phase, with efforts to restore peace on Afghan soil, and in future, after the achievement of national reconciliation and a political solution in the country.

[p. 4] We are prepared to share in the manifold assistance to Afghanistan, along the lines of the United Nations, and hope that everybody who cares about the future of the Afghan people will provide assistance and support in this difficult period for Afghanistan.

At present the Soviet Union is particularly disturbed by attempts of extremist parts of the armed opposition to stifle the Afghan people and starve out Kabul; that is why the USSR considers it its duty to do everything possible to ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered to the Afghan people on time and to the designated places.

We turn to you at a time when the USSR, in good will and after agreement with the Afghan leadership, is leaving Afghanistan, and we emphasize that we are not indifferent to what happens in Afghanistan. We shall make an all round effort to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Afghan problem. We are convinced that you understand our thoughts and feelings, our efforts to attain peace for the Afghan people so that they can run their lives as they see fit and with the right to determine their own fate.

Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU, conveyed by Comrade Marat
KUZNETSOV, Deputy to the Soviet Ambassador to the CSSR, 17 February 1989.