

**July 20, 1987**

**Record of a Conversation of M. S. Gorbachev with  
the General Secretary of the Central Committee of  
the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan Cde.  
Najib (Excerpt)**

**Citation:**

"Record of a Conversation of M. S. Gorbachev with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan Cde. Najib (Excerpt)", July 20, 1987, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Gorbachev Foundation, Moscow. Provided by Anatoly Chernyaev and translated by Gary Goldberg for CWIHP  
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**Summary:**

Najibullah and Gorbachev discuss the implementation of a policy of "national reconciliation" and political settlement in preparation for Soviet troops withdrawal from Afghanistan.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

M. S. GORBACHEV. In the name of the Soviet leadership we welcome you to Moscow, Cde. Najib. Your visit to Moscow to talk and to exchange opinions here is well-timed.

□NAJIB. I would like to express my deep gratitude for the opportunity afforded me to meet with you, Mikhail Sergeyevich, and with members of the Soviet leadership. The constant attention which is devoted to the problems of Afghanistan is displayed in this.

□Our meetings and conversations have become a good tradition and have great importance for the work of the DRA Party and government leadership. We view today's meeting as a manifestation of your constant attention toward Afghan affairs and the Afghan Revolution. And this is why I view today's meeting as a great honor for myself. I express appreciation for the organization of my brief visit which will allow me to share ideas about the trends of the military and political situation in Afghanistan and the plans for our future work directed at its normalization.

□If you will allow me, then, following established tradition I could first inform you about the state of affairs in Afghanistan. In doing so I would like to give you prepared material on this issue but in today's conversation I would like to dwell on key topics of principle. (hands over the material).

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Thank you. As always, we study your material closely. As you know, our comrades in Kabul regularly inform Moscow [tsentr] of your ideas and assessments. However this material, it seems, allows us to realistically determine how accurately they are passing on your ideas and what they add from themselves (commotion).

□NAJIB. They do not add, rather they enrich them.

□Firstly, I would like to dwell on an analysis of the initial results of implementing the policy of national reconciliation and problems we are encountering at the present time in carrying out this policy; to talk about the immediate tasks of the Party in promoting this policy, including in the area of military policy and economic work; and to touch on several problems of the international activity of the PDPA and the DRA government.

□At the present time what is the focus of attention of the Party and governmental leadership are the issues of the unswerving implementation of the steps for national reconciliation developed in all areas-political, economic, military, and ideological. As the accumulated, although as yet insignificant, experience shows, as regards the fight against the counterrevolution, the defense of the gains of the Revolution and normalization of the situation, there is no alternative to the policy of reconciliation. It is nevertheless important that the period past has convincingly demonstrated the impossibility of resolving the problems facing Afghanistan by military means alone.

□I'll dwell on several specific topics.

□A mechanism has been created for implementing the policy of national reconciliation, the main links of which are appropriate commissions. At the present time more than 10,000 reconciliation commissions are operating in the country, joining together tens of thousands of patriotically-minded representatives of the population, including former rebels. These commissions can be viewed as temporary operating bodies of local authority with a specifically marked coalition structure.

□In the period after the proclamation of the policy of reconciliation, of a total of around 164,000 [rebels], fifteen thousand armed rebels openly came over to the side of the

government. More than 600 groups with a total strength of 53,000 men are holding talks with the government. Part of the counterrevolutionary formations, about 50,000 men, are taking a wait-and-see position. However, as before, there is an active nucleus of the irreconcilable opposition numbering 46,000 men. The groups in it continue serious resistance to the measures which people's power are implementing.

□

□The process of returning refugees to the DRA has been stepped up. More than 60,000 people have already returned to various regions of the country. Their numbers could be even greater if obstacles were not placed in their way by Pakistani and Iranian authorities.

□The policy of national reconciliation, the proclamation of which was a surprise to the opposition, is deepening the split in the ranks of the irreconcilable counter-revolutionary organizations operating within the framework of the "Alliance of Seven." In particular this has been displayed by the failure of the plans to create a "provisional government," a "government in exile" by uniting the leading counter-revolutionary organizations. A tendency toward a division between the second echelon of the counter-revolution-the middle link of the leadership of counterrevolutionary groups and organizations in Afghanistan-and the highest echelon located in Pakistan is also increasingly perceptible.

□In a word, interest in participating in the policy of national reconciliation is growing in the opposition camp. The attitude of the counter-revolutionary organizations toward former King Zahir Shah, who is inclined to look for a compromise, is indicative in this sense. It can be said that the attitude toward the former King is a unique "litmus test" through which the real positions of one or the other counterrevolutionary group are revealed. But, in any case, there are a considerable number of serious opponents of the former King in the opposition, chiefly representatives of right-wing, reactionary forces, who think that the appearance of Zahir Shah on the political stage could strike a serious blow to the plans of the counter-revolution in Afghanistan.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. These forces are striving in every way to diminish the importance of this figure and the possible role of the former King in achieving reconciliation. And he himself is displaying great caution.

□NAJIB. The main thing is that the policy of national reconciliation become a unique catalyst for the sentiments of the population to strengthen their support for the measures of the PDPA and government. It can be stated with confidence that the policy promoted by the PDPA enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of the Afghan people and meets the national interests of the country. But, on the other hand, in the process of implementing the policy of reconciliation all the more often reserves are being identified and not used by the Party, including those for a further increase of its authority.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Have you thought about the question of what the basis will be for national reconciliation considering the great diversity of attitudes, interests, and trends existing in society?

□NAJIB. Yes, of course. In our view, in these conditions the objective possibilities for a larger role for the PDPA increases by expanding its social base. But, nevertheless, it would be premature and incorrect to say that the policy of national reconciliation has brought such tangible results and acquired an irreversible nature. The enemy is not only not stopping fighting but is intensifying resistance to the policy of the PDPA and government. Washington and its allies in the region are continuing to whip up tension in and around Afghanistan and are escalating combat operations. Our country has become one of the main links of a policy of state terrorism being pursued by the US. In implementing the designs of their patrons, the main blow of the counter-revolution is being directed at the PDPA.

□As is well known, since May of this year the counter-revolution has begun at the orders of the White House to implement a plan to create a "national council of mujaheddin" with the functions of a provisional or transitional government. However the reactionaries are making efforts to discredit the PDPA and the policy of national reconciliation, seemingly separating the Party from the policy of national reconciliation. In the opinion of these forces such an approach could give them an opportunity to gradually nullify reconciliation itself.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. In other words, they are, so to speak, "for councils, but without communists." For a neutral, independent Afghanistan, but without the PDPA.

□NAJIB. There are also subjective reasons for the current difficulties. It is necessary to admit openly and self-critically that up to now the PDPA has not made a sharp turn toward an active implementation of the policy it advanced and is insufficiently purposeful and diligent in solving the problem of creating [the appropriate] conditions for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Moreover, even at the highest level of the Party and government there still remains a narrow-mindedness of views, a lack of initiative, a disinclination to free themselves from the burden of past mistakes, and conservatism. The fact that in local Party organizations and among the population in the districts work has still not been properly organized to explain and propagandize the results of the June CC PDPA Plenum could serve as an example of this.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Is it not the case that some comrades in the PDPA leadership will identify the interests of the people and the country with their own welfare and their own egoistic interests?

□NAJIB. Yes, this is actually so.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. The question also arises: do not individual comrades view the policy of creating a coalition government and expanding the social base as a threat to their positions and status? A real revolutionary thinks about his own country first. This is his fate, too. If there then are such sentiments, will they interfere with the process of national reconciliation? In this connection there is the question of the historic responsibility of the PDPA leadership to their own people, especially considering the policy of reconciliation and the solution of the problems of a political settlement under the conditions of the upcoming withdrawal of Soviet troops.

□NAJIB. I completely agree with you. It ought to be openly admitted that as before there is a feeling of routine in our work and a substitution of words and slogans for specific deeds. Control of the expeditious solution of pressing problems and the implementation of planned measures has been poorly organized. Executive discipline is still at a low level. The Party and government bureaucracy often displays a lack of initiative. This could be illustrated, for example, by how things are going with the solution of the critical problems of helping the peasants, providing medical services, and the other first-priority needs of the population. It is completely understandable that all this negatively reflects on the authority of the PDPA.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. It could be said that there exist two levels of problem solving. The highest level is the adoption of decisions which would consider the interests of all groups and sectors of the population to the maximum possible degree and would determine the way to support these interests under Afghan conditions. If this can be achieved then the population itself will actively participate in the implementation of such measures, not waiting for steps from various government bodies. The second level is translating these decisions into practice. Those responsible for carrying out government policy are the local party and government bodies who are called upon to work to support the very interests of the population. What interest is this to us in this regard? Perhaps something is interfering with the adoption of the necessary decisions at the highest level. Perhaps the decisions which are being made are not being

realized at the grassroots. We would like to understand this.

□NAJIB. Specific and correct decisions are being made. Moreover, they are encountering ever greater understanding and support from the people, who are displaying a readiness to actively assist in their implementation. Government bodies at the local level are taking specific steps for their realization. But when specific work from higher levels of the government and party bureaucracy is required to implement decisions which have been made, the process slows down. We encounter inaction, laziness, an inability to work, a love of routine, and a lack of understanding of the problems being faced by several members of supervisory bodies. Executive discipline is weak. It would seem in present conditions that the leadership itself would be an example of dedication and purposefulness. Unfortunately, however, this does not yet happen, mostly due to surviving group thinking and factionalism.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. If the decisions being made do not affect the interests of the population, for example, the peasantry, then no bureaucrats will be able to do anything. And on the contrary, if they do affect [the population] then things will move. I will cite an example from history in this connection. Why was Lenin's Decree on Land effective? After its proclamation Soviet power was still far from being established. But the peasants, to whose interests the Decree responded, took the land themselves and translated the Decree into practice.

□I would like to stress this: if a particular decision affects [someone's] interests, then the mechanisms for their [the decrees] implementation will be found. But it will not work out if something is not fully thought out in decisions and decrees made by the PDPA and government and the interests of one or another group of the population are overlooked.

□NAJIB. I can say in this regard that the policy of national reconciliation has evoked a warmer reaction from the Afghan people than in the ranks of the PDPA. Regrettably I have to say that the activity of the Party is lagging behind the situation and the reaction of the population.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Probably the reaction in the Party is varied. Those who represent the working levels are trying to do everything necessary to satisfy their aspirations. However, obviously there is the leadership level, which is afraid of losing its privileges if the PDPA withdraws to the background under the conditions of reconciliation. They are concerned not for the fate of the Party but about some interests of their own.

□NAJIB. I agree with your statement.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. And everything turns on this.

□NAJIB. What do we consider the main tasks of the PDPA and the government to implement the policy of national reconciliation considering the current situation? First of all, we have to concentrate our efforts on actively translating into practice steps to defend revolutionary achievements, especially considering that we are entering a new stage of the policy of national reconciliation. Today new complex and critical tasks are on the agenda which the Party should resolve in the shortest possible time. In this regard, in our opinion, the main directions of the work should be the following.

□We think that it is necessary to increase pressure on the enemy with emphasis on stepping up contacts with various sectors of the opposition-monarchists, "moderates," representatives of the big and middle bourgeoisie, clergy, and tribal leaders and elders.

We have to develop and carry out such specific measures which would facilitate the imparting of an irreversible character to the process of reconciliation, which the

enemy especially fears.

□ One of the main areas of work is the expansion of coalition forms of power at all levels.

□ The task of creating a bloc of leftist democratic forces on a platform of support for the policy of national reconciliation, involving all patriotically-minded forces in cooperation under the slogan of defense of the independence and non-aligned status of Afghanistan, and the strengthening of friendship with the Soviet Union is being promoted to the forefront. In so doing we do not exclude that other forces acting in the conditions of reconciliation will receive access to political activity, of course, on the basis of their principles.

□ The PDPA has also announced and has stressed with specific steps its readiness to create a multi-party system in the country. Political parties are receiving the right to [perform] appropriate activity on condition that they will act in support of peace and security in the country. Moreover, they will be afforded the opportunity to realize their goals and tasks in the framework of the National Front.

□ However, I would like to openly admit in this regard that the National Front has not yet become an influential and notable force in society. The scope of its activity is limited to large cities but even in this situation its organizations function poorly. One of the main reasons for such a state of affairs is that until now we have viewed the National Front as a part of the Party and have restricted its activity to the limits of Party requirements. The time has come for it to become a genuine union of all patriotically-minded forces on a voluntary, not compulsory, basis.

□ It happened that in the draft constitution of the DRA which we submitted at a national conference the obligatory collective membership of particular parties, public, and political organizations in a National Front was stipulated. It appears that this is an incorrect formulation of the problem. Therefore we have in mind introducing a corresponding amendment to the final draft of the Basic Law, for it is important that the Front facilitate the attainment of national reconciliation.

□ There is yet one more problem which is of concern. As before, there are people in the PDPA who favor not the creation of a bloc of leftist forces but are for the fusion of leftist democratic organizations with the PDPA. However, as experience has shown, the artificial union of four such organizations with the PDPA did not produce a political effect. Actually, in these four organizations in the PDPA only 885 people joined. At the same time they continue to maintain their organizational structure and act in accordance with their programmatic and regulatory requirements.

□ On the other hand, as is well known, there are leftist groupings of the so-called "radical type" in Afghanistan, in particular the Revolutionary Organization of Workers of Afghanistan. They place the leading role of the PDPA in doubt and damage the unity of leftist forces. Therefore it would be more correct and advisable for the PDPA to work in cooperation with leftist democratic organizations in a common bloc, at the same time actively implementing measures to restructure intra-Party activity. In our view, a recently adopted law about parties creates good preconditions in these terms.

□ M. S. GORBACHEV. That is why it is very important to correctly determine what the "face" of the PDPA should be at this stage.

□ NAJIB. Absolutely. I would like the PDPA to remain the leading mobilizing force. But, unfortunately, a wish is one thing and life and practice are another. At the present stage we do not have the strength to compete for such a role.

□ M. S. GORBACHEV. I think that at this stage of implementing the policy of national reconciliation, in the conditions of forming a broad coalition the PDPA could play a leading organizational role. And at the same time it would actually be unrealistic to count on the Party maintaining its present position after achieving national reconciliation. It's necessary to accurately forecast the situation which will develop in the background of the processes now already underway, put this policy into effect, and [forecast] the situation after achieving reconciliation.

□ In other words, the step-by-step principle should be at the foundation of the determination of the near-term and long-term tasks of the PDPA. At the present time the PDPA is operating in conditions of a struggle for implementation of the policy of national reconciliation. A correct evaluation of the tasks of each stage, a precise and realistic analysis of the situation at each of them, will help correctly determine the role and place of the PDPA in the first and second stage.

□ At the present stage the PDPA is the leading force of national reconciliation. It fulfills its role, relying on a scientific analysis of the situation in Afghan society, the processes taking place in it, and a correct evaluation of the historic stage of this society. Preserving its revolutionary character, at the same time the Party understands that right now it needs to work on translating a minimal program into practice, that is, the realization of national democratic reforms. And here it should act with a consideration for the entire spectrum of political and social forces of Afghan society. And now at the stage of realizing a policy of national reconciliation and after achieving its goals and turning to democratic reforms, the PDPA should consider the real situation in Afghanistan. Otherwise this will be adventurism.

□ Of course, right now the PDPA can do much in order to play an important role in succeeding stages. It is important not to lose time now and that the PDPA be the initiator of the policy of national reconciliation and that it be ready to share real power—all this will substantially facilitate the strengthening of the authority of the PDPA, and create a good foundation and opportunities for the future. But if it is more expedient for the Party now to place its cadres in all institutions of government authority then it could create favorable conditions to preserve and strengthen its positions. Of course, the task is very difficult and the process of its resolution will be difficult, but you and I have come to the conclusion that there is no other way.

□ There can be mistakes and losses on this path. You won't avoid them. Of course, it is easier to shout, proclaim revolutionary slogans, and fight for the purity of the revolutionary banner. This is the spirit of "Karmalism." Those who uphold it would like for the Soviet Union to fight while they live quietly in palaces. But such an approach and such a situation can in no way suit the Afghan people, let alone the Soviet Union. The Afghan public is tired of the war. We need to be realists and politically responsible people.

□ Now, when you are moving to the next stage in realizing the policy of national reconciliation it is very important to show the danger of reasoning in the spirit of "Karmalism." Tell Party members bluntly that inactivity and an unwillingness to realistically analyze the current situation are being hidden behind pseudo-revolutionary leftist phraseology. People need to be united in an understanding of what needs to be done at the present stage.

□

□ Information is reaching Moscow that there are such sentiments: the policy of national reconciliation "is coming to an impasse, which means the loss of revolutionary achievements and a retreat from goals which had been reached." This is all nonsense, irresponsible chatter. The Party needs to be told bluntly about this and those who are mistaken need to be set straight.

□ It is very important at this stage not to allow a split in the PDPA.

□The future of Afghanistan can only be secured through national reconciliation. It is impossible to jump to socialism without a stage of national democratic reforms. We and the Chinese had "great leaps." We know how they end.

□The fate of the PDPA after achieving national reconciliation will depend on how the Party acts now, at the present time. It is impossible to retain authority on [the force of] Soviet troops. But while our troops are in Afghanistan, all capabilities need to be used. Propose such a policy that the people see the PDPA as a national force. The authority of the leadership and those who implement the policy depend on this. And it cannot be otherwise. I got so actively involved in your information because this is the central point of the political situation.

□NAJIB. In the first PDPA platform adopted in 1966 one of the main tasks that was established was the joining of various classes and sectors of Afghan society together on a national patriotic basis. But after the Revolution we forgot this principle and monopolized power. Instead of isolating the enemy we isolated ourselves and lost touch with the people. Now we are trying to convince our own people that we have not repudiated these principles once and for all. Therefore we are forced to take one or two steps back in order to correct errors of dogma. We are doing this on a principled basis.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. The Party should be ahead of the people. One cannot lose touch with [one's own] base. A fondness for leftist slogans leads to sectarian politics. This is why the situation has become difficult when all of society is undergoing a certain historical stage of its development and the Party has withdrawn into its own circle and its own ideas. Whether one or two steps need to be taken is more evident to you. But [they] need to be together with the public.

□NAJIB. I will note that some people interpret our actions as a retreat. But in reality this is a movement forward in all directions-inside the country and in the international arena. We are at that stage of our development when to advance we need first of all to correct the mistakes which have been made. There have been and [still] are mistakes. We are correcting them.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. I completely agree with your analysis and assessments, with one reservation. All this needs to be done without losing time. Because Afghanistan is a country at war. You cannot ponder for years.

□NAJIB. I want to note that our efforts to create a leftist democratic bloc are being implemented quite successfully. Moreover, we intend to develop contacts with the so-called social democratic party "Afgan mellyat." This organization operates both inside and outside Afghanistan. Specifically, such a meeting took place not long ago in Delhi. On the whole we hope to complete work to form a bloc of leftist democratic forces by fall.

□Work is also being done to create political organizations which would express the interests of categories and sectors of the population. I have in mind joining the representatives of the Afghan clergy together into an Islamic Party. We are acting cautiously in this direction since we don't want such a party to be imposed from above. This would be a mistake and could be used by the enemy in their interests. Additionally, in order to intensify work with the clergy we plan to introduce structural changes in the Ministry for Islamic and Waqf Affairs.<sup>[1]</sup> The implementation of the planned measures would allow the opposition to recommend their representatives for this Ministry through Islamic committees operating in the country. Thus yet one more channel of communication with various groups of counter-revolutionary forces could arise.



□NAJIB. The creation of a peasant party could be an effective step in attracting the peasantry to participate in political life.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Was there such a party in Afghanistan earlier? Through whom, in your view, could such a party be formed?

□NAJIB. There was no such party in the past. As regards the members of the peasants party then they could be landowners, peasants who receive land in the process of reforms, and members of agricultural cooperatives. I think it is a realistic matter, considering a certain interest which is being shown by the population itself.

□We are also encouraging representatives of the ethnic bourgeoisie to create their own democratic party. We are confident that the successful implementation of these plans will permit the PDPA to find a way out of the situation in which it has to confront the counter-revolution alone. The union of all democratic, ethnic forces on a common platform would facilitate the creation of political pluralism and be in accord with ethnic interests.

□Of course, all this is directed at strengthening cooperation with patriotic forces who have moderate positions on the whole. But we continue to swing [our] work around to strengthen our contacts with the so-called "rightist" forces.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Probably a moment will come before the elections when the PDPA will have to share posts in the government bureaucracy with other parties. Otherwise a situation could develop where, in accordance with the law adopted in Afghanistan, different parties could be created and operate but all the positions remain in the hands of the PDPA.

□NAJIB. I agree with you completely, Mikhail Sergeyevich. Actually they can gain access to real power in the government bureaucracy themselves as a result of elections. It is tactically more advantageous for this to be done ahead of time by the PDPA. Such a step could produce a positive effect both inside the country and abroad.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. In addition, this would intensify the split there, outside the country.

□NAJIB. We have also established contacts with several leaders of counter-revolutionary organizations in the "Alliance of Seven." Without question, former King Zahir Shah would be a realistic and suitable candidate to be used in a high government post under the conditions of national reconciliation.

□Moreover, while searching out and expanding contacts with the highest level of the counterrevolution, we are concentrating our attention on work with its middle echelon. In our view one could go so far as recognizing a certain autonomy and independence of mid-level rebel chieftains on the territory which they control on the condition of their recognizing the central government, albeit only partially. As regards the opposition outside the country then here the main target is its moderate part. Expansion of ties with representatives of "moderates" would allow us to create a greater split and dissension within the "Alliance of Seven."

□In this context I would like to consult with you on this issue. In our view it would be advisable to turn to the opposition, first and foremost the moderates, with a proposal: open your own missions in Kabul to have constant contact and talks within the framework of national reconciliation.

□Now about military issues. At the present time our measures in the political,

economic, and ideological spheres are directed at solving military problems. In doing so, the main attention in the military area is devoted to fighting the irreconcilable part of the counter-revolutionaries whose strength is 46,000 men, as I have already noted above.

□We understand that the problems of strengthening the armed forces are quite important from the point of view of implementing the policy of national reconciliation; however it has to be said that a great many, good well-founded decisions directed at strengthening the armed forces, primarily the army, have not yet been carried out.

□As an analysis of the current state of affairs shows, we have made several mistakes in determining priorities in military policy. For example, at one time a decision was made to bring the armed forces up to 500,000 men. However, right now we have a ten-fold advantage in manpower over the nucleus of the irreconcilable opposition. Such a task is therefore incorrect, even if there was not a high level of desertion, which has reached thirty thousand, or a need to discharge men into the reserves who have served their terms.

□The main thing is to concentrate efforts at increasing the combat readiness of personnel already on hand, and solving the problems of providing necessary discipline and coordination between various branches of the armed forces, and units and subunits. To put it another way, it's necessary to achieve a qualitative, not [just] quantitative improvement of the DRA armed forces. The problems of staffing combat units and subunits, the [manning] level of which at the present time is only 40% of authorized strength, can be solved only by transferring servicemen into them from logistical subunits, administrative echelons, and [other] staff.

□What has great importance for stepping up the fight against the counter-revolution is a directive of the HQ [Headquarters] of the Supreme High Command providing for the creation of military districts and subordinating all armed formations to a single command within the zones of responsibility of the corresponding army corps. Such a measure will facilitate, in particular, more active participation by border troops deployed in border areas in combat operations to neutralize rebel groups. In this connection we are requesting you examine the issue of transferring the advisory functions in the border troops to the staff of the Chief Soviet Military Adviser.

□In solving the problem of creating special purpose units of the "commandos" type by a call-up of volunteers, we intend to subordinate them directly to the HQ of the Supreme Commander. In addition, in present conditions we have to increase the level of coordination of the Ministries of Defense, State Security, and Internal Affairs under the command of the Supreme Commander within the framework of the Supreme High Command. Such a coordination of operations already exists, without doubt, but it is of a predominantly military nature, and it needs to be given a more political direction.

□Taking this opportunity I would like to express appreciation to you, Mikhail Sergeyevich, for agreeing to send to Afghanistan such an eminent military leader as General of the Army V. I. Varennikov. Moreover I would like to ask that you consider these following ideas of ours.

□At the present time all plans for combat operations which are developed by the USSR Armed Forces General Staff Operations Group headed by, V. I. Varennikov, are submitted to Moscow for coordination. This leads to a loss of time. Obviously it would be more suitable to give General of the Army V. I. Varennikov the authority to make operational decisions in the field. Moreover, he could also be given the functions of coordinator of the activity of all Soviet military organizations in Afghanistan in waging combat operations.

□A new department has been created in the PDPA CC in order to strengthen political work in the armed forces and expand the military-political education of the population. Considering the importance of this task we would like to ask you to consider the possibility of a temporary assignment to the DRA of a special adviser to help in the work of this department. Of course, we have arranged for the gradual reduction of the strength of the advisory staff, but nevertheless we are proceeding only from the interests of the matter in this request.

□Regarding the problems of party work to implement the policy of national reconciliation. I completely agree with your assessment of the nature of the new stage of implementing the policy of national reconciliation and the PDPA's growing responsibility in it. From this point of view, in our opinion, the June plenum of our Party's CC was an important step in understanding the future tasks of the PDPA. It demonstrated that by an overwhelming majority the members of the PDPA are supporting the policy which has been advocated. The plenum seemingly marked the conclusion of a certain period in developing and implementing this policy and showed that the Party has outlined a specific framework for the policy of reconciliation.

□The readiness for compromise, the introduction of a multiparty system in our country, the creation of coalition governing bodies, the formation of a bloc of left democratic forces including the PDPA, etc. lies at the base of our future activity. In developing the concept of reconciliation, we submitted the draft constitution for public discussion and we are examining the possibility of changing the name of the country and even the Party. By the way, in connection with the following question - I intend to change the name of the PDPA-I need to consult with you about the following. Considering the law about parties, the Karmalists could take steps to create their own political organization. One can already observe such a tendency. Therefore if we rename the Party then they could name their organization "PDPA" as a counterbalance and act against us.

□The main task of the present stage of development of the PDPA's activity is preparation for an all-Party conference. Considering the magnitude of the issues which have to be decided at the present time we are devoting special attention to work in this direction.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. When do you think it possible and necessary to hold the conference?

□NAJIB. In about two or two-and-a-half months. This is why we need to sharply step up work to explain the decisions of the last plenum.

□Taking into consideration that, regarding the questions being submitted for its consideration, the conference could be equal to a congress, it is obvious that organizational measures have to be put on the agenda. The time has come to cleanse the Party of people who speak against the policy of national reconciliation, factionalists, and saboteurs.

□The most important task, the task of overriding importance, is to strengthen the authority of the Party. That fact that even under the conditions of a coalition the post of president should belong to the PDPA can be viewed as a favorable precondition to take the necessary steps directed at preserving the Party's positions under new conditions. Of course, even now one ought to think about the correct placement of people. And in this connection the question arises about forming a united monolithic nucleus in the PDPA leadership by drawing on capable young party activists.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. But are there such possibilities? Are there are trained young cadres?

□NAJIB. Yes. But they need to be used and advanced more boldly. In doing so one can in no way forget about trustworthy party veterans. Everything ought to be done so that their rich experience is used with maximum effectiveness. This will be especially important when the PDPA has to confront opposition forces under completely new conditions in a future situation.

□I would like to consult with you on such a serious topic as the ethnic problem. We understand that the Party needs to solve the ethnic issue. And we need to take specific steps in this direction. Individual comrades even speak of granting autonomy to various ethnic groups of the population.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. This is actually a very serious issue and it is impossible to ignore it. But the main thing is that such decisions not be artificially imposed and not conflict with existing realities. A mechanism has been worked out in Afghanistan over the ages which to a particular degree has supported mutual relations between the ethnic groups, sectors, and population groups in the country. Therefore it's important to look for such ways to solve the problem which would dialectically consider their interests and organically integrate the ethnic groups in the process of consolidating society. If you propose something new to the people which they do not understand, this can complicate the process of national reconciliation. In any case, it is more apparent to you, and only you, how to proceed. The main thing is respectful and impartial relations with everyone.

□I'll cite an example of solving the ethnic problem in our country. At one time I worked in Stavropol' Kray, which includes the Karachay-Cherkesskaya Autonomous Oblast.' Ninety thousand Karachay, 35,000 Circassians, 14,000 Abazi, 11,000 Nogay, etc. live here; Russians comprise 53% of the population. Nevertheless there are newspapers and radio and television broadcasts; literature is developed; and instruction in the schools is done in all the national languages. The ethnic factor is also considered when assigning party and government personnel.

□It is understood that the ethnic problem is very delicate and tricky. But it is impossible to solve other problems without solving it.

□NAJIB. I share your point of view. Right now we are working on creating a Ministry of Nationalities proceeding from such an understanding of the problem. We are taking steps to develop the culture and preserve the customs, traditions, and the national characteristics of various ethnic groups. The draft constitution provides an option to create ethnic entities. But nevertheless I think there is no need for haste here. We ought not be eager to solve this problem by purely administrative methods.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Right. A normalization of the situation needs to be achieved. Live in peaceful conditions, and then it will be more evident what ought to be done. Then everything will become clear.

□NAJIB. Haste in solving such complex problems is extraordinarily dangerous. We already have the bitter experience of carrying out land and water reform. The mistakes made in this area were palpable, but all the same they did not lead to especially negative consequences. However if a mistake is made in carrying out ethnic policy, then it will be a powerful "delayed-action bomb."

□Right now we are working on a well thought-out, considered, and scientifically-based PDPA concept on the ethnic issue. And we would like to send it to you after preparation of the corresponding document.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. We will study it carefully without fail. But again I repeat: the main thing is to take steps yourselves. It is more evident to you [what to do]. In Marxism

the main thing is recognition of dialectics and their employment in specific historical conditions.

□NAJIB. Briefly about economic issues.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Is our aid reaching you as intended?

□NAJIB. On behalf of the PDPA CC and the government I would like to express deep gratitude for the enormous unselfish aid which is being given our country. We see in this firm guarantees of a successful solution of revolutionary problems. Along with the large-scale free aid of the Soviet Union which is being sent for the needs of strengthening the armed forces and increasing the standard of living of the population, border trade and direct ties between the various Soviet republics and oblasts and Afghan provinces have great importance. These are no longer simply inter-governmental relations but invariably strengthening ties between our peoples. Without question, the development of such ties will bring great political results. One could say they are historic in their scale.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Not long ago in the CPSU CC a conference was held with the leadership of a number of republics and oblasts which were charged with implementing direct ties with Afghanistan, giving direct aid to the population of Afghan provinces, and developing human contact. This ought not to be forgotten in order that the free Soviet aid reaches those for whom it is intended, ordinary Afghans.

□NAJIB. Eh. A. Shevardnadze told me about the results of this conference. We know well how seriously the Soviet comrades approach the question of developing direct ties. Recognizing the full measure of their responsibility for the successful implementation and the correct and effective use of the free aid being granted us, the Party and government leadership of Afghanistan is also trying to devote constant attention to improving the operation of Afghan agencies in these areas. At the same time it has to be said that shortcomings and oversights still exist in the activity of the Afghan side. We will try to remove them.

□Taking this opportunity, on instructions of the PDPA CC, I would like to state several additional requests.

□First of all, we would be appreciative of favorable consideration of our proposal for the command of the Limited Contingent of Soviet Troops and the staff of the Chief Military Adviser to give us assistance as before in the organization of work to distribute free Soviet aid among the population. This would have great political importance in terms of propagandizing the idea of friendship with the Soviet Union among the population.

□In the interest of strengthening long-term cooperation between our countries in the economic sphere, we request you consider the question of building an approximately 200 km Kushka-Herat railroad branch line and return to the issue of developing the Aynak copper deposit. We understand that the realization of such projects is fraught with considerable expense in the initial stage, but all this would be repaid a hundredfold.

□In terms of involving the population in supporting the government and strengthening the political position of the Soviet Union, the further improvement of trade, economic, cultural, and other ties between the northern provinces of the DRA and the Central Asian republics of the USSR can have great importance, but so also does the solution of the problem of expanding the practice of building "Soviet border to DRA province" electric power transmission lines.

□ We think that the opportunities for cooperation with COMECON [Council of Mutual Economic Cooperation] member countries are still being insufficiently used in solving the economic problems of Afghanistan. The conditions for expanding ties with socialist countries are good, including the creation of joint enterprises.

□ Now I want to touch on issues of the international activity of the PDPA and government. First of all, let me state a request to help us establish and expand Afghanistan's ties with progressive countries through CC CPSU channels, especially with those where the parties or governments in power could be viewed as leftist. In addition, we would be appreciative for help from Soviet diplomatic missions in various countries in establishing contact with the Afghan opposition.

In light of the announced policy of national reconciliation, the foreign policy activity of the Party and government is at the present time being implemented sufficiently actively. In spite of the fact that India has not yet given its consent to hold a conference on reconciliation on its territory, our foreign policy is exerting an ever-growing influence on the moderate, wavering part of the opposition.

□ M. S. GORBACHEV. In conversations with [Indian prime minister Rajiv] Gandhi we discussed in detail issues connected with Afghanistan and around it. It is very important that Afghanistan not fall under US and Pakistani influence. This would be absolutely unacceptable to them. This is a good basis for cooperation with the Indians.

□ But there's one difference. The Indians are afraid that normalization of the situation in Afghanistan will lead to Pakistan directing subversive activities against India. One can feel, although they do not talk of this, that the Indians are interested in the USSR not hastening to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan. But in this position India is considering the interests of India alone 100%, but the interests of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union maybe 20%.

□ Since Afghanistan and the Afghan people having lived for so many years in a state of war they could hardly agree with such a formulation of the question. The desire of the Afghan people for peace is the main reason why the policy of national reconciliation is encountering growing understanding and support.

□ NAJIB. Considering my possible future meeting with Gandhi I would like to consult with you about the following issue. At the present time we are on the threshold of renewing talks in Geneva. We are trying to put constant pressure on Pakistan to act so that they neutralize those circles in the Pakistani administration who favor positions sharply hostile to Afghanistan. Of course, in the present circumstances even the policy of national reconciliation itself has become an effective factor in influencing the mood of the Pakistani population. But besides this we have traditional possibilities of influence. I have in mind the Pushtun and Baluchi tribes and also the opposition movements. There is an opportunity, for example, to work in Sind Province.

□ Not long ago we sent S. Layek to Delhi. The thing is, the famous leader of the Pushtun tribes of Pakistan there, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, is hospitalized in serious condition. He began his political activity even before the time of Mahatma Gandhi [the leader of the Indian nationalist movement]. They even call him "the Gandhi of the border tribes." Right now he is over 100 years old, of which he has spent 40 years in prison. In his will he expressed the wish that he be buried not in Pakistan, which, he said, is a "prison for peoples," but in Afghanistan. Unquestionably, we will try to get a suitable propaganda effect from this fact.

□ In the course his visit to Delhi, Layek met with Gandhi and delivered my message to him. In the conversation the Indian leader noted that the US had turned Pakistan into

a bridgehead for a fight against India and Afghanistan, using the Sikhs and the Afghan counter-revolution, accordingly, for their own interests. In this regard he proposed thinking about joint retaliatory actions by India and Afghanistan against Pakistan. What do you think, would it not be worth it if Pakistan and the US try for a political settlement and develop a coordinated plan for such actions together with India? I even have an idea, a risky one, you could say. In this matter I am proceeding from the Indian leaders seriously thinking from time to time about the problem of launching a preventive attack, as a sort of demonstration, on Pakistan. Not to occupy its territory but as a show of force.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. Gandhi even told me that they have plans to dismember Pakistan.

□NAJIB. If the Indians do this, we for our part could, without being directly involved, provoke serious disturbances in the border regions of Pakistan where Pushtun and Baluchi tribes live. However, the danger of a US military presence arises. But could the Americans decide to act against India? I think not. Even the simple fact of an American presence in the region would create problems for them far more difficult than in Vietnam. There is still one serious factor, however the presence of the Soviet limited contingent. This issue could obviously be studied as an alternative.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. I think that the special measures you are taking justify themselves. Moreover, the other side is resorting to similar actions.

□NAJIB. You are right. The effectiveness of our measures has a particularly notable effect on the political situation in such provinces as Sind and Punjab.

□M. S. GORBACHEV. [We] need to constantly go in the main direction which we have jointly decided on: to achieve a political settlement. If we encounter direct sabotage of the efforts for a political settlement on the part of the US and Pakistan [or] some kind of harsh measures to undermine the developing process, then obviously we will discuss with you how to act.

□But today the two main issues on the agenda are: the implementation of a policy of national reconciliation and the achievement of a political settlement. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility of carrying out special measures, including ones coordinated with India. However [we] need to act so that they do not lead to a direct confrontation, not to open a path to the Americans in this region.

□Not long ago a group of retired Pakistani generals came to our military attaché in Pakistan, who requested that assurances be given to the Soviet leadership that they would not permit Pakistan to be turned into a bridgehead for an American military presence. We are determining right now whether this was an initiative of the generals themselves or a move instigated by Zia ul-Haq. In any case, in Pakistan they understand they ought not to play dangerous games with the Soviet Union. They see the limits.

In discussing long-range issues with Gandhi, we have proceeded from [the assumption] that there is the Soviet Union and there is India in this region and an independent, non-aligned Afghanistan would be a stabilizing element in the region. We intend to collaborate with India in the long run. Especially with Gandhi. It is very difficult for him right now. But we support him in that difficult situation which has evolved in India.

We think that the basic interests of the USSR, India, and Afghanistan coincide as regards the international issues and the situation in the region.

NAJIB. There are several more issues connected with our foreign policy activity.

We are on the eve of the convening of the 42nd UN General Assembly session. Considering the work that we are doing, opportunities have arisen to try to introduce changes to the General Assembly resolution on Afghanistan which are favorable to us. Together with this we have developed a plan of specific actions to strengthen Afghanistan's positions in the Non-Aligned Movement, to work with the member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and in other directions. In particular, we plan to send 67 delegations to various countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin American to conduct explanatory work there. [We] intend to enlist the aid of socialist countries in implementing the foreign policy measures of the DRA government. [We] plan to distribute special material on the subject of refugees as an official UN document in order to deprive Pakistan of an opportunity to use this problem against us.

M. S. GORBACHEV. But have you estimated how many refugees could really return to Afghanistan, even if [only] approximately?

NAJIB. We think that the return of the overwhelming majority of the refugees can be expected if the barriers from Pakistani and Iranian authorities are removed. We have information that many of those who left Afghanistan as our enemies are now actively speaking out [vystupayut, which can also mean "acting"] against the counter-revolutionary chieftains. But, of course, we need to work more actively to involve the various specialized UN agencies in solving the problem of the refugees.

What are our immediate plans to implement the policy of national reconciliation? In the first place in determining these problems we rely on the positive momentum created in the course of implementing this policy. We have held meetings in party organizations with a single agenda dedicated to the problems of translating Party policy into practice. They have shown that the steps being taken by the PDPA are exerting the proper influence both on party members and the population as a whole. At the same time, in the process of the work the need arises to improve the planned measures, the approaches, all the work. For example, one of the important areas is the development and consolidation of the legal basis for the policy of national reconciliation in the course of the implementation of which various questions arise, even as far as the granting of the opportunity to all public and political organizations to openly express their opinion.

In accordance with a decree of the DRA Revolutionary Council, the Party has been granted the right to draw up proposals to reorganize the political structure of the country. In this connection a group has been created within the framework of the PDPA CC Secretariat which includes representatives of both our Party and other political organizations. It has been given the task of drawing up proposals to create a bloc of leftist forces.

We understand the importance of organizing reconciliation work this way in order that the role of public organizations and the population itself be more broadly displayed in these processes. For example, the decision to extend our call for a cease-fire for six more months was adopted at the initiative of the National Front, the Higher Extraordinary Reconciliation Council, and the Higher Council of Ulemas and the Clergy. In the immediate future we plan to prepare and send messages to fraternal parties and the Socialist International in which, along with an explanation of the substance of the policy being followed, we will state requests to give appropriate aid in its implementation.

In the military field we will solve the problems of neutralizing the irreconcilable rebel groups and destroying caravans with weapons, fortified regions, and bases. At the same time the implementation of measures to cover the border with Pakistan and



Iran will be continued. Our goal is not to let the counterrevolution consolidate their positions, especially in the border zone, which should become a bulwark of people's power.

All these measures have been recorded in the composite plan of the PDPA CC Politburo. We will try to actively implement them in practice, relying on the aid of all the Soviet comrades working in Afghanistan. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express appreciation for the support which has been given us by the Soviet Embassy, Cde. Ambassador P. P. Mozhayev, the CPSU CC group of advisers to the PDPA CC, the Manager of Affairs of the CPSU CC Cde. Kruchina, and other comrades.

Considering the large and important measures which we plan to carry out-I have in mind the all-party conference and the PDPA Congress planned for the coming year-I would like to request the tenure of the CPSU CC adviser to the PDPA CC Politburo, Cde. V. P. Polyanichko, be extended.

Dear Mikhail Sergeyeovich, we constantly feel your attention and concern, your exacting attitude. In spite of your great workload you find time to deal with Afghan affairs. Among us in our country we know you as a genuine friend of the Afghan people, a firm fighter for peace, a stout internationalist. The efforts, which the CPSU and Soviet government are undertaking at your initiative in the name of the progress and prosperity of the Soviet people, find a keen response in our hearts. We seek to learn from you how one needs to love one's native land and fight for common human ideals.

Two hundred and twenty days have passed since our December meeting. During this time the policy of national reconciliation has become a reality and your ideas played a role in its development. The results of the January and June CPSU CC plenums have evoked a broad response in Afghanistan, and I would like to congratulate you on their success. By decision of the PDPA CC Politburo, the texts of your reports at these plenums were translated into Dari and Pashto and printed in large numbers. Party members study these documents. Highly esteeming the constructive, peace-loving initiatives you have advanced in the name of the CPSU and Soviet state directed at stopping the arms race and ensuring peace and security, as internationalists we see our duty in the creation of conditions for the withdrawal of the Soviet military contingent within the agreed timeframe.

We are deeply appreciative of the unflinching aid and support which the CPSU CC Politburo and the entire Soviet leadership give us. The meetings and conversations with Cdes. Eh. A. Shevardnadze, A. F. Dobrynin, and other Soviet comrades and the visits of various Soviet delegations have special importance for us. We are constantly aware of the aid of the CPSU CC Politburo Commission on Afghanistan. All this strengthens in us a confidence that with our joint efforts we will build an independent and non-aligned Afghanistan without fail which will forever remain in a position of friendship with the Soviet Union.

M. S. GORBACHEV. For my part I would like to describe briefly the situation as we see it.

Your information has again confirmed the coincidence of the points of view about what is happening in Afghanistan and those measures which the PDPA needs to implement within the framework of a new stage of the policy of national reconciliation.

Comrade Najib, you should know that with the great responsibility which rests with the CC CPSU in the areas of domestic and foreign policy problems facing our country the problems associated with Afghanistan are always on the forefront of our attention

We usually don't report them, but these issues are very often discussed in the Politburo.

Inasmuch as we and you have opened a new stage in the development of the situation in Afghanistan, the Politburo Commission headed by Eh. A. Shevardnadze has resumed its work. Besides the Politburo, the Soviet government, the CC Secretariat, and our other organizations and departments devote the most serious attention to Afghan problems. We proceed from the position that the root interests of the USSR and the DRA coincide. First and foremost this determines our policy with regard to Afghanistan for today and the future. We have always treated Afghanistan with respect, as early as Lenin's time.

But there are also factors of no little importance such as the civil war in Afghanistan and the presence of our troops. This gives our relations a special character and forces us to constantly deal with questions of relations with Afghanistan.

We have carefully listened to your information. We draw a general conclusion from it: the policy of national reconciliation which you and we have worked out together is the correct one, and it should be continued. The problems cannot be solved by military means. In the person of Comrade Najib we see a political leader who understands the depth and importance of the processes which are occurring and the correctness of the chosen policy of national reconciliation for the destiny of Afghanistan.

It can be said that the policy of national reconciliation enjoys the support of the Afghan people. It is supported by progressive forces in the world, realistic circles, and all those who are actually interested in a political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. It can also be said that national reconciliation is proceeding with difficulty and is encountering resistance from the counterrevolution and also from those forces of inertia in the PDPA itself which do not want to live and work in a new manner. There is nothing unexpected here. This should shock neither you nor us. On the whole, we and you foresaw this. No one inside or outside Afghanistan has suggested an alternative to the policy of national reconciliation put forth by the PDPA. This is a fact. Employing our terminology, it can be said that Afghan society has learned this through suffering. The people are tired, they want peace. This is the main thing. But whom does it not suit? The rebels and, excuse me for the harsh words, those who think only about their own hides.

The main part of the Party leadership is concentrating around the policy of national reconciliation. And Afghanistan needs these people right now. They will also be needed tomorrow. I would say this: the main criteria for assessing the political and professional characteristics of workers of different levels is their attitude toward the policy of national reconciliation. I am dwelling on this issue in detail because it is the main one. There should be no doubt or wavering in the correctness of Afghanistan's current choice. We are deeply convinced of this.

Now about the role of the PDPA in the policy of national reconciliation. Without question, the PDPA is the leading force in the implementation of this policy. And the more authority this program gains, the more authority the Party will have. A contradictory but dialectically clear situation is developing. On one hand, the PDPA, in expanding its social base and adopting a policy of creating a coalition government, is seemingly undermining its own authority. But this is not so. This is just an appearance. The true authority of the PDPA is being formed right now. It is necessary that there be no defeatist sentiments so that those in the leadership understand this correctly. While our troops are in Afghanistan, the process of national reconciliation needs to move forward as the PDPA views it and not as the rebels want. The potential of national reconciliation is still far from exhausted. It needs to be used to the maximum. It is impossible to replace it with anything. Right now despairing, defeatist sentiments and any doubts or wavering are simply impermissible. New impetus is

needed to move the policy of national reconciliation forward. Please convey this opinion of the CPSU CC to the entire Afghan leadership, the PDPA Central Committee, and the government.

It is necessary to act decisively right now and systematically turn the policy of national reconciliation around. Create reserves for the future now. Create opportunities for a real presence of the PDPA in all areas of Afghan society now. This is lacking now.

We have carefully listened to your ideas about what needs to be done in the near future, and we support you. But information is reaching us that decisions made in Kabul reach the grass roots very much watered down.

When we talk about the second stage of the policy of national reconciliation, then we mean that it began on 14 July, that is, on the day when the Afghan government declared its readiness to extend the cease-fire and respond only to military operations of the other side. It is evident that in the second stage of the reconciliation the question arises at the practical level of forming a coalition government, and the creation of other parties and a bloc of left-democratic forces. You cannot refuse to cooperate with those who do not share your point of view. On the contrary, you have to create real pluralism in society and in government structures. Probably it would be tactically correct to put the stress on joining these forces together and the policy of national reconciliation and the cessation of military operations would be such a unifying factor.

You've talked about the principles of volunteerism. These need to be encouraged in every way. And they need to be followed especially consistently in the creation of structures of political power.

Possibly it is not necessary to require that other, newly-created parties loudly advocate friendship with the Soviet Union. For them, it would be equivalent to recognizing the presence of Soviet troops. Let them come to this themselves. But when the organizational structures of these parties are registered, our Embassy will get in touch with you in order to establish dialogue with these parties.

Now some words about the specific tasks of this new stage of reconciliation. It seems to us that it is necessary to decide the issue of the president more quickly. As far as we understand the situation, there is no other candidate for the post other than Cde. Najib. Yes, and comrades from your entourage maintain the same opinion. In spite of the fact that the process of understanding is proceeding with difficulty, the main representatives of the leadership, including Cde [Prime Minister Sultan Ali] Keshtmand, support this idea. It is very important to correctly place party cadre in government and party posts ahead of time. All this needs to be done in order to adopt a constitution in the near future and thus create the legal basis for the second stage.

I agree that the discussion of creating a transitional government needs to be translated into practical terms. And very well thought-out, considered steps are needed here. It is very important to draw the opposition into a dialogue about the creation of a coalition government. There need to be several options for its makeup. There are options which would suit both you and us. A coalition government should include figures who enjoy real authority and influence and who will work in favor of national reconciliation, and not the first people who come along.

I think that the tactic of public appeals to the opposition has justified itself. Moreover it will become effective if it is combined with a designation of specific posts in the governmental structure. This would also facilitate the process of dividing the

opposition. The leaders will undoubtedly reject this proposal but the ordinary members will be drawn to it. But work needs to be done in this direction. It is also necessary to think carefully about the possibility of granting specific posts in the government to two or three rebel leaders. But these should be real proposals and not political games. We completely support your plans to continue contact with foreign opposition centers. We will help you in this where there is an opportunity.

You are right, Comrade Najib, when you say that the present stage of national reconciliation requires new approaches and an abandonment of stereotypes and methods which have outlived themselves. And it is correct that you want to hold a party conference in order to consolidate the Party and all healthy forces. Hence we support all your plans in this regard.

Some specific issues in terms of military policy. Those issues which you have raised require deep analysis. They go in the right direction. We will think them over and decide together.

I would like to stress one more thing here: the military policy, as it is being pursued today, suits neither you nor us. But when is it going to be dealt with if not today, when our troops are [still] in Afghanistan? I agree with you that we need to improve the quality of military training. The special forces subunits of the "commandos" type are justifying themselves. Great attention needs to be devoted to them.

NAJIB. Excuse me for interrupting you, Mikhail Sergeyevich. I am surprised how we have been fighting for eight years. When Karmal was the supreme commander he did nothing. We actually lost these eight years.

M. S. GORBACHEV. It is especially important not to permit debates between the former "Khalq" and "Parcham" wings. Send this to the comrades from us: if this happens it will be a stab in the back. This would be the same as treason and suicide.

We are very impressed with how you are conducting ethnic policy. You are conducting it in a considered fashion. This has great importance.

As regards international issues then, as before, we will help here, considering our common goals and those changes which are taking place in Afghanistan. We will lay bricks in the building of good relations between our countries and peoples.

And lastly. I want again to draw your attention to the necessity of the maximum use of the temporary presence of Soviet troops so that the policy of national reconciliation produces the results that you are counting on. And we are counting from 1 January of this year.

NAJIB. Seven months have already passed.

M. S. GORBACHEV. Time is flying and we need to use it to the maximum. The Soviet leadership, as before, is giving Afghanistan the highest priority attention.

Please send greetings to your comrades from the Soviet leadership.

We invite you, Comrade Najib, to the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution as the head of an Afghan delegation.

How would you view the possibility of carrying out a joint flight of Soviet and Afghan cosmonauts? The information about this could be included in a report about our

meeting today.

NAJIB. You, Mikhail Sergeyeovich, have seized the initiative from me. I also wanted to propose this idea to you. The problem is that the use of surface-to-air missiles by the counter-revolutionaries, especially Stingers, have not failed to affect the morale of our pilots. But the prospect of space flight will lift them.

M. S. GORBACHEV. It would be necessary to show Pakistan that Stingers can hit their territory, too.

NAJIB. We will do this without fail.

M. S. GORBACHEV. We have one path-only forward. I am glad to meet you. I am glad that you are not only in good physical shape but deeply understand the problems which lie before you. Act confidently. Unite the Afghan leadership and Afghan society around you.

You will have an opportunity to rest a bit. If you want to see something or meet with Soviet comrades then we will organize this.

NAJIB. Thank you very much. Today's meeting is a great honor for me. Its results will be used by us in the course of preparing for the all-party conference of the PDPA. I will say openly: such meetings with you, our senior comrades, are always exceptionally useful and instructive for me. I assure you that I have always been and will remain a faithful student of the Leninist school.

I want to express thanks for the invitation to the Great October celebration. I accept it with appreciation.

Please accept my wishes for the health, success, and welfare for you and your family.

[\[1\]](#) Editor's note: a waqf is a religious endowment