

**May 19, 1982**

**Memorandum of Conversations between SED  
General Secretary Erich Honecker and Afghan  
Leader Babrak Karmal**

**Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117263>

**Summary:**

Karmal describes threats against the Soviet-backed Afghan government from Pakistan, Iran, the US, China, and Egypt.

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German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

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(uncorrected version)

[...]

Karmal: When I talk about imperialism, I mean US-Imperialism and its allies, reactionary Arab lands, the reaction in the region, reactionary forces in Pakistan, right-wing forces in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially SAVAK, the former secret service of the Shah of Persia, and the hegemonists. They got together three years ago to start an undeclared war against Afghanistan.

Before the newest phase of the April [1978] Revolution there were 80 bases in Pakistan, 10 to 12 in Iran, 8 in Xinjiang in China. Counterrevolutionaries are being trained by specialists from the PRC, the US and Egypt. These countries I have named have publicly announced that they support the counterrevolutionary elements of Afghanistan.

[...] The imperialist and reactionary forces have plans not only to end the Afghan Revolution, but also to end Afghan territory as a free country. The second stage of the April Revolution of 27 December put an end to that.

These plans called for regions such as where the Pushtuns, one of Afghanistan's largest minorities, live as well as the western part of the country to be given to Iran. The northeast would go to China and in the center of Afghanistan, they would create a government against socialism, obedient to American imperialism, directly linked to the CIA.

Since the existence of Afghanistan and its territorial integrity were in danger, the revolutionary government and the People's [Democratic] Party of Afghanistan asked the Soviet Union for help under our treaty of friendship. The Soviet Union gave this help at just the right moment. It was a matter of days.

The imperialists were even ready to let loose a regional war. But the timely help of the Soviet Union not only saved the Afghan Revolution and territorial integrity, but also blocked the imperialist powers' advance. The danger was that Amin, who had had the legal president of the Republic murdered, was in on the plans of American imperialism and that the forces against the party had won influence inside the party.  
[...]

In the last two years and some months, the national army, the security forces and the People's militia have not doubled or tripled but quadrupled, and now with our own security forces we can eliminate large groups of counter-revolutionaries who are filtered into our country from Pakistan and Xinjiang, China. They can not make any frontal attack on us, rather they are organizing terror bands of 5 to 10 men to blow up schools, public buildings, hospitals and other government institutions. They blackmail the farmers and other classes. This kind of counter-revolutionary battle creates problems for us.

We are in the position to remove counter-revolutionary forces in our country this or next year. But the main problem is that when we succeed in bringing over the counter-revolutionary elements through promises and offers, then new forces are slipped in from Pakistan...

Honecker: In our view, it will be a very difficult process to go from a feudal society to a new democratic and socialist system, while there are open borders with Iran and Pakistan.

Babrak Karmal: 2,340 kilometers of border with Pakistan, 800 kilometers of border with Iran, and 96 kilometers of border with China. And they are all adversaries!

Honecker: We understand it this way: the imperialists want the borders with Iran and Pakistan open, as well as with China, but the border with the Soviet Union should be closed. But not everything follows the will of the imperialists and the development of the world has its own law.

[...]