

May 21, 1982

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

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Summary:

Honecker and Karmal discuss East German support for Afghanistan, as well as threats against Afghanistan, especially from West German and Pakistan.

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[...]

Honecker:... I don't need to emphasize that we are most closely allied with Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. We have a friendship and mutual aid treaty with Vietnam and the same treaty with Kampuchea and now we are about to conclude one with Laos.

Babrak Karmal: And now with Afghanistan.

Honecker: Yes. That takes place today. But I wanted to consider now the Indochinese countries which are threatened by the Chinese hegemonists. This is clearly our main thrust in this region; otherwise, we wouldn't conclude these treaties. We know how complicated the situation is in Southeast Asia. I had a chance to see it on the spot with [GDR premier] Comrade [Willi] Stoph and other comrades. We've supported Vietnam with over 2.5 billion marks. We've trained tens of thousands of specialists in our higher schools and even our manufacturers are organizing workshops for manufacturers...

As an expression of our alliance and solidarity I would like to present you, Comrade Babrak Karmal, as a complement to the print-shop already at work, with a photo laboratory as a present from the GDR communists. A photo laboratory can help to reflect reality and we know that image plays an important role in the fight for peace. We are deeply convinced that on the basis of the measures we have agreed on today, on the basis of our treaty of mutual aid and friendship, the cooperation between our countries in political, scientific-technical, economic and cultural areas will become closer.

In our view, we could also expand the education of your cadres in higher education and popular education as well as with experts in this area. Together with all these measures that we agreed on today, we will expand considerably the spectrum of our cooperation...

Babrak Karmal: [...] We put the emphasis on the fact that Afghanistan is confronted with Pakistan, Iran and the People's Republic of China. But our policy principles are based on peaceful coexistence and our foreign policy follows.

Naturally, one can add that after Pakistan, Iran, China, and several Arab lands, the Federal Republic is one of the most important centers of the counter-revolution against Afghanistan and here we have almost the same positions.

Honecker: Do you still have a Federal Republic German school in Kabul?

Babrak Karmal: It is good, comrade Honecker, that you are bringing up this problem, since we were planning to talk with you about it. Aside from the German school, we have...[Cut off]

Honecker: They're all agents.

Babrak Karmal: [continuing] ...the Goethe Institute and both institutions are very conspiratorially active in Afghanistan.

Honecker: They send all the bad reports to Bonn. That is why [West German Chancellor Helmut] Schmidt said [to me that] he is better informed about Afghanistan than I.

Babrak Karmal: But the reports they send are not true.

Honecker: That is clear [...]

Babrak Karmal: Regarding Pakistan, as you said, comrade Honecker, the US intends to use Pakistan as a gendarme. This is naturally a danger for the neighboring countries, such as Afghanistan, friendly India, and Iran, if it comes to a progressive line there.

In Pakistan power is basically limited to the military. They have a half million soldiers. They are professional soldiers. Although there are differences, they are directed by the Americans. The US can put anyone in power at any time.

The Pakistani military government has naturally tried to exploit the so-called Afghanistan problem with reactionary Arab countries, with the US and also with China and to get as much help and support as possible. I do not want to leave unmentioned that the People's Republic of China is also supporting the Pakistani military government with large quantities of weapons and munitions. But the conflict is very hard in Pakistan as well as the ethnic conflicts, since there are several nationalities.

With regard to the Pakistani population, all the forces of the illegal parties are for the Afghanistan revolution. We have received many telegrams from leaders of these parties in which they fully support our revolution and reject the position of Pakistan.

It is a fact that the reactionary forces of America, China, Pakistan and the NATO countries have an interest in the limited Soviet contingent remaining in Afghanistan. In this way, these countries can use their help as a pretext for their dirty goals [...]

Babrak: There is a matter that I'd like to raise. I don't know if it has been raised here to say that Afghanistan has labor and also mineral resources, and we will be in a position in the near future to take care of the needs of our friend the GDR. The riches of Afghanistan are enough to guarantee 50 million men the best living standard, if there was developed, socialist industry.

The main problem is the lack of energy [resources].