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Report on the Situation in Afghanistan, Gromyko, Andropov, Ustinov, and Ponomarev to CPSU CC

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Summary:

Gromyko, Andropov, Ustinov, and Ponomarev report to CPSU CC on the increased repressions by Amin in Afghanistan. Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders may meet with Amin to discuss economic cooperation between the two countries, relating to petroleum products, food, and industrial goods. These topics are on the path to progressive socioeconomic reforms in the DRA.

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to the CC CPSU

The situation in Afghanistan following the events of September 13-16 of this year, as the result of which Taraki was removed from power and then physically destroyed, remains extremely complicated.

In the efforts to strengthen Amin in power, along with such superficial gestures like the beginning of the reworking of the draft of the constitution and the liberation of some of the people who had been arrested earlier, in fact the scale of repressions in the Party, army, state apparat and civic organizations has widened. He is clearly pursuing the removal from power of practically all eminent figures of the Party and government whom he views as his real or potential enemies.

According to information which we have, at the present time the execution of a group of Politburo members (Zeray, Misak, Panjshiri) who are subject to fictitious accusations of "anti-Party and counter-revolutionary activity," is planned. At the plenum of the CC PDPA which took place recently, Amin introduced into the ruling organs of the Party people who are more devoted to him, including a number of his relatives.

These actions of Amin led to a further aggravation of the split in the PDPA, the liquidation of the healthy nucleus in the Party, and the weakening of its influence on the social and political life of the country. They are even distracting the leaders of the country from solving the urgent problem of building a new society and from the fight against the internal counterrevolution. Moreover, although at the present time the military situation in Afghanistan has somewhat stabilized, there are no grounds to think that the rebels have rejected attempts at overthrowing the government by force.

Amin's actions are provoking growing unrest among progressive forces. If earlier the members of the "Parcham" faction spoke against him, now the supporters of the "Khalq" faction and individual representatives of the government bureaucracy, the army, intelligentsia, and youth have also joined them. This has generated mistrust on the part of Amin, who is looking for way to step up repression, which will narrow the social base of the regime to an even greater degree. A considerable part of the population of the country is taking a watchful and expectant position in regard to the new leadership and the measures they are taking. This also refers to the sentiments of army personnel.

Incoming warnings about the organization of contacts by Amin with representatives of the right-wing Muslim opposition and the leaders of tribes hostile to the government are suspicious. In the course of [these contacts] he displays a readiness to settle with them about the cessation of armed combat against the present government under "compromise" conditions, which are actually to the detriment of the progressive development of the country.

Recently there have been noted signs of the fact that the new leadership of Afghanistan intends to conduct a more "balanced policy" in relation to the Western powers. It is known, in particular, that representatives of the USA, on the basis of their contacts with the Afghans, are coming to a conclusion about the possibility of a change in the political line of Afghanistan in a direction which is pleasing to Washington.

Amin's conduct in the area of relations with the USSR ever more distinctly exposes his

insincerity and duplicity. In words he and those closest to him are in favor of a further expansion of collaboration with the Soviet Union in various fields, but in fact they permit actions which run counter to the interests of this collaboration. Outwardly agreeing with the recommendations of Soviet representatives, including about the issue of preserving unity in the PDPA and DRA leadership, and declaring readiness to strengthen friendship with the USSR, in practice Amin does not only not take steps to put a stop to anti-Soviet sentiments but he himself actually encourages such sentiments. In particular, at his initiative a story is being spread about the supposed involvement of Soviet representatives in "making an attempt" on him during the 13-16 September events. Amin and his closest circle do not stop at slanderous inventions about the participation of Soviet representatives in repressive actions being conducted in Afghanistan.

Thus in the person of Amin we have to deal with a power-hungry leader who is distinguished by brutality and treachery. In conditions of organizational weakness of the PDPA and the ideological immaturity [nezakalennost'] of its members the danger is not precluded that, thanks to the preservation of his personal power, Amin might change the political orientation of the regime.

At the same time, judging from everything, Amin understands that the domestic and foreign difficulties of advancing the Afghan revolution, the geographic factor, and the dependence of Afghanistan in providing for the daily requirements of the army and the economy, dictates an objective interest of the Afghan leadership in maintaining and developing comprehensive Afghan-Soviet relations. Amin's understanding of the fact that at this stage he cannot do without Soviet support and aid will give us the capability to exercise a certain restraining influence on him.

In the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and in the Afghan army healthy forces have been preserved who express serious concern about the developing situation in the country, which could lead to a loss of the gains of the April 1978 Revolution. However these forces are disunited and are essentially in an illegal position.

Taking account of this and starting from the necessity of doing everything possible not to allow the victory of counter-revolution in Afghanistan or the political reorientation of H. Amin towards the West, it is considered expedient to hew to the following line:

1. Continue to work actively with Amin and overall with the current leadership of the PDPA and the DRA, not giving Amin grounds to believe that we don't trust him and don't wish to deal with him. Use the contacts with Amin to assert appropriate influence and simultaneously to expose further his true intentions.

2. Proceeding from our common policy regarding Amin at this stage and considering his repeatedly expressed desire to make an official or working visit to Moscow to meet with L. I. Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders we ought to give him a favorable reply in principle without, however, giving specific times for his visit right now.

3. Constantly direct Amin's attention to the need to maintain collective leadership, the norms of party life and law and order, and the inadmissibility of continuing unjustified repressions of Party, military, and other personnel.

4. Through the channels of all Soviet institutions in Afghanistan intensify the study of the situation in the country and also of the leading figures of the Party and government apparatus and the command staff of the army and security agencies. In conversations with people who are well-disposed toward the USSR and concerned for the fate of the April Revolution, do not create the impression that we approve of

everything that is going on right now in Afghanistan and do not put such people off. At the same time avoid open criticism of one or another actions of the present Afghan leadership in order not to give Amin and his supporters grounds to accuse us of interference in [their] internal affairs.

5. Military aid is to be given to Afghanistan in limited quantities right now. Considering the real situation in the country and the need for future combat operations to be waged against the rebels, continue deliveries of small arms, spare parts, and the minimally necessary amount of ammunition and auxiliary military equipment. Consider the request of the Afghan leadership for delivery of light small arms for the DRA people's militia favorably. Hold off for now on deliveries of heavy weapons and military equipment, especially as there is no real need for them right now, but it is inadvisable to create excess reserves of such weapons and ammunition in Afghanistan.

6. The Soviet subunits located in Afghanistan (communications centers, the parachute battalion, the fixed-wing and helicopter transport squadrons) and also the Soviet institutions' security detachment are to continue to perform the assigned missions.

7. In the area of economic cooperation we should adhere to a policy of fulfilling current obligations according to signed agreements. However we should approach all new requests coming from Amin to give economic and financial aid, including delivery of petroleum products, food, and industrial goods, very cautiously and decide these questions considering our capabilities and the actual needs of the Afghan side, not allowing them to create long-term reserves at our expense.

8. Our advisers located in Afghanistan on behalf of the Ministry of Defense, KGB, and other Soviet ministries and agencies should remain there and carry out the missions assigned to them earlier. However, taking into account that Amin insistently pursues the point of "equal responsibility" of Afghan officials and Soviet representatives for the work of the corresponding Afghan agencies, the participation of Soviet representatives and advisers in measures of the Afghan side should be precluded which could cast a shadow on the Soviet Union.

Requests of the Afghan side to send additional Soviet advisers of one or another specialty should be carefully weighed and be granted only in those cases when this would correspond with our interests.

9. Continue the practice of mutual consultations and exchanges of opinions with Amin and other DRA representatives on questions of foreign policy with the idea of explaining our position on specific issues and also revealing the intentions of the Afghan side in foreign affairs. In necessary cases and in an appropriate form let Amin know of our disapproving attitude of his playing up to the West.

At the same time, though diplomatic and also through special channels, continue to take measures against the interference of other countries, particularly neighboring [countries], in its internal affairs.

10. In the Soviet press they should limit themselves mainly to reports of a factual nature about what is going on in Afghanistan, describing only favorably the measures of the Afghan government which facilitate a deepening of Soviet-Afghan cooperation, consolidate the gains of the April Revolution, and develop the DRA along the path of progressive socioeconomic reforms.

11. The Soviet Embassy in Kabul, the USSR Committee for State Security [KGB], the Ministry of Defense, and the CPSU CC International Department are to study the

policy and practical activities of H. Amin and his circle regarding Afghan internationalists, patriots, and also personnel who have undergone training in the Soviet Union and socialist countries; the reactionary Muslim clergy and tribal leaders; and the foreign policy ties of Afghanistan with the West, particularly with the US…

Upon the availability of facts bearing witness to the beginning of a turn by H. Amin in an anti-Soviet direction, introduce supplemental proposals about measures from our side.

A draft decree is attached.

We request this be considered.

A. Gromyko (MID), Yu. Andropov (KGB), D. Ustinov (MO) , B. Ponomarev (CC CPSU)

29 November 1979