CONFIDENTIAL

Department of State

SECRET

To ALL NATION CAPITOLS NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR BEIJING NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR DAKAR NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR KINGSTON NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR LUSAKA NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR GOROTA NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR BANGALORE NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR LIBREVILLE NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR KINSHASA NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR LAGOS NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR NAIROBI NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR TUNIS NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR PASEO NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR KATHMANDU NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR ISLAMABAD NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR NEW DELHI NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR JAKARTA NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR ALGIERS NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR CAIRO NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR COLOMBO NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR DELHI NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR BUENOS AIRES NIAC IMMEDIATE
AMBASSADOR CANBERRA NIAC IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

Page 03  STATE 333161

SECRETIAL STATE 333161

MILITARY ADDRESSEES TREAT AS SPECIF EXCLUSIVE

S/P 124803 605 12/20/83 (MURHABLO, MICHAEL)
TASSI PEPH, AP, UN, US

SUBJECT: OUR ASSESSMENT OF RECENT EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. ADDRESSEE POSTS MAY ORGAN UN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN BRIEFING MOST GOVERNMENTS. ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IN SEPTEL.

3. ON DECEMBER 27, AFGHAN PRESIDENT MAFIZU LLAM AMIN WAS DEPOSED AND EXECUTED IN A COUP D'ETAT CLEARLY PLANNED AND EXECUTED BY THE SOVIET UNION. DURING THE TWO DAYS PRIOR TO THE COUP A MASSIVE SOVIET AIRLIFT COMPRISING OVER 200 FLIGHTS BROUGHT MEN AND MATERIAL INTO KABUL. ALTHOUGH THE PRECISE REASON FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THESE new forces was not clear at the time, it is now apparent that the first stage was to effect a coup against AMIN's government which had proved ineffective and perhaps embarrassing to the Soviets.

4. RELIABLE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS FROM KABUL INDICATE THAT SOVIET TROOPS WERE ENGAGED IN FIGHTING AFGHAN TROOPS AND OTHERS FOR CONTROL OF RADIO AFGHANISTAN. THE SOVIETS WERE SEEN TO BE TAKING AFGHAN PRISONERS AND AT LEAST THREE AFGHAN TANKS STATIONED NEAR THE RADIO BUILDING WERE DESTROYED. SOVIET CONVOYS WERE SEEN MOVING TOWARD THE CITY AND THERE WAS FIGHTING OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS IN THE VICINITY OF DURULAMAN PALACE, THE RESIDENCE OF AMIN.
SOVIET TROOPS ARE NOW STATIONED IN KEY INTERSECTIONS AT KABUL AND IN FRONT OF MANY GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

5. OUR INITIAL FINDINGS INDICATE THAT THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE COUP APPEAR TO HAVE COME FROM TRANSMITTERS IN THE SOVIET UNION ITSELF, AND NOT FROM RADIO AFGHANISTAN IN KABUL. THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE CLEARLY PRE-RECORDED AND WERE REPEATED CONTINUOUSLY ON SEVERAL FREQUENCIES PURPORTING TO BE RADIO AFGHANISTAN. ACCORDING TO THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS, BABRAK KARMEI HAD SUCCEEDED ARMIN AND WAS NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. BABRAK (WHICH HE IS USUALLY CALLED) WAS FOR MANY YEARS A RIVAL OF FORMER PRESIDENT TAHARI FOR LEADERSHIP OF AFGHANISTAN'S MARXIST MOVEMENT. AFTER THE APRIL 1978 COUP BABRAK WAS NAMED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BUT WITHIN A FEW MONTHS HE WAS "EXILED" AS AMBASSADOR TO PRAGUE, A POST HE HELD FOR ONLY SIX WEEKS BEFORE BEING ORDERED BACK TO KABUL. BABRAK DID NOT RETURN TO KABUL, BUT WE BELIEVE HE REMAINED IN EASTERN EUROPE UNTIL HIS INSTALLATION BY THE SOVIETS AS THE NEW AFGHAN PRESIDENT. HE IS KNOWN TO BE A DEDICATED MARXIST WHO HAS BEEN CLOSE TO THE SOVIETS FOR YEARS, AND HE WILL PROBABLY BE THOROUGHLY AMENABLE TO SOVIET DIRECTION. GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS INSTALLATION, BABRAK WILL CLEARLY BE DEPENDENT ON MOSCOW FOR HIS SURVIVAL.

6. WE HAVE REPORTS FROM KABUL THAT THE SOVIET AIRLIFT IS CONTINUING. EARLIER IN DECEMBER, AT LEAST THE EQUIVALENT OF A COMBAT REGIMENT ARRIVED AT BAGRAM AIR FORCE BASE SOME 40 MILES NORTH OF THE CAPITAL, A VERY SUBSTANTIAL BUILDOUP OF SOVIET FORCES IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF THE AFGHAN BORDER. INVOLVING THE ELEMENTS OF AT LEAST FIVE DIVISIONS, SUGGESTS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ADDITIONAL MILITARY OBJECTIVES BEYOND THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN KABUL. THIS BUILDOUP CONFIDENTIAL

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
The new regime has already made some conciliatory public announcements in an effort to make it more palatable to the Afghan public and has offered to negotiate with various insurgent groups. However, we expect that most of the insurgents will probably spurn these approaches since they are likely to regard Babrak as even more a creature of the Soviet Union than his predecessor. Babrak will doubtless give lip service to non-alignment but will in fact be pursuing an anti-Soviet policy and be subservient to the Soviets in domestic affairs.

The new regime may have a difficult time co-opting elements of the former government. The Afghan army which was already badly demoralized will be further shaken by this most recent coup and there may well be more desertions. The Afghan development program has already in shambles due to the widespread, popular insurgency throughout the countryside. The Soviets will face a difficult task in rebuilding the Afghan army and reconstructing the economy.