

Politburo Session, 26 June, 1986
Notes of Anatoly S. Chernyaev

About Afghanistan

Gorbachev. We have reached a new stage in our relations. There is now a new leadership in Kabul. Where will it go? The Afghan society has also come through a whole stage, gained some experience, the processes will get straighter... And we should act in such a way so that they follow our lead. The road is open for them to act independently, and the new leadership there is ready and willing to do just that. They have shown themselves to be both wise and skillful and able to shoulder these important political decisions. We need to bring our consulate up to speed, and change advisors. We need to give the new leadership a chance to step up to the task. We need to name a new ambassador and cut in half the number of members of the advisers. There are 2500 of them...

And we need to tell Najib: here is our approach. Kornienko (the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs) has already told him some of this.

The United States does not want political reconciliation. They're doing whatever they can to make it fail. We have taken a first step and withdrew two regiments... Maybe we should just announce: look, two years have passed, we said we would take our forces out and we have started doing just that. Maybe we should, in the near future, take out another 5 to 10 thousand to give the process a boost. We will complete it within two to three years, in any case. But to do it all as a package. We need to think it all through and keep the initiative. [We should] pull U.S.A. and Pakistan by their tails all the time. We just need to be sure that the final result does not look like a humiliating defeat: to have lost so many men and now abandoned it all. In other words, we need the process to continue, so that it does not pause.

Maybe we should invite Najib to Moscow? In short, **we have to get out of there.**

Gromyko: It is not our war.

Gorbachev: It would be harder to blame us for it...

Gromyko: We need to bring some people into the government from the opposition. We need to find individuals.

Gorbachev: We will put the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the KGB, the Defense Department, and Dobrynin in charge of preparing such a proposal.

[Source: The Gorbachev Foundation Archive, Moscow, Fond 1, Opis 2
Translated by Jayson Stoinski and Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive]