



14.

PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SATURDAY, 20 MARCH 1982

AFGHANISTAN DAY

Australia will commemorate Sunday, 21 March as Afghanistan Day, to recognise the continuing plight of the people of Afghanistan. In doing so, Australia will be joining a number of countries, including members of the Islamic Conference, European Parliament and the European Community.

It is now more than two years since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, overthrew the government, and took military control of the country. It installed Babrak Karmal as head of a new illegal regime, which has not secured wide international recognition. Australia has not recognised and will not recognise or support that regime. Soviet armed forces, now numbering around 90,000-95,000, still occupy Afghanistan. They show no signs of withdrawing. They continue to carry out harsh repressive action against the Afghanistan people, including bombing of cities and villages, destruction of crops and livestock, and the detention of thousands of citizens. These Soviet military actions have precipitated one of the largest single refugee problems in the world. Around three and a half million Afghans have been driven into refuge in Pakistan and in Iran. The agony of Afghanistan must not be forgotten.

By its invasion and continued military presence in Afghanistan, the USSR has violated the most elementary laws of international behaviour.

It has deprived Afghanistan of its sovereign, independent and non-aligned status. It has flouted the United Nations charter and all the international conventions which prohibit the use of force except in self-defence, and prohibit foreign intervention in another country's affairs. The Soviet Union has consistently ignored repeated calls by the international community for withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Above all, the USSR's continued intervention in Afghanistan projects political uncertainty and instability into the sub-continent and beyond. Because of the Soviet Union's disregard for the accepted norms of international behaviour, Australia has made it clear that our own relations with the Soviet Union cannot be divorced from Soviet activities in Afghanistan. This is why Australia has cut back co-operation and exchanges with the USSR.

There can be no end to the fighting and suffering, and no political solution, until the Soviet troops leave Afghanistan. A political settlement needs to be found on the following basis:

- withdrawal of foreign troops;
- full respect for the independence, sovereignty and non-aligned status of Afghanistan, and
- strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference.

A background paper on Afghanistan, prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs is attached.

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AFGHANISTAN

Background

Over two years ago, on 27 December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, overthrew the communist government of Hafizullah Amin and took military control of the country. It installed Babrak Karmal as head of a new and illegal regime, which has not secured wide international recognition. Soviet armed forces, now numbering around 90-95,000, still occupy Afghanistan. They show no signs of withdrawing. They continue to attack the Afghan people, bombing cities and villages, destroying crops and livestock, and keeping thousands of citizens prisoner. These Soviet military actions have precipitated one of the largest single refugee problems in the world. Around three and a half million Afghans have been forced to seek refuge in Pakistan and in Iran.

Within Afghanistan the Mujahideen continue to be militarily active throughout the country, with growing evidence of unity between the various groups. The intensification of the Parcham-Khalq rivalry within the Afghan Communist Party has continued, although Moscow remains committed to Babrak Karmal and therefore to the Parcham faction. Karmal recently appointed a new Parchamite Prime Minister, Sultan Ali Keshtmand. The Babrak Karmal regime has not won popular support, its administration does not extend beyond the major cities and towns, and it is totally dependent on Soviet military support. There is no end in sight to the continuing resistance by Mujahideen groups to the Soviet military presence.

Military situation

Fighting continues in all provinces within Afghanistan; tension and conflict continue to increase in the towns especially in Herat and Kandahar; and the Afghan Army now reduced by purges, casualties and defections to a force of about 25-30,000, no longer plays a primary role. Soviet forces, which now total around 90-95,000, with a further 26,000 across the border in the USSR bear the brunt of much of the serious fighting against insurgent groups, but have not been able to inflict crippling losses on them. Although the total forces have only marginally increased, there have been qualitative changes in the type of Soviet forces deployed in Afghanistan and the military equipment which they have brought with them.

Despite superior Soviet fire power and complete control of the skies, the insurgent groups, who number at any one time from 30,000 to 50,000 fighting men in groups of anything from 24 to 2-3,000, continue to fight well. The insurgents are now better equipped, partly because of weapons given to them by defecting Afghan troops, partly because of weapons they have captured and weaponry being supplied by outside sources.

Political infighting, between the ruling Parcham faction of the People's Democratic Party and the former dominant Khalq faction, has also meant that military units supporting the Khalqis are less inclined to fight. As a result the Soviet Union has systematically withdrawn much of the modern equipment which it had supplied to the Afghanistan Army, especially anti-aircraft weapons, so that defecting Afghan units cannot give them to the insurgents. Those Afghan units still considered to be loyal and still involved in fighting suffer from poor morale and lack of food and other supplies, especially petroleum products, and they are resentful of their Soviet commanders. Recent reports indicate a lessening of Soviet

attempts to increase control of territory and suggest that the Soviet forces are limiting their role to consolidating their hold on the major towns, communication centres and important airfields. In particular Soviet/Afghan forces have had to fight hard to hold control over the cities of Kandahar and Herat.

The Karmal regime, conscious that the army has been reduced from a total of 100,000 to around 25-30,000 men has made continuous efforts to conscript more men into the army often by force. These efforts have largely failed or been matched by desertions and have had the counter-effect of swelling the numbers of the Mujahideen.

Effect on Pakistan

Pakistan feels itself under pressure from the Soviet troops on its border with Afghanistan, and from the approximately 2.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The Pakistan Government is concerned at the possibility of Soviet troops entering its territory in "hot pursuit" of the Mujahideen: already there have been incidents of helicopter gunships and aircraft entering Pakistan and firing on ground targets. The USSR has commented that a state of "undeclared war" exists between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pakistan has reached agreement with the United States on a \$US3 billion military and economic package spread over five years. Approximately half of the total will be used to acquire new armaments and the United States hopes thereby to strengthen Pakistan's resistance to Soviet pressures. Pakistan continues to obtain financial and other support from its West Asian neighbours, especially Saudi Arabia.

International Developments and Response

By its invasion of Afghanistan the international image of the Soviet Union has been badly damaged, especially in its relations with the non-aligned countries, in particular the Islamic countries. Almost all major international bodies and associations have called for the withdrawal of foreign forces and for steps to be implemented that would allow Afghanistan to determine its own future free from outside interference and to allow it to regain its non-aligned status.

The most important forum in which the Soviet Union has come under pressure is the United Nations.

Following the veto by the Soviet Union on 7 January 1980 of a Resolution in the UN Security Council, the question of Afghanistan was transferred to an emergency session of the 34th General Assembly, which, on 14 January 1980, adopted by 104 votes to 18, with 18 abstentions, a Resolution calling for "the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan in order to enable its people to determine their own form of government and choose their economic, political and social systems free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever". The Resolution, sponsored by 17 non-aligned States, called on the Security Council to consider ways and means which could assist in its implementation.

On 19 February 1980 the Australian House of Representatives condemned the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union inter alia as a gross violation of the UN charter; referred to the January 1980 UN General Assembly Resolution; and called for an immediate unconditional and total withdrawal of Soviet troops.

At the 35th session of the General Assembly, which began on 16 September 1980, an item was inscribed concerning "The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security". The Soviet Union's lack of response to the earlier call for withdrawal was sharply criticised, and a new Resolution, drafted principally by the Islamic Conference countries, repeated the demand.

The main elements of the Resolution were described by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan during the debate on Afghanistan in the General Assembly on 17 November 1980: "first, the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan; secondly, the right of the Afghan people to determine their form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever; thirdly, the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan; and fourthly, the creation of the necessary conditions which would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour". The crux of a political solution, he said, was the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghan territory: "Obviously, what is implied is nothing other than a total withdrawal of Soviet troops". The Pakistan Foreign Minister also warned:

"No less ominous for the world order is the contention that military intervention is justified in the exercise of the right of individual and collective defence against an imaginary threat. Nor can the invasion of a small non-aligned country like Afghanistan be rationalised on the basis of geo-strategic considerations or doctrines. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that despite the injection

of a formidable military force the resistance of the Afghan people has not only continued but acquired new dimensions."

These views were echoed by a very large majority of UN member States who, on 20 November 1980 voted in support of the Resolution by 111 votes to 22, with 12 abstentions.

On 18 November 1981, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution reaffirming the Afghan people's right to choose their own form of government free from outside intervention or constraint and again calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops. This Resolution, No. 36/34, was approved by 116 votes to 23, with 12 abstentions. This compares with the vote of 104 in favour of a similar but shorter Resolution in January 1980 (at the Assembly's Emergency Session following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979) and the 111 in favour of the Resolution at least year's 35th General Assembly. The Soviet Union's refusal to heed the Assembly's recommendations, its maintenance of some 85,000 troops in Afghanistan during 1981, the continuing popular resistance to the Soviet-imposed Babrak Karmal regime and international concern about the continuing refugee problem contributed to this sustained support for the General Assembly resolution in 1981. The Soviet Permanent Representative to the UN tried to dissuade the Assembly from inscribing an agenda item on the "so-called" question of the situation in Afghanistan, but he was defeated, and the subject was raised by many speakers in the general debate as well as in discussion of the Resolution itself in mid-November.

After recognising the importance of initiatives by the Islamic and non-aligned countries in finding a political solution for Afghanistan, the 1981 Resolution:

- . "Reiterates that the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan is essential for a peaceful solution of the problem;
- . reaffirms the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever;
- . calls for the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan;
- . calls upon all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement of a political solution, in accordance with the provisions of the previous Resolution, and the creation of necessary conditions which could enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and honour;
- . renews its appeal to all States and national and international organisations to continue to extend humanitarian relief assistance, with a view to alleviating the hardship of the Afghan refugees, in co-ordination with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees."

It also asks the UN Secretary-General to continue his efforts to solve the problem of Afghanistan and promote a political solution there, and to keep the UN member States informed of progress.

Australia has given full support to all three Resolutions and has welcomed the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to find a solution. Australia endorses the appointment by Secretary-General de Cuellar of his personal representative on Afghanistan, Mr D. Cordovez of Ecuador. (Mr de Cuellar himself occupied the position of personal representative on Afghanistan to the former Secretary-General of the UN, Mr Waldheim, from February 1980). Australia supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's personal representative to negotiate a political solution to the Afghanistan problem.

The Soviet Union has also been criticised by such organisations as the UN Human Rights Commission, the Islamic Conference (on three occasions, the most important being on 21 May 1980), the Foreign Ministers of the European Community, the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries, at CHOGRM II in New Delhi in 1981 and at the Melbourne CHOGM in October 1981, by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and by the February 1981 NAM Foreign Ministers Meeting in New Delhi.

Despite the overwhelming condemnation of the Soviet Union by the international community there appears to be little shift in the attitude of either of the Soviet Union or the Afghan regime. This was made clear when a proposal put forward by the UK Foreign Minister, Lord Carrington with the support of the EC countries on 30 June 1981 was rejected by the Soviet Union as unrealistic and unacceptable. The UK/EC proposal is for a two stage conference:

Stage one would seek international arrangements to create conditions in which Afghanistan's independence and non-alignment

can be assured. It would be attended by the permanent members of the Security Council, Pakistan, India, Iran and the Secretaries General of the UN and the Islamic Conference or their representatives.

Stage two would include representatives of the Afghan people. It would try to reach agreement on the international arrangements proposed at the first stage.

Subsequently on 24 August 1981, the Karmal regime released its latest proposal regarding a political solution. The new proposal no longer insisted upon separate bilateral talks with Pakistan and Iran and would enable tripartite talks to take place. In addition the Karmal government no longer objects to the UN Secretary-General or his representative taking part in either bilateral or tripartite talks. These concessions appear to be designed to soften international criticism of the Soviet Union and Afghanistan at the UN and to increase pressure on Pakistan to begin negotiations. The proposals were released shortly after the second visit by the then UN Secretary-General's personal representative Perez de Cuellar, to Kabul and Islamabad. Reaction by key countries such as Pakistan, the United States etc. has not been favourable, as the proposal carries with it the implication that the Babrak government would gain some degree of legitimacy under the cover of negotiations. The proposal also does not address itself to the main issues - namely the withdrawal of Soviet forces before negotiations can begin. It also continues to lay the blame on "foreign interference" from Pakistan and Iran.

Subsequently both Pakistan and Afghanistan presented views to each other through the office of the Secretary-General in New York, but the exchange did not get far. It is not clear whether these "proximity talks" will resume.

Iran is now pursuing its own proposal, which calls for Soviet forces to be replaced by an Islamic force (including Iranian and Pakistani elements) and the creation of a National Assembly to agree on a political basis for the future of the country. The National Assembly would include representatives from the Mujahideen. It is not clear how Iran would negotiate its proposal with the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, in view of its present position of not discussing its views with either of them.

At the Melbourne CHOGM in October 1981, the communique item on Afghanistan reflected the earlier strong language of UN and NAM meetings. It said:

Heads of Government expressed grave concern at the situation in and around Afghanistan and its implications both for the region's peace and stability and for international security. Although there were differing perceptions about the developments leading to the present situation, Heads of Government were united in calling urgently for a political settlement on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops and full respect for the independence, sovereignty, and non-aligned status of Afghanistan and strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference. They affirmed the right of Afghan refugees to

return to their homes in safety and honour. They urged all concerned to work towards a negotiated settlement which would leave the Afghan people free to determine their own future.

Refugees

The situation in Afghanistan has generated a significant outflow of refugees primarily to Pakistan and Iran. There are an estimated 2.5 million refugees in Pakistan and about 1 million in Iran.

International organisations including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), have been active in meeting the basic needs of the refugees.

Australia is keenly aware of the special difficulties which Pakistan is facing as a result of the inflow of refugees into its territory. To ease the burden of coping with these difficulties Australia has provided assistance totalling approximately \$A12 million to date in the form of direct relief aid to the refugees. In 1981/82 Australia is supplying 25,000 tonnes of wheat, 300 tonnes of high protein biscuits, and 40 tonnes of sugar through the UNHCR and the WFP.

In addition, Australia provides economic assistance to Pakistan in the form of food aid, project assistance, and technical cooperation and training. The total value of such assistance in 1980/81 and 1981/82 is approximately \$A11.5 million.

Post-Afghanistan Measures Against the Soviet Union

In its condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the Government imposed a series of measures designed to curtail Australia's bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. These measures include:-

MEASURES	DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION
a) Suspension of bilateral scientific exchange	9 January 1980
b) Soviet research vessels refused permission to operate in Australian waters	9 January 1980
c) Suspension of bilateral cultural exchanges (including sporting exchanges)	9 January 1980
d) Suspension of bilateral academic exchanges	9 January 1980
e) Suspension of regular officials talks at Foreign Ministry level	9 January 1980
f) Suspension of fisheries co-operation	9 January 1980
g) Suspension of Soviet proposals in aviation, including the denial to Aeroflot of access to Australia	9 January 1980
h) Suspension of meetings of the bilateral Mixed Commission on Trade and Economic Co-operation	9 January 1980
i) Suspension of official visits between Australia and the Soviet Union by Ministers and Senior officials	9 January 1980
j) Australian support for the U.S. partial grains embargo	9 January 1980
k) Support for the Western campaign to boycott the Moscow Olympics in 1980	9 January 1980
l) Suspension of negotiations for the reciprocal allocation of land and the building of new Embassies in Canberra and Moscow	15 January 1980
m) Cancellation of the Soviet trade promotion exhibit at the 1980 Royal Agricultural Show, Sydney	15 January 1980

- n) Suspension of consideration of new Soviet maritime initiatives 14 February 1980
- o) Withholding of Special Government marketing and promotion assistance to Australian exporters to the Soviet Union 14 April 1980
- p) Banning Soviet cruise ships from using Australian ports 31 May 1980

By its continuing occupation of Afghanistan, its disregard of the views of many countries, and its refusal to negotiate for a just solution, the Soviet Union has not given the international community any cause to discontinue its strong condemnation of what has occurred in Afghanistan. If anything events in Poland have served only to reinforce the need to maintain its present approach to the USSR. In these circumstances the Government is not prepared to conduct normal bilateral relations with the Soviet Union and has made its position clear to the Soviet authorities. When in April 1981, the United States decided to lift its partial grains embargo for domestic political reasons this effectively removed the basis for Australian participation in the partial embargo. This decision on grain sales in no way represented any retreat from the Government's strong condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. All the other measures remain firmly in place.

The Australian Government has implemented its sanctions in consultation with other western governments. There has been no change in the perception by western governments of Soviet intervention in Afghan. Although international condemnation and retaliatory measures have not so far caused the Soviet Union to change its policies towards Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has clearly suffered in terms of loss of esteem in the eyes of third-world countries (especially Islamic and Non-Aligned states), and the more hardened posture by western groups on such strategic issues as NATO defence preparedness, with

corresponding constraints on its activity e.g. with respect to Poland. The international community has therefore sound reasons for persisting with its opposition to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan in the hope that Soviet withdrawal will eventually be procured.

CHRONOLOGY OF NOTABLE EVENTS WITHIN AFGHANISTAN
SINCE APRIL 1978

- April 1978 President Daoud imprisons anti-government leaders including Mohammad Taraki, leader of the Khalq (masses) faction of the communist Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (P.D.P).

- 27 April 1978 Elements of the Afghan army and airforce led by General Abdul Qadir and Major Aslam Watanjar mutiny and lead a successful revolt against President Daoud. President Daoud, members of his family and leading Ministers and officials are killed during the fighting.

- May 1978 Mohammad Taraki is appointed Prime Minister and President, with the leader of the Parcham (flag) faction of the P.D.P, Babrak Karmal, as Deputy Prime Minister.

- May-July 1978 Small tribal groups in eastern Afghanistan adjoining the Pakistan border increase traditional hostility towards the central Government. Muslim leaders express fears over the Godless nature of the Government. Armed forces and bureaucracy are ruthlessly purged to eliminate pro-Daoud and right wing elements.

- July 1978

Because of his support of closer relations with the Soviet Union, Karmal and a number of his associates are removed from Government and appointed as Ambassadors. Shortly afterwards they are called traitors by Taraki and take refuge in east-European countries. Hafizullah Amin is appointed Deputy Prime Minister.

- August 1978

General Abdul Qadir is arrested and gaoled.

- August-December 1978

. Soviet military and civilian advisers begin to step up program of replacing victims of purges. Total number of Soviet advisers reaches about 4,000-5,000.

. Reforms introduced by Taraki and Amin are opposed by traditional elements in Afghan society.

. Fighting in east Afghanistan increases with the support of extremist Muslim groups and other tribes alienated by the reforms. Insurgents describe themselves as "Mujahideen" - freedom fighters.

- December 1978

A Soviet-Afghan Treaty of Friendship is signed.

- February 1979

American Ambassador in Kabul is shot dead with possible connivance of Afghan Security Forces whilst being held captive in a Kabul hotel.

- March 1979

Taraki hands over Prime Ministership to Amin who toughens Government position against freedom fighters. There is fighting throughout the country. All religious groups are now in opposition. Soviet military advisers become more active in directing Afghan armed forces.

- September 1979

. Further purge of armed forces takes place. Major Aslam Watanjar is expelled and disappears. Army morale suffers from purges and from continued harassment by freedom fighters.

. President Taraki returns from the Havana Summit via Moscow and is replaced by Amin following a shooting incident at a meeting of the Revolutionary Government on 14 September. Taraki's death is made public on 9 October.

- October-December 1979

Major fighting breaks out between the Afghan army and freedom fighters, particularly in east Afghanistan and in the remote north-eastern province of Badakhshan.

- December 1979

US Department announces concern at build-up of Soviet military formations on the Soviet border and within Afghanistan, particularly at Bagram airbase.

Soviet force of about 2,500 land at Bagram military air base, 40 miles north of Kabul. Their forward move to Kabul Airport is reported by foreign Press. The Soviet invasion begins.

- 24-25 December 1979

Soviet transport planes land with increasing frequency at Kabul Airport, bringing troops and equipment.

- 27 December 1979

. Soviet troops seize the Ministry of the Interior and largely neutralise the Kabul garrison of the Afghan Army by disarming troops and immobilising vehicles.

. A statement by Babrak Karmal that he has taken over the government and is appealing for Soviet military assistance is broadcast from Termez, on the Soviet side of the River Oxus.

. Kabul Radio broadcasts names of new Revolutionary Council, headed by Babrak Karmal. Regime announces that Amin has been executed, and that on the basis of the Afghan-Soviet Treaty of December 1978, it has requested the Soviet Union to render urgent political and military assistance.

- January 1980

General Qadir and Major Watanjar are included in the new Government. Fighting continues but is hampered by the difficult terrain and winter conditions.

- February 1980

Morale and efficiency in the Afghan Army further deteriorates in face of desertion, casualties, lack of supplies etc. Freedom fighters step up activities. Afghan and Soviet forces are called in to quell major urban disturbances, following effective national strike. Considerable casualties in Kabul. Soviet forces play greater role in counter-insurgency operations. There are reports of villages being razed and of the use of chemical weapons.

- March-May 1980

Fighting continues, particularly in Konar and Paktia provinces. Karmal tries to widen support by including experienced Administrators in bureaucracy. Urban tension continues. Soviets increase activity and are believed to have strengthened their forces.

- May 14 1980

Karmal regime issues program for political settlement proposing bilateral talks with Iran and Pakistan.

- June 1980

President Brezhnev announces limited withdrawal of troops and tanks. Faction fighting within the People's Democratic Party increases. Further defections take place by Afghan army units to the Mujahideen. Soviets attack rebel groups near Kabul.

- July 1980
Mujahideen increase activity. In Ghazni province a major Afghan army group rebels and is attacked by Soviets. Karmal begins purge of Khalq faction Ministers and officials and centralizes power under his authority.
- August 1980
Further call is made to young men to fight in Afghan army, including some groups earlier exempt. Major fighting occurs around Herat and in eastern provinces. Reports come in of Soviets removing anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons from Afghan army.
- September-January 1981
Karmal visits Moscow. Afghan army is reduced to about 25,000 due to casualties, purges and defections. Regime begins efforts to create National Fatherland Front in order to increase support.
- April 1981
Saudi Arabia breaks off diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. U.N. Secretary-General's personal representative, Perez de Cuellar, visits Kabul and Islamabad for initiation of talks on a political settlement.
- May 1981
Karmal denies involvement of Soviets in murder of President Amin and reiterates that Soviet troops were invited in by Amin and Taraki, as well as by himself.

- June 1981

Fighting continues between Khalq and Parcham factions. Heavy fighting continues around Herat and there are further defections by Afghan troops. Soviet airbase at Bagram is attacked. Three MIG-21s of the Afghan Airforce attack a passenger bus in Pakistan. Sultan Ali Keshtmand is made Prime Minister; Karmal remains as President. Inaugural congress of Fatherland Front begins 15 June. Major fighting is reported in Nangarhar province.

- July 1981

More Parcham political figures are assassinated. Large scale Soviet/Afghan operations take place in Paghman area near Kabul. Demonstrations take place in Kabul protesting against the deployment of military cadets in Paghman and their subsequent high casualty rate. Karmal regime facilitates hijack of a Pakistan aircraft. Security measures are tightened in Kabul.

- August 1981

Further Soviet offensives take place in Panjshir Valley, North-East of Kabul, on 24 August.

Afghanistan announces revised stance on possible negotiations leading to a political settlement of the issue of Soviet occupation. It accepts concept of trilateral talks with Pakistan and Iran involving U.N. participation on conditions which

imply recognition of Karmal government and acceptance of the Soviet argument that "outside interference" necessitated the invasion and occupation.

- September 1981

New conscription order covers all males under 35 years old, including reservists, and leads to demonstrations in major cities with large number of arrests. Heavy fighting takes place in Kandahar. Soviet Panjshir offensive fails. Soviet and Afghan administration buildings in Kabul are attacked.

- October-November 1981

Serious fighting continues in Kandahar, city said to be largely under control of the Mujahideen. Fighting continues in main provinces, including Herat and Paghman.

- December 1981

Pakistan Government claims in a protest to Kabul that Afghan helicopter gunships attacked buses, villages and a frontier post, killing five people. Pakistan complains that its air space was violated 23 times between 5 October and 2 November. Afghan sources in Islamabad say hundreds of people were killed in five days of fierce attacks by Soviet-Afghan forces on villages near Kandahar.

- January 1982

Soviet/Afghan forces withdraw from fighting north of Kabul. Reports circulate that Afghan army is suffering loss of morale and is unwilling to fight. Major-General Abdul Qadir is appointed Acting Minister of National Defence. Fighting continues in many parts of the country despite harsh winter conditions. Soviets bomb and shell Kandahar in effort to destroy parts of Mujahideen hold on the city. A Soviet General is killed when his helicopter is shot down.

- February 1982

Elections for delegates to Afghan Communist Party begin. There is a large exodus from Kandahar after heavy bombardment. Fighting continues elsewhere in Herat, Parwan and Bamyan, with harsh reprisals in areas reclaimed by regime forces.