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**GEHEIM**

Land: Afghanistan/Sowjet-Unie.

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Verzonden aan: de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken.

Aan Zijne Excellentie Prof. Dr. J.E. de QUAY  
Minister-President

Plein 1813 no. 4

'S-GRAVENHAGE.

The USSR's continued blandishments, which have been welcomed in Afghanistan, and Kabul's fear of the military government in Pakistan have resulted during the past year in a major expansion of ties between Kabul and Moscow. In its effort to keep Western influence in Afghanistan to a minimum, Moscow has given Kabul the largest sum of grant aid yet provided a free-world country and has increased the quantity of its military assistance. Soviet leaders apparently hope that the magnitude of their own ties with Afghanistan will completely overshadow those of the West.

Fear of Pakistan After a period of increasingly cordial relations with the West which reached a peak in the summer of 1958, the Afghans reacted strongly to a series of developments during the following fall and winter. They were especially disturbed by the ouster of Pakistani President Mirza, with whom they felt they could do business on the Pushtoonistan issue--Kabul demands that the Pushtu tribesmen in Pakistan be given the right of self-determination. The Afghans were also bothered by the bilateral defense agreements negotiated by the United States with Pakistan and with Iran, which they feared would turn the local balance of power further against Afghanistan.

Expanded Relations with USSR: As a result of a visit by Foreign Minister Naim to Moscow early in January 1959, the Afghans received the first large-scale grant aid ever given by Moscow to a free-world country. This aid is being used principally on a road project, the largest single development project scheduled in Afghanistan, which, it is said, will cost \$80,000,000.

Afghanistan is becoming increasingly dependent on the USSR for spare parts for its weapons as it modernizes its army and air force. The USSR now accounts for over 40 per cent of the country's foreign trade, and the Afghans would find it costly to shift their markets in a short time should they be threatened by a less friendly Soviet trade policy. Early assistance from the USSR generated a desire for more aid, and the recent agreement will probably induce Afghanistan to seek still more.

The Afghans appear impressed by the speed with which Soviet projects are implemented, as well as by the favorable terms offered by the USSR. In addition, the Afghan Government seems to feel it can safely accept a large increase in Soviet assistance without endangering its own control of the country, since there has been no apparent effort by Soviet technicians to propagandize or engage in subversion.

Kabul Relaxes Its Guard: Confident of its ability to deal safely with the USSR, Prime Minister Daud's government seems to be relaxing its guard somewhat. The Afghan Government has opened up new areas of its territory to Soviet activity. In the past, there has been a rough north-south division of the country, with Russian technicians working in northern Afghanistan and Western technicians mainly in the south. This division will cease with the introduction of the Soviet technicians who are to work on the new road from the Soviet border to Kandahar, Afghanistan's southernmost major city.

**GEHEIM**

Also of interest is the assistance being provided by the USSR in building three bridges just north of the Khyber Pass. The powerful Mohmand tribe living in this border area, like other Pushtu tribes, strongly opposes any attempt by "outsiders," including the Afghan Government, to strengthen controls over tribal territory. Mohmands opposing a road-building project in the tribal area killed a district official last December. Introduction of Soviet technicians into this sensitive tribal area may therefore create additional friction both with the tribes and with Pakistan.

Cooling Relations with West: Daud's willingness to expand Afghan ties with the USSR apparently reflects a belief that the chief threat to his regime comes from Pakistan. Kabul strongly resents the failure of the present military regime in Pakistan to respond to Afghanistan's Pushtoonistan campaign. Daud may also suspect that the Pakistanis are capable of attempting to overthrow his government and replace it with another more friendly to Karachi.

**SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE**



Kabul seems to consider that American interest in Afghanistan has cooled, and finds this especially disturbing in view of its suspicions of Pakistan. In December 1958, Daud initiated a new policy of public opposition to the Baghdad Pact, denouncing US military aid to Pakistan and Iran as compelling Afghanistan to take steps to redress the local balance of power.

Daud and his colleagues probably also see as an indication of American indifference the comparatively slight show of high-level official US interest in Afghanistan as compared with the frequent and extensive displays of interest by Moscow. Since the

visit by Bulganin and Khrushchev to Kabul in December 1955, there have been frequent exchanges of cultural delegations and high-level visits, featuring lavish red-carpet receptions in the USSR for the Afghan King and a number of his ministers.

Present Position: The Afghans have reacted toward what they consider the hardened attitude of the Pakistani military regime and the cooling interest of the West by stepping up their propaganda against Karachi's "oppression" of Pushtu tribesmen living in Pakistan and by an occasional commentary critical of the United States. Most recently, Kabul's propaganda has even claimed that US-Pakistani defense agreements are intended to convert Pakistan's Pushtu region into an American military base.

On the other hand, Afghanistan's leaders have in the past clearly shown they are aware that Soviet friendship is motivated by worldwide aggressive ambitions. They probably believe the controls of their own police state will provide protection against any attempts at subversion. They probably also hope that Moscow's goals will fall short of making Afghanistan a Soviet satellite and remain limited to keeping Western influence in Afghanistan to a minimum. Although the Afghans are still sensitive to infringements on their independence, they may find that the sheer magnitude of their growing ties with the USSR will make it increasingly difficult to set national policy without reference to Soviet wishes.