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CFVV ESAE526JC55A
 OO RUMHR
 DF RUSLX 173 2061140
 ZNY SSSSS ZZM(ZDK)
 CR 331117Z OCT 79
 FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5879
 INFO RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0789
 RUSBCD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9395
 RUMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 249E
 RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1841
 RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1962
 RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7464
 RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATC 0073
 RUMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 2535
 RUMHQA/CINCPAC
 RUSNAA/CINCEUR
 BT
 SECRET KABL 7319

2521
 EXDIS
 ROK ChG
 CHRON

EXDIS

NOFORN

MILITARY ADDRESSEES PLEASE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

CINCPAC AND CINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

U.S. 12065: 3DS 10/5/85 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) GR-M
 TAGS: FEPR, PINE, MILI, MOPS, AF, UR
 SJLJ: (S) SOVIET COMBAT TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. DEFINITION OF SOVIET COMBAT PERSONNEL: WHEN EMBASSY KABUL USES THE TERM "COMBAT TROOPS" TO REFER TO SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN, IT INCLUDES: (A) CLEARLY DISTINCT SOVIET MILITARY UNITS, SUCH AS THE SOVIETS' SPECIAL 500-MAN "REACTION FORCE" WHICH APPEARS TO BE PROVIDING THE INTERIOR DEFENCE CURRENTLY FOR BAGRAM AIR BASE; (B) SOVIET COMBAT SPECIALISTS, SUCH AS THE SOME 500 TO 1,000 SOVIET ARMORED-CORPS SOLDIERS CURRENTLY STATIONED AT THE PUL-I-CHARKI TANK BASE; (C) THE SEVERAL INDIVIDUAL YOUNG SOVIET SOLDIERS BEING SIGHTED AROUND KABUL, WHO ARE BELIEVED TO PERFORM, INTER ALIA, SPECIAL SENTRY ROLES FOR SOVIET INSTALLATIONS AND HOUSING AREAS (MANY HAVE CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE SLAVIC FEATURES, AND THEIR AFGHAN UNIFORMS ARE CONSPICUOUSLY NEATER THAN THOSE OF REGULAR AFGHAN SOLDIERS); (D) ANY SOVIET MILITARY MAN HERE WHOSE OPERATIONAL ROLE APPEARS TO BE MORE THAN THAT OF A TRAINING ADVISOR, SUCH AS THE SOVIET TECHNICIANS WHO SERVICE THE HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS AND ARMORED VEHICLES NOW BEING USED HERE IN ACTION AGAINST THE REBELS.

3. NUMBER OF SOVIET COMBAT PERSONNEL: ACCORDING TO THE BEST INFORMATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO US, INCLUDING DATA CONFIRMED BY OTHER SENSITIVE USG SOURCES, THERE ARE PROBABLY ~~4,200 SOVIET COMBAT PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN AT THIS TIME.~~ THIS FIGURE CAN BE REGARDED AS CONSERVATIVE. AS NOTED ABOVE, THERE ARE AT LEAST 600 SOVIET TROOPS GUARDING BAGRAM AIR BASE. THE ACTUAL NUMBER COULD BE HICHER. THE OTHER CATEGORIES DISCUSSED IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH TOTAL 3,600, AT THE VERY LEAST. IT IS HARD TO BE PRECISE IN CERTAIN CASES, HENCE THE 500-TO-1,700 FIGURE WE ARE CITING FOR SOVIET ARMORED COPRS PERSONNEL AT THE PUL-I-CHAPKI TANK BASE. AS THESE FIGURES ARE RETAINED AND VERIFIED, THE TOTAL COULD GO HICHER. FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE CHECK NHK-4028 OF SEPTEMBER 8, NHK-4047 OF SEPTEMBER 22, AND NHK-4050 OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1979.

4. DEFINITION OF SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORY PERSONNEL: WE USE THE TERM "SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS" TO DESCRIBE ONLY THOSE PERSONS WHO PRIMARY ROLE APPEARS TO BE TO TRAIN THE AFGHAN FORCES AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ADVICE. BECAUSE SO MANY SOVIET "ADVISORS" ASSIGNED TO AFGHAN COMBAT UNITS ARE ASSUMING DIRECT OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS DURING COMBAT WITH REBEL FORCES, HOWEVER -- INCLUDING, IN SEVERAL CASES, DIRECT COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIB.

REF: 3,1; 315; 5#343 (9.3 9:34)-0 735253,
5#3 "MILITARY ADVISOR - AND "COMBAT FORCES" CATEGORIES. SOME OF THESE SOVIET OFFICERS SHIFT BACK TO ADVISORY ROLES DURING PERIODS WHEN THEIR REGIONS BECOME STABILIZED; OTHERS RETAIN COMMAND AUTHORITY. AT LEAST THREE OF THE SOVIET COMMANDERS IN THE FIELD ARE OF GENERAL RANK, INCIDENTALLY.

5. NUMBER OF MILITARY ADVISORS: WE ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE SOME ~~1,200 SOVIETS ASSIGNED HERE AS MILITARY ADVISORS,~~ BUT, FOR THE REASONS DISCUSSED ABOVE, SOME HUNDREDS OF THIS TOTAL PROBABLY SHOULD BE SHIFTED TO THE "COMBAT TROOPS" SIDE OF THE LEDGER AT TIMES. WE UNFORTUNATELY LACK PRECISE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR CATEGORY AT THIS TIME. IT IS EASIER TO SPOT AND EVALUATE LARGE BLOCKS OF SOVIET TROOPS AT BAGRAM AND PUL-I-CHAPKI THAN IT IS TO WEIGH THE VARYING ROLES OF INDIVIDUAL SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS IN AFGHAN UNITS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

6. TOTAL SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN: THE 4,200 CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE COMBAT TROOPS, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH SOME 3,000 MEN WHOSE PRIMARY ROLE SEEMS AT THIS TIME TO BE IN THE TRAINING AND ADVISORY LEVEL GIVES A TOTAL OF 7,200 SOVIET UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN THIS COUNTRY. MOST OF THEM, OF COURSE, COULD BE REGARDED AS "COMBAT TROOPS" IN A CRUNCH SITUATION HERE REQUIRING A QUICK SOVIET REACTION. AS NOTED ABOVE, WE BELIEVE THAT OUR FIGURES ARE ON THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE; THEREFORE, WE SUBJECT THEM TO CONTINUING REEVALUATION. ADDR SEE POSTS WILL HENCEFORTH BE INFORMED WHEN THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THESE STATISTICS. AMSTUTZ

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