

## Document Citation

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# AFGHAN BREAKDOWN

(ITALIAN-SOVIET)

A Clemi Cinematografica (Rome)-Lenfilm Studios (Leningrad)-Russkoe Video (Leningrad) co-production, in collaboration with Raidue. (Intl. sales, Sacis.) Produced by Giovanni di Clemente. Directed by Vladimir Bortko. Screenplay, Alexander Tchervinsky, adapted by Gino Capone; camera (Cinecitta color), Zasiadko Leomidovitch; editor, Bruno Micheli; music, Vladimir Draskovic. Reviewed at Cannes Film Festival (market), May 11, 1991. Running time: **108 MIN.**

Major Bandura . . . . . Michele Placido  
Katya . . . . . Tatiana Doghileva

Also with: Oleg Borisov, Iskander Gifarov, Boris Plotnikov, Nina Ruslanova, Alessandro Stefanelli.

*(Italian soundtrack)*

**The Soviet withdrawal after nine years of war in Afghanistan is given a wacky pastiche treatment in "Afghan Breakdown." Downbeat pic has its darkly comic moments caused by dubbing virtually the entire picture into Italian.**

Available in both tv miniseries and feature versions, pic, shot in Turkistan and Leningrad, avoids pretentiousness of such parallel-world films as "The Beast," in which all-American actors played Russians and Afghans. Instead, Michele Placido is almost the only Italian in sight, but his Russo co-stars speak,

and even gesture in, Italian.

He stoically walks through his role of a major sent by a cruel colonel on various missions to protect the Russian flank during the pullout. An air of gloom and defeat is sustained by helmer Vladimir Bortko. The Soviet involvement (never referred to explicitly as an invasion) is criticized heavily.

War horrors are treated here as a given rather than peculiar to the Afghan conflict. The career soldier's p.o.v. and the problems of a dogface are both presented.

Several corny subplots, seemingly truncated in the feature version, fail to arouse much interest. Though married, Placido is carrying on with blond nurse Tatiana Doghileva, who is constantly being hit on by the sex-starved colonel. Several visually impressive battle scenes punctuate the talkfest. Glum finale is a downer, as intended.

*J/Lor  
5/27/91*