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Intelligence

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# Near East and South Asia Review



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5 December 1986

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**Near East and  
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**Articles****Oman-US: Whither the Access Agreement?**

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Oman is unlikely to renew the access agreement with the United States in 1990. In Muscat's view, threats from the USSR and Iran have lessened, and declining US economic assistance and the rise of a new generation of leaders in Oman have placed the assumptions underlying the agreement in question.

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**The Growing Iranian Threat to Persian Gulf Shipping**

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Tehran, reacting to its severe economic difficulties, is showing a greater willingness to interfere with merchant shipping in the Persian Gulf. The Gulf Arabs are increasingly worried and are bracing themselves for possible military encounters.

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**When an Ayatollah Dies: Implications for the Iranian Succession**

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When Khomeini dies, his successors will inherit the nascent institutions put into place under his guidance, but they will not inherit his religious authority. Indeed, Shia traditions will have a negative impact on regime stability, and religious leaders will probably play a disruptive role.

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**Pakistan: Growing Sunni-Shia Tensions**

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Relations between Pakistan's majority Sunni Muslims and the minority Shia community have deteriorated over the last few years, resulting in more frequent and violent clashes between the two denominations. Animosity is likely to intensify as parliament debates the imposition of Sunni jurisprudence as the law of the land.

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**Pakistan: Shifting Interest Group Politics in Urban Punjab**  17

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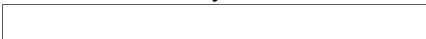
New alliances among urban interest groups in Punjab appear to be emerging as the Army relinquishes its day-to-day political authority. For most interest groups in Punjab, President Zia has skillfully struck a balance among competing demands to ensure that his transition to democracy has a reasonable chance of success. 

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**Pakistan: Economy of the Tribal Areas**  21

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Pakistan's tribal territories include some of the poorest regions in the country. Islamabad plans to provide development aid to create alternative employment opportunities to the lucrative trade in arms and narcotics that has long dominated the local economy, but tribesmen are resisting the government's efforts. 

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**Afghanistan: Postmortem on the Soviet Troop Withdrawal**  27

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The recently completed withdrawal of six Soviet regiments from Afghanistan was a sham. Two of the regiments and some tanks had been introduced in recent months solely for the purpose of withdrawing them, but the Soviet charade has failed to win over world opinion. 

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**Afghanistan: Cultural Factors in the Insurgency—  
Mixed Blessings**  31

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Ethnic, cultural, and religious factors generally strengthen the Afghan resistance's ability to resist Soviet domination. At the same time, deeply rooted hatreds among ethnic groups and tribes, xenophobic attitudes, opportunism, and individuality slow the transition of fighters or even groups of fighters into a strong insurgency. 

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**Western Sahara: Whither the Polisario Front?**

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[Redacted]

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The Algerian-backed Polisario Front continues to face insurmountable challenges in trying to attain unilaterally a military victory against Morocco in Western Sahara. In addition, the Front is experiencing strains with its patron, Algeria, which is facing severe financial difficulties of its own.

[Redacted]

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*Some articles are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the views of a single analyst; these items will be designated as noncoordinated views.*

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**Near East and South Asia Review** [Redacted]

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**Articles**

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**Oman-US: Whither the Access Agreement?** [Redacted]

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Oman is unlikely to renew the access agreement with the United States in 1990. In Muscat's view, threats from the USSR and Iran have lessened. Although Omani-US relations have been close, declining US economic assistance to Muscat and the rise of a new generation of leaders in Oman threatens the relationship.

These nationalists include Yusif bin Alawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Maj. Gen. Ali Majid al-Maamari, President of the Palace Office. Both support the Omani-US relationship, but their primary motivation appears to be to use it to reduce British influence. Alawi and Ali Majid are close friends and together are creating a loose alliance of like-minded colleagues in the military, government, and intelligence services.

The 1980 access agreement granting the United States extensive use of Omani military facilities laid the foundation for close Omani-US relations. Perceived threats to Oman's security, triggered by the fall of the Shah of Iran—a longtime friend of Sultan Qaboos—and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, led Muscat to formalize its security relationship with the United States. Despite certain reservations, Sultan Qaboos agreed to extend the agreement in 1985 because of the growing threat from Iran.

The nationalists are concerned that too close an association with the United States will jeopardize their efforts to develop closer ties to other Arab states. They want Oman to be more influential in regional and Arab politics. The nationalists probably believe that Sultan Qaboos needs to avoid the charge that he allowed Washington to establish permanent bases in Oman. Omanis remember that the United States used Omani territory without Muscat's knowledge or permission for the Iranian hostage rescue mission in 1980.

In our view, Oman now sees the USSR and Iran as posing less of a security threat and probably believes it no longer needs a US military presence to deter aggression. Muscat also has seen decreasing levels of US financial assistance under the Economic Support Fund (ESF) program and probably questions the US commitment to Oman. In 1985, ESF loans and grants to Oman totaled \$20 million; in 1986, \$19.5 million; and for 1987, \$15 million is budgeted. In a move to get more aid, Sultan Qaboos last year publicly vowed not to renew the access agreement when it expires in 1990.

Although renewal of the access agreement appears doubtful at this time, Oman's economic problems may encourage Muscat to reconsider. Increasing domestic pressure will probably motivate Muscat to call for a substantial increase in US aid, which most likely will be directly linked to renewal of the agreement. Sultan Qaboos probably believes that an increase in ESF monies would help Muscat explain to its Arab critics its continuing relationship with the United States. The nationalists most likely hope that the agreement has already demonstrated to the British that Oman has become increasingly independent of London and will continue to put distance between itself and Britain.

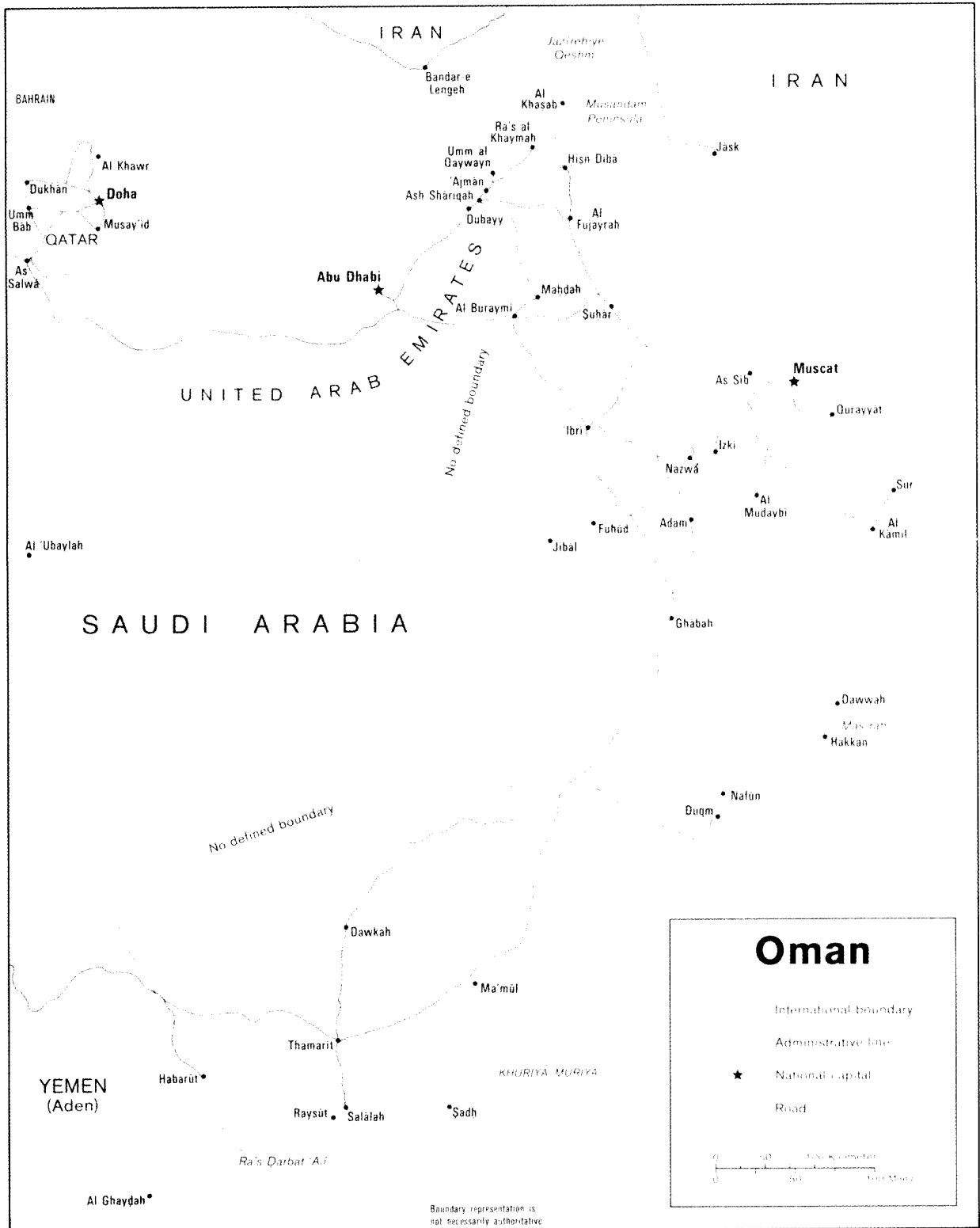
Oman's newfound confidence is largely the result of a growing sense of nationalism fostered by new decisionmakers in Oman. In 1980 Oman was governed by the "Muscat Mafia"—a small group of Omanis and British expatriates intensely loyal to London. Since 1982 a younger, more nationalist group has emerged as the dominant force behind the Sultan.

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**The Growing Iranian Threat to Persian Gulf Shipping** [redacted]

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Tehran, reacting to its severe economic difficulties, is showing a greater willingness to interfere with merchant shipping in the Persian Gulf. Since late summer Iran has increased the strength and range of its air and naval forces in the southern Gulf and has expanded the scope of its antishipping operations.<sup>1</sup> The Gulf Arabs are increasingly worried and are bracing themselves for possible military encounters. Although the Iranian military still displays some caution, Tehran's recent aggressiveness and the threat of more attacks increase the possibility of a widening of the conflict. [redacted]



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**The Politics of Ship Attacks**

Iran has been attacking ships in the Persian Gulf since 1984, usually in retaliation for Iraqi airstrikes against tankers carrying Iranian oil exports. This year, however, Iran has increasingly focused its attacks—and its suspension of attacks—on influencing the Gulf Arabs to reduce their support for Iraq and to alter their oil production policies. The greater determination shown by Tehran in the past few months probably results from a desire to retaliate for Iraq's effective air campaign against the Iranian economy. In view of the damage to Iran's oil export system, Tehran may also believe it needs to back up its repeated threats to make Iraq's allies suffer if Iran cannot export oil. [redacted]

The supertanker Akarita following an attack by [redacted] *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 6 Sep 1986

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Tehran is taking more of a carrot-and-stick line with Saudi Arabia. Displeased with Saudi oil policies earlier this year, Iran attacked three Saudi tankers within one month in April and May after previously exempting them from the antishipping operations. As Riyadh has moved closer to Tehran's position on OPEC oil production, Iran is again exempting Saudi vessels from attack. Iranian pressure may no longer be overt, but the threat is implicit in the increased size of Iran's air and naval forces in the southern Gulf. [redacted]

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Iran is now focusing pressure on Kuwait, which is a strong financial backer of Baghdad and serves as a major transshipper of arms bound for Iraq. In addition, Iran has been annoyed by Kuwaiti intransigence over oil production quotas at recent OPEC meetings. Tehran may view Kuwait as an attractive target because it cannot effectively defend shipping beyond its coastal waters. Most of the Iranian ship attacks in the past few months were conducted against Kuwaiti vessels or those trading with Kuwait. [redacted]

**A Shadow Over the Strait**

Iran has greatly increased its military presence in the southern Gulf, where Tehran already had a major naval base and airfield at Bandar-e Abbas. During 1986 the Iranians began staging helicopters from Abu Musa Island and oil platforms in the southern Gulf. Iran has further extended its operational range by deploying aircraft to Kish Island, [redacted]

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[redacted] since late summer, Iranian naval ships

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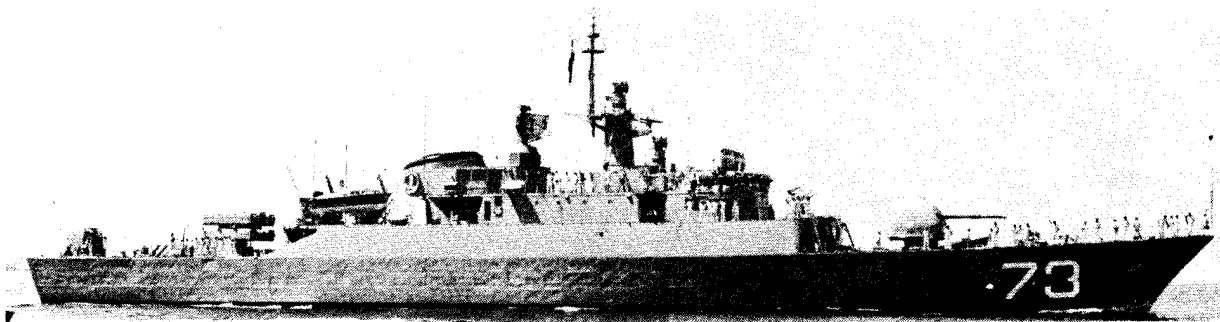
<sup>1</sup> Antishipping operations include ship attacks and ship interdiction—the stopping, inspection, and sometimes seizure of merchant vessels. [redacted]

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Iranian Navy frigates, like the Sabalan (nee Rostam), have conducted the recent night attacks against merchant shipping using both Sea Killer missiles and their 4.5-inch guns. [redacted]

Jane's

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have been more aggressive, attacking at night and using antiship cruise missiles and naval guns against merchant shipping for the first time in the war.

[redacted]

and both sites give it the capability to hit any ship passing through the Strait of Hormuz. [redacted]

Nearly two-thirds of all ship attacks by Iran during the six-year Iran-Iraq war have occurred in 1986. Moreover, Iran's deployment of air and naval units has greatly expanded the range of its antishipping operations since the fall of 1985. The area patrolled by Iran is now so large that merchant ships cannot avoid it or completely cross it at night when Iranian air and naval forces are not as active. Using the new staging areas, Iranian antishipping operations have occurred throughout the western approaches to the Strait of Hormuz and even in the Gulf of Oman. In early November, Iranian Navy Commander Malekzadegan said that merchant ships using Gulf state territorial waters are within Iran's defensive zone and subject to attack. [redacted]

Iran has been forceful in making its presence felt in the southern Gulf. Iranian naval units have challenged Omani patrol boats and have twice fired on aircraft of the United Arab Emirates. An Iranian F-4 fired warning shots at an Omani reconnaissance aircraft in September, according to the [redacted]

**Ship Attacks in the Persian Gulf, 1986**

	Iran <sup>a</sup>	Iraq <sup>b</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>59</b>
January	3	4
February	3	6
March	9	5
April	4	4
May	3	7
June	4	4
July	0	3
August	8	8
September	3	6
October	3	5
November	2	7

<sup>a</sup> 1980-86 Iranian ship attacks total 70.  
<sup>b</sup> 1980-86 Iraqi ship attacks total 127.

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[redacted]

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[redacted] Moreover, Tehran has stopped Soviet and US-flag merchant ships as part of its campaign to halt the supply of arms to Iraq. This aggressiveness has been tempered by Iran's recognition of its limitations. Iran has tried to avoid confrontations with the major powers, and the Soviet and US vessels that were seized were quickly released.

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[redacted] since October the

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Navy has been ordered not to seize any more Soviet or US ships. The Navy has long operated under instructions to avoid warships or merchant vessels under military escort.

[Redacted]

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According to press reports, the Gulf Cooperation Council also will ask the United States to approve an extension of AWACS coverage over the southern Gulf.

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**The Gulf States Respond**

The Gulf states thus far indicate a willingness to resist the Iranian pressure. In late October, Kuwait fired two surface-to-air missiles at what it believed was an Iranian aircraft. By publicizing the event, Kuwait probably hoped to demonstrate its resolve to protect its sovereignty from Iranian aggression. A month earlier, Kuwait sent a similar message to Tehran by firing an air-to-air missile at an Iranian aircraft crossing Kuwaiti airspace after bombing an Iraqi oilfield.

**Shippers, Seamen Worried**

In response to Iranian attacks earlier this year, shippers ordered their tankers to avoid the Iranians by traveling at night and spending the daytime protected in safe anchorages. By early fall, however, the extended range of Iranian antishipping operations and the use of night attacks removed this defense. The number of lives lost in ship attacks has dramatically increased this year. More than 50 seamen have been killed, according to press reports. Lloyd's reports that insurance payments during the first eight months of 1986 totaled \$80 million. According to a European shipowners' organization, the owners, insurers, and seamen's unions are becoming more militant over the risk to lives and ships in serving Gulf ports. Convoys are regarded as impractical by the operators, however, and they do not expect the Western or Gulf state naval forces to protect them.

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While aggressively showing its desire to protect itself, Kuwait has taken additional measures to increase its defensive capabilities.

**Outlook**

There is a good chance that Iran will increase its antishipping operations as economic pressures build because Tehran will consider that it has less to lose by expanding the war in the Gulf. Iran's efforts to date have not resulted in any significant reduction in the movement of arms to Iraq, putting additional pressure on Tehran to do more. Even if Tehran only maintains the current pace of its ship attacks, the possibility of more severe actions may cause some shippers to avoid Gulf ports. Once Iran's HY-2 missiles become operational—probably in early 1987—shipowners and seamen may become even more reluctant to enter the Strait. If Iraq continues to attack Tehran's oil export facilities, Iran may clamp down on the Gulf states' exports. Tehran might seize Gulf state oil shipments to compensate for its own losses or eventually use commando-style raids directly against their oil facilities.

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The Kuwaiti Navy has also begun escorting tankers through its own territorial waters, according to the US Embassy, and it recently held its first live-fire exercise in nearly a year.

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Riyadh is also responding to Tehran's growing belligerence. The Saudis are deploying their newly organized Marine Forces as well as naval special forces from the Red Sea to Ras al Ghar in the Persian Gulf.

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Iran probably will not try to close the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran does not want a confrontation with Western nations, which depend on the oil shipped through the Strait. Moreover, Iran needs to move its own exports through the Strait and cannot afford to have it closed. In addition, Iranian capability for such an operation is limited. [redacted]

Tehran will probably continue to modulate its ship attacks to keep pressure on the Gulf states while avoiding a dramatic escalation of its confrontations with their militaries. The risk of hostilities, however, is increasing because of Iran's more aggressive activities and greater military presence. Saudi and Kuwaiti actions to deter Iranian attacks could lead to a military confrontation. Any confrontation is likely to be followed by urgent requests for US assistance. Iran will try to avoid clashes with Western or Soviet naval forces. The risk of accidental confrontation is increasing, however, because of the Iranian Navy's expanding operations and because of Tehran's increasing willingness to take risks in the Gulf as its economic problems grow. [redacted]

[redacted]

**Bad News for Shipowners**

*In October an Iranian frigate fired an Italian-made Sea Killer antiship missile against a Kuwaiti-chartered tanker. Thirteen crewmen were killed or wounded, and the ship suffered serious damage in this first use of an Iranian naval missile against a merchant vessel. Shippers' concerns over this development were further heightened because the attack took place at night. Previously, merchant ships traveled at night because Iranian aircraft—Tehran's preferred weapon platform for ship attacks—did not operate during darkness.*

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*The threat to shipping will increase greatly in early 1987 when Iran will probably be ready to deploy its Chinese-built HY-2 missiles. The HY-2 has a 500-kilogram warhead that is nearly three times as large as the French-built air-launched Exocet missile used successfully by Iraq and is seven times larger than the Sea Killer. In addition, the Exocet was designed to damage naval vessels' fire-control and command-and-control equipment, not to sink ships, but the HY-2 is capable of sinking many types of merchant ships. The HY-2, however, has a less capable guidance system than either the Exocet or Sea Killer. The HY-2 has a range of approximately 100 kilometers, or enough to cover the entire Strait of Hormuz from launchsites along the Iranian coast. Iranian frigates need to close to within at least 27 kilometers of their targets to fire the Sea Killer and could be deterred by Western or Gulf state naval escorts. Use of the HY-2s, which are positioned on land, is unlikely to be affected by the presence of foreign warships.*

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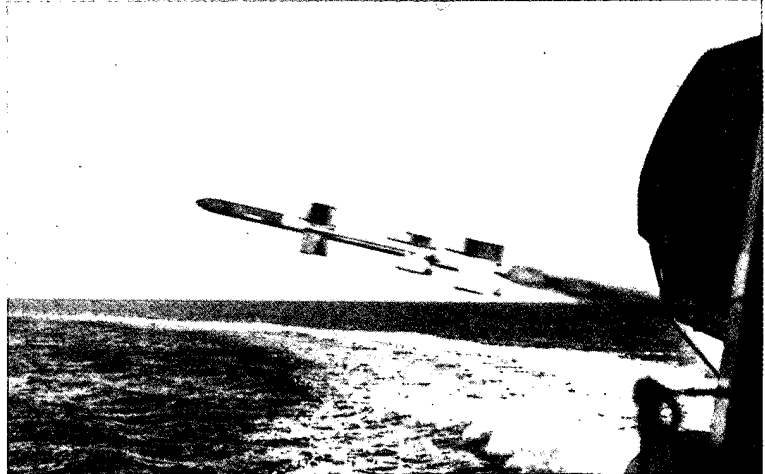
**Sea Killer**

**Warhead:** 70 kg, semi-armor-piercing HE

**Guidance:** Beam rider/radio command

**Maximum range:** 27 km

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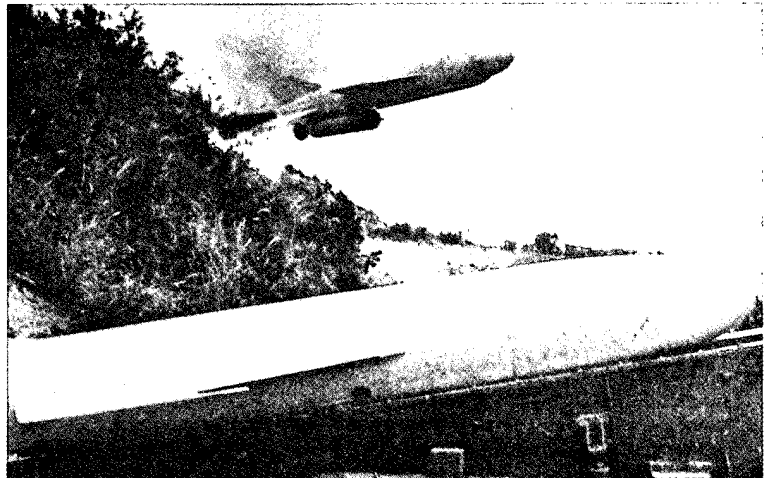
**HY-2 missile**

**Warhead:** 500 kg, HE

**Guidance:** Active radar

**Maximum range:** 100 km

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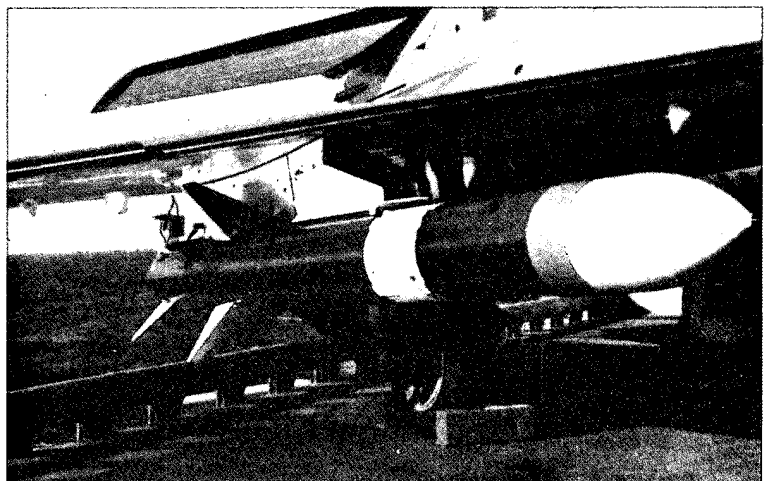
**Exocet**

**Warhead:** 165 kg, HE

**Guidance:** Active radar

**Maximum range:** 50 to 70 km

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## When an Ayatollah Dies: Implications for the Iranian Succession

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When Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini dies, his successors will inherit the nascent institutions put into place under his guidance, but they will not inherit his religious authority. Indeed, Shia traditions will have a negative impact on regime stability, and religious leaders will probably play a disruptive role. [redacted]

ensure that his religious rulings outlive him. An official textbook on the Koranic basis of the constitution, for example, makes the controversial assertion that the constitution cannot be changed because it was written by *mujtahids* and that the Majles (Parliament) should not deal with matters related to Islamic jurisprudence. Nevertheless, continuance of Khomeini's theological authority after his death would run counter to 13 centuries of Shia religious tradition. [redacted]

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### Religious Succession: Shia Tradition

Observers of the rigorous procedures governing papal succession in the Roman Catholic Church will have little to compare with the informal process of leadership transition in the Shia religious hierarchy. Only recently—in the context of Khomeini's Islamic republic—has Shiism begun to develop institutions governing the transmission of religious authority and regularizing advancement in the religious hierarchy. Traditionally, Shia Muslims are required only to follow the teaching of a *mujtahid* (jurisprudent)—a cleric with sufficient training who is accepted by ayatollahs to interpret Islamic scripture and tradition. The religious chain of command extends upward from the village/neighborhood level to the grand ayatollahs—a handful of men who have developed extensive regional followings and whose stature has been acknowledged by their peers and superiors. When a *mujtahid* dies—even Khomeini—his followers turn to a new leader, his teachings lose their authority, and any innovations he introduced can be reversed by his successor. [redacted]

### Possible Implications

When Khomeini dies, Shia religious leaders will probably play important roles in undermining regime stability by attempting to supplant his teachings with their own:

- Ranking clerics within the regime will probably work to enhance their own positions. Ayatollah Meshkini, the chairman of the Council of Experts, will play a role in any succession struggle. [redacted] he has already made moves against both Ayatollah Montazeri and Majles Speaker Hojjat-ol-Eslam Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. As father-in-law to Intelligence Chief Mohammad Mohammadi-Reyshahri, who supervised the arrests of Montazeri's son and son-in-law, Meshkini has direct access to a potential power base.

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### The Islamic Republic: New Rules

Grand Ayatollah Khomeini's position as both head of state and supreme religious jurisprudent (*marja-e taqlid*) is unprecedented in Shia history, and his death will have profound religious and political implications. As *marja-e taqlid*, Khomeini instituted clerical rule (*velayat-e faqih*) as the basis of the government and initiated efforts to institutionalize theological authority. He formed a Council of Experts, which completed Iran's Islamic Constitution in 1979. In 1985 an elected Council of Experts designated Ayatollah Hosein Ali Montazeri as Khomeini's successor. In addition, Khomeini has attempted to

- Montazeri's succession could be challenged by the surviving grand ayatollahs who outrank him and who objected to the institution of the Council of Experts. Grand Ayatollah Tabatabai-Qomi and Grand Ayatollah Musavi-Golpayegani have criticized the current regime, and we believe that, unless further constraints are applied after Khomeini's death, they could attack the theological basis of the government.

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**Senior Shia Clerics**



**Hosein Ali Montazeri**  
... about 64 ... lacks charisma, religious stature, and political savvy of longtime mentor, Khomeini ... support from some elements of Revolutionary Guard ... wants to curb revolutionary organizations and government involvement in economy and favors greater freedom of expression ... probably willing to wind down the war.

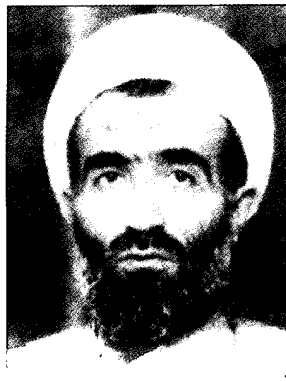
[Redacted]



**Hasan Tabatabai-Qomi**  
... about 76 ... outspoken and quick tempered ... first grand ayatollah to publicly oppose Khomeini's government and war policy ... perceived as opposing everything and supporting nothing ... some support in the Revolutionary Guard and revolutionary committees ... under house arrest in Mashhad.

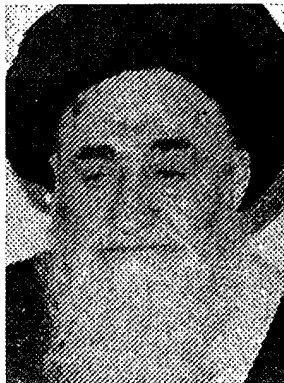
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**Ali Meshkini**  
... about 65 ... probably wants to succeed Khomeini ... close ties to both Montazeri and Rafsanjani ... Qom Friday prayer leader ... has good ties to some Revolutionary Guard commanders and leading Qom theologians ... vehemently anti-Western ... favors land reform, nationalization of trade, export of the revolution ... believes continuation of Iran-Iraq war may undermine regime.

[Redacted]



**Shahab ad-Din Marashi-Najafi**  
... about 88 ... timid ... generally avoids politics ... openly criticized government for first time following death of Grand Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari earlier this year ... opposes state control of economy, state taxes, and designated succession of Montazeri ... studied under revered late Ayatollah Haeri-Yazdi.

[Redacted]

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**Mohammad Reza Musavi-Golpayegani**  
... about 90, but still active ... highly respected grand ayatollah ... large network of former students in Qom ... has occasionally supported the government but opposes velayat-e faqih, land reform, continuation of the war ... dislikes Montazeri ... easygoing and uncomplicated,

[Redacted]

**Abdol-Qasim Musavi-Khoi**  
... about 94 ... most senior of the grand ayatollahs ... has lived in holy city of Najaf in Iraq since his youth ... many religious supporters in Iran ... generally apolitical ... opposes designated succession of Montazeri ... tacitly supports Ba'th regime of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn.

[Redacted]

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- Grand Ayatollah Musavi-Khoi, who is based in Iraq, also disputes Khomeini's teachings and condemns his continuation of the Iran-Iraq war. His followers, most of whom are in Iraq and Pakistan, claim that he—not Khomeini—is the supreme jurispudent. Because he outranks Khomeini's possible successors, Khoi will be in a better position to compromise Iranian influence among international, particularly Arab, Shia communities.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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## Pakistan: Growing Sunni-Shia Tensions

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Relations between Pakistan's majority Sunni Muslims and the minority Shia community have deteriorated over the last few years, resulting in more frequent and violent clashes between the two denominations. US Embassy officials see a growing Sunni intolerance of the Shias and, consequently, an increased sense of insecurity among the Shias. Shias have long been wary of President Zia's Islamization program, which they interpret as the government's effort to establish a Sunni-oriented state in Pakistan. Animosities between the communities are likely to intensify over the next several months as parliament debates the Shariat bill, which, if passed, would impose Sunni jurisprudence as the law of the land.

### Background

The Sunnis account for 80 to 85 percent of Pakistan's population. The community is divided into two sects. Another 10 to 15 percent of Pakistan's population are Shias. They reside principally in Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) but are also concentrated in Karachi and other urban areas of Sind, where many Mohajirs (Shia immigrants from India after 1947) live. The Shias are generally well educated and include many skilled entrepreneurs. US Embassy officials say their general affluence contributes to Sunni-Shia tensions.

### Confrontations

Confrontations between Shias and Sunnis have occurred sporadically, usually following Shia religious processions marking the anniversary of the death of Husayn, Muhammad's grandson. During these processions, the Shias publicly curse Husayn's persecutors, the early caliphs who are deeply venerated by the Sunnis. Last fall, the processions sparked violent clashes in Lahore, resulting in at least 10 deaths and numerous injuries.

US Embassy officials note that the intensity and frequency of clashes between the two groups have increased dramatically over the last five to six years. They attribute the deterioration in relations to two

events—the introduction of Zia's Islamization program and the Iranian revolution. The former raised fears among Shias that the government would try to establish a Sunni-oriented state in Pakistan, while the revolution awakened in the Shia community a new sense of pride and awareness of their faith.

### Islamization

A Shia leader explained to a visiting US scholar that Shia concern about Islamization stems from their belief that, because both Shias and Sunnis struggled together to establish Pakistan, both denominations should have equal rights. He pointed out that Shias believe there should be two sets of personal and public laws, one for Sunnis and one for Shias. If that cannot be, the Shias would prefer secular law over Islamic law, which they see tilted toward Sunnis. To demonstrate the difference between the two groups' approach, the Shia leader explained that, while Sunnis would cut off a man's hand for stealing, the Shias would cut off only his fingers so he could still perform his religious duties.

To protect Shia rights in the face of Islamization, the Shias, under the leadership of Mufti Jaffar Hussain, founded in 1980 the TNFJ—*Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqh-e-Jaffria* (Movement for the Establishment of Shia Jurisprudence). Following the Mufti's death in 1983, a split occurred in the TNFJ as two rivals, Arif al-Hussaini in the NWFP and Agha Hamid Ali Musavi in Punjab, attempted to gain control of the movement. The struggle for succession radicalized the TNFJ, with both leaders speaking out against the government for not addressing Shia concerns. Their actions have led to several confrontations with the authorities, the most violent being the riots in Quetta in 1985 in which approximately 60 people died.

### The Shariat Bill

Members of two Sunni fundamentalist parties have introduced legislation, which, if passed, would require enforcement of Islamic law in Pakistan. One of the

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sponsors of the bill has made clear that he intends the law to be interpreted according to the Sunni school of Islamic law and that there would be no consideration of Shia jurisprudence. Supporters have formed the United Shariat Front, which includes about 20 different Islamic parties and organizations. They plan to hold numerous demonstrations over the next several months to build public support for the bill.

The bill has many critics. The Shias are its main opponents, but members of one of Pakistan's two Sunni sects also oppose the legislation because they believe the other Sunni sect would use the law to impose an austere lifestyle throughout Pakistan. Other critics believe Zia is using legislation certain to spark sectarian violence in order to build a case to reimpose martial law. Still others see the bill as threatening the reestablishment of democratic institutions in Pakistan because the new Shariat courts would have the authority to review, and even amend, legislation passed by parliament to ensure its conformity with Islam.

Zia has publicly endorsed the bill. Although Prime Minister Junejo has been cool toward the idea, many legislators feel politically incapable of opposing anything done in the name of Islam. Embassy officials therefore judge that some form of the bill will be passed, but they believe legislators will attempt to modify it to assuage some of the fears of its opponents.

#### **Outside Funding**

External funding has encouraged extremists in both the Sunni and Shia communities. Most Pakistanis are convinced—and we agree—that Iran is supporting the Shia extremist organizations, particularly the Hussaini faction of the TNFJ and the Imamia Students' Organization. The Iraqis are alleged to be actively supporting Sunni extremist groups.

US Embassy officials say Islamabad feels constrained in its ability to act against such interference because it wants to maintain good relations with both sides in the Iraq-Iran war. The Embassy judges that Pakistani authorities will be reluctant to crack down on outside meddling unless they conclude that it threatens the stability of the government.

#### **Outlook and Implications for the United States**

Tensions between the Sunni and Shia communities will continue to erupt into occasional confrontations, hindering US efforts to foster the development of democratic institutions in Pakistan. A drastic deterioration in law and order might even prompt a reimposition of martial law.

Further Shia disaffection would encourage the Shias to seek closer links to their coreligionists in Iran. US interests and personnel could then face new anti-US sentiment in Pakistan.

If the Shariat bill is passed, the Shias may also establish closer ties to the opposition, particularly Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), to underscore their unhappiness with the current government. This would present the government with a more formidable opposition. Shia leaders have expressed support for the PPP in the past because of its position in favor of secular law.



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**Pakistan: Shifting Interest  
Group Politics  
in Urban Punjab** <sup>1</sup>

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New alliances among urban interest groups in Punjab appear to be emerging as the Army relinquishes its day-to-day political authority. Among traditional interest groups, the large industrialists appear to be losing out to the landlords who dominate the National Assembly. Nontraditional interest groups—organized labor, students, and professionals, all of whom expanded their political role in the late 1960s—are apparently coalescing and could significantly challenge Islamabad. For most interest groups in Punjab, President Zia has skillfully struck a balance among competing demands to ensure that his transition to democracy has a reasonable chance of success.

**Traditional Interest Groups**

***Industrial Family Conglomerates.*** The large conglomerates that before the Bhutto era controlled large-scale industries, international trade, insurance, and banking are unlikely to recover their influence. Entrenched bureaucratic control operating in partnership with retired Army officers, widespread distrust of big business among the populace, economic decline in key sectors, as well as the decision by the industrial families to invest abroad are likely to limit the concentration of industrial holdings.

Although the influence of the industrial family conglomerates remains significant, it has not gained much under Zia. As a percent of gross national product, private investment in big business increased by one-third under Zia but remains one-third below the level of the pre-Bhutto era. Key assets lost under Bhutto, such as the domestic banking industry, have not been regained. Another limitation on the families' economic power is the general decline in key industries upon which they had based their empires, such as the provincial textile industry.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared by an outside contractor. It was not coordinated within this Agency. The views expressed are those of the author.

As a whole, industry has benefited from the peace and prosperity brought by Zia and the more apolitical application of the government's regulatory and licensing policies. Zia's industrial policies have sought to encourage investment by the largest industrialists. They have enjoyed substantial tax concessions under Zia: a reduction from 66 to 45 percent on personal tax rates and from 55 to 40 percent on corporate tax rates for public limited companies (companies issuing stock for public investment). Patterns of investment suggest renewed confidence in bringing private resources back to Pakistan. In 1983-84 private investment in large and medium-size businesses surpassed that of the public sector for the first time since 1973-74. Many industrialists have also been attracted by the more liberal import and export rules and other aspects of the free market policies of the Zia regime.

Zia's policies have coaxed powerful businessmen into more visible, official positions of influence. They have become active in the Federation of Pakistani Chambers of Commerce and Industry and play increasingly visible roles in politics. The number of industrialists and other businessmen in the National Assembly increased to 16 and 34, respectively, following the nonpartisan election in February 1985. Businessmen also hold influential positions as internal trade and export promotion advisers, Commerce and Interior Ministers, provincial finance ministers, and as Chief Minister of Punjab.

Under a democratic system that reactivates political parties, the large family conglomerates and businessmen could see a profitable period become less so. The industrialists are concerned about industrial unrest and realize that, without the instruments of martial law readily available to suppress labor dissent, business productivity could suffer. Most observers believe that the businessmen in the National Assembly would lose their seats in an open, partisan election.

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**Government Bureaucracy.** The interests of the federal and provincial bureaucracies have for the most part been maintained under Zia. The federal bureaucracy has substantially grown over the past 30 years, especially under Bhutto. It controls \$22.7 billion in large-scale industrial assets and distributes industrial credit through the nationalized banks. This large regulatory apparatus bestows considerable power to officials at all levels. Zia has attempted to tackle bureaucratic corruption, but he has not substantially reduced the bureaucracy's prerogatives.

Friction between private industry, which resents bureaucratic extortion and what it views as regulatory harassment, and the bureaucracy, which is generally suspicious of the efforts of large industry to free itself from Government control, is characteristic of the urban political scene in Punjab. Under a more democratic political system, the role of the bureaucracy in regulating big business is likely to be preserved. Public opinion strongly favors curtailing the industrialists' power, and this provides support for efforts to limit the pace and scope of deregulation, privatization, and other policies that have benefited industrialists under Zia. Rural landlords, some retired military officers, and bureaucrats, who clearly want to expand their own industrial holdings at the cost of older industrial groups, are likely to support resistance to deregulation. The removal in January 1986 of Mahbubul Haq, the architect and champion of deregulation and private industrial investment, from the powerful position of finance minister suggests that the predominantly landed National Assembly has successfully teamed up with bureaucratic and retired military interests.

**Small Business.** Although small businessmen are becoming increasingly dependent upon the bureaucracy to transport, market, and export goods; to render technical advice; and, especially, to secure lines of credit, they remain a relatively independent player in Punjabi politics. They still generally function through market committees, bazaar organizations, and kinship networks. Recently they have begun to gain a voice through the Punjab Chamber of Commerce, which suggests that they are becoming better organized to make demands on the political system.

Small businesses (defined as those with assets no larger than \$300,000 exclusive of land and buildings) are arguably the most dynamic sector in Pakistan and have played a disproportionate role in propelling Punjab's economic growth since the early 1970s. Small businesses are generally efficient, flexible, and, with lower wage and overhead costs, more competitive than some of the large-scale businesses in Punjab. The provincial government in Punjab has been at the forefront of small business promotion and assistance in Pakistan.

National economic expansion and the less visible capital injected by Gulf returnees have enabled this sector to expand rapidly. Pakistani workers remitting wages from the Gulf states have a much greater propensity to invest in small businesses than in big businesses with anonymous managers and accountants. Gulf returnees believe they can control or monitor a small, closely held business, an attitude that reflects a deep distrust of big business among Punjabi laborers.

Although small businessmen probably have sufficiently profited under Zia, a significant downturn in the economy could prompt this group to support political agitation. As a still relatively independent and unregulated sector, small business opposition to the government would entail fewer risks than opposition from groups more dependent upon the government. An independent role leaves small businessmen better positioned to concentrate resources behind political agitation should their interests be ignored or damaged—a factor in the urban movement that unseated Prime Minister Bhutto in 1977.

There is as yet no sign of general unrest among the bazaar merchants in Punjab. A lack of order in the markets, however, is a persistent complaint that has reduced support for the regime among bazaar merchants.

#### **Labor and Students**

**Organized Labor.** Organized labor, relatively powerful under Bhutto, may be attempting to unite to oppose the civilian government of President Zia and

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Prime Minister Junejo. Labor-management relations in Punjab have historically been bitter, and labor grievances are likely to have built up under Zia. Several government policies have provoked labor interests, including banning some unions outright, holding labor unrest in check through martial law, and devaluing the rupee over 60 percent from 1981 to 1986—benefiting the exporters but undercutting workers' purchasing power. As with most other groups, Zia has not ridden completely roughshod over labor's interests and has preserved important statutory concessions that labor gained under Bhutto.

Nevertheless, Zia is not regarded by labor as a friend, and most of labor may join an opposition movement against him. Although Zia's strategy to divide the labor movement has been successful, there are signs of growing cooperation among the old center and left labor federations. They have jointly participated in street demonstrations and apparently are cooperating with other interest groups, such as students. Before the lifting of martial law, sympathy strikes and supportive press statements on behalf of other unions were usually the extent of interunion cooperation.

The Pakistan People's Party will probably gain labor support and try to use the labor unions to test the intentions of the Army and the viability of the new civilian government by promoting strikes and labor unrest. Temporary coalitions among powerful federations could be emerging to press the Junejo government on labor issues.

**Students.** Punjabi students, who in the past were catalysts for violence and served as "shock troops" for antigovernment street demonstrations, are split ideologically. The Islamic students usually are members of the militant Islami-Jamiat-Tulaba (IJT), the student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami. The Islamic students usually control student unions by using their more effective organizations to defeat the larger, but divided, moderate-to-left groupings. Student groups have recently joined members of other interest groups, including trade unions, professional groups, and women's associations in protests in Lahore against President Zia and US policy toward Israel and Libya. Students in Karachi, Peshawar, Lahore, and Rawalpindi also staged sympathy strikes for the junior doctors in Punjab in October 1985.

There is a consensus that the ban on student unions is the most pressing student issue in the country and that it is the driving force behind the broadening student discontent in Punjab. Even the IJT bitterly opposes this ban and could unofficially help an anti-Zia movement, even if the leaders of their parent party do not. This issue has the potential to galvanize student groups against the Zia/Junejo government. It is the kind of issue behind which student groups of all persuasions can rally and which opposition political leaders will exploit to reach understandings with student leaders.

The government attitude toward student unions under civilian rule is changing due to increased pressure from students, professional associations, and labor unions. In his speech at the inauguration of a new university hospital in Karachi in November 1985, Zia blamed all campus unrest on outside agitators who use the slogan "democratic rights" in order to gain physical control of the institutions. By mid-February 1986 the newly reorganized Junejo Cabinet could not dismiss student unrest so perfunctorily. Education Minister Nasim Aheer recognized the necessity of meeting with student leaders and confronting the ban issue but could not adequately explain how he could do so without recognizing the unions to which the students belong.

#### **Professionals**

Punjabi professionals—doctors, lawyers, teachers, and engineers—are split in their position on Zia. Those ideologically drawn to Islam are usually connected with the Jamaat-i-Islami, a supporter of the President, although the party's position on the Junejo government is less clear. The more secular-minded professionals are among the most alienated from the status quo. Some, like the lawyers, have had their interests badly damaged by Zia's policies. Others—doctors, engineers, teachers—work for the government and are on relatively fixed incomes. Their economic status has plunged as inflation has outpaced salary increases, and they are bitterly envious of unskilled and semiskilled workers who return from the Gulf with modern appliances and considerable ready cash. The professional associations, which can be effective in molding urban opinion during times of

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domestic unrest, tend to express the views of the vocal, alienated sections of the urban professionals. Despite their dependence on the government, they will be a significant opposition element in any political movement against Zia. The Pakistan Medical Association has denounced the treatment of political prisoners and has sought access to them for physical examinations.

#### **Urban Poor**

The poor comprise one-third of the population of Pakistan's largest cities, Karachi and Lahore, and 20 percent of the village population. In Punjab members of this group are politically disorganized, but their plight—principally the lack of adequate housing—furnishes the opposition parties with an opportunity to contrast the conditions of the poor with those of the rich under Zia. Left/liberal groups have traditionally used the question of urban housing to generate political support, although no organization representing the urban poor has stepped forward to press the government to take strong action. Under Zia concern for the urban poor has generally been overshadowed by rural development issues in the National and Punjab Assemblies. The Zia/Junejo government is well aware of the importance of the housing issue but has taken few substantive measures to resolve it.

The timing of recent initiatives demonstrates government concern over the volatility of the housing issue. Three days before PPP leader Benazir Bhutto's return to Pakistan, Prime Minister Junejo announced several measures to alleviate housing problems that included an immediate grant of proprietary rights to slumdweller in Lahore. The record on past housing projects has not been good. Past schemes have been subject to problems of resident maladjustment, unmet transportation needs, and land appropriation by real estate opportunists. Experts recommend that any housing scheme adopt specific measures, such as freezing all new settlements and granting untransferable—as opposed to proprietary—ownership rights to slumdweller. This provision prevents the slumdweller from selling their property in times of economic distress, a widespread problem.



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**Pakistan: Economy of the Tribal Areas**

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Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the provincially administered Frontier Regions of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) include some of the poorest territories in the country. Smuggling of narcotics and arms has long dominated the local economy, and tribesmen are expanding black-market activities to underscore their opposition to government efforts to suppress the illegal economy. Islamabad plans to provide development aid to create alternative employment opportunities. The government's efforts, however, will probably not displace the lucrative arms and narcotics trade.



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**Basic Facts of the Tribal Areas**

About 2.2 million Pakistanis of the Pushtun ethnic group and 800,000 Afghan refugees live in the Tribal Areas, which are divided into seven units called agencies that occupy nearly 29,000 square kilometers along Afghanistan's eastern border. The Tribal Areas are under the nominal control of Islamabad and are not bound by provincial laws. In practice, rule by tribal leaders prevails. Four smaller units, called Frontier Regions, are also considered tribal territories but are attached to a district of the NWFP and are under the control of the provincial government. The Tribal Areas and Frontier Regions share the common label of "unsettled areas" because of their relatively low population density and open landscape—desolate plains, barren hills, and denuded forests.

Farmers in the border area.

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US Embassy reports state that the economic mainstay of the tribal people is the smuggling of goods from Afghanistan that are either banned or subject to a prohibitively high customs duty in the settled areas of Pakistan. In smugglers' bazaars near Peshawar customers can purchase rocket launchers, heavy machineguns, and anti-aircraft guns. Other smuggled goods include hashish, heroin, opium, watches, household appliances, and even Russian caviar.

that as much as \$3 billion is earned annually by Pakistan from the sale of heroin. Although we do not have specific income figures for Pakistan or the tribal territories, we believe that this figure is overstated.

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The principal cash crop in the area—in fact, a major source of income—is opium poppies, despite official endeavors to eradicate the crop. Press reports state

Foreign remittances earned by Pakistanis working in the Gulf are the major source of legal wealth in the frontier areas, according to US Embassy reporting. Approximately 4 million Pakistanis working overseas remit about \$2.5 billion annually. Press reports state that the tribal territories receive a large portion of these funds because many of the expatriate workers are from remote villages.

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### Afghan Refugee Camps in Pakistan



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Field prepared for opium poppies in the North-West Frontier Province. [redacted]

Some Pakistanis and Afghan refugees living in the border areas engage in legitimate economic activity. Gun manufacturing, carpet weaving, basketmaking, and transportation are the most visible sectors of the legal economy. The transportation sector is profitable, according to US Embassy reporting, largely because truckers are well paid to carry aid to the Afghan refugees. [redacted]

**Islamabad Searches for Answers**

Islamabad is trying to promote legitimate trade and agriculture, but it is hindered by its lack of control in the unsettled areas, according to US Embassy officials. The Tribal Areas operate under separate laws, governed by treaties with the government, and are responsible for their own internal affairs. Pakistani customs and excise laws are not applicable. A visitor, therefore, may buy items that are either banned or subject to a very high duty in Pakistan so long as he is willing to smuggle the goods into settled areas. [redacted]

Occasionally, Islamabad tries to exert control over illegal activities through economic sanctions. It may institute blockades to prevent tribal merchants from reaching their market, seize property, or deny grazing land for the tribes' herds. The government also has imposed conditions on aid programs, such as stipulations regarding poppy cultivation, but they

have not proven effective. Tribal people see little incentive to planting legal crops, [redacted] because the income from a harvest of poppies is about 20 times that of wheat. Residents also believe they are entitled to public improvements regardless of their illicit activities, [redacted]

[redacted] Islamabad has devised programs to encourage tribesmen to find legal alternatives to illicit trade. In the short term, they envision a combination of financial relief, subsidized food and agricultural imports, and the creation of 2,000 jobs to help meet the demand for housing and infrastructure caused by the refugee presence. Long-term recommendations are generally targeted at industrial expansion, but the remoteness of both markets and raw materials will almost certainly hinder industrial development in the tribal territories. [redacted]

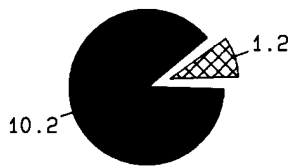
Islamabad's inability to provide profitable alternatives has stirred unrest in the Tribal Areas and the NWFP. Last year's poppy eradication effort resulted in 13 deaths in tribal regions of the NWFP, according to Embassy reporting, as farmers protested the government's failure to compensate them for the loss of their poppy crop. [redacted] the farmers are preparing again this year to resist the government's plan to eradicate the poppy crop. Farmers are sowing poppy fields in several tribal agencies, and, [redacted] plan to cultivate areas this season that have been poppy free in recent years. [redacted]

**Economics and Afghan Refugees**

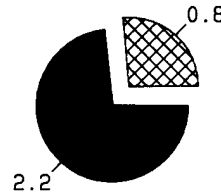
The presence of Afghan refugees is adding to the unease in the tribal territories. Refugees make up about one-third of the total population there, and in some tribal agencies refugees outnumber natives, according to US Embassy reports. Tensions between refugees and the local population are increasing as the two groups compete for the region's limited jobs and scarce resources. A large number of Afghan refugees are involved in black-market activities—usually dealing in narcotics, arms, and smuggled goods,

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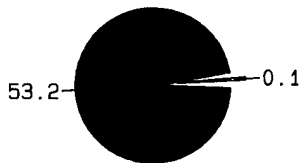
### IMPACT OF AFGHAN REFUGEE POPULATION ON PAKISTAN'S PROVINCES (In Millions)



North-West Frontier Province



Federally Administered Tribal Areas

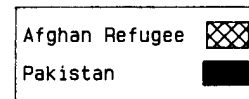


Punjab



Baluchistan

Sind Province contains no refugee camps. 300,000-400,000 refugees remain unregistered.



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according to defense attache reporting. The return of many Pakistani workers from the Gulf states and the concurrent reduction in remittances are complicating the situation.

areas. Moreover, if not for the refugees, international donors would probably not be so generous, and the tribal territories would be worse off than before.

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Penetration of the Afghans into the economy has been tolerated because the Afghans' labor skills and commercial vehicles are in demand. Refugees create ill will, however, by routinely undercutting prevailing wages in the job market, according to a UN report. They accept 15 to 25 rupees per day for unskilled work, while Pakistani laborers demand as much as 30 rupees per day. Afghans are competitive in the transportation sector but have not displaced Pakistanis because of the growing demand for carrying people and material to and from the border

Government support for the Afghan refugees, which Pakistani officials claim amounts to \$70-100 million annually, has created many speculative opportunities for Pakistanis in the tribal territories. Housing markets have experienced a miniboom because of demand by wealthy Afghans residing in the border regions and the availability of low-paid Afghan workers for unskilled labor. Refugee commodities

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supplied by aid donors but transported under Islamabad's supervision have found their way to black-marketeers, who profit from the high demand for necessities among the refugees. [redacted]

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**Outlook**

Although the tribal territories appear to be a drain on the Pakistani economy, support for the tribal population will probably continue because the government sees this as serving wider national interests. Islamabad believes its development aid, not only props up economic activity in these areas, but also provides infrastructure for supporting the Afghan resistance and placates native tribesmen who are growing weary of the Afghan presence in Pakistan. Pakistani officials, however, will have to contend with rising tensions between Pakistani natives and Afghan refugees as each group competes for scarce jobs and resources. [redacted]

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Even with plans to channel nearly \$50 million to promote legitimate development in the coming year, continuing government aid is unlikely to displace the lucrative trade in narcotics and arms. Islamabad's unclear enforcement policies in the tribal territories are equally unlikely to persuade either the tribesmen or the Afghan refugees to seriously consider legal sources of income. The government probably recognizes that well armed poppy growers act as a buffer between the war in Afghanistan and the rest of Pakistan as well as bring income to the border area.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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**Afghanistan: Postmortem on the Soviet Troop Withdrawal** [redacted]

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The recently completed withdrawal of six Soviet regiments from Afghanistan, as promised in a speech by General Secretary Gorbachev, was a sham. Two of the "regiments" and some tanks had been introduced in recent months solely for the purpose of withdrawing them. Soviet hopes to make a maximum positive impression on world opinion will not be realized. Initial press coverage has largely been skeptical. [redacted]

Although the withdrawal almost certainly was timed for maximum impact on the UN General Assembly vote on Afghanistan on 5 November, there was not much erosion in support for the Pakistani-sponsored resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces. The revelation of Soviet underhandedness in the withdrawal, however, is unlikely to win the resistance new supporters. Even those countries that have accepted the legitimacy of the troop withdrawal have largely dismissed it as an insignificant gesture. At most, the gesture may make it more difficult in a few Third World countries to argue convincingly that the Soviets are intransigent. [redacted]

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**Playing a Shell Game**

[redacted]

[redacted] By the time the Soviets were ready to begin the ceremonies in mid-October, they had deployed the main elements of two new motorized-rifle regiments and two tank battalions to Afghanistan to be withdrawn. [redacted]

**The Key Players Add Up the Points**

The Chinese were quick to judge the withdrawal pledge as a largely rhetorical gesture. Although Soviet leader Gorbachev clearly hoped that the pledged partial withdrawal of forces would help to remove one of the three main obstacles that Beijing says stand in the way of normalized Soviet-Chinese relations, he has almost certainly not succeeded. From China's perspective, Soviet policy on Afghanistan is unchanged. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted] The tank and air defense regiments had little military value and were expendable. [redacted]

Pakistan probably was initially cautiously hopeful that the withdrawal indicated a desire on Moscow's part to be more flexible in the UN-sponsored negotiations in Geneva. President Zia in early October commented publicly that he saw the move as "encouraging," but that he did not endorse a withdrawal in installments. He insisted that, if the situation had stabilized enough to allow a partial withdrawal, all Soviet forces should go. [redacted]

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**Reading the Cards**

The Soviets probably hoped that publicity surrounding the withdrawal would convince world opinion of their desire for a negotiated settlement, but initial evidence suggests that reporters attending the ceremonies were not impressed. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, one Russian-speaking journalist described ceremonies at Shindand as a badly organized spectacle. He noted that the troops he spoke with were obviously well rehearsed, that many nervously looked to their seniors for prompting, and that some denied any combat contact with the insurgents. Most West European press coverage portrayed the withdrawal ceremonies as part of a propaganda offensive with little military significance, a view that was shared by most West European governments. [redacted]

Zia, who subsequently told the press that the Soviets had introduced 15,000 troops this year into Afghanistan, is unlikely to feel any pressure to respond to the withdrawal with a "reciprocal gesture" as the Soviets insist. Although the Pakistani President may be unwilling to publicly criticize Moscow over its duplicity, the Soviet ruse may affect Pakistan's

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**Excerpts From World Press  
Coverage of the Withdrawal**

*In France, the influential Le Monde: "The event, which was noisily announced by the official press, does not seem to impress the people of Kabul . . . ."*  
*The right-of-center Quotidien: "A withdrawal whose meaning has no relation with the formidable propaganda operation surrounding it . . . they invited 140 correspondents in Moscow to witness the withdrawal . . . a public relations operation . . . ."*

*In Belgium, the Catholic De Standaard: "The Soviet decision can best be described as a subtraction from an unknown quantity."*

*In Portugal, Diario de Noticias, the leading daily, said that "the withdrawal is a mere gesture" that signifies no basic change in Moscow's policy.*

*In Japan, the Daily Yomiuri said "There is some doubt about the Soviet Union's true intentions in starting its announced withdrawal of troops . . . but at any rate, only 8,000 out of 115,000 troops are going to leave and this will not really change the situation much." The conservative Sankei Shimbun said, "The Soviet Union should show a more visible withdrawal figure as it is pulling out only 8,000 of its 115,000*

*troops estimated to be in Afghanistan . . . the Soviets should announce a complete withdrawal timetable."*

*In China, Renmin Ribao said ". . . the number of regiments scheduled to be withdrawn amount to only a small part. In addition, the Soviet Union has not yet published the troop withdrawal schedule and has not stopped Soviet military operations in Afghanistan. For this reason, people cannot understand whether this is the beginning of a general withdrawal . . . or a tactical step for the purpose of gaining a favorable position in the US-Soviet talks."*

*In Yugoslavia, domestic radio commentators said, "It is obvious that the military situation and the relation of forces in Afghanistan have not changed considerably . . . anyway, even if one discounts—but one does not have to do so—the number of soldiers who will be withdrawn . . . there is also the composition of those forces. One of the six regiments is a tank regiment, two are mechanized, and three are antiaircraft. Not only do the mujahidin not have tanks or planes, they do not have a large quantity of heavy arms. This is why mujahidin members seem not to believe much in a real withdrawal . . . ."*

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negotiating position at Geneva. The Pakistanis are likely to be more suspicious of Soviet pledges, possibly more insistent on strong monitoring provisions, and probably even less willing than in the past to consider any Soviet offer to withdraw all its forces over an extended period. Pakistan, however, will continue bilateral discussions with Moscow. [redacted]

At the same time, Moscow's attempts to convince the world that it wants a negotiated withdrawal in Afghanistan risk creating fears among Kabul's ruling elite that the Soviets are beginning to abandon them. We believe that the ruling party, seriously divided since the Soviets installed Najib as party chief, would suffer increased strains if party members were to

believe that a genuine Soviet disengagement had begun. Babrak Karmal loyalists, unhappy over his replacement, have already formed an opposition party with anti-Soviet overtones, [redacted]

[redacted] It was embarrassing for Moscow, moreover, when Babrak was publicly mobbed by well-wishers at withdrawal ceremonies in Kabul. This show of support followed his conspicuous absence from pullout ceremonies a few days earlier in Shindand and rumors of his arrest. [redacted]

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**Looking at the Scorecard**

The withdrawal almost certainly has failed to win over world opinion and impress China and Pakistan with what was meant to appear as a good-faith gesture of the Soviets' willingness to solve the Afghan problem. But the negative results of the venture, primarily the charges of Soviet duplicity, were also manageable. Even the reaction of the US Government to the deception was apparently considered by Moscow as within acceptable bounds.

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## Afghanistan: Cultural Factors in the Insurgency — Mixed Blessings <sup>1</sup>

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Ethnic, cultural, and religious factors generally strengthen the Afghan resistance's ability to resist Soviet domination. Deep commitments to defending family and religion sustain the will of the fighters, while the fragmented nature of Afghan society tends to hamper regime policies aimed at co-opting the population. At the same time, deeply rooted hatreds among ethnic groups and tribes, xenophobic attitudes, opportunism, and individuality slow the transition of fighters or even groups of fighters into a strong insurgency.

### **Traditional Social Organizations**

The tightly knit Afghan family, tribal, and village structures provide strong barriers to Soviet penetration. Traditional tribal structures have long provided a basis for organizing opposition to outside invaders, but the tribal leaders are fickle and quick to shift their loyalties in return for bribes or to stay on the winning side.

**The Family.** The primary allegiance of Afghans is to the family. In rural areas the most common form is the extended family consisting of brothers and their families sharing the same household.

To an Afghan, family and extended kinship ties determine to a great extent who he is, who he can become, where he can go, and how he should fight the war. Afghans do not take actions independently but, rather, in kinship units.

Scholars of Afghanistan have pointed out that, although a family may experience internal competition and feuds, it presents a united front to the outside world and is impermeable to outside influence. In part, the Soviet movement of thousands of Afghan youths away from their families for education in the USSR reflects a recognition by Moscow of the difficulties in changing attitudes within the traditional family units.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared by an outside contractor. It was not coordinated within this Agency. The views expressed are those of the author.

Providing for the family comes before fighting. Historically this has meant that military campaigns lasted for limited periods so that men could return to farming or herding to provide for their families. This is still largely the case with the Afghan guerrillas, even in areas where there has been an attempt to build a professional paid army.

Many men with families in Pakistan commute between Pakistan and the battlefronts in Afghanistan. Many guerrilla commanders have a rotation system, with the men spending two weeks in Afghanistan and two weeks with their families in Pakistan. For the groups fighting deeper inside Afghanistan, the rotation period is longer.

**Tribes.** The tribal areas of Afghanistan are in the east, primarily among the Pashtuns near the Pakistani border. The tribes include the Mohmand, Jaji, Jadran, Mangul, Tani, Shinwari, and Waziri in the Provinces of Paktia, Nangarhar, and Konarha. Tribal structures divide characteristically into subtribes, lineages, clans, and extended families.

In Afghanistan, as in other traditional societies, tribal leaders can often mobilize thousands of men at a moment's notice for a battle. The Pashtun tribes are particularly bellicose. Fighting over pasture land, tribal honor, or tribal autonomy against neighboring tribes, national governments, or invading armies has long been a way of life. Acquiring war booty is also a motivating factor.

Pashtun tribal groups under traditional leaders have fought against the Kabul regime and the Soviets in many areas for several years, but their capacity to increase pressure on the regime is limited. They usually participate in the fighting only if it suits their tribal objectives and tend not to fight in areas outside their tribal region. They resist being organized into units led by nontribal members and generally resist military training from nontribal people. Tribal leaders

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often are allied with Gailani or Mojadedi, the so-called traditionalist insurgent leaders, partly because these groups are loosely organized and present no challenge to established tribal authorities.

The tribes most often fight on the side of the resistance but owe little allegiance to it. They strike deals with Kabul when it suits their interest. Several tribes—including part of the Mohmand, the Jaji, and the Shinwari—cooperate to some degree with Kabul. They will quickly abandon Kabul if they believe their interests lie elsewhere.

**Village Structure.** In the non-Pashtun areas where the village-based system predominates, allegiance beyond the family traditionally goes primarily to the local landlord, called *khans* in most areas. The *khans*, often natural and capable leaders, control the distribution of farmland and products as well as most aspects of village life. They are also, in some cases, quite despotic.

Since the beginning of the war the influence of landlords has been challenged by young men, often of humble origin who have gained prestige as successful guerrilla leaders, and by some religious leaders. Many of the landlords have been killed or have fled to Pakistan or Kabul.

Antilandlord activity is a stated policy of the Islamic alliance groups—Jamiat-i-Islami, both factions of Hizbi Islami, and Sayyaf's Islamic Union—and the groups fighting out of Iran. These groups espouse the development of a more egalitarian society based on Islamic principles. Leaders of the traditionalist political groups, including Gailani, Nabi, and Mojadedi, are themselves largely from the landlord class and thus often support traditional village structures.

The collapse of the *khans* as traditional leaders in the villages in some areas, such as in the Panjshir, has allowed development of a regional front uniting various villages and groups. In other areas, the ousting of the *khans* has had a negative effect, leaving many villages without good leadership.

Religious leaders, who generally did not play a large role in village leadership before 1978, have become more important, but in some areas the population is led by an often ineffective local mullah.

#### **Afghan Codes of Honor and Manhood**

The Afghans, especially the tribal Pashtuns, have a strong code of behavior that emphasizes bravery, honor, and revenge. Called *pushtunwali*, the code of behavior is an elaborate although indefinite set of rules that describes the duties of manhood. The rules specify everything from how to entertain a guest to how to fight. Among the nontribal people of Afghanistan these codes have been largely replaced by religious codes of honor. Among Tajik and other Persian speakers, the concept of bravery and honor is called *jarvin maroi*.

Codes of honor sometimes enhance the ability of the Afghans to fight. They account for the incredible bravery and tenaciousness of Afghan fighters. The emphasis on the ability to withstand privation and difficult surroundings without complaint accounts for the ability of Afghan insurgents to wage war in bleak circumstances.

Still, the codes often work against the development of good guerrilla fighters and account for many of the Afghans' problems in accepting training and in using appropriate military tactics. The emphasis on bravery and on individual action leads Afghans in many areas not to bother with normal precautions in planning and executing military operations. Insurgents often seem to believe that only courage is required to succeed. Training, intelligence, and other preparations are often neglected.

Many Afghans are unnecessarily wounded or killed because they believe that taking precautions would show cowardice and violate the codes of honor in front of fellow Afghans. Moreover, the individual approach to fighting makes it difficult to develop cooperation in fighting.

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***The Insurgents Under Fire—Pluses and Minuses***

*The following account of an insurgent attack in 1985 on a regime post near Jegdalek in Kabul Province was written by an experienced military observer. It provides a useful account of the strengths and weaknesses provided by Afghan cultural traits.*

Elementary principles of warfare were violated. Although there was no time pressure, reconnaissance of the terrain was insufficient. No one knew the exact location of the minefields. Fire support from infantry weapons was, at a distance of 800 to 900 meters, much too far from the enemy positions to have a serious neutralizing effect on the target. The insurgents were not divided into groups until 30 minutes before the attack. Thus, good coordination between the combatants was impossible from the outset. There was no contact between the two assault groups and the fire support teams. No one thought about the care of possibly injured troops. Even bandage sets had been left behind in the base camp, 10 hours away by foot.

An impressive aspect was the calmness with which the guerrillas from Jegdalek prepared for battle. Full of confidence, they believed that they would capture weapons and hoped for deserters from the enemy camp. Enthusiasm in battle was correspondingly high at the outset. After the disastrous explosion of a land mine, the troops fell into retreat. During this phase there was no discernible panic or despair. The insurgents came to terms amazingly well with the demise of one of their comrades. After three days they set out, unflustered, on a new attack. They impressed me as amazingly carefree and somehow fatalistic because they did not draw any kind of basic conclusions from their most recent defeat.

The guerrillas in Jegdalek apparently do not know the idea or even the meaning of a cost-benefit analysis. This vexing phenomenon is probably explained more or less as follows:

- Because many Afghans from the rural population scarcely have any higher education, their imagination is basically supported by and limited

to their everyday surroundings. It is only with difficulty that they can put distance between themselves and their romantic concept of war, anchored in tradition.

- Many Afghans are still bound to the idea that the outcome of a war depends primarily on the courage and boldness of the individual combatant.

Only a few have realized that in a modern war the quality of the armaments, the level of military training, and the application of appropriate tactics are additional factors in determining success. Even fewer are capable of drawing useful conclusions from the above-mentioned realizations.

In Jegdalek, I got the impression that the fighters scarcely make a direct association between their hopes for victory and the successes or failures of an individual campaign. The catastrophic consequences of the war and the unimaginable strains of permanent combat have thus far been endured by an amazingly large number of Afghans without resignation. The conviction that they are fighting for a just cause appears to be invincible. Certainly, religion plays a significant role in this context, found in the idea of the "holy war" against the "godless Communists." One, however, should be careful not to see purely religious fanatics among the Afghan guerrillas. Their strength of resistance is fed from other sources as well:

- The close connection to their home and their deeply rooted demand for self-determination, which would never permit the assimilation of imposed societal forms, are other elements of their combat morale.
- Many Afghans would also have sufficient motivation for maintaining their almost axiomatic will for resistance even without strong religious convictions. An enormous number of Afghans have already lost everything except their lives. They are driven to win back their country and their independence.



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***Martyrdom and Fatalism.*** Martyrdom and fatalism are closely related to the codes of honor and manhood and have much the same effect on the fighting. A martyr in Islam is one who dies fighting in the sacred Islamic war, the  *jihad* . Like the codes of honor, the Islamic notion of martyrdom encourages the Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan to take large risks without regard to danger, facilitating guerrilla attacks.

Although strong belief in a just cause and an ultimate trust in God help sustain morale, in a guerrilla war this fatalism also works against developing strategy and tactics and against the acceptance of proper training. Many Afghans believe that faith is enough to drive out the Soviets and they need only to put themselves in God's hands to win the war.

#### **Afghan Attitudes Toward Other Nationalities**

Afghans, a proud people who have defended themselves against the outside world for centuries, have built up prejudices toward other nationalities. These attitudes affect Afghan relations with these people and also the fighting when the other nations are involved.

***Pakistanis.*** An Afghan, generally speaking, views Pakistanis and other peoples of the Indian subcontinent with contempt. This can be observed in several ways, including the naming of their major mountain range the Hindu Kush—the killer of Hindus—and the jokes they tell of the people from that area. Afghans openly mock the speech of the subcontinent and consider the Pakistanis to be inferior. This dislike is strongest toward the Punjabis and perhaps least noticeable toward the Pakistani Pushtuns, who share a similar cultural heritage with the Afghans.

As a result, Afghans find it difficult to be under Pakistani supervision. This bias accounts, in part, for the refusal of some Afghans to be trained by the Pakistani Army. Even though many guerrilla commanders admit that the Pakistani Army is good and could probably help them, they cannot accept the idea of working under an officer who most likely is Punjabi.

The Afghans suspect the Pakistanis of cheating them and resent having to plead with Pakistani (Punjabi) officials for arms and ammunition they believe are

rightfully theirs. Distrust of the Pakistanis also accounts in part for the stockpiling of military supplies by Afghan insurgents in the border region of Afghanistan, even though these arms depots are not defensible.

***Iranians.*** The Afghans display an inferiority complex toward the Iranians. Parts of Afghan culture are closer to Iranian culture than to Pakistani culture; Persian is the most widely spoken language in Afghanistan; and Iran is looked to by many Afghans, though not all, as the cultural heartland. Many Afghans, Sunnis, and Shias, go to Iran to study. Before 1978 it was considered desirable among the upper class in Kabul to speak Persian with an Iranian accent. At the same time, the Afghans rightly believe that the Iranians look down on them. Afghans who have gone to Iran report being treated rudely by Iranians.

***Other Nationalities.*** The Afghans hold varying attitudes toward other foreigners, shaped by recent history:

- Muslim Arabs are not well liked because the Afghans find them overly puritanical, preachy, arrogant, and effete.
- The Soviets are disliked, in part because they are atheists, but largely because of the events of the last eight years. Still, the Soviets are grudgingly respected for their brutality and staying power. Comments heard earlier in the war about inept Soviet soldiers are heard less as the Soviets have improved their fighting capability.

#### **In Sum . . .**

The Afghans have proven to be brave, tough, and skilled fighters. Their ability to fight an effective guerrilla war has been heightened by the characteristics of traditional Afghan culture and social structure. Paradoxically, this traditional culture has held the Afghan guerrillas back in many ways and had a negative effect on efforts to develop a more sophisticated, well-organized fighting force.



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**Western Sahara: Whither the Polisario Front?** [redacted]

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The Algerian-backed Polisario Front continues to face insurmountable challenges in trying to attain unilaterally a military victory against Morocco in Western Sahara. Conventional warfare has proven ineffective against Rabat's berm strategy. In addition, the Front is experiencing strains with its patron Algeria, which is facing severe financial difficulties of its own. In our view, the Polisario has three options in Western Sahara: continuation of the current low-intensity conflict; initiation of terrorism; or disengagement. We believe that the most the Polisario can hope for is the first option as long as Algeria insists on limiting the conflict. Escalation through terrorism could develop as the war drags on with a reduction in Algerian assistance. Any political solution involving Sahrawi autonomy is unlikely while Rabat has the upper hand militarily. [redacted]

**Leadership and Organization.** The Polisario remains fairly stable as a political and military movement 12 years after its creation. Mohamed Abdelaziz has served as President of the SDAR and political chief of the Polisario since the death of its founder in 1976. Senior positions in the movement are held by a small coterie of leaders who stress non-Marxist Arab socialism, unity, and nationalism as the main features of the Polisario struggle. A nine-member Executive Committee is the formal executive body of the Polisario, while the Council of Ministers of the SDAR is the administrative and governmental apparatus. The only apparent differences within the Polisario arise over strategy, in which a group including Defense Minister Ghali and Foreign Minister Mansour want to pursue more aggressive military tactics against Morocco, including terrorism. [redacted]

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**Background**

The Western Sahara problem, like many Third World conflicts, has its origins in the process of decolonization. Primarily the product of the conflict between the desire of Saharan nationalists for self-determination and Moroccan territorial claims, it has been greatly complicated by the longstanding rivalry between Morocco and Algeria. Spain's decision to grant independence to its Saharan colony in 1976 set the stage for the small-scale war that has been fought since then by Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro). [redacted]

Stability within the Polisario Front probably stems primarily from the fact that Algeria provides it with the necessary financial and military support and a territorial base. Algeria claims that it gives the Sahrawi refugees, housed in four camps around Tindouf, about \$100 million per year—a sum probably not overly burdensome even with Algeria's economic problems. The number of Sahrawi refugees has been a source of contention: Algeria and the Polisario claim as many as 165,000 and Morocco 15,000. An American scholar believes the number falls between 17,000 and 35,000—a range we endorse. Algeria also has provided the Polisario with an impressive arsenal of weapons, including approximately 100 tanks, 150 armored vehicles, 40 howitzers and mortars, SA-6 air defense missiles, and 500 trucks and land rovers. [redacted]

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The military and political prospects for the Polisario and its government-in-exile, the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic (SDAR), have diminished over time. Although the Polisario initially achieved some military gains, the tide of war has turned against it since the early 1980s. At that time, Morocco began constructing a network of earthen berms to wall out the Polisario insurgents. The SDAR has been more successful on the diplomatic front, gaining diplomatic recognition from 65 countries and the Organization of African Unity. These political advances, however, have not had a significant effect on the battlefield. [redacted]

**Difficulties Facing the Movement**

SDAR officials are facing challenges from Algiers. [redacted] financial aid to the Polisario has diminished as Algeria copes with falling petroleum revenues. In [redacted]

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**Table 1**  
**Countries Recognizing the Saharan Democratic**  
**Arab Republic**

Year/ Number <sup>a</sup>	Africa	Asia	Latin America	Europe
1976 10	Algeria Angola Benin Burundi Guinea-Bissau Madagascar Mozambique Rwanda Togo	North Korea		
1977 1	Seychelles			
1978 5	Congo Sao-Tome and Principe Tanzania	South Yemen	Panama	
1979 16	Cape Verde Ethiopia Ghana Lesotho Zambia	Afghanistan Cambodia Laos Vietnam	Dominica Grenada Guyana Jamaica Mexico Nicaragua St. Lucia	
1980 12	Botswana Libya Mali Sierra Leone Swaziland Chad Zimbabwe	Iran Syria Vanuatu	Costa Rica Cuba	
1981 5		Kiribati Nauru Papua New Guinea Solomon Islands Tuvalu		
1982 4	Mauritius		Bolivia Suriname Venezuela	
1983 1			Ecuador	
1984 5	Burkina Mauritania Nigeria		Peru	Yugoslavia
1985 2		India	Colombia	
1986 4	Uganda		Guatemala Dominican Republic Trinidad and Tobago	

<sup>a</sup> Total number of countries from 1976 to 1986 is 65: Africa (30), Asia (15), Latin America (19), and Europe (1).



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**Table 2**  
**Political Leadership of the Polisario Front**

	SDAR Ministers	Polisario Front
Mohamed Abdelaziz	President	Secretary General
Bechir Mustafa Sayed		Deputy Secretary General
Mohamed Salim Ould Salek	Secretary General of the Presidency	
Mohamed Lamine Ould Ahmed	Prime Minister	
Omar Mansour	Foreign Affairs	
Brahim Ould Mustafa Ghali	Defense	
Mohamed Ould Zayou	Justice	
Mohamed Lamine Ould Ahmed	Education	
Taleb Omar	Interior	
Ould Boubeh Ould Youssef Salek	Health and Welfare	
Ould Ahmed Baba Hammoudi	Communications and Energy	
Ibrahim Hakim	Information	
Mohamed Ould Sidati Ould Sheikh	Counselor to the Prime Minister	
Omar Hadrani	Director General for Foreign Relations	

[REDACTED]

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addition, Algiers imposes limits on Polisario military planning and operations because President Bendjedid fears that an escalation of the war could lead to a direct confrontation between Algeria and Morocco.

prospects for a resumption of Libyan aid, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] events such as Polisario leader Abdelaziz's journey to Tripoli shortly after the rupture of the Moroccan-Libyan union. Polisario and Algerian officials would almost certainly welcome renewed Libyan financial or military support, but they would not allow Tripoli to influence military and diplomatic strategy. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Polisario leaders are displeased with Bendjedid's cautious stance on prosecuting the war. The friction stems from the fact that the Polisario Front has lost its capability to win the war through military means. The insurgents have increasingly used hit-and-run tactics because conventional military assaults have proven ineffective against Morocco's defensive berms. [REDACTED]

Mauritania's policy toward the Polisario has hardened since the emergence of the Taya government in late 1984. Whereas Mauritania favored the Polisario cause under President Taya's predecessor, the current government in Nouakchott appears more sympathetic toward Morocco. Mauritania is attempting to remain officially neutral, however, and has been unable to prevent the guerrillas from using its territory for attacks against the berms. [REDACTED]

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**Foreign Relations.** Libya does not appear to be a major alternative source of support. Qadhafi gave aid before Libya's union with Morocco in 1984, but such support was sporadic and unreliable. The recent schism between Morocco and Libya raises the

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**Social.** The Polisario leadership's control over, and support from, the Sahrawi population in Algeria appears fairly firm. Every aspect of life in the camps is heavily politicized and militarized, including complete indoctrination of youth. According to the [redacted] the techniques of education resemble brainwashing, and student youth rallies have been likened to those of the Nazis. Although this indoctrination has not led to terrorism, the potential for radicalization of the Front—similar to the PLO—is great and could pose a problem for Algeria over the long term. Some credible press reports indicate disaffection among the population and desertions among Polisario fighters, [redacted]

[redacted]

**Options**

The Polisario Front and Algeria can choose among three alternative courses of action: continuing the status quo; escalation through terrorism; and disengagement. Of the three, we believe that continuing the status quo is most likely, at least for the short term, and that disengagement is the least palatable for the Polisario. Polisario officials cannot devise any strategy without the concurrence of Bendjedid, given the Front's dependence on Algiers.

[redacted]

From the military standpoint, the Polisario and the Algerians have shown no sign of devising a new strategy for winning the war. Even so, both Algeria and the Polisario probably will at some point decide to intensify the fighting through use of armor, air defense weapons, and more aggressive commando raids. Algeria under Bendjedid and his economic austerity program is unlikely to allow the Polisario to drag it into a full-scale conflict with Morocco. Morocco, for its part, has no need to adopt more aggressive measures, given the success of its berm strategy. [redacted]

Diplomatically, there are no signs of progress toward a negotiated settlement. Other than the general concept of a cease-fire, little has been agreed upon because the Algerians want Morocco to negotiate directly with the SDAR, a position unacceptable to Rabat. The definition of the voting population in Western Sahara is a subject of disagreement with regard to holding a referendum on the political status

of the territory. In addition, the composition of a peace-keeping force to safeguard the polling would need to be worked out. [redacted]

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**Terrorism.** A less likely scenario is the Polisario's initiation of terrorist operations. Because terrorism is not yet used, all sides in the dispute would view such action as an escalation of the war. The Polisario probably realizes it must adopt new methods of direct confrontation to turn the conflict against Morocco. [redacted]

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the SDAR Defense and Foreign Ministers are attempting to obtain Algerian approval to mount terrorist operations. Terrorist attacks carried out behind Moroccan lines against military targets in Western Sahara probably would be less controversial to Rabat than terrorism against civilians within Morocco proper. [redacted]

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**Disengagement.** Abandonment of the conflict probably is the least likely option for the Polisario. Such a course is unnecessary, given Algerian military commitments and the SDAR's diplomatic gains. Algiers, for its part, would not want to stop the fighting at this juncture without a face-saving solution. Algeria probably views the current Polisario military campaign as a way of encouraging Rabat to accept a negotiated settlement. [redacted]

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**Implications for the United States**

We believe Polisario attitudes toward Washington will reflect those of Algiers. Polisario leaders rankle at Washington's support for King Hassan, but they have been restrained in their comments about Washington's position and have sought to curry favor with the United States. [redacted]

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Only a serious escalation would encourage the parties to go beyond their limited attempts to draw Washington into the conflict. Algeria's attitude toward the United States will be a key factor in limiting the adverse impact of the conflict upon US interests. So long as Algeria keeps the Polisario under tight control, there is little likelihood that the guerrillas will challenge Rabat in ways that could destabilize Morocco in the near term. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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