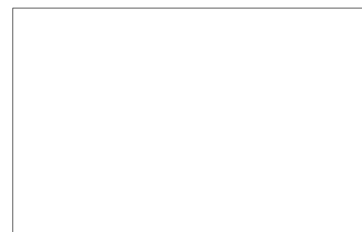




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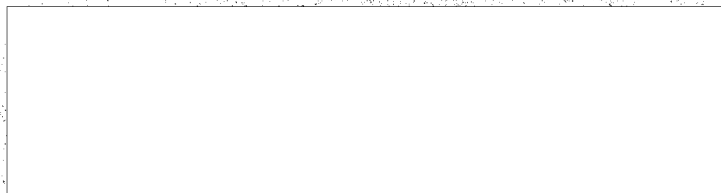
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Soviet Problems, Prospects, and Options in Afghanistan in the Next Year

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum



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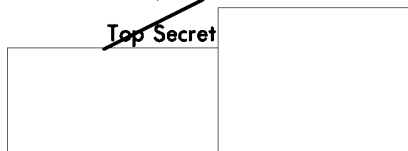
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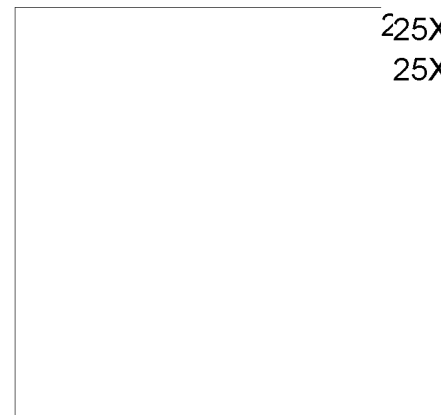
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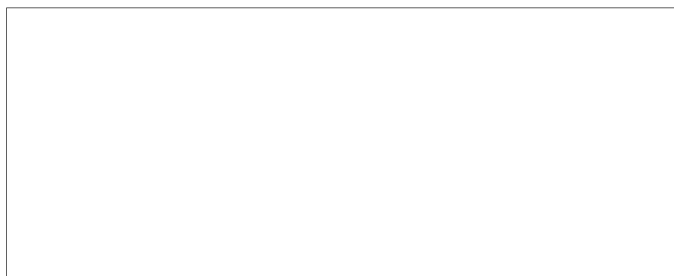
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**SOVIET PROBLEMS, PROSPECTS,
AND OPTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN
IN THE NEXT YEAR**

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SCOPE NOTE

Increased insurgent effectiveness and the continuing ineffectiveness of the Afghan Army forced the USSR into adopting a more aggressive approach to combat in Afghanistan in 1984. Greater outside support for the resistance this year and last means that Soviet problems probably will again increase in 1985. This Interagency Intelligence Memorandum assesses the effectiveness of the measures the Soviets have taken thus far to deal with a more potent resistance and projects their options over the next year or so. [redacted]

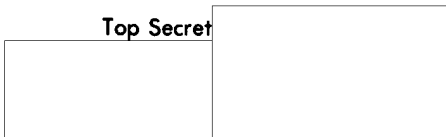
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This Memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for the USSR in the Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, and coordinated at the working level among CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organizations of the Department of State and of the military services. [redacted]

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KEY JUDGMENTS ¹


The Soviet military situation in Afghanistan has continued to deteriorate as a result of the increased insurgent capabilities and the continuing ineffectiveness of the Afghan Army, and despite intensified Soviet military efforts. The Soviets expect that their problems will increase as the resistance receives more and better materiel this year. 

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We believe that the Soviets will respond in the near term by attempting to apply more widely and skillfully the measures they have sought to apply in the past year. In support of this effort, additional tactical adjustments to the current economy-of-force strategy are likely and some force increases—probably not more than 5,000 to 10,000 men—are possible. 

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Moscow will continue to hold to its main objective of assuring a Communist regime in Afghanistan because:

- The Soviet invasion itself has made it likely that any successor regime in Afghanistan not supported by Soviet military occupation would be deeply hostile to Moscow.
- The fall of its Afghan regime would be seen as a serious blow to Moscow's reputation as a resolute power.
- Control of Afghanistan is seen by the Soviets to be important to the security of Soviet Central Asian border regions.
- The Soviets also see controlling Afghanistan as helping fulfill long-range aspirations to expand their influence in the region. 

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We believe that the Soviet military are examining how their military presence in Afghanistan could be utilized for various military contingencies against Pakistan and Iran. Major improvements in lines of communications and air and logistic facilities, and the deployment of significant additional forces, would be essential for the Soviets to undertake and sustain large-scale operations from Afghanistan. The Soviets almost certainly would not undertake such major improvements until they had consolidated control in Afghanistan. 

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The Soviets have a combined political-military strategy for consolidating Communist rule in Afghanistan, but appear to have consistently



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underestimated the difficulties they face. Initially, they reportedly thought the mere presence of Soviet forces would be sufficient to intimidate any resistance. Then they thought Soviet involvement in combat would militarily destroy most armed resistance within a couple of years. By 1983, they seem to have reconciled themselves to a longer term military strategy aimed at destroying enough of the resistance to compel the remainder to see the futility of continuing to fight. This strategy was coupled with a political strategy of trying to build up a cadre of reliable Afghan Communists to govern the country eventually. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union has made no significant progress in its attempts to obtain political backing from the Afghan people. [redacted]

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In 1984, the Soviets augmented their forces by a few thousand men and made other tactical and force adjustments designed to regain the military initiative. But the resistance, increasingly armed and trained from the outside, also continued to improve. The net result by the end of the year was that Soviet losses had increased and there had been no measurable improvement in the Afghan Government's position. The territory under government control may actually have declined slightly in 1984. [redacted]

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Moscow's lack of progress in Afghanistan has generated argument and pessimism among Soviet middle-level military and intelligence officials familiar with the situation. Many in the Soviet elite harbor doubts about the prospect of ultimate victory and the wisdom of the initial Soviet commitment. Soviet officials privately admit that Afghanistan has entailed significant costs, but they also assert that the costs of alternative policies would be even higher and that they must stay the course. The costs of Afghanistan have not been so high as to force Moscow to shrink from its objective of ultimately controlling the country. Soviet military capabilities elsewhere have not been substantially diminished, the economic costs are bearable, and dissatisfaction within the elite and populace, while noticeable, has remained within tolerable levels. The leadership's recent decision to promote three of the key military figures who are most responsible for the USSR's operations suggests no disposition to reexamine its commitment or its strategy in Afghanistan now. [redacted]

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The new party General Secretary, M. S. Gorbachev, like all other top leaders, has avoided significant direct comment on Afghanistan in public. As a key figure in the leadership during the last year, Gorbachev has presumably developed a degree of commitment to current Soviet goals and strategy in Afghanistan. He used his meeting with Pakistan's President Zia at Chernenko's funeral to chastise Islamabad over its policy toward Afghanistan. Gorbachev would naturally wish to solve the

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Afghanistan problem in some way, but, while he is consolidating his power in the Soviet leadership over the next year or so, he has a strong political interest in avoiding positions that might make him look weak or open him to charges of adventurism. He therefore does not seem to have an immediate interest in seeking to revise Soviet goals and strategy. [redacted]

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A major escalation or expansion of the war would certainly raise the costs to the Soviet system while not necessarily leading to a quick victory. Intensification of the conflict at roughly present levels of Soviet commitment—which is what we expect—will raise the costs somewhat. The Soviet Union has the economic and military resources to continue this war indefinitely at present or escalated levels. It is the prospect of a very protracted war with potentially large domestic and international costs that is politically and psychologically troubling to many in the Soviet population and elite, and presumably of concern to the Soviet leadership. The Soviet Union is more capable than other countries might be of bearing the political costs of direct involvement in an open-ended war. Its tolerance for a protracted war in Afghanistan may not be limitless. We cannot say at this point, however, what the limits might be and whether or when they might eventually be reached. [redacted]

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On the basis of an improving military supply situation, we project that the performance of the resistance in Afghanistan will improve steadily during 1985 as it did in 1984:

- The greater availability of ammunition and other materiel will increase the operational effectiveness and persistence of those already under arms.
- The number of near-full-time fighters, now estimated at about 150,000,² will increase substantially.
- Resistance effectiveness against aircraft is likely to increase substantially, against both airborne targets and airbases.
- The number of resistance fighters with rudimentary military training will continue to rise, and all are learning from combat experience. [redacted]

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At the same time, the inevitable sluggishness and unevenness of the resistance logistic network, shortages in many needed items, food problems, and the fragmented nature of the war will probably cause these factors to increase resistance effectiveness only gradually. They

² This is the estimated number of resistance fighters for whom the war is a full-time or primary activity; some 30 percent of them are in daily action against the Soviets. The number of occasional fighters is probably several times as large. [redacted]

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will not confront the Soviets with a dramatic crisis or sharp deterioration of their military situation, or prevent the Soviets from making selected improvements to it.

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Even so, the Soviets know that in 1985-86 they will be facing a more militarily capable resistance. They have already signaled that more outside support will not dissuade them from pursuing their objective of full control over the country. They are already planning military measures aimed at negating the improvement in insurgent capabilities. These measures, we believe, are most likely to be extensions of what the Soviets did in the recent past:

- More operations by Soviet forces without the Afghan Army.
- More agile and aggressive ground force tactics, particularly with special and air assault forces.
- Better use of tactical air and ground-based firepower.
- Temporary augmentations of Soviet forces for high-priority operations.
- Further efforts to improve tactical intelligence and command and control.
- More efforts to interdict resistance supplies near Afghanistan's borders.
- Continued improvement of the logistic infrastructure.
- Continued efforts to build a Communist cadre to control the country in the long term.

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We expect the Soviets to continue making a concerted effort to destroy Panjsheri resistance leader Masood and his men in 1985. We also anticipate more Soviet effort to improve security in Afghanistan's major cities. Interdicting infiltration across the borders with Pakistan and Iran will mean more Soviet/Afghan air and artillery strikes and perhaps a few ground incursions—both deliberate and accidental—against insurgent targets in both these countries. Despite the Soviet desire to keep them down, Soviet casualties and equipment losses will probably continue to rise.

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As an adjunct to their military efforts, the Soviets will attempt to do more politically and diplomatically to reduce support for the resistance. However, we see no signs that Moscow is now prepared to seek a genuine political solution that requires abandoning Soviet objectives and withdrawing from Afghanistan:

- In addition to continuing cross-border incidents, the Soviets will apply strong diplomatic and propaganda pressures on Pakistan.

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They may increase efforts to destabilize the Zia regime. They have had strong incentives to do so in the past, but apparently lack adequate means.

- In recent months the Soviets have toughened their stance toward Iran, and we expect this trend to continue. However, the Soviets might try a more flexible approach to Iran in which they seek to exploit Iran's interest in an improved relationship to get Iran to cut back its support of the Afghan resistance.
- The USSR and China have moved to improve relations with each other despite the "three obstacles" raised by China—Soviet troops on China's borders; Soviet support of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia; and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Even if the Afghan issue has become more significant because of the growing Chinese role in aiding the Mujahedin, we judge that neither side is likely to make the continuing improvement of relations contingent on its resolution.
- Toward the United States, the Soviets could attempt to make US support for the resistance more of a factor in bilateral relations than they have in the past. But there are inhibiting risks in either of the two approaches they might take. Should they suggest that other improvements in the relationship, such as arms control progress, are jeopardized by US policy toward Afghanistan, they risk sacrificing other important political goals, such as encouraging restraint in US military programs. Should they, on the other hand, hint at the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan without prior guarantees for the Kabul regime in order to encourage reductions in US support for the resistance, they would risk signaling their own vulnerability in Afghanistan and emboldening their major adversary. For these reasons we do not believe that the Soviets will wish to make Afghanistan stand in the way of changes in US-Soviet bilateral relations in the near future.

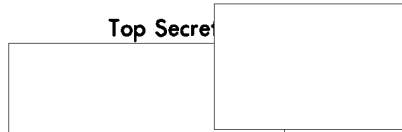
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We doubt that any of these military or political measures will be sufficient to put the war convincingly on the path toward a Soviet victory. To the contrary, if our appreciation of the situation is correct, the Soviets are likely to find themselves no better off after another year or so of tactical adjustments and small troop increases. At some point, a continued military stalemate might no longer be tolerable to the Soviets and they might consider radical alternatives to their present strategy. These could include a large Soviet military buildup in Afghanistan and more forceful attempts to diminish Pakistan's support to the resistance or—less likely—serious efforts to get a political solution involving Soviet military withdrawal.

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For the time being, however, we believe that Moscow prefers to avoid the military costs and risks of a major troop increase. Logistic preparations for an increase of 50,000 troops, for example, would require several months and would probably not decisively affect the course of the war. A much larger expansion—to a level of 400,000 to 500,000 troops—designed to assure Soviet control would take a year or more to accomplish and still might not lead to quick suppression of the insurgency.

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We also believe that Moscow is not yet ready to face the military risks and political consequences of a significant expansion of hostilities into Pakistan or Iran. Major action against either country from Afghan territory would require extensive logistic preparations, including securing of supply lines.

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We believe, therefore, that the Soviets will continue for at least the next year or so to try to make progress against the insurgents without a major expansion of their forces or of the geographic scope of the war. But we believe that such progress will continue to elude them.

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There are a number of developments, which do not now seem likely, that could upset our calculations. Although we see no evidence that Gorbachev is ready to depart far from current Soviet strategy, Soviet leadership politics could produce debate that leads to more radical changes in Soviet policy than we currently foresee. A Pakistani government without President Zia might be less committed to current Afghan policy, despite the consensus that supports this policy now. Iran might reduce its support for the Afghan resistance to improve its relations with Moscow; but an increase of Iranian support is as likely in the near term. Regional political development adverse to the Afghan resistance might curtail but probably would not altogether cut off Mujahedin resupply. If there were a cutoff of outside support for the resistance in Afghanistan, the Soviets would start making progress toward gaining control of Afghanistan. This would reduce pressure on them to escalate their commitment to the war or to seek a political accommodation.

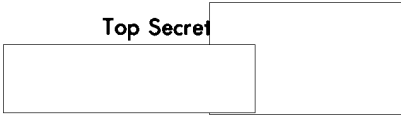
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If present trends continue, the Soviets may well face 10 years or more of fighting in Afghanistan. We cannot judge with any certainty how this will impact on Soviet society and the Soviet political system. The case can be made that the USSR would find the prospect of indefinite and costly conflict preferable to the alternatives of significant reinforcement or abandonment of Soviet objectives, and will continue the present course indefinitely in the belief that eventually the resistance and its outside supporters will give up. The contrary case can be



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made that the prospects of indefinite and protracted conflict in Afghanistan would be unacceptable to Moscow; that sooner or later the domestic and international costs of a continuing war in Afghanistan will force the leadership to either radically increase the Soviet military commitment to the war, accepting the costs and risks of its expansion beyond Afghanistan's borders, or to seek a political path for withdrawal, even at the cost of the Kabul regime's collapse. If the Afghan resistance continues to grow in scale and effectiveness in the years ahead, the odds increase that the Soviets will eventually confront such choices.

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We think our view of the war and how the Soviet leadership sees it is a reasonably accurate one. Changes in insurgent effectiveness, morale, and the size of forces actually fighting might take some time to detect.



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We probably would not be able to forecast with long leadtimes a Soviet decision to undertake radical policy changes. However, because the logistic preparations for a substantial escalation in the Soviet military effort either within Afghanistan or against Pakistan and Iran would take many months, we should still be able to provide early warning. Moscow might attempt initially to obfuscate a decision to cut Soviet losses and get out of Afghanistan, but eventually we should be able to detect such a decision from Soviet diplomatic and propaganda shifts in time for assessment and policy response.

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DISCUSSION

The Current Soviet Approach

Soviet Goals and Strategy

1. Moscow's basic goal in Afghanistan has changed little since the invasion. The Soviets are seeking to create a situation whereby a pro-Soviet Communist regime can rule the country on its own without a large Soviet military presence engaged in occupation and pacification—and to do so at the lowest possible cost in terms of Soviet lives and resources. The Soviets now realize that accomplishing this goal requires a political and military campaign, extending over years, that suppresses the resistance and develops a large, effective, and loyal cadre of Afghan Communist leaders. As of now, the Soviets do not know how long this strategy will take to succeed. But this uncertainty, while a concern to them, is not a deterrent to their continued quest for control of Afghanistan.

2. Moscow will continue to hold to its main objective of assuring a Communist regime in Afghanistan because:

- The Soviet invasion itself has made it likely that any successor regime in Afghanistan not supported by Soviet military occupation would be deeply hostile to Moscow.
- The fall of its Afghan regime would be seen as a serious blow to Moscow's reputation as a resolute power.
- Control of Afghanistan is seen by the Soviets to be important to the security of Soviet Central Asian border regions.
- The Soviets also see controlling Afghanistan as helping fulfill long-range aspirations to expand their influence in the region.

3. We believe that the Soviet military are examining how their military presence in Afghanistan could be utilized for various military contingencies against Pakistan and Iran. Major improvements in lines of communications and air and logistic facilities, and the deployment of significant additional forces, would be essential for the Soviets to undertake and sustain large-scale operations from Afghanistan. The Soviets almost

certainly would not undertake such major improvements at least until they consolidate control in Afghanistan.

4. Moscow has consistently underestimated the difficulty of quelling the Afghan insurgency. When the Soviets first intervened, numerous sources report they thought that the accession of a more moderate and controllable regime (Babrak Karmal following Amin) and the mere presence of Soviet forces would enable the Afghan Army to finish off the resistance.

5. By the time General Secretary Andropov replaced Brezhnev in late 1982, the Soviets were beginning to realize that their forces in place might not be sufficient to quell all armed resistance. Rather than increase Moscow's military commitment, the Soviets appear to have opted for a longer term attrition strategy aimed at destroying enough of the resistance to compel others to see the futility of continuing to fight. How long the leadership expected this to take is not clear. Officials responsible for implementing Soviet policy often talk in terms of a few more years. Soviets who know Afghanistan talk of decades. To relieve insurgent pressures, the Politburo also apparently ordered the Soviet military to engage in a more intensive effort to negotiate some insurgent leaders out of the war and used the UN-sponsored talks on Afghanistan to probe more energetically for signs of give in Pakistan's position.

6. By mid-1983, however, the Soviets apparently reached the conclusion that the increased attention given to the political side of the struggle had not significantly eased Soviet security problems in Afghanistan. They sent Defense Minister Sokolov—then a first deputy defense minister charged with overseeing the war—back to Kabul for an assessment of the situation. [redacted] found the resistance still strong and Soviet counterinsurgency operations ineffective because of chronic deficiencies in tactical intelligence, inadequate logistics, and deteriorating Soviet morale, discipline, and leadership. In early 1984, Sokolov went back to Afghanistan to

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oversee a new military campaign against the resistance and to pressure Soviet commanders to remedy problems still hampering operations. [redacted]

What Moscow Did in 1984

7. The centerpiece of the 1984 campaign was the offensive in the Panjsher Valley, the largest single operation of the war, involving 20,000 Soviet and Afghan troops. By early 1984 it had apparently become clear to the Soviets that the cease-fire they had concluded with Panjsheri resistance leader Masood in early 1983 was working more to insurgent than Soviet advantage. Freed of the necessity of protecting their home base, the Panjsheri insurgents were taking a heavy toll of Soviet supply convoys en route to Kabul; the capital was experiencing unprecedented shortages of fuel and electricity; and Masood was working on expanding his local political base of support. [redacted]

done to reduce outside support to the Afghan resistance. Beginning in February 1984, there was a steady hardening in Moscow's posture toward both Pakistan and Iran: [redacted]

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8. The campaign itself was the most innovative of the seven major offensives the Soviets have conducted there. First, they deployed an additional 5,000 men to Afghanistan—1,000 returned to the USSR after the campaign. Then, they temporarily deployed over 100 bombers to bases north of Afghanistan for a brief high-altitude bombing campaign in support of ground forces—the first such use of strategic aviation assets since World War II. [redacted]

— In July the Soviets delivered a warning to Pakistan threatening serious consequences if Pakistan did not cease supporting the resistance. [redacted]

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— Beginning in August, Soviet forces moved into eastern Afghanistan to try to block insurgent infiltration routes and relieve insurgent pressures on a number of besieged government outposts, and there was a sharp increase in the number of Soviet or Afghan violations of Pakistani airspace. We have had no reports of Soviet or Afghan ground force incursions into Pakistan since 1980. [redacted]

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— In March 1985, *Pravda* issued a hard-hitting warning to Iran that Moscow would not remain indifferent to its support for the resistance. [redacted]

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9. The Soviets made widespread use of small heli-borne assault units to seize the area's high points and establish fire support bases to protect advancing Soviet units and block insurgent escape routes. They tried harder to secure more accurate intelligence and to use it more effectively in support of their military operations. When the offensive ended in May, the Soviets had succeeded in reestablishing a military presence halfway up the valley and disrupted Masood's operations. The campaign may have also contributed to the subsequent easing of the supply situation in Kabul. [redacted]

[redacted] Since June 1984, confirmed cross-border bombing incidents against Pakistan have averaged more than six a month, while cross-border attacks against Iran have averaged about two a month. [redacted]

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13. It is worth noting that during 1984 and to date in 1985, while increasing political and limited military pressure on Iran and Pakistan, the Soviets did not—save for intermittent propaganda attacks—make a major political effort to alter the Afghanistan policies of those extraregional countries they accuse of providing support to the Mujahedin—the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, and others. Moscow probably believed it had little chance of any success in this arena. Moreover, the Soviets may have feared that, at this stage, such an effort involving explicit threats to

11. The Soviet leadership also appears to have reached a consensus early last year that more had to be [redacted]

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Soviet Military Improvements in Afghanistan in 1984 and So Far in 1985

- During 1984, Soviet special-purpose forces (Spetsnaz and security units) were augmented by two battalions, bringing the total of those forces in Afghanistan to about 3,000. [redacted]
- Another 2,500-man motorized rifle regiment has recently been deployed to Herat in western Afghanistan. [redacted]
- The Soviets deployed to Afghanistan longer range field guns (152 mm), more effective mortars (the 82-mm automatic mortar Vasilek), a new more capable command vehicle, and improved conventional munitions. (See figure 1 on page 14.) [redacted]
- Moscow also significantly increased the number of fixed-wing aircraft devoted to the war. [redacted]

Of equal importance, older model aircraft were replaced with more modern MIG-23s, SU-17s, and SU-25s (see figure 1). (The SU-25 is similar to the US A-10 and especially suited for operations in Afghanistan's mountainous terrain.) [redacted]

- The Soviets upgraded their helicopter force and replaced losses, keeping the total number in Afghanistan at nearly 300—of which 200 are attack helicopters (MI-24s, MI-8s) (figure 1) and 100 are transport helicopters (MI-8s, MI-6s) [redacted]
- Major expansion of an airbase is under way at Termez, and the Soviets are in the process of upgrading airfields elsewhere in the Turkestan Military District just north of Afghanistan. When these are completed in 1987, we estimate the Soviets will be able to deploy twice as many aircraft as they now have for operations in northern Afghanistan. [redacted]

- The Soviets developed more effective air tactics—approaching the target from several directions, using massed airstrikes (12 to 15 aircraft as opposed to two to four), and increasingly employing flares for protection. [redacted]

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- In 1984 the Soviets conducted many more heli-borne assaults of insurgent positions using elite troops from airborne and ground forces units and special-purpose troops (such as Spetsnaz). [redacted]

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- Because of the poor performance of the Afghan Army, the Soviets took over a larger share of combat and undertook more operations without Afghan Army participation. [redacted]

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- In late 1984 and early 1985 the Soviets were also more active during the winter than ever before, especially along the border with Pakistan. They also established Afghan-manned outposts in positions to interdict insurgent supply lines. [redacted]

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- The Soviets deployed additional photoreconnaissance and SIGINT assets to Afghanistan and attempted to improve their human intelligence collection and analytical efforts. [redacted] after the Panisher campaign, the Soviet military intelligence organization (the GRU) sent some of its best officers to Afghanistan to train Soviet officers to do a better job. [redacted]

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escalate and expand the war or more conciliatory proposals about a political settlement, might convey lack of confidence in their strategy, impart too much leverage to their adversaries, or make Afghanistan more central to Soviet relations with these countries. [redacted]

Impact of Soviet Measures

Degree of Success for Soviets

14. Although the number of Soviet troops in Afghanistan has increased some 35 percent since 1980 to 116,000, and the Afghan armed forces now number

roughly 50,000, these forces are far too few to defeat entirely an unconventional resistance force that is estimated at 150,000.³ Moscow turned in a somewhat better counterinsurgency effort in 1984, but the insurgents were also more effective. The overall result, therefore, was some deterioration in the Soviet/Afghan position. [redacted]

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³ This is the estimated number of resistance fighters for whom the war is a full-time or primary activity; some 30 percent of them are in daily action against the Soviets. The number of occasional fighters is probably several times as large [redacted]

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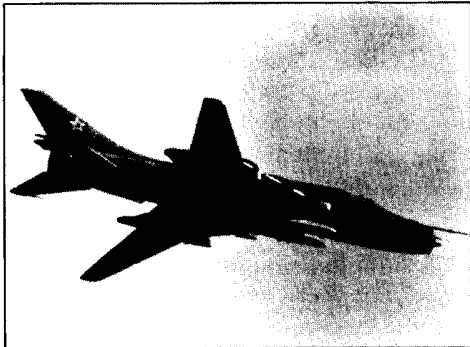
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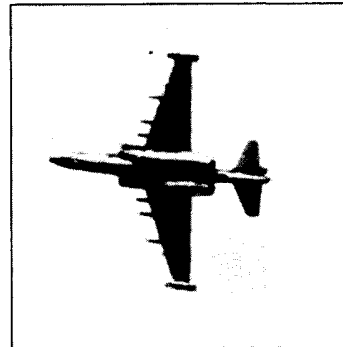
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Figure 1
Selected Soviet Equipment in Afghanistan

Ground Attack Aircraft



SU-17
Fitter (various models)
Max speed:
2,250 km/hr (at 12,000 meters)
Combat radius:
450 km with eight 250-kg bombs



SU-25
Frogfoot
Max speed:
900 km/hr (at 12,000 meters)
Combat radius:
500 km with six 250-kg bombs

Helicopters

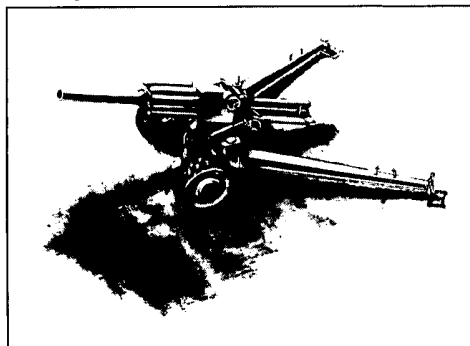


MI-24
Hind
Designed for close air support and assault
Maximum combat radius:
220 km with 1,150-kg weapon load
Cruise speed:
260 km/hr



MI-8
Hip
Designed for close air support and troop transport
Combat radius:
200 km with 2,000-kg payload
Cruise speed:
210 km/hr

Artillery



82-mm automatic mortar
Vasilek
Maximum range:
4,000 to 6,000 meters
Fires 80 to 100 rounds per minute
Air transportable

[Redacted]

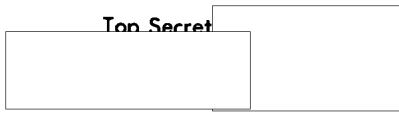
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15. The increased use of airpower was not as effective as the Soviets probably hoped. In particular, the brief high-altitude bombing that preceded the Panjsher VII campaign was inaccurate and ineffective, [redacted]. Moreover, the longer the war has dragged on the more adept the insurgents have become at protecting themselves from Soviet airstrikes and at shooting down aircraft. [redacted]

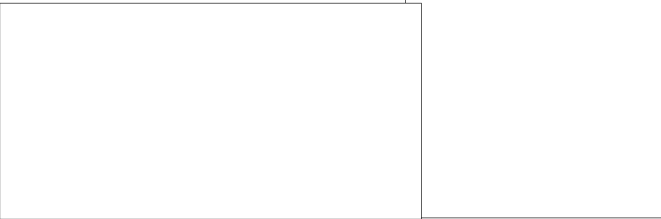
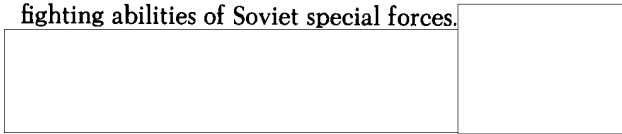
tinue supporting the resistance. President Zia has used them to justify closer military cooperation with the United States and firmly believes that Soviet pressures along the border occasioned by the war are more tolerable than an ultimate Soviet victory would be. [redacted]

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16. Soviet special forces—the Spetsnaz troops and the airborne and ground forces reconnaissance units—have been used more often during the past year and have been more effective in combat than regular Soviet combat troops. Insurgents, who generally regard regular Soviet soldiers with contempt, respect the fighting abilities of Soviet special forces. [redacted]

20. The more aggressive Soviet approach last year apparently increased Soviet losses. [redacted]

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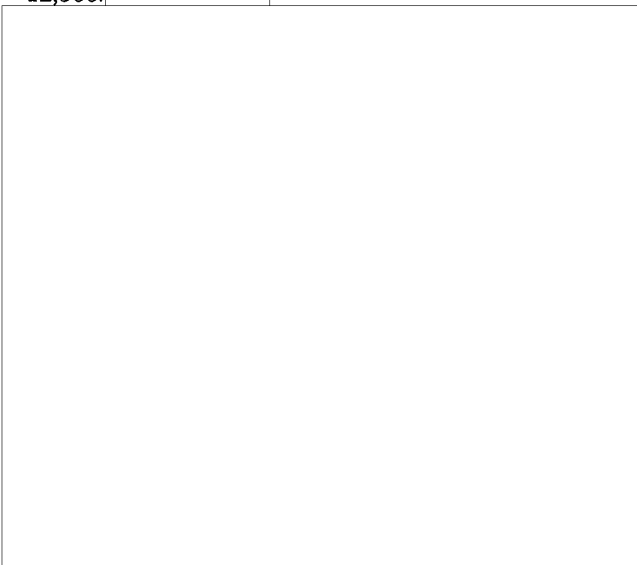
17. [redacted]

21. We estimate that total Soviet casualties since the invasion now amount to about 25,000,⁴ one-third of whom were killed in action. Preventable infectious diseases still appear to be taking a much higher toll—perhaps two to three times as high—of Soviet forces than combat. [redacted] Afghan Army and paramilitary forces, in our judgment, have suffered some 67,000 casualties. (See figure 3 on page 16.) The Soviets and their Afghan allies have also lost several thousand combat vehicles and trucks since 1979 and more than 600 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft in combat, at an equipment cost of more than \$2 billion.⁵ (See figure 4 on page 17.) We have no reliable data on Afghan resistance or civilian casualties and offer no estimates. [redacted]

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[redacted] the insurgents successfully thwarted a commando assault on a major insurgent base at Tora Bora last October by Soviet troops disguised as insurgents. In any event, Moscow cannot win the war with Soviet special-purpose forces alone. Soviet special-purpose troops in Afghanistan number about 3,000, and the airborne and ground reconnaissance units that are also used for commando-type operations number about 12,500. [redacted]

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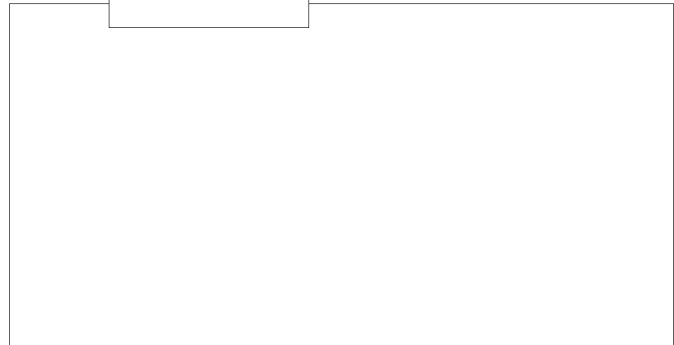


22. Moreover, government control over Afghan territory has diminished in the five years since the invasion. By late 1983, Afghan Government statistics indicated that the insurgents controlled twice as many local districts in Afghanistan as the government. (See figure 5 on page 17.) We believe the regime lost further ground in 1984 because of increased insurgent activity in the cities and the decline in security in some areas of the countryside. No Afghan town, not even the capital, was completely free of insurgent activity. [redacted]

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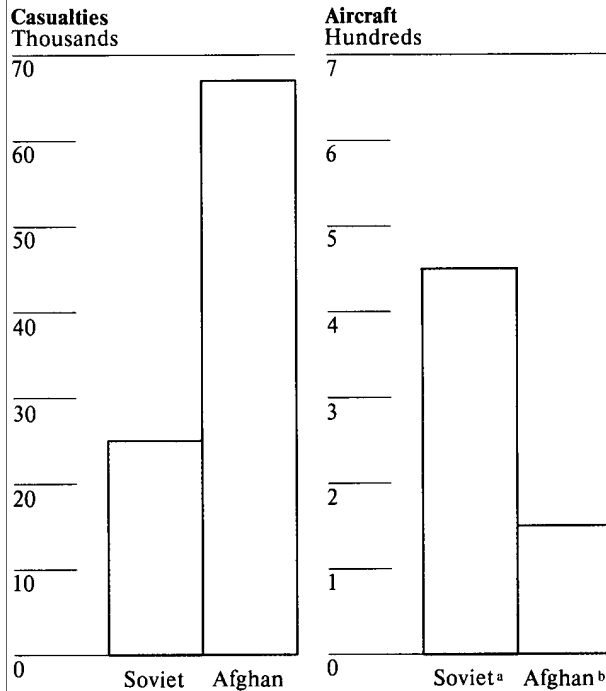
19. Cross-border attacks against Pakistan and Iran have not reduced either country's willingness to con-



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Figure 3
Afghanistan: Estimated Soviet and Afghan Government Losses, 1980-84



^a Helicopters and fixed-wing—400 helicopters, 45 fixed-wing; 10 transports.
^b Helicopters and fixed-wing.

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23. The Soviet program to transform Afghanistan socially and politically into a reliable Communist client state continued to have little impact. Lack of security prevented Communist civilians from trying to implement regime social and economic reforms in more than two-thirds of the country. The Afghan education system, which before the 1979 invasion reached no more than 20 percent of the school-age population, now reaches an even smaller proportion of the population and is widely distrusted. Even those Afghans sent to the USSR for all types of training—they reportedly number about 7,500 annually—often return antagonized rather than indoctrinated. Some returnees cannot find appropriate or attractive jobs from which to spread regime influence. The evidence suggests that efforts to buy loyalty for the regime with economic inducements or truces continue to work only temporarily.

Afghan Military Performance

24. Despite Soviet efforts to build reliable forces for the Babrak regime, Afghan military and paramilitary

forces remain ineffectual. The government's inability to retain personnel is a principal cause. Desertions average about 30,000 a year in an army of about 50,000, not counting paramilitary forces. Factionalism in the Afghan People's Democratic Party is another factor contributing to the Afghan military's ineffectiveness, particularly in the officer corps. Infighting between the Parcham and Khalqi factions of the Communist Party has hindered the development of military cohesion and the emergence of competent, dependable commanders. Shortages of equipment, low equipment readiness rates, and the technical inability of many soldiers to use what equipment they do have also diminish Afghan military effectiveness.

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25. In combat, the Afghans need strong Soviet support to ensure even small gains against the resistance. The Soviets are increasingly conducting operations on their own, although most of their operations are still carried out jointly with the Afghans. Afghan troops frequently leak word of pending operations to the resistance and desert under fire. Last year, part of

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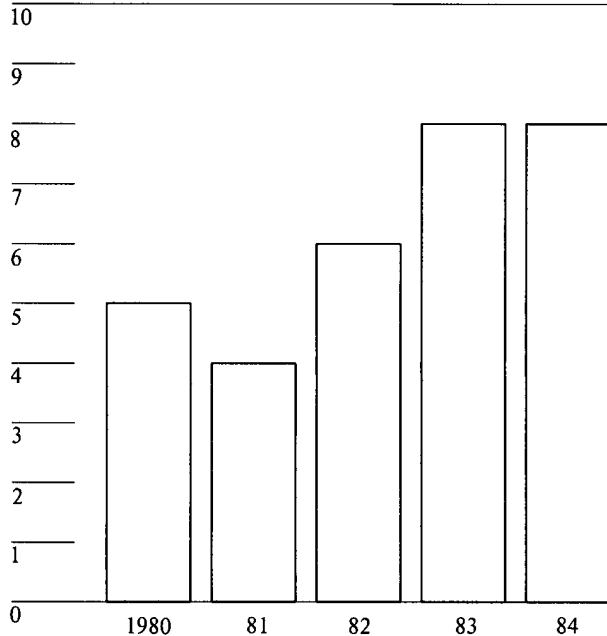
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Figure 4
Afghanistan: Estimated Soviet Helicopter Losses, 1980-84

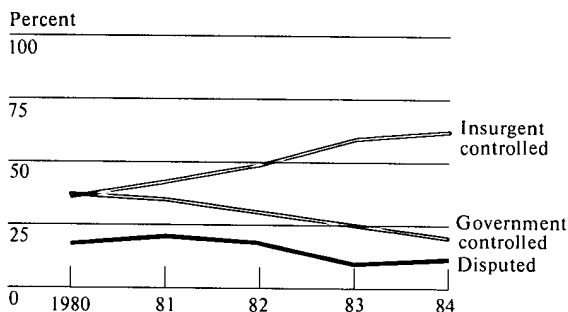
Average losses per month^a



^a CIA estimate.

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Figure 5
Afghanistan: Insurgent Versus Government Control of Local Districts, 1980-84



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an elite Afghan brigade that reportedly had been trained in the USSR deserted when faced with the

prospect of fighting in the Panjsher Valley; the fighting in the valley itself decimated the remainder.

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Impact on the Insurgents

26. Although Soviet and regime forces have been unable to maintain continuous security in the cities and in rural areas following sweep operations, their forces have prevented the insurgents from maintaining large permanent strongholds. The threat of air and artillery retaliation on civilians has deterred the resistance from firing persistently from a single area, and Soviet and regime surveillance networks and informants—weak as they are—hamper the insurgents, causing delays and complications in infiltration and logistics, and occasionally provoking internecine fighting among insurgent groups.

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27. Nevertheless, in 1983 and 1984 the insurgents increased attacks on airfields, garrisons, and other military targets. Increased patrolling and periodic Soviet and Afghan sweep operations and retaliatory bombing strikes did not substantially ease the pressure by resistance forces on Soviet supply lines. Although Kabul's supply situation eased after the Panjsher VII campaign, rocket and mortar attacks on Soviet installations in Kabul increased and there was a dramatic bombing at the Kabul International Airport in 1984. Resistance forces operate freely in both Herat and Qandahar—Afghanistan's second- and third-largest cities—keeping both in a state of constant turmoil.

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Impact on Noncombatants

28. Soviet and Afghan military pressure has forced the emigration or dislocation of about one-third of the population and disrupted the traditional agricultural transportation and marketing networks. There are now an estimated 2.8 million Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan and 1.2 million in Iran, and Kabul reportedly has swollen to roughly twice its prewar population of about 900,000.

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29. The impact of the population dislocation and exodus—both of which have declined in recent years—has been mixed. Some areas of the countryside that have been largely depopulated by repeated Soviet military operations—the Panjsher, the Konar Valley—no longer grow enough food to feed the insurgents, and the resistance cannot rely on the population for intelligence or blend in for security. In depopulated areas, freed of the necessity of providing local government services to the civilians, the resistance now has

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more time to devote to its military effort against the Soviets. The refugee influx into Kabul has brought more people under Soviet control, but it is probably also one of the factors that has made Kabul increasingly insecure for the Soviets. The refugee influx into Pakistan may yet prove to be a serious internal security problem for the Zia government, though it is now largely an economic problem, and relations between the predominantly Pushtun refugees and Pakistani Pushtuns are surprisingly good.

30. Only repeated military operations, serious food shortages, and high casualties appear to erode civilian willingness to support the resistance, and the impact of these measures has usually been only temporary. The Soviets have not applied systematic scorched-earth policies throughout most of the country. The result is that, despite occasional signs of war weariness, overall support for the resistance after five years of fighting appears strong.

Moscow's Perception of the Situation

The Current Mood in Moscow

31. The Soviet party's new General Secretary, M. S. Gorbachev, was not on the Defense Council at the time the decision to invade Afghanistan was made and presumably had little voice in that decision. As a key figure in the leadership during the last year, Gorbachev has presumably developed a degree of commitment to current Soviet goals and strategy in Afghanistan. He used his meeting with Pakistan's President Zia at Chernenko's funeral to chastise Islamabad over its policy toward Afghanistan. Although he would naturally wish to solve the Afghanistan problem in some way, while he is consolidating his power in the Soviet leadership over the next year or so, he has a strong political interest in avoiding positions that might make him look weak or open him to charges of adventurism. He therefore does not seem to have an immediate interest in seeking to revise Soviet goals and strategy.

32. A major escalation or expansion of the war would certainly raise the costs to the Soviet system substantially while not necessarily leading to a quick victory. Intensification of the conflict at roughly present levels of Soviet commitment will raise the costs somewhat. The Soviet Union has the economic and military resources to continue this war indefinitely at present or modestly escalated levels. It is the prospect of a very protracted war with potentially large domestic and international costs that is politically and psy-

chologically troubling to many in the Soviet population and elite, and presumably of concern to the Soviet leadership. The Soviet Union is more capable than other countries might be of bearing the political costs of direct involvement in an open-ended war. Its tolerance for a protracted war in Afghanistan may not be limitless. We cannot say at this point, however, what the limits might be and whether or when they might eventually be reached.

33. There is no hard intelligence on the current views regarding Afghanistan of other members of the Politburo. The situation in Afghanistan does not figure prominently in their public remarks or their private ones that are known to us. Moreover, they, along with Gorbachev, have just promoted some key military figures who have been most directly responsible for the military strategy underlying the Soviet campaign. Newly appointed Defense Minister Sokolov, Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev, and Commander in Chief of the Southern Theater of Military Operations Maksimov all come to their jobs having spent the better part of the past five years grappling with the war in Afghanistan. It seems unlikely they would have been promoted had there been any fundamental leadership dissatisfaction over their performance or the strategies they have followed.

34. The removal of Marshal Ogarkov as Chief of the General Staff could have involved Afghanistan to some extent, although we have very little hard knowledge on why he was removed and believe the main cause was his suspected lack of subservience to the political leadership on a whole range of issues. One recurrent but undocumented rumor contends he complained about the inconclusiveness of the war and pressed for escalation or withdrawal. If this was the case, then it is significant that he was demoted while officers more directly responsible for the strategy were advanced.

35. [redacted] the failure of the Panjsher VII campaign last spring to locate and destroy the Panjsheri resistance—the key objective of the campaign—heightened frustration in Moscow and led to recriminations within the military over the cause of the poor Soviet performance. [redacted] many middle-level mili-

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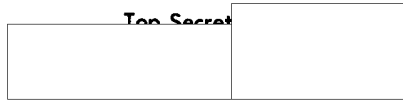
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tary intelligence officials familiar with the situation now think the war is unwinnable. In support of this judgment, they reportedly cited the fact that less than 30 percent of the country is in government hands, the insurgents are becoming more numerous and more capable, and Soviet losses are increasing. [redacted]

36. It is possible that top Soviet leaders have a less-than-accurate appreciation of the Soviet position in Afghanistan. [redacted]

[redacted] Second, the Soviet leadership probably is reluctant to admit it made a mistake and face the domestic and international consequences that might result. Third, Soviet ideology dictates that the majority of the Afghan people want the kind of revolution the Communists are attempting to impose, and the Soviet leadership surely finds it difficult to admit that this is [redacted] Finally, the condition of the men at the top during the past five years and their need to address more pressing problems at home and abroad probably has limited the time they devote to their Afghan problem, at least to its fundamental assessment. [redacted]

The Soviet Cost/Benefit Calculus

37. The Soviets privately admit that Afghanistan has entailed significant political, economic, and military costs. They also assert, however, that the costs of alternative policies would be even higher and that they have no alternative but to stay the course. We believe the costs have not yet reached a point where they are likely to force the Soviets to scale back their objectives. [redacted]

— Afghanistan has been nowhere near as disruptive an experience for the Soviet Union as was Vietnam for the United States after five years. It has not upset Soviet military priorities elsewhere or significantly diminished the overall readiness of the Soviet military. The problems the Soviet army has experienced with morale, discipline, and leadership, while not insignificant, are magnified versions of problems throughout the Soviet forces in peacetime. (See inset on "Effects of the War on the Military, page 20.") [redacted]

— The economic costs are bearable. Direct military costs are estimated to amount to about 1 percent of the Soviet defense budget, and aid for Afghanistan is substantially less than the costs of aiding either Vietnam or Cuba. (See inset on "The Economic Impact, page 21.") [redacted]

— Afghanistan has exacerbated a number of domestic and societal problems, but we believe the population's normal passivity, the regime's coercive and palliative measures, and the population's acceptance of some costs for the fulfillment of the USSR's global role have all combined to keep the political and social consequences of the war under control. The absence of a free press allows the government to keep the war out of the public eye; to some degree, however, the lack of information about the war undermines the credibility of official Soviet pronouncements on the war to the population. (See inset on "The Domestic Social and Political Impact, page 22.") [redacted]

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— The Soviets have said, and almost certainly believe, that failure to preserve the Communist regime in Kabul would have a more damaging international impact than continued occupation and war; a Soviet defeat would weaken the USSR's international posture, damage its credibility as an ally, and encourage the West to increase the pressure on Soviet interests around the globe. (See inset on "International Impact of the Soviet Involvement, page 23.") [redacted]

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Moscow's Views on Outside Support

38. The Soviets know outside support for the resistance has steadily become a more important factor accounting for the increased military effectiveness of the resistance. Nonetheless, they have not chosen to make Afghanistan a major roadblock in their bilateral dealings with any of the aid donors, except Pakistan and Iran—whom they regard as the potential weak links in the chain of support and the most vulnerable to Soviet pressures. [redacted]

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39. The Soviets have sought to signal to the aid donors that more outside support will not deter the USSR from accomplishing its objectives in Afghanistan. In a major *Pravda* editorial article on 14 February 1985, they noted that such aid might reach \$600 million this year and includes such items as the Swiss Oerlikon-Bourlet anti-aircraft gun and more Chinese-made weapons, including surface-to-air missiles, mines, submachineguns, and heavy-caliber anti-aircraft guns. The Soviets probably expect that the resistance will be more capable militarily in 1985-86, particularly against Soviet aircraft, as the growing amount of military supplies they have denounced in their propaganda reaches the resistance forces. [redacted]

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Effects of the War on the Military

Maintaining a force of 116,000 men in Afghanistan has not affected Soviet military priorities elsewhere or seriously reduced the overall readiness of the Soviet military. Soviet casualties and equipment losses are a source of major concern to the leadership in Moscow due to their potential impact on the population, the prestige of the Soviet military, and morale in Afghanistan.

[Redacted]

Afghanistan has highlighted serious deficiencies in the military supply system and in Soviet military medicine, and the measures

[Redacted]

The Soviets have also experienced chronic morale and discipline problems among their forces in Afghanistan.

[Redacted]

Indifferent or incompetent leadership at unit levels, together with frequent cases of physical abuse and neglect of conscript personnel, have not only adversely affected morale but also sometimes diminished operational effectiveness.

[Redacted]

Moscow's involvement in Afghanistan has also demonstrated serious deficiencies in the Soviet system and procedures for command and control. Some measures to streamline the process by which operations are directed and controlled were made in 1982, and more probably are in train as a result of the activation of the new Southern Theater of Military Operations high command last autumn, which appears to be taking a more direct hand in operations in Afghanistan. But Soviet commanders in Afghanistan still must operate in a complex and highly rigid command and control environment that significantly inhibits more effective operations in a counterinsurgency environment. In the tactical arena Soviet commanders can successfully carry

out preplanned operations,

[Redacted]

While the terrain and nature of the conflict in Afghanistan limit the relevance of the Soviet military experience in Afghanistan to a war in Europe or China—the theaters where Soviet military planning is overwhelmingly focused—there have been benefits. A small but growing group of career military personnel are gaining combat experience, and the Soviets have learned some lessons about the performance of specific weapons and tactics that may be useful elsewhere.

Afghanistan has been used as a testing ground for new weapon systems. For example, the Soviets have tested the SU-25 Frogfoot ground-support aircraft, the rapid-fire Vasilek mortar, and new antipersonnel mines. Moreover, usage in Afghanistan has generated modifications to existing systems, such as the incorporation of additional armor on the MI-24 Hind helicopter.

In contrast to the rigidity seen in operational command and control, the Soviets have demonstrated considerable flexibility in organizing forces for unique combat situations. In fact, the most important operational development has been the Soviets' attempt to adapt their combined-arms approach to the special conditions of the war in Afghanistan. Difficulties encountered in coordinating the various combat units have led Moscow to create new units in Afghanistan for specific combat missions by combining on an ad hoc basis motorized rifle, tank, artillery, and engineering troops, and other special supporting elements. Moreover, the Soviets have also established several permanent specially tailored combat formations for operations in Afghanistan. These included two combined-arms independent brigades and several independent security battalions for pipeline protection and road security. Such tactical experience for young commanders may have significant relevance beyond Afghanistan.

The Soviets have learned to use helicopters effectively to ferry troops and supplies and to support operations by ground forces. They have also demonstrated a growing appreciation for the value of heliborne assault operations, and have gained substantial experience in coordinating the use of fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft in such operations.

Some of the lessons learned in Afghanistan are now finding their way into the military school system. For example, Major General Slyusar, former commander of the airborne division in Afghanistan and now commandant of the Ryazan Airborne Forces Higher Command School, has publicly acknowledged the necessity of including the lessons learned from operations in Afghanistan in the school's curriculum.

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The Economic Impact

Direct Soviet military expenditures in Afghanistan are estimated to account for about 1 percent of total Soviet military spending. In the years 1980-84, we estimate it cost Moscow, at a minimum, the equivalent of more than \$16 billion in direct support of Soviet forces. However, about 55 percent of this total probably would have been spent on maintaining these forces even if there had been no intervention in Afghanistan.

The dollar estimate for the direct military costs of the war takes account of operations and maintenance, personnel, medical care, transportation, construction, ammunition and POL used, and equipment repair and replacement. The \$16 billion figure does not include—for lack of data—the costs of repairing roads, facilities, or pipelines in Afghanistan, which are damaged daily by insurgent actions; the loss of Soviet food, POL, and ammunition to theft or ambush; the additional manpower cost of the combat benefits Soviet soldiers receive while serving there; pay for civilian employees of the Soviet military in Afghanistan; or the cost of replacing wornout equipment. In ruble terms, what we can estimate amounts to about 1 percent of estimated Soviet defense spending each year between 1980 and 1984. Because of the limitations on our data and methodology, what we can cost must be regarded as a very conservative estimate.

Manpower and construction costs rose sharply in 1981 and 1982 but then declined and leveled off. The

cost of replacing equipment lost in combat or destroyed in accidents has been rising steadily. About 90 percent of these replacement costs, which account for about 15 percent of the direct military costs of the war, go for aircraft, especially helicopters.

Preparations for the invasion temporarily caused a significant disruption of the civilian economy in the region just north of Afghanistan, and military priorities there continue to cause periodic disruptions. For example, having to use scarce railroad rolling stock to transport goods to Afghanistan causes bottlenecks in Soviet industries in the region, which disrupt production and limit output. Western economic sanctions caused even more widespread economic disruptions, but almost all economic sanctions now have been lifted and their impact has diminished.

The growth of the insurgency and the concomitant decline in the Afghan Government's ability to collect revenue has meant Moscow has also had to provide steadily increasing amounts of economic and military support to Afghanistan. We estimate that Moscow has provided about \$1.6 billion in economic assistance and \$1.7 billion in military aid since the invasion. The Soviets pay Afghanistan about \$300 million annually for natural gas—about 2.8 billion cubic meters in 1984—which the Afghans then use to pay for Soviet imports and repay Afghanistan's prerevolutionary debts to the USSR.

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The Outlook for the Next Year

40. On the basis of an improving military supply situation, we project that the performance of the resistance in Afghanistan will improve steadily during the next year or so as it appears to have in 1984:

- The number of near-full-time fighters, now estimated at about 150,000, could increase substantially.
- Increased availability of ammunition and other material will increase the operational persistence of those under arms.
- Resistance effectiveness against aircraft is likely to improve substantially, against both airborne targets and airbases.
- The number of resistance fighters with rudimentary military training is likely to continue to rise. Some 25,000 were trained in 1984; we expect at least that number will receive training in 1985; trainees steadily impart their knowledge to other fighters.

41. At the same time, the inevitable sluggishness and unevenness of the resistance logistic network, shortages in many needed items, food problems, and the fragmented nature of the war will probably cause these factors only gradually to increase resistance effectiveness. They will not confront the Soviets with a dramatic deterioration or crisis in their military position or prevent the Soviets from making selected improvements to it.

42. On the basis of recent trends in Soviet operations and available resources, we can anticipate with some confidence many of the major actions the Soviets are likely to take and some of the options that they might adopt to reverse a gradually deteriorating situation and to counter the increases in resistance effectiveness they expect in the coming year. We believe Soviet operations will certainly include attempts to apply more skillfully and widely the tactics applied with limited success in 1984:

- More operations by Soviet forces without the Afghan Army.

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The Domestic Social and Political Impact

[redacted] indicated that the original decision to invade Afghanistan was politically contentious and that middle-level officials in the ruling Soviet elite questioned the necessity for intervention. Five years later, it is not clear whether Afghanistan currently generates significant tension at the top [redacted]

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Dissatisfaction within the elite has been accompanied by some problems within the populace at large [redacted] casualties returning from Afghanistan have triggered isolated popular demonstrations against the government. The fact that the regime has publicly acknowledged only some dozens of the estimated 25,000 casualties suffered there testifies to its concern about possible popular reaction to the real level of casualties. [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet popular protests against the war in Afghanistan were more frequent shortly after the invasion. [redacted]

[redacted] spontaneous, short-lived popular demonstrations against the war occurred, generally in response to the sight of coffins returning from Afghanistan. [redacted]

[redacted] demonstrations in 1980 in Alma-Ata, Tashkent, Dushanbe, and other cities in Soviet Central Asia. Subsequently, antiwar demonstrations reportedly occurred in the Baltic republics, the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, the European RSFSR, and Siberia. In the most recent report in October 1984, [redacted] claims to have learned from a senior military officer that relatives of the killed and wounded burned the military commissariat in Kazan', 450 kilometers east of Moscow. In addition, [redacted] learned from colleagues in TASS and Novosti that they have received thousands of letters from Soviet citizens complaining about casualties and asking for further explanations of Soviet policy. [redacted]

Charges of criticizing the occupation of Afghanistan have figured in the trials of a number of Soviet dissidents. [redacted] condemned the invasion in January 1980. Sakharov was arrested five days after his interview with Western media and exiled to Gor'kiy. An unusual incident of dissent within official ranks—albeit at a low level—occurred in 1983 when a Moscow Radio broadcaster, Vladimir Danchev, altered official news broadcasts on Afghanistan for foreign audiences to express opposition to Soviet involvement. [redacted]

Reports from returning troops—specifically the contrast between what they tell and what Soviet media report—have increased popular cynicism about regime propaganda. Western visitors report that ordinary Russians do not relish risking the lives of their children in Afghanistan, and the paucity of media coverage of casualties indicates the regime is sensitive to their concerns. [redacted]

Afghanistan, along with events in neighboring Iran, reportedly has increased regime concern about disaffection among Soviet Central Asians. In May 1984 a Moscow lecturer told a public audience that Islam represented a serious internal problem and that the regime was worried about the impact of Afghanistan on Soviet Tajiks. In addition, there are reports that members of most major ethnic groups in the USSR complain they are bearing a disproportionate share of the combat burden. (Central Asians were prominent among the Soviet initial invasion force, but the ethnic breakdown of Soviet forces is now approximately representative of the population as a whole [redacted])

A Soviet emigre journal has reported that in a covert opinion poll of 287 Muscovites, including some party members, 62 percent expressed disapproval of Soviet involvement in the war. [redacted]

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[redacted] concluded that some 40 percent of those aged 55 or older were opposed to the intervention, and some 60 percent of midcareerists (35 to 45) were opposed. Diplomatic observers, journalists, and most expert travelers report, however, that, while generally negative feelings about the war may be widespread in the Soviet population and elite, they are not intense, they coexist with broad acceptance that Soviet interests require its continuation, and they are surpassed by popular worries about other issues, such as the economy. [redacted]

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Soviet media have acknowledged increased tensions resulting from the fact that children of the elite can avoid service in Afghanistan. The leadership has also shown public signs of concern that the problem of youth alienation in the USSR is growing in part because of the Soviet involvement. [redacted]

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The regime has not let problems with popular opinion go unattended, but has moved to minimize or control their impact. Thus it has:

- Sought to justify its involvement by playing up US involvement and the dangers to Soviet security of an insurgent victory.
- Appealed to the patriotism of ordinary Soviets by more candid media coverage of conditions Soviet troops face there, by publicizing a few heroic exploits, by calling attention to the problems of wounded veterans, and by cracking down on elite draft dodgers by tightening draft deferments.
- Launched new propaganda campaigns to improve discipline within the military and combat the problem of youth alienation.
- Increased antireligious propaganda in the Turkmen SSR.
- Attempted to relieve ethnic tensions, particularly in the military [redacted]

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International Impact of the Soviet Involvement

The unprecedented economic and political sanctions imposed on the USSR because of Afghanistan endured much longer than any sanctions imposed after other Soviet international misdeeds. The Soviets are concerned about the coalition of outside forces continuing to support the Afghan resistance. Soviet actions reinforced international perceptions of Soviet aggressiveness; fueled increased Western, Chinese, and Japanese defense efforts; made Third World countries more wary of Soviet intentions; and hampered Moscow's efforts to exploit the Nonaligned Movement. In Southwest Asia in particular, Afghanistan disrupted Soviet efforts to cultivate the post-Shah regime in Iran and turned Pakistan into the major supporter of the Afghan resistance and a closer security partner of the United States. India views the Soviet presence in Afghanistan as posing an indirect threat to Indian interests because it has brought superpower competition to a region where India aspires to unchallenged political and military dominance.

Moscow probably believes, however, that it has weathered the worst of international censure as Afghanistan has become an international fact of life. Last year most of the remaining countries that had put ties to the USSR on ice because of Afghanistan moved to resume more normal economic and political contacts.

- More agile and aggressive ground forces tactics, particularly with special and air assault forces.
- Better use of tactical air and ground-based firepower.
- Temporary augmentations of Soviet forces for high-priority operations.
- Further efforts to improve tactical intelligence and command and control.
- More efforts to interdict resistance supplies near Afghanistan's borders.
- Continued improvement of the logistic infrastructure.
- Continued efforts to build a Communist cadre to control the country in the long term.

43. In the nature of guerrilla warfare, the Afghanistan conflict is dominated by small, diverse actions occurring all over the country. Operations as large as the Panjsher VII campaign are the rarity. Moreover, a good part of the Soviets' problem in Afghanistan derives from a host of persistent deficiencies in their

forces, ranging from poor health among the troops to rigid behavior by commanders, and, of course, the near-complete unavailability of the Afghan Army. Much of the Soviet effort during the coming year will, hence, be devoted to simply struggling with these problems along lines seen in the past. With respect to the Soviets' programs for improving the basic performance of their own forces and the viability of their puppet regime in Kabul, we foresee neither sharp departures of policy nor major positive achievements over the next year.

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Soviet Military Operations in Afghanistan

44. Planning probably is already under way for a good-weather campaign against the resistance in 1985 that will include another Panjsher offensive—albeit not necessarily on the scale of 1984—to capitalize on last year's partial success. Destroying the insurgency in the Panjsher would greatly improve security along the Termez-Kabul highway and increase the supply of goods to Kabul, as well as disrupt one of the most visible and effective pockets of opposition to Soviet forces.

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45. There probably will be other attempts to capture or kill key insurgent leaders, especially Ahmad Masood, who has become a symbol of Afghan resistance. A renewed effort against Masood most likely would involve smaller, elite forces. The timing of such attacks could depend largely on the ability of Soviet and Afghan intelligence to locate Masood's headquarters and main bases.

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46. There will be more efforts to interdict supplies and personnel crossing the Pakistani and Iranian borders.

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expense of other missions such as convoy security and protecting the cities. [redacted]

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47. The Soviets are likely to increase their efforts at suppressing insurgent activity inside and surrounding the major cities. The Soviets will continue conducting regular sweeps and airstrikes against the insurgents operating from nearby bases in the countryside. Inside the cities, there are limits to what direct military measures can achieve. Superior Soviet firepower is less of an advantage, generally killing far more civilians than resistance fighters, though Soviet troops have used heavy weapons and airstrikes in the suburbs of Qandahar and Herat. Reprisals for urban incidents are likely to be increased. Since the most effective measures are manpower intensive, any large Soviet effort in the cities would seriously affect other military missions. A perception that security in Kabul was deteriorating, however, would be most likely to provoke an exceptionally strong Soviet reaction [redacted]

50. To increase their total effectiveness over the next year, the Soviets are likely to introduce into Afghanistan relatively small numbers of additional troops perhaps totaling up to 10,000. These forces could be added within a month or so of a decision to do so. The Soviets will probably adopt more aggressive tactics led by special forces and conduct more independent operations. Greater aggressiveness could be achieved by more use of airmobile assaults, greater willingness by regular troops to leave armored vehicles and close with the enemy, use of smaller tactical formations, more initiative by lower ranking officers, more effective use of air and fire support, and quick-reaction forces to follow up on intelligence reports of insurgent locations. Independent operations—without supporting Afghan units—would be easier to conduct and less likely to be compromised by leaks to insurgents. All these approaches would be more casualty intensive, however, which would tend to inhibit their application and at the same time reinforce Soviet commanders' demands for more forces. [redacted]

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48. There is likely to be an increased amount of Soviet activity in western Afghanistan over the next year. The new regiment at Herat, which is subordinate to the motorized rifle division at Shindand, presumably will be tasked with reducing the insurgent presence near that hotly contested city and protecting the new pipeline in western Afghanistan. The Soviets are also attempting to enhance their capabilities for conducting simultaneous and independent operations in both the east and the west. They are realigning their forces so that those in the west are less dependent on redeployments from the east for major operations. [redacted]

Undermining the Insurgents' Civilian Base

51. The Soviets have generally tried to undermine civilian support for the resistance with a combination of conciliatory and coercive measures. This combination of tactics is likely to continue in 1985 and will probably be intensified, because undermining the resistance's civilian base is one of the keys to a Soviet victory. The Soviets have given Afghan government workers and military men large salary increases, an opportunity to benefit from the government's land and water reform program, and educational opportunities for them and their children in the USSR. Villages and tribes willing to support the government get economic, military, and medical aid and some degree of local autonomy. On the other hand, some villages, whose sympathies are with the resistance, have been completely destroyed, and the Soviets and their Afghan allies reportedly routinely use torture to extract tactical military intelligence from captured insurgents. [redacted]

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49. [redacted] While present force levels cannot seal the Iranian and Pakistani borders, interdiction measures nearby hamper insurgent resupply efforts by forcing them to move only at night, split into smaller groups, expend ammunition en route, and take more circuitous routes to and from Afghanistan. [redacted]

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52. In the next year the Soviets will continue to employ a mixture of coercive and conciliatory measures toward the population:

- They will continue trying to improve the image of the Kabul regime and smooth over the factional infighting in the ruling party but they will not be successful, at least in the near term. We believe the Soviets now see no better alternative

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than Babrak Karmal and that they will not move to replace him. [redacted]

— The Soviets probably will make greater political and economic concessions to win support from individual tribal and regional leaders, but this program is not likely to find much receptivity among insurgents. [redacted]

— The Soviets may apply draconian measures against selected civilian targets as they have in the past, perhaps on a wider scale. But we do not believe they will adopt large-scale scorched-earth tactics to drive out or kill populations that they do not control. This would inevitably raise the economic and international political costs of the war while not assuredly advancing the prospect of a Soviet victory. [redacted]

Increased Military Pressures Against Pakistan and Iran

53. Alongside efforts to improve the capabilities of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, Moscow will probably increase military pressure on insurgent targets inside Pakistan and Iran, but only modestly. Options within the capabilities of present Soviet forces are limited. Moscow can:

- Conduct more frequent artillery attacks and airstrikes on insurgent targets just inside Pakistan and Iran.
- Mount up-to-regimental-size heliborne assaults or operations by ground forces to destroy individual insurgent bases. [redacted]

54. More intensive air and artillery strikes than we have seen thus far are Moscow's easiest option—even though the strikes that have taken place have accomplished little militarily. A sustained bombing campaign might prompt Tehran, Islamabad, and the refugees themselves to relocate camps farther away from the border but this would have little effect since the insurgents will remain in the border area. Currently, the paramilitary Pakistani Frontier Corps, which has primary responsibility for border security, has very limited capabilities to detect and shoot down incoming aircraft from the west, and the most modern Pakistani fighters are located at fields in central and eastern Pakistan. If, however, increased airstrikes cause the United States to accede to Islamabad's requests for early-warning aircraft and more advanced air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles, Pakistan's air defenses could improve markedly and could take a large toll of

attacking aircraft. The prospect of becoming engaged in serious air-to-air actions with Pakistan is a deterrent to major Soviet cross-border attacks. Iran has no fighter aircraft based in eastern Iran, and its overall border defenses are weaker than Pakistan's. [redacted]

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55. There is no evidence of Soviet planning for limited ground incursions to destroy individual insurgent bases outside Afghanistan—although the Soviets long ago laid a propaganda groundwork justifying such actions, particularly vis-a-vis Pakistan. Small-scale heliborne assaults are most likely. Assaults of up to regimental size are also possible, though some repositioning of units would probably be necessary. Surprise attacks with extensive air support could destroy specific insurgent bases provided they are conducted in remote areas away from the major infiltration routes, which are protected by Pakistani and Iranian forces. As with air attacks, however, defensive responses by refugees and Pakistani or Iranian forces would quickly increase the risks for follow-on raids, especially if the insurgents obtain advance warning. The large numbers of helicopters that would be required to mount operations along the mountainous parts of the northern Afghan-Pakistani border would be vulnerable to ground fire. [redacted]

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56. Because of limited forces and logistics, and the fact that their resources are concurrently occupied with missions inside Afghanistan, the Soviets are in a poor position to put serious military pressure on Pakistan and Iran through strikes at border targets. Even increased levels and frequency of Soviet cross-border attacks are unlikely to create serious problems for President Zia unless such attacks are directed at Pakistani facilities or the Soviets conduct the force and logistics buildups needed to create a serious offensive threat. While we believe it likely that the Soviets will increase the severity of cross-border air attacks, and may undertake occasional ground raids, these are unlikely to be of sufficient nature or scale to force any Pakistani accommodation to the Soviets. [redacted]

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Diplomatic Options

57. The USSR has put some diplomatic effort into attempts to neutralize world hostility to its role in Afghanistan, and will continue to do so. Moscow agreed to indirect talks between Kabul and Islamabad under UN sponsorship in an effort to appear reasonable about wanting a political solution and thus relieve international pressures. Its approach to the talks, however, involves trying to win in the diplomatic arena what it has been unable to win on the battlefield in

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Afghanistan—an effective end to the resistance without any commitments for a withdrawal of Soviet forces. Thus, the Soviets demand that the Pakistanis recognize the regime and guarantee Pakistani non-interference in Afghan internal affairs, while maintaining Soviet troop withdrawals are a bilateral issue between the USSR and Afghanistan to be decided separately as the country is brought under effective control by a Soviet-run regime.

58. The talks are currently bogged down over Moscow's attempts to have a bilateral Soviet-Afghan accord on a Soviet troop withdrawal timetable excluded from a comprehensive UN-sponsored settlement. The Soviets may try to regain diplomatic initiative in 1985 by suggesting that a withdrawal commitment could be part of a comprehensive accord, thus shifting the onus for the diplomatic stalemate back to Pakistan and focusing discussions on how Pakistani pledges of non-interference might be implemented.

59. In addition to continuing cross-border incidents, the Soviets will apply strong diplomatic and propaganda pressures on Pakistan. They may increase efforts to destabilize the Zia regime. They have had strong incentives to do so in the past, but apparently lack adequate means.

60. In recent months the Soviets have toughened their stance toward Iran, and we expect this trend to continue. However, the Soviets might try a more flexible approach to Iran in which they seek to exploit Iran's interest in an improved relationship to get Iran to cut back its support of the Afghan resistance.

61. The USSR and China have moved to improve relations with each other despite the "three obstacles" raised by China—Soviet troops on China's borders; Soviet support of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia; and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Even if the Afghan issue has become more significant because of the growing Chinese role in aiding the Mujahedin, we judge that neither side is likely to make the continuing improvement of relations contingent on its resolution.

62. With respect to the United States, the Soviets could attempt to make US support for the resistance more of a factor in bilateral relations than they have in the past. But there are inhibiting risks in either of the two approaches they might take. Should they suggest that other improvements in the relationship, such as arms control progress, are jeopardized by US policy toward Afghanistan, they risk sacrificing other impor-

tant political goals, such as encouraging restraint in US military programs. Should they, on the other hand, hint at the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan without prior guarantees for the Kabul regime in order to encourage reductions in US support for the resistance, they would risk signaling their own vulnerability in Afghanistan and emboldening their major adversary. For these reasons we do not believe that the Soviets will wish to make Afghanistan stand in the way of changes in US-Soviet bilateral relations in the near future.

Prospects for Soviet Success

63. We doubt that any of these military or political measures will be sufficient to put the war convincingly on the path toward a Soviet victory. On the contrary, if our appreciation of the situation is correct, the Soviets are likely to find themselves no better off after another year or so of tactical adjustments and small troop increases. At some point a continued military stalemate might no longer be tolerable to the Soviets and they might consider radical alternatives to their present strategy. These could include a large Soviet military buildup in Afghanistan and more forceful attempts to diminish Pakistan's support to the resistance or—less likely—serious efforts to get a political solution involving Soviet military withdrawal.

64. For the time being, however, we believe that Moscow prefers to avoid the military costs and risks of a major troop increase. Logistic preparations for an increase of 50,000 troops, for example, would require several months and would probably not decisively affect the course of the war. A much larger expansion—to a level of 400,000 to 500,000 troops—designed to assure Soviet control would take a year or more to accomplish and still might not lead to quick suppression of the insurgency.

65. We also believe that Moscow is not yet ready to face the military risks and political consequences of a significant expansion of hostilities into Pakistan or Iran. Major action against either country from Afghan territory would require extensive logistic preparations, including securing of supply lines.

66. We believe, therefore, that the Soviets will continue for at least the next year or so to try to make progress against the insurgents without a major expansion of their forces or of the geographic scope of the war. But we believe that such progress will continue to elude them.

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The Longer Term Outlook

67. We do not attempt in this Memorandum to project Soviet strategy toward the war beyond the current year. From the present vantage point, however, the pattern of successive reassessments, tactical adjustments, and ratcheting up of the Soviet commitment—qualitative and quantitative—appears to us the most likely prognosis for several years to come. This is because it appears to offer the Soviets a reliable and, so far, tolerable means of preserving their minimum equity—a Communist regime, however ineffective, in Kabul, while avoiding the unpleasant costs and risks of substantially expanding the war or pulling out.

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68. The Soviets would clearly like not merely to do better, but to put the war on a course that points convincingly toward ultimate victory, even though it might take many more years to complete. To do so, however, they must crack the morale of the resistance through a sustained pattern of tactical victories inside Afghanistan, and sharply constrain by military or political means its outside support. We believe it is highly unlikely that the Soviets can achieve these conditions through the measures they are most likely to apply in the near future.

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Alternative Scenarios

69. There are a number of developments, which do not now seem likely, that could upset our calculations. Although we see no evidence that Gorbachev is ready to depart far from current Soviet strategy, Soviet leadership politics could produce debate that leads to more radical changes in Soviet policy than we currently foresee. A Pakistani government without President Zia might be less committed to current Afghan policy, despite the consensus that supports this policy now. Iran could also change its Afghan policy, but the change would probably lead to more rather than less support for the resistance. These developments might curtail but probably would not altogether cut off Mujahedin resupply. If their were a cutoff of outside support for the resistance in Afghanistan, the Soviets would start making progress toward gaining control of Afghanistan. This would reduce pressure on them to escalate their commitment to the war or to seek a political accommodation.

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Communist Rule Is Threatened

70. We cannot rule out a more serious deterioration of the Soviet position in Afghanistan than we estimate. This could occur if the insurgents are able to improve

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their coordination, adjust their tactics, and assimilate increased outside assistance more rapidly than we anticipate. Even a more rapid deterioration of the situation than we anticipate would give the Soviets time to assess and react.

— The Soviets might attempt to stabilize the situation by introducing a few additional divisions—possibly as many as 50,000 men—in order to increase efforts to garrison and hold large areas after sweep operations. Such an increase, however, would require the kinds of regular ground force units that have been least effective so far.

— If the Soviet hold in Afghanistan were to be seriously threatened, we do not rule out a much more sizable reinforcement of 300,000 to 400,000 troops. Such a reinforcement would allow Moscow to make serious inroads against the insurgency if the effort were sustained. An augmentation of forces on this scale would require a long-term buildup involving large-scale mobilization of forces throughout the USSR. A major reinforcement of Soviet troops would substantially raise the political and economic costs of the war. We currently believe Moscow would bear them rather than face the consequences of a victory by the insurgency. But even a massive increase in the Soviet troop commitment would take up to a year to execute and would not guarantee a rapid victory.

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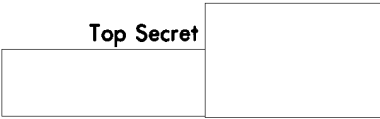
71. We believe a major Soviet expansion or escalation of the war is unlikely in the near term, not only because of the increased cost and risk to Moscow, but because even increased Mujahedin effectiveness, while probable, is unlikely to confront the Soviets with distinct “crunch points” or a countrywide crisis of control that would precipitate a major revision of strategy. Moreover, although leadership politics in Moscow could generate debate over Afghanistan, we believe the Soviets will focus more heavily on other issues, such as the domestic economy. During his consolidation of power Gorbachev will not want to face the implications of a major policy change if present Soviet strategy can avoid it; and we believe it can for now.

The Soviets Get “Onto the Path to Victory”

72. Some close observers of Afghanistan, among them strong supporters of the resistance, believe that Moscow will prevail in Afghanistan eventually and sooner than we judge probable. Basing their judgments on classified and unclassified reporting, observations in

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Kabul, and knowledge of Afghan society, these observers argue that Soviet efforts to build a viable regime in Kabul are making slow but steady progress. They note, too, that Soviet forces have a military capability that the insurgents cannot hope to match and which is being used with somewhat better effect each year the Soviets have been in Afghanistan. They assert that divisions among the resistance groups will prevent them from providing an alternative focus of legitimacy to the pro-Soviet regime.

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73. Drawing on observations in Kabul and conversations with regime officials, these observers point to the thousands of Afghans—estimates range up to 375,000—who now are in some way part of the Communist government. They are convinced that the Afghan Army already includes a core of highly motivated junior officers and is gradually increasing its effectiveness.

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74. These observers maintain that, with the exception of a few leaders such as Masood, most insurgent commanders are poorly organized to carry out military operations and have few disciplined political cadres capable of building an underground political and administrative infrastructure. They characterize many insurgent leaders as local warlords who would like to get Soviet forces out of Afghanistan but who often are opportunists seeking to deal with both sides. These observers suggest that most Afghans are apathetic and that war weariness may gradually erode the insurgents' base of support.

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75. This perspective must be taken account of, but we believe it is unduly pessimistic about insurgent prospects. We believe it is influenced by the complaints of resistance figures pleading for more aid, insufficient awareness of the military picture throughout Afghanistan, and overestimation of Soviet capabilities and performance.

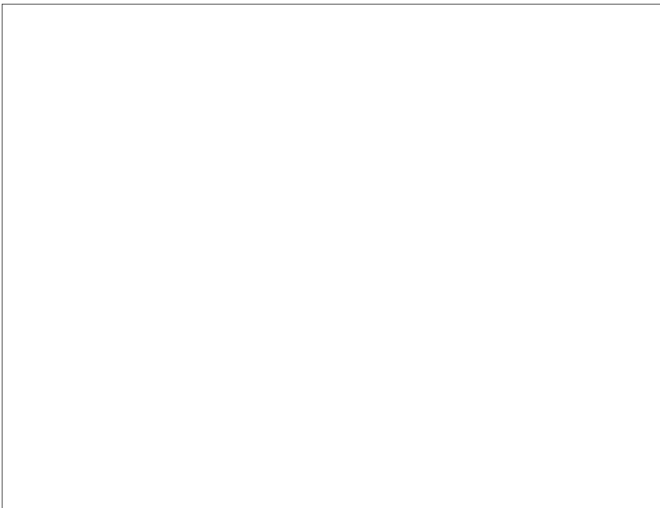
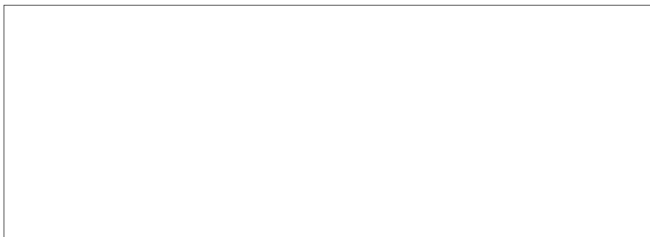
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76. The implication of this perspective for Moscow is that the Soviets will hold to a patient continuation of their current strategy with neither escalation of nor retreat from the war.

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ANNEX

Expanding Soviet Forces in Afghanistan: Capabilities and Constraints

Moderate Augmentation

Depending on the size of the augmentation, the Soviets could introduce new forces into Afghanistan to improve performance throughout the country, or might focus on particular areas such as the Pakistani and Iranian borders. Increases of from two to four divisions—roughly 20,000 to 50,000 troops—could probably be carried out over one to two months, including calling up reservists, training, and transporting them to Afghanistan. While we estimate such an increase would not pose a serious long-term threat to the insurgency, it would allow the Soviets to improve security in several major cities, interdict more insurgent convoys near the Pakistani and Iranian borders, and perhaps establish additional garrisons in high-priority areas, such as the Panjsher Valley and along lines of communication [redacted]

At present, Soviet forces in Afghanistan rely on a very limited and vulnerable road net. Logistic and support elements in Afghanistan would need to be considerably expanded, especially if more troops were committed to border areas away from current garrisons and airfields. Initial deployments would probably be to large bases close to major cities. Construction of temporary tent camps would take several weeks or longer, with permanent construction requiring many months. Buildups of munitions and POL storage would probably begin well before the arrival of troops. [redacted]

A potential bottleneck for sizable force augmentations would be in-country air support. Soviet maneuver units rely heavily on locally based helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft for mobility and fire support. The airfields in Afghanistan are estimated to be close to the saturation point. Constructing additional runways and support facilities would require at least months and perhaps considerably longer. [redacted]

Massive Reinforcement

The Soviets could greatly expand their troop strength to clear and hold large parts of the countryside, or to block infiltration from Pakistan and Iran.

Either strategy would probably require troops several times their current numbers. We estimate that maintaining a permanent presence in large areas of the countryside would require double or triple the present strength. [redacted]

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Forces Available for Afghanistan

Theoretically, the USSR has over 200 divisions from which to augment forces in Afghanistan; in practice, considerations such as location, readiness, and other priority missions would limit the choice of units selected. To spread the military and economic impact, any large augmentation eventually would probably involve ground forces from many areas of the Soviet Union. [redacted]

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There are 32 motorized rifle or tank divisions in the four military districts closest to Afghanistan; most of them, however, are designated "not ready" or cadre units by the Soviets and would require three to five weeks for mobilization and training before deployment. About one week would be required to prepare the "ready" units in this area, but none of these are located near Afghanistan and all probably have priority missions opposite China, Iran, or Turkey. Divisions or major units could be drawn from other areas—particularly from the interior military districts of the USSR—but most of these are in the "not ready" category. We believe that there is little likelihood the Soviets would draw down major ground combat forces opposite NATO in Eastern Europe or immediately opposite China to reinforce Afghanistan. [redacted]

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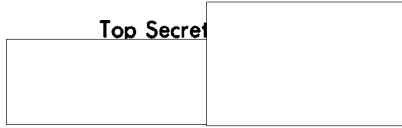
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The Soviets also have five operational airborne divisions not currently committed to the war, and the airborne forces are among the best the Soviets have in


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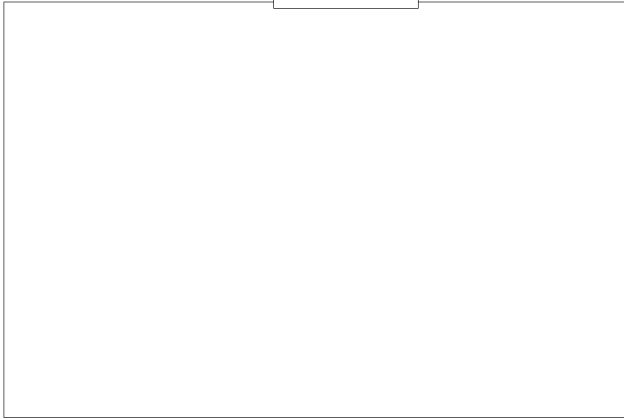
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Afghanistan. They have been reluctant to commit additional airborne units, although elements of the 104th Guards Airborne Division did deploy temporarily last April to serve as a reserve during the spring offensive in the Panisher Valley. Soviet Defense Minister Sokolov had previously been reported to favor the dispatch of additional airborne forces to Afghanistan, but we do not know the extent to which this might be constrained by potentially competing missions for these few units. In addition, the Soviets have a number of units especially trained for heliborne assault operations that would be suitable for use in Afghanistan. One such unit has been deployed there since the invasion. 

Limited numbers of additional specialized troops could also be deployed to Afghanistan. An estimated 3,000 Spetsnaz special forces and some 3,000 KGB Border Guard troops have already been deployed. The KGB contingent could probably be doubled by drawing from the estimated 13,000 Border Guard troops in adjacent areas of the Soviet Union. Reinforcements for Spetsnaz troops—which Afghan insurgents rate highly—are more problematic and would probably require a drawdown of capabilities elsewhere, as current estimates credit the Soviets with only about 12,000 Spetsnaz troops in the order of battle (including those already in Afghanistan). 




Logistics

The Soviets, however, do not currently have in place the logistic infrastructure necessary to support and sustain a force significantly larger than the 116,000-man army they have already deployed. The limited number of airfields and all-weather roads and the absence of railroads in Afghanistan would severely impede movement of large forces and their support elements into and through the country. Any large increase would have to be preceded by a substantial augmentation of the logistic infrastructure. 


The Soviets would also have to improve their distribution and upgrade repair facilities. Intermittent shortages of fuel and munitions, for example, still occur and at times hamper operations. The Soviet capability to repair equipment remains poor, especially for aircraft. Past Soviet experience indicates, moreover, that the provision of water and medical support for additional forces would also pose major challenges to the current infrastructure. Although the Soviets have spent an estimated \$2 billion on military construction in Afghanistan during the first five years of the war, Soviet forces for the most part remain housed in temporary accommodations (tents), and such seemingly basic measures as protective revetments for combat aircraft are only now under construction. 


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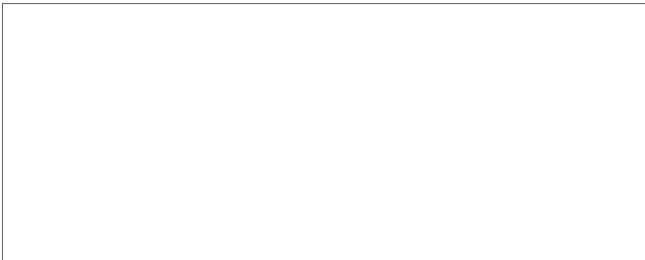
Manpower costs or adjustments required for a major expansion would be substantial and would involve either the mobilization of reservists to fill out low-strength units, the diversion of conscripts from other units, increased conscription, or a combination of these measures. Recent restrictions on draft deferments and indications that defense industry workers are being conscripted highlight the manpower pinch the Soviets are experiencing and suggest some of the difficulties involved in any peacetime military manpower increase. Commitment of a large number of divisions from the military districts near Afghanistan to the counterinsurgency effort would severely restrict Soviet capabilities to deal with contingencies elsewhere in the southern region, and would involve a lengthy effort to increase the overall readiness levels of the forces involved. 

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The attraction of such large troop increases would be the prospect of decisive actions to permanently cripple the insurgency and allow Moscow to begin reducing its military commitment within two to four years. The Soviets cannot be sure, however, that even a massive presence near the borders would prevent insurgents from operating in the interior, using stockpiled and captured weapons. Once Soviet troops left, the insurgency would probably revive, as long as bases in Pakistan and Iran remained intact. 

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