



**Directorate of
Intelligence**

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Developments in Afghanistan (U)

4 April 1985

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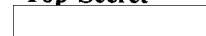
Developments in Afghanistan (U)

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Developments in Afghanistan 


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Perspective

The Dynamics of Insurgent Cooperation 


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We believe the Afghan insurgency will continue to develop under different leaders and along different paths from region to region in Afghanistan. In the north and west, the Jamiat groups, which are well organized and have a common ethnic background, probably will gradually consolidate their control. In the central area, military pressure from the Iranian-backed groups probably will result in domination from Tehran. In the south and east, *intraregional* cooperation among the fractious Pushtuns will evolve slowly. *Interregional* cooperation among the ultimately dominant groups probably will remain a distant prospect. 


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The Jamiat-i-Islami groups predominate in the northern and western provinces, primarily because of the dominance of the Tajik social structure. Despite the marked language differences among Tajiks from Kapisa Province and those in Herat Province, there is little history of rivalry. Relations among the Jamiat groups, the Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin) groups, and others vary from province to province. 


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The central region, the Hazarehjat, is generally controlled by Shiite Hazara groups. Internecine fighting—prompted mainly by Iranian-backed groups—has resulted in increasing control for the Sepah-e Pasdaran and Sazman-i-Nasr, at the expense of the Shura-Inqilab-i-Itifaq-i-Islami organization, which has refused to offer its allegiance to Khomeini. 

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Fighting has also been widespread among groups in the southern and eastern provinces. These groups, dominated by Pushtuns, often are divided along tribal lines and have many personal rivalries. The most effective groups in the fighting have been the Hizbi Islami of both the Khalis and Gulbuddin factions. 

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The Afghan insurgency embraces hundreds of groups. They have significant disagreements with one another—even on what it means to defend Islam. However, most groups, we believe, want considerable autonomy for their regions or ethnic groups. They prefer minimal interference from the Peshawar-based resistance organizations. 

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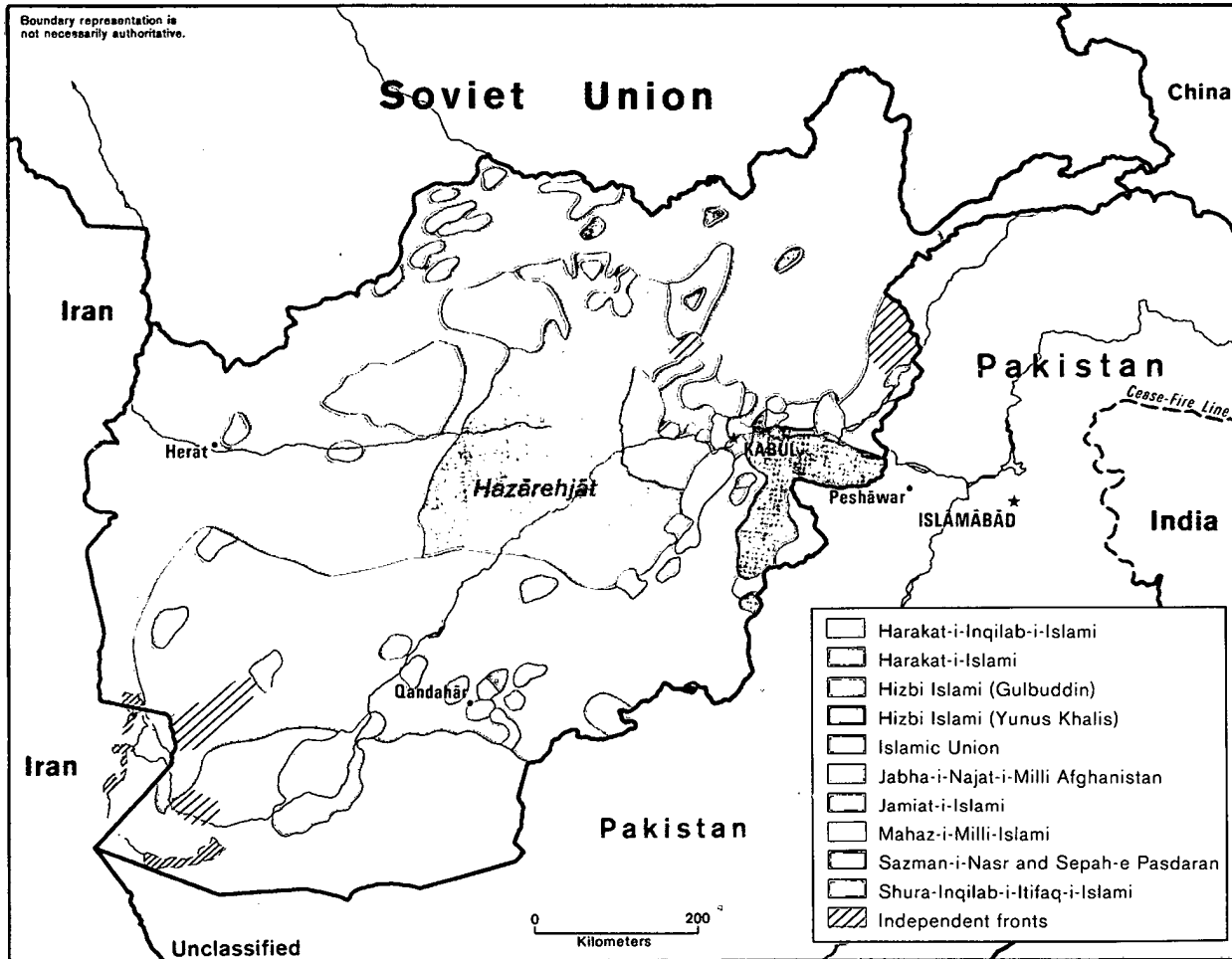
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Major Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan



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[Redacted]

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Several insurgent commanders in Afghanistan have promoted unity, but ethnic, cultural, political, and religious differences deter cooperation, as do difficulties in communication resulting from terrain, distances between groups, and the presence of Soviet, Afghan regime, and rival insurgent forces. Most insurgent leaders have few political skills and care about little but their own small areas of influence. [Redacted]

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Though many insurgent groups are affiliated with Peshawar-based resistance organizations, these affiliations have done little to advance resistance cooperation in Afghanistan. Most groups ally with the Peshawar organization that will provide them with the most aid; allegiances shift depending on the ability of the Peshawar organization to meet the needs of the fighters in Afghanistan. Few groups in Afghanistan, we believe, understand the political goals of the Peshawar organizations, which frequently squabble among themselves. [Redacted]

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Unification of the Peshawar exile groups would have little effect on the insurgents in Afghanistan. Most exile leaders have only limited influence with the fighters in Afghanistan and appear to have little control over insurgent battle plans. [Redacted]

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Prospects for cooperation among the resistance groups in Afghanistan are improving most rapidly in urban areas. Urban Afghans, especially Push-tuns in and near Kabul and Qandahar, have become detribalized, and parochialism has diminished. Coordinated military operations are much more common in these cities than in rural areas. Areas inhabited by people with weak tribal associations, such as northeastern Afghanistan where detribalized Tajiks predominate, also offer a good environment for cooperation because cultural and ethnic divisions are less intense. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Briefs

Increasing Soviet Activity in Western Afghanistan

[Redacted]

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The Soviets and the Afghan regime probably are preparing to launch new offensives in western Afghanistan this spring to counter declining security in Herat City, interdict insurgent supply caravans from Iran, and attempt to halt attacks on the new fuel pipeline.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Insurgents in and near Herat City have been very active, despite repeated large-scale Soviet operations. They have captured supplies during convoy ambushes and raids on Afghan regime and Soviet garrisons, and their attacks—together with accidents along the pipeline—have resulted in the loss of thousands of tons of fuel

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Most of the aid received by insurgents in the west transits Iran. [Redacted]

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Air Violations During the First Quarter of 1985

[Redacted]

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Aircraft from Afghanistan bombed Pakistani territory 12 times during the first three months of 1985 and killed five people.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] All these attacks occurred within several kilometers of the Afghan-Pakistani border across from Konarha and Paktia Provinces.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Pakistani officials report 43 air violations—including attacks and overflights—from Afghanistan so far in 1985 compared with 88 during all of 1984.

[Redacted]

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The bombings and overflights probably reflect support for the larger-than-usual Soviet and Afghan regime winter campaign along the eastern border of Afghanistan.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Pakistani Concerns About Soviet Pressure [Redacted]

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Pakistani officials are fearful that the Soviets will step up pressure to reduce Islamabad's support for the Afghan resistance. They expect more military pressure along Pakistan's western border and more Soviet intrusions into Pakistani airspace. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Moscow is convinced that the Afghan insurgency would be crippled without Pakistani support. How far the new Soviet leadership is willing to go in pressing Zia is unclear, but heavier pressure on the border—possibly including incursions by Afghan forces—appears likely as spring fighting intensifies. The Pakistanis may be citing the possibility of greater Soviet pressure in part to impress on Washington the need for increased US support for Islamabad. [Redacted]

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Soviets Improve Fuel Resupply and Distribution [Redacted]

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The Soviets have been continuously upgrading the logistic system to assure adequate fuel supplies for their activities in Afghanistan. The latest improvements include the completion of a pipeline in February extending 200 kilometers (km) from the Soviet border to Shindand in western Afghanistan and the construction of a new fuel storage site at Herat with about 1 million liters of capacity. Shortly after the invasion, the Soviets started construction of a 375-km-long fuel pipeline from Termez in the Soviet Union to Bagram Airfield to serve northeastern Afghanistan and supplement supplies delivered by trucks. This line became operational in 1982. We believe the Soviets completed a second, parallel line last year. In addition, the Soviets have more than doubled the capacity of tactical fuel storage facilities in Afghanistan to slightly more than 100 million liters. Approximately 70 percent of this storage is along the pipeline routes.

[Redacted]

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The two pipeline systems and additional storage capacity give the Soviets more flexibility to adjust to seasonal fuel demands, changing operational needs, and interruptions caused by insurgent activities. The pipelines—approximately 15 centimeters in diameter, [Redacted] [Redacted] have an estimated normal delivery capacity of 100,000 liters per hour for a single line. [Redacted]

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Mixed Prospects for Soviet Elite Units in Afghanistan

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The Soviets are relying more on a variety of elite units—airborne troops, special-purpose forces (Spetsnaz), and reconnaissance detachments—for combat operations in Afghanistan. Compared to regular units, elite forces are more mobile and have superior quality troops and leadership.

- The ability to operate at night and remain outside secured compounds for up to 10 days to carry out ambushes and intelligence operations. Regular units generally abandon the night and the countryside to the insurgents.

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Despite recent increases in the number of elite troops and some indications of improved unit tactics, we believe these forces are still not being used to best effect. Poor intelligence, the desire to hold down casualties, poor security, and rigid tactics have been obstacles to improved performance. Major improvements in effectiveness probably would require changes in the basic Soviet approach to the war.

- Elite units are in almost all cases more rigorously trained, have better quality conscripts, and are better led than regular units.

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Comparison of Elite Units

There is little to suggest major differences in the types of operations conducted by airborne, Spetsnaz, and reconnaissance units. All have participated in helicopter assaults, raids, and ambushes as well as support for conventional ground force operations. Although airborne, Spetsnaz, and reconnaissance units normally have different missions, it appears that combat experience in Afghanistan has caused them to arrive at roughly similar approaches to the counterinsurgency.

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Characteristics of Elite Units

Elite units—frequently called commandos in insurgent reports—are generally airborne troops, reconnaissance battalions or companies (attached to motorized rifle divisions and regiments), or Spetsnaz units organized into independent motorized rifle battalions (IMRB). These units have a number of common features that make them more effective than conventional ground forces:

- Heavy reliance on helicopters for rapid transportation and fire support. Air mobility helps achieve surprise and allows elite units to take the tactical “high ground,” blocking insurgent escape routes and exposing them to artillery and air attacks.
- A willingness to fight on foot and close with the insurgents rather than staying in tracked vehicles, a common criticism of motorized rifle troops.
- A readiness to operate alone, increasing flexibility and reducing vulnerability to resistance intelligence networks.
- Strong emphasis on small-unit raids and ambushes to achieve surprise.

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Airborne. The initial use of airborne forces in Afghanistan fits the standard Soviet role—a light, quick reaction force designed to seize key objectives ahead of advancing main forces. In the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, they landed at the main airports after these had been secured by the KGB and special-purpose forces and remained there until November.

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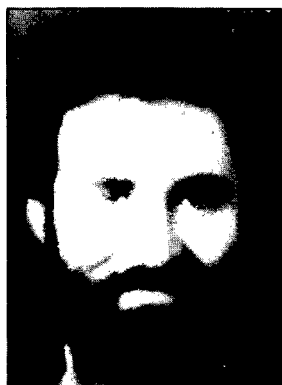
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Abdul Haq: A Capital Insurgent (U)

Afghan insurgent commander Abdul Haq has been an important player in keeping the insurgency active in the Kabul area. Haq's sense of organization and his understanding of tactics and strategy have contributed to his success, but recent heavy Soviet and regime security measures and operations may be decreasing his effectiveness. His potential as a regional commander is limited by ethnic, political, and religious differences among the insurgents. While Abdul Haq expresses hope for better cooperation among insurgent groups, he apparently is willing to let it evolve gradually. His group is affiliated with the Hizbi Islami faction of Yunus Khalis. [redacted]



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Leadership and Tactics

In our view, Abdul Haq's leadership and tactical expertise have made him the most effective commander in the Kabul area. In the fall of 1984 Abdul Haq told a Western journalist that he saw Kabul as the symbol of Soviet occupation, and that attacks on Kabul were particularly important because diplomats and international organizations would publicize the insurgents' activity. [redacted]

outside the capital into seven units that surround the city. The largest group is in the Paghman area, a short distance northwest of Kabul, from where he can attack Soviet and regime outposts and convoys and seek refuge in the nearby mountains when confronted by superior forces. [redacted]

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[redacted] Haq maintains records on the performance of each commander and on possible successors and distributes arms according to each commander's effectiveness. He delegates to subcommanders the authority to mount minor operations and seeks to avoid charges of favoritism by meeting periodically with each commander to review performance. [redacted]

Inside the city of Kabul, [redacted] Abdul Haq has divided his forces into eight or nine cells, each comprising five or six persons aware of the identities of only their own cell members. The cells gather intelligence and relay it to Haq, who passes it on to one of the seven units outside the capital. Unit actions in the city usually are small-scale raids, kidnappings, or assassinations. [redacted]

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We believe that Abdul Haq's organization is responsible for many of the rocket attacks on Soviet and regime installations inside Kabul; he has told US officials that his organization is responsible for numerous attacks on power stations and on Kabul Airport. In a recent interview, he praised improvements in coordination among insurgent groups and in arms supplies, particularly 107-mm rockets. [redacted]

Limitations

Abdul Haq's effectiveness is limited by the size of his force, by Soviet and regime security, by weak leadership among the other groups he cooperates with, and, inside Kabul, by the lack of internal support structure. Soviet and regime security prevents insurgent groups from maintaining large weapons caches and from making prolonged or large-scale attacks in the capital; insurgents in the city cannot expect timely support once they run out of ammunition, [redacted]

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Abdul Haq's forces total approximately 6,000 to 7,000 men. He has arrayed them in Kabul Province

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The Man

Abdul Haq has been fighting Kabul regimes since 1974. He claims to have commanded Hizbi Islami-Khalis faction units in Paktia and Nangarhar Provinces before assuming his current post near Kabul. Haq has frequently journeyed abroad to promote the Afghan cause in recent years; traveling to Western Europe three times and the United States twice. He seems favorably disposed toward the West, although he has expressed dismay at the indifference he has encountered toward Afghanistan, particularly among European socialists. About 27, Haq is a Pushtun from the Jalalabad area. US Consular officials in Peshawar describe him as frank, tough, and optimistic.

Hizbi Islami-Yunus Khalis Faction

The Yunus Khalis faction of the fundamentalist Hizbi Islami resistance organization comprises mainly Pushtun tribesmen who are Sunni Muslims. The organization's strength is concentrated in Kabul, Lowgar, Nangarhar, Paktia, and Paktika Provinces. Khalis's faction still is linked with the seven-party fundamentalist alliance, though he pulled out of the organization in December 1983, charging alliance leader Sayyaf with misusing funds. Khalis has often been at odds with other fundamentalist alliance members and with the moderates, but his organization has had good personal relations with the Jamiat-i-Islami which is strong in northern and western Afghanistan.

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[redacted] because [redacted]

Goals

Although Abdul Haq's modest political role in the insurgency has grown since 1982, he is still reluctant to push for resistance unity. In February 1985, in fact, Haq defended resistance **disunity**, telling a Western journalist that the diversity of the Afghan resistance was evidence of its democracy.

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Reports from the US Embassy in Kabul indicate little insurgent activity in the capital during 1985. Increased security in the city—evident since December—high levels of helicopter activity over Kabul suburbs and the surrounding area, Soviet and regime operations in Lowgar Province, and winter weather probably caused the insurgents to curtail operations.

[redacted] in spring 1982 Haq [redacted]

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[redacted] in spring 1984, Haq's group was more effective than a 10,000-man group backed by Peshawar fundamentalist leader Sayyaf, as well as local Jamiat insurgents and Hizbi Islami groups belonging to the Gulbuddin faction. [redacted] poor leadership and lack of central control in some of those groups resulted in high casualties for limited gains and also made it difficult for Haq to coordinate operations with them. In winter 1985, Haq told a Western journalist, however, that coordination among commanders had improved.

In Abdul Haq's view, development of a working alliance of insurgents would have to proceed in stages. It would involve first the negotiating of a joint platform on political strategy, such as accepting the principle of negotiating with the Soviets, determining the acceptability of former King Zahir Shah, and adopting a common policy toward the Arab countries and the West. A spokesman could be chosen once a common platform is established, and a joint commission created to settle local conflicts. Another essential task, in Haq's judgment, is to establish an education system in the refugee camps and inside Afghanistan.

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Haq condemns Arab countries for reserving their aid for "stooges" rather than distributing it equitably. He publicly advocates evenhanded treatment of other groups and hopes that they will accept the plan for gradual union. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Afghanistan: Assessing the War

[Redacted]

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Recent assessments [Redacted] the Indian Government emphasize Soviet and Afghan regime gains in the war in Afghanistan during the past year, [Redacted]

[Redacted] US diplomats in Kabul also report an improved situation for the Soviets and Afghan Government. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

- The Soviets are confident of success over the long run and find the costs of the war manageable.
- The Soviets are placing most of their emphasis on educating and indoctrinating a new generation of Afghans and expect that this generation will grow up free of factionalism. [Redacted]

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The View From Kabul

A US Embassy assessment from Kabul on 17 March reports that during the past 12 months the Soviets have consolidated their position in the capital and other urban areas and prevented resistance gains elsewhere in the country. According to this assessment:

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- The basic stalemate is hurting the resistance more than the Soviets.
- Kabul appears calmer, less affected by the war, and more firmly in Soviet and Afghan hands than in past years. There are no outward signs that the population is restive under regime and Soviet control. Fuel and food supplies in the city are better than last year.
- The bureaucracy in Kabul continues to grow in size.
- The campaign against the Panjsher Valley is a success for the Soviets because it has "thrown Masood off balance" and severely hampered his ability to interfere in the flow of traffic from the USSR to Kabul.

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The Indian View

[Redacted]

- The Shomali Plain, north of Kabul, was quieter as a result of heavy Soviet bombing and Soviet reinforcement along the main road.
- Mazar-e-Sharif and other population centers in the north were more secure. [Redacted]

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The Indians,

[Redacted]

[Redacted] believe:

- The regime fully controls nine out of 10 urban centers and 9,000 villages, and has the "dominant" position in 9,000 more villages.

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The Insurgent Perspective

[Redacted] the insurgents remain optimistic about the future. Morale is good, and insurgent confidence has been boosted by their ability to keep a superpower on the defensive for five years. The insurgents believe "time is on their side."

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[Redacted]

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- Insurgent forces are becoming more aware of the growing national scale of their effort.
- Most guerrillas have adapted to disruptions in their family lives and are confident they will be able to continue fighting.
- The insurgents are developing a new generation of commanders—Ismail Khan in Herat and Masood in the Panjsher are the main examples—who will prosecute the war more effectively and have strong support within Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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The Balance

In our view, resistance attacks on Kabul probably have declined in part because of winter weather, because the insurgents have been concentrating their attacks elsewhere in the east, and because of increased Soviet and Afghan security. [Redacted]

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We support the insurgent assessment that morale is high among most fighters and that they are prepared for much more intense fighting this spring and summer. We believe Masood's Panjsher resistance forces remain well organized and have been active in fighting Soviet and Afghan forces this winter. Elsewhere in the eastern provinces, insurgent forces continue to overrun and threaten regime posts. [Redacted]

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The Indian assessment of the extent of government control is clearly overstated, [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Afghanistan Chronology

Noteworthy events relating to Afghanistan that have occurred or come to light

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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23 February

A Soviet convoy, the fourth in February, attempted to reach a besieged Afghan garrison near the Afghan-Pakistani border in Konarha Province but, like the previous three, was stopped by insurgent attacks. [Redacted] US Embassy officials in Kabul that Soviet and Afghan troops have suffered some 200 casualties during these attempts. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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26 February-1 March

[Redacted] a large insurgent force attacked the Afghan military outpost in the northern Panjsher Valley, causing 83 regime casualties while suffering 13 killed. On 1 March the insurgents in this area reportedly shot down two transport helicopters. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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2-11 March

US Embassy sources in Kabul reported large Soviet and Afghan Army sweep operations along the main road between Qandahar and the Pakistani border. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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7 March

Four aircraft from Afghanistan fired eight rockets on Pakistani territory near the Afghan-Pakistani border approximately 100 kilometers north of Quetta. [Redacted]

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Insurgent attacks on Soviet and Afghan regime convoys near the Kowtal-e Salang (Salang Pass) reportedly closed the highway for a short period of time. The number of convoy attacks, especially south of the Tunel-e Salang (Salang Tunnel) on the main highway, is increasing. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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14 March

In Moscow, Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Gorbachev received Pakistani President Zia "coldly," with each repeating standard positions vis-a-vis Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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15 March

US Embassy officials in Kabul reported that a bomb exploded in an Afghan intelligence service (KHAD) building in midmorning. [Redacted]

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16 March

Afghan forces initiated a brief firefight with Pakistani border troops after Mujahedin had seized three Afghan observation posts near the Towr-Kham-Khyber Pass border crossing. [Redacted]

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18, 19, 24 March

Insurgents exploded one bomb each day in Kabul shopping areas frequented by Soviets causing at least 35 Soviet and Afghan casualties, according to US Embassy officials in Kabul. [Redacted]

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18-25 March

The US Embassy in Kabul reports the highest level of air activity at Kabul Airfield this year. On 19 March, more than 60 MI-24 attack helicopters flew missions east of Kabul. [Redacted]

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