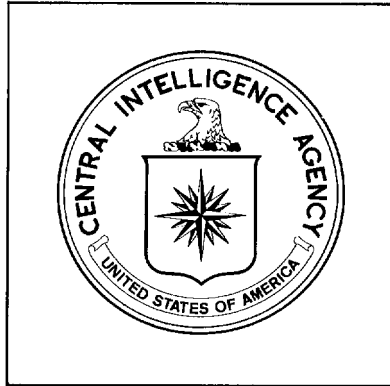


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

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Afghanistan

*Daoud Seeks to Avoid Serious Trouble
with his Neighbors*

Afghan President Daoud is apparently trying to ensure that neither Pakistan, his country's main adversary, nor the Soviet Union, its principal benefactor, will make trouble for his government. Daoud has long been at odds with Islamabad because of a territorial dispute. He also appears concerned that his good relations with Moscow may be coming under some strain because of his anti-leftist domestic policies.

In recent months Daoud has passed up several opportunities to intensify his government's intermittent propaganda war with Pakistan. Early this month, for example, Kabul replied in a relatively low key when Islamabad erroneously accused it of building its military strength along the two countries' common border.

The main reasons for Daoud's restraint are probably his awareness of Pakistan's superior military strength and his apprehension that Pakistan could decide to give substantial assistance to [redacted] others in Afghanistan who have opposed his regime. Daoud's concern over the latter possibility apparently increased last July when an Islamic-oriented organization, [redacted] was said to have been involved in simultaneous outbreaks of anti-government violence in several parts of Afghanistan.

The July incidents appear to have been, at least in part, an expression of dissatisfaction by some of Daoud's predominantly conservative Islamic countrymen over leftist influence in his government. In the months that followed, Daoud moved to ease this discontent by dismissing or downgrading the main leftists in the regime and by restoring his extended family, the Mohammadzai, to the central role this

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family has traditionally played in governing the country. Lately, however, Afghan officials have reportedly indicated some concern that the purge of the left, which is largely Moscow-oriented, might antagonize the Soviet Union. The USSR has long been Afghanistan's largest source of military and economic aid and enjoys considerable influence among Afghan army officers.

Daoud will probably seek to assure Soviet President Podgorny, who is scheduled to visit Afghanistan next week, that he has not abandoned his friendly stance toward Moscow. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] signs that Daoud's regime is trying to forestall a hostile Soviet reaction to the anti-leftist purge include a recent series of approaches by Afghan officials to Soviet embassy officers and a decision by Kabul to permit the long-delayed opening of a Soviet cultural center.

Iran, Afghanistan's other immediate neighbor and an important economic benefactor, probably hopes that Daoud will stick to his current policy of relative restraint toward Pakistan and also that he will succeed in discouraging Moscow from actively siding with the Afghan leftists. Tehran views Daoud as probably more capable than anyone else in Afghanistan of maintaining firm control over the country and of preventing an upsurge of instability and turmoil that could affect Afghanistan's neighbors. The Iranians probably also see Daoud as better able to resist Soviet domination than any leader who might replace him. (SECRET NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON)

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