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Soviet Contingency Plans for Military Operations Against Pakistan

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An Intelligence Assessment

Top Secret

SR 81-10082JX

July 1981

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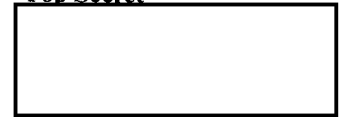
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*Information available as of 1 July 1981
has been used in the preparation of this report.*

This assessment was prepared by [redacted]
the Office of Strategic Research. [redacted]
[redacted]

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Office of Political Analysis, [redacted] the
Office of Geographic and Societal Research, and
[redacted] the Office of
Imagery Analysis contributed to the paper.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Theater Forces Division, OSR,
[redacted]

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This assessment was coordinated with the
contributing Offices and with the National
Intelligence Officers for the USSR and Eastern
Europe, General Purpose Forces, and Near East
and South Asia. [redacted]

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**Soviet Contingency Plans
for Military Operations
Against Pakistan** 

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
Key Judgments

 the Soviets and Afghans have been developing plans for neutralizing insurgent bases in Pakistan and annexing part of Pakistan's border area to Afghanistan. The Soviets have also begun to develop separate contingency plans for a large invasion of Pakistan. This planning probably reflects a need to cope more effectively with the Afghan insurgency, high-level Soviet interest in redefining the USSR's military position in Southwest Asia, and a need to rehearse procedures for mobilizing and preparing the 40th Army in Afghanistan for a large war 

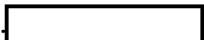
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
We have no indications that the Soviets intend to conduct military operations against Pakistan soon. On the contrary, the information available suggests that their plans—at least for large operations—are in the early stages of development and probably will require substantial evaluation and revision before the Soviets could even consider implementing them. Small cross-border raids, however, probably could occur at any time. 

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Major military operations into Pakistan would be much more costly for the Soviets than their invasion of Afghanistan. The Soviets sent an invasion force into Afghanistan in a low-risk operation to prevent the downfall of a client on their own border, ostensibly in response to a request for assistance from a Marxist government. Pakistan, however, has long been within the Western sphere of influence, has a security agreement with the United States, and is an important Muslim state. Moreover, its armed forces of about half a million men would resist a Soviet invasion. A Soviet move into Pakistan would have grave consequences for the political balance in South-west Asia and in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf regions. 

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Although the Soviets have carefully avoided crossing Pakistan's border intentionally, they might perceive small cross-border raids as a means of pressuring Pakistan to curtail insurgent operations or as a way to disrupt insurgent supply routes. Such raids probably are within Soviet capabilities and would entail only limited risk of a major international outcry or military confrontation with the United States, but they probably would disrupt the insurgents only temporarily. 

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The Soviets might consider larger cross-border operations and annexation of part of Pakistan to Afghanistan as a means of gaining more lasting control over areas in Pakistan which now support Afghan insurgents and of denying access to insurgents by Pakistan or its allies. These advantages, however,



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would have to be tempered by concern that Pakistan would resist and seek assistance from the United States. There would also be severe international repercussions

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Forces required for this type of operation are available in Afghanistan, but additional forces would be required to maintain Afghanistan's internal security and protect the Soviet position there. The Soviets still would have to seal the new border with Pakistan and prepare for a likely Pakistani response. Attacking units would have to transit rugged terrain that offers advantages to the defender. Nonetheless, this type of operation might succeed if Pakistan's forces remained committed to the east, if Afghanistan's security could be assured, if attacking units can attain superiority over defending forces before the United States could intervene, and if they could be resupplied. Soviet and Afghan authorities probably would be forced to accept heavy losses and the probability that this type of operation could escalate quickly to a larger conflict

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A major invasion of Pakistan is unlikely at present and probably would not be triggered solely by events in Afghanistan

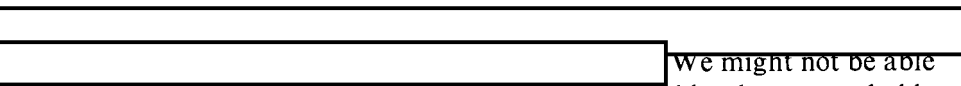
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The Soviets might consider such an invasion, however, to exploit a government takeover by Pakistani leftists. Moscow would expect almost certain confrontation with the United States, severe international repercussions, and extreme difficulty in consolidating its military position in Pakistan. Soviet forces would require mobilization and movement from the Turkestan Military District before they could launch a major invasion. It probably will be at least several years before Afghan forces could participate in such an invasion as more than a token force

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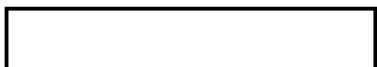
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We might not be able to anticipate the details of small raids they might consider, but we probably would be able to provide short notice of impending large cross-border operations and substantial warning of a large invasion

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