

Afghanistan: Kabul and P Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/07/08 : CIA-RDP84S00927R000100060002-6



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The extremely rugged terrain in the Panjshir Valley favors guerrilla warfare and hinders the effective use of mechanized ground and air forces. Mountains over 10,000 feet high parallel the river that runs through the 90 kilometers of the narrow valley floor. Before the Soviet invasion an estimated 90,000 civilians lived in small farming villages that dotted the main valley. The weather in summer is relatively pleasant, but winter snow and storms make travel to or through the area extremely difficult.

Colors on Landsat infrared imagery do not correspond to those seen on normal photography. On Landsat, living vegetation appears as varying shades of red, soil and rocks appear green, blue, brown, or tan, lakes and rivers are blue to black, snow, ice, and clouds appear white. Occasionally shadows falling away from the view cause an illusion in which ridged features appear reversed. Streams appear to be on ridges, and ridges appear to be valleys. This effect will not occur if the map is oriented so that shadows fall toward the viewer.



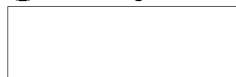
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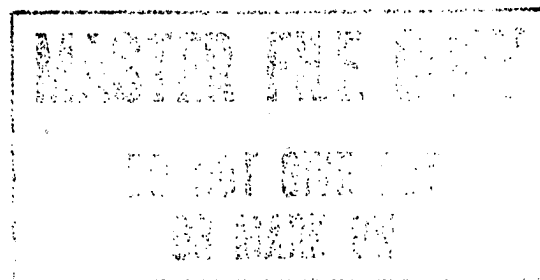
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Afghanistan: The Cease-Fire and the Future of the Insurgency in the Panjsher Valley



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An Intelligence Assessment



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*NESA 83-10211
September 1983*

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Afghanistan: The Cease-Fire and the Future of the Insurgency in the Panjsher Valley



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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office of
Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis, with a
contribution by [redacted] Office of Soviet
Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. [redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA [redacted]

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**Afghanistan: The Cease-Fire and
the Future of the Insurgency
in the Panjsher Valley**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 15 August 1983
was used in this report.*

The insurgent stronghold in the Panjsher Valley—strategically located near Kabul and major Soviet supply lines—continues to be a significant military threat and potential political embarrassment to Soviet forces and the Communist regime in Afghanistan. The leadership—under Ahmad Shah Masood—and organization of the resistance in the Panjsher have become the model of a militarily effective insurgency. Despite the de facto cease-fire in the Panjsher Valley between the insurgents and the Soviets, the valley remains an important symbol of the viability of the Afghan resistance movement.

The Soviets have launched six major operations against the insurgents in the Panjsher since the invasion. We believe the cumulative effect of Soviet and Afghan Government military pressure led local insurgent leaders to accept the Soviet offer of a cease-fire in January 1983. The insurgents' inability to protect civilians had contributed to a 60-percent decline in the valley's population and a weakening in support for the insurgents.

The military and political position of the Panjsheri insurgents and the resistance movement overall have not, in our view, been undermined so far by the cease-fire in the valley. The Panjsheris have benefited from the agreement, and they probably will attempt to maintain the cease-fire in the valley into the fall of 1983 and agree to similar truces in the future:

- The insurgents have infiltrated equipment and weapons into the valley, stockpiled food, and tried to protect civilians and raise their morale. Masood's forces also attacked a rival insurgent band that threatened the Panjsheris' supply lines.
- We judge that the Panjsher Valley insurgents could establish new strongholds throughout northern Afghanistan in one to two years, especially if they secured additional foreign material support.

Our analysis suggests that the Soviets hoped the cease-fire would encourage other insurgent groups to reach similar agreements. They also believed that over the short term the truce would reduce insurgent attacks near Kabul, allow the Soviets to redeploy troops from the valley for operations in other areas, and encourage Masood to attack rival bands, weakening all local insurgent groups:

- So far no other major insurgent groups have agreed to truces with the Soviets. The Panjsher cease-fire has not divided the resistance movement further nor been condemned by most insurgent groups inside or outside Afghanistan.

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- We believe Soviet and Afghan Government forces have not gained any significant military advantages from the truce; insurgents in other areas have defeated government forces withdrawn from the valley.

We judge that Moscow will tolerate limited attacks by Panjsher insurgents outside the valley in hopes of preserving and extending the cease-fire. In our view, however, the Soviets will be impelled eventually to resume major operations against Masood's forces in response to the continuing buildup of his military capability and the likelihood that his troops will launch extensive attacks outside the Panjsher:

- The insurgents probably would survive new Soviet and Afghan attacks on the Panjsher even though Soviet and government forces, by undertaking a major offensive, could reoccupy the main valley.
- In the less likely event that the Panjsher organization was destroyed militarily, effective guerrilla resistance would continue in Afghanistan, although the insurgent movement's morale would decline temporarily.

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[Redacted]

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Afghanistan: The Cease-Fire and the Future of the Insurgency in the Panjsher Valley [Redacted]

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The strategic location of the Panjsher Valley near Kabul and the growing effectiveness of the insurgents there have made the valley increasingly important for the Soviets, the Afghan Government, and the insurgents. [Redacted]

between early 1980 and late 1982 Panjsher-based guerrillas repeatedly attacked the Soviet fuel pipeline and convoys on the Termez to Kabul road, reducing vital supplies to major Afghan and Soviet garrisons and airfields near the capital. [Redacted]

[Redacted] the Panjsher is a major infiltration route for supplies from Pakistan to northern Afghanistan. By mid-1982 the survival and growth of the Panjsher insurgent organization had become a major political and military embarrassment for the Babrak regime and a symbol of resistance that raised the morale of Afghans opposed to the Communist government. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

International press coverage has given the Panjsher and the leader of the resistance in the valley, Ahmad Shah Masood, an inordinate amount of attention compared to other insurgent bases and leaders in the country that have been equally effective but less well publicized. [Redacted]

[Redacted] one guerrilla leader has established an insurgent organization with hundreds of men in Balkh Province. Reports from the US Embassy in Kabul indicate that guerrillas operating from strongholds have periodically isolated the cities of Herat and Qandahar, causing Soviet and Afghan forces to launch major counterattacks. Repeated insurgent attacks from the Paghman area, 15 kilometers west of Kabul, have destroyed convoys and damaged facilities near the capital. The press attention given to the Panjsher, however, combined with its strategic location and the effectiveness of the insurgency there, have given impetus to Soviet efforts to destroy or co-opt the resistance in the valley. [Redacted]

Since early 1980 Soviet and Afghan forces have launched six major ground offensives and many air attacks into the Panjsher Valley. These attacks failed to destroy the resistance, although we believe their

cumulative effect contributed to Masood's willingness to accept a cease-fire in January 1983. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Soviet and Afghan offensives could not eliminate Masood's guerrilla bands, primarily because the large-scale sweep operations were insufficiently aggressive and lacked the speed, mobility, and surprise necessary for successful counterinsurgency operations. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] we estimate that between early 1980 and December 1982 Soviet and Afghan forces suffered between 1,000 and 2,500 killed and wounded—mostly Afghan—and the insurgents suffered somewhat lower losses in combat in the valley (see table). [Redacted]

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In addition to their military efforts against the insurgents, Soviet and Afghan forces have attempted to bribe or coerce civilians in the Panjsher to reduce their support to the insurgents. [Redacted]

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Soviet and Afghan troops deliberately destroyed some crops and farms during past attacks. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] after the offensive in May 1982, Afghan officials tried unsuccessfully to pacify areas of the valley by distributing food and goods to civilians. [Redacted]

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Insurgent Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths. The success of the resistance in the Panjsher Valley has resulted from organizing all insurgents in the area into military units under a single command and using them in coordinated offensive and defensive operations. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Masood was able to weld together many formerly disorganized insurgent bands largely because of his willingness—unusual for an Afghan leader—to set aside ethnic, religious, political, and tribal differences to fight Soviet and Afghan regime forces. [Redacted]

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The Six Campaigns in the Panjsher Valley

Date	Soviet and Afghan Forces ^a	Insurgent Forces ^a
Mid-April 1980	1,000 to 2,000 men	A few hundred men
Late August to early September 1980	2,000 men	Less than 1,000 men
Late October to early November 1980	2,000 to 3,000 men	Approximately 1,000 men
Late August to early September 1981	5,000 to 8,000 men	1,000 to 2,000 men
Mid-May to mid-June 1982	14,000 men	1,000 to 2,000 Panjsheri insurgents. 1,000 to 2,000 insurgents from nearby areas.
Late August to mid-September 1982	5,000 to 8,000 men	Approximately 2,000 men.

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Ahmad Shah Masood
Insurgent Commander in the Panjsher

Ahmad Shah Masood has become the best known field commander in the Afghan resistance and has built what many believe to be the most successful insurgent band in Afghanistan. Masood's successes have boosted insurgent morale throughout the country and have gained him considerable international press coverage, with one article stating that he was emerging as a national folk hero. [redacted]

Masood has studied the works of Mao Zedong and Che Guevara and has a good understanding of guerilla tactics. [redacted] *Masood understands the need for training, including physical conditioning, development of tactical skills, and "political indoctrination" in current affairs and the nature of Communism. Although he professes allegiance to the Jamiat-i-Islami organization, one of the six major insurgent groups, he apparently uses this tie primarily to procure weapons.* [redacted]

An ethnic Tajik born in the Panjsher Valley in 1953, Masood was an engineering student at Kabul University in 1973 when the King was overthrown. Masood later fled to Pakistan, where he joined other Afghan dissidents in opposing the Daoud regime and its Communist successors. Along with other Panjsheri students, he returned to the valley after the Soviet intervention in 1979 and won the support of the local population and insurgents from the fundamentalist Hizbi Islami organization. [redacted]

[redacted]



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[redacted]

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We believe the effective use of guerrilla warfare tactics—avoiding direct combat with superior enemy firepower and manpower—has helped the insurgents survive massive attacks in the valley and raid targets outside the Panjsher. [redacted]

[redacted] Masood's forces include some 2,000 full-time guerrillas organized into at least five "mobile groups" that fight generally outside the valley and about 5,000 part-time fighters who have the main responsibility

for defending the Panjsher. [redacted]

[redacted]

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Acquiring more light infantry weapons has helped the Panjsher resistance to increase significantly the number of armed insurgents and to expand operations, [redacted]

[redacted] The guerrillas are armed with a variety of rifles, automatic weapons, antitank rockets, mines, and a growing number of heavy machineguns, mortars, and recoilless rifles.

[redacted] growing numbers of 12.7- and 14.5-mm heavy machineguns helped the insurgents improve their air defenses in 1982. We believe the Panjsheri insurgents destroyed or damaged between 20 and 30 helicopters in attacks inside and outside the Panjsher between early 1980 and early 1983. [redacted]

Training in weapons and tactics has helped increase the effectiveness and number of insurgent attacks.

[redacted]

Weaknesses. The Panjsheri insurgents appear to have realized only recently the need to plan for a long-term struggle and to protect and win the loyalty of their civilian supporters. [redacted]

[redacted] the insurgents' greatest error was their failure to stockpile adequate food for the winter, especially after several enemy attacks on the Panjsher in 1982. [redacted]

[redacted] insurgents did little to protect civilians from air attacks or prepare them psychologically for a long war. [redacted]

Failure to protect civilians has contributed to a significant decline in the valley's population and, with high noncombatant casualties, has lowered civilian support for the resistance. [redacted]

[redacted] civilians were becoming depressed, were not as friendly toward the insurgents, and were increasingly reluctant to give them material support. [redacted]

60 percent of the population has fled the main valley as a result of enemy attacks. [redacted] between 1980 and early 1983, air attacks killed 3,000 civilians and destroyed 6,800 homes. We estimate that 5,000 to 10,000 civilians have died as a direct

result of the war since late 1979 and that between 30,000 and 40,000 civilians and insurgents of the 90,000 prewar population remain in the main valley. [redacted]

Negotiations and the Cease-Fire

The military situation that developed in the Panjsher following the Soviet and Afghan occupation of the main valley in 1982 and the insurgents' ability to avoid destruction in the mountains and side valleys led to talks and a cease-fire with the insurgents in January 1983. [redacted] the Soviets initiated negotiations in December 1982, seeking an agreement that would halt insurgent attacks in the Panjsher and apparently also in the northern provinces and along the main road from Termez to Kabul. Although Masood said he rejected this plan and the insurgents claim no agreement was signed, a cease-fire subsequently has been observed by both sides in the Panjsher. As a result of the cease-fire, Soviet and Afghan forces withdrew from most of the valley in late April 1983. [redacted]

Masood's Motives. We believe the Panjsheris accepted a cease-fire because of continuing Soviet and Afghan military pressure, supply problems, and hardships suffered by unprepared civilians. By late 1982 guerrilla leaders may have recognized that their forces could not militarily dislodge the strong Afghan and Soviet garrisons in the valley. Moreover, continuing Soviet and Afghan air and ground attacks made it difficult to rebuild and resupply guerrilla units that had suffered losses in 1982. We believe the insurgents recognized that without efforts to improve conditions among the valley population, civilians might begin to withhold support for the resistance. The leadership probably judged that improvements could best be achieved during a cease-fire. [redacted]

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Insurgent Antiaircraft Weapons
Insurgent with shoulder-fired
SA-7 surface-to-air missile.



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Insurgents firing 12.7-mm
heavy machinegun.



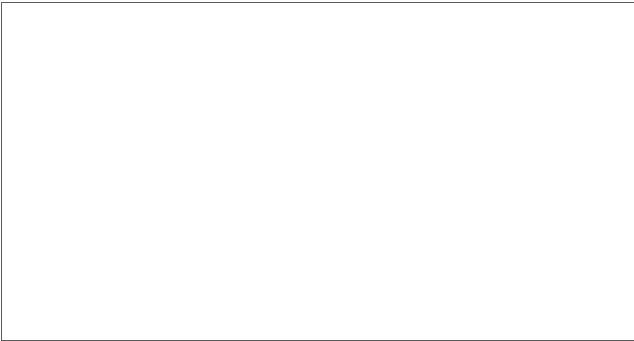
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Insurgents firing 14.5-mm
heavy machinegun.



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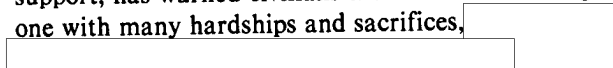
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Since January 1983, the insurgents have used the truce to improve their military position in and outside the Panjsher. Masood has increased his influence in the northeast, which was already growing before the cease-fire



Crops have been replanted, and efforts are being made to stockpile food. More effective propaganda efforts have been organized, and Masood, using the concept of a "holy war" to maintain popular support, has warned civilians the war will be a long one with many hardships and sacrifices.



Masood's insurgents seized control of the strategic Andarab Valley from Hizbi Islami forces who had used the area to block caravans from reaching the Panjsher.

Soviet Motives. We believe that the Soviets entered into the cease-fire with the guerrillas to reduce insurgent activity around the Panjsher, particularly near Kabul, and over the long term, to weaken and divide the resistance movement. the Soviets believed that a cease-fire with the famous and respected Panjsher insurgents would encourage other guerrilla groups in the country to reach similar agreements. They probably hoped that they could use such cease-fires to stimulate fighting among guerrilla bands throughout Afghanistan, reversing the trend of cooperation between bands that has led to increased insurgent military effectiveness.

the Soviets may even have hoped that they could eventually entice Masood into collaborating with them and perhaps join a coalition government.



Our analysis indicates, however, that Soviet attempts to use the Panjsher cease-fire to weaken and divide the resistance movement have not been effective so far. We know of no cease-fires between the Soviets and other major insurgent groups.

the overall level of insurgent infighting had declined significantly in 1983 compared to a similar period in 1982. Although some fundamentalist groups have been critical of the Panjsher cease-fire, most insurgent groups and leaders have not criticized Masood's agreement with the Soviets.

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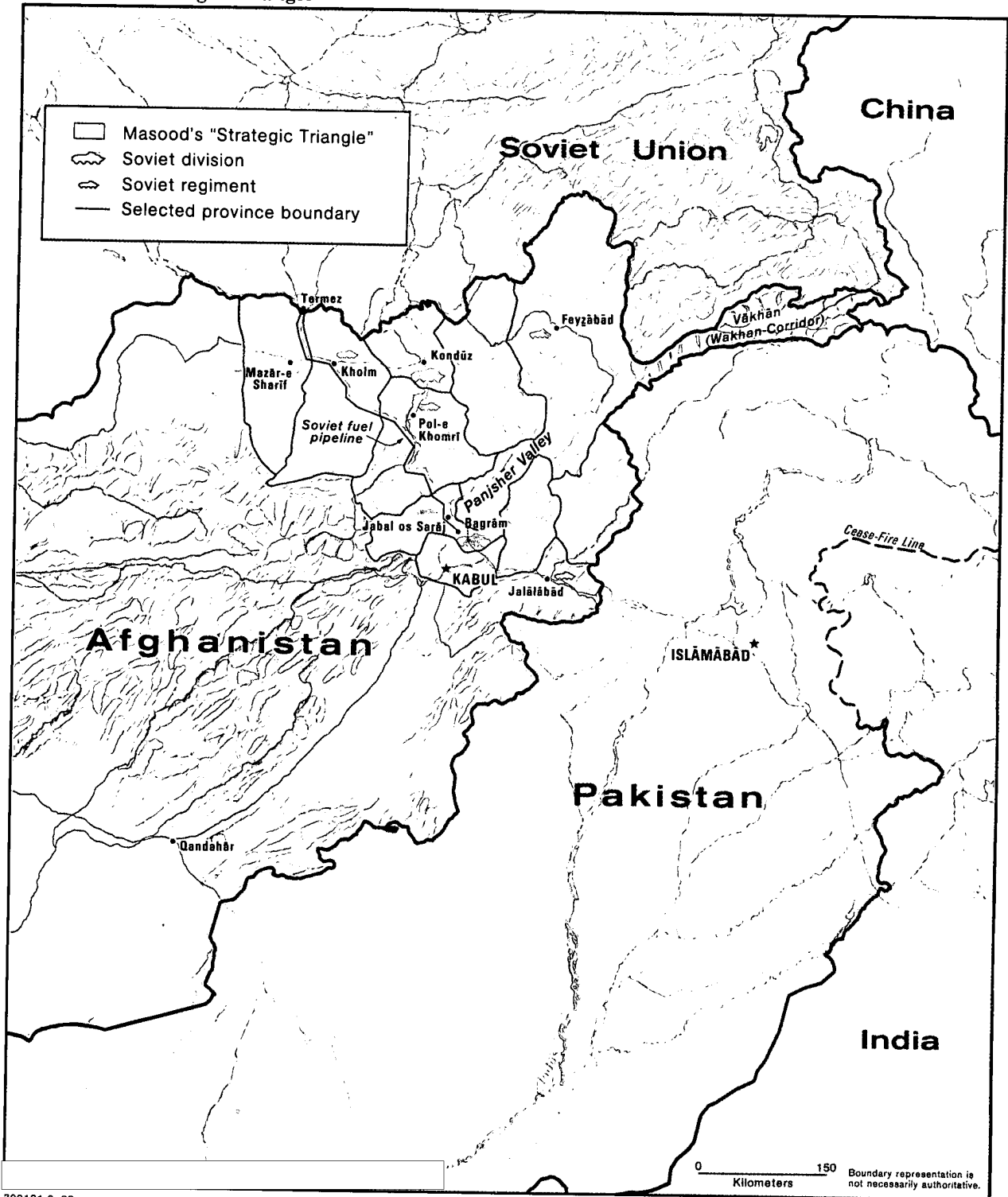
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Masood's "Strategic Triangle"



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We judge that the cease-fire has not yet resulted in a significant strengthening of the Soviet military position. [redacted] insurgent attacks in Kabul, including mortar attacks on the airport, Radio Afghanistan buildings, and Soviet military headquarters, increased during the summer of 1983. [redacted]

[redacted] an elite, Soviet-trained Afghan brigade withdrawn from the Panjsher suffered what the Afghan Ministry of Defense called the worst defeat of the war during fighting in May 1983 in Paktia Province. Another Afghan unit that was redeployed from the Panjsher apparently failed to help stem increasing insurgent activity in Herat Province [redacted]

Prospects and Implications

We believe that Masood will seek to extend the cease-fire as long as possible within the valley. [redacted]

[redacted] the cease-fire will allow the Panjsheris to continue to build up their forces, infiltrate more weapons and supplies, and take measures to protect civilians. Using the valley as a sanctuary allows Masood to continue attacks elsewhere and maintain efforts to expand his influence among other insurgents. [redacted]

We believe Masood currently lacks the ability as well as the desire to enforce a cease-fire in areas outside the Panjsher. [redacted]

he has not tried to extend the cease-fire outside the valley. Even if he attempted such an effort, other groups not party to the agreement would continue attacks, although the overall level of combat in the northeast probably would decline. In our view, even groups allied with Masood outside the Panjsher probably would eventually renew attacks on Soviet and Afghan targets. [redacted]

International press coverage has drawn world attention to the war in the Panjsher Valley, and a lengthy truce in the area could eventually reduce foreign support for the resistance movement. We believe the Soviets would cite the truce to foreign critics as evidence that the insurgents had accepted a Communist government. [redacted]

Defections and Bribes

In addition to their military efforts to destroy the resistance, the Soviets and the Afghan Government have made extensive efforts to buy the loyalty of tribes and encourage insurgent groups to defect to the government. [redacted]

[redacted]

Afghan officials reportedly have offered money and weapons in return for the insurgents' promise to stop attacks. [redacted]

[redacted]

Kabul has also sought to buy the loyalty of tribes and then use them to block insurgent supply routes or guard government facilities in remote areas. [redacted]

Efforts to bribe or induce insurgent defections, however, apparently have had only limited success so far. [redacted]

[redacted] many guerrilla bands have followed the traditional Afghan response to such efforts—accepting government positions, money, and arms only to rejoin the resistance later on. Government efforts to gain the loyalty of tribes have been undermined by the traditional rural Afghan distrust of any central authority and, since the revolution and invasion, hostility toward the anti-Islamic Communist regime kept in power by a foreign army. [redacted]

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Given these possible gains, we believe Moscow in the short term will tolerate limited attacks by Panjsher insurgents outside the valley. In our view, however, the Soviets will be impelled eventually to resume major operations against Masood's forces in response to the continuing buildup of his military capability and the likelihood that his forces will launch extensive attacks beyond the Panjsher. A massive Soviet and Afghan attack similar to the one in May 1982 would result in occupation of the main valley floor and blocking some supply routes, according to our analysis, but the insurgent organization in the Panjsher Valley would survive. [redacted]

insurgents train and arm the men in the bases that would be used to cut key Soviet supply lines—especially the Termez to Kabul road and the Soviet fuel pipeline—for long periods [redacted]

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The Panjsher insurgents will face some dangers and problems in attempting to consolidate control even in northeastern Afghanistan, in our judgment. Some major insurgent bands would become hostile toward the Panjsher group's expanding hegemony, resulting in more clashes between insurgent bands. The Soviets and Afghans could exploit any animosity by providing some groups with military aid to attack the Panjsher insurgents. With the increase in manpower and control over a wider area, Masood and his subordinates could become overconfident, cease guerrilla warfare, and attempt to confront major Soviet offensives in large-scale battles, resulting in heavy insurgent losses. [redacted]

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The guerrillas will be able to continue effective military operations, in our view, because of resupply efforts during the cease-fire. The Soviets are aware of the resupply but have been unable to significantly reduce infiltration into the valley [redacted]

[redacted]

Consolidation of military control under a single group in the northeast would also raise the risk that a future cease-fire agreement between one insurgent group and the Soviets could seriously weaken the resistance movement. With command over most insurgent forces, Masood would be in a strong position to enforce a truce that could halt almost all resistance military pressure against Soviet and Afghan Government forces in the most important area of the country. Such a truce could convince insurgent supporters inside and outside Afghanistan that all resistance was likely to end in a short time. [redacted]

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Because of these preparations, we believe the insurgents are not only likely to survive, but that there is a good possibility that Masood's organization will continue to expand and eventually become the predominant insurgent group in northeastern Afghanistan. We judge that the development of additional insurgent strongholds under Masood's command in the northeast would pose a significantly increased danger to Soviet and Afghan forces by threatening to cut supply lines and temporarily isolate Soviet and Afghan Government units. [redacted]

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[redacted] continuing ethnic, religious, and political differences among the hundreds of insurgent bands make it unlikely that any insurgent commander will emerge as a national leader in the foreseeable future. [redacted]

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Building and operating a large number of effective strongholds would depend greatly on increasing outside material support to the Panjsher insurgent organization. Increased supplies of ammunition, heavy machineguns, mortars, and mines would help the

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