

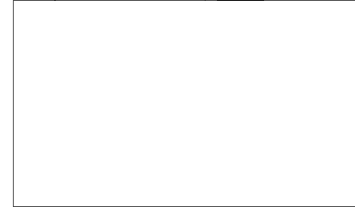


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Afghanistan Situation Report



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28 June 1983

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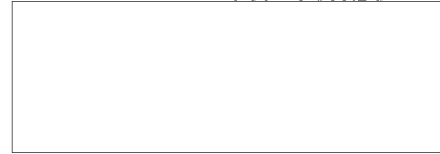
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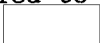


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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Some progress was made on secondary issues at the Geneva talks, but the parties failed to define the timing or manner of Soviet troop withdrawals. 

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A Soviet expert on Afghanistan has grown pessimistic over prospects for an early Soviet withdrawal. 

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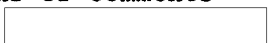
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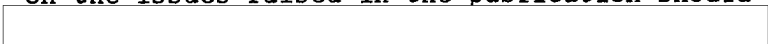
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There is no clear successor to President Babrak Karmal, and, were he to leave office, whoever replaced him would probably be no more effective than Babrak has been. 

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This document is prepared weekly by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues raised in the publication should be directed 

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Publication Note

Unless major developments warrant otherwise, we will publish only the cable version and not the hard-copy Afghanistan Situation Report next week. The next hard copy report will appear on 12 July.



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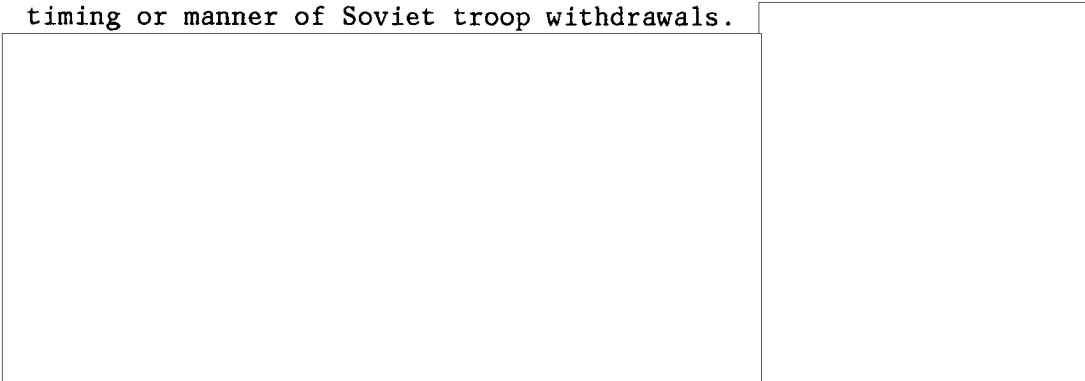
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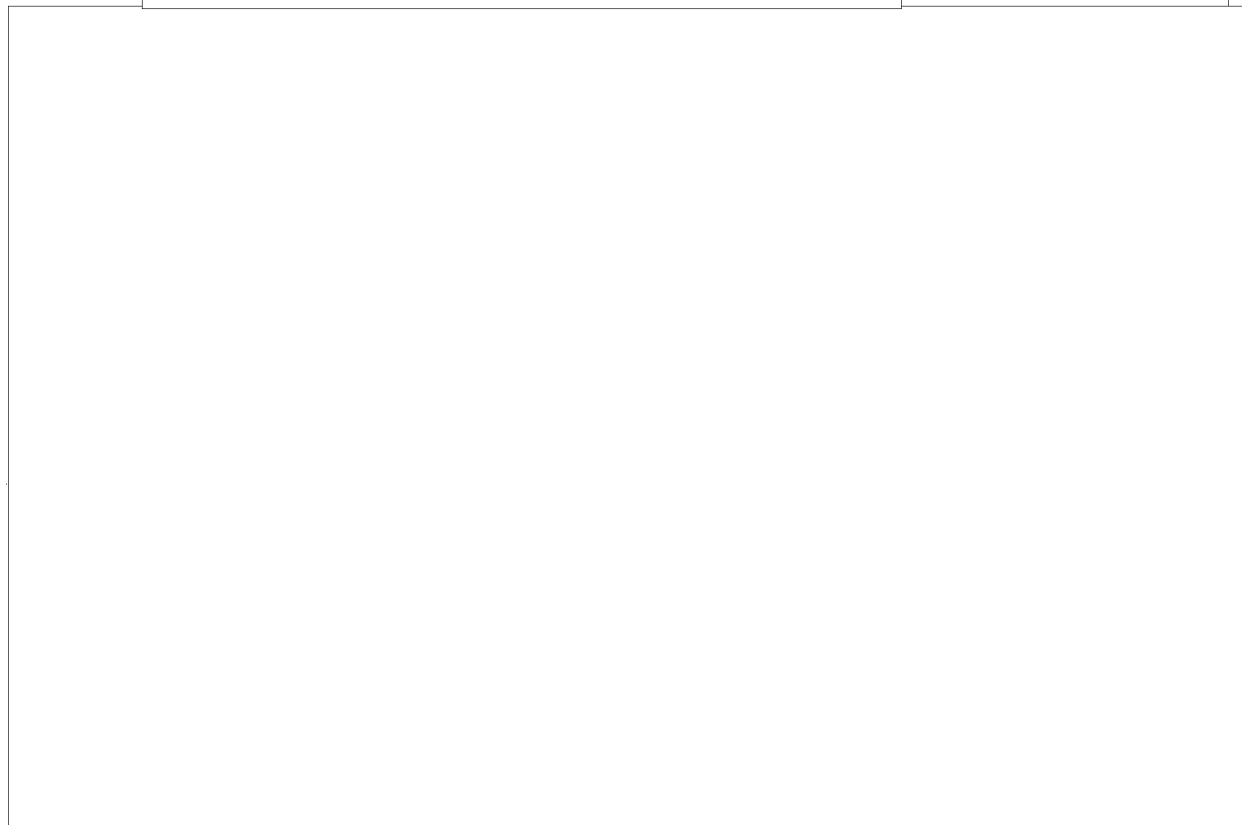


KEY ISSUE REMAINS UNSOLVED AT GENEVA TALKS 25X1

Although some progress was made on secondary issues at the UN-sponsored talks on Afghanistan, the parties failed to define the timing or manner of Soviet troop withdrawals.



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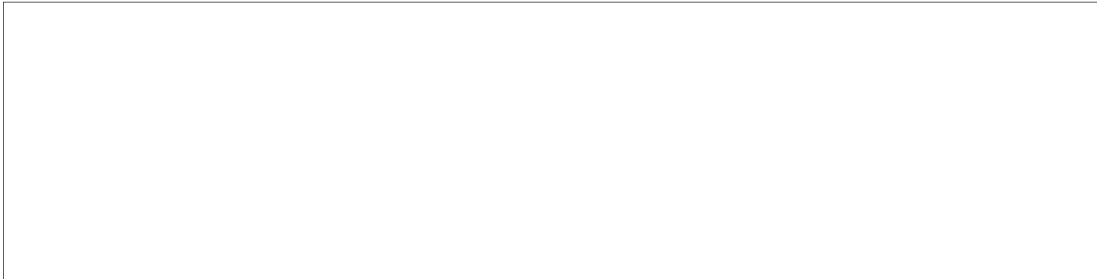


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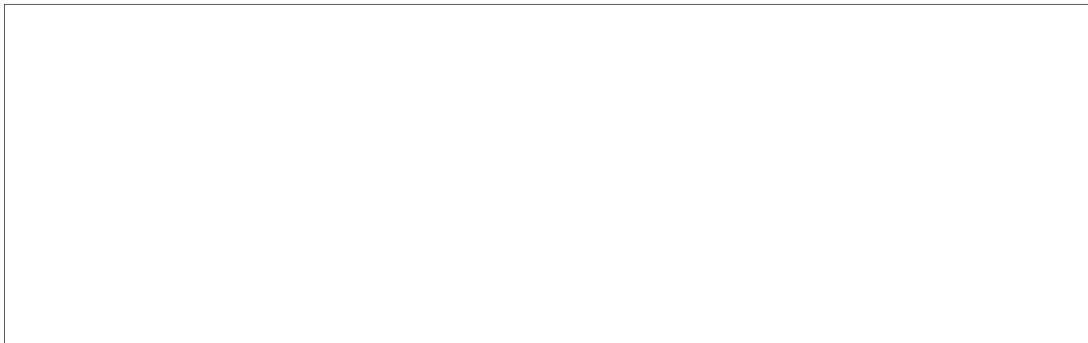
SOVIET ACADEMIC FORESEES LONG INVOLVEMENT

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Yuri Gankovsky, a Soviet academic expert on Afghanistan and Pakistan, has grown pessimistic since December over prospects for an early Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Gankovsky recently told US Embassy officers in Moscow that a Finland-like status would once have satisfied Moscow, but the best Afghanistan can expect now is a Mongolian solution. Gankovsky said the USSR would stay a long time to protect the Afghan regime--at least as long as it took to pacify Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s.

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IN BRIEF



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-- The Moscow radio commentator who reported on "Soviet invaders" several times last month in English-language broadcasts on Afghanistan has been interned in a psychiatric asylum in Tashkent, Moscow radio officials told Western reporters.

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PERSPECTIVE

BABRAK'S SUCCESSORS



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There is no clear successor to President Babrak Karmal, and, were he to leave office, whoever replaced him would probably be no more effective in reducing the level of insurgency, implementing government programs, or healing the deep rift in the ruling party. The reason for his departure would be of major importance in determining which of the many possible candidates would be his successor.

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Babrak's failure to deal effectively with the many problems the government and the party face has sparked periodic rumors that he will be replaced.

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we have tried to identify those individuals who, because of their influence in the government and party, their ties to the Soviets, and other qualifications, would be the most likely to replace Babrak. Afghan press coverage of party and government leaders gives no indication that any individual is being built up as a successor; other reporting indicates no one with a clear edge. The strengths and weaknesses of the possible candidates reported by these sources indicate that those who would be leading contenders under some scenarios would have little chance under others.

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The Soviets and the Afghan Communists would probably try to make the succession appear as orderly and legal as possible. Babrak holds two offices--Chairman of the quasi-legislative Revolutionary Council (by virtue of which he is chief of state) and General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Ostensibly the Revolutionary Council would elect a new chairman from among its members, and the party's Central Committee would choose a new general secretary. In fact, of course, the choice would be made by the Soviets or by Afghan Communists under close Soviet supervision.

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If Babrak Dies

If Babrak were to die or become physically unable to continue in office, the Soviets would probably try to minimize the effect on the



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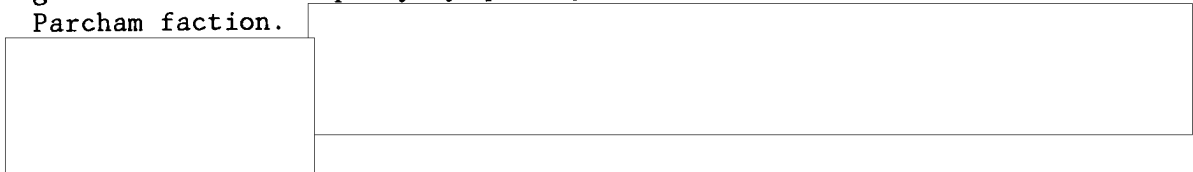
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government and the party by quickly installing a member of Babrak's Parcham faction.




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If the Afghans follow Soviet practice, Babrak would be replaced by someone in the party Secretariat. Noor Ahmed Noor is the second most powerful Parchamist in that group. Noor is also a Pushtun, the ethnic group that has always ruled Afghanistan, and some Afghans say he is much more competent than Babrak. 

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The PDPA is not a mature Communist party, however, and it is possible it would not follow Soviet practices, and other Parchamists might make a successful bid for Babrak's job. Among the possibilities are:

-- Prime Minister Keshtmand.  he, too, is among the more capable of the Afghan Communists. His major disadvantage is that he is a Hazara, the ethnic group with the lowest socioeconomic status in Afghanistan.

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-- Former Defense Minister Mohammad Rafi. He is the leading military figure among the Parchamists and could be selected in hopes of increasing military backing for the regime. The fact that the Soviets have already replaced him as defense minister, however, argues against his selection.

-- Mahmoud Baryalai. Babrak's brother is in the Secretariat and has been given some important domestic and foreign policy tasks, but he is only a candidate member of the Politburo, and his selection might be opposed by more senior party members.

-- Dr. Najibullah. The KHAD chief is clearly a rising star, but some party members might fear that once on top he would be no less ruthless than former President Amin in dealing with opponents in the party. Moreover, although he is a full Politburo member, he is not in the Secretariat. 

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If the Soviets Try To Find a More Popular Leader


If the Soviets removed Babrak to install a leader more likely to unite the Afghan Communists or win greater popular support, Defense Minister Abdul Qader and Politburo member Mohammed Saleh Ziray would be among the leading candidates. Qader, who is not tied closely to either faction tends to favor the Parchamists but might be acceptable to many Khalqis--especially in the military. Ziray, although an important Khalqi, has been able to work with the Parchamists. Ziray has not been closely associated publicly with unpopular government programs, and 

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 Qader is regarded by many Afghans as more of a nationalist and less subservient to the Soviets than are most party members. Several other figures might also be considered, such as Commerce Minister Mohammad Khan Jalalar, a non-Communist, and Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost, a technician who has had no role in unpopular domestic programs. 

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The Soviets are probably aware that, at best, only marginal improvement would result from installing one of these men. Most Afghans would regard them as Soviet puppets. They are less objectionable than Babrak only because they so far have not dealt with many of the issues that face a president. The odds are against anyone accomplishing much through the inefficient and often secretly disloyal Afghan civil service. Moreover, the rivalry in the People's Democratic Party is so bitter that no one is likely to be able to reconcile the Khalq and Parcham factions. 

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If the Communists Are Replaced by a Coalition

The Soviets could form a coalition government either as part of a peace settlement or to try to win over part of the resistance. Such a government would lack credibility if headed by a Communist, so Moscow would presumably try to install a non-Communist with whom it had been able to work in the past and who believed that Kabul must have good relations with Moscow. Rumors in Kabul and among Afghans abroad have included among the candidates former Prime Minister Yusuf, former King Zahir Shah, and his son-in-law Prince Abdul Wali. 

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Public and private statements by these men and others who would give the coalition credibility make it doubtful that they would agree to serve without major Soviet concessions, including troop withdrawal. Some less well known figures--such as former Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Sattar Shalizi, who has kept up contacts with both sides--might be more easily induced to serve, but most Afghans would probably consider them as having sold out to the Russians. 

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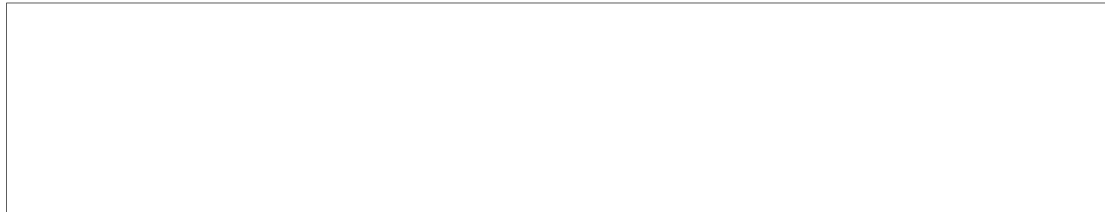
If the Soviets Side with Khalqis

The Khalq faction may still be the larger faction in the People's Democratic Party, and sources in the Afghan military report it is far stronger than the Parcham faction in the officer corps. Although the Soviets have favored the Parcham faction, they have tried to maintain good relations with both factions and have protected the Khalqis from a wholesale Parchamist purge. 

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If the Soviets were to decide to back the Khalqis, Interior Minister Gulabzoi, Communications Minister Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, Politburo member Ghulam Dastigir Panjshiri, and Ziray would be among the candidates to replace Babrak. Ziray would be chosen if the Soviets follow their own practice and select the most senior Khalqi party official. Ziray is in the party Secretariat and has demonstrated a willingness to work with the Parchamists. 

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