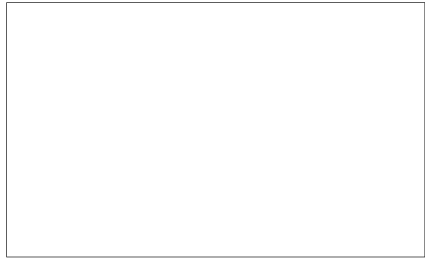




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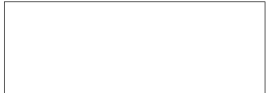
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# Afghanistan Situation Report



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7 February 1984

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### AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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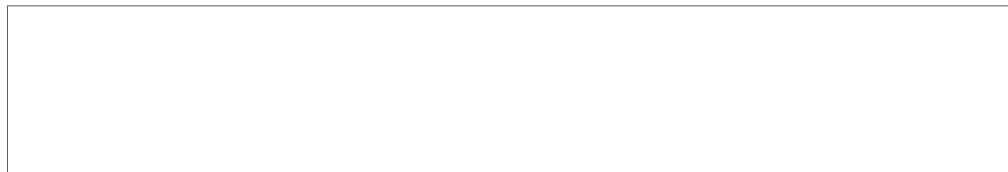
#### SOVIETS' TOUGH STAND ON PAKISTAN

The Soviets have adopted a more active policy toward Pakistan that may include increased military pressure along the border.



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##### THE MEDIA WAR

Soviet efforts to indoctrinate the Afghan populace through the media have had little success but may help to define Soviet political goals, limit antiregime sentiment, and influence Afghan youth.



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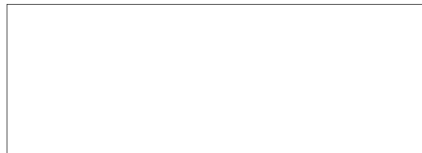
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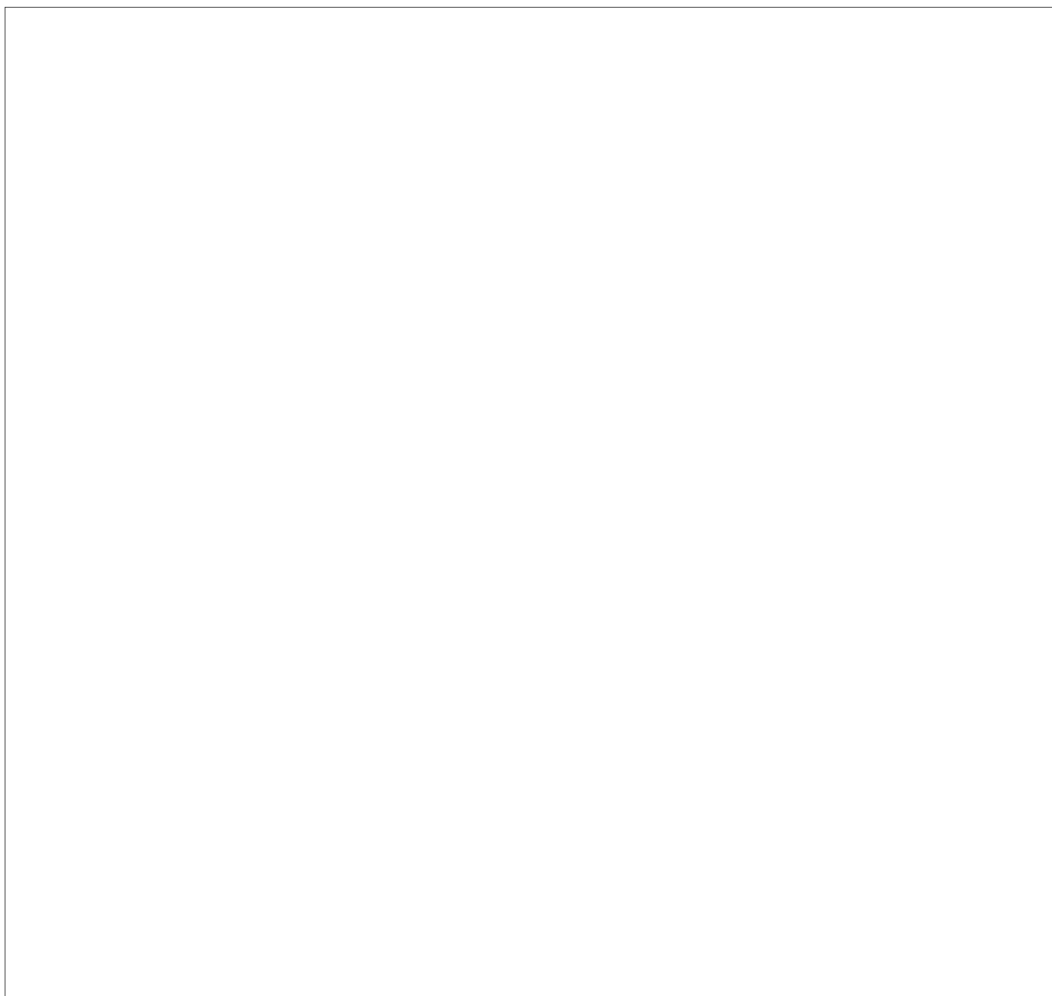
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**SOVIETS' TOUGH STAND ON PAKISTAN**



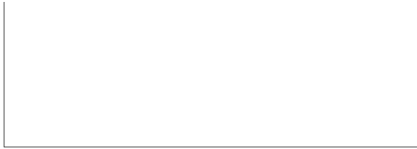
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**The US Embassy in Islamabad believes that the Soviets have adopted a more active policy toward Pakistan that may include increased military pressure along the border. The Embassy observes that the recent signing of a joint economic agreement and public statements about the desirability of improved bilateral ties have been accompanied by more belligerent rhetoric by Ambassador Smirnov. Last December, Smirnov warned in a press**

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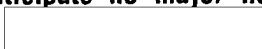
interview that the Soviets and Afghans would take joint action if needed to end Pakistan's support for the resistance. In a speech on 1 February the Soviet Ambassador accused Pakistan of establishing 80 "military bases" on its territory for arming and training the insurgents. The US Embassy posits that the 27 January air attack against a Pakistan border village that caused more than 100 casualties may presage more such attacks.



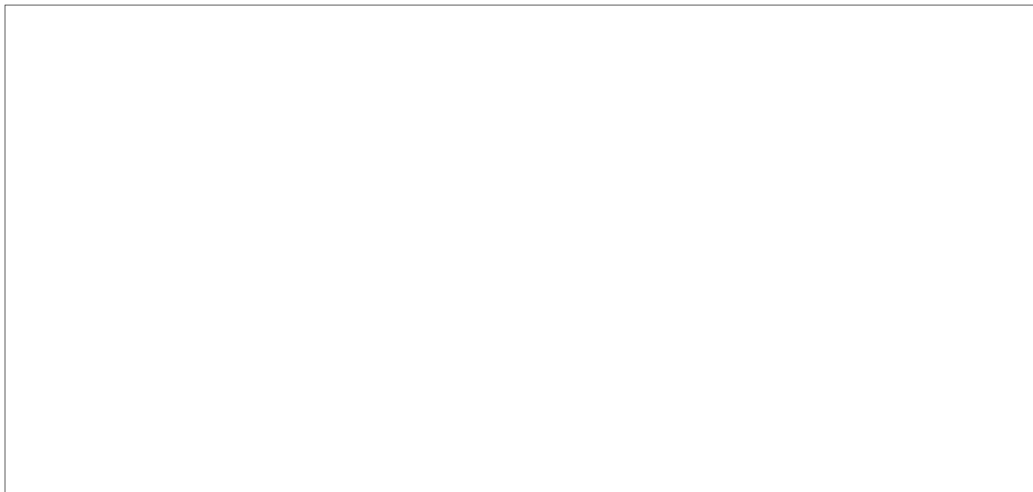
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**Comment:**

The Soviets hope that the economic and political benefits of improved bilateral relations will cause Pakistan to moderate its policy towards Afghanistan, but they also seem prepared to increase military pressure--including more cross-border attacks. The Soviets are increasingly frustrated by the lack of military progress in Afghanistan and may have concluded that tougher measures are needed to stem insurgent infiltration from Pakistan. Soviet press coverage along with Ambassador Smirnov's recent statements lay the basis for stepped up military pressure on Pakistan. Soviet analysts believe that Moscow recognizes past cross-border incidents may have served to strengthen international support for Zia and discredited Zia's domestic opponents. Soviet analysts anticipate no major near-term changes in the Soviet policy approach.



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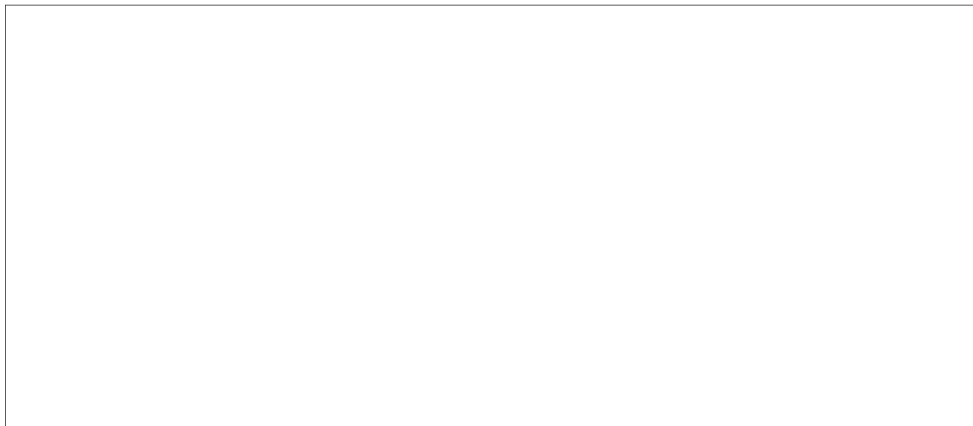
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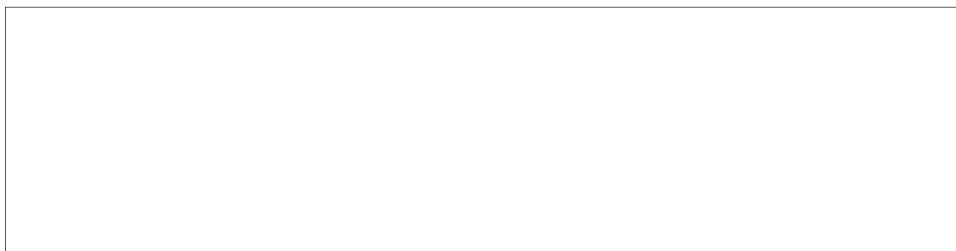


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**IN BRIEF**



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-- [redacted] increased Soviet and Afghan security measures, similar to those in Kabul, are in effect in Mazar-e Sharif, but the road from the city to Jeyretan port remains insecure. [redacted]

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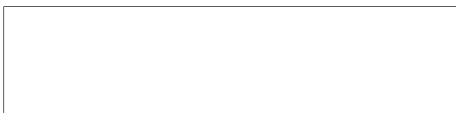
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-- [redacted] Nur Ahmad Nur, who holds the number two post in the Afghan Communist Party, was for reasons

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unknown placed aboard a flight to Moscow on 8 January, apparently against his will. 

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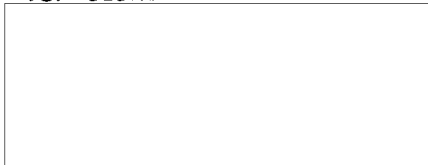
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**PERSPECTIVE**

**THE MEDIA WAR** 

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Soviet efforts to indoctrinate the Afghan populace through the media have had little success but may help to define Soviet political goals, limit antiregime sentiment, and ultimately influence Afghan youth. The ignorance and cynicism of Afghans, with minor assistance from Western and antiregime media, generally serve to counter the Soviet and regime media campaign. The media also define what Afghans can say openly without incurring risks and provide the party line for those who wish to advance in the regime. 



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**Communist Control, Goals**

In the four years they have been in Afghanistan, the Soviets have created a smaller version of their own propoganda apparatus for the Afghans.  15 Soviet advisers control all Kabul radio and television broadcasts and write scripts promoting socialism and criticizing US policy. The Soviets exert similar controls over Afghan publications, many of which did not exist prior to the Soviet intervention. 

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Soviet and regime media efforts are directed at anyone who will listen, though youth are the primary target, according to US Embassy reports. In 1980,  Soviet advisers set propoganda goals that apparently are still being followed. The primary tasks assigned Afghan media personnel were to discredit Western reportage and to publicize Soviet-Afghan friendship, Afghan party unity, and the heroism of the Afghan Army. Soviet aid, the protective role of the Soviet military's "limited contingent," and Moscow's benevolence toward Islam also were to be stressed. 

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**Kabul Broadcasts**

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Kabul broadcasts reach large numbers of urban residents,  yet have little effect on popular opinion. Some broadcasts are aimed particularly at youth, according to US Embassy reports. A popular daily television show features Kabul schoolchildren

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reciting poems and stories with revolutionary themes, after which nonpolitical animated cartoons are shown. Most of the radio and television programs, however, purvey political, social, and economic themes that even the Kabul audience considers irrelevant. US Embassy sources indicate that Afghans find most international news meaningless. One marcher in the 25 December 1983 demonstration protesting US intervention in Grenada confessed to having no idea where or what Grenada was. On issues of public interest, such as military service and the resistance, most listeners reject the regime line out of hand.



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In the countryside, regime broadcasts are widely received but ineffective. most villagers in Faryab and Jowzjan Provinces listen to transistor radios nightly--mostly to Kabul radio for music and entertainment.



Kabul radio is the most popular among rural Afghans only because it provides Afghan music and continual service. Regime broadcasts of propaganda elicit amusement or derision,



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**Kabul Press**

The Afghan press has a very small audience and a very limited influence in Afghan society. Because the literacy rate is below 10 percent, the press probably reaches only a small portion of the urban populace. US Embassy reports indicate the vast majority of literate Afghans ignore the press. In seven months of walking about the capital, an Embassy officer has not seen a single Afghan buying, reading, or even carrying a newspaper. Kabul apparently has only two newspaper kiosks, both with old newspapers for sale, and the newspaper display stands that are so prevalent in the USSR apparently are nonexistent in Kabul. Embassy sources believe Kabul newspapers are used predominantly for wrapping, toilet paper being widely available.



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Kabul newspapers are essentially compilations of regime slogans, according to the US Embassy. Articles critical of economic mismanagement or the faults of lower-ranking officials, common in the Soviet press, are rare in Afghanistan. Nearly all problems are attributed to imperialists and counterrevolutionary elements.



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The book trade has little effect in Afghan society, apart from its role in supplying schools. US Embassy sources indicate that the trade in Kabul is almost entirely a Soviet undertaking. The city has only one bookmobile and two sales outlets for new books. The outlets specialize in children's books, with well printed, colorful volumes such as Tales About Lenin selling at give-away prices. Soviet-published books dominate the juvenile market and are also prevalent in Kabul's used book outlets. The high proportion of new Soviet books appearing in the used-book markets suggests the regime may be supplying them directly to dealers in an attempt to increase distribution.

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**Soviet Media**

In our view, the cynicism and illiteracy of the Afghans render Soviet media as ineffective as Afghan media in shaping public opinion. Moscow radiobroadcasts in Dari, Tajik, and Pashtu, along with Soviet television, are clearly monitorable in Kabul. Soviet media regularly stress that the Afghan revolution is irreversible and portray the Afghan people as busily engaged--with Soviet assistance--in consolidating the gains of the April 1978 revolution under the leadership of the Afghan party. We believe listeners ignore Soviet propaganda as they do the regime's.

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[redacted] a steady flow of Soviet propaganda comes from translating centers like Tashkent to remind Afghans of their ethnic and cultural ties to the USSR. [redacted] quotes the Tashkent press as stressing the need "to tell our Uzbek brothers in Afghanistan about the great progress we have made under Communism in Central Asia." Another theme centers on the need "to extend help to our backward brothers in Afghanistan to enrich and develop their primitive literature and culture." Most of the propoganda, [redacted] is aimed at Afghan youth. [redacted]

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**Antiregime and Western Media**

Antiregime broadcasts, in our view, may occasionally boost insurgent morale. Three clandestine radios have recently begun to broadcast criticism of Soviet and Afghan regime policy. Two of the stations, The Voice of Afghanistan and The Voice of the Afghan Mujahedin, reportedly broadcast from insurgent strongholds within Afghanistan. The third, The Revolutionary Islamic Voice of Afghanistan, apparently broadcasts from

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Mashhad, Iran. Its programs stridently attack the Afghan regime as well as "Zionism" and the US presence in Lebanon. Cassette recordings, however, are probably more effective than the clandestine broadcasts. [redacted] [redacted] tapes distributed by Panjsher insurgents are popular, though scarce. The tapes present music, Afghan poetry, and commentaries on fighting, and they are designed to encourage other insurgents. Cassettes from personally identified sources are akin to Afghans' traditionally accepted medium for news: rumors passed orally. [redacted]

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Resistance publications, like the Communist press, are limited by widespread illiteracy and do little more than provide cheerleading. Insurgent organizations in Peshawar maintain several publications, [redacted] some of which may be smuggled into Afghanistan. In our view, most of them exaggerate claims of insurgent successes. [redacted]

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Insurgent printed media in Afghanistan are probably almost nonexistent. [redacted] one group of insurgents claims that it publishes a newspaper in Baghlan Province featuring general news, insurgent operations, and criticism of regime policies. The monthly run reportedly consists of 700 to 1,000 copies, using newsprint stolen by government employees collaborating with the insurgents. Given the low rate of literacy, however, along with the danger to anyone observed by the regime in possession of such a newspaper, we doubt that such publications are very extensive or very effective. [redacted]

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Western broadcasts to Afghanistan may occasionally boost insurgent morale in some areas. [redacted] insurgents in Faryab Province are eager to get Western military aid but seem unimpressed by expressions of support for the resistance on Western broadcasts. The insurgents view the radio more as a source of entertainment than of information. [redacted]

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[redacted] statements of support for the resistance by US officials appreciably boost morale among insurgents in Peshawar and among the Kabul populace. [redacted]

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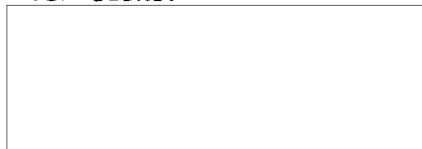
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The effect of Western broadcasts is limited by reception problems, lack of interest, and ignorance. US Embassy reports indicate that VOA and Radio Liberty are often jammed, fully or partially. Although Radio



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Pakistan, VOA, and BBC have local audiences, listeners generally find the programs too short and tune to the continual service of Kabul radio,  Moreover, Afghans have no interest in Western radios' extensive reporting on international sports. Although they enjoy news on anti-Communist groups and personalities, such news is poorly understood. The East-West conflict is seen in the context of a struggle between Soviet atheism and religious faith. Polish opposition leader Lech Walesa and Solidarity are seen as "Catholic mujahedin." The Faryab insurgents--probably typical--are poorly informed on the war in other parts of the country. By late 1983, none had heard of the truce concluded between Panjsher insurgent commander Masood and the Soviets early in the year. 

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**Outlook**

Armed with the sword of cynicism and the shield of ignorance and illiteracy, most Afghans are amply protected against Communist propaganda. Afghans in the near term probably will continue to consider Communist propaganda ridiculous or irrelevant. Youth may absorb the persistent message but may well turn skeptical as they grow older. The success of the Communist media campaign will lie in its capacity to intimidate the populace by heightening the impression of regime pervasiveness and control. The media will also define what Afghans can say openly without incurring risks and provide the party line for those who wish to advance in the regime. 

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