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Afghanistan Situation Report



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8 May 1984

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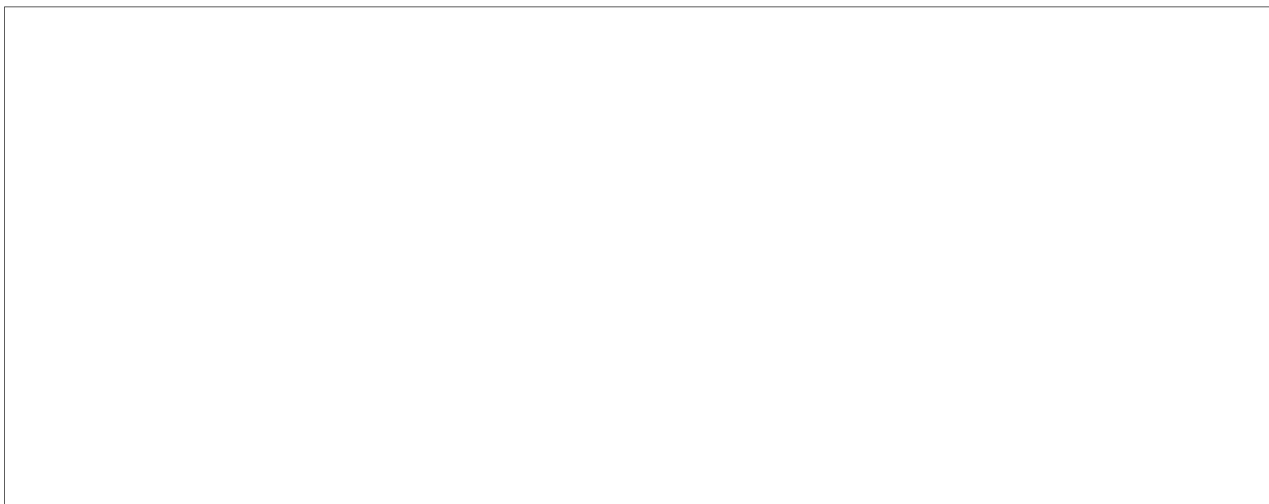
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

CONTENTS



25X1

SOVIET POL PIPELINE

3

The pipeline to Bagram improves the Soviets' capability to replenish POL reserves in Afghanistan, but is vulnerable to attack. 

25X1


IN BRIEF

4

PERSPECTIVE

PAKISTAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

6

The US Embassy in Islamabad concludes there is little likelihood for change in Pakistan's policy toward the USSR. 

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25X1

**8 May 1984
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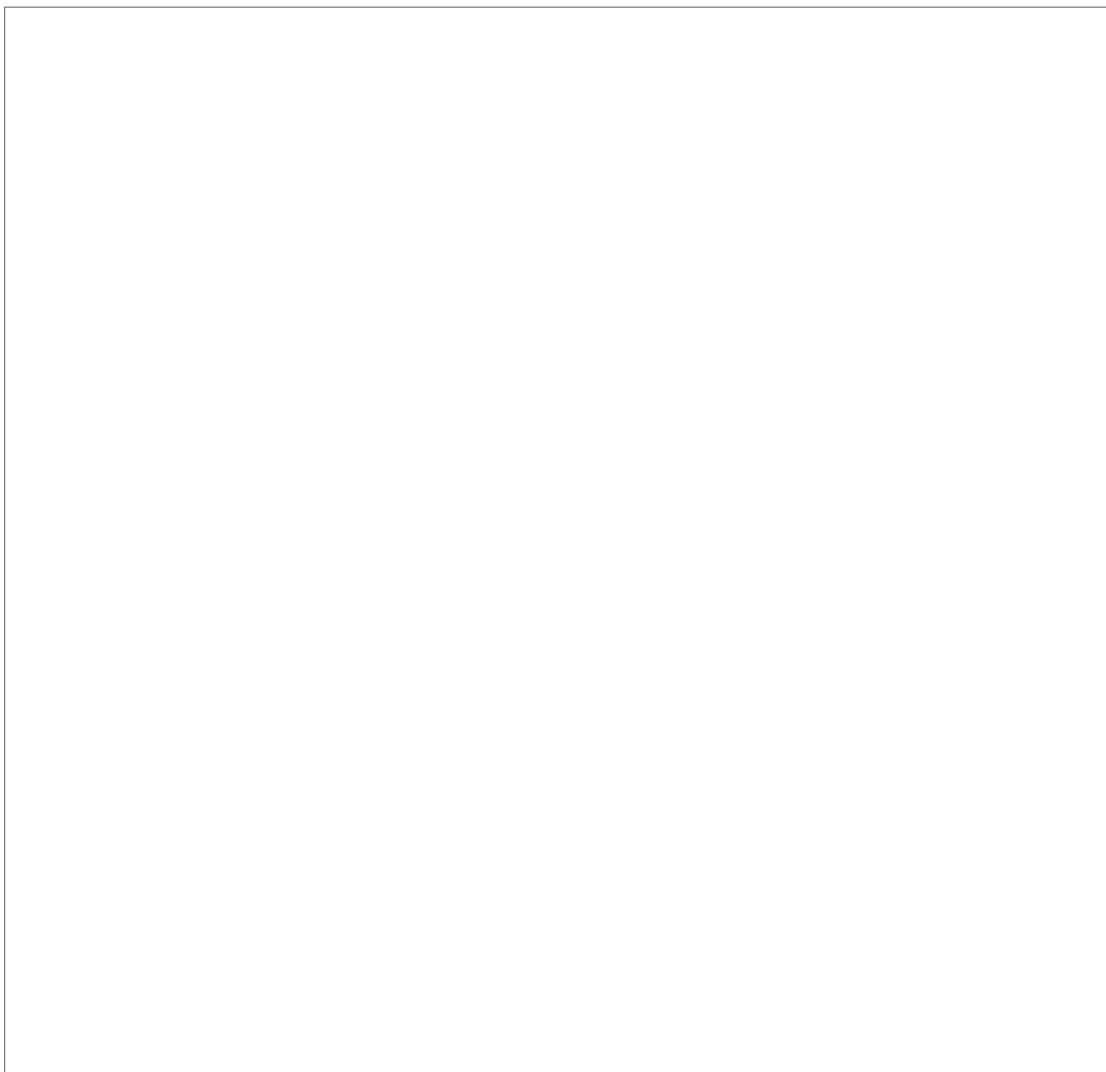
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TOP SECRET



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SOVIET POL PIPELINE 

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The POL pipeline from the Soviet border near Termez to Bagram Airbase was completed in August 1982 and extends 375 kilometers across often rugged terrain. The pipeline runs above the ground and parallels the main highway from the Soviet border to Kabul. There are at least 48 pumping stations and seven POL transfer


**8 May 1984
NESA M 84-10184CX
SOVA M 84-10068CX**

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stations along the pipeline. Many of the pumping stations are located near company- or battalion-sized security posts, with the rest protected by smaller units. 

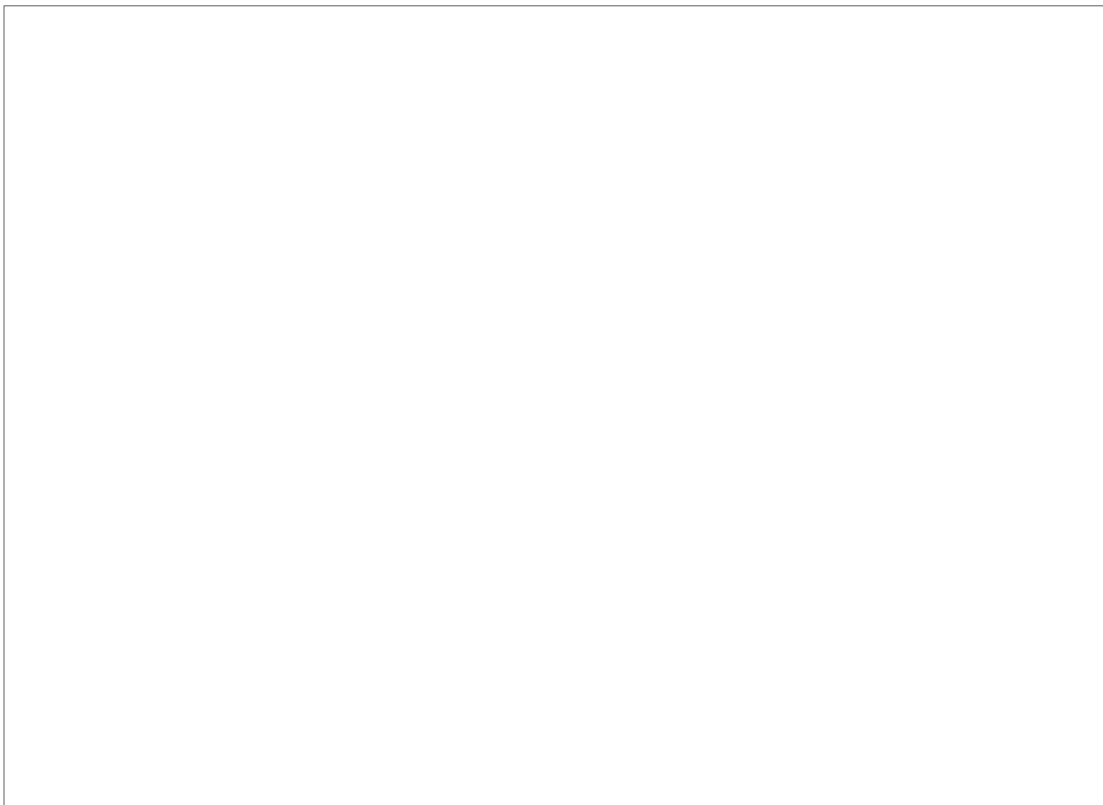
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Comment:

The pipeline improves the Soviets' capacity to replenish POL reserves in Afghanistan, but they are still dependent on tanker trucks for more than half of their fuel requirements. The pipeline has an estimated capacity for handling 4.8 million liters of fuel per day, but its actual average daily flow probably is significantly less because of weather and terrain problems and frequent insurgent attacks. The insurgents also tap into the pipeline to obtain fuel for themselves. The pipeline is difficult to protect because of the terrain. 

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IN BRIEF



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8 May 1984
NESA M 84-10184CX
SOVA M 84-10068CX





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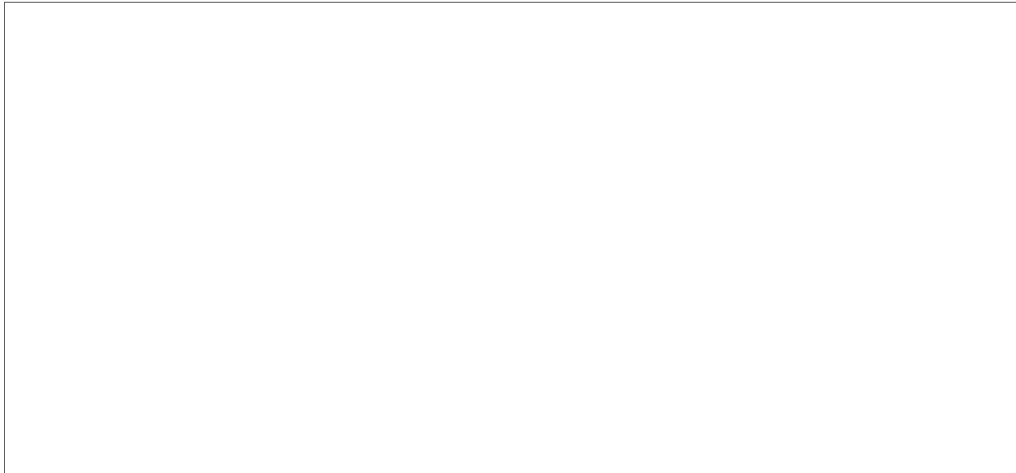


--  the Soviets are conducting sweep operations southwest of Qandahar. Major elements of the airborne battalion at Bost were gone and five additional MI-24 helicopter gunships had arrived at the airfield, presumably to provide air support. 

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**8 May 1984
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25X1



PERSPECTIVE

PAKISTAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

(The following is a condensed version of an assessment by the US Embassy in Islamabad.)

President Zia and his closest advisors perceive the Soviet Union and potential Indo-Soviet collusion as major threats to Pakistan's security. In confronting the challenges posed by the Soviet Union, Islamabad has sought to pursue a balanced policy. The Soviets have not yet made an all out effort to persuade Islamabad to change its policies, but as long as the US-Pakistan relationship remains close, we see little likelihood of a significant shift in Islamabad's attitudes toward the Soviet Union.

Pakistan's Soviet Policies

President Zia, the Pakistani military and civil service, and the landowning elite see the Soviets as a direct and long term threat to Pakistan's sovereignty, integrity, social structure and islamic orientation. They realize that, with a significant troop presence in Afghanistan, the Soviets can launch a direct attack on Pakistan and believe that in the long term, consolidation of the Soviet position in Afghanistan will lead to increased Soviet efforts to bring Pakistan into the Soviet sphere of influence.

Pakistanis in the elite also see the Soviets as offering significant indirect challenges to Pakistan's security. They fear, for example, that a government sympathetic to the objectives of the USSR may come to dominate Iran. Zia and his associates are concerned that Soviet machinations in the Persian Gulf and support for radical Islamic states could weaken and even destroy Saudi Arabia and other moderate states to whom Pakistan looks for political and financial support.

India remains the central foreign policy and security issue for Pakistan. There is a pervasive fear that India's desire for dominance in South Asia represents a threat to Pakistan's ability to pursue independent foreign, economic and security policies, and that Indian objectives have at a minimum tacit Soviet support. In assessing Pakistan's security environment, the Zia regime is fully aware that it cannot cope with a direct military threat from the Soviet Union, and has

8 May 1984
NESA M 84-10184CX
SOVA M 84-10068CX

sought closer relations with the US, in addition to its already close ties to China.

While Islamabad welcomes a renewed relationship with the US, many officers see the US as having been an unreliable ally in the past. They realize that the US and Pakistan do not share the same perceptions of the threat posed by India and are convinced that the US would not come to Pakistan's assistance even if India attacked Pakistan at Soviet behest.

Pakistani-Soviet Relations Since 1979

These considerations underlie Islamabad's policy toward the Soviet Union, which has emphasized the use of international pressure to persuade the Soviets to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan. Islamabad has also contributed directly to the Afghan cause, by welcoming over two million Afghan refugees, by allowing the resistance parties to establish themselves on Pakistani soil, and by other measures.

At the same time, the Zia regime has endeavored to avoid unnecessary confrontation with the Soviets and has sought to maintain an ongoing dialogue with Moscow on Afghanistan which would permit the return of the refugees. These talks to some extent reduce the Soviet pressure on Pakistan and to some degree deny the Soviets grounds for charging that Pakistan is pursuing "imperialist aggression" against the Karmal government in Kabul.

The Soviets so far have not made an all out effort to persuade Pakistan to alter its policies, although they have repeatedly made threats. Soviet Ambassador Smirnov offered the most direct challenge when, in an interview in December 1983, he stated that Afghanistan and the Soviet Union might take joint action to stop intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs from Pakistan. Although there have been over 400 violations of Pakistan's airspace and territory since December 1979 most have not been attacks. Several air strikes on border villages have resulted, however, in a number of injuries and deaths and caused apprehension about Soviet intentions. Chernenko's refusal to meet privately with Zia at the Andropov funeral could presage a new phase of increased pressure.

8 May 1984
NESA M 84-10184CX
SOVA M 84-10068CX



If seemingly reluctant to wield the stick as heavily as they might, the Soviets have chosen not to put forward much in the way of desirable concessions. They have given Islamabad little hope for a settlement on Afghanistan in keeping with UN General Assembly resolutions. Although expressing a readiness in principle to withdraw their forces, the Soviet position is encumbered with conditions unacceptable to Pakistan. The Soviets, moreover, have backed away from concessions which the UN's Special Representative alleges they made at Geneva. The Soviets have also reacted rather coolly to Pakistani suggestions for better relations. The USSR continues to emphasize its relationship with India and Defense Minister Ustinov's recent visit seems to have reaffirmed this commitment.

Prospects

A significant shift in Pakistan's policies toward the Soviet Union does not seem probable under present circumstances and an increase in Soviet efforts to pressure the Martial Law Administration in our view would backfire. In all likelihood, attacks such as the January 27 bombing of a border village, in which over forty Afghans and Pakistanis died, heighten fears of the Soviets and increase demands for closer relations with the US.

The Soviets in any case may be pursuing a different strategy--awaiting a change of government in Islamabad. In the last several years, efforts to subvert the Zia regime seem to have increased.

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The Soviets might hope to enjoy somewhat greater influence in dealing with a civilian Pakistani government. Various Pakistani elites--including many members of the political opposition, the media and even some Foreign Ministry officials--believe that Islamabad should seek an overall accommodation with the Soviet Union. They argue that the Soviets, as a superpower on Pakistan's doorstep, not only cannot be ignored but should be accommodated. They assert that the US is too far away and unreliable, while China and Saudi Arabia are too weak.

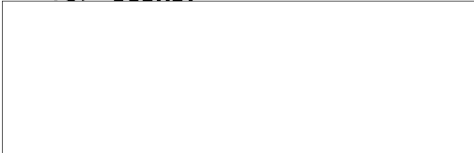
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At the very least, increased Soviet pressures and incentives could complicate Pakistani decisionmaking on Afghanistan. The Soviet factor would also weigh more heavily if US support for Pakistan falters. Pakistan, well aware that it cannot long alone oppose Soviet policies in South and Southwest Asia, has to have external support if it is to achieve its foreign policy objectives.



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