

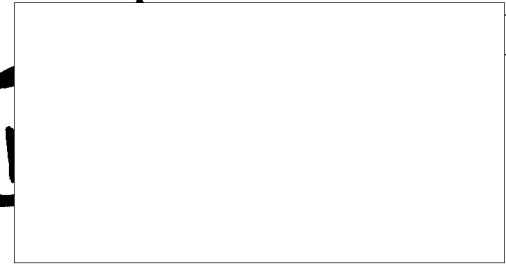


Directorate of Intelligence

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Afghanistan Situation Report



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7 August 1984

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

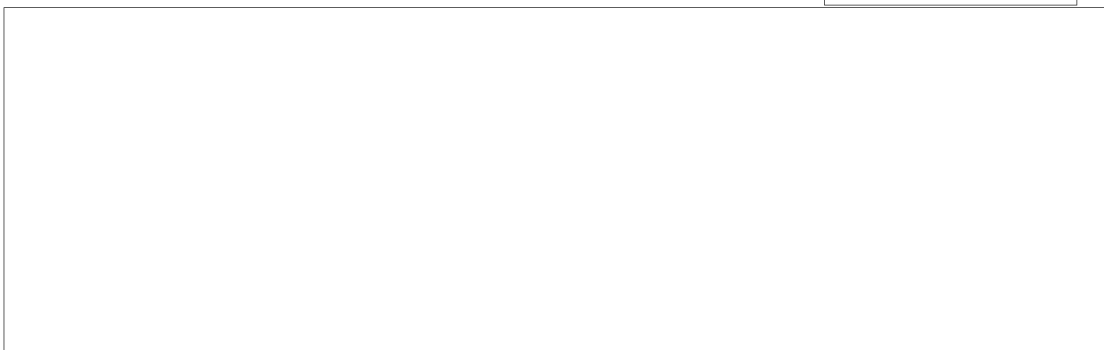
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Soviet retaliatory strikes are causing some insurgents and villagers to withdraw support from the resistance. 

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We believe overall food supplies during the past year have been adequate to meet the needs of the civilian population and the insurgents. However, disruptions in the distribution system, poor harvests in a few areas, and higher prices probably have caused periodic and localized shortages of food. 

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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 to 



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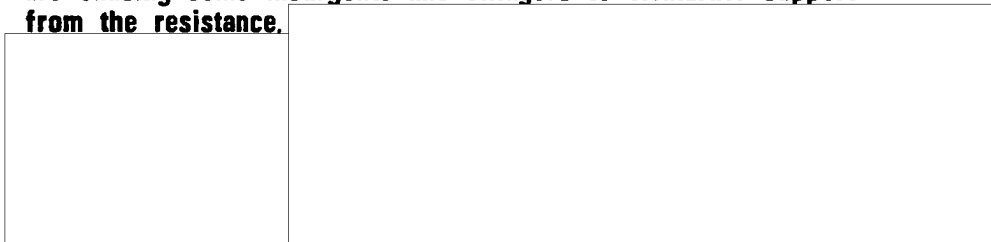
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EVIDENCE OF WAR WEARINESS 

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Soviet retaliatory strikes  south of Kabul are causing some insurgents and villagers to withdraw support from the resistance.

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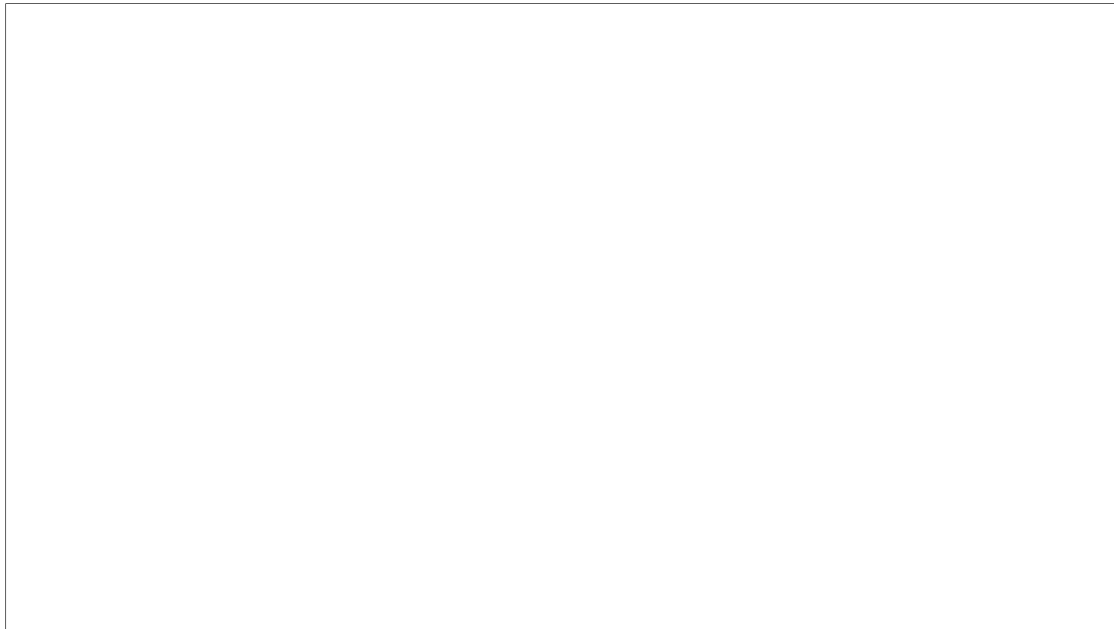
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Comment:

Insurgent and villager war weariness has usually been temporary. It probably will abate after a respite from the strikes. Some insurgent commanders may reduce the level of their operations because villagers object; others will not, believing the civilians must bear their share of the costs of the war.



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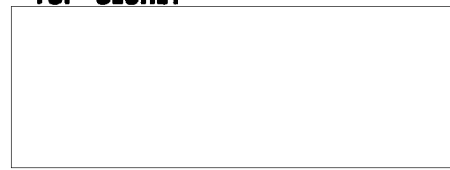
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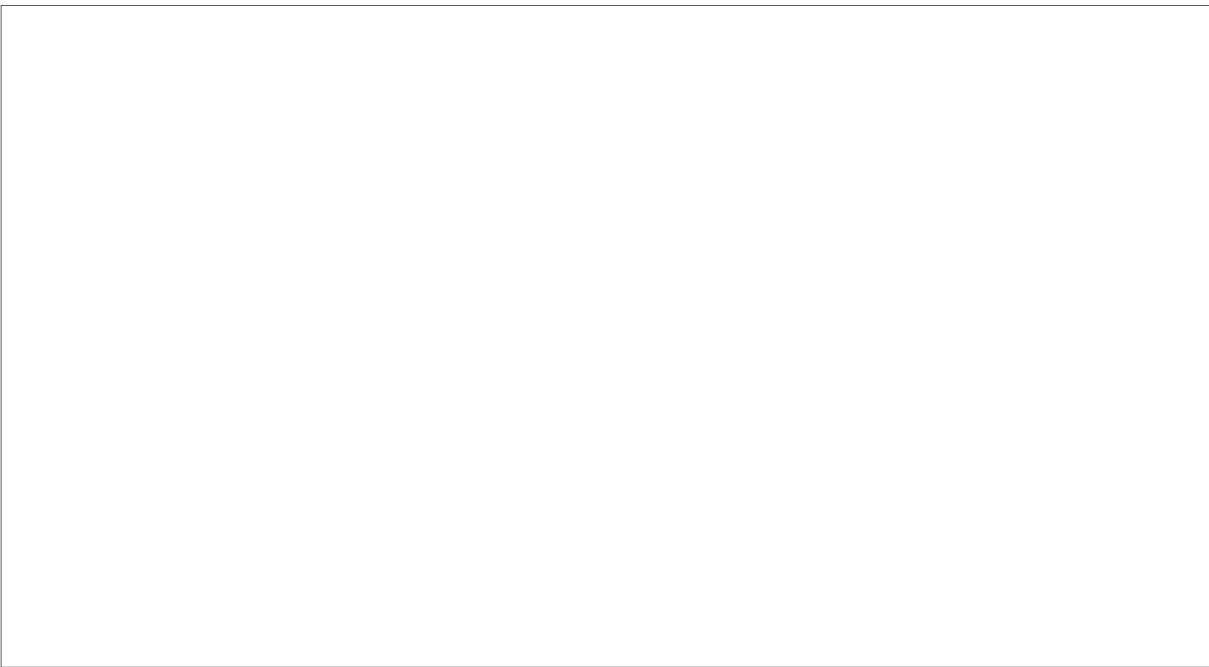
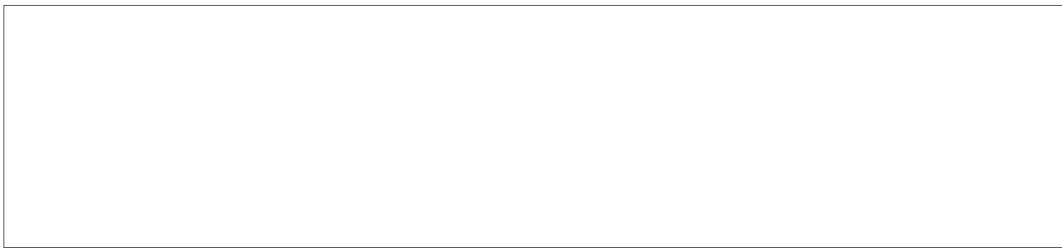


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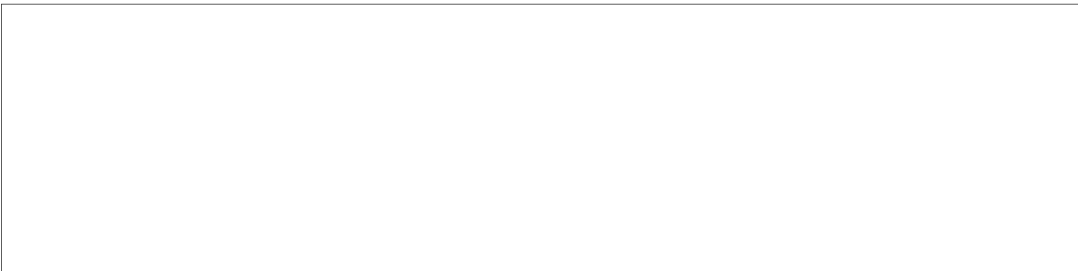
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IN BRIEF

--On 3 August, President Babrak returned to Kabul from a month-long medical check in the USSR, according to Kabul radio. Prime Minister Keshtmand left for the USSR on 6 August.

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-- The Pakistanis have asked insurgent groups to move their headquarters outside the city because of recent bombings in Peshawar. The Pakistanis have made similar requests previously, but never have pressed for compliance. 

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-- On 2 August, insurgents released to the Japanese Embassy in Islamabad a Japanese diplomat captured on 22 June. Reporting about how he was captured and why the insurgents held him so long has been contradictory. 

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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: TENUOUS FOOD SITUATION



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Overall food supplies during the past year probably have been comparable to levels before the Soviet invasion and adequate to meet the current needs of the civilian population and the insurgents. Soviet operations, rather than policy, have had an adverse effect on agriculture but have not significantly reduced overall levels of food supplies. Disruptions in the distribution system, poor harvests in a few areas, and higher prices probably have caused periodic and localized shortages of food.



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Afghanistan's subsistence agriculture and food distribution system are so fragile that a dramatic change could come quickly. The high level of operations this spring and summer or an effort by the Soviets to deny food to the insurgents and their rural supporters could lead to additional shortages as early as this winter, and unfavorable weather could lead to widespread shortages by early next year.



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Agriculture Prior to the Invasion

Agriculture is the most important sector of the Afghan economy. In the mid to late 1970s agriculture contributed more than 60 percent of national income and employed about 80 percent of the population.



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Afghanistan's cultivated land is scattered throughout the country, mostly in valleys along rivers and other sources of water because rainfall is uncertain and inconsistent. Only about 8 million of Afghanistan's total area of 63 million hectares are arable. About 1.4 million hectares of irrigated land, approximately one half of the irrigated land that is planted, has adequate water throughout the year to make double cropping possible.



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Foodgrains occupy 90 percent of cultivated land.

-- Wheat, the primary grain crop and main food staple, is grown on about 60 percent of the total cultivated area--2.4 million hectares. It is grown throughout the country and on half the irrigated land. In 1976 wheat production reached 2.9 million tons and no imports were required.

-- Corn, used for human consumption and animal fodder, is the second most important cereal. It is planted on about 500,000 hectares and average production has been about 800,000 tons.





-- Rice and barley occupy another 500,000 hectares with total yields up to 850,000 tons.

-- Truck gardens, orchards, and vineyards utilize less than 10 percent of the arable land, but yield an important harvest of vegetables, fruits, and nuts. 

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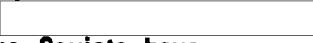
Agricultural Problems and Resiliency

Since the Soviet invasion, the agricultural sector has faced serious problems.  large numbers of landowners have fled the country, taking valuable machinery as well as financial assets. The flight of more than 3 million people to neighboring Pakistan and Iran and migration to the cities almost certainly have reduced the cultivated areas. The press  have reported that military operations have resulted in burned crops, damaged grain fields, and destroyed irrigation systems. In some cases the Soviets have deliberately destroyed crops in retaliation for insurgent operations.  land along major transportation routes and around military bases has been taken out of production either because the Soviets want a security zone or the farmers fear for their lives. 



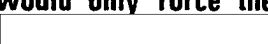
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The Soviets, however, generally allow the agricultural sector to operate as it did before the invasion. Government-produced fertilizer, for example, is sold freely throughout Afghanistan, 

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 the Soviets have  said that cutting production of food in rural insurgent-held areas would only force them to increase shipments of food to urban areas. 

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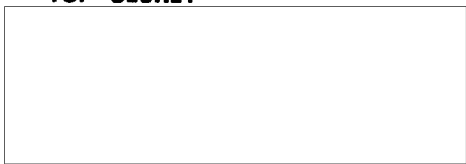
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The primitive nature of Afghanistan's agricultural sector has softened the impact of the Soviet occupation. Most farmers operate at the subsistence level and are not heavily dependent on outside sources of modern equipment, fuel, chemical fertilizers, improved seeds, or pesticides. In addition, [redacted] the destruction associated with military operations is minor compared to total land under cultivation. [redacted]

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The Weather

A review of agricultural production for the past 15 years shows that Afghanistan's crop production is dramatically affected when precipitation is inadequate. Even in the better farming areas, rainfall averages less than 16 inches a year. Winter snows and spring rains provide almost all the water for irrigation; little, if any, rain occurs during the summer months. Droughts occur periodically, most recently in 1970-71 and 1977. In 1971 the wheat harvest was 20 percent below normal. [redacted]

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Domestic Food Production

[redacted] there were good food crops in most regions during 1983. The major exception was in the Khowst Valley where heavy fighting has resulted in abandoned fields and unharvested crops. We estimate the 1983 wheat crop, an indicator of total food production, was between 2.5 and 3.0 million metric tons. [redacted]

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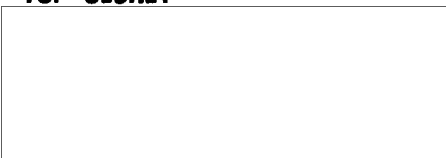
Production of industrial crops, even by government records, has dropped dramatically. Harvests of cotton, the most important commercial crop, and sugar beets have declined by two-thirds since the mid-1970s. We believe some of the resources used in producing these crops--land and labor--may now be used in producing basic foodstuffs. [redacted]

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Imports Fill Gap

We estimate that slightly more than 300,000 tons of wheat were brought into Afghanistan from the USSR and Pakistan in 1983 to cover the gap between supply and demand. According to Soviet and Afghan press reporting, [redacted] wheat imports from the Soviet Union in 1983 were an estimated 160,000 to 180,000 tons. Most of the Soviet grain is sent to Kabul where the population has increased to nearly 2 million from 750,000 before the invasion. [redacted] the movement of people from rural to urban areas, disruption of transportation, and the government's inability to collect grain and other agricultural products in insurgent-controlled areas left urban areas with serious shortfalls. [redacted]

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Most of rural Afghanistan, which is controlled by the insurgents or has only limited government control, appears to be almost self-sufficient in food production. [redacted] most of the insurgents get their supplies from the local population and do not carry large supplies of food while on operations. [redacted]

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We believe that in areas where domestic supplies are insufficient, shortages are alleviated by imports primarily from Pakistan. [redacted] about 140,000 tons of wheat are brought in annually from Pakistan through unofficial channels. The US Embassy in Kabul assumes that these supplies are diverted from the refugee camps. [redacted] the Afghans purchase surplus grain from the Pakistanis. [redacted]

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Military operations and patrols, however, have interfered with internal and external trading necessary to balance food deficit and surplus areas and have caused higher prices. Goods used in barter are visible and subject to destruction or confiscation. We believe there is now a greater use of and more demand for money to buy basic commodities and reduce the risks of transporting goods. [redacted]

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Increasing Food Prices

Food prices have climbed dramatically in the past four years, but no faster than nonfood items according to spot price surveys and official government statistics. Fragmentary reporting indicates a wide range of prices from province to province depending on how self-sufficient the

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area is in food production and whether the survey was taken before or after the harvest.

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wheat prices in insurgent-held areas of northeastern Afghanistan declined in 1983 from 1982.

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We would expect price increases even without a shortage of food. The local money supply officially has been growing at about 20 percent annually. We believe that increases in the money supply, as well as difficulty in transportation and distribution, have had a greater effect on food prices than have actual shortages.

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We believe that higher prices are a problem for isolated rural areas that are deficient in food production. These areas are likely to have less access to currency and thus may not be able to afford the increased prices for food. People in the urban areas probably have more opportunities to earn money, have greater access to government food supplies, and are more closely associated with a cash economy.

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Overall Food Situation

Food supplies in Afghanistan last year probably were near the levels available before the Soviet invasion. We believe 2.8 to 3.3 million tons of wheat were available from domestic production and imports. Afghanistan was considered self-sufficient in wheat in 1976 when production reached 2.9 million tons and the population was roughly 14.5 million.

-- The lower estimate--2.8 million tons of wheat--indicates there was sufficient food in the country to feed the population at pre-war levels if distributed properly.

-- The upper range of the estimate indicates there was about 400,000 tons above minimum requirements.

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The tenor of current reporting indicates that supplies probably were greater than the minimum. For the past year we have had little reporting of severe food shortages.

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System Remains Fragile

Preliminary information indicates that food supplies in 1984 generally are still adequate with the possible exception of Farah Province. Crops produced thus far this year--primarily winter wheat-- appeared to be of at least normal quantity.

[redacted] sufficient water in rivers, canals, and reservoirs to satisfy the needs of the spring growing season.

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Afghanistan's food supplies, agricultural production, and food distribution networks, however, are fragile. The advent of widespread combat operations or a Soviet effort to deny food supplies could easily upset the tenuous balance and lead to localized shortages in a few months. [redacted] in the Panjsher Valley, for example, the fighting from April to June has left crops in the fields to rot. If large areas of crops go unharvested and unplanted, and the Soviets block the main entrances to the valley, the inhabitants are likely to face shortages this winter. The same would hold true in other areas of concentrated military activity.

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Lack of precipitation would lead to more widespread and potentially catastrophic food shortages. We already have reports that last winter's snowfall was below normal. Certain areas of western and southwestern Afghanistan reportedly are experiencing drought.

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While the US Embassy in Kabul has indicated that it usually takes two years of light snowfall to cause serious problems, insufficient snowfall last winter probably will reduce the water available for summer crops and fall planting.

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[redacted] Spot shortages attributed to bad weather are likely to be felt first in the western provinces and the Hezarahjat--areas most inaccessible to supplies from Pakistan or the northern provinces. We estimate, however, that it would be sometime next year before severe weather conditions cause widespread food supply problems.

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