



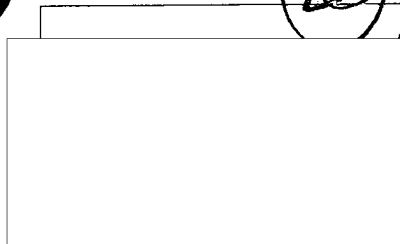
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Afghanistan Situation Report



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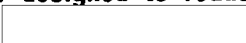


AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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President Zia is concerned with increasing Soviet military and diplomatic pressure designed to reduce Pakistan's support to the Afghan resistance. 

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The Soviets have been fighting a war in Afghanistan not envisaged by their military doctrine and one for which they were poorly prepared in terms of military strategy and organization. After five years, the Soviets still have not developed an effective counterinsurgency strategy. Because alternatives of a withdrawal or massive troop increases are so unacceptable, the Soviets are likely to sustain protracted military and political efforts. 

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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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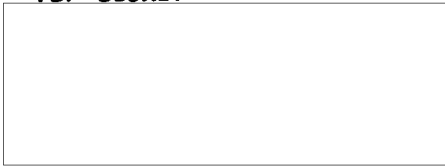


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T U P S E C R E T



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PAKISTAN-USSR: ISLAMABAD'S CONCERN GROWING 

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President Zia told visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Murphy last week the Soviets are increasing military and diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to force it to end aid to the Afghan resistance. Zia said cross-border violations have tripled since last year, and he expects a further increase when the UN General Assembly debates the Afghanistan issue in November. Neither Zia nor Foreign Minister Yaqub expressed concern that the Soviets are planning to invade, however, Yaqub noting that Moscow wants accommodation, not disintegration. Moscow has also refused to finance three aid projects, citing "credit requirements elsewhere." 

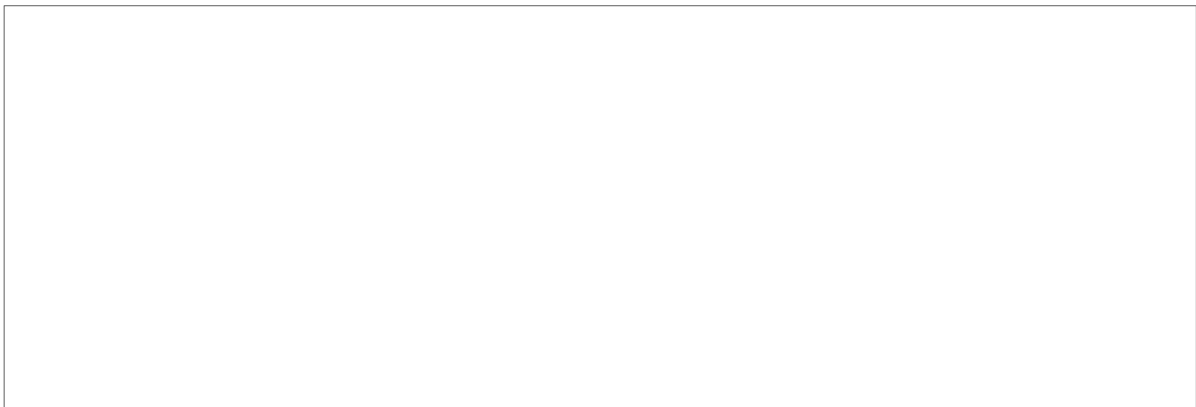
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Comment:

Zia's assertion that incursions are on the rise is consistent with other reporting. Soviet activities since July indicate that local Afghan and Soviet commanders have been given greater leeway to call for air strikes in support of operations being conducted along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Zia's resolve to resist apparently remains as strong as ever. It is unlikely the Soviets would have financed two of the three economic aid projects even if the Soviet-Pakistani relations were good; one is a nuclear power project and the other is a multibillion-dollar dam project.



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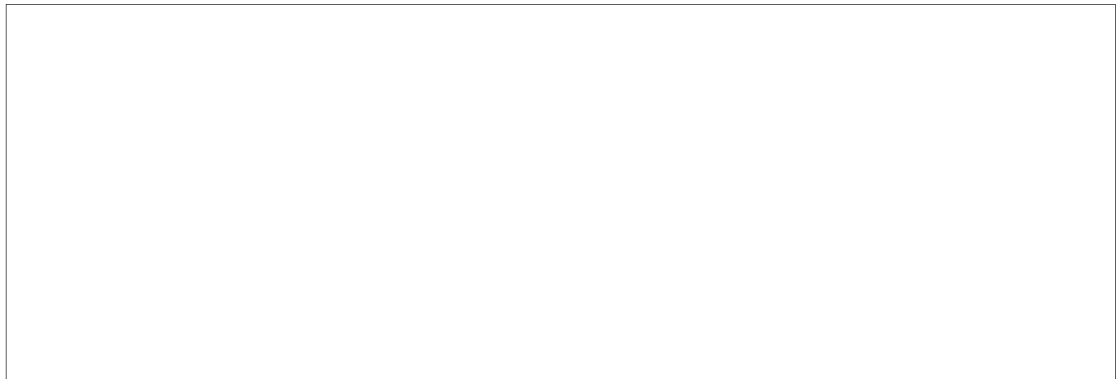
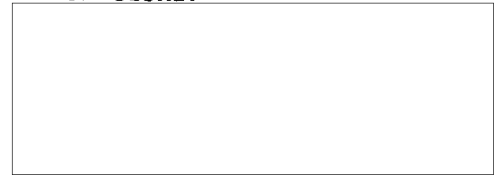
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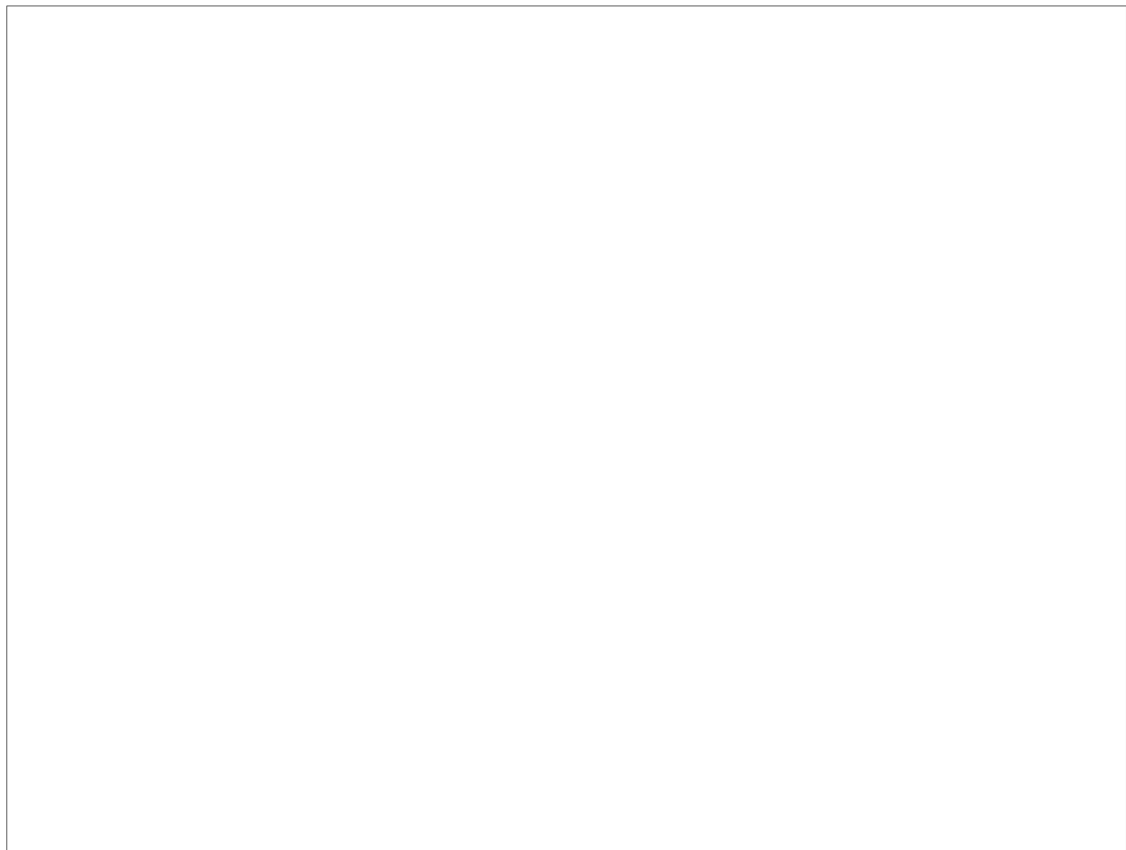
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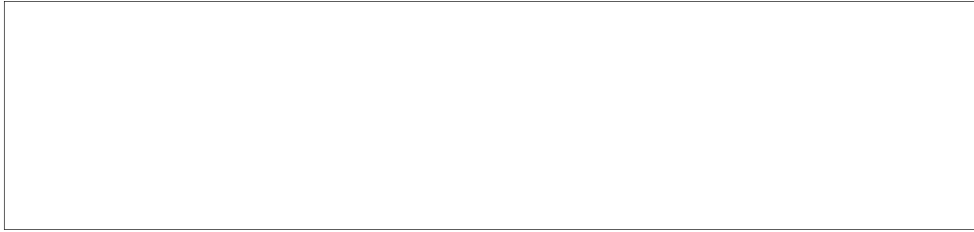
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-- Pakistani police have arrested three suspected KHAD agents after a 24 October bomb explosion in a Peshawar cinema killed five and injured 22, according to press reports. Some Pakistani officials believe the Peshawar blast is related to recent explosions in Islamabad and Parachinar. 

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PERSPECTIVE

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SOVIET MILITARY STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN



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The Soviets have been fighting a war in Afghanistan not envisaged by their military doctrine and one for which they were poorly prepared in terms of military strategy and organization. Despite almost five years in Afghanistan, the Soviets still have not come to grips with the war either conceptually or operationally. They appear not to have recognized the fundamental nature of the Afghan insurgency and have failed to develop any significant new insights into the conduct of counterinsurgency warfare. Approaches which the Soviets have tried and problems they have encountered mirror some of those experienced by other nations in attempting to combat insurgencies. Nonetheless, because the alternatives are unacceptable, the Soviets appear likely to sustain their effort over the protracted period required to reduce the insurgency and create reliable and effective Afghan political and military organizations.

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Conceptual Problems

A major difficulty for Soviet ideologists and strategists lies in attempting to reconcile the insurgency in Afghanistan with their conceptions of the nature of local wars and wars of national liberation. Basic Soviet theory holds that local wars and military conflicts in the Third World are an outgrowth of imperialism and its reactionary policy. Communist ideologists have long viewed the "national liberation process" as a positive and historically-ordained trend and one in which the Soviet role is to champion peoples oppressed by colonial or foreign-dominated regimes. Over the years, the Soviets have gained much expertise in, trained thousands of foreign students for, and provided significant materiel, advisory, and political assistance to insurgent-liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

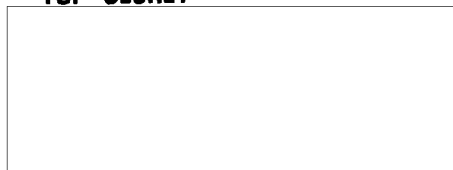
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On the other hand, the Soviets have had relatively little experience in supporting friendly Marxist governments threatened by insurgencies. The Soviets do not appear to have developed either a clear-headed

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analysis of the vulnerabilities of their Marxist client states like Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan to an insurgency or any significant new approaches to dealing with such insurgencies.

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In Afghanistan, the Soviets allege the fighting is being conducted by "counterrevolutionary elements" supported by mercenaries of "international imperialism and Chinese hegemonism." Soviet propaganda to their own troops emphasizing that they will be fighting US, Chinese, and other foreign forces in Afghanistan does not pass the test of reality, and in failing to do so, contributes to morale problems for Soviet forces there. Nevertheless, the Soviets seem to be both psychologically and ideologically incapable of confronting the fact that they are dealing with a broad-based, spontaneous popular movement opposed to the imposition of Communist rule. This attitude probably impacts adversely on their military planning for the war which tends to portray combat operations in the Afghan environment as not significantly different from operations in any other mountainous-desert region against a more conventional foe.

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Soviet Strategy

Moscow's major military-strategic decision to date has been the introduction of Soviet combat forces in December 1979 followed by their commitment early in 1980 to counterinsurgency operations. The Soviets also recognized at the outset that reliable Afghan armed forces would be required for long-term pacification of the country. To this end, the Soviets have adopted a strategic approach emphasizing the participation of Afghan military forces in combat against the insurgents and the development of Afghan military capabilities through training and provision of modern military materiel.

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At the same time, Soviet strategy has called for only a modest level of Soviet forces despite growing recognition by Moscow that the war cannot be won quickly or easily. For a combination of reasons, the Soviets have decided to fight in Afghanistan using an economy-of-force approach. Soviet expectations that the Afghan Army could assume an increasing burden of the war have proven unfounded, but we still see no good evidence that Moscow will resort to much greater force levels.

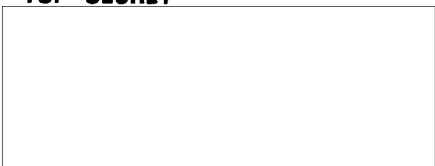
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The military component of the overall Soviet strategy has been a mixture of approaches employed in other counterinsurgencies, to include


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"enclave," "attrition," and "consolidation" aspects. "Enclaves" have been a significant feature of Soviet military strategy since the intervention, as Soviet forces have sought to secure government control in Kabul and other major cities and along the main lines of communication. Soviet forces were initially deployed to Kabul and (at least until recently) have played a major role in providing security for the capital; Soviet forces in other major urban areas such as Ghazni, Qandahar, Jalalabad, and Herat have played for the most part a secondary, though important, role. Soviet units also garrison the major air bases such as Bagram and Shindand, and provide both fixed and mobile security along the main lines of communication. 


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Soviet strategy has been focused on reducing the insurgency through attrition in combat, in addition to securing these important centers and routes. Joint and combined operations have been conducted regularly to search out and destroy insurgent groups, to disrupt insurgent base areas, and to hinder resupply of insurgent forces. Various tactical approaches have been employed in pursuit of these objectives, but the strategy has not wavered. 

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Finally, the Soviets have made efforts toward expanding and consolidating Afghan Government control in the countryside, but these have been constrained by the limited number of Soviet troops available and the unreliability of Afghan forces. Much of this effort has been in the nonmilitary aspects of overall Soviet strategy. Soviet strategy in Afghanistan in practice has been multifaceted and includes economic, political, educational, and propagandistic as well as military elements that draw on Soviet domestic experience and the record of Western involvement in various counterinsurgencies. Military units have been used to provide small security garrisons in isolated areas and conduct propaganda and public works activities. 

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The most extensive consolidation efforts to date have been developed in the Panjsher Valley subsequent to the spring offensive there this year. This has involved maintaining an expanded Soviet and Afghan military presence in the Panjsher, extensive propaganda and intelligence activity, and the forcible resettlement of refugees in the valley. 

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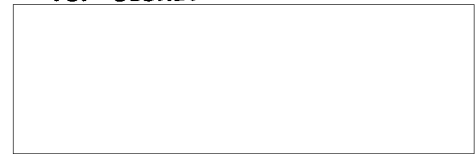
Problems

In their analyses of previous counterinsurgency efforts--notably the US experience in Vietnam--Soviet authors gleefully pointed out the problems inherent in such an undertaking. Still, the Soviets have been unable to avoid many of the same difficulties in devising their own strategy in Afghanistan.

- Insurgent forces better adapted to local conditions, fight on their own soil, and have the support of the local population.
- Unfavorable terrain precluding the utilization of the full military capabilities of counterinsurgent forces.
- Inadequate intelligence and counterintelligence resources and performance.
- Dependence on unreliable local government forces to secure "pacified" areas.
- A military force unprepared for counterinsurgency in organization, training, or equipment.
- The necessity to conduct recurrent combat operations in populated areas with resultant political problems for the government.
- The vulnerability of lines of communication, military installations, and important political-administrative centers to harassing attacks by insurgent forces.
- The inability of airpower to break insurgent morale and the difficulty of employing airpower effectively.
- Logistic problems which are compounded by difficult terrain, insurgent attacks, and limited infrastructure--including the lack of railroads.
- The protracted nature of counterinsurgency campaigns during which morale becomes an especially significant factor.

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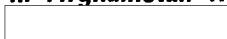


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-- The problems of deploying limited forces to attain maximum control without sacrificing operational capability, flexibility, and the strategic initiative. 

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Outlook

Despite its failure to achieve a victory thus far, we see little prospect for a major change in Soviet strategy in Afghanistan. Though Moscow has not yet succeeded in resolving many of the intractable problems associated with a counterinsurgency campaign, the Soviets' long-term perspective should enable them to endure while rationalizing away tactical defeats and strategic shortcomings. Moscow probably views its current economy-of-force strategy, incorporating variations in tactics and modest efforts to increase the combat power and effectiveness of Soviet forces, as preferable to higher cost policy alternatives such as withdrawal or a major troop buildup. Finally, the Soviet determination to prevail is an influential factor in the implementation of its Afghan strategy. Russian and Soviet history and the tenets of Marxism-Leninism serve to encourage the Soviets' belief that they can prevail in Afghanistan if they remain patient and simply do not accept defeat. 

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