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30 SEP 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: (See Distribution List)

FROM: 25X1
Chief, Strategic Resources Division, OGI

SUBJECT: Afghanistan: Late Season 1985 Grain Outlook
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1. The attached memorandum--the second in a planned series of three agricultural reports on Afghanistan--contains the late season outlook for the 1985 grain crops. It focuses on weather conditions thus far and compares production prospects this year with last year's estimated production. 25X1

2. The first report in this series provided an early spring crop outlook. The final report will provide a comprehensive look at regional crop conditions, give our best estimate of 1985 wheat output--Afghanistan's principal grain--and assess Kabul's food situation. It will be disseminated in early November. 25X1

3. This report is based on analysis of 25X1
meteorological data. Comments and questions are welcome and 25X1
may be addressed to the Chief, Agricultural Assessments Branch, OGI, 25X1

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Attachment:
Afghanistan: The 1985 Late-Season Agricultural Outlook GI M 85-10259 25X1
September 1985 25X1
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NGA Review Completed

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[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: Afghanistan: Late Season 1985 Grain Outlook [redacted] 25X1

OGI/SRD/AAB [redacted] (September 1985) 25X1

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MEMORANDUM

Afghanistan: The 1985 Late-Season Agricultural Outlook

A preliminary crop survey of key grain-growing areas in Afghanistan indicates that the 1985 wheat crop will be larger than last year's estimated 2.7 million tons, which equaled the estimated average for 1980-84.[1] Other grain crops are also expected to do better than average. The droughty conditions which began last year and continued through the winter were alleviated by timely spring rains, which began in late March and continued intermittently throughout most of this year's growing season. Irrigation water, dangerously low early in the year, was replenished in time for the winter grains to produce above average yields. The dryland crops which are totally dependent on spring precipitation and the summer crops that are heavily dependent on irrigation water, should also produce above average yields. 25X1

The abandonment of agricultural fields is extensive in some combat areas near the Pakistani border, but these fields represent only a very small portion of Afghanistan's agricultural land and their loss should not significantly reduce total grain production. Furthermore, the loss of much of this grainland has been offset by the expansion of cultivated land elsewhere within Afghanistan. In addition, some land previously used for industrial crops such as cotton and sugar beets has been diverted to food production. 25X1

Background

This preliminary assessment of the agricultural outlook in Afghanistan is based on the analysis of weather data 25X1 of the most important agricultural areas of the country. These areas include the irrigated cropland in the vicinty of Kabul, and in Jalalabad, Qandahar and Herat provinces, and the principal dryland farming areas in the northern provinces (Badghis, Faryab, Jowzjan, Balkh, Samangan, Konduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, and Baghlan). 25X1 25X1

Afghanistan contains approximately 8 million hectares of arable land, less than half of which is cultivated due to limited supplies of water. Some 3.3 million hectares of the arable land

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[1] The 1980-84 wheat production average is based on both Foreign Agriculture Organization and CIA estimates. We believe statistics published by the Afghan government are normally derived from very limited and unreliable information. 25X1 25X1 25X1

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are irrigated, but because of fallowing practices, only about three-fourths of this area is cropped each year. Irrigated land produces approximately 85 percent of the country's food and industrial crops. Dryland crops occupy about 900,000 hectares and are concentrated mainly in the foothills of the northern plains region.

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Some 85 percent of Afghanistan's food and industrial crops are produced on irrigated land. Water for the irrigation system comes primarily from the snow-fed rivers flowing out of the central mountain region and is augmented by ground water and spring rains. Since little rain normally falls after May, the principal rivers depend on snow melt and mountain springs to maintain their flow during the late spring and summer when demand is high. However, Afghan weather appears to have departed from the norm this year.

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1985 Weather Summary

Afghanistan suffered a serious water shortage until the last week of March. secondary rivers and most feeder streams were dry or nearly dry during March; much lower than in March 1984. Irrigation canals were running, but with greatly reduced flow. The outlook began to change on 31 March when a deep low pressure area with an associated frontal system moved across the country from west to east, dropping unusually large amounts of rain. For example, in Farah Province, a weather station recorded 106 mm, an amount equal to its average annual rainfall. A second system moved across the country during the first week in April. Rivers, irrigation canals and reservoirs were replenished, and in the mountains where the precipitation fell as snow, the depleted snow fields expanded. numerous pools of standing water throughout the country. Unseasonable rain in varying amounts also fell over wide areas during the remainder of April, May, and June. Surprisingly, still more rain fell in the northeast provinces during the normally dry month of July. When last observed , rivers and streams in most areas of the country were still flowing well above normal and significantly higher than last year.

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1985 Production Outlook

Despite last winter's precipitation shortfall, we believe that this year's grain harvest will be better than last year's estimated 2.7 million tons and the estimated average of recent years--1980 to 1984. In addition to weather data, Landsat imagery of the principal Afghan grain-growing areas were analyzed throughout the growing season. to check the availability of water in the irrigation systems; to determine crop health during critical growth stages; and to make a rough estimate of the size of the harvest based on the number and

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density of post harvest straw shocks.[2] This preliminary analysis suggests that:

- The irrigated winter grain crop, mainly wheat, should produce above average yields--slightly better than last year.
- The dryland grain crop, mainly wheat, should produce above average yields--considerably better than last year's crop which had suffered an estimated 25 percent reduction due to drought.
- The irrigated summer crops, consisting of mostly corn and rice, should produce above average yields--slightly better than last year.

Because most food shortages in Afghanistan have resulted from crop failure in the dryland region, the above average estimate for dryland grain production and the average to above average estimates for the other large producing regions indicates that Afghan food supplies will be adequate this year.

harvest and procurement activities in neighboring countries, which are generally affected by the same weather patterns as Afghanistan, also support our assessment of above average Afghan crop prospects. The size of the grain harvest in south Uzbek, SSR--which adjoins the Afghan dryland area on the north--was above plan in late June, according to Moscow domestic radio. Unclassified reporting from Pakistan--to the east of Afghanistan--indicates that grain procurements for the May-July period ran about 10 percent higher this year than last.

Impact of Military Activity on Agriculture

Our preliminary analysis of the principal agricultural areas revealed no large-scale deliberate destruction of crops or irrigation sytems by Soviet or Afghan military forces. Military action such as bombing and armored vehicle traffic is estimated to have damaged less than one percent of the total agricultural area.

Agricultural activity in the Panjer Valley in 1985 was nearly non-existent. Apparently the continued presence of Soviet and Afghan military forces discouraged farmers from returning to the valley. Cultivation evidence was observed only in a small

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[2] Because of the direct relationship between the amount of grain harvested and the amount of straw shocks observed in the fields, this methodology provides a reliable indication of relative difference in grain yields from one year to the next.

area near the southern entrance and near the northern end of the valley. Most of the villages in the central part remain abandoned and the fields unattended. Grain production in the valley accounts for less than two percent of total national 25X1
output.

[redacted] the Konar Valley, site of 25X1
recent heavy military actions, shows a steady decline in population since the Soviet invasion. Approximately 50 percent of the population has left since 1979. The majority of the abandoned land is on the eastern side of the Konar River. The remaining agriculture in the valley suffered some minor damage this year from military operations. Vehicle tracks through the agricultural fields and the military take over of some villages are evident. Near the entrance to the valley a significant amount of agricultural land around Jalalabad Airfield was abandoned from 1984 to 1985. It appears this abandonment was caused by increased military activity in the Konar Valley area, or an attempt by the military to secure a larger security zone around the nearby airfield. The agricultural area abandoned in and near the entrance to the Konar Valley equates to less than 2 percent of Afghanistan's grain producing area. [redacted] 25X1

Military operations this summer in and around Herat had no significant impact on grain production since most of the activities occurred after the main grain harvest was completed.
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