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Directorate of
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Afghanistan Situation Report



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22 October 1985

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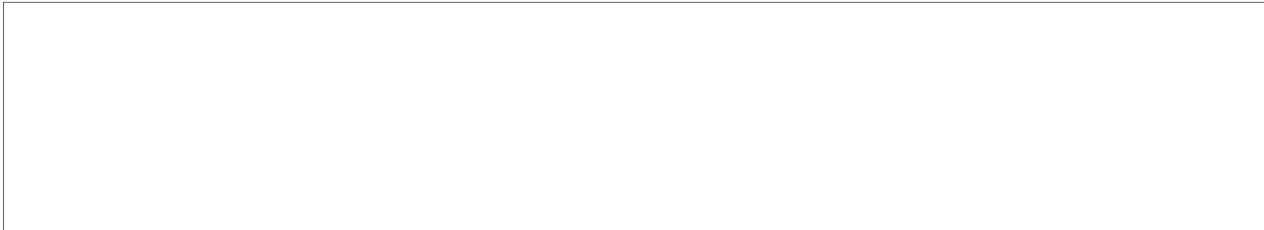
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT


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PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN-UN: UN REPORT ANGERS ISLAMABAD 


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The Pakistanis believe that a recent UN report on the progress of the Geneva talks is slanted in favor of Moscow and is aimed at pressing Islamabad into making more concessions. 

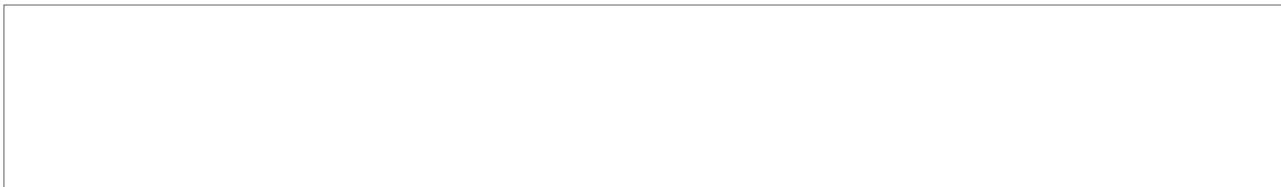
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PARTY PURGE IN LOWGAR PROVINCE 

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The recent arrest of party members in Lowgar Province underscores the problems the Afghan regime faces in maintaining control outside the capital and eliminating factional strife. 


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INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR REFUGEE FOOD PROGRAMS DECLINES 

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The World Food Program's Afghan refugee project is faced with decreasing contributions, but improved monitoring and management should enable Pakistan to feed the refugees without difficulty this year. 

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THE WAR IN SEPTEMBER



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The Soviets staged several operations in September, including a major offensive in Paktia Province aimed at relieving the siege of Khowst and interdicting insurgent supplies. Fighting was at a high level for this time of year, traditionally a time for rest and reequipping prior to the fall campaigns.



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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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PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN-UN: UN REPORT ANGERS ISLAMABAD



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The Pakistanis believe UN Special Representative Cordovez' October report on the progress of proximity talks in Geneva blames Islamabad for obstructing a comprehensive settlement. According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, the Pakistanis suspect the report's emphasis on their procedural--rather than substantive--differences with Moscow is intended to press Islamabad to make unilateral concessions--such as agreeing to direct talks with Kabul.



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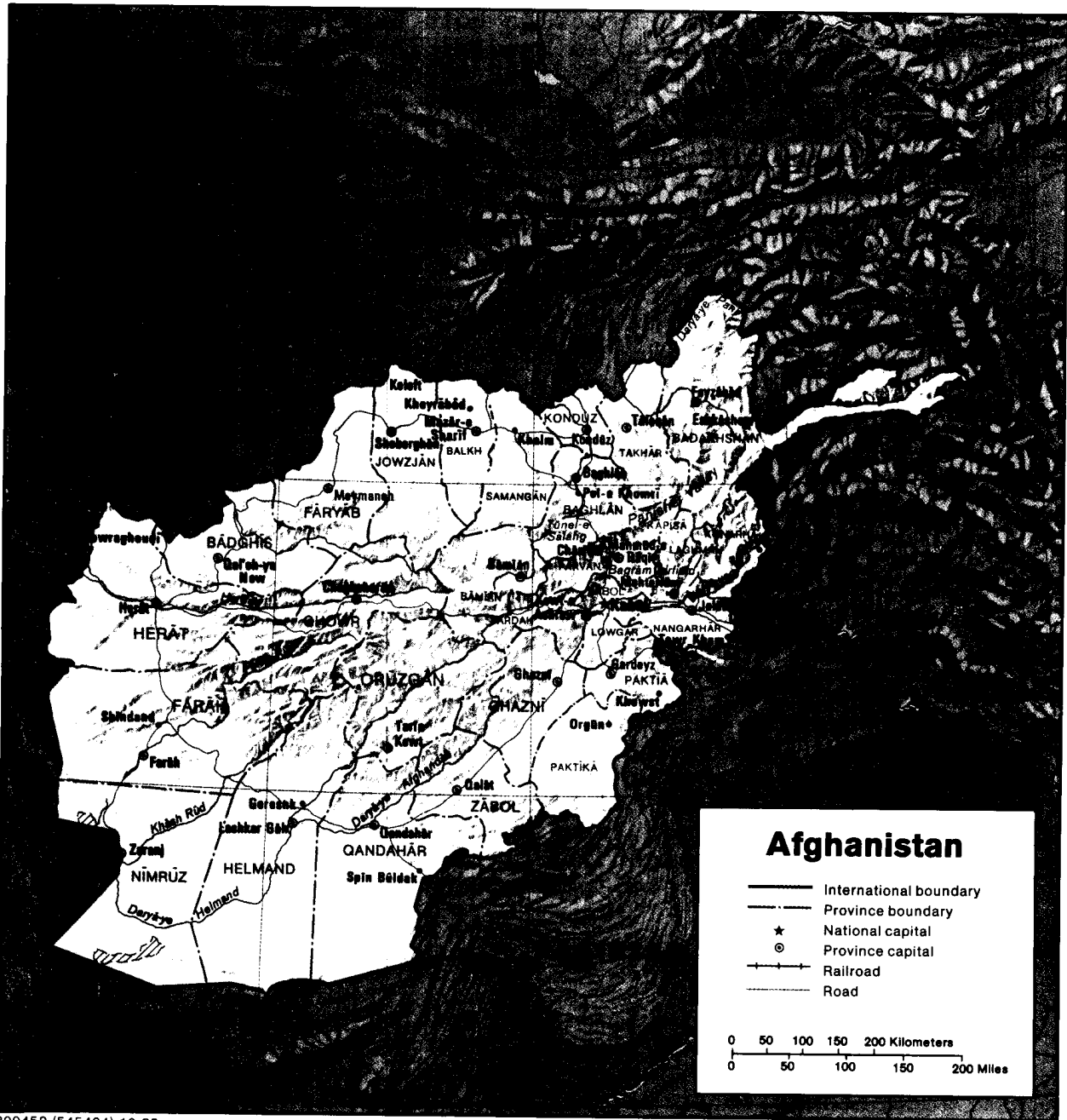


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Comment: The Pakistanis say they will consider direct talks only after the four parts of the comprehensive settlement are finalized; thus, progress is possible only when the Soviet-Afghan side is ready to discuss a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Islamabad's belief that Cordovez misrepresented Pakistan's role and responsibilities reinforces its already strong suspicions about his pro-Moscow stance, and is likely to cast a cloud over the talks when they resume in December. In the meantime, the Pakistanis almost certainly will try to set the record straight during the UN General Assembly debate on Afghanistan in November. 


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PARTY PURGE IN LOWGAR PROVINCE 

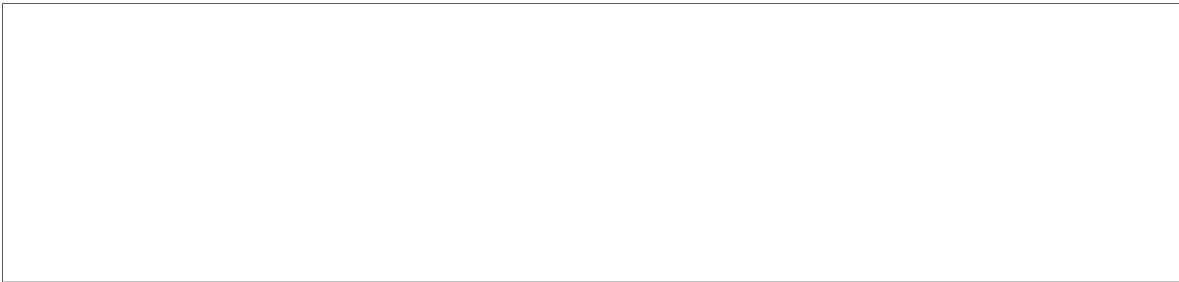
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The Parchami-dominated Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan publicly called on the Interior Ministry to arrest an "antiparty group" in Lowgar province recently. The group--charged, among other things, with spreading seditious rumors and conducting activities inconsistent with their obligations to the party--included the Lowgar Provincial militia commander and the local secretary of the Democratic Youth of Afghanistan. The Central Committee also criticized the governor of Lowgar for not restoring order in the militia or strengthening party organizations. 

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Comment: Kabul continues to have problems maintaining a functioning, disciplined party apparatus, especially outside the capital. The Khalqi-dominated Interior Ministry has close ties to provincial militias, which have often shown questionable loyalty to Kabul. Most of those accused are also probably Khalqi. The national publicity accorded the incident is unusual and is probably intended as a warning to other Khalqis. 

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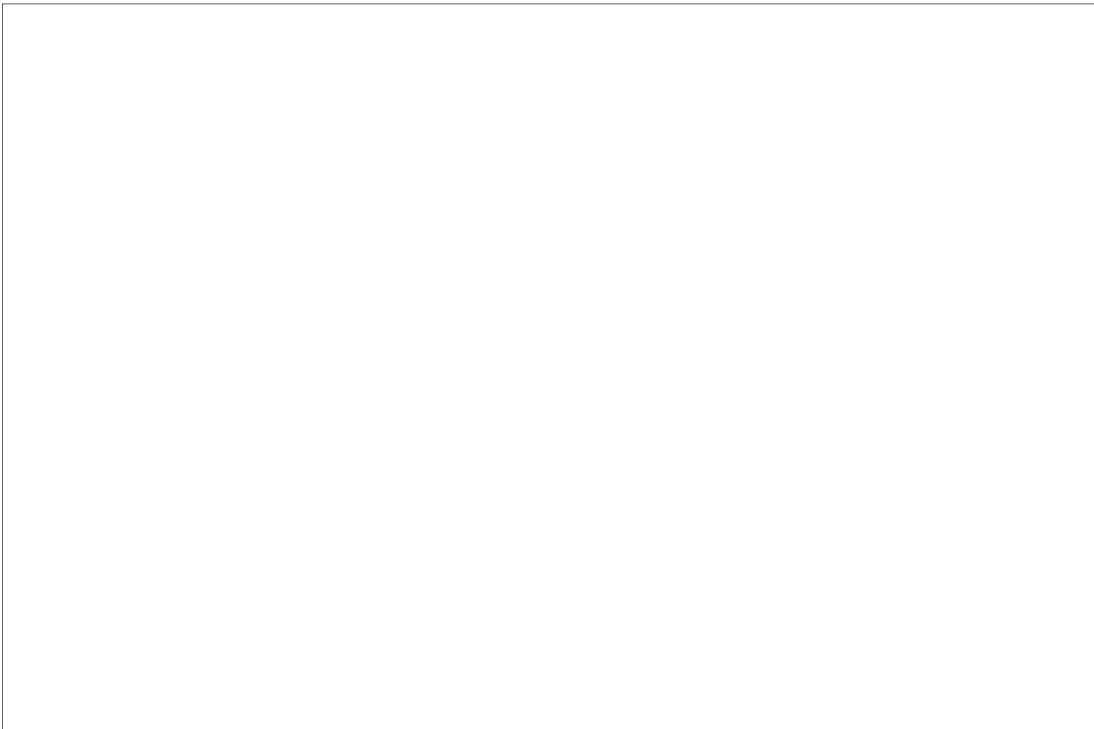
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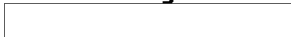


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INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR REFUGEE FOOD PROGRAMS DECLINES 

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Wheat commitments to the World Food Program's commodity relief project for Afghan refugees declined by roughly 25 percent between 1983 and 1985, according to the State Department. International support has fallen primarily because of competing demands from Africa. Reports of corruption and mismanagement have also contributed to declining donations. Wheat commitments to date are about 75,000 metric tons short of the World Food Program's 1985 target of 400,000 metric tons.



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Comment: The reductions are not likely to reduce significantly Pakistan's ability to feed its refugee population this year, largely because the program was over-supplied in the past. Better monitoring of the refugee program--previously plagued by corruption and mismanagement--will also help compensate for this year's shortfall. Despite the adequacy of current support, Pakistan will probably raise the spectre of widespread food shortages in an effort to obtain additional aid from the United States and other sources. If donations drop again, however, the Pakistanis would have real reason for concern.



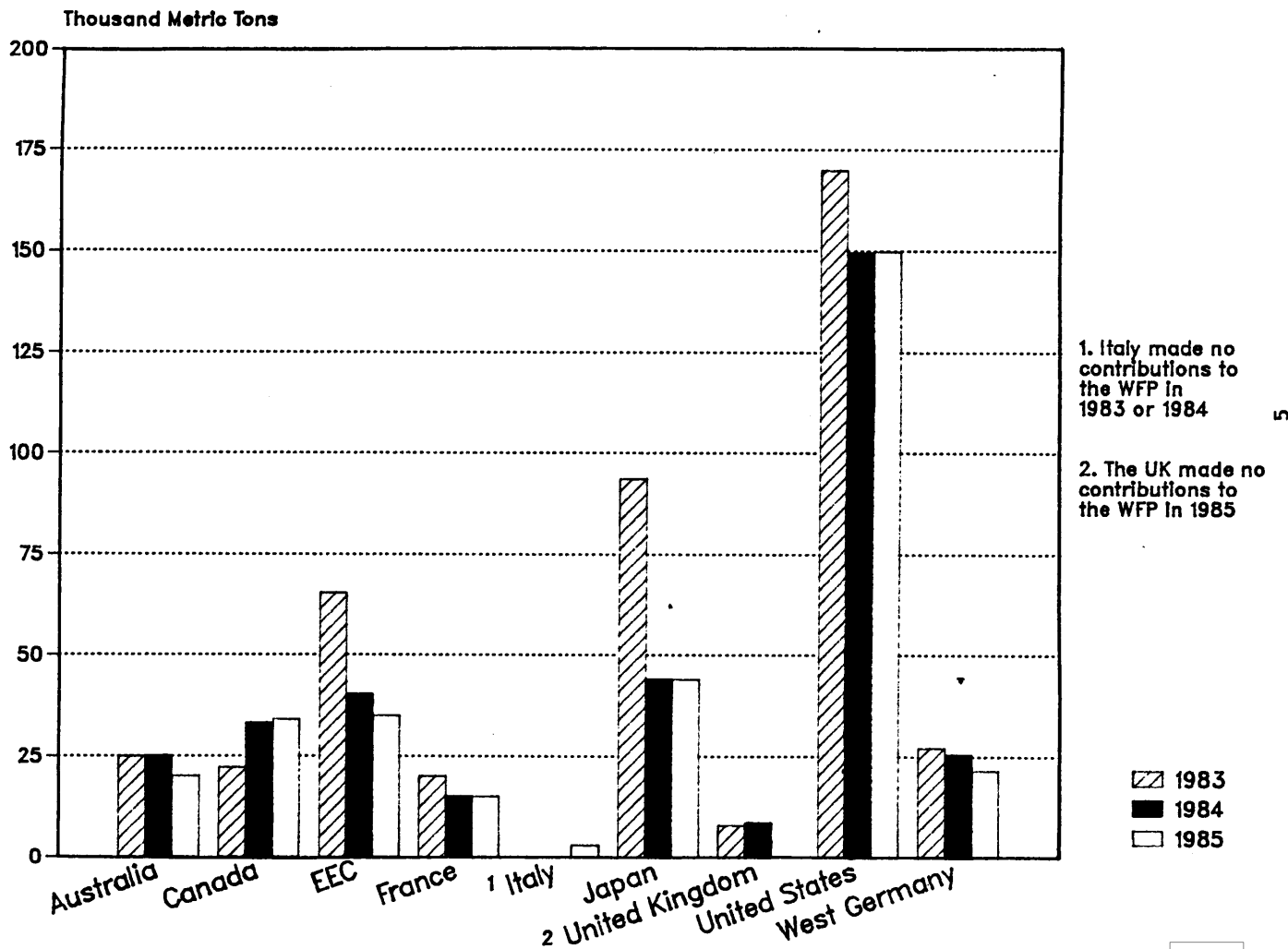
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FOOD CONTRIBUTIONS TO WFP 1983-85



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IN BRIEF

-- The Afghan resistance alliance's delegation to the UN General Assembly arrived in New York on Saturday. The eight-member delegation, which is headed by current alliance spokesman Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, will focus on public relations with the international media and other UN missions. It is scheduled to leave the United States on 1 November, well before the UN debates the Afghan resolution.



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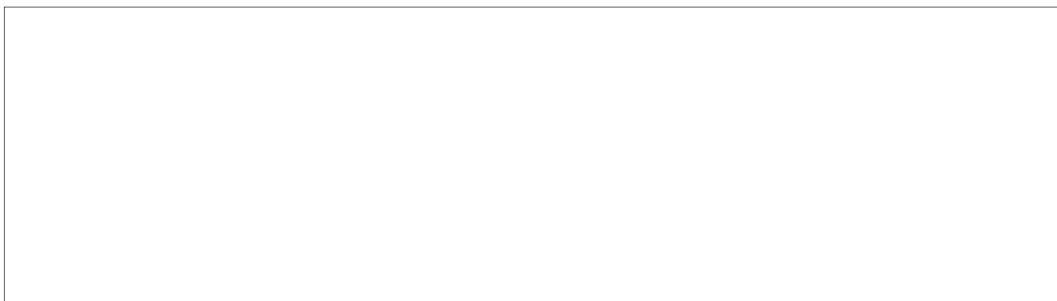


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-- Pakistani officials decided to buy a tethered balloon radar surveillance system, instead of a more expensive AWACs-type aircraft they had originally sought. Numerous Afghan and Soviet air violations probably sparked this effort to improve Pakistani surveillance capabilities along the Afghan border, where three of the five balloons will be deployed.



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-- The Soviet military newspaper **Red Star** began a new feature on 19 October--an entire page devoted to what it calls heroic acts by Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The move is probably designed primarily to improve the low morale of Soviet troops serving there; there have been numerous complaints from the troops about inadequate press coverage of the war.



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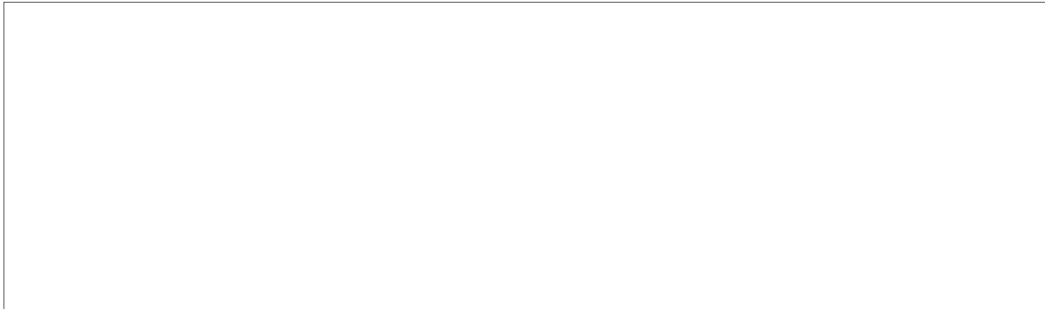
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-- Politburo Member Nur Ahmad Nur met in Kabul last week with a delegation of the Communist Party of India, Kabul media reported. The number two leader in the Afghan ruling party and a potential successor to Babrak, Nur was sent to Moscow approximately two years ago for an extended period of training. 

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-- An American who traveled with US journalist Charles Thornton says their party was attacked by Soviet or Afghan ground forces--not helicopters, as previously reported. Helicopters had apparently dropped the assault team in the area earlier in the day. Meanwhile, the Kabul regime is exploiting the incident for its propaganda value, claiming the Americans were CIA agents. 

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UPCOMING EVENTS

1 November Afghan resistance delegation to the UN leaves United States for Pakistan. 

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11-13 November The UN General Assembly debate on Afghanistan. 

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PERSPECTIVE


THE WAR IN SEPTEMBER 
by Darald Thomas, NESAs

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Fighting in Afghanistan continued at a high level during the month of September. Combined large Soviet and Afghan operations were conducted in Paktia, Kabul, Ghazni, Qandahar, Helmand, Herat, and Balkh Provinces. Insurgent forces also attacked Soviet and Afghan logistic convoys and isolated outposts throughout the country. 

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Soviets Move on Several Fronts

The Paktia Campaign. The large multibattalion Soviet-Afghan military operation in Paktia Province, launched in early August, continued in September. Three separate joint Soviet-Afghan columns attempting to relieve the four-year siege of Khowst were beaten back by resistance forces, according to sources of the US Embassy in Islamabad. A Soviet-supported Afghan force that tried to break out was also forced to return to the Khowst garrison. Soviet forces that had assisted the lagging Afghan efforts in late August were withdrawn by mid-September, after achieving only limited tactical successes. Fighting had ebbed but had not halted by the end of the month, and casualties were reported to have been heavy on both sides. 

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Helmand Heats Up. The Soviets launched major efforts to interdict and destroy insurgent forces, particularly in northern Helmand Province. Combined Soviet airborne and ground operations resulted in heavy insurgent casualties 

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 the Soviets shanghaied more than 1,000 boys and men in the area for forced induction into the army. Despite Soviet military operations, on 9 September several insurgent groups combined to attack a large Soviet logistics convoy, resulting in the capture of 25 to 30 trucks full of materiel 

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Kabul and Environs. Soviet and Afghan security forces maintained a high profile in their efforts to block insurgent access to the capital. Insurgents rocketed the airport and Darulaman Palace on the nights of 17 and 24 September. The US Embassy in Kabul reports that Soviet and Afghan forces launched a major combined air and ground operation against insurgents in the Paghman region northwest of Kabul on 24 September, despite government claims that the area had been pacified two weeks earlier. The Soviets reportedly employed hundreds of helicopter sorties during the operation. [redacted]

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Insurgents Keep the Pressure On

Insurgent forces achieved a number of notable successes during September.

- [redacted] a warehouse in the Soviet garrison in Kabul was destroyed between 7 and 12 September (see foldout).
- On 4 September, a Bakhtar Airline flight from Kabul to Shindand was shot down after it took off from an intermediate stop at Qandahar. Insurgents claimed the passengers were either government officials or soldiers.
- Two major Soviet ammunitions depots in Kabul and Konduz were destroyed, [redacted] as many as 150 to 200 vehicles at the Kabul depot were destroyed. Insurgent sabotage was probably responsible for at least one of these incidents; the other probably resulted from Soviet negligence.

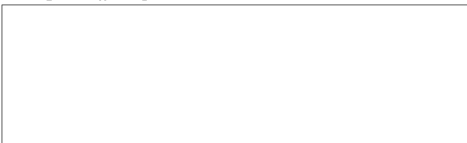
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-- A 100 man insurgent force attacked and destroyed the natural gas well station at Jar Qoduq in Jowzjan Province on 21 September, [redacted]

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[redacted] The preplanned attack caught the Soviet unit guarding the facility by surprise and it reportedly suffered heavy casualties. [redacted]

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Despite Soviet and Afghan sweep operations during September, the insurgents regularly set up road blocks on the main highway linking Kabul and Qandahar to obtain fuel, supplies, and information, [redacted]

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[redacted] Supplies consigned to Afghan or Soviet facilities were either diverted to insurgent use or destroyed, [redacted]

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Outlook

Soviet military activity was maintained at an unusually high level for this time of year. September traditionally is a time to rest and reequip for the heavy fall campaigns. Although Soviet airmobile sweep operations declined somewhat in September from August levels, they still represent a dramatic escalation compared to past years. The Soviets will probably continue to use strong doses of airpower in their offensive operations before inclement weather severely degrades air support capabilities. [redacted]

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