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Directorate of
Intelligence

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Afghanistan Situation Report



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29 October 1985

79-81 IMC/CB

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT



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COMBAT OPERATION IN BAGLAN AND PARVAN PROVINCES ENDS



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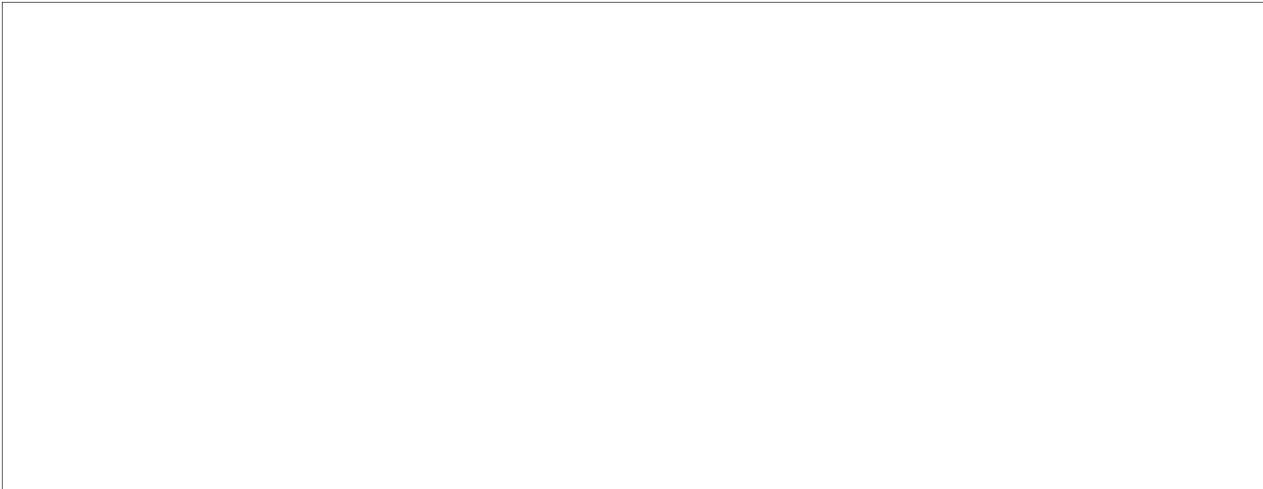
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Soviet and Afghan forces completed sweep operations along the strategic Salang Highway, but attempts to clear the area of insurgents will probably only reduce resistance activity temporarily.



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IN BRIEF

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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PERSPECTIVE

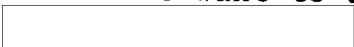
THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND AFGHANISTAN



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It is doubtful that the Organization of the Islamic Conference will provide significant support for the Afghan insurgency since many of its members are more interested in Middle East issues and do not want to antagonize the Soviet Union.



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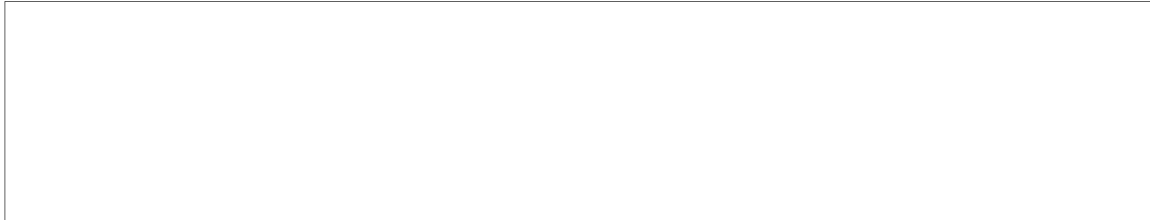
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COMBAT OPERATION IN BAGHLAN AND PARVAN PROVINCES ENDS

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A combined Soviet and Afghan combat operation underway along the Salang Pass between Jabal os Saraj and Pol-e Khomri ended last week, [Redacted]

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[Redacted] The approximately 5,000 Soviet and Afghan troops involved in the operation returned to their garrisons in Kabul, Bagram, Pol-e Khomri, Ghazni, and Jalalabad. These operations, aimed at clearing insurgent bands along the strategic Salang Pass and the north-south highway linking the Soviet Union to Kabul, probably will not have any lasting impact on insurgent capabilities in the area because the insurgents apparently sustained few losses and chose not to confront Soviet forces. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] US Embassy reporting indicates that the guerrillas are still active, albeit at a reduced level, in the Kabul area and the Embassy reports that regime security in the capital has generally lessened since the summer. Several insurgent rocket attacks and two kidnappings of KHAD agents occurred last week. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

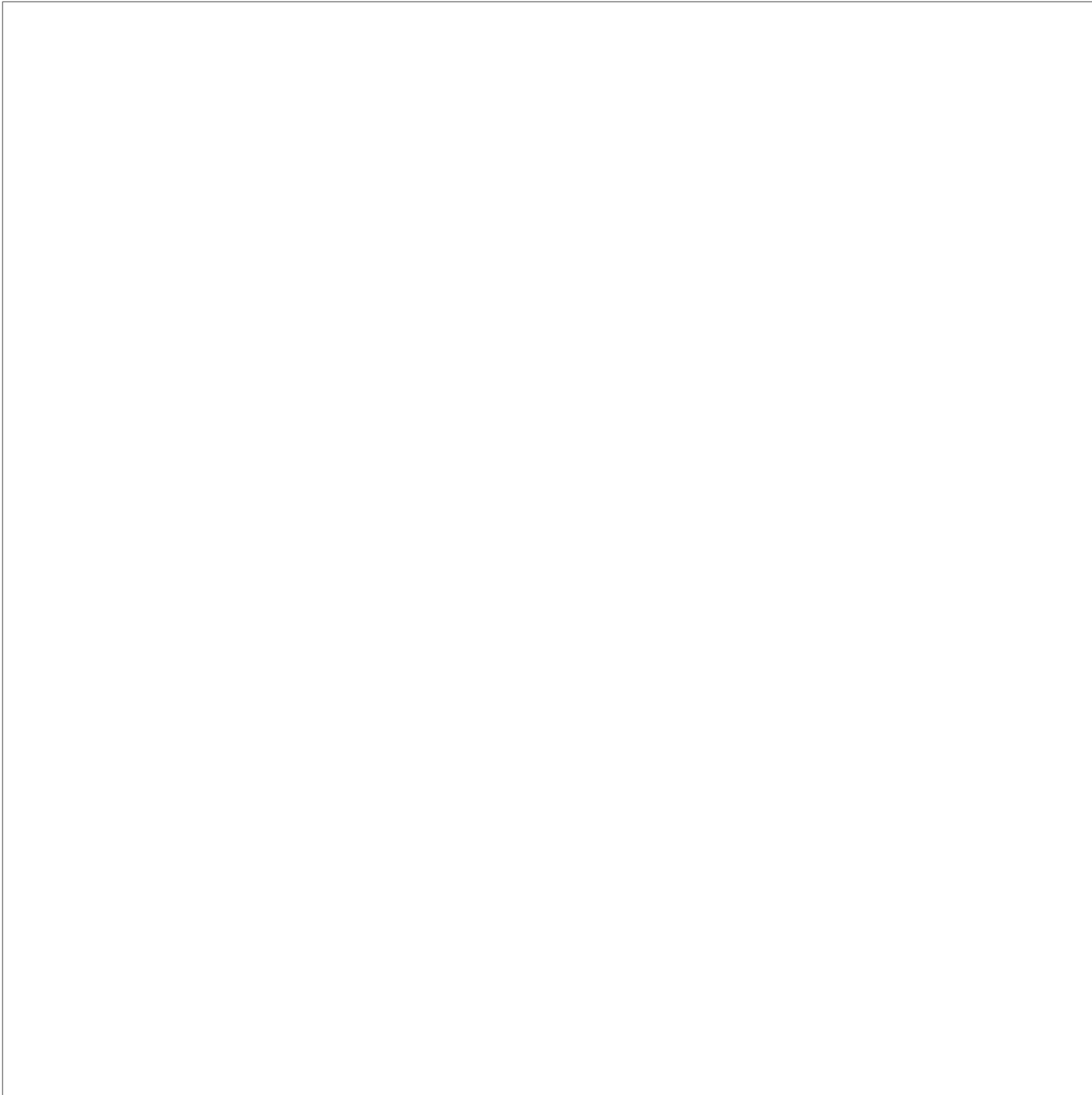
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IN BRIEF

-- According to press reports, the Gulbuddin-led Afghan resistance delegation sent a letter to the UN secretary general last week contesting the credentials of the Kabul regime and asserting the resistance's right to Afghanistan's UN seat. 

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-- Reporting from the US UN mission indicates that the British will protest informally to UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar about the recent UN report blaming Pakistan for the "procedural impasse" in the Geneva proximity talks. The European Community group will also convey its concerns during a briefing by Special Representative Cordovez. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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UPCOMING EVENTS

1 November Afghan resistance delegation goes home. [Redacted]

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11-13 November UN General Assembly debate on Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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PERSPECTIVE**THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND AFGHANISTAN**

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The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is unlikely to furnish much more than impotent resolutions in support of the Afghan resistance. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the two OIC members most concerned with Afghanistan, do not view the OIC as a significant or useful forum on the Afghan issue. Pakistan wants to keep the pressure on the Soviets, but does not want to antagonize Moscow unnecessarily. Saudi Arabia, the main financial backer of the OIC, prefers to keep the OIC focused on Arab-Israeli problems. The Saudis want to maintain a low profile in their support for the insurgents. Other Arab states are reluctant to offend Moscow on the Afghan situation for fear of losing Soviet support on Arab-Israeli issues.

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US ability to influence the OIC is slight because the organization associates Washington with Tel Aviv. Washington would have to work through Islamabad, Riyadh, and perhaps Cairo to influence the OIC on Afghanistan.

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A Shaky Alliance

The OIC since its inception has been a weak organization most concerned with forging consensus among its 44 members. Despite the OIC's charter that calls for "safeguarding the independence and national rights of all Muslim peoples," many controversial political topics, such as the role of the Soviets in Afghanistan or the Iran-Iraq war have tended to reveal conflicting interests and have resulted in relatively tame resolutions. In contrast, militant resolutions on the status of Jerusalem and the Palestinians find near universal support.

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The OIC bureaucracy is small and not well equipped to provide material aid to Muslim guerrilla groups such as the Afghan insurgents. Secretary General Sharifuddin Pirzada, who was in President Zia's government, is not an independent-minded official likely to advocate an Afghan policy counter to Islamabad's wishes. We do not believe the OIC's Islamic Development Bank--created to

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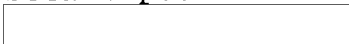
fund projects such as irrigation or municipal services--will stretch its charter to aid the Mujahedin. The organization's Islamic News Agency might consider publishing more articles on the insurgents, provided that the Mujahedin establish an information arm. 

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An unwieldy group such as the OIC compares unfavorably with other international organizations such as ASEAN. ASEAN is a more geographically compact and politically cohesive group than the OIC and is better positioned to take action in the face of external aggression directed at one of its member states. 

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Disinterest in Afghanistan

The OIC has displayed only limited concern for Afghanistan. In January 1980 the OIC suspended Afghanistan's membership and "strongly condemned Soviet military aggression against the Afghan people," according to the published resolutions. But by May 1980, the OIC Foreign Ministers Conference had softened its criticism to express only "deep concern over the perpetuation of Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, and strongly reiterated the demand for the immediate, total, and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan." This same softened language has been repeated in OIC Afghan resolutions since 1980. 

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In 1984, despite US demarches for a tougher condemnatory resolution and an impassioned speech attacking the USSR by a prominent Afghan Mujahedin figure, Islamabad offered no new language for the Afghan resolution, with the exception of a phrase critical of the bombing of Pakistani territory. The widely-publicized final communique of last December's Foreign Ministers Conference called only for "further efforts to safeguard the independence of Afghansitan as a nonaligned Islamic state." The document did not mention the Soviet occupation. The final resolutions do mention the Soviets, but these were published months after the meeting and received scant attention. 

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The Key Players


Pakistan, which plays the major role in OIC consideration of Afghanistan, has not pushed for tougher language,  Islamabad, in our view, probably believes that Arab delegations friendly to the USSR would successfully thwart any anti-Soviet effort. President Zia, faced with both political divisions within Pakistan over the effectiveness of a hard line policy on Afghanistan and increasing Soviet pressure, does not want to get too far out front on an anti-Soviet resolution. 

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Saudi Arabia and Egypt--the most influential Islamic nations in the OIC--also seem reluctant to support a stronger Afghan resolution. The Saudis prefer a low profile on Afghanistan. Egypt--whose suspension from the OIC was lifted only last year--does not want to expend its limited political capital on Afghanistan. 

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US influence in the OIC is minimal. In last year's final communique, the US was condemned by name for its "hostile attitude towards the Palestinians," its continued support of the "Zionist enemy," its anti-Arab voting in the UN, and its military presence along Arab coasts. US friends and allies among the OIC membership remained silent during the debates. 

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Outlook

The OIC is likely to continue to pay little more than lip service to Afghan affairs unless a key OIC member such as Pakistan or Saudi Arabia takes a more active leadership role. Until then, the best we expect the OIC to do is to continue to allow Afghan insurgent leaders to address the annual foreign ministers meetings. Even with Pakistan and Saudi leadership, other Arab and African members would probably drag their heels because of their own priorities. Similarly, if the Mujahedin were to arrive on the OIC's doorstep with a unified delegation, we believe pro-Soviet Arab states would resist granting it formal observer or government-in-exile status. Other moderate OIC states such as Morocco or Sudan would have qualms about seating an anti-regime group for fear it would set a precedent. 

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