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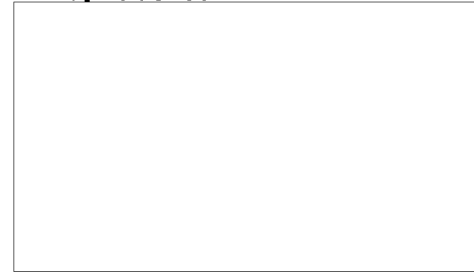


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Afghanistan Situation Report



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17 December 1985

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NESA M 85-10234CX
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17 December 1985

25X1

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TOP SECRET

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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CONTENTS

25X1

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1

25X1

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25X1

NEW COMBAT EQUIPMENT AT TOWRAGHONDI

[Redacted]

3

25X1

The new supplies of combat equipment that arrived at Towraghondi--a transshipment and storage area--are probably intended to replace equipment lost in recent heavy fighting around Herat, and do not, in our view, point to an increase in the number of Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

[Redacted]

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NEW RESISTANCE COUNCIL FORMED

[Redacted]

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At a recent press conference, insurgent spokesman Gulbuddin Hekmatyar announced that a new resistance council had been formed to represent the resistance abroad and focus international attention on Afghanistan.

[Redacted]

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NAJIBULLAH LIEUTENANT TAKES OVER AT KHAD

[Redacted]

4

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The new head of KHAD, Lieutenant General Ghulam Faruq Yaqubi, is a confidant of former KHAD head Najibullah and will probably protect Najibullah's power base.

[Redacted]

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REFUGEE AID UPDATE

[Redacted]

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Although several countries may raise their food contributions to the refugees, aid is still likely to fall short of what Islamabad claims it needs to cope with the recent increase in the refugee flow from Afghanistan.

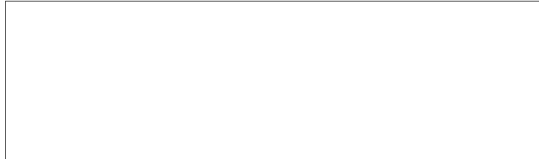
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TOP SECRET



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IN BRIEF

5

PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: THE INSURGENT'S MEDIA WAR



7

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The insurgents are trying to improve their Afghanistan propaganda efforts both inside and outside in order to increase support for their cause.



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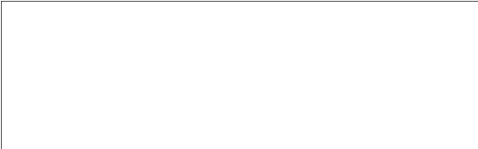
PUBLICATION NOTE

Unless major developments warrant otherwise, we will not publish the **Afghanistan Situation Report** the next two weeks. The next report will appear on 7 January 1986.



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TOP SECRET



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In Kabul, several insurgent bomb blasts between 8 and 11 December caused heavy casualties, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. One bomb near the airport exploded among a group of Afghan soldiers preparing to be airlifted to Qandahar; casualties were as high as 50-65, with many more wounded.

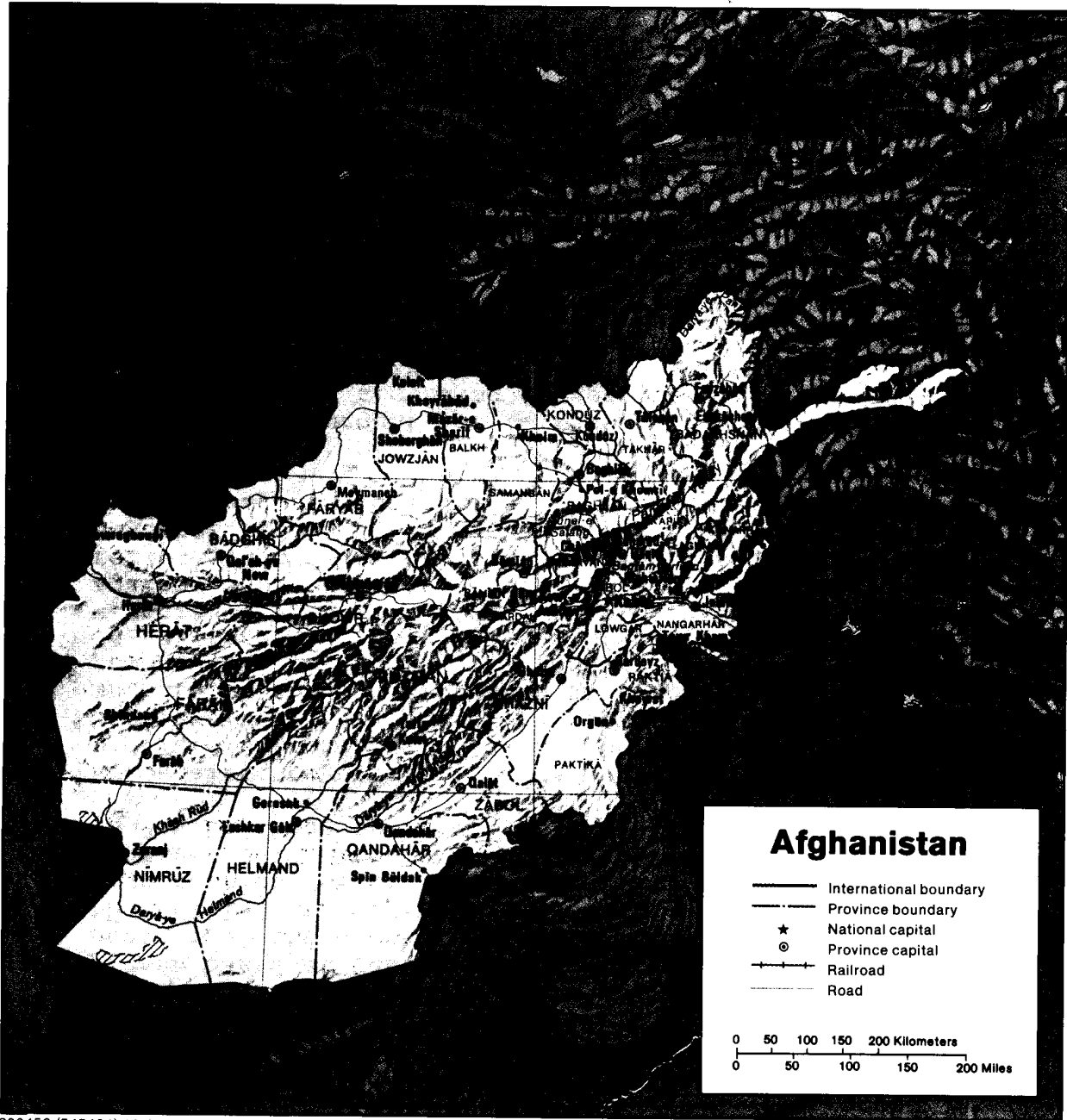


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17 December 1985
NESA M 85-10234CX
SOVA M 85-10216CX

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NEW COMBAT EQUIPMENT AT TOWRAGHONDI

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Additional combat equipment has recently arrived at Towraghondi transshipment and storage area. At least 24 medium T-62, T-54, and T-55 tanks, nine BTR-60PB armored personnel carriers, two M-1974 armored reconnaissance vehicles, four BRDM-2 armored reconnaissance vehicles, 14 D-30 Howitzers, a Thin Skin B radar, and 14 unidentified vehicles were observed there during the first week of December.

[Redacted]

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Comment: The new equipment probably will mainly replace equipment lost during heavy fighting in the Herat area in November. Although the shipment is extensive, the new equipment probably does not point to an increase in Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Towraghondi transshipment point, moreover, normally supplies Soviet and Afghan units in western Afghansitan.

[Redacted]

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NEW RESISTANCE COUNCIL FORMED

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In a press conference on 12 December, Afghan resistance spokesman Gulbuddin Hekmatyar announced the formation of a resistance council--shoora--that will oversee political, information, cultural, health, education, and refugee affairs committees. The political committee is charged with unifying alliance offices abroad, representing the Afghan nation in world forums, and striving for recognition of the resistance by international organizations and nations. The other committees deal with providing health, education, and economic services both to Afghan refugees in Pakistan and to Afghans remaining inside Afghanistan. Gulbuddin also said that the resistance alliance had just started working to form a government in exile, and said the present alliance was "in the shape of a government."

[Redacted]

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Comment: Resistance leaders have recently been increasing their efforts to cultivate international opinion. Several resistance representatives have held press conferences and attended seminars on Afghanistan abroad--most recently in Sweden--to promote the


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TOP SECRET




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resistance cause. The formation of a functioning government in exile would lend the resistance alliance further legitimacy. 

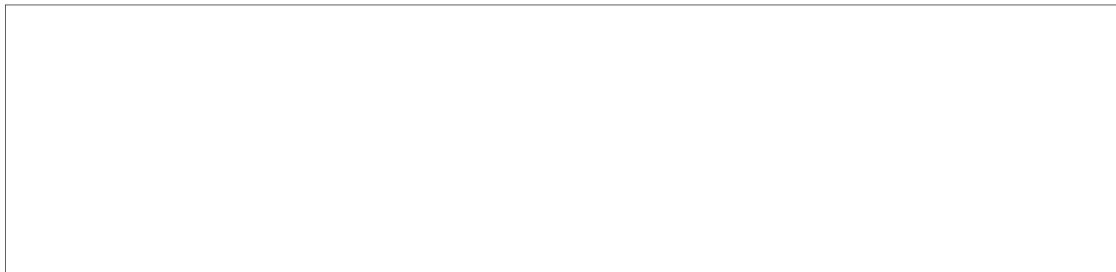
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NAJIBULLAH LIEUTENANT TAKES OVER AT KHAD 


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Lieutenant General Ghulam Faruq Yaqubi, the First Deputy President of KHAD, has been named to head that powerful intelligence and security organization in the wake of former KHAD chief Najibullah's promotion to PDPA Central Committee Secretary. Yaqubi, a West German-trained career police officer, has been one of Najibullah's principal deputies since 1980. A Parchami and a candidate Central Committee member since 1983, he was raised to full membership last month. 

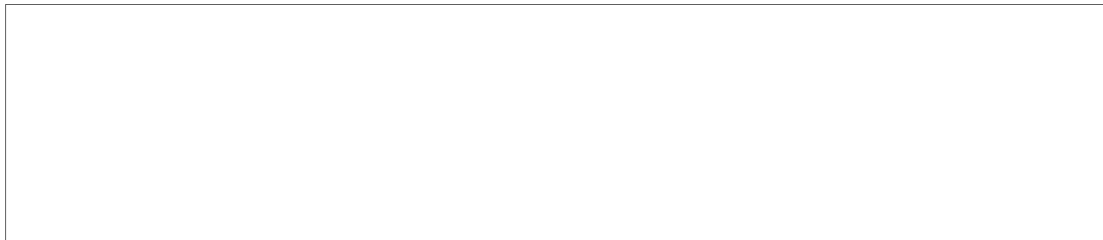
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As head of the Criminal Police Division in the Ministry of Interior under Daoud, Yaqubi probably played an active role in the 1978 Communist coup but, like other Parchamis, was imprisoned for a period under Taraki and Amin. Yaqubi has a brother, also a Parchami, who has served in Karmal's cabinet and may still be a minister without portfolio. 

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REFUGEE AID UPDATE (U)

Pakistani officials report that the number of Afghan refugees entering Pakistan increased sharply during the summer and fall, partly as a result of heavy fighting in Afghanistan's eastern provinces. Islamabad claims



17 December 1985
NESA M 85-10234CX
SOVA M 85-10216CX

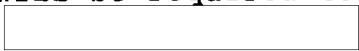
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TOP SECRET



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an increase of 75,000 officially registered refugees between May and October, bringing the total to some 3 million (including 300,000 unregistered refugees). In a new estimate of food needs for refugee programs, Islamabad reports that a minimum of 500,000 metric tons of wheat will be required to adequately feed refugees in 1986.



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Contributions to the World Food Program (WFP) in Afghanistan have fallen from a high of 431,306 metric tons in 1983 to 322,500 tons in 1985. Several countries, including Canada, France, West Germany, Australia, and the US, have indicated that they are either considering or have decided to increase their food contributions for 1986, according to US Embassy reporting.



Comment: Islamabad's estimate of food requirements contrasts sharply with the estimate of 350,000 metric tons made in a joint WFP/UN High Commission on Refugees study. Although increases in donations will probably reverse the declining trend in contributions, total contributions are unlikely to reach the 500,000 tons that Pakistan claims are required.



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IN BRIEF

-- Successful insurgent attacks against Soviet convoys are causing fuel shortages in Kabul, according to US Embassy reporting, and the city is virtually without kerosene. The shortages indicate that recent Soviet efforts to upgrade convoy security have had, at best, mixed success.



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-- [Redacted] insurgents in northern Afghanistan attacked a number of economic targets during October and the first half of November, including mining operations in Herat and Baghlan provinces, and natural gas pipelines in Jowzjan Province. The operations caused considerable damage and at least 20 workers were killed or captured.



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-- [Redacted]

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TOP SECRET

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

-- According to press reports, the Australian couple who were kidnapped by tribesmen in Pakistan last May are being held by the Kabul regime and may be brought to trial soon for "conduct not in conformity with the laws of Afghanistan." The Australian government has appealed to the Soviets, India, and UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar to bring pressure on Afghanistan to release the couple. [Redacted]

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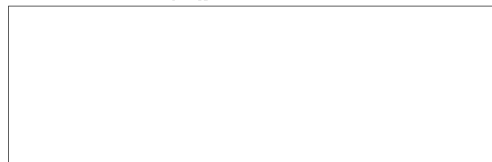
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17 December 1985
NESA M 85-10234CX
SOVA M 85-10216CX

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TOP SECRET



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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: THE INSURGENTS' MEDIA WAR

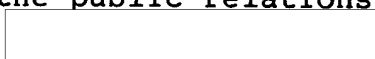


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by **NESA**

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The insurgents are showing more interest in using the international media to publicize their cause and are increasing their propaganda efforts inside Afghanistan as well. Insurgent leaders sent a delegation to the opening of United Nations General Assembly in October 1985, and even fundamentalist leaders are showing more interest in cultivating contacts with Western journalists. Significant problems remain in disseminating insurgent material inside Afghanistan--most notably in the operation of radio transmitting equipment--but insurgent propaganda is appearing in new areas of the nation. An improved insurgent media effort, in our view, would not only increase international attention to the resistance but raise somewhat the public relations cost of the war to the Soviets.



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Media Use in Afghanistan

the insurgent propaganda effort is stronger in the eastern provinces than elsewhere in Afghanistan because of the east's proximity to Pakistan.

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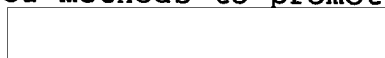
insurgents in northern and southern Afghanistan are having more success in getting materials from Pakistan with the increased use of trucks along infiltration routes.

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Resistance groups use a variety of methods to promote their cause inside Afghanistan.



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Cassettes. Cassettes are particularly effective because they are widely available and comprehensible to the largely illiterate Afghan population. Afghan civilians are also receptive to the tapes' pro-insurgent message, in our view. Jamiat-Islami leader Rabbani tapes speeches that exhort Afghans to support his resistance leaders, place the war in a religious context, and recount alleged Soviet atrocities. insurgents also record the sounds of their battles on tapes and play them to the local population to recruit members and to

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TOP SECRET

[Redacted]

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convince party leaders in Peshawar that they deserve to receive arms. [Redacted] Iranian-made cassette tapes lauding the resistance and the Ayatollah Khomeini are also widely available in the Hazarajat region--where most Afghan Shias live.

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[Redacted]

Leaflets. [Redacted] most of the Peshawar-based political parties distribute written materials widely within eastern Afghanistan. The materials are usually sent from Pakistan by pack animal or truck. [Redacted]

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Although only about 10 percent of the population is literate, the leaflets reach a much wider audience because [Redacted] literate Afghans explain them to those who cannot read. Cartoons of evil Soviet troops, fawning Afghan Government officials, and courageous insurgents also have been effective. [Redacted]

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Radios. The insurgents have been largely unsuccessful in operating radio transmitters inside Afghanistan. French technicians from three French human rights organizations helped moderate insurgent groups set up one short-wave and 15 FM radio transmitters inside Afghanistan between 1981 and 1983, [Redacted]

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[Redacted] but only three of the original FM transmitters and the short-wave transmitter were operating intermittently in the Kabul and Panjsher Valley areas and in Paktia Province by 1984. The FM transmitter had a range of 30 to 50 kilometers; the short-wave transmitter had a range of 200 kilometers. Former Afghan radio technicians from Kabul developed broadcast programs consisting of prayers, commentary on the Koran, war songs, and news about the insurgency.

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[Redacted]

A lack of trained personnel and Soviet and Afghan Government military operations hindered operation of the radios. [Redacted] insurgent leaders in Peshawar often chose people to be trained by the French on the basis of their family connections or religious piety and not because of their technical competence. Moreover, some of the more competent trainees decided to stay in Pakistan because of the easier life. Finally, transmitters were damaged during the war because they were bulky and difficult to get out of harm's way. [Redacted]

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TOP SECRET

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This poster is one of many used by the resistance in Afghanistan. The Afghan maiden represents the outraged innocence of the nation at the hands of the Afghan torturers in the interrogation centers of KHAD. In the foreground, licking his lips, reclines Brezhnev, drinking wine--or is it blood?--one arm resting on a skull.

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17 December 1985
NESA M 85-10234CX
SOVA M 85-10216CX

TOP SECRET



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Insurgents have participated in radio broadcasts to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran. [redacted]

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[redacted] the insurgents help Iranians set up programs for the Revolutionary Islamic Voice of Afghanistan based in Mashhad, Iran. These programs stridently attack the Afghan Government as well as the United States. Insurgents also help Pakistani authorities broadcast pro-insurgent material on Radio Pakistan. [redacted]

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Cultivating International Opinion

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[redacted] insurgent leaders are becoming more skillful at using the international media. An Afghan resistance delegation, led by fundamentalist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and including a representative of each of the main groups, attended the opening of the UN General Assembly last October and was well received. The last significant effort by the insurgents to lobby at the UN was in 1980, when a delegation--split between supporters of former King Zahir and guerrilla leaders--was denied entrance to the General Assembly. The most recent delegation hopes eventually to challenge the Afghan Government's representatives at the UN and set a precedent for representation at other international forums such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference. [redacted]

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Even fundamentalist leaders are more interested in improving their image in the West. After attending the opening of the General Assembly, Gulbuddin held press conferences in California and West Germany. Gulbuddin also has been criticizing the West less often in his press conferences in Peshawar. [redacted]

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Jamiat representatives told US officials and French officials in 1985 that they would like to train insurgent reporters to use cameras to record fighting, expose atrocities, and document food and medical problems. The French Government says it is considering accepting about 20 candidates for such a program. [redacted]

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Nonetheless, insurgents still suffer from serious handicaps in dealing with public opinion, in our view.


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- Western journalists complain that the lack of a single resistance leader who can function as a spokesman for the resistance hampers their coverage. Although the newly formed resistance alliance recently designated a spokesman, media efforts remain uncoordinated.
- The more dynamic resistance leaders with military experience inside Afghanistan seldom leave the country to promote their guerrilla struggle.
- Journalists report that they are still subjected to anti-Western harangues by fundamentalist leaders in Peshawar.
- The lack of an experienced cadre of Afghans familiar with the media has in many cases forced the resistance to rely on non-Afghan organizations for support. 

The Insurgents' Media Impact

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An improved insurgent media effort would, in our view, increase international attention to the resistance and raise somewhat the public relations cost of the war to the Soviets. Inside Afghanistan a better use of media techniques would help counter Afghan government propaganda and civilian war weariness, and boost morale. 

At the same time, a more active insurgent media effort internationally risks drawing attention to their disunity and anti-Western views. Moreover, Pakistan probably fears that a more active insurgent international media effort might further antagonize the Soviets and undercut Islamabad's control of the resistance. 

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TOP SECRET



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PUBLICATIONS BY THE INSURGENTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS



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Insurgent groups publish a number of English-language publications in Peshawar that are distributed to foreign visitors, particularly journalists. One of the more polished ones, "Afghan Realities," appears twice a month and includes interviews with insurgent leaders and Afghan military defectors as well as the usual claims of insurgent victories. Other publications, such as "Islamic Unity of the Mujahedin," the "Afghan Information and Documentation Centre," and "Afghan Information Center" appear sporadically. Most publications appear to give equal weight to all insurgent organizations, although the "Jehad-e-Afghan" focuses on Mojadedi, who heads the Afghanistan National Liberation Front. The Pakistani Government appears to exercise only loose control over the publications. Several European publications support the insurgents. The "Afghan Voice," published in London, consists of heavy-handed propaganda; but two French publications, "Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan" and "Defis," are relatively sophisticated publications whose tone is more convincing.



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