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The Afghan Resistance: Arming for Effectiveness [redacted] 25X1

An Intelligence Assessment

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NESA 85-10200
October 1985

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The Afghan Resistance: Arming for Effectiveness

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An Intelligence Assessment

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This paper was prepared by Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations.

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA, on

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The Afghan Resistance: Arming for Effectiveness

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 25 September 1985 was used in this report.

The Afghan insurgents' supplies of weapons and ammunition have increased considerably as the war has progressed, and their effectiveness in using them has improved. Although the weapons situation varies significantly among guerrilla groups, in general they:

- Better understand the capabilities of their arms because of training and combat experience.
- Waste less ammunition.
- Are integrating different types of weapons for better defense.
- Have improved their tactics and better coordinate their use of arms with those of other insurgent groups.

Training is the key to improving insurgent weapons skills. The need for instruction will remain high as the resistance grows and obtains more weapons and its commanders try to make the most effective use of their arms.

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More insurgent commanders, as they gain expertise, will also train their forces inside Afghanistan to be close to the fighting. Many guerrillas lack education and mechanical skills, hindering the scope and effectiveness of the training.

The resistance probably will continue to have the most success with weapons that can be transported easily, are simple to use and easy to maintain, and for which ammunition is readily available. Overall guerrilla effectiveness against the Soviets and Afghan regime forces, however, will depend as much or more on leadership, organization, and morale as on better arms and training. The insurgency's diffuse nature—particularly the lack of central direction and inability to coordinate resistance efforts—probably will forestall dramatic breakthroughs in the near term.

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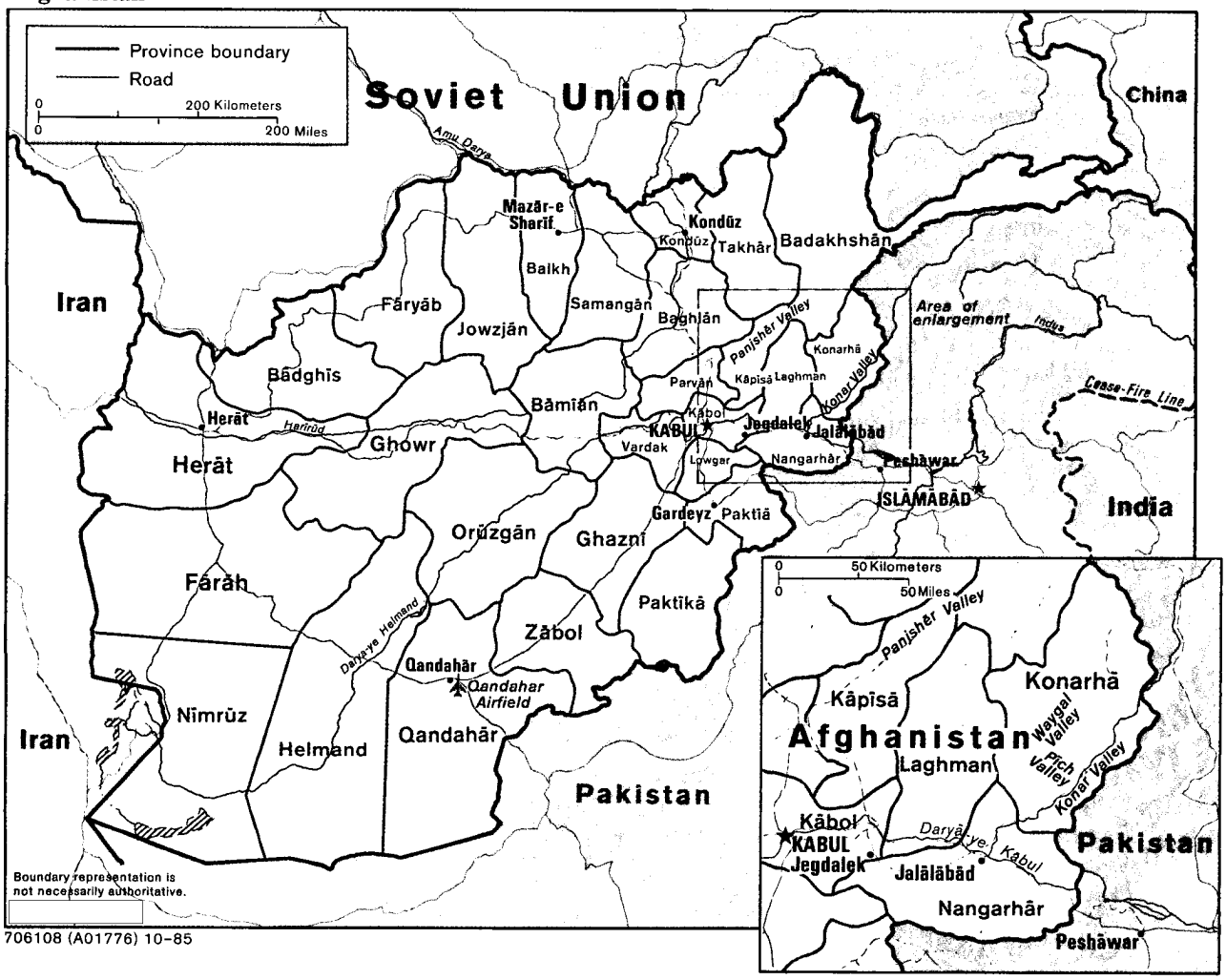

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The Afghan Resistance: Arming for Effectiveness

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The Afghan insurgents have acquired significant amounts of arms and ammunition since the Soviet invasion in 1979.[1] We believe that, in general, the guerrillas' performance with light infantry weapons has improved over time. Some arms, such as 20-mm guns and 14.5-mm antiaircraft guns, however, are too cumbersome for many groups to use effectively in areas where great mobility is required. Insurgent weapons skills also are uneven, and training will be a key factor governing the resistance's ability to absorb more and better arms.

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Over the past few years the insurgents have learned to use a variety of weapons that were unavailable to them at the time of the invasion. They have captured many from Soviet forces—including weapons like the AK-74 5.45-mm assault rifle, RPG-22 light antitank weapon, and AGS-17 30-mm automatic grenade launcher. Others—like mines, surface-to-air missiles, and 107-mm rockets—have come from foreign donors sympathetic to the resistance.

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some guerrillas also are using longer range antiaircraft weapons—20-mm guns—this year.

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Air Defense Weapons

Heavy Machineguns

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The insurgents' effectiveness with heavy machineguns (HMG) has improved markedly.

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early in the war the guerrillas fired at aircraft far beyond the range of their guns, wasted large quantities of ammunition, and failed to take the movement of the aircraft into account when aiming. Most guerrillas have learned from their mistakes, and more and better training has contributed to mounting success against low-flying aircraft.

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we estimate that the insurgents have destroyed or seriously damaged some 750 Soviet and Afghan aircraft since the invasion, mostly with 12.7-mm and 14.5-mm heavy machineguns. More aggressive Soviet air assault tactics, however, are making air defense more difficult, altering the insurgents' needs. Soviet aircraft also are using countermeasures more frequently, such as releasing flares, and conducting attacks from just outside the range of insurgent heavy machineguns with longer range guns and rockets.

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The 12.7-mm heavy machinegun, which has an effective range of about 1,000 meters, is available to most large resistance groups. Insurgents use the direct-fire weapon against low-flying aircraft. Compared to many air defense guns, it is light, can be quickly dismantled, and requires minimal training. Some insurgents, however, believe the 12.7-mm HMG is no longer as useful as earlier in the war because Soviet and Afghan helicopter pilots conduct their attacks from longer ranges.

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the 12.7-mm HMG successfully keeps helicopters at distances that reduce their accuracy against insurgent targets. Guerrillas in western Afghanistan claim they need more sophisticated antiaircraft weapons because of difficult terrain features, more frequent air assaults, and more aggressive Soviet tactics,

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Almost any heavy machinegun—unless it has a great range and is capable of very rapid fire—will be of limited effectiveness against fast-flying fixed-wing aircraft.

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Some guerrillas consider the 14.5-mm antiaircraft gun—which has a slightly greater range than the 12.7-mm HMG but is in the hands of fewer groups—too heavy for mountain fighting and the aiming

Table 1
Weapons Commonly Used by the Insurgents

	Characteristics	Role
AK-47	Caliber: 7.62 mm Weight, empty: 3.14 kg Maximum range: 2,500 m Effective range: 300 m (semi); 200 m (auto) Feed: 30-round magazine	Assault rifle
RPG-2	Caliber: 40 mm (launcher); 82 mm (warhead) Weight: 7.9 kg Effective range: 100 m Ammo type: HEAT Armor penetration (0° obliquity): 180 mm	Used against armor and other vehicles, especially in convoy attacks
RPG-7	Caliber: 40 mm (launcher); 85 mm (warhead) Weight: 7.9 kg Effective range (against armor): 300 m Ammo type: HEAT Armor penetration (0° obliquity): 330 mm	Used against armor and other vehicles, especially in convoy attacks
82-mm mortar	Caliber: 82 mm Elevation: 45° to 85° Weight in firing position: 56 kg Weight of projectile: 3.1 kg Maximum range: 3,040 m Minimum range: 90 m	Used defensively to protect bases and camps; offensively to harass posts and garrisons
SA-7a	Maximum operational range: 3.7 km Minimum operational range: 1 km Maximum effective altitude: 3,000 m Minimum effective altitude: less than 10 m Guidance: passive infrared homing Reaction time: 4 to 5 seconds Missile weight: 9.1 kg Warhead weight/type: 1.17 kg/HE	Hand-held, portable air defense. The insurgents also may be receiving the SA-76 which provides improvements in range and altitude.
82-mm recoilless rifle (B-10)	Caliber: 82 mm Weight: 71.7 kg Elevation: −20° to +35° Traverse: 360° Rate of fire (practical): 4 to 6 rounds/min Practical range (against armor): 400 m (est.) Armor penetration: 240 mm	Used defensively and offensively for direct-fire support
Mines	Types: vary (homemade, Chinese, Egyptian, Soviet, double-impulse varieties, Claymore-type, and others)	Used defensively to protect base areas, against convoys and road traffic, and to slow and control the movement of advancing enemy forces
12.7-mm heavy machinegun	Caliber: 12.7 mm Elevation: −10° to +85° Traverse: 360° Tactical antiaircraft range: 1,000 m Weight of projectile: 0.044 to 0.052 kg Weight of machinegun: 35 kg Weight of mount: 119 kg	Air defense and attacks on posts and convoys
14.5-mm antiaircraft gun	Caliber: 14.5 mm Elevation: −8.5° to +90° Tactical antiaircraft range: 1,400 m Weight: ZPU-2: 620 kg; ZPU-4: 1,770 kg Weight of projectile: 0.06 kg	Air defense

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system poorly adapted for use against fixed-wing aircraft,

the 14.5-mm antiaircraft guns are used mostly in the east, noting that the guns' bulk makes them useful only where the resistance is well organized.

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Surface-to-Air Missiles

Some insurgent groups are using SA-7 surface-to-air missiles effectively against helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, and,

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larger supplies of the man-portable missiles would dramatically improve their air defense capabilities.

the number of their aircraft lost to SA-7s will increase. The weapon serves as a powerful deterrent. Soviet aircraft pilots, made more cautious because of fears about the presence of SA-7s in Afghanistan, are using evasive tactics and countermeasures—such as dropping flares when taking off and landing.

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Despite some successes with surface-to-air missiles, less than 1 percent of the insurgents have them and appear able to make effective use of them. Larger supplies of the missiles probably would not improve resistance effectiveness substantially unless more guerrillas are trained in their use. The system itself is susceptible to countermeasures and limited in effectiveness by a guidance system that sometimes cannot discriminate spurious heat sources from targets. Moreover, its battery has a short life, and the weapon can be damaged easily while being transported through rugged terrain in Afghanistan.

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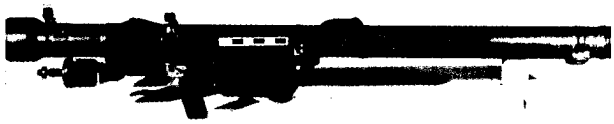

Figure 4. SA-7 surface-to-air missile

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SA-7 Missile System

The SA-7 is a man-portable, shoulder-launched surface-to-air missile system that can be used most effectively against slow, low-flying aircraft. The missile is aimed from a launch tube and locks on to a target through a passive infrared guidance system.

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Although the SA-7's portability makes it an ideal weapon for small, mobile insurgent groups, it has serious limitations. The system is not effective against high-speed targets. Missiles usually are fired from behind a targeted aircraft so they can home in on the heat from the aircraft's exhaust. The gunner, because he must be behind the aircraft, consequently cannot easily engage aircraft until the later stages of attack. The aircraft must be flying at a slow speed—usually no more than 500 knots—as well as at a low altitude if the missile is to overtake it. Because the SA-7 uses an uncooled infrared detector, it is vulnerable to countermeasures such as flares, and it cannot filter out other heat sources. It may, for example, home in on the sun or even geothermal heat if not fired at the proper angle. The missile's inability to distinguish between geothermal heat and the infrared radiation from aircraft significantly reduces its effectiveness against helicopters flying nap-of-the-earth.

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Party Affiliation and Arms Supplies

Insurgent supplies of weapons and ammunition vary widely. Most guerrillas obtain their supplies from the seven major Peshawar-based resistance organizations, but they also capture some from Soviet and Afghan forces, steal arms from rival groups, and purchase supplies directly in arms bazaars in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Foreign suppliers channel aid to the insurgents through the Pakistani Government, which in turn distributes it to the Peshawar organizations and, in some instances, to especially active field commanders. Most of the military supplies are provided to the fundamentalist Peshawar groups—which generally have the most active field commanders. The Peshawar organizations authorize arms shipments to the field commanders and arrange for transporting materiel to depots close to the border, where field
25X1 *commanders assume responsibility for moving it into Afghanistan.*

The Hizbi Islami (Gulbuddin) and Jamiat-i-Islami probably have the best armed insurgents in Afghanistan. Guerrilla groups belonging to Sayyaf's Ittihadia organization probably are also well supplied, but they are few in number and tend to be less active than Jamiat or Hizbi groups. Other insurgents claiming allegiance to fundamentalist resistance organizations tend to be comparatively well armed only in selected areas—usually the provinces bordering Pakistan. Guerrillas belonging to the moderate resistance parties, with some exceptions like the well-armed insur-
25X1 *gents in Paktia Province who belong to Gailani's Mahaz-i-Milli-Islami organization, are among the most poorly armed groups in Afghanistan.*

25X1 Even some large insurgent groups have difficulty obtaining and using SA-7s.

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Table 2
Alliance of Afghan Resistance Parties Based in Pakistan

Group	Leader	Ethnic Composition
Islamic Fundamentalist		
Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) (Gulbuddin)	Gulbuddin Hekmatyar	Pushtun
Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) (Yunus Khalis)	Mohammad Yunus Khalis	Pushtun
Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan (Ittihadia)	Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Pushtun
Jamiat-i-Islami (Islamic Society)	Burhanuddin Rabbani	Tajik
Moderate Islamic		
Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement)	Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi	Pushtun
Jabha-i-Najat-i-Milli Afghanistan (Afghanistan National Liberation Front)	Sibghatullah Mojadedi	Pushtun
Mahaz-i-Milli-Islami (National Islamic Front)	Sayed Ahmad Gailani	Pushtun

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Light Infantry Weapons

Rocket-Propelled Grenade Launchers

The rocket-propelled grenade launcher (RPG) has become the standard weapon used by the resistance to attack convoys. Guerrillas have used RPG-7s and RPG-2s against Soviet and Afghan trucks and armored vehicles since the beginning of the war, but their effectiveness has improved dramatically with training and experience. Early in the war the insurgents often missed targets because they failed to compensate for the rise of the rocket during its

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trajectory. By 1982 most had learned to aim at the lowest point on a target—the bottom tread on an armored vehicle, for example—improving their accuracy considerably. even some 14-year-old boys can aim and fire RPGs properly.

Although the rocket-propelled grenade launchers and rockets are easily portable by one person and can be fired quickly and accurately with little training, the short ranges of the RPGs—insurgents usually fire the weapons at a range of 75 to 100 meters from the target, —require a close approach to targets and limit their role in rear-guard actions or in defense of bases. Transporting large amounts of ammunition to support an attack also can be difficult for some groups. on average, guerrillas need four or five rockets to destroy or stop tanks and one rocket to disable armored personnel carriers.

Mortars

most guerrillas believe that their accuracy with the 82-mm mortar is improving but that they do not use them with much effectiveness in offensive roles. as a result of insufficient stocks of ammunition, many insurgents regard the weapons as useful only for defensive actions or for harrying government posts. For example, during 1984, insurgents in Paktika Province reduced their fire against the local regime garrison from a steady barrage to three to five rounds a day as a harassing action to conserve rounds. Moreover, even when mortars have been available, the insurgents have chosen other weapons and ammunition that can be transported more easily.

Most insurgents use mortars only in observed-fire roles because they want to see the impact of the mortar rounds on their target. many guerrillas, because they are illiterate and can neither read maps nor understand fire-direction plotting techniques, do not grasp indirect fire techniques. some groups are learning to use forward observers to direct the fire, communicating with the crew by signal mirrors.

Recoilless Rifles

since last March the insurgents have been receiving greater numbers of recoilless rifles. Some groups apparently consider them more useful than mortars in offensive operations, probably in part because the recoilless rifles are direct-fire weapons, and, although heavy, the weapons and their ammunition can be moved more easily. In our view, larger supplies of recoilless rifles and ammunition would improve the guerrillas' ability to launch attacks against Soviet and Afghan posts and convoys by providing them with additional direct-fire support for their attacks.

Multiple Rocket Launchers

an increasing number of guerrillas in eastern Afghanistan consider the Chinese-made 107-mm multiple rocket launchers and rockets excellent for barrages against Soviet and Afghan bases and airfields. The insurgents have also used the rockets against targets in Kabul City. Resistance forces probably like the rockets because they can be fired from long distances—some 8,000 meters—and because the rocket launcher system is lightweight and easy to move.

The 107-mm rockets are not very accurate. They are designed to provide suppressive fire over a wide area, not to hit a narrowly defined target. in November 1984 a Jamiat-i-Islami group fired 27 rockets at Qandahar Airfield, but none hit the target. Four rockets struck the Soviet barracks nearby, causing some casualties and sparking a large Soviet sweep in the area. US Embassy sources in Kabul report that 107-mm rockets fired at Jalalabad airport in April also missed their target by a wide margin. The guerrillas appear to have their most success with the rockets in urban areas like Kabul, where the rockets, although usually causing little damage, have a psychological impact.

Figure 5
Major Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan

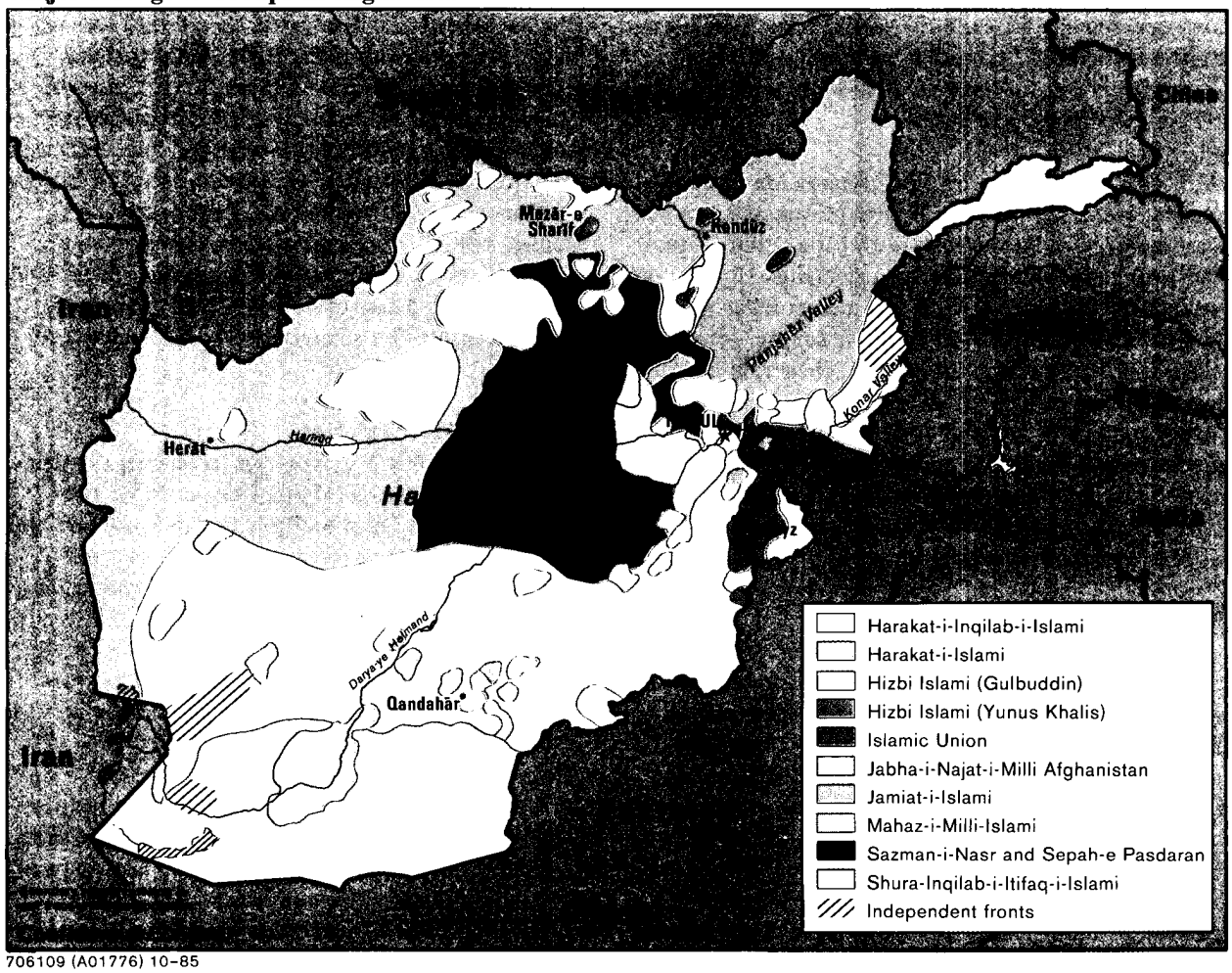

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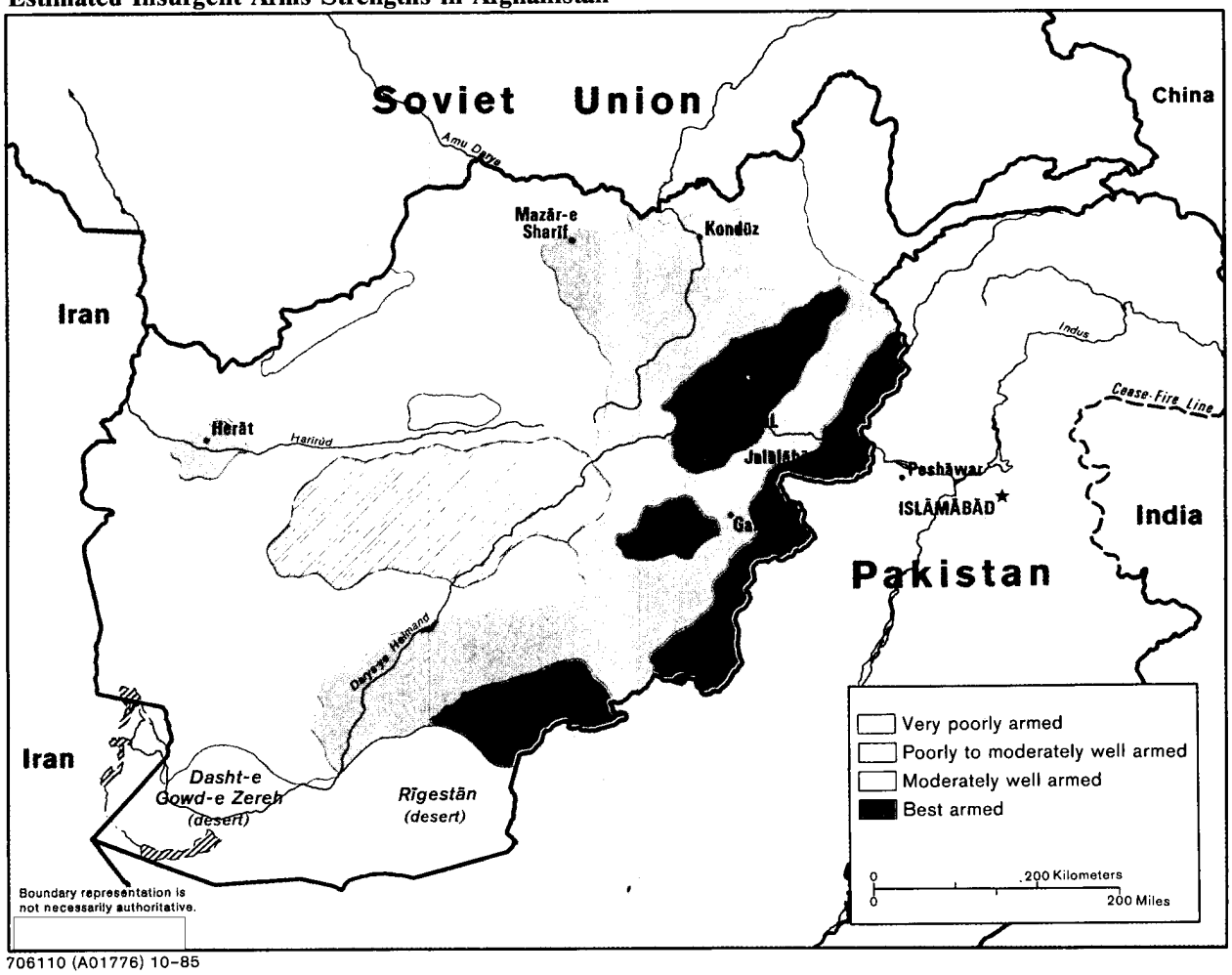
Figure 6
Estimated Insurgent Arms Strengths in Afghanistan



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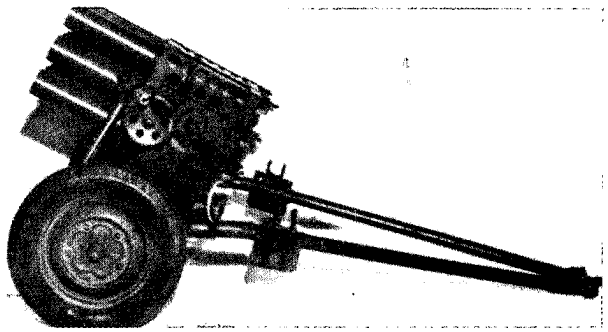

Figure 10. 107-mm multiple rocket launcher

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Small Arms

most insurgents say they have much larger supplies of small arms than ever before, but they complain about ammunition shortages. Although the guerrillas have a variety of rifles—some predating World War II—the majority use the Soviet 7.62-mm Kalashnikov assault rifle (AK-47), for which ammunition is most readily available. Some insurgents still use early 20th-century Lee-Enfield (.303) rifles, which, if in good condition and supplied with good quality ammunition, provide greater range than the AK-47. Many groups also use Soviet light machineguns, like the 7.62-mm Kalashnikov and 7.62-mm Degtyarev. In general, we believe the insurgents use small arms effectively.

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Minelaying

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The insurgents have gradually and significantly increased their effectiveness with mines over the last several years. Soviet and Afghan forces have a healthy respect for guerrilla mining techniques.

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Extensive mining in the Panjsher Valley area over the last few years has also resulted in a substantial number of Soviet and Afghan casualties.

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Resistance forces use a variety of mines, including plastic, metallic, and other types (including homemade mines). a widely used homemade device consists of 5 kilograms of plastic explosive, a battery, and a matchbox detonator having two electrical contacts on opposite sides of the box. When a passing vehicle crushes the matchbox, its electrical circuit is closed and the device explodes. Mines sometimes are made from undetonated Soviet and Afghan bombs.

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insurgents in Balkh Province are now using double impulse mines, which are effective against Soviet KMT 5 mine rollers.

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guerrillas in some areas also are using Claymore mines.

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Much of the insurgents' success with mines is due to improved tactics and minelaying techniques. In some areas—such as Herat and the Panjsher Valley—the mines have been used defensively to slow the advance of Soviet and Afghan forces.

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some Hizbi Islami insurgents now defend areas where they have planted mines. If hostile forces enter the area with dogs to detect or deactivate the mines, the guerrillas harass the Soviets and try to kill the dogs. In the Qandahar area insurgents have had some success in "double mining." Boobytrapped mines are laid with antivehicle mines in the hope that, if Soviet sweepers find and try to extract a mine, the boobytrap will kill them. Even when the mine and boobytrap are discovered and exploded in place, the road is damaged, hindering travel.

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Along the roads from Kabul to Gardeyz and Qandahar, insurgents have adopted another common mining technique to ensure the success of their convoy attacks. they mine not only the roads but also the shoulders where vehicles will detonate mines if they try to pursue insurgents in ambush positions.

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Mineclearing

Despite their growing proficiency with mines, the insurgents' equipment and efforts aimed at mineclearing generally tend to be rudimentary. Their inability to adequately clear Soviet and regime minefields has resulted in high casualties and prevented them from overrunning some posts and garrisons. Mines also cut off resistance escape routes, make the insurgents more vulnerable to attacks by hostile forces by slowing their movements, and cause resupply caravans to use alternative routes. New Soviet equipment that can lay hundreds of mines over broad areas—such as BM-27 multiple rocket launchers—probably will increase resistance problems with scatterable mines.

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The resistance has resorted to several tactics to clear mines. Some insurgents use animals to detonate the mines. an insurgent group in western Afghanistan drove a flock of 500 sheep ahead of them through a minefield. The insurgents cleared an escape route, but about 200 sheep—a major source of food and a sign of wealth—were killed. In other areas insurgents try to clear paths through minefields using a sharpened stick to poke the ground and probe for soft areas where the earth appears freshly dug. If they find a mine, they carefully dig around it, looking for a wire leading to other mines in a series with the first. After uncovering the single or series of mines, the guerrillas remove the detonators manually.

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Panjsher Valley insurgents use grappling hooks that they toss ahead of themselves and then pull in to trigger tripwire mines. The grappling lines usually consist of about 40 meters of nylon line attached to a four-pronged metal hook.

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Training

The number of insurgents with at least nominal skills in the use of various weapons available to the resistance has increased dramatically since 1980. Roughly 50,000 fighters now have, or will obtain by the end of this year, at least some formal training. Still, because time for instruction is limited and most Afghans are illiterate and lack mechanical knowledge, relatively few insurgents have been trained in sophisticated techniques.

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Most basic training courses

last about 10 days and include instruction in the use of small arms and light machineguns, RPG-7s, and mines, Groups that are especially active also receive training on heavier weapons—such as mortars, recoilless rifles, and heavy machineguns.

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The camps are staffed with insurgent instructors and are designed to provide basic training to about 200 guerrillas each month. [redacted]

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Since early in the war, some insurgent field commanders also have conducted training courses for their men during lulls in the fighting. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted] training in remote regions generally is poorer than in areas close to the border, in part because weapons and ammunition are in shorter supply. Few fighters from remote areas are sent [redacted] for instruction because of the cost and time required for the trip. [redacted] few of insurgent leader Ismail Khan's men have received any weapons training [redacted] because of the long distance [redacted]

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[redacted]

Tactics and Coordination

Guerrilla groups continue to depend mainly on small hit-and-run attacks. Insurgent commanders in several areas, among them Masood in the Panjsher Valley, Mohammad Anwar in Kabol and Nangarhar Provinces, and the late Zabiullah Khan in Balkh and Samangan Provinces, have successfully used lightly armed 15-to-30-man mobile groups to assault convoys and other Soviet or regime targets. The size of the groups allows them to better maintain the element of surprise and to react more quickly than larger forces. [redacted]

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Major resistance organizations, because of their increasing supply of instructors and to be closer to the fighting, are beginning to train more of their insurgents inside Afghanistan. [redacted]

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Time and Tactics

Most Afghans have a fundamentally different concept of time than Westerners. According to experts on Afghanistan, Afghans are indifferent to time; hurrying is foreign to them; and the timing of their activities is unpredictable and rarely planned. Their view of time complicates resistance operations and hinders the guerrillas' ability to wage war.

Because the notion of dividing a day into 24 segments is alien to the insurgents—watches are worn for ornamentation and prestige—scheduling and coordinating operations are difficult. An attack is launched when all members of a group are "ready"—a feeling, not a time. *insurgents, in general, keep time through their daily prayers. Prayer time usually differs among groups, however, so attacks rarely can be coordinated more precisely than within a two-hour time frame.*

The guerrillas believe that an attack begins when the first shot is fired. Random shots, *thus have occasionally started assaults before all groups committed to participate in an attack are in place.*

Insurgents in some areas of Afghanistan are learning to integrate different types of weapons for more effective attacks and to coordinate the use of their arms with those of other groups for better defense. insurgent groups in Balkh Province have developed a complementary air defense system that includes 18 12.7-mm and 14.5-mm heavy machineguns positioned at intervals in caves along a valley to concentrate or provide overlapping fields of fire on aircraft entering the area. Insurgent groups also are using a variety of weapons to attack convoys. insurgents in Kabol Province are augmenting their use of small arms, grenades, mines, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers with comparatively heavy weapons—82-mm mortars, 12.7-mm heavy machineguns, and 82-mm recoilless rifles—to provide air defense and direct-fire support for their attacks.

Insurgents in some areas are also developing better tactics to attack regime and Soviet posts, in part a result of improvements in their ordnance. insurgents in the Panjsher Valley have developed new tactics for assaulting government posts using paired mobile and stationary units of about 30 men each. The units target several outposts in the same general area, but with the intention of overrunning only one of them. Stationary units fire rockets, mortars, and 12.7-mm heavy machineguns from several locations to suppress the outposts' artillery, allowing the lightly armed mobile units to approach the outpost they are attempting to overrun with less worry about interdicting fire from other outposts. Guerrillas in Paktia Province have used a variety of weapons to keep Afghan units under siege, blocking their aerial resupply much of the time and preventing them from stopping insurgent infiltration.

Outlook and Implications

The insurgents probably will be able to maintain their supply routes into Afghanistan and increase their arms holdings. More weapons and better training in their use will enable many guerrilla groups to achieve greater tactical flexibility than earlier in the war. Larger supplies of ammunition already are helping some groups to prolong attacks against garrisons and stage larger, more effective attacks against convoys.

The weapons that probably will be the most useful for the resistance over the coming months will be those that can be transported easily by one to three men or a small number of animals, are simple to use and easy to maintain, and for which ammunition is readily available. Larger supplies of arms considered prestigious by the insurgents—such as surface-to-air missiles or 107-mm rockets—will enhance the performance of the resistance only as more guerrillas are trained to use them.

Variations in Tactical Effectiveness

The insurgents' ability to develop and implement effective tactics against Soviet and Afghan forces varies widely. In general, the groups in urban areas and regions where Soviet and Afghan forces stage more frequent operations tend to be the best fighters. [redacted] *a growing gap in effectiveness between the experienced guerrillas in the "war zones," who are becoming more professional and have access to better arms, and the amateurish conduct of some insurgents where fighting is less frequent. Some groups continue to fight according to traditional tribal warfare patterns—most of these tend to be part-time and will fight only so long as village life remains undisturbed. Other insurgents, including groups in the Hazarehjat and parts of northwestern Afghanistan, are trying to develop organizations imitating regular armies. Still others, most notably Masood in the northeast, are attempting to broaden the war by creating autonomous mobile groups capable of acting far from their bases. In theory, such light units will enable commanders to coordinate simultaneous attacks on communications axes.* [redacted]

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The insurgents most likely will continue to have high rates of success against Soviet and Afghan ground forces with RPG-7s and mines—weapons the Soviets and Afghans have often complained have caused the greatest percentage of their losses—and heavy machineguns will remain a mainstay of resistance air defense. New and longer range air defense weapons being made available to the insurgents—such as 20-mm guns—will allow the resistance to hit aircraft previously out of range and force Soviet aircraft to attack from greater distances. Nonetheless, the 20-mm guns may prove too cumbersome for effective insurgent use in areas where great mobility is required. [redacted]

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Training will be the key to improving insurgent weapons skills in Afghanistan. The rapidly growing number of guerrillas with arms expertise and the increased supplies of weapons and ammunition flowing into the country will allow more live-fire training. The need for instruction will increase as the resistance grows and obtains new weaponry and its commanders try to make the most effective use of the arms. [redacted]

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Increases in weapons holdings and training, however, will not alone improve the insurgents' long-term performance. The effectiveness of resistance operations will depend as much on leadership, organization, and morale. Relatively poorly armed but well-led and -organized groups—such as the Jamiat-i-Islami insurgents in Herat Province—have already demonstrated more success than their better armed counterparts. Resistance groups will have to take steps to achieve greater cohesiveness among their own members and foster at least tactical cooperation with other bands, although, paradoxically, the lack of a central insurgent authority means that, even if the Soviets decimated one or two key groups, they will not have dealt a knockout blow to the insurgency. [redacted]

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