



Directorate of Intelligence

Top Secret



Afghanistan Situation Report



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7 January 1986

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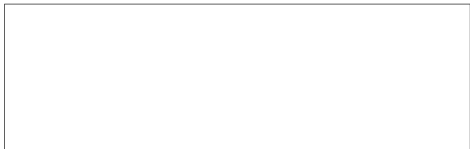
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**AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT
7 January 1986**

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SOVIET AND AFGHAN OPERATIONS NEAR BAGRAM AIRFIELD  1 25X1

Several thousand Soviet and Afghan troops are conducting air and ground operations in the Shomali Plain region, probably mainly in an attempt to prevent the insurgents from interfering with convoy traffic on the major transportation route between the Soviet Union and Kabul.



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ARTILLERY AUGMENTATION IN AFGHANISTAN  1 25X1

The Soviets are greatly increasing their holdings of automatic and self-propelled mortars in Afghanistan.



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PAKISTAN: PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS AFGHAN POLICY  2 25X1

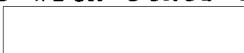
The Pakistan National Assembly approved Islamabad's policy on Afghanistan, although opposition parties will continue to use it as an antigovernment issue.



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GAILANI ELECTED RESISTANCE SPOKESMAN  2 25X1

As part of a planned leadership rotation, Ahmad Gailani became the new resistance spokesman on 1 January. His secular approach may create tension in relations with other insurgent leaders and with Pakistan.



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**SOVIET MINE WARFARE IN AFGHANISTAN: A PRELIMINARY
LOOK** [Redacted]

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The Soviets continue to improve and increase their use of mines in defense of their garrisons and airfields and to disrupt insurgent supply routes. [Redacted]

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SOVIET AND AFGHAN OPERATIONS NEAR BAGRAM AIRFIELD

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Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 Soviet and Afghan troops from garrisons north of Kabul are conducting operations in the northern Shomali Plain near Bagram Airfield,

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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The activity near Bagram is probably designed mainly to clear the strategic transportation route from the Soviet Union to Kabul, which was recently closed to traffic due to insurgent harrassment of supply convoys.

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[Redacted]

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ARTILLERY AUGMENTATION IN AFGHANISTAN

[Redacted]

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The Soviets have doubled the number of 82-mm Vasilek mortars in Afghanistan to 211 and quadrupled the number of 240-mm self-propelled mortars to 21.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Comment: The increase in heavy weapons reflects the recent Soviet preference for using firepower in lieu of manpower in Afghanistan. The mobility of the self-propelled and truck-mounted systems will enable the Soviets to respond to insurgent activity more rapidly and effectively.

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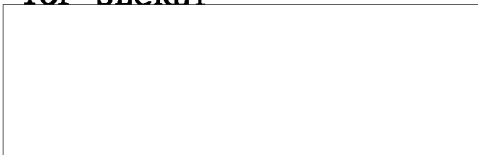
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PAKISTAN: PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS AFGHAN POLICY



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The National Assembly endorsed Islamabad's Afghan policy in the 24-28 December debate on foreign policy, the first since 1976. Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan told the joint session Islamabad believes the UN process is an adequate framework for arriving at a mutually acceptable settlement--even though it means excluding the resistance from a formal role in the negotiations. He confirmed that Islamabad would continue to reject direct talks with Kabul because such a move would legitimize not only the Kabul regime but the manner by which it was installed.



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Comment: The government almost certainly anticipated a more contentious session; the Assembly may have been preoccupied with the 30 December lifting of martial law. Many delegates are probably unenthusiastic supporters of Islamabad's Afghan policy, but they probably believe Pakistan has no better options.



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Elements in the extraparliamentary opposition almost certainly intend to develop Afghanistan as an anti-government issue. Several parties, including the leading opposition People's Party, say that Islamabad's argument against direct talks is fraudulent because the Zia regime itself is not legitimate.



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GAILANI ELECTED RESISTANCE SPOKESMAN



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Ahmad Gailani, head of the National Islamic Front, became the new spokesman of the Afghan resistance alliance on 1 January. His three-month term is part of the scheduled leadership rotation determined when the alliance was formed last May. Gailani is the first of the nonfundamentalist, traditionalist leaders to head the resistance. He will lead the resistance delegation to the Organization of the Islamic Conference now in session in Morocco.



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Comment: Gailani is the most secular in outlook of the exile leaders and reportedly would favor a pro-Western parliamentary form of government in Afghanistan, possibly including the retention of former King Zahir Shah, with whom he has close ties. He is well known in the West--where he has visited often--and makes effective use of media.



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Gailani's relations with Islamabad--as well as with fundamentalist resistance leaders--are reportedly strained, however, and his tenure may prove divisive. Members of Gailani's group frequently accuse the Pakistanis of diverting arms meant for the resistance and have leveled charges of corruption at senior Pakistani officials. The Pakistanis maintain that Gailani's group does not undertake a significant share of the fighting. 

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Gailani may try to use his position to remedy alleged inequalities in the distribution of humanitarian relief aid. The head of the new cross-border relief organization, Pakistan Welfare International, for example, is an Islamic fundamentalist who reportedly has been accused of favoring fundamentalist resistance groups in disbursing relief materials. 

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IN BRIEF

-- [Redacted] seven SU-24 fighter-bombers at a Soviet airbase in the Turkestan Military District. The last time the fighter-bombers were deployed to the Karshi/Khanabad Airbase, in April 1984, they supported combat operations in the Panjsher Valley. The SU-24 can deliver twice as much ordnance per mission as any aircraft in Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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-- The Australian couple held prisoner in Afghanistan since May were released on 27 December. They said they had been kidnapped in Pakistan and taken across the border, where they were picked up by a Soviet helicopter and flown to Kabul. The Afghan Foreign ministry claimed the regime knew nothing of the couple's whereabouts. [Redacted]

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-- A private West German aid organization has selected 60 Afghan insurgents--representing various resistance groups and almost every province--for an intensive media training course in West Germany. The course will begin this year, and the aid organization will provide each Afghan with a portable video camera for documentary work in Afghanistan. The Afghan Government cited the training program in a formal protest note lodged with West Germany over that country's "hostile propaganda campaign." [Redacted]

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-- The Afghan regime seems to be trying to bolster its international image by playing up its relations with India. In late December, Babrak Karmal received a delegation of Indian parliamentarians in

[Redacted]

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Kabul and Mahmud Barialay, secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan's Central Committee and Babrak's brother, reportedly met with Rajiv Gandhi in India at a ceremony celebrating the centennial of the Indian National Congress Party.

-- The Afghan Government recently announced that Ethiopia had agreed to the appointment of Nur Ahmad Khorami as ambassador--an apparent effort to raise the regime's diplomatic profile.

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PERSPECTIVE

SOVIET MINE WARFARE IN AFGHANISTAN: A PRELIMINARY LOOK
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The Soviets have used mines extensively in Afghanistan to combat the insurgency. They have employed mines to interdict insurgent supply and movement routes, to remove staging points for insurgent ambushes along roads where an open zone cannot be cleared, and to provide protection for outposts and airfields. In the past year, the Soviets have also improved their use of mines by testing new varieties, using new emplacement systems, and different minefield configurations. Insurgent countermeasures against Soviet mines have improved, but insurgent leaders are increasingly worried about the effectiveness of Soviet mine warfare. [Redacted]

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Development of Soviet Mine Warfare

The Soviets began minelaying operations to combat the insurgents in Afghanistan in July 1980. They first concentrated on the provinces along the Pakistani border in order to hinder insurgent resupply operations. The Soviets soon expanded their minelaying effort to areas around airfields, along key routes traveled by Soviet columns, and in potential ambush positions. [Redacted]

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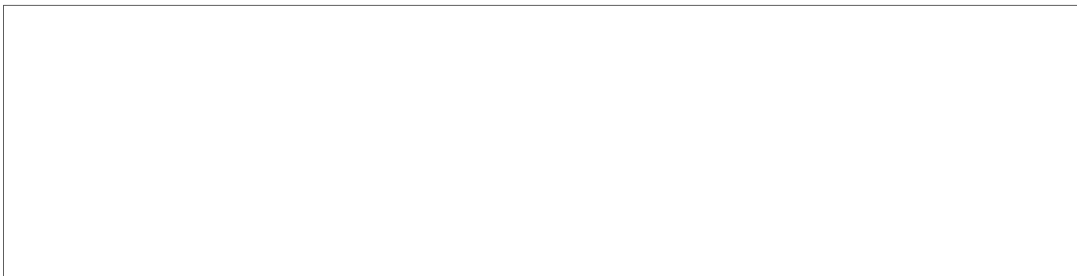
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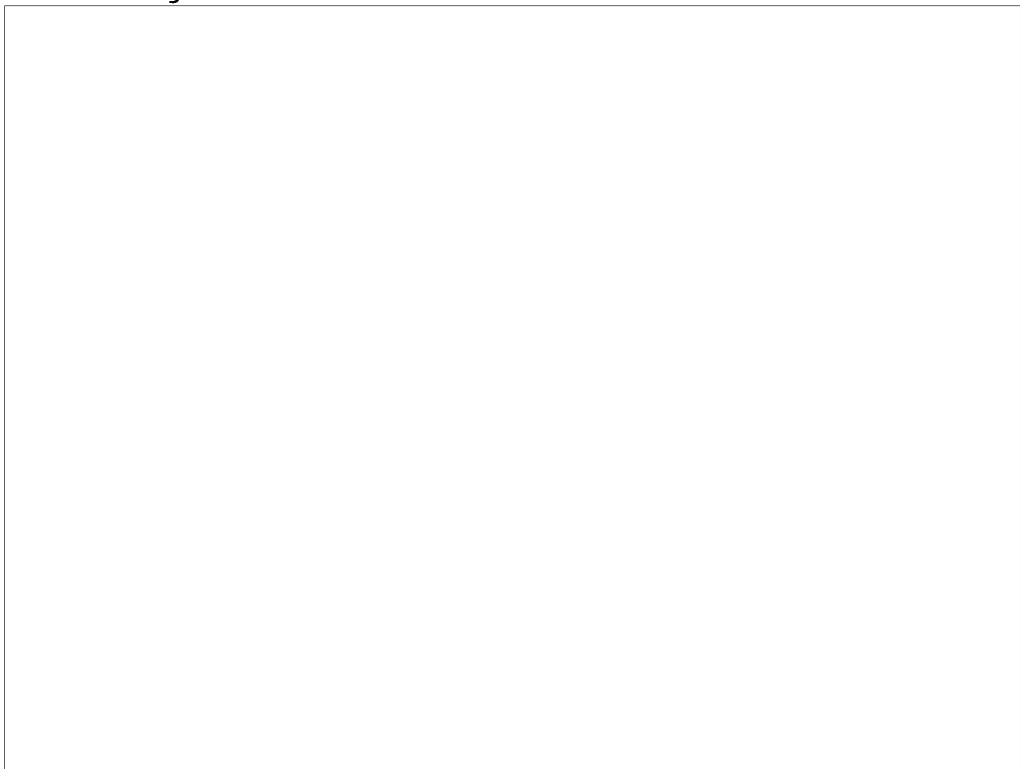


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Other new developments this year include:

--  earlier this year that the Soviets were using a new mine cluster. The cluster consists of one four-kilogram mine and several parrot-type anti-personnel mines, probably emplaced by artillery. Press reports in March indicate that the Soviets planted a new type of mine system after operations in a side valley of the Panjsher Valley near Rokheh. The system consists of a box of cells located three to four meters away from a cylindrical-shaped device. This is surrounded by six five-kilogram charges placed in a circle. The entire system is hidden underground.

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-- [redacted] during the summer the Soviets began using a vibration-detonated mine. The mujahedin claim that the mine is detonated by footsteps or the sound of a nearby voice. This could possibly be the mine with seismic sensors [redacted].
 [redacted] The mine with seismic sensors could be detonated selectively within a 10-kilometer range.

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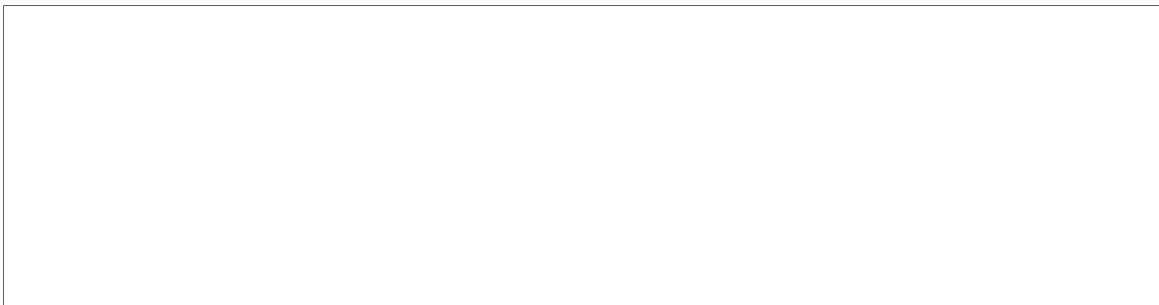
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-- In November the Soviets began using a new anti-personnel fragmentation mine. [redacted] unlike previous fragmentation mines, it does not need to be manually emplaced and can be delivered in percussion-fired canisters that sow up to 240 mines at a time. The system is mounted on the BTR-60, the BMP, or possibly on helicopters. It is not known if the new fragmentation mine can easily be defused. [redacted]

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Insurgent Countermeasures

When unable to avoid Soviet minefields, the mujahedin develop methods to defeat them. In order to overcome tripwire mines, such as the POMZ-2 antipersonnel mine, the insurgents toss grappling hooks attached to approximately 40 meters of nylon line ahead of themselves during an assault. The hooks are then pulled back to catch on the wires used to trigger the mines. Also, the mujahedin use a weighted net made of primacord to blow up area-planted mines. [redacted]

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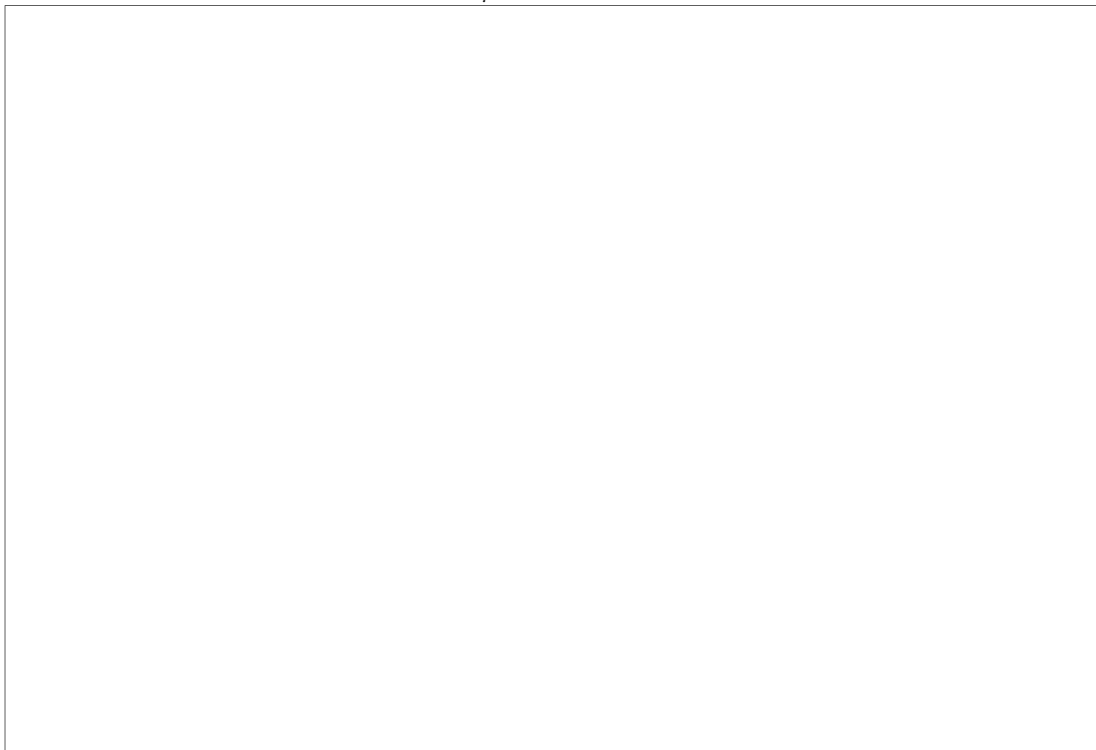
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Outlook

Soviet use of mines against the insurgents will increase. The continued introduction of command-detonated mines, coupled with covering fields of fire, should improve the effectiveness of mine use by the Soviets. Minelaying in the countryside and along routes of movement will continue to be a nuisance to the insurgents and, as the Soviets develop more lethal mines that are increasingly difficult to detect and defuse, effective countermeasures will also be more difficult. However, the Soviets are a long way from their goal of using mines to close the major insurgent supply and escape routes. Moscow would have to adopt more active measures, such as quick-response forces, to significantly limit insurgent mobility.



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