



Directorate of
Intelligence

Top Secret



Afghanistan Situation Report



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1 April 1986

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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OPERATIONS IN THE BORDER PROVINCES

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Soviet forces conducted operations in several border provinces last week

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PERSPECTIVE

IRAN AND THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE: FOSTERING REVOLUTION IN THE HAZAREHJAT

[Redacted]

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Iran is increasing its influence in the Hazarehjat region of central Afghanistan, where Tehran-backed insurgents are in ascendance. The spread of Khomeini-style fundamentalism in Afghanistan could affect Moscow's willingness to negotiate a pullout of its forces.

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EVIDENCE OF INCREASED USE OF AFGHAN ARMY FORCE IN COMBAT OPERATIONS



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increased participation of Afghan Army forces in combat operations near Jalalabad, Gardez, and Herat. The Kabul regime has been under pressure from the Soviets to have its troops take a more active role in the fighting.

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OPERATIONS IN THE BORDER PROVINCES

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Soviet forces conducted operations in several Afghan border regions last week, although poor weather hampered Soviet airstrikes [Redacted] and temporarily interrupted some ground force movements near Qandahar. The Soviets launched [Redacted] sorties against targets in Kabul and Paktia Provinces and the Panjsher Valley on 24 March.

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PERSPECTIVE

IRAN AND THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE: FOSTERING REVOLUTION IN THE HAZAREHJAT

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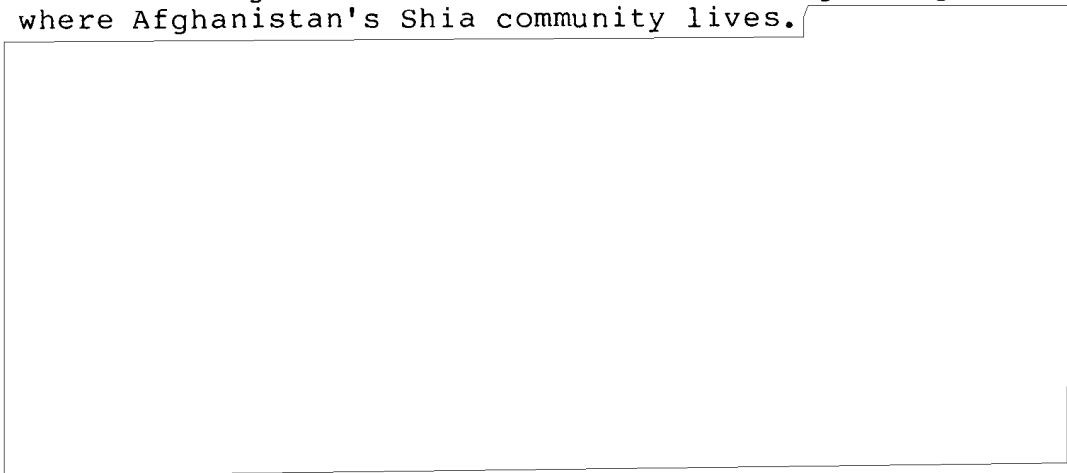
Iran is increasing its influence in the Hazarehjat region of central Afghanistan, where Tehran-backed Shia resistance groups are in ascendance. Although Iran's attempts to establish a Khomeini-style government in the Hazarehjat have increased fighting among local Shia resistance groups, as well as between Shia insurgents and Sunni groups that transit the region, Shia groups would be able to concentrate on fighting Soviet and regime forces if the gains of pro-Iranian groups in the Hazarehjat could be sustained. Fear of the spread of Khomeini-style fundamentalism in Afghanistan remains an important factor in Soviet policy calculations. It helps account for Moscow's reluctance to make concessions during ongoing UN-sponsored peace talks.



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Tehran Increasingly Active

Recent evidence suggests that Iran has been consolidating its influence in the Hazarehjat region, where Afghanistan's Shia community lives.



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As evidence of Moscow's concern over Iranian subversive efforts in the Hazarehjat, Kabul protested Iranian behavior twice since the disappointing visit in February of Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister



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Hazarehjat Society

The Hazarehjat is one of the most backward and isolated regions of Afghanistan. Because of their Mongoloid features, separate dialect, and minority (Shia) religion, the Hazaras have traditionally been regarded by other Afghans as the lowest social class.

[redacted] the social structure of this poor rural area is based on a tenant-farming peasantry cultivating land for large landowners. [redacted]

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Members of all classes of Hazara society who have lived in Kabul tend to become Marxists or Islamic revolutionaries,

[redacted] Many, especially the Islamists, have returned to the region and provided the leadership for the most radical of the fundamentalist insurgent organizations: Sazman-i-Nasr and Sepah-e Pasdaran. With little affection for the traditional social institutions of the Hazarehjat, the Islamists are attempting to foster Iranian-style revolution--in our view, with some success. [redacted]

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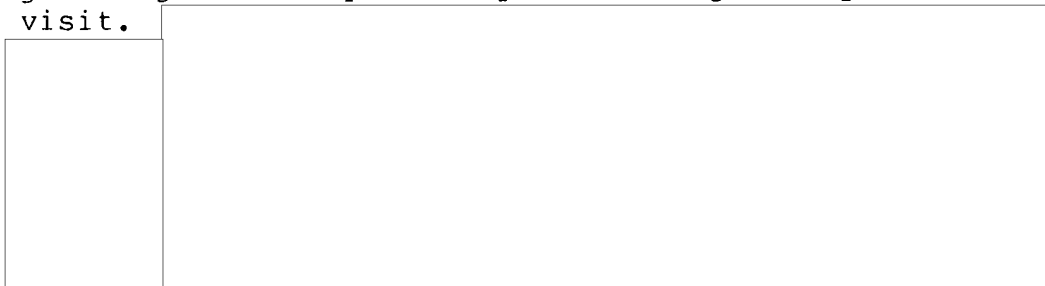
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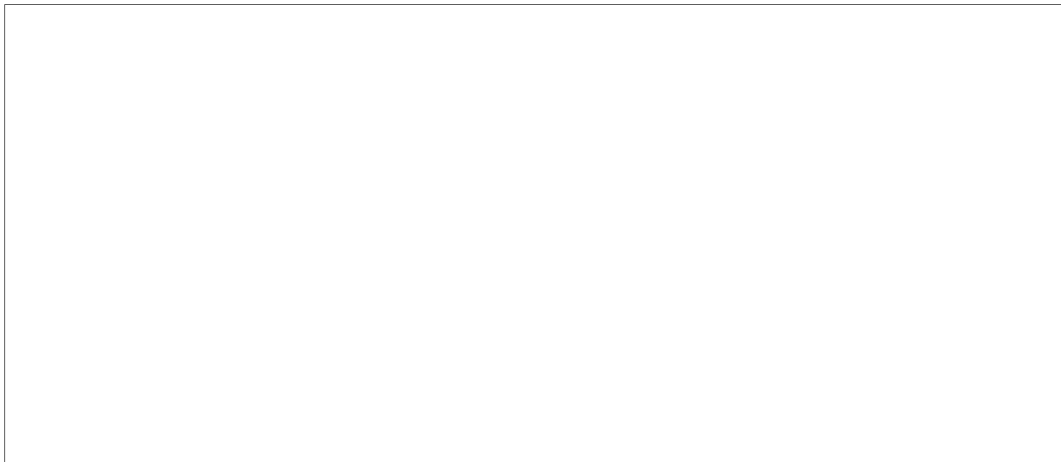
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Korniyenko to Tehran. A week after Korniyenko's departure, Kabul issued a formal protest to Iran for sending a delegation of Iranian clerics into Afghanistan to promote Islamic revolution--a demarche we believe Moscow probably inspired in light of gloating Iranian press reports during Korniyenko's visit.




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How Important is the Hazarehjat?

The region has strategic value to the resistance. Some insurgent groups active in western and northern Afghanistan--such as Jamiat-i-Islami groups in Herat, Balkh and Kapisa Provinces--use supply routes that pass through the area. The Hazarehjat's terrain, moreover, provides the insurgents with a natural redoubt from which to strike Soviet and Afghan convoys and installations on the highway encircling the region. The Soviets would be at a disadvantage during such assaults because the region's mountainous terrain makes vehicle land transit difficult and hampers effective helicopter support operations. 

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To date, the resistance in central Afghanistan has not played a significant role in the war effort. Attacks



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Excerpts From Kabul's Foreign
Ministry Statement

The Iranian Charge d'affaires in Kabul was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on 3 March and handed an unusually strong protest note. Kabul complained that:

- During the current year (21 March 1985 - 20 March 1986), Afghan territory "has been violated 63 times by the ground and air forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a result of which 20 people have been killed, 245 people wounded, and 19 people abducted to Iran...."
- "Despite repeated requests, the propaganda, publicity, and organizational operations against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan have not been reduced, but the hours of hostile broadcasting of the Iranian radio and television against [us] have been increased and...is [sic] full of hostile articles and concocted subjects against [us]...."
- "The authorities and leaders of [Iran] have expanded their interference in organizing, provoking, and instigating the resident Afghans and counterrevolutionary elements in Iran to such an extent that religious leaders, instructed by the high authorities, enter the territory of [Afghanistan] in order to carry out unfriendly secret actions which the Iranian media extensively publicize. Such actions are taken at the instruction of such personalities as Ayatollah Montazeri...."
- "Some Iranian media...admit that the Islamic Republic of Iran gives broad material, financial, political, and military assistance to the Afghan counterrevolutionaries and exposes those persons at the Presidency, the

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Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps who are in charge of and oversee these actions. It is due to the involvement of these authorities that the Afghan counterrevolutionary bands have been organized in Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, Yazd, Esfahan, and other parts of Iran, and are sent to Afghanistan for murder, plunder, and subversion...."

-- "It has become necessary once again, in the light of evidence and documents at hand, to state [Afghanistan's] strongest protests at the Iranian state [and ask it to] reconsider its position and method of approach...and not allow, by supporting reactionary and US-linked bands, to take up positions within the ranks of US imperialism and its collaborators...."

-- "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan states that if the authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran do not cease, resolutely and effectively, the course of their interference and aggressions in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, conditions will be imposed on us such that we shall defend our national sovereignty and security at any cost. In that case undoubtedly the responsibility for their inevitable and dangerous consequences will rest with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

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against the Soviets and the Afghan government have been minimal. Much of the resistance's potential in the Hazarehjat has remained unfulfilled because of fighting among the numerous Iranian-backed groups. There also has been fighting between Shia groups and the mainstream Sunni insurgents based in Pakistan that seek to transit the region. [redacted]

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Major Resistance Groups

Four major Shia groups compete for power in the Hazarehjat:

-- Shura-Inqilab-i-Itifaq-i-Islami (Shura) is a traditionalist, Hazara coalition of some 30 groups that united during local uprisings in 1979 against the Communist government. Once dominant in central Afghanistan, its influence has declined because of internal weaknesses that caused the departure of many of its original member groups, and the growth of more revolutionary Iranian-supported groups in the Hazarehjat.

-- Harakat-i-Islami (Harakat) operates on the periphery of the Hazarehjat region. It is the most active in fighting the Soviets in the Qandahar region. Sheikh Asef Mohseini, the head of Harakat, is based in Qom but reportedly gets no arms from Iran. He is highly suspicious of revolutionary Islamic doctrine [redacted]

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[redacted] Its members are mainly of Tajik, Pushtun, and Turkmen ethnic stock, with some Hazaras.

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-- Sazman-i-Nasr (Nasr), an Iranian-backed group, seeks the establishment of a Khomeini-style society in the Hazarehjat. Formed in 1972 by Shia students in Kabul, it moved to Iran in 1979 and became active in the Hazarehjat in 1980. We believe most Hazaras who are attracted to Nasr view it as more nationalist than pro-Iranian.

-- Sepah-e Pasdaran (Pasdaran), the most revolutionary of the Hazara resistance groups, is a direct instrument of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards [redacted] Its recruits are young Hazaras, uprooted from their

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villages, often without family ties and dissatisfied with the traditional social structure in the Hazarehjat. [Redacted]

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Relations With Other Resistance Groups

The Pakistani-based resistance alliance has a history of troublesome relations with Shia groups in the Hazarehjat, partly because of Iranian meddling.

[Redacted]

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Even Hizbi-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin--whose staunchly fundamentalist and anti-Western values most closely mirror Iran's--is reportedly unhappy with Iran. He objects to the low level of support to Peshawar-based resistance groups.

[Redacted]

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Individual Nasr commanders, however, make ad hoc transit arrangements with local Sunni commanders, because the Shias are not adequately supplied by Iran. The arrangements often include the collection of "tolls" from comparatively better-supplied Sunni groups.

[Redacted]

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The agreement provided for safe passage for Jamiat convoys to Balkh and Jowzjan Province, in exchange for a percentage of ammunition, medicine and money for Shia commanders along the convoy route. The system appeared to be working well in late 1985, according to press reports.

[Redacted]

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Revolutionary Groups Take the Lead

[Redacted] revolutionary groups backed by Iran, Nasr and Pasdaran, have displaced those in the Hazarehjat which are more traditionalist --a development we believe will give Iran an important foothold in the country.

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[Redacted]

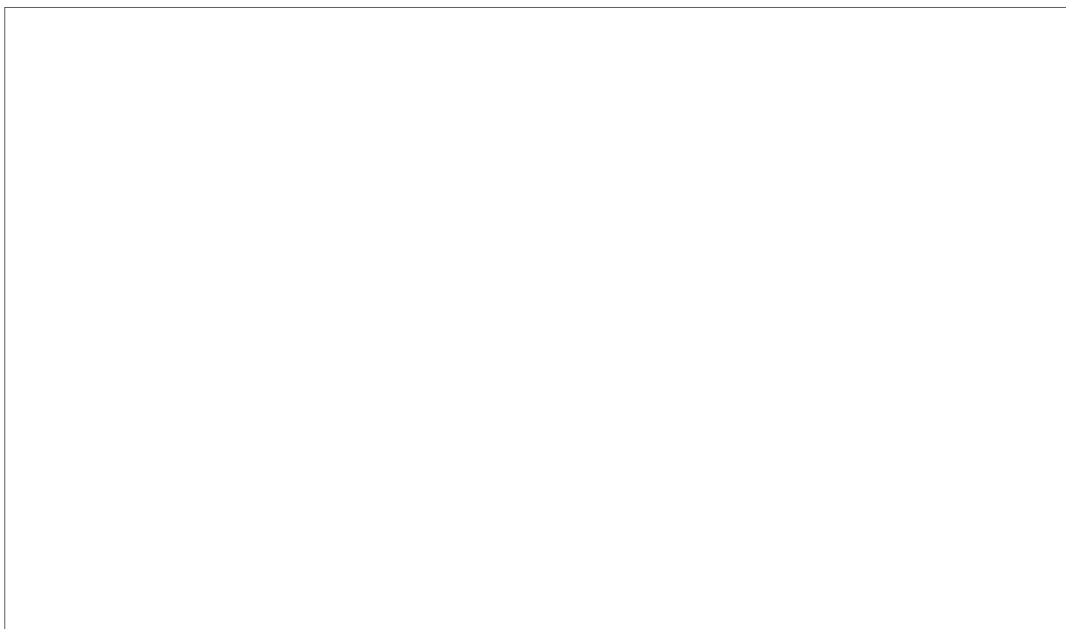
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Implications...

...For the Mainstream Resistance. We do not expect transit through the Hazarehjat--which has always depended on local and somewhat fragile arrangements--to become significantly more difficult. Because Iranian materiel support is minimal, we believe Shia insurgents have come to rely on Sunni groups that transit the area for needed supplies and weapons. Only a major breakthrough in the Iran-Iraq war, which would allow for a significant increase in Iranian materiel support for Shia groups in Afghanistan, would alter this assessment. 

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...For the War. The growing capabilities of Iranian-trained forces operating in the Hazarehjat are likely to increase military pressure on the Soviets somewhat, but Shia groups probably will not make a substantial difference to the course of the war until Nasr and Pasdaran can sustain and further consolidate their position. Shia groups would then be able to concentrate on fighting Soviet and regime forces--a development we believe would be a major step toward opening a front west of Kabul. Soviet-Afghan forces now have only two outposts in the region--at Chaghcharan and Bamian--but a significant increase of antiregime activity would force them to garrison more units. 

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...For a Peace Settlement. Growing Iranian control and intervention in Afghanistan would further complicate progress toward a settlement, in our view. Fear of rising pro-Iranian fundamentalism in Afghanistan was one of the reasons for the Soviet invasion and remains an important part of the Soviet policy-making calculus.



although Kabul and Moscow appear to have softened their demand that an Iranian-Afghan bilateral agreement on non-interference be a part of a settlement, Kabul still insists that Iran "sign off" on any peace agreement.

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Iran, which has consistently called for a unilateral Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan to be followed by the creation of an Islamic state in Kabul, has not backed down from these demands. Although we do not believe Tehran currently could torpedo a peace agreement--the level of military activity in the Hazarehjat remains only a nuisance to the Soviets--a substantial increase in Iranian-sponsored attacks would make Moscow more reluctant to make concessions.

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participation of Afghan Army forces during combat operations with Soviet units near Jalalabad, Gardeyz, and Herat. The Afghan Army conducted sweeps while the Soviets apparently provided mainly air, artillery, and advisory support. Earlier this year, an Afghan regimental-size task force was observed operating on the Shomali plain without substantial involvement of Soviet ground units (see map).

[Redacted]

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Jalalabad Operation

[Redacted] elements of the Afghan 11th Infantry Division at Jalalabad were observed [Redacted]

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preparing for sweep operations. The divisional task force--which consisted of four armored companies (40 tanks and armored personnel carriers), two field artillery battalions, two BM-13 multiple rocket launcher batteries, a command post, and at least 250 additional trucks and vehicles--relocated to an area about 35 km southeast of Jalalabad [Redacted]

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One to two companies of the Afghan forces were subsequently seen on patrol in the river valley extending south from the deployment area. Soviet air support for this operation evidently was provided by MI-8 and MI-24 helicopters from Jalalabad, where a higher-than-usual number had been observed [Redacted]

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The sweep operation concluded [Redacted] and Afghan units were back in garrison [Redacted]

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Gardeyz Operation

[Redacted] Afghan forces conducted sweeps on two sides of a mountain ridge about 60 km northeast of Gardeyz [Redacted] Preparations

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for the operation were observed  when an Afghan command post was established near a Soviet signal battalion, and Afghan units left their post at Gardeyz. The Afghan units, including an infantry regiment, armored company, and two field artillery battalions, swept the river valley north of the ridge. A Soviet air assault battalion from Gardeyz, positioned in the rear area, did not appear to be directly involved in the sweep operations. South of the mountain ridge, another group of Afghan forces moved up a river valley. This task force comprised at least three battalion-size armored groups and one field artillery battalion, probably drawn from the 25th Infantry Division at Khowst. A concurrent increase in MI-8 and MI-24 helicopters at Gardeyz suggests that Soviet units at the airfield supported the ground operations. 

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Herat Operations

A small Afghan sweep operation with Soviet artillery support was observed in Herat  Three armored companies maneuvered south of Herat, and the Afghans also established at least four field artillery batteries on the edge of the city. North of Herat, the Soviets set up an artillery fire support base. 

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