



Directorate of
Intelligence

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Afghanistan Situation Report

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6 May 1986

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT [Redacted]

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AFGHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN [Redacted]

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The Iranian Government has been forced recently to request international aid to support the some 1.8 million Afghan refugees in Iran because of falling oil prices and the cost of the war with Iraq.

[Redacted]

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PRAISE AND PROMOTIONS FOR THE AFGHAN ARMY [Redacted]

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The Afghan and Soviet media are giving public praise to the Afghan Army for its recent successes in Paktia Province. [Redacted]

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NEW PARTY CHIEF IN AFGHANISTAN [Redacted]

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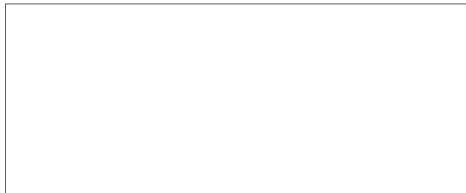
Former intelligence chief Najibullah has been appointed to replace Babrak Karmal as head of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. His new role probably will not enhance the regime's public image or improve Kabul's ability to prosecute the war. [Redacted]

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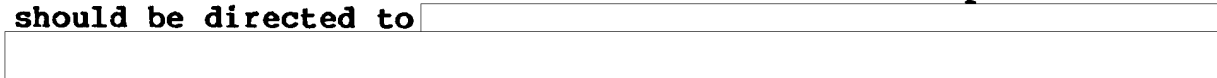
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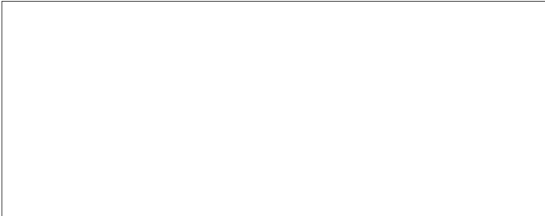


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AFGHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN



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Over 1.8 million Afghan refugees--1.1 million since the 1979 Soviet invasion--have settled in Iran, [redacted]

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[redacted] About 10 percent of the refugees are received in centers, while the majority have a more uncertain position as illegal aliens. The Iranian Government--which had previously refused international aid for the refugees--will receive \$11 million this year from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and has also sought aid from the World Food Program (WFP). [redacted]

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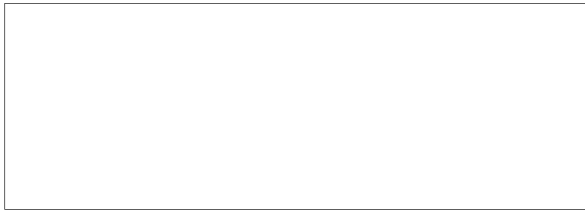
COMMENT: Deteriorating economic conditions in Iran--caused by falling oil prices and the cost of the Iran-Iraq war--have forced Tehran to overlook its fear of outside interference and seek international aid for the Afghan refugees. The refugees' position in Iran probably will become more difficult because of high



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unemployment and growing shortages of consumer goods. Tehran probably wants to stop the flow of refugees into Iran but cannot, given the long open border. [redacted]

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PRAISE AND PROMOTIONS FOR THE AFGHAN ARMY [redacted]

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The Afghan and Soviet media are playing up recent Army successes in Paktia Province. In a speech given in Khowst, Defense Minister Major-General Nazar Muhammad praised the army for its destruction of the nearby insurgent camp in Zhawar Killi. Kabul-based soldiers who participated in the attack were greeted on their return by government officials including Prime Minister Keshtmand. The Soviets reported in Krasnaya Zvezda how Afghan Army units cleared the insurgents' supply base. In a related move, the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan recommended expediting promotions for eligible personnel in certain military specialties and for some who have participated in combat over the past year. [redacted]

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COMMENT: The extensive publicity and unusual promotions come at a time when the Soviet Union is pressing the Afghan Army to assume more combat responsibilities and are probably intended to boost army morale. [redacted]

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IN BRIEF

-- [redacted] Soviet and Afghan forces are destroying houses, farms, and orchards to create a security belt around Qandahar. When completed, the belt will have some 37 squad-size outposts linked together with minefields. The belt will hamper insurgent attacks in Qandahar and make it more difficult for insurgents to enter and exit the city. [redacted]

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-- The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), which will meet in Moscow in mid-May, has planned an "Afghan solidarity day". [redacted]

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-- Iranian media, in a commentary on Najibullah's recent appointment as General-Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, labeled the new leader a "KGB pawn." The Iranians charged that Moscow's decision to remove his predecessor Babrak Karmal is an indication of a "fundamental instability" in the Soviet policy toward Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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-- Polish activists in Warsaw chanted "hands off Afghanistan" during pro-Solidarity Front demonstrations on 1 May. The protest was broken up by Polish security forces, and two British journalists were arrested. [Redacted]

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-- [Redacted] the insurgent base camp at Zhawar Killi shows extensive damage from the Afghan regime assault more than a week earlier. The guerrillas evidently have returned to the camp but probably will not attempt to rebuild completely the large complex. [Redacted]

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-- [Redacted] Ethiopian leader Mengistu last week expressed concern about the Soviet role in possibly ousting Babrak Karmal. The replacement of Karmal as Afghan Communist Party chief on 4 May probably will increase Mengistu's disquietude over Soviet intentions toward him. [Redacted]

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PERSPECTIVE**NEW PARTY CHIEF IN AFGHANISTAN**By OCR

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Former intelligence chief Najibullah's appointment as head of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to replace Babrak Karmal will not improve the regime's ability to prosecute the war and could aggravate factionalism. For now, Karmal remains as chairman of the Revolutionary Council--the regime's executive branch--and as a member of the PDPA Politburo. Najibullah's good relations with the Soviets while head of the intelligence service suggest he will be a compliant partner, although his background probably will reinforce the regime's image as a Soviet-controlled and narrowly based police state.

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Unusual Activity in Kabul

Najibullah's appointment--publicly praised by Soviet leader Gorbachev--followed two days of substantially increased security measures and unusual military activity in Kabul. According to the US Embassy, Afghan troops--mostly unarmed--blocked off a large section of the capital around the presidential palace and key government buildings on 2 May. Soviet combat forces were observed at several points throughout the city on 3 May. Kabul airport was closed to civilians, and air activity over the city was unusually light.

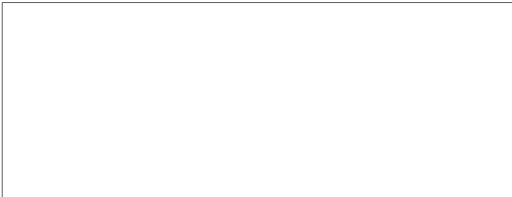
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Moscow probably had decided before Karmal's return to Kabul on 1 May that he should be replaced, but we do not know whether the Soviets intended this to occur immediately or whether events forced their hand. Moscow probably would have preferred to have avoided the public display of military power in Kabul associated with the changeover--and the appearance of instability in the regime that it conveyed--but may have felt compelled to make the switch because of a deterioration in Karmal's health, internal Afghan plotting, or a desire to have a leader more capable than Karmal of forcing unpopular policy choices upon a recalcitrant government and military establishment.

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Up the Ladder

Najibullah's appointment in November 1985 as a Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) Central Committee gave him a much broader role in the regime and expanded his already considerable power. By overseeing the Ministries of Defense and Interior, as well as the Afghan intelligence service (KHAD), he was able to consolidate his control of all of the regime's security forces. 


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In addition, Najibullah's new position helped to give him broader experience in party affairs and increase his public visibility, already considerable for a secret police head. Moscow may have seen such expanded horizons as essential preparation for assuming the top post in the regime. Last year a Soviet diplomat in Kabul acknowledged the similarity between Najibullah's rise and Yuri Andropov's movement from KGB chief to party secretary to General Secretary. 

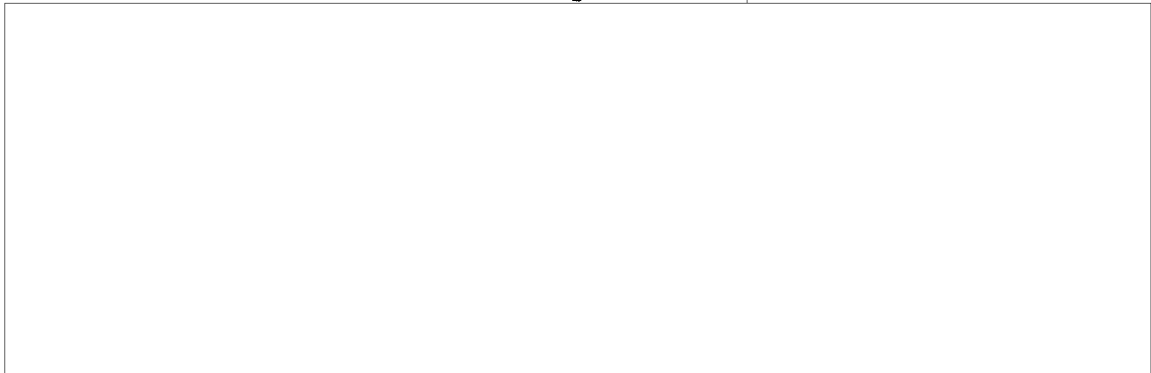
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The Man from KHAD

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The new Secretary brings numerous professional, party, and personal assets to his position. As leader of KHAD since the Soviet invasion, Najibullah presided over the growth of the secret police into a powerful and feared organization, which has at times overshadowed the party itself. He also built a personal reputation for ruthlessness and relative competence. 

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Najibullah has traveled frequently to the USSR for consultations. A fervent Communist, he has impressed those around him as fanatically pro-Soviet in



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outlook. [Redacted]

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Parchamis and Other Strangers

Links to others in the PDPA hierarchy may have eased Najibullah's rise to power. As an early party activist--he was a student organizer for Karmal in the late 1960s--Najibullah has longstanding ties to most high-ranking members of the Parchami faction. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Najibullah's links to other Parchami luminaries also go well back in the PDPA's turbulent history. Along with Nur Ahmad Nur, Anahita Ratebzad, Mahmud Baryalai, and Babrak Karmal, Najibullah was sent into ambassadorial exile by the Khalqis in 1978. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Problems Ahead?

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Despite his many assets, Najibullah will have to overcome his reputation as violently anti-Khalqi to become the successful, effective leader the Soviets apparently want. [Redacted]

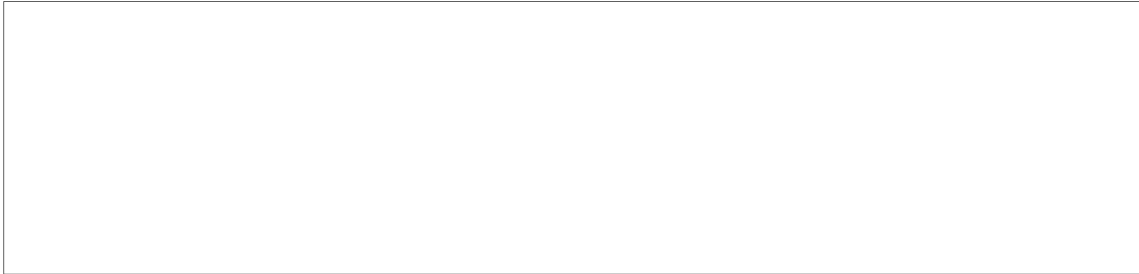
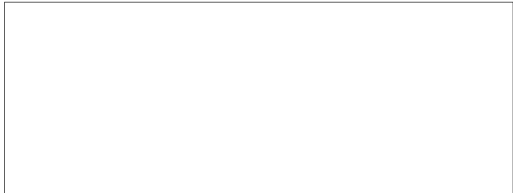
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In his efforts to mold the PDPA into a more effective governing body, Najibullah may also encounter resistance from the party's old guard. While the PDPA Politburo is hardly a Kremlin-style gerontocracy, seven of the 12 full and candidate members are a full decade older than the new Secretary and may resent his rapid advancement.

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Outlook

The Soviets probably deemed Najibullah most capable of molding Afghan security forces and the PDPA into a more effective, cohesive unit. The Soviets probably hope such a new, improved regime would prove capable of shouldering a greater share of what they expect to be a long, grinding struggle--permitting, in effect, an "Afghanization" of the war.

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The elevation of a former secret police head, in our view, will reinforce the regime's image as a Soviet-controlled and narrowly based police state, however. Najibullah's appointment is unlikely to draw back many of the Afghans who have fled the country over the past six years, and the Afghan resistance almost certainly views his accession to power as offering no improvement over Karmal.

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Najibullah's accession will almost certainly complicate Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan and will not advance diplomatic efforts to reach a compromise solution to the war. Efforts to destabilize Pakistan can also be expected to continue with Najibullah's rise to power.

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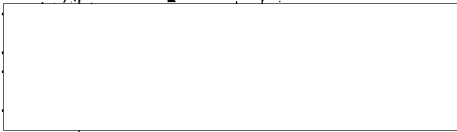
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