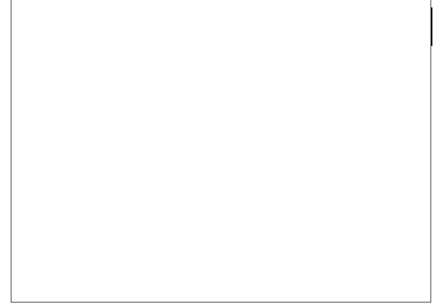




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# Afghanistan Situation Report



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15 July 1986

79-81 IMC/CB

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**AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT**



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**CONTENTS**

**TEMPO OF FIGHTING INCREASES NATIONWIDE**



2 25X1

Combat activity increased in Afghanistan during the past two weeks in Kabul, Herat, and Qandahar city, although a month-long offensive against insurgent forces in northern Afghanistan seems to have ended.



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**SOVIETS SEEK TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY ON AFGHANISTAN**



2 25X1

Recent talks between General Secretary Gorbachev and French President Mitterrand underscored the Soviets efforts to convince international opinion of their seriousness and willingness to be flexible in seeking an Afghan settlement.



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**NINETEENTH PARTY PLENUM MAKES LEADERSHIP CHANGES**



3 25X1

Leadership changes made at the 19th Central Committee plenum of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan suggest that General Secretary Najibullah is moving slowly to consolidate his power because of factionalism and Soviet concerns.



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**VISIT OF WESTERN JOURNALISTS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE**



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A West German and an American journalist were recently invited to visit Afghanistan, but their accounts of the situation probably will be disappointing to the Kabul regime.



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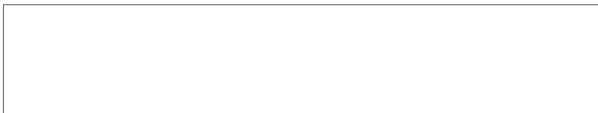
**SOVIETS CONCERNED ABOUT AFGHAN ISSUE AT NAM SUMMIT**



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The Soviet Union and Afghan regime are trying to



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prevent the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from becoming an issue at the 8th Nonaligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Harare in August. 

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**IN BRIEF**


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**PERSPECTIVE**

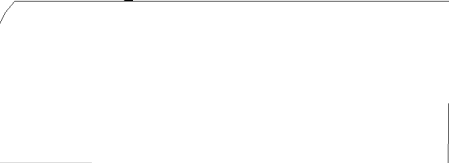
**THE WAR IN JUNE** 

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Combat intensified in June as Soviet and Afghan forces conducted antiguerrilla operations in the areas of Konduz, Herat, and Qandahar in an attempt to preempt expansion of insurgent activity in the north and to consolidate control of key urban areas. 

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**TEMPO OF FIGHTING INCREASES NATIONWIDE**



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the major combat operation against Panjsher Valley commander Masood's forces in Takhar Province was ending, after almost a month-long campaign that probably achieved little. Earlier in July--during the second phase of the offensive--Afghan forces swept the road from Taloqan past Keshem in Badakhshan Province, probably in an attempt to preempt insurgent operations as well as find and destroy resistance base camps. Numerous air and artillery strikes were conducted against guerrilla positions



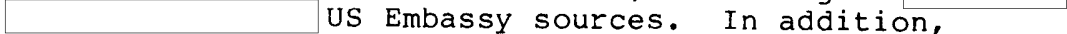
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Fighting in urban areas intensified in July. Soviet and regime forces have extensively shelled Herat city for several weeks, according to US Embassy sources. The heavy combat evidently has also closed sections of the road to Kabul between Herat and Shindand. In Qandahar, Soviet and Afghan forces apparently have gained control of much of the city. They have intensified efforts to impede insurgent infiltration in the area.



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The resistance stepped up activity in the northeastern provinces during the past two weeks. The US Embassy in Kabul reports that an insurgent attack on Bagram airbase last week resulted in four helicopters destroyed or damaged. The guerrillas also attacked three Soviet columns recently--two in the Shomali Plain, one south of Kabul, and another north of the Salang Tunnel--causing considerable vehicular damage and significant Soviet casualties, according to



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US Embassy sources. In addition, numerous explosions and firefights occurred in Kabul during this period; these probably were mainly the result of insurgent activity although factional fighting within the regime may also have contributed.



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**SOVIETS SEEK TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY ON AFGHANISTAN**



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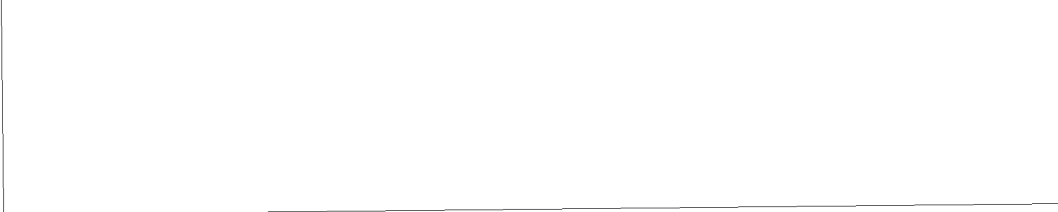
General Secretary Gorbachev again referred to Afghanistan as a "raw wound" during French President Mitterrand's visit to Moscow earlier this month and







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blamed US pressure on Pakistan for lack of progress toward a settlement.   


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**COMMENT:** Gorbachev's statement   
 underscore Moscow's efforts to convince international opinion of the USSR's seriousness and willingness to be flexible in seeking an Afghan settlement. Moscow probably hopes that its representations will create pressure from France and other Western governments on the US and Pakistan to make concessions. By presenting the US as the main obstacle to a settlement, the Soviets also hope to drive a wedge between the US and its European allies. While the proposal for a UN-sponsored conference could indicate that Moscow is exploring alternatives to the Geneva negotiations for a settlement, Kabul's participation in the proximity talks provides considerable public relations benefits and is likely to remain an important component of Soviet strategy.   


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**NINETEENTH PARTY PLENUM MAKES LEADERSHIP CHANGES** 

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Leadership changes made at the Central Committee plenum of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan on 10 July suggest factionalism and Soviet concerns are preventing General Secretary Najibullah from moving quickly to consolidate control. Former General Secretary Babrak Karmal and Prime Minister Keshtmand retained their positions on the Politburo, but four full members of the Central Committee were replaced: Asadulla Sarwari, Abdul Ghafar Azad, Mohammad Anwar Farzam, and Major General M. Yasin Sadegi. Minister of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs Solayman Laeq--a Najibullah supporter--was elevated to full Politburo membership; two other Najibullah proteges were appointed candidate members. Full membership in the Central Committee rose from 53 to 95, while alternate membership increased from 27 to 50. 

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**COMMENT:** The retention of Babrak and several of his key supporters on the Politburo indicates that Najibullah does not yet feel confident enough of his control to move against them. Moscow, concerned that continuing unrest in the party could harm the war effort, may also have urged Najibullah to move cautiously. Soviet Central Committee Secretary Korniyenko probably relayed this message during his visit to Kabul last month. The extraordinary increase in the size of the Central Committee and the appointment of less doctrinaire members are intended mainly to pack the committee with members beholden to Najibullah and to improve the regime's image before UN-sponsored peace talks resume later this month.

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The New Politburo of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan

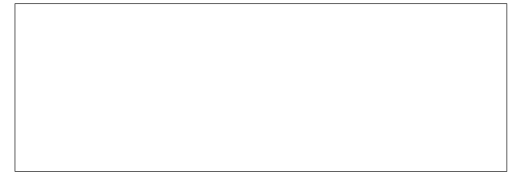
	<u>Age</u>	<u>Faction</u>	<u>Date of Appointment</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<u>Full Members</u>				
Najibullah	39	Parchami	Jun 1981	PDDA Central Committee General Secretary.
Karmal, Babrak	57	Parchami	Dec 1979	Refuses to leave political scene, supporters have split Parchami faction.
Keshtmand, Soltan Ali	54	Parchami	Dec 1979	Part of ruling triumvirate, ouster rumored.
Laeq, Solayman	55	Parchami	Nov 1985	Promoted to full member July 1986, close to Najibullah
Nur, Nur Ahmed	49	Parchami	Dec 1979	Anti-Khalqi plotter 1978-79, may be jealous of Najibullah.
Rafi, Mohammed	42	Parchami	Jun 1981	
Ratebzad, Anahita	55	Parchami	Dec 1979	Strong Babrak supporter, boycotting office duties.
Watanjar, Mohammed Aslem	40	Khalqi	Jun 1981	Enemy of Najibullah, but fellow Pashtun.

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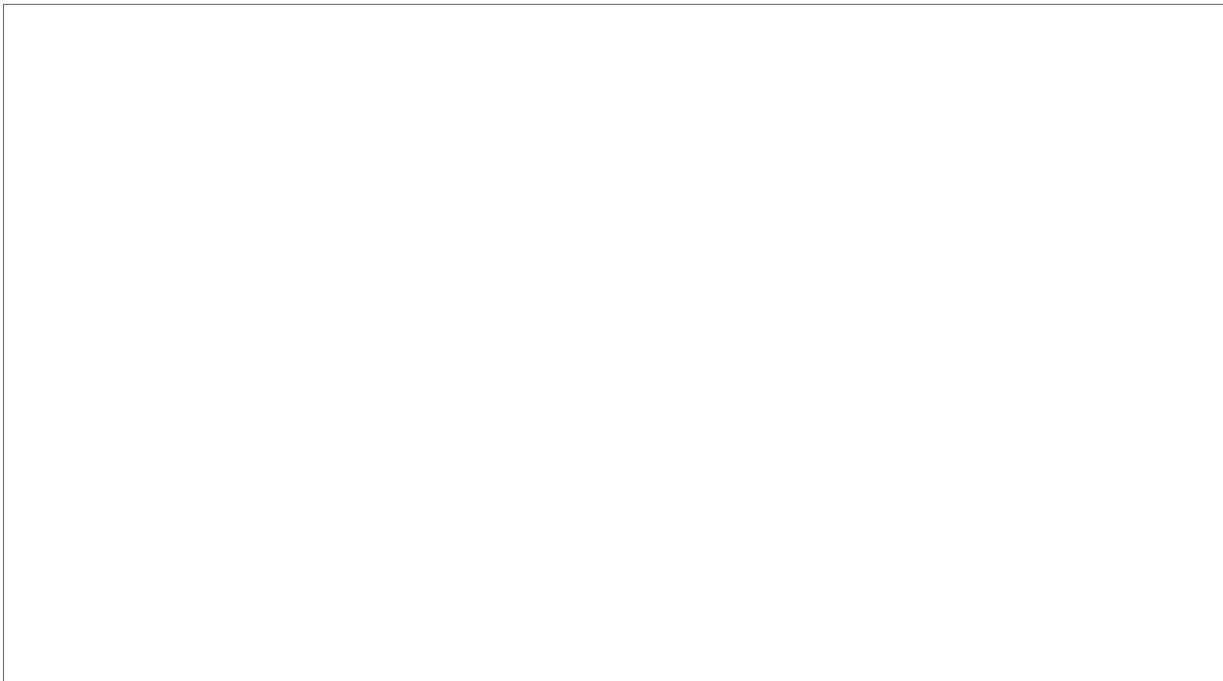
Ziray, Saleh 50 Khalqi Apr 1978  
Mohammed

Candidate Members

Baryalai, Mahmud	42	Parchami	Dec 1979	Babrak's younger brother, anti-Khalqi plotter, 1978-79
Karwal, Mir Sahib	?	Parchami	Jul 1986	Longtime party workhorse, ethnic Pashtun.
Mohammed, Nazar	58	Khalqi	Nov 1985	Defense Minister.
Razmjo, Abdul Zohur	34	Parchami	Dec 1982	
Yaqubi, Ghulam Faruq	42	Parchami	Jul 1986	Close friend and confidant of Najibullah; his deputy (1980-85) and successor as head of the intelligence service.



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[Redacted]

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**SOVIETS CONCERNED ABOUT AFGHAN ISSUE AT NAM SUMMIT** [Redacted]

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The Soviets are concerned that the war in Afghanistan may be one of the main subjects debated at the 8th Nonaligned Movement (NAM) summit scheduled for late August in Harare/

[Redacted]

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According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan has lined up support for a strong antiSoviet statement on Afghanistan at the summit but does not want an Afghan resistance alliance delegation to attend. [Redacted]

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**COMMENT:** Despite efforts by the Kabul regime--and Moscow--to pigeonhole a critical statement on Afghanistan at the summit, the final communique will probably again call for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan. It would be the third time that this Third World forum has indirectly criticized the Soviet Union for its role in Afghanistan. Islamabad's opposition to a resistance alliance presence at the summit probably stems from a concern that a fight to gain admission could undermine support for the antiSoviet resolution. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

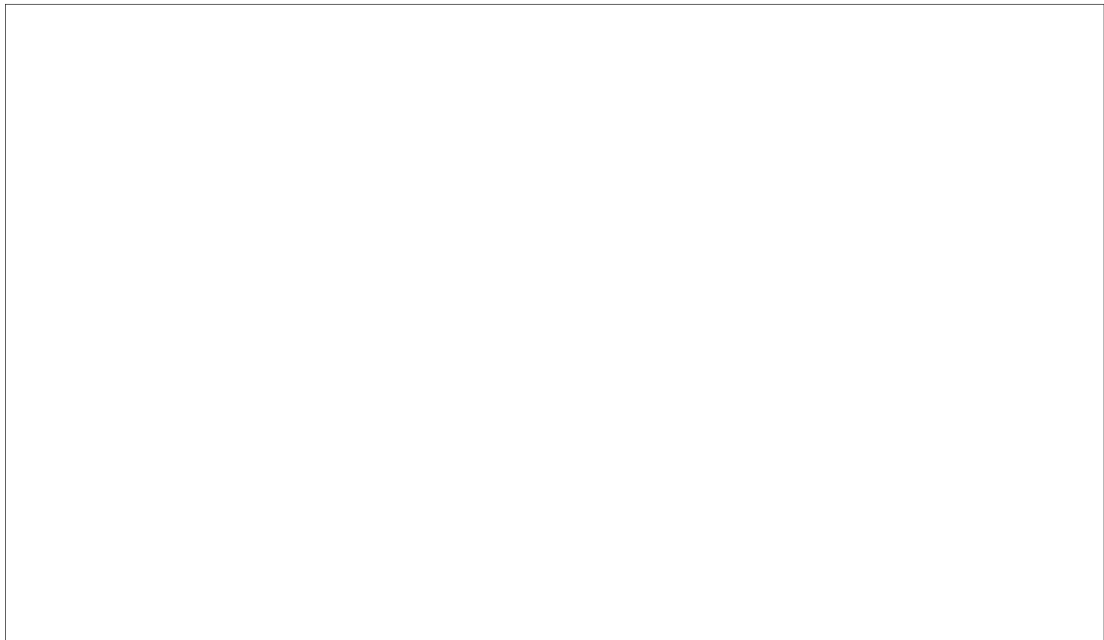
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[Redacted]

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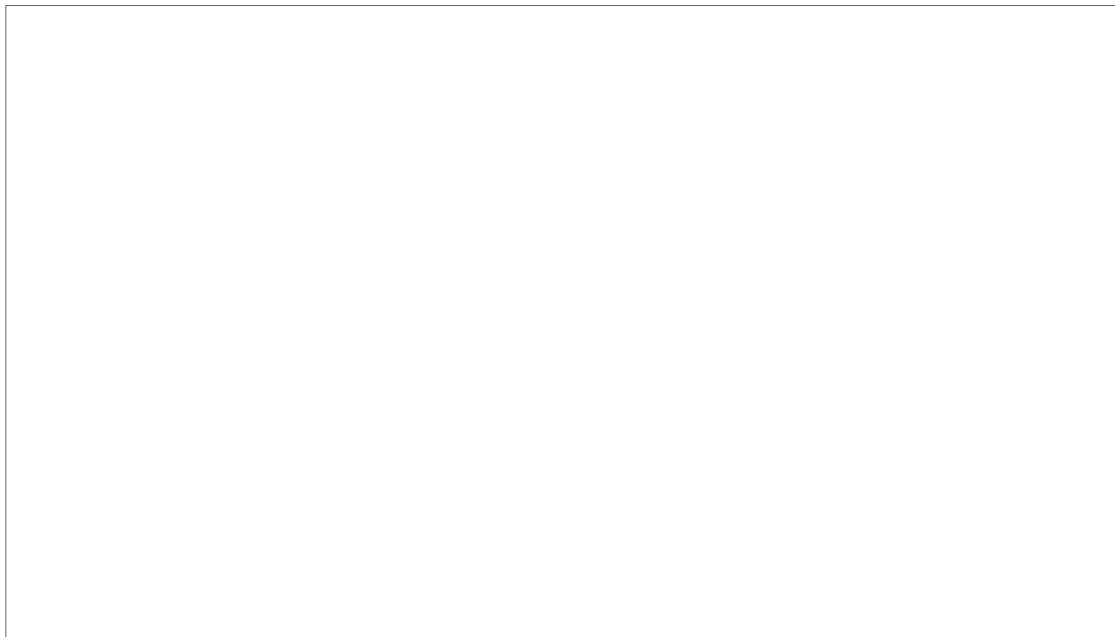


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**IN BRIEF**



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-- On May 25, Afghan resistance leaders allowed representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit regime prisoners



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[Redacted]

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being held at Khowst, according to insurgent press accounts. Their decision was probably motivated by the hope that it will result in a reciprocal gesture by the regime. Kabul agreed in April to allow ICRC delegates to visit insurgent prisoners but has not yet followed through on its offer.

[Redacted]

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-- [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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-- [Redacted] the Soviets have constructed a helicopter airfield at the Special Purpose Forces (Spetsnaz) garrison at Tapa in Farah Province. Built since early March, the airfield has hardstands for eight helicopters. A permanently based attack helicopter unit at Tapa would facilitate air support for the Spetsnaz unit there and for other operations in the area. [Redacted]

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-- Private enterprise accounted for 82 percent of Afghanistan's gross domestic product last year, according to official Afghan press reports. The private sector predominates in retail trade, transportation, and agriculture. Although the regime has previously highlighted the achievements of the state sector, its recent encouragement of the private sector reflects its dependence on that sector for revenue and foreign exchange. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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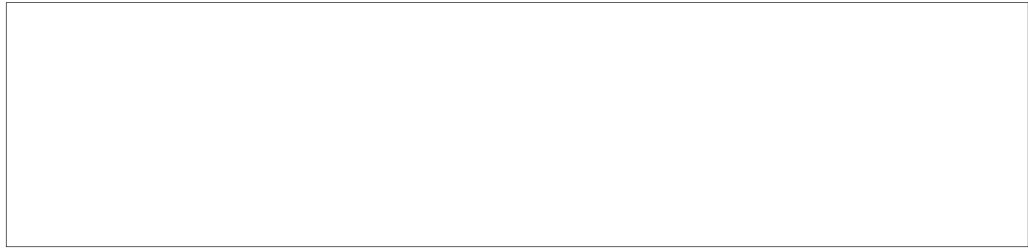
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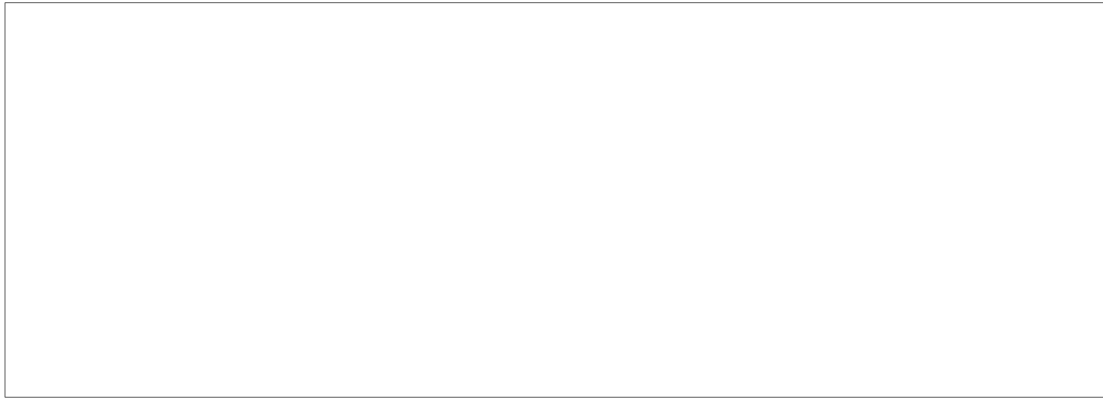


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**PERSPECTIVE**

**THE WAR IN JUNE**



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Combat activity in June intensified as the Soviets and Afghan regime forces conducted several multiregimental operations against guerrilla forces, notably south of Konduz, in the Herat area, and at Qandahar. These combat actions represented attempts to consolidate control of key urban areas and preempt expansion of insurgent activity in the north. Because of the Afghan military's continuing inability to meet authorized strength levels, the regime resorted to drastic measures during the month to increase manpower. Guerrilla forces in some areas experienced logistical problems during the month.

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**Masood is the Objective**

Panjsher Valley insurgent commander Masood was the focus of major combat operations by Soviet and Afghan forces in June. Over the past several months, Masood has attempted to extend operations by Jamiat-i-Islami guerrillas into some of the northeastern provinces bordering the USSR, where insurgent activity heretofore has been comparatively limited.


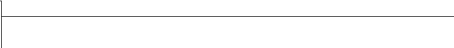
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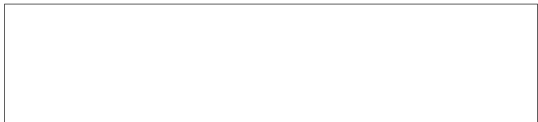
Most of the ground forces that participated in the first and largest phase of the offensive were Soviet.



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  suggest that during the 10-day-long first phase, the task force relied heavily on artillery bombardments and air

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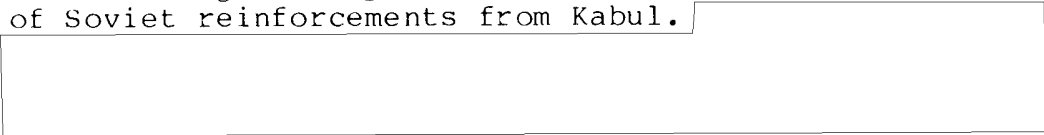
strikes to assault the guerrilla positions. Motorized infantry units appeared to be largely used to secure fire bases and lines of communication, although they engaged some guerrilla units in combat southeast of Eskamesh. When the second phase of the offensive began on about 24 June, Afghan forces took a more active role,

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Insurgent forces probably were put on guard about the impending offensive by airstrikes in the area between Eskamesh and Taloqan that occurred a week in advance of the actual ground operations and the movement overland of Soviet reinforcements from Kabul.



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**The Battle for the Cities and Towns**

Fighting in Herat flared again in June. [redacted] insurgent forces commanded by Ismail Khan were on the offensive in the area after mid-month. The upsurge in guerrilla activity evidently prompted the Soviets to employ major elements [redacted] from both Herat and Shindand in the operation.

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Soviet forces involved in the combat included three motorized rifle regiments and a tank regiment as well as two independent artillery battalions. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, Soviet forces increased bombardment of guerrilla-occupied sections of the city on 20 June.

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In Qandahar, the insurgents encountered more problems, and [redacted] the guerrillas may have lost control of the city. Unable to root out the insurgents by periodic sweeps, the Soviets and Afghans apparently have had more success in limiting guerrilla activity by "ringing" Qandahar with security outposts.

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The new defensive perimeter evidently has made insurgent movement in and out of the city more difficult, especially in terms of keeping forces supplied with materiel.

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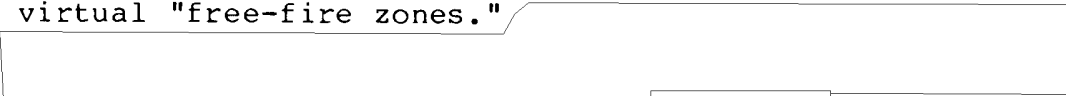
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Fighting in and around Ghazni increased during the month. [redacted] most of the Soviet motorized rifle regiment in Ghazni was out on operations after about 6 June. A traveler recently told officials of the US Embassy in Kabul that extensive destruction has made the approaches to Ghazni virtual "free-fire zones."

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[redacted] source of the US Embassy said a Soviet-Afghan regime force that conducted sweeps in two villages outside Ghazni suffered heavy casualties in the fighting. [redacted]

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For most of June, Kabul remained fairly quiet, although insurgent activity began to pick up at month's end. The US Embassy in Kabul says the level of guerrilla rocket attacks conducted against the capital is lower than in 1984 and 1985. [redacted]

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**Combat in the Northeastern Provinces**

[redacted] Soviet and Afghan forces initiated an operation in the lower Panjsher Valley in mid-month to expand the government's presence in the upper reaches of insurgent leader Masood's home region. Although information is scanty, few insurgent groups were in the area, and the Soviet and Afghan regime offensive probably had little impact. [redacted]

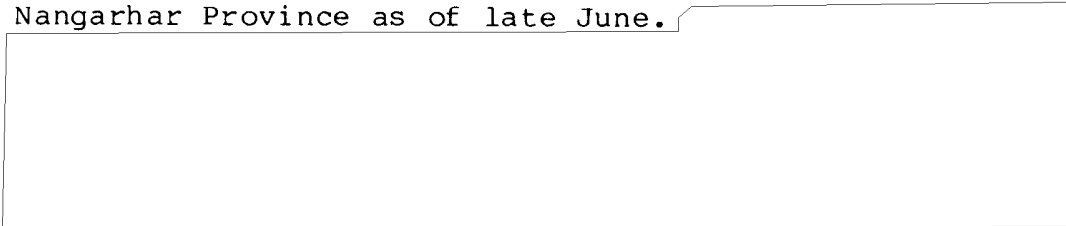
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Press reports indicate that regime forces had engaged the guerrillas in combat around the Nazian section of Nangarhar Province as of late June. [redacted]

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**Army Roundups**

During the month, the Afghan regime accelerated efforts to resolve its continuing serious shortages of military manpower. A decree on 6 June by the Politburo of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)



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stipulated that access by draft-age males to "higher and vocational education establishments" at home and abroad would depend on their completion of military duty. The US Embassy in Kabul reported that Kabul's recruitment centers were "awash" with new conscripts brought in off the street or directly from schools. Some boys as young as 15 years of age may have been inducted into the military, and one foreign youth was mistakenly nabbed and sent to the garrison at Khowst.



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These press-gang tactics probably will have a detrimental impact on the Afghan armed forces, even if they succeed in increasing their size. Desertion will almost certainly increase, and morale is also likely to suffer. A concurrent flareup in factionalism within the armed forces--stimulated by the changeover in the leadership of the PDPA--is likely to hamper further the Kabul regime's efforts to develop a proficient military.

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**Pressure on Guerrilla Logistics**

[redacted] the insurgents had increased problems during June in moving supplies from Pakistan into some areas of Afghanistan. Soviet and Afghan efforts to block key infiltration routes had forced rerouting of supply trains, and transportation costs for supply caravans have increased sharply. Moreover, depopulation efforts in some areas have reduced the support that insurgents were once able to count on from local populations.

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**Outlook**

Priority objectives for the Soviets and Afghan regime in the fighting over the next few months probably will include curbing insurgent activity in Afghanistan's second- and third-largest cities--Qandahar and Herat--preventing Masood from further developing an insurgent infrastructure in the north, and maintaining pressure on the guerrillas' logistics system.

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The use in the Eskamesh operation of a multiregimental



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task force, which relied heavily on artillery fire and airstrikes, to hit insurgent targets will probably be repeated in other key offensives this summer. Sweeps by division-size task forces in past summer campaigns have generally had disappointing results, probably leading the Soviets to stress smaller operations. The fighting in June also suggests that the Soviets will continue to provide the core elements in major offensives for some time, despite attempts earlier this year to increase the combat role of the Afghan military. 

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