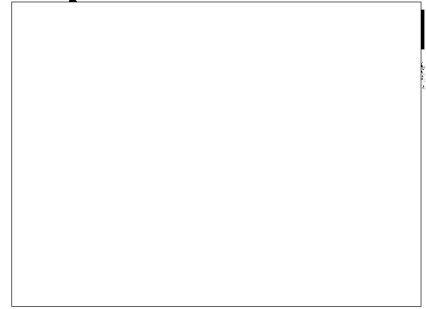




Directorate of Intelligence

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# Afghanistan Situation Report



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79-81 IMC/CB

22 July 1986

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**AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT** 

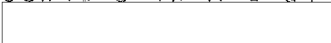
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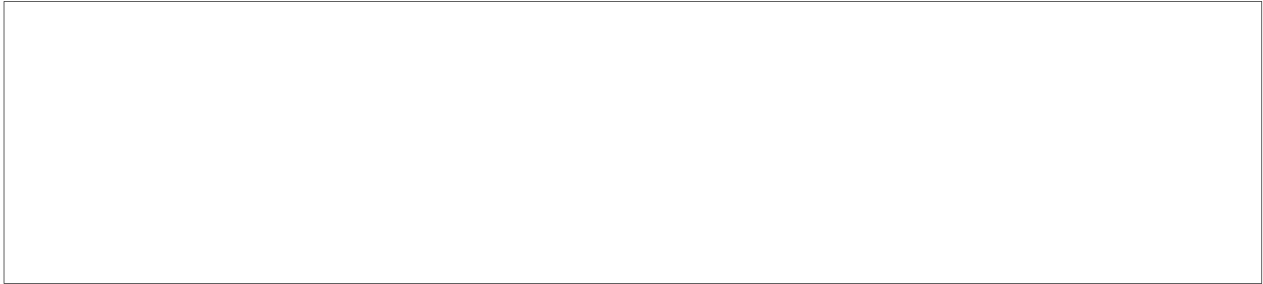
**FIGHTING IN CAPITAL REGION FLARES** 

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Insurgent activity in Kabul and in areas north of the city increased last week, but the intensity of fighting elsewhere in Afghanistan slackened somewhat. 

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**AFGHANISTAN: RISING FOOD PRICES IN KABUL** 

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Afghan Prime Minister Keshtmand recently expressed concern over rising food prices in Kabul, especially for fruits and vegetables, and candidly listed the reasons for the increases. 

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**IN BRIEF**


4

**PERSPECTIVE**

**THE AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN--SHIFTING DYNAMICS** 

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The experiences of Afghan refugees who fled to Pakistan in 1985 are different than those who left Afghanistan earlier, according to recently conducted interviews. 

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This document was prepared by the Office of  
Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the  
Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments  
on the issues raised in the publication should be

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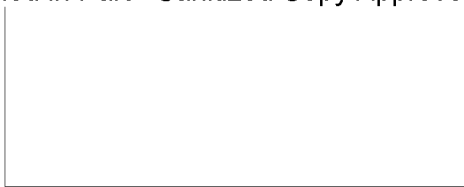
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**FIGHTING IN CAPITAL REGION FLARES** 

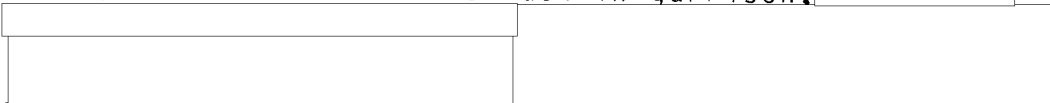
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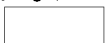
The level of insurgent activity in the Kabul region increased last week. The Soviet Embassy compound in Kabul endured a coordinated small arms and rocket attack on 16 July for two hours, according to the US Embassy. Northwest of the city in Paghman, Soviet forces began an offensive to recapture about five company-size security posts lost to the insurgents during the past two months. Continuing strong insurgent activity in Paghman evidently has forced the Soviets to use air drops to resupply forces in the area, although the US Embassy reports that the Soviets are moving in reinforcements. In nearby Charikar, repeated attacks on entrenched resistance forces have forced out most of the local residents. 

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Elsewhere, the intensity of fighting in Afghanistan slackened somewhat during the past week. Most units that participated in the month-long Soviet and Afghan regime offensive against insurgents in the Konduz-Taloqan-Eskamesh area are back in garrison. 

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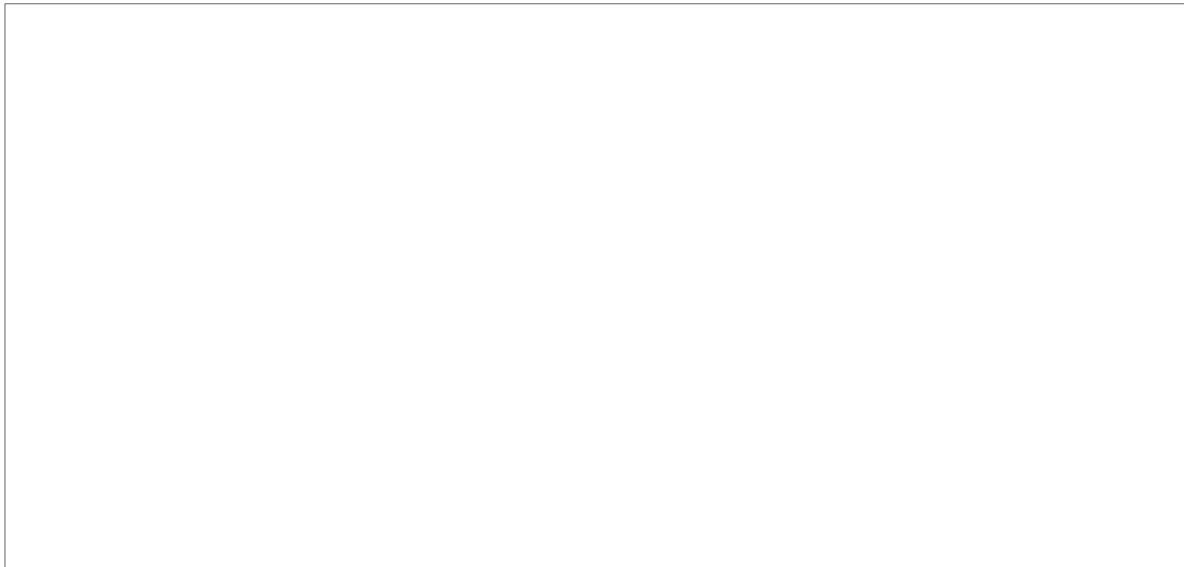
 According to the US Embassy, weeks of heavy fighting in the area have led to heavy civilian casualties and significant damage, especially in the old sectors of the city, where areas have been razed. 

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**AFGHANISTAN: RISING FOOD PRICES IN KABUL** [Redacted]

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In a speech on 9 July, Afghan Prime Minister Keshtmand expressed concern over rising prices in Kabul of some food commodities--particularly fruits and vegetables. While the overall foodstuff price index in Kabul rose only 7 percent in 1985, the index for fruits increased 17 percent and the index for vegetables was 23 percent higher. Keshtmand claimed rising transportation costs are partly responsible for the increase in produce prices. He said various production constraints, including the farmers' preference for growing wheat, inadequate irrigation and storage facilities, and a weak marketing infrastructure also contributed to the problem. [Redacted]

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**Comment:** The increase in transportation costs probably stems from poor security conditions along the main roads and the high demand for trucking services. The government is unlikely to persuade farmers not to grow wheat because it is a traditional staple of the Afghan diet and because its production is less of a drain on already severe shortages of labor. The high prices will keep fresh produce beyond the means of many Kabul residents, further worsening the incidence of malnutrition in the capital. Failure to keep down prices for these items will also detract from the regime's efforts to increase its popularity. [Redacted]

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**IN BRIEF**

-- [Redacted] claimed that some Afghan pilots have refused to fly SU-22 Fitter fighter bombers in the Afghan Air Force because the aircraft have a design flaw.

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[Redacted] Bagram, where the SU-22s are based [Redacted] little activity recently by these aircraft. This suggests that the Afghans' reservations about the fighter-bombers' reliability are keeping them grounded. [Redacted]

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-- [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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-- [redacted] some 30 derelict armored vehicles on tank transporters en route to the Khairabad transshipment facility from Jabal Os Saraj. Because of lack of a capital repair capability for armor in Afghanistan, vehicles that need to be rebuilt are returned to the Soviet Union. [redacted]

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-- On 17 July, the Government of France announced plans to increase aid to the Afghan resistance, according to press reports. The subsidy--which will go to eight humanitarian organizations operating in insurgent-held areas of Afghanistan--apparently will be at least \$300,000 this year. Previous official French aid has been modest and unpublicized. Burhanuddin Rabbani received pledges of increased French humanitarian aid during his recent visit to Paris as spokesman for the Afghan resistance alliance. [redacted]

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-- Soviet Ambassador Tabeyev recently returned to Moscow from Kabul, where he had served since 1979 and was dean of the diplomatic corps. No successor has yet been named. [redacted]

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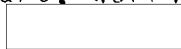
**PERSPECTIVE**

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**THE AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN--SHIFTING DYNAMICS**

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Interviews conducted among refugees who fled from Afghanistan to Pakistan in 1985 revealed results of increasingly brutal Soviet military tactics. Although the refugees talk about going back to Afghanistan, some worry that the war is not going well for the insurgents. They follow news of peace negotiations closely but have only the vaguest notions on the shape of a settlement. The refugees in the camps appeared to have little respect for the alliance of seven insurgent groups. The Pakistanis, for their part, worry about the impact of the refugee presence.



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**The Early Refugees**

Interviews conducted in 1983 suggested the large flow of refugees from Afghanistan into Pakistan in 1980-81 was mainly because of panic as a result of the massive Soviet invasion. Some tribal leaders also brought their units to Pakistan as a political protest against the Communist government in Kabul. Economic problems were another important factor. Farming was no longer possible in many regions because of fighting, destruction of irrigation systems, disrupted distribution of seeds and fertilizer, and manpower shortages.



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The refugees during 1980-83 left Afghanistan as whole villages or tribes in groups of from less than 100 to over 1,000. Travel in the rural areas near the Pakistani border was relatively easy and safe, making large-group travel feasible. Many came out by bus or other vehicles. By late 1983, the migration had slowed in part because of a lull in the fighting in the eastern provinces and because those who were in the most immediate danger had already left.



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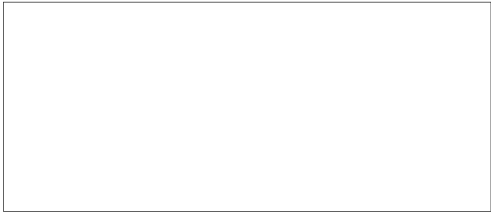
**The Newer Refugees**

The refugee flow to Pakistan increased in 1985 compared with 1984--although it remained much less than in the early 1980s. The increase in 1985 largely reflected increased air attacks and a general upsurge in the fighting in the border areas, especially in the plains




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of Paktia Province and the Konar Valley. Pakistani officials estimate that about 35,000 people a month came out in the summer and fall. We believe the Soviets intentionally drove the people from Afghanistan so that guerrilla infiltrators could be more easily spotted and destroyed, and so that the insurgents would not have a populace to feed and house them and provide them cover for their operations. 


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Because movement across the border became more dangerous and difficult in 1985, refugees had to travel in small groups and at night to avoid attack. Even so, many were attacked from the air as they crossed exposed areas, such as mountain passes or open plains. The attacks on fleeing unarmed refugees created further panic among the general population of Afghanistan. 

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The refugees in 1985 were more often wounded, hurt, or in shock from the fighting than the earlier refugees. Because of food shortages in parts of Afghanistan, many of the more recent refugees, especially the children, are suffering from varying degrees of malnutrition and are in generally poorer health. They came with little except the shirts on their back, whereas the earlier refugees often arrived in Pakistan with more possessions, especially commercial vehicles or domestic animals that they could use to make a living. 

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Many newer refugees attempted to find tribal or kin members in Pakistan for help; tribal codes dictate that tribesmen are obligated to help fellow tribesmen. But often the conditions for those already in Pakistan are strained, and they are able to offer little help. Many of the newly arriving refugees had no tribe or kinship group to fall back on because they came from areas of greatest devastation and most of their tribe or village had been killed. 

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**Pakistani Discomfort with Refugees**

The Government of Pakistan has firmly supported the refugees. President Zia has announced many times that he welcomes the Afghan refugees as Islamic brothers who need help in a time of need. He usually adds that he sincerely hopes that they will soon be able to return to their homeland. The Government of Pakistan has treated the refugees well, spending about one million dollars a day on them. 

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[REDACTED]

But Pakistan is now facing increasing concerns about the Afghan issue. It is a major topic of conversation among the Pakistani public and has been the subject of more editorials and public forums. The position of the citizens of Pakistan as a whole on the refugees is hard to gauge. Pakistan is a diverse multiethnic and multilingual country. [REDACTED]

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In the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), where the crush of the Afghan refugees is greatest, the people are the most hospitable. There are two reasons for this--first, the code of the Pushtuns, called "Pushtunwali," that requires them to help fellow tribesmen when they are in need, and second, because of the ex-governor, Fazle Haq. He was a supporter of the Afghan refugees, but more importantly would personally intercede when potential conflicts came up between Afghans and Pakistanis. Fazle was well liked and respected in the NWFP and set the tone for public opinion and action. [REDACTED]

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Opinion in the Punjab toward the refugees is more negative, but not significantly so. Part of the Punjabis' concern reflects historical ethnic animosities. Punjabis, especially the educated, see the Afghans as rather crude and wild. Tension between the people of the Punjab and the Pathans dates back to before the British presence. Some Pakistanis complain about the refugees who do not stay in the camps. Peshawar and Quetta are crowded with Afghans--buses are jammed, the city parks are full. [REDACTED]

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Penetration of the Afghans into the Pakistan economy has been tolerated because the Afghans' labor skills--and their commercial vehicles have been needed. Moreover, many Pakistani workers have found employment abroad, mostly in the Gulf areas. Afghans serve as shopkeepers, craftsmen, traders, truck drivers, and general laborers in all parts of Pakistan. Although the Government of Pakistan has tried to curb these activities when they compete with Pakistani businesses, officials have not pursued this policy aggressively. Ordinances forbidding Afghans from buying real estate or from engaging in business in some areas are largely ignored. [REDACTED]

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To the Government of Pakistan, however, the Afghans'

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economic presence is a ticking time bomb. Pakistani workers are beginning to return from the Gulf countries because of the collapse of oil prices. While it is not clear that the returnees will directly compete with the Afghans for jobs, they will nonetheless make the job market tighter. [redacted]

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### The Refugees and the Alliance of Seven

The refugees in the camps in December and January of 1985-86 had little good to say about the alliance in Peshawar. The fundamentalists in the alliance represent a militant new ideology that means little to the average Afghan; the so-called traditionalists in it are too disorganized and unstructured to be of real consequence. To the Afghan refugee, the alliance must be taken seriously only because it controls important resources. [redacted]

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Many refugees see the alliance as a small group of people enriching itself while they suffer. The refugees live in tents or mud huts in crowded camps, and they believe the leaders of the alliance are living in relative grandeur and are uncaring of the refugees' plight. The refugees suspect the alliance leaders of being in league with Pakistani officials to get rich on money designated for the refugees. Local insurgent commanders, who have gained power at the expense of the Peshawar leaders, say they are now faced with three difficulties: the burden of fighting the war in Afghanistan, providing for what might be left of their people in Afghanistan, and taking care of the refugees in Pakistan. [redacted]

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### War Weariness

The interviews detected some war weariness inside Afghanistan. Villagers assert that insurgent activity in their areas often makes them a target of aerial bombardment. Many said they would prefer to be left alone by both sides. [redacted]

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Although most refugees put little credence in the recent tribal "Loya Jirqa" called by Kabul, they note that some tribes or parts of tribes are cooperating with the regime--or at least not cooperating with the insurgents. Refugees expressed concern that Kabul's plan to establish village militia to keep out the

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insurgent fighters could be successful, although they were careful to say that they knew of no village that had yet gone along with the plan. [redacted]

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### Will the Refugees Return?

In the camps, the Afghans themselves frequently talk of returning to Afghanistan. They believe that they will be going back, although most realize that it will probably be later than sooner. They closely follow events in Kabul for any sign that the regime is weakening or that a settlement is near. In late 1985, the camps were full of rumors from Afghanistan regarding a potential settlement. [redacted]

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Interviews in the camps revealed some realism regarding the shape of a settlement of the Afghan hostilities. The Afghans believe that the insurgents will eventually be victorious but often say that the war is not going well, and that the Soviets are becoming more difficult and cunning. When asked what kind of a settlement or of a government might be acceptable to all sides, most Afghans have no answer. Even though King Zahir Shah was ousted thirteen years ago, he is still the leader most mentioned to reunite Afghanistan. [redacted]

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Several Pakistani officials suggest that the number of refugees who would return to Afghanistan would depend on the nature of the settlement, the political stability in Afghanistan after any settlement, and the degree to which the refugees have penetrated the Pakistani economy. Most Pakistanis feel that those refugees who have been politically active in Pakistan would not be able to return. The Pakistanis believe that Afghans who have received asylum abroad will also not return to Afghanistan after a settlement. [redacted]

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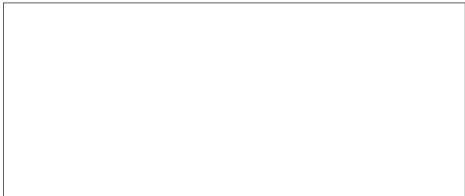
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### REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN--A PROFILE


According to the Pakistan Commissioner of Refugees, 2.7 million Afghan refugees are registered in Pakistan, with another 500,000 unregistered. There are 312 refugee camps in three provinces: 240 in the

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Northwest-Frontier, 61 in Baluchistan, and 11 in the Punjab. 

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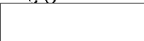
The refugees in Pakistan are primarily Pushtu, the ethnic and linguistic group that also dominates the Northwest-Frontier Province and the area of Afghanistan closest to the Pakistani border. 

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The size of the refugee camps varies greatly. Near Peshawar, the center for Afghans in exile, the camps are large, well organized, and generally affluent. Several "show" camps near Peshawar routinely entertain foreign visitors and journalists. Farther from Peshawar, the camps tend to be small and less well organized, and the quality of life is considerably poorer. 

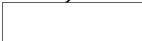
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**The Pakistan Refugee Organization**

Over 10,000 Pakistani administrators are involved in managing the refugees under the overall supervision of SAFRON, the State and Frontier Regions Division. A Chief Commissioner for Refugees in Islamabad answers directly to SAFRON and provincial commissioners for each of the three provinces. In addition there are district administrators, area administrators (each in charge of five camps) and camp administrators. It is the stated intent of the Government of Pakistan to let the refugees settle their own disputes through tribal "jirgas," or councils, and to govern themselves except where they deal directly with the laws of Pakistan. The task of the Pakistani administrators is largely to dole out humanitarian assistance to the refugees. 

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**Registration and Rations**

The major tensions of camp life stem from the related issues of registration and the distribution of the humanitarian assistance. To be eligible to receive rations, a refugee must first be registered as an official refugee, and then receive a ration card. To become registered as a refugee, a newly arrived Afghan must get a letter from one of the seven official parties and then apply for a card from the local Pakistani refugee office. This requires that he obtain the endorsement of one of the political parties, thus, in a way, politicizing the registration process. 

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Refugees encounter several problems in obtaining a ration card. The refugee must register at one of the official camps, but the camps in the desirable areas are full and have long waiting lists, especially the camps near Peshawar and those near the border. The refugees do not want to be too far from the border because many cross back and forth. These people include the insurgent fighters, but also farmers and traders who often bring their families out to refuge in Pakistan, and return to farm or trade. 

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Other reasons prompt Afghan refugees to stay near the Afghan and Pakistani border. The topography there is similar to Afghanistan--mountainous with high plains. In addition, the Pakistani people in the border areas are ethnically and linguistically similar to the Afghans, whereas the Pakistanis of areas further inland are traditional and bitter enemies. 

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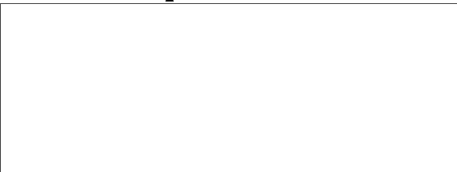


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