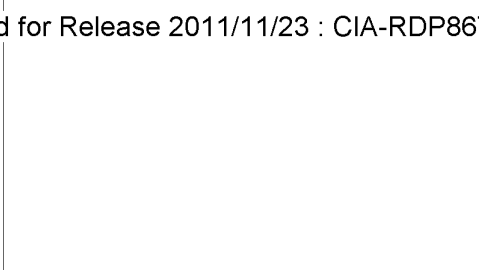
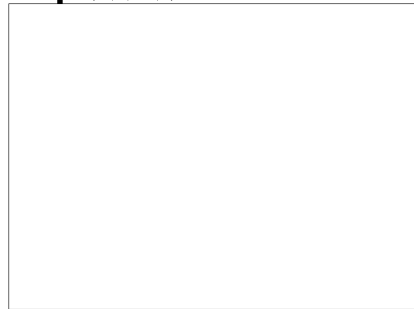




Directorate of
Intelligence



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Afghanistan Situation Report



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28 October 1986

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT



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CONTENTS

PROTECTING THE FORCES TAKES PRIORITY



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In the Kabul area, a continuing high level of insurgent activity caused stricter safety measures for air traffic.



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RESISTANCE ALLIANCE'S FAR-EASTERN TOUR



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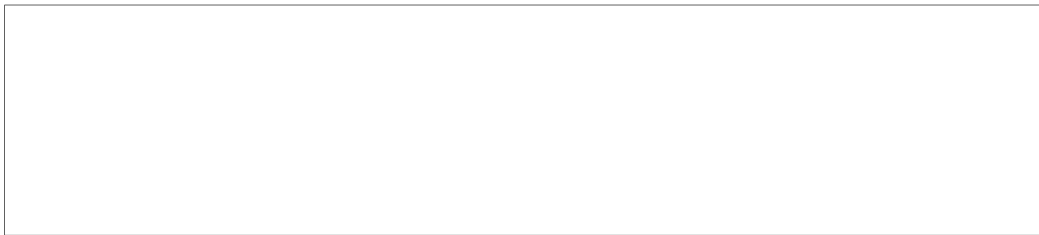
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An Afghan resistance delegation is trying to arrange official receptions in several Asian countries on stopovers en route to New York for the UN General Assembly vote on the Afghan resolution. The vote is next week, but plans for the Asian tour are still in the early stages.



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IN BRIEF

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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHAN RESOURCES: HOW IMPORTANT FOR THE SOVIETS? 

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A contract study asserts that Afghanistan is likely to remain an economic burden to the USSR, despite extensive Soviet exploitation of the country's resources. 

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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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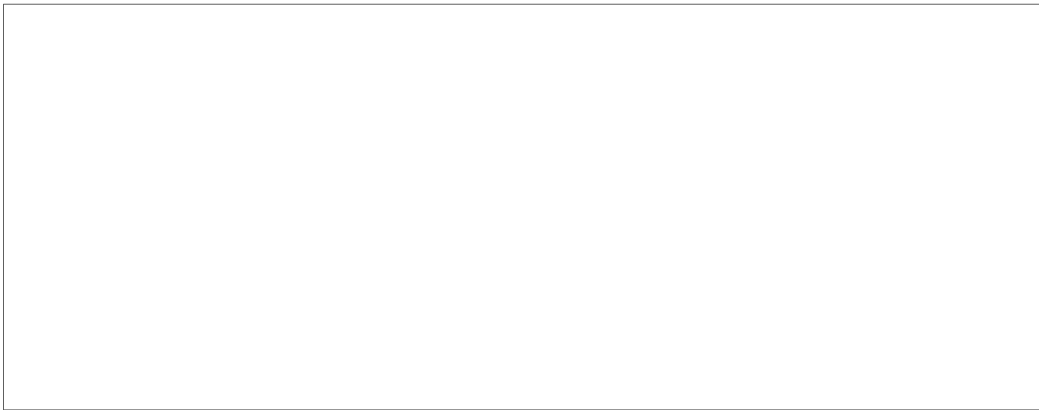


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PROTECTING THE FORCES TAKES PRIORITY [redacted]

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The US Embassy in Kabul reports that the Soviets and the Afghans are continuing their still unsuccessful efforts to secure the area around Kabul. In recent weeks, regime forces reportedly established 65 security posts in the Paghman hills west of the city. Despite these actions, the insurgents continued their rocket attacks against Kabul, causing reduced air traffic at the airport, according to the US Embassy. The threat posed by insurgent air defense weaponry also caused noticeable changes last week in flight patterns for aircraft using Kabul International Airport. Departing aircraft reached "safe" altitudes by ascending in a tight spiral directly over the airport, and four flare-dispensing helicopters accompanied large fixed wing aircraft in and out of Kabul airspace. [redacted]

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RESISTANCE ALLIANCE'S FAR-EASTERN TOUR [redacted]

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An Afghan resistance alliance delegation may visit several Asian countries--including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh--before attending the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in early November, according to US Embassy reporting in these countries. Plans for the tour apparently are still in the preliminary stages. The US Embassy in Jakarta believes that requests to receive the delegation will probably be made to the prospective host governments by Islamabad. [redacted]

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COMMENT: These Asian countries--which have shown support for the Afghan cause in the past--probably would receive a resistance alliance delegation. Their



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show of support for the resistance before the UNGA vote next week on Afghanistan could help sustain support for the resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan. It would also cause concern to the Soviets, who have courted Third World opinion on Afghanistan in recent weeks.



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IN BRIEF

-- French Secretary of State for Human Rights Claude Malhuret recently told the US Embassy in Paris that France will finalize plans for humanitarian aid to the Afghan resistance by the end of October. Paris pledged increased support for the resistance during Rabbani's visit in June to France as spokesman for the Afghan resistance alliance. Malhuret claims that although the amount of assistance will be small, the political gesture is important.



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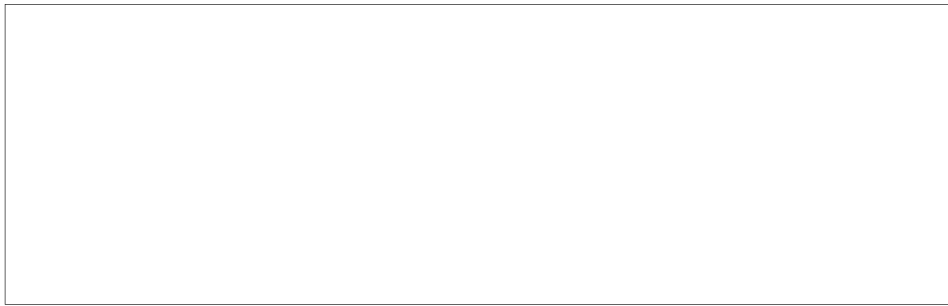


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-- Afghan insurgents, using surface-to-air missiles, shot down an MI-6 Hook helicopter on 17 October near Qandahar and an MI-24 Hind helicopter near Jalalabad on 19 October. These losses increase to six the number of Soviet and Afghan aircraft that we can confirm have been shot down by air defense missiles since 25 September.



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major elements of the Soviet BMP-equipped motorized rifle regiment normally stationed at Konduz had returned to garrison. A truck- and BTR-equipped motorized rifle regiment--deployed from the USSR for the withdrawal--occupied the installation from 7 September to 17 October.



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-- Egyptian President Mubarak recently told the US Ambassador that earlier conversations with a Soviet official had left him with the impression that the "Soviets do indeed wish to withdraw completely" from Afghanistan. Mubarak interpreted the Soviets' unwillingness to specify a timetable for withdrawal as primarily a matter of "saving face."



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-- Zimbabwe's Assistant Secretary for International Organizations recently commented to an official of the US Embassy in Harare that he did not know whether Afghanistan would open a diplomatic mission in Harare. He noted, however, that "there was nothing to prohibit it from doing so."



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-- The US Embassy in Islamabad says that the Afghan resistance alliance delegation that will attend



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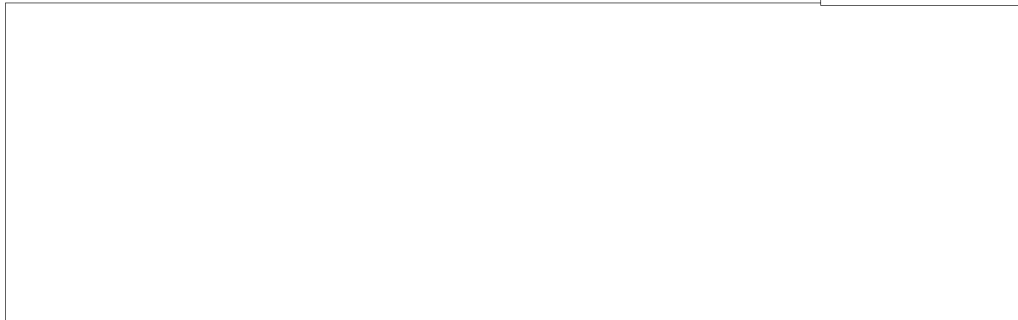
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the UN General Assembly next week will include representatives of the seven major resistance parties. Only three resistance leaders of the seven parties will be there, however.

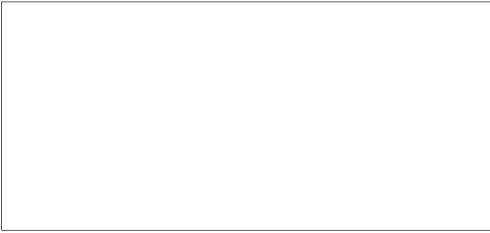
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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHAN RESOURCES: HOW IMPORTANT FOR THE SOVIETS?



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Afghanistan is an economic burden to the USSR and will remain so through the end of this century. The Soviets try to pay for strategic gains by robbing the country of some of its resources, but the economic ledger will remain negative not only for the Afghans but for the USSR as well.

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Scope of Exploration

From 1955 through 1979, the USSR spent around 500 million rubles on mineral resource exploration and development in Afghanistan. By contrast, between 1960 and 1980, roughly 115 billion rubles were devoted to such activities in the domestic fuel industries alone. This means that from 1955 through 1979, Soviet planners channeled perhaps 230 times more into their domestic mineral resources than into those in Afghanistan. In 1982, the USSR produced about 9 billion tons of minerals of all types, without counting building materials, and for several crucial minerals, its contribution ranged between one-fourth and one-third of global output.

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Gemstones

Besides lapis lazuli, significant quantities of fine emeralds, tourmaline and even some rubies have recently appeared from Afghanistan on the world market. These gems originate principally from the extremely rugged northeastern parts of the country: emeralds chiefly from the Panjsher Valley and pegmatite gems, such as tourmaline, from the Nurestan region of Laghman and Konar Provinces. The mining areas are accessible only by foot. Emeralds occur at an elevation of 3,000 to 4,000 meters and up rough slopes of a 30- to 40-degree angle. After blasting with dynamite to identify and expose the host rock, mining is performed with picks and shovels. Rubies come from the Sarowbi district east of Kabul, though current supplies are small. Given the location, inaccessibility, harsh climate and extreme insecurity of all areas where gemstones occur, the latter provide no benefit to the USSR, and are unlikely to do so in this century. Mining is entirely

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in the hands of local tribesmen. The uncut crystals are smuggled into Pakistan where most of the trade is carried on

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Metals and Strategic Minerals

The only large metal deposits located so far are iron ore, copper and chromium. The high-quality hematites of Kowtal-e Hajigak, 90 kilometers west of Kabul, are found at an elevation of 3,500 to over 4,000 meters, in an extremely inaccessible area. The two nearest cart-tracks run 24 kilometers to the north and the south, the former does link up with the Kabul-Dushanbe paved road halfway to the Soviet border, and may be passable to some motor vehicles during part of the year. Although much smaller than the one of Kowtal-e Hajigak and poorer in ferrous content, another deposit lies in Badakhshan Province, close to the Soviet border

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The Aynak copper deposit, only 30 kilometers southeast of Kabul, is physically more accessible and is found at an elevation of only 2,500 to 3,000 meters in less rugged terrain. The metal content ranges from a low of 0.4 percent to 2.4 percent in the central portion containing sulfide ores. With estimated copper reserves of 6.1 million tons (but down to 4.4 million if only ores with higher than 0.7 percent metal content are considered), the deposit is one of the largest concentrations of copper in Asia. Also noteworthy are by-product minerals associated with copper, among which cobalt and nickel are the most important. A large chrome deposit, with estimated reserves of 180,000 tons, is found less than 60 kilometers southwest of Kabul in relatively low elevations. Given the very restricted distribution of this ferroalloy in the world, this find is considered significant

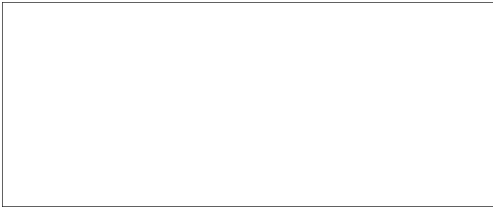
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These ores will not be a factor on the world mineral market or even within the Soviet bloc. Exploitation of metals requires a much larger labor force, more elaborate processing facilities, and transport and housing infrastructure than the production of oil and gas. Without prior construction of railways, in particular, the mining of metals in interior areas cannot even be considered. In addition, the opening of any mineral frontier by outside effort is always contingent on alternative opportunities elsewhere. Recoverable reserves of iron ore, or copper, or even


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chromium, are not in short supply in the USSR. 

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Given Gorbachev's emphasis on retooling and modernizing existing enterprises--which are to receive 50 percent of all investment by 1990, the chances of large-scale ferrous and non-ferrous mineral development in central Afghanistan in this century would be very low, even with peace and political stability. The development of rich mineral concentrations, among them the extremely large Udokan copper deposits, along the new, and now nearly operational, Baykal-Amar Railway has already been postponed or shelved because of the reorientation of investment policy. Although the Soviets established a railhead across the Amu Darya at Termez and the Kushka Darva at Kushka, 

 reports of railway construction to Kabul both from the Soviet border and from the Jeyretan iron ore deposits are simply mistaken. Reports of a copper smelter at Aynak also are likely to be incorrect. Given the poor security conditions and difficult terrain of the central part of the country, plus Soviet capital requirements for the current Five Year Plan, such activities would represent the height of strategic and economic folly. In addition, Jeyretan iron ore would have to be used entirely in Afghanistan, because there are no blast furnaces existing or planned in Soviet Central Asia and the nearest markets at Karaganda and in the Urals are over 2,000 miles away.

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Oil And Gas

Only hydrocarbons bring any benefit to the USSR. Afghan natural gas helps to pay for the Soviet occupation and the depletion of reserves robs Afghanistan of its patrimony, but Afghan gas represents a mere 0.5 percent of Soviet gas output. Hydrocarbons occur within 90 kilometers of the Soviet border. Their exploitation and transport require a far smaller labor force and a much less elaborate infrastructure than metal extraction. The petrol-rich area of northern Afghanistan is, in fact, an extension of the Kopet Dag Trough, a basin stretching from central Turkmenia south across the border and eastward into southwest Tadzhikistan. The sedimentary accumulation is deep, but the Afghan portion of the basin is quite small in area extent: 240 miles long, with an average width of 45 miles. As with the portion over the Soviet




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border, the basin is primarily gas-bearing 


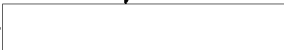
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According to a World Bank document, most of the 9.9 million tons of "crude oil" produced in Afghanistan from 1976 to 1977 (up from less than two million tons in 1970), in fact, represent gas condensates and not crude. And for several years, much of that condensate was wasted. 

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Total initial reserves of gas may have been near 100 billion metric meters, but the recoverable portion amounted to only 73 billion 

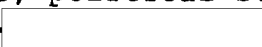
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 Although some expansion has probably occurred since 1979, the rapid withdrawal of around 3.5 billion cubic meters per year has now depleted half of these reserves. The above authority reports only 7.2 million tons of crude oil in place, which would give only 3.6 million tons of recoverable reserves, with a 50-percent recovery ratio. Some further discoveries of gas may yet take place, but oil finds are expected only on the flanks of natural gas reservoirs. Soviet geologists describe the prospect of oil discoveries across the border as "unlikely." Most of the natural gas is piped to the USSR. Yet damage to the gas line by guerrillas has interrupted the flow several times, proving that even in this strategically and most secure region of the country for the Soviets, resource exploitation remains a risky business. 

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Coal

Coal is likely to remain of local significance, with no effect on the economy of the USSR. Most coal reserves are also found in northern Afghanistan, although not as close to the Soviet border as the gas and oil. The coal is of high-heat content and is used in industry, the largest consumer being a cement plant. Coal mining, however, is a highly labor intensive activity. Significant expansion in production would require a much larger labor force, political stability, and sharply increased investment. 

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