



Directorate of Intelligence

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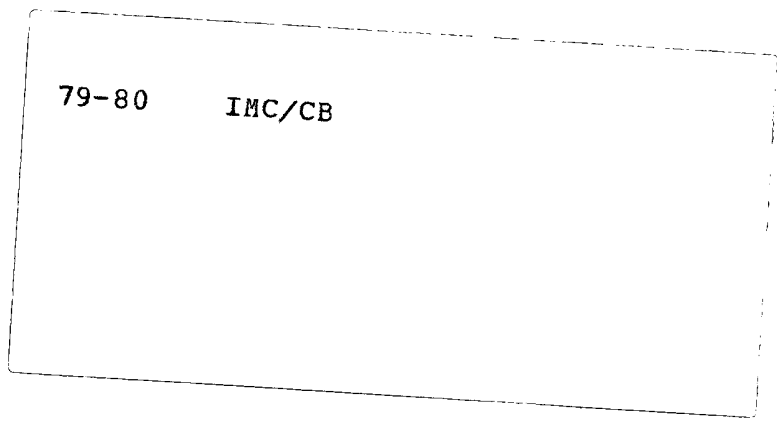
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Afghanistan Situation Report



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9 December 1986



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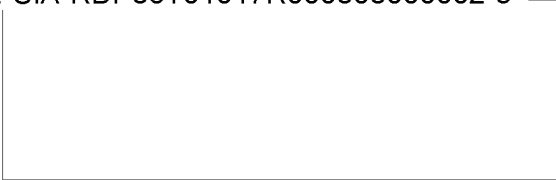
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT



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fighting on a smaller scale continues in several areas of Afghanistan.

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A Chinese official in Kabul believes that the Soviets have had little success in Afghanistan in 1986 and that insurgent morale remains high.

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CABINET CHANGES



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Afghan Defense Minister Nazar Mohammad and Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost were replaced last week by supporters of Secretary General Najib.

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STATUS OF UN-SPONSORED NEGOTIATION

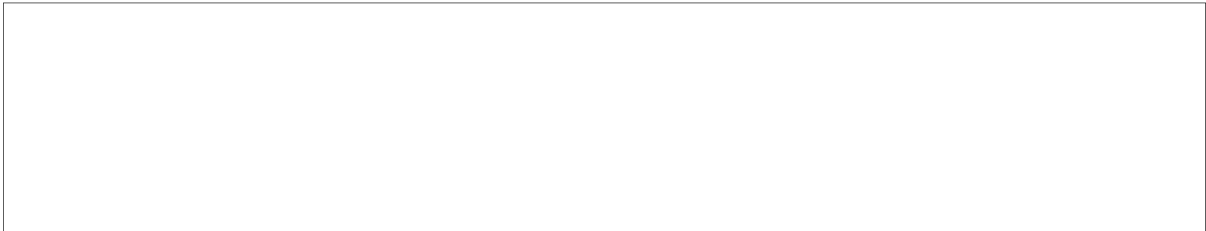


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During his latest shuttle between Kabul and Islamabad, UN Special Negotiator Cordovez reportedly obtained an agreement on monitoring arrangements, but made little progress on the key issue, a timetable for withdrawal.

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PERSPECTIVE



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PERSPECTIVE

**ISLAM, THE SOVIETS, AND AFGHANISTAN--THE CASE OF
TAJIKISTAN**



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Although Islam remains important in the lives of many Soviet Muslims, it does not seem to have increased in influence because of events in Iran or Afghanistan.



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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 directed to



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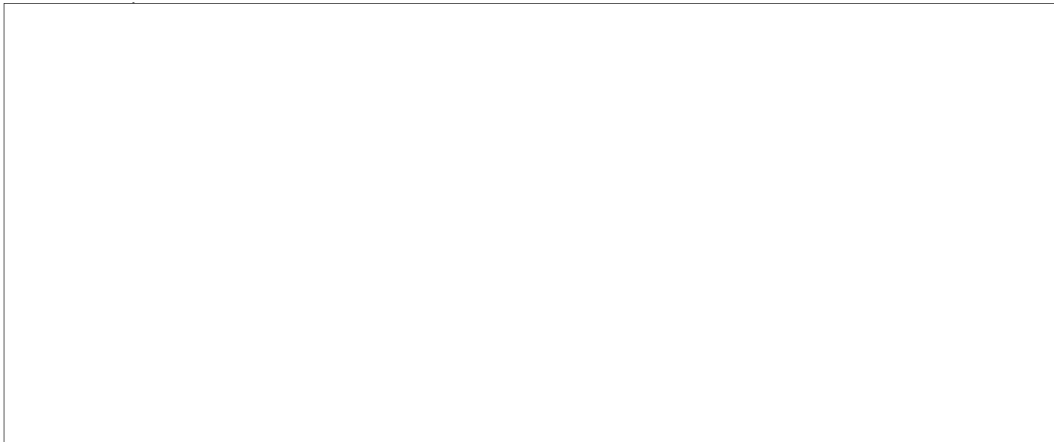


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THE DUST SETTLES



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[redacted] fighting continues in several areas of the country. [redacted]

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[redacted] US Embassy sources indicate insurgent activity in the Kabul area picked up markedly last week, with daily artillery bombardments. A reliable Afghan source of the US Embassy in Kabul says a Soviet general was recently killed in fighting in Lowgar Province. The source reported seeing a large cortege of vehicles accompanying an ambulance that apparently transported the officer's casket to the airport. The presence of senior Afghan army officers and Soviets in the cortege suggests the victim was high-ranking. Fighting in Baghlan and Pol-e Khomri is heavy with both cities subject to a 2000 to 0400 curfew, according to US Embassy sources. [redacted]

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CHINESE VIEWS OF THE WAR IN 1986



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A senior Chinese Embassy officer in Kabul recently told US officials that he believes the Soviets have had only marginal military success in Afghanistan in 1986. The officer claimed, for example, that Soviet and Afghan regime efforts to seal the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and mop up opposition in the provinces of Herat and Qandahar and around Kabul had produced limited gains at the cost of heavy



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[REDACTED]

casualties. He also described Soviet attempts to shift combat responsibility to the regime as largely ineffective. Moreover, the Chinese official asserted that the Soviets' brutal conscription methods probably will cause antiregime dissension.

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The Chinese official also said that insurgent morale is high despite the Soviets' "more effective" use of air power in 1986. He attributed this to the guerrillas' improved air defense weapons. In the official's opinion, these weapons could make a dramatic difference in the war. Besides proposing to Beijing that China provide such weapons to the resistance, he also urged his government to increase its propaganda efforts on behalf of the resistance, particularly by highlighting insurgent military successes.

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COMMENT: The Chinese official's assessment tracks well with--and probably will sharpen--Beijing's longstanding view that the Soviet position in Afghanistan ultimately will become untenable because of the unpopularity of the Kabul regime, the ruling party's debilitating factionalism, and the Soviets' inability to crush the resistance. The report may influence the content of Chinese military aid to the insurgents in 1987, and almost certainly will cause Beijing to consider redoubling its propaganda efforts

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CABINET CHANGES [REDACTED]

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Afghan Defense Minister Nazar Mohammad and Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost were replaced last week by Mohammad Rafi and Abdul Wakil, respectively, according to the official press. Dost will be posted to the UN, and Nazar Mohammad was named Deputy Prime Minister, a relatively powerless post. According to sources of the US Embassy in Kabul, Nazar Mohammad, an opponent of party chief Najib, was under criticism for the poor performance of the Afghan Armed Forces during last month's operations in Qandahar and because of the successful insurgent attack against the Qarghah ammunition depot in August. Rafi is loyal to Najib and reportedly trusted by the Soviets.

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Dost, a long-time supporter of former President Babrak, has been Kabul's principal negotiator at the UN-mediated peace talks with Pakistan. The US Embassy reports that his removal may have been prompted in part by his differences with Moscow over Soviet-instigated concessions during the peace talks. His replacement reportedly has ties to Najib dating from the late 1970s. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, the appointment of Wakil, who was believed to be slated for diplomatic assignment in Prague, has renewed speculation that Babrak Karmal will again become ambassador to Czechoslovakia. Babrak is staunchly resisting diplomatic exile.

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COMMENT: The changes indicate Moscow's determination to stifle feuding between Najib's and Babrak's supporters in the ruling party, and Najib apparently has a green light to weaken those still opposing his rule. Despite ongoing purges at lower levels of the party--including rumors of extensive arrests in the Defense Ministry--he has not yet been able to eliminate from the Politburo Babrak's remaining supporters--including Nazar Mohammad, Mahmud Barialay, and Anahita Ratebzad. Dost's removal is unlikely to affect the peace negotiations--set to resume in Geneva in February--but suggests that there may be differences between Moscow and Kabul over negotiating issues.

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STATUS OF UN-SPONSORED NEGOTIATIONS



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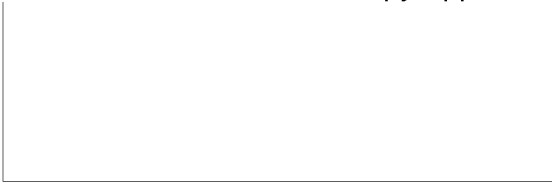
US officials report that UN Special Negotiator Cordovez concluded an agreement on monitoring arrangements for a potential settlement during his recent Kabul-Islamabad shuttle. The monitoring arrangement provides for up to ten five-man military units--stationed in both countries--operating under the direction of a representative of the UN Secretary General. But Cordovez apparently made little progress on a schedule for a Soviet troop withdrawal, which is to be the focus of the Geneva talks planned for February.

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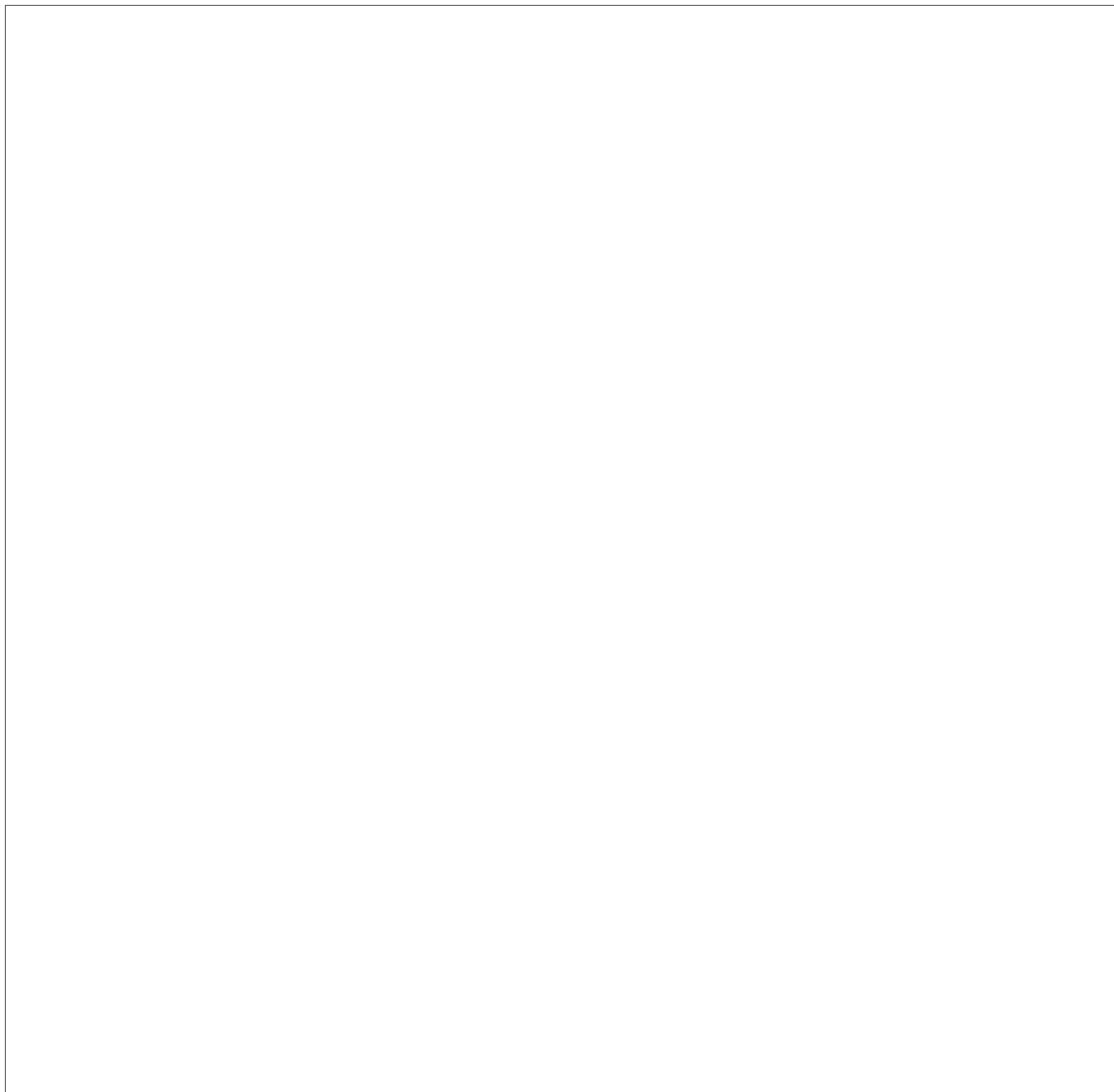
COMMENTS: Islamabad almost certainly doubts that a mutually acceptable timetable can be drafted at Geneva, and President Zia has hinted to US officials that a timetable might have to be negotiated directly between Pakistan and the USSR. Meanwhile, the 7-10 December visit of Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar to Moscow will provide Islamabad with an opportunity to probe Soviet views on this issue and the nature of a post-Soviet government in Kabul.



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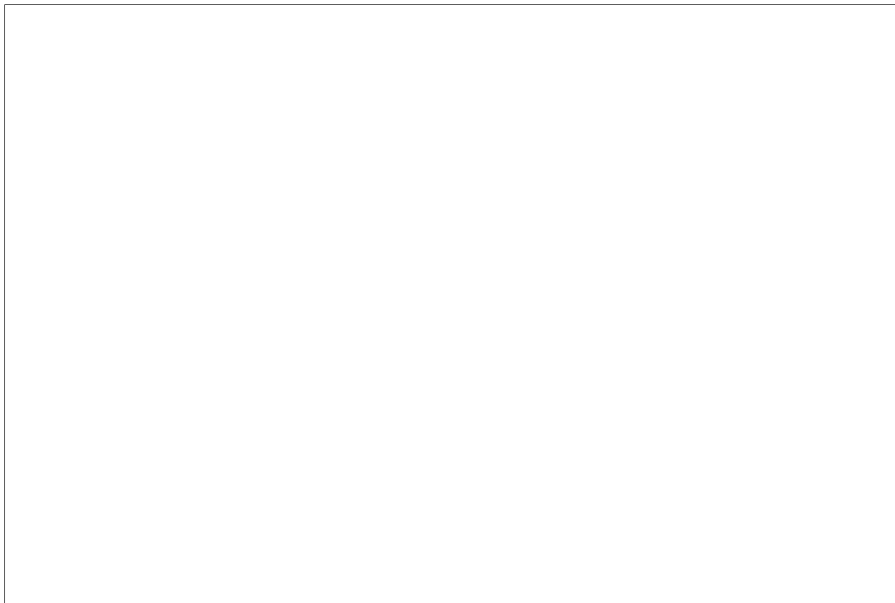
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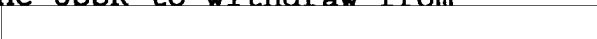
IN BRIEF



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--The United Arab Emirats' (UAE) Red Crescent Society recently set up an office in Quetta to provide humanitarian aid to Afghan refugees, according to press reports. A Red Crescent official told the US Embassy in Abu Dhabi that this is the first large project for Afghans undertaken by the organization. The society--which is the only private charitable organization in the UAE--is funded by private donations. 

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--The US Embassy in Copenhagen reported last week that Denmark is considering backing moves to secure observer status for the insurgents at the United Nations and marshaling West European diplomatic pressure on the USSR to withdraw from Afghanistan. 

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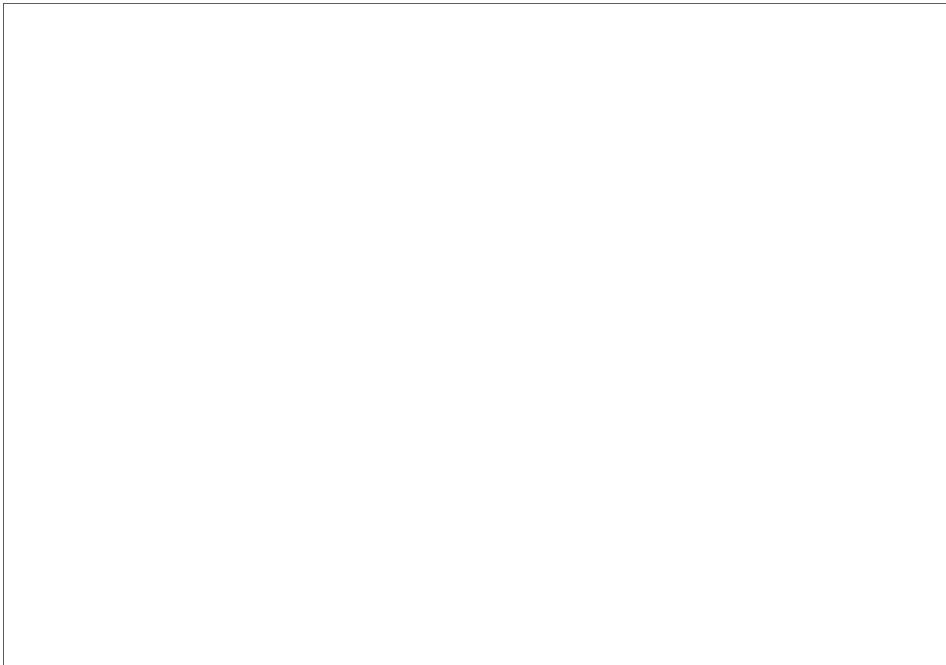
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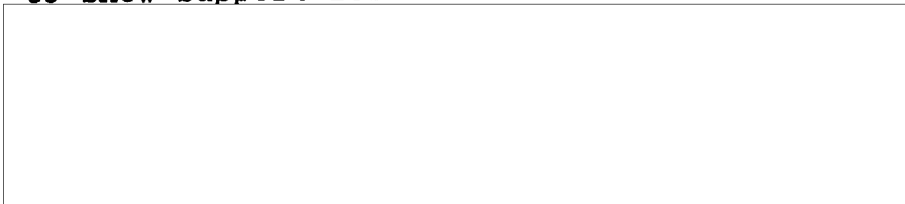
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-- [redacted] the morale of Afghan pilots is plummeting as a result of the successful use of surface-to-air missiles by insurgents. After the SAM shootdown of an AN-26 on 22 October, eight AN-26 pilots were arrested for refusing to fly. The following day most AN-26 pilots and engineers went on strike to show support for those arrested.

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--Afghan resistance leader Burhanuddin Rabbani was scheduled to leave Paris on 4 December for Gabon, Senegal, and Niger, where he is hoping to boost support for the Afghan resistance cause. [redacted]

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--On 4 December, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Social and Humanitarian Affairs Committee's human rights resolution on Afghanistan by a vote of 89 in favor of the resolution, 24

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against, and 36 abstentions. Last year's vote was 80 in favor, 22 against, and 40 abstentions. Ghana, Guinea and several Caribbean countries accounted for the increase in positive votes, according to the UN mission in New York. 

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--In a trip aimed at shoring up tribal support for Islamabad's Afghan policy and responding to local concerns about Soviet and Afghan-sponsored destabilization efforts in the province, Prime Minister Junejo visited Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province on 29-30 November. In speeches to tribal jirgas, he pledged to respond to Afghan border violations and compensate Pakistani victims of cross-border attacks. He also praised the tribesmen for their support of the Afghan refugees. 

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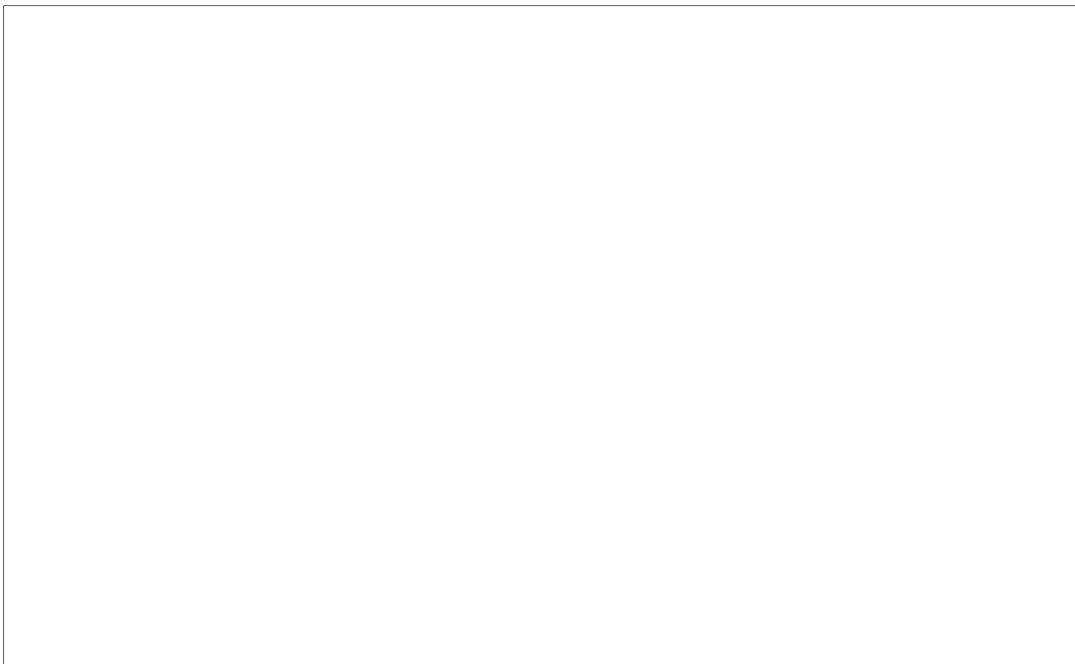
PERSPECTIVE

THE WAR IN NOVEMBER




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Increased Security in Kabul

According to the US Embassy, the regime extended the nightly curfew to six hours, increased the number of checkpoints and armed personnel throughout the city augmented Soviet armored vehicle patrols, and instituted body searches at banks, post offices, and large department stores. Nonetheless, sporadic small arms fire continued in Kabul throughout the month. Kabul was also subject to rocket attacks, including a hit on Arg Palace and a coordinated attack on the Darulaman late in the month. 

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Soviet and Afghan regime air forces closed some air routes out of Kabul and changed their flight patterns to prevent further aircraft losses to guerrilla surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), according to sources of the US Embassy. Soviet and Afghan helicopter flight formations were reduced in size, and local helicopter operations consisted primarily


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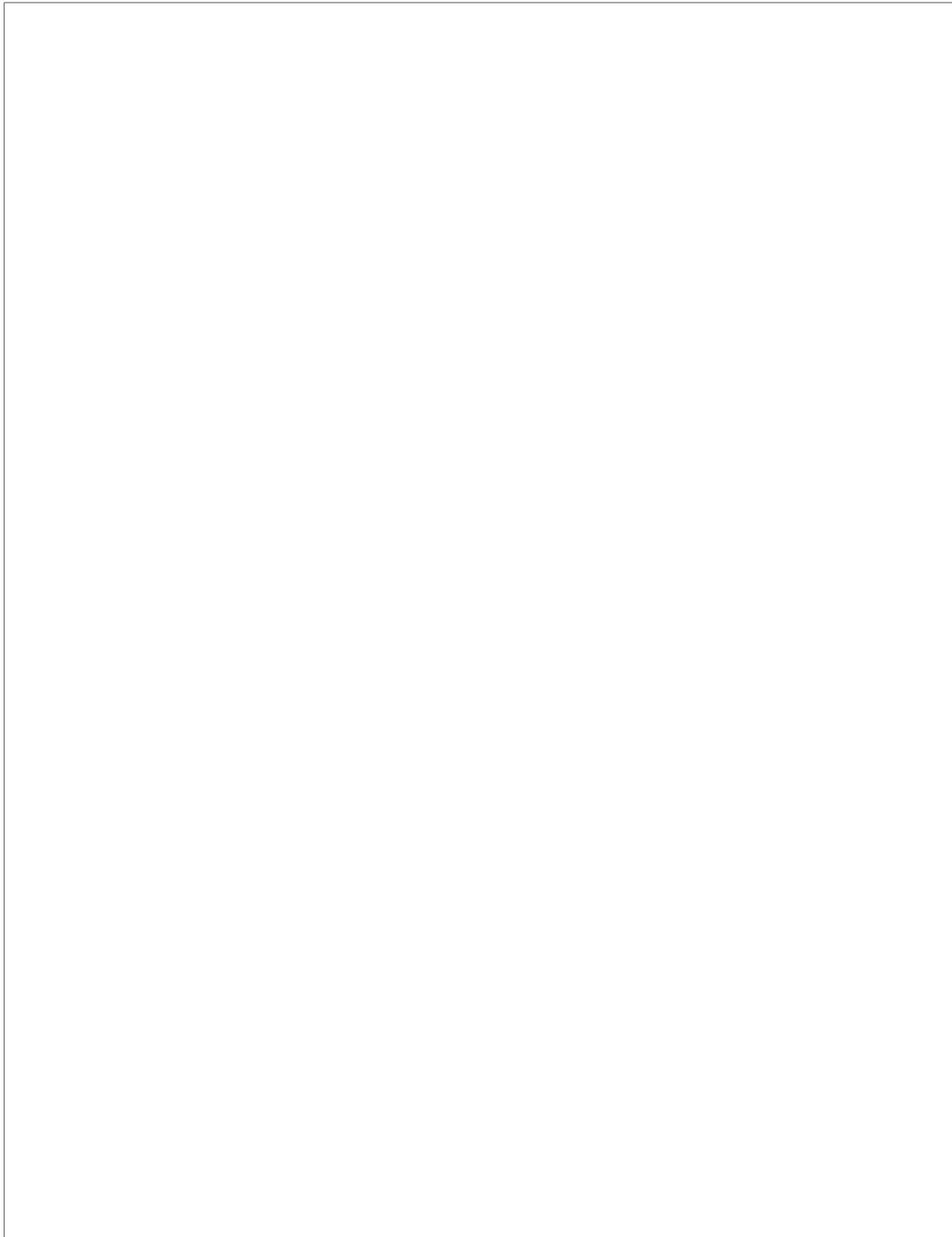


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of patrolling around the airport when large transport aircraft took off. Fixed-wing aircraft performed tighter "corkscrew" ascents and descents and the Embassy reported greater use of flares to counter SAMs. 

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Victory for Resistance in Baghlan

Resistance forces overran a regime garrison in Baghlan Province in mid-November, according to the US Consulate in Peshawar. Three hundred Jamiat-i-Islami guerrillas launched a two-stage attack on a regime garrison. In the first phase of the attack on 11 November, the guerrillas captured outposts belonging to the police, Ministry of State Security, and the Army in addition to the district

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administration headquarters. Delayed slightly by enemy air strikes, the insurgents initiated the second phase of the attack on the main garrison on 13 November.

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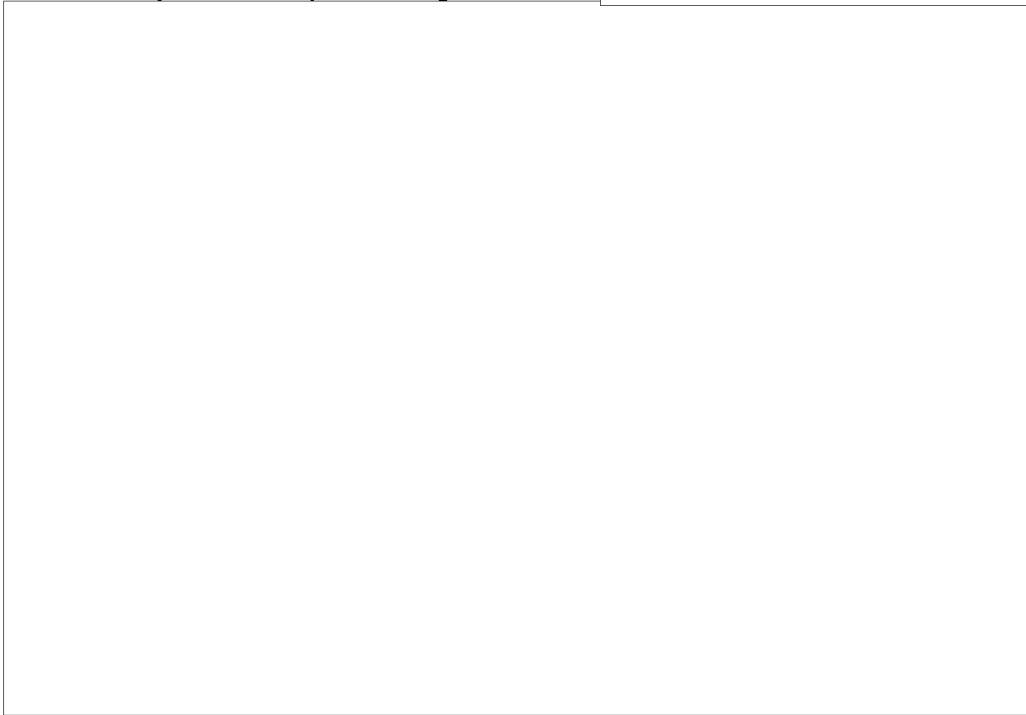


Resistance forces had withdrawn from the garrison shortly after seizing their booty.

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A resistance spokesman told the US Consulate that guerrilla forces sustained 19 dead and 26 wounded. He claimed that 450 government troops were either wounded, killed, or captured.

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PERSPECTIVE

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ISLAM, THE SOVIETS AND AFGHANISTAN--THE CASE OF TAJIKISTAN
A contractor study

It is easier to demonstrate that Islam remains influential among the traditionally Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union than to show that its influence has increased recently in reaction to events in Afghanistan and Iran. Recent Soviet statements portraying Islam as on the rise in Central Asia are not necessarily indicative of great Soviet concern.

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Islamic Persistence and Diversity

Islam in Central Asia has retained a broad following throughout the Soviet era. Despite major constraints imposed by Moscow and periods of Soviet persecution, believers still meet many of the formal and informal obligations of establishment Islam and look to Islam for help. Perhaps even more importantly, for practicing Muslims and a significant number of those who are not religious, Islam is an integral part of their ethnic identity and way of life.

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An estimated 45-55 million Soviet citizens are of Muslim ancestry out of a total estimated Soviet population of nearly 280 million in 1986. The traditionally Muslim peoples are a diverse group. They differ with regard to language, geographic location, way of life, history, and culture. Muslims in the Soviet Union historically have had their share of wars and lesser animosities among dynastic states, tribes, peoples, and ambitious conquerors.

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The recent increased Islamic activism outside the USSR, especially in Afghanistan and Iran, may have caught the attention of at least some Soviet Muslims, but no solid evidence is available to indicate whether such interest takes the form of increased attention to spiritual matters and ritual observance or an increased striving for a political alternative to the Soviet regime. We also cannot be certain how interest in Islam has changed over time,

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[REDACTED]

either in response to the strong but inconclusive Afghan resistance to the Soviet invasion or as the problems characterizing Islamic government in Iran--internecine struggle, stalemated reforms, and a long a bloody war with Iraq--have become evident. [REDACTED]

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Tajikistan's Muslims

Although Islamist political activism in the late 1970s may have influenced Tajikistan's Muslims, such influence has not necessarily entailed political radicalization. The decentralized structure of Soviet Islam is ill-suited to mobilizing broad support. [REDACTED]

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The Soviet republic of Tajikistan borders Afghanistan and the Tajik language, a dialect of Persian, provides an important link to both Afghanistan and Iran. The Tajik intelligentsia portrays Tajiks as contributors and heirs to 2500 years of high Iranian civilization. The Tajiks differentiate themselves from their Turkic neighbors. [REDACTED]

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Tajikistan's population numbered 4.5 million at the start of 1985. Tajiks comprise about 60 percent of the republic population, Uzbeks about 20 percent, and Russians, Ukrainians, Kirghiz, Jews, and others make up the rest. [REDACTED]

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Powerful internal forces work to sustain Islam's influence, quite apart from any spill-over of Islamic militance from countries to the south:

--The predominantly rural, agrarian environment of Tajikistan's population tends to preserve more of the traditional way of life and is less amenable to Soviet efforts to transform people's outlook than is the case in the cities.

--Islam is strongly linked to national identity among Tajiks;

--Family and the clergy, often acting in concert, seek to preserve Islamic observance as an integral part of the way of life. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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**Impact of Afghanistan**


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In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, the Soviets made a concentrated effort to destroy the guerrillas in regions along Afghanistan's border with the USSR, and stories that Afghan guerrillas have crossed into Soviet territory on a number of occasions, bringing Korans and their own propaganda literature to the local inhabitants--according to some versions, trading Korans for weapons or other goods--remain unconfirmed. We cannot be sure how people on the Soviet side of the border react to such encounters. Given the scarcity of Korans in the Soviet Union, obtaining one may be most important as an end in itself, not necessarily as an indication of new militance on the part of Soviet Muslims. It is probably still extremely difficult to penetrate Soviet border security. 

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Although the use of the Soviet army in Afghanistan has stimulated some discontent among Soviet Muslims, other segments of Soviet society--including some Ukrainians, Balts, Georgians, and Armenians--also disapprove of the war. The number of defections in Afghanistan seems to be few, and Muslims are not the only defectors. Defectors have been prompted by various motives, many of them personal rather than political. The initial Soviet invasion force probably included a disproportionate number of Central Asians because it was composed of troops regularly stationed in the military districts nearest Afghanistan, supplemented by local reserves. Later, regular units replaced the reserves, with the result that the ethnic composition of the Soviet troops returned to normal. 

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The actions of Soviet authorities do not suggest they fear that Central Asian Muslims' loyalty will be undermined by contacts with Afghans. Young Afghans are brought to Dushanbe to study in institutions of higher education and technical schools. Tajiks continue to be sent to Afghanistan in various capacities. They and other Central Asians fill many positions in Afghanistan's administration and educational system. 

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Propaganda Treatment

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[REDACTED]

Soviet authorities do not behave as though they see the influence of foreign Islam as a serious threat to the loyalty of Tajikistan's Muslims. The Soviets have complained repeatedly about foreign broadcasts on Islamic themes, but the Soviets also want to reduce attention to the domestic shortcomings which they believe contribute to the persistence of Islam.

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[REDACTED]

The Soviets are at least as concerned about Islamic propaganda from Western as from Islamic sources. Radio broadcasts by Western and other non-Muslim countries come in for more criticism than do stations in Islamic countries. Afghan opposition groups are not listed among the offenders by the Soviets.

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Soviet authorities may even see foreign Islam's political activism as advancing Soviet interests in some cases. The assessment of foreign Islam which the Soviet media presents to a mass audience includes much that is positive. The message conveyed to the general public in Tajikistan is that Islam can serve as mass ideology espousing things the Soviets favor: anti-imperialism (including anti-Americanism and anti-Zionism); disenchantment with the Western economic model; and advocacy of social transformation.

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While the Party frequently calls for more and better atheist propaganda, it also recognizes that too vigorous a campaign against Islam would be counterproductive. This clearly implies that the authorities regard the persistence of Islam as a problem of manageable proportions, rather than a crisis which demands an all-out effort.

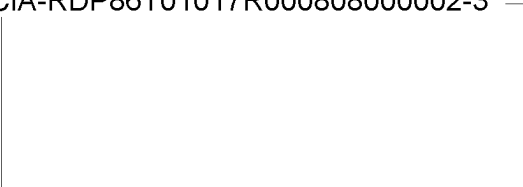
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Soviet expressions of concern about the revival of Islam since 1979 are virtually identical to statements made before then. During the 1960s and 1970s Soviet authorities periodically directed their attention to the persistence of religion in general, and Islam in particular. Each time they found the situation worrisome. They saw a "revival" led by mullahs and Sufis, and in general noted the continuing influence of Islam. Islamic countries

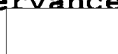
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neighboring the Soviet Union were accused of encouraging religious observance by Soviet citizens for subversive purposes. 

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Although there is more public discussion of the persistence of Islam in the Soviet Union now than there was before the revolution in Iran and the anti-Communist insurgency in Afghanistan, the substance of the discussion has not changed. Moreover, even the increased rhetoric about domestic Islam in recent years is still small by comparison with Soviet rhetoric on other subjects. 

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An Ultimate Sanction

The Soviet leadership has amply demonstrated to the citizens its readiness to crush all real or imagined opposition. Even though the extremes of the Stalin terror are past, the leadership has on occasion used force to thwart what it considered opposition. If the Soviet leaders should perceive themselves to be threatened by domestic Islamic militance, there is no reason to doubt that they would use as much force as necessary to end the threat. 

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