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Afghanistan: The Domestic and International Implications of National Reconciliation



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An Intelligence Assessment

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*NESA 87-10048
October 1987*

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Afghanistan: The Domestic and International Implications of National Reconciliation

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [Redacted]

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Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis,
with contributions by [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Office of Leadership Analysis. It was
coordinated with the Directorate of Operations [Redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESAS [Redacted]

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Aghanistan: The Domestic and International Implications of National Reconciliation [Redacted]

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 22 September 1987 was used in this report.

The peace initiative launched by the USSR and the Afghan regime on 15 January 1987, which features a unilateral cease-fire and a national reconciliation plan, has failed to attract the interest of Afghan insurgent groups and has weakened the Kabul government domestically. At the same time, Moscow and Kabul probably are succeeding through their peace initiative in slowly enhancing the Afghan regime's diplomatic legitimacy, dividing the resistance alliance, and undermining international political support for the insurgents, thereby threatening to win politically what they have not been able to win on the battlefield. [Redacted]

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Because of disagreements about the reconciliation proposals, the Moscow-dominated People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) almost certainly has become more faction ridden and less effective as an instrument of government. The chronic factionalism that has characterized the PDPA since its inception in 1965 has intensified since January and has led to the emergence of several small splinter groups in the PDPA's traditional Parchami and Khalqi factions. [Redacted]

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The decline of the regime's armed forces' combat proficiency has matched—and perhaps exceeded—the deterioration of the government since the peace offensive began. The threat of Soviet withdrawal implicit in the peace offensive has undermined the already poor morale of party and regime cadre, as well as that of the officer corps. So far in 1987 the Afghan army has performed poorly on the battlefield and—after a two-year respite—is again experiencing small, whole-unit desertions. Growing insurgent use of surface-to-air missiles is causing a rapid decline in the morale and aggressiveness of the Afghan air force. The combination of the specter of near-term Soviet withdrawal and the insurgents' improving combat effectiveness is almost certainly having a detrimental impact on the morale and aggressiveness of the regime's armed forces as a whole. [Redacted]

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Moscow and Kabul have scored some international successes, however, and are methodically building on the peace proposals to create a diplomatic environment in which the Afghan regime's legitimacy is growing. Moscow appears to have concluded that the campaign is softening international political support for the insurgents and increasing the possibility of many states viewing the war as an East-West issue rather than as a clear-cut case

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of Soviet aggression. The international impact of the national reconciliation effort almost certainly will reduce the number of nations voting for Pakistan's Afghanistan resolution at the UN General Assembly this fall.

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The Soviet-Afghan regime peace initiative has had considerable success in sowing confusion and dissension both in the seven-party resistance alliance and between the insurgent party chiefs and the Pakistanis. Moscow's and Kabul's acceptance of an as yet undefined leadership role in a national reconciliation regime for former King Zahir Shah has sharply increased tensions between the fundamentalist political party chiefs and the traditionalist leaders, and among the party leaders, the field commanders, and the refugees. The Zahir Shah issue [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] has also divided most of the alliance and the Pakistanis. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets and Afghans undoubtedly realize they have struck the alliance and its external backers at their weakest point—the alliance's lack of internal cohesion and a single political agenda—and will probably continue to pursue the policy. After the UN General Assembly session, Moscow and Kabul probably will continue presenting their "reasonable" peace proposals to the Islamic Conference Organization and the Nonaligned Movement and contrast them with the resistance's lack of a flexible negotiating policy.

[REDACTED]

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Despite the increasingly severe rifts in the PDPA growing out of the peace initiative, we see no imminent prospect for a collapse of the Kabul regime. Moscow could not permit the dissolution of the PDPA or the breakdown of the regime's armed forces because there are no other instruments through which Soviet goals in Afghanistan could be pursued. The intensity of the current intraparty struggle for power also suggests that most senior PDPA members still regard the party leadership as a prize worth winning, an attitude implying that senior party members do not foresee an imminent withdrawal of Soviet protection. [REDACTED]

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Aghanistan: The Domestic and International Implications of National Reconciliation



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The peace initiative begun by the USSR and the Afghan regime in January 1987 has, in our judgment, failed at home and had limited but important success abroad. No important insurgent commander has observed the regime's cease-fire—most have increased their combat activity—and no prominent resistance political figure or significant number of refugees has returned home to participate in the national reconciliation process. The peace campaign nonetheless has succeeded in securing increased international recognition for Kabul, and Soviet and Afghan regime media are having some success in portraying the war as an East-West issue, blurring the reality of Soviet aggression. The "peace proposals" have also sown dissension within the resistance alliance and between the insurgent leaders and the Pakistanis. 

What Is "National Reconciliation"?

The Soviet-Afghan regime peace initiative has thus far gone through two distinct phases. Kabul and Moscow launched the first stage of the peace offensive in early January 1987 with the declaration of a six-month unilateral cease-fire, a call for national reconciliation, and the release of some political prisoners. Initially, Kabul's plan was short on specifics, offering only a vague scheme for sharing power with its opponents and pledging the establishment of an Islamic state. Kabul also promised to provide land, food, money, and resettlement arrangements for those refugees choosing to accept its invitation to return home. The Soviets and Afghans complemented the domestic aspects of the initiative with a media and diplomatic offensive aimed at increasing Kabul's international legitimacy, blaming the United States for prolonging the war, and accusing Pakistan and Iran of preventing the return of refugees. 


The second and more specific phase of the peace initiative was proclaimed in June and July. People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) General Secretary Najib began this stage by announcing the

Economic Aspects of Kabul's National Reconciliation Plan

Kabul has unveiled several economic programs to garner support for national reconciliation in the Afghan business and refugee communities. In May,  the regime announced that it would soon return some expropriated industries to their former owners. The regime apparently has been unable to operate many of them profitably because of shortages of labor, energy, and raw materials. According to regime media, Kabul is also trying to prompt a mass return of refugees through gifts of cash, land, seed, and farming equipment, as well as an exemption from back taxes and interest on debt. 

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Land reform is a major economic component of national reconciliation. Acknowledging that serious mistakes had been made in implementing the regime's original land reforms, a top official stated last spring that Kabul would raise the limit on individual landholdings from 6 to 20 hectares. The regime's land distribution program has been universally unpopular since its introduction in 1978 and was instrumental in triggering the initial outbreak of armed resistance to the new regime. In our opinion, the new land policy will fail because opposition to Kabul's land reform policy is directed not so much at the size of individual landholdings—which have traditionally been small—but at government interference in a matter that has historically been governed by Islamic laws of inheritance. The regime's program will also be constrained by the shortage of land in a country where only about 20 percent of total acreage is arable. 

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possibility of renaming the country the Republic of Afghanistan, presumably hoping that dropping the term "Democratic" from the country's current name would blur the regime's Marxist underpinnings. Kabul next offered its opponents 23 Cabinet, sub-Cabinet, and ambassadorial posts; promulgated a law legalizing a multiparty political system; declared former King Zahir Shah eligible for a post in a reconciliation regime; and issued a draft constitution for "national" debate. The regime also extended its unilateral cease-fire through 15 January 1988 and issued a decree allowing insurgent commanders—after agreeing to join the national reconciliation process—to establish autonomous "political and military structures" within their areas of control. Kabul also sweetened its offer to the refugees by promising restitution for property and land confiscated or destroyed by the regime. [redacted]

At the same time, Kabul continued its diplomatic offensive by sending senior officials to more than 60 states—mostly Islamic nations and in the Third World—to explain the "successes" of the national reconciliation campaign and assert US "responsibility" for prolonging the war by providing sophisticated arms to the insurgents. The diplomatic campaign was capped in early September by a session of the UN-sponsored Afghanistan negotiations in Geneva called at Kabul's insistence during which the Afghan Foreign Minister reduced the proposed timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal from 18 to 16 months. [redacted]

National Reconciliation: Destabilizing the PDPA
We believe the Soviet-Afghan peace initiative has had a negative internal impact on the PDPA, sharply increasing the party's chronic factionalism and steadily lowering morale. In our view, PDPA General Secretary Najib, former General Secretary Babrak Karmal, and many party members of both the Parchami and Khalqi factions expected such a result and have never had much enthusiasm for the peace proposals. [redacted]

[redacted] We believe that Kabul's six-month extension of the regime's unilateral cease-fire, announced in mid-July, was imposed by Moscow against Najib's wishes. [redacted]

Impact on the Cadre. The national reconciliation plan has, in our view, weakened party cohesion and sapped the confidence of party and government cadre in the reliability of Soviet protection. The widespread uncertainty created by the initiative appears to have encouraged many PDPA members—who had been nervous [redacted] about the durability of Soviet protection since Babrak Karmal was removed as party leader in May 1986—to organize themselves into groups that are loosely associated with but distinct from the two traditional party factions. [redacted] at least six separate factions are vying for power in the PDPA: pro-Najib Parchamis, pro-Babrak Karmal Parchamis, anti-Soviet Khalqis, pro-Soviet Khalqis, Khalqis recently released from prison by Najib, and the various non-Pashtun ethnic groups who are gathering around Prime Minister Keshtmand. [redacted]

In the 10 months since the cease-fire—national reconciliation plan began, the PDPA regime, according to US diplomatic reports, has experienced a steady rise in nervousness among its middle- and lower-level cadre. The usually well-informed Indian Ambassador in Kabul summarized the impact of the peace plan on the cadre when he told US officials that they, unlike Najib and his Cabinet-level colleagues, "could not hop the last plane to Tashkent" in the event of a Soviet withdrawal. Nervousness about a potential Soviet pullout began to grow almost immediately after the cease-fire commenced, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. [redacted]

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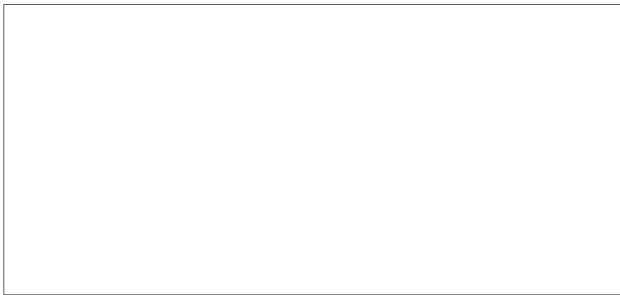
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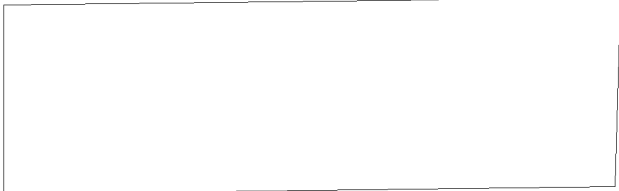
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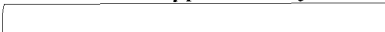


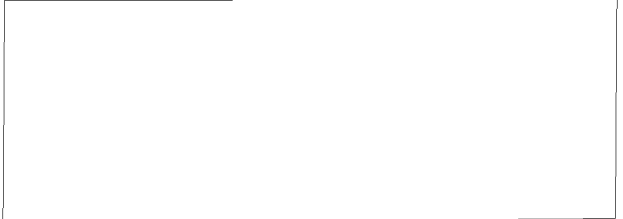
Ratebzad, forced to resign from the Politburo, and Babrak Karmal's half brother Mahmud Baryalai, demoted to a less important party post.  25X1

As a result of the unnerving effect of the peace initiative on government and party officials, we believe that Kabul has lost most of the already limited effectiveness it possessed last January. 

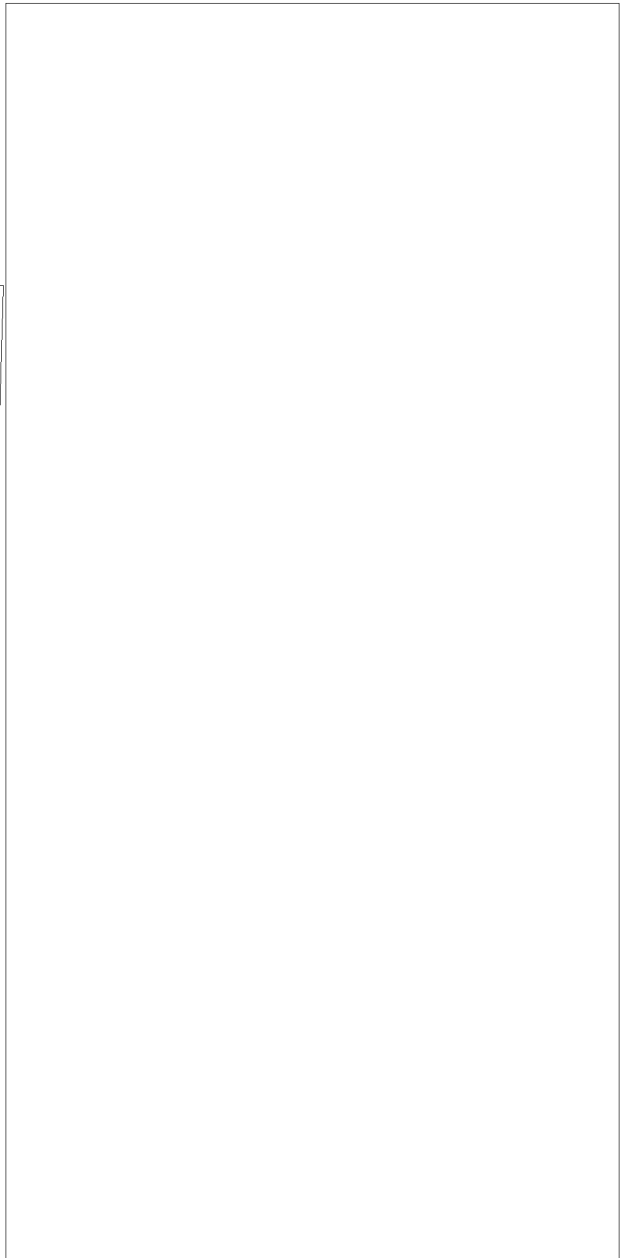


Moreover, in our opinion, rumors of Moscow's displeasure with the domestic failure of national reconciliation, its reported interest in replacing the PDPA regime with a "nonparty" government, and the hints of an imminent Soviet withdrawal that accompanied Najib's extended July-August visit to the USSR almost certainly will add to the disquiet. 

Parchami Splintering Continues. Dissension within the Parchami faction—to which both Najib and Babrak Karmal belong—has increased markedly since the cease-fire was announced, largely because Babrak Karmal and his followers opposed the peace plan from the start. 



Adding to tension in the faction has been Najib's continuing purge of Babrak Karmal loyalists from senior posts in the bureaucracy and party apparatus. The most recent prominent victims of the purge, according to US diplomatic reporting, have been longtime Babrak Karmal loyalist Anahita



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The Refugees' Response to National Reconciliation

Kabul built several elaborate reception centers last spring to facilitate the repatriation of large numbers of the nearly 5 million Afghan refugees resident in Pakistan and Iran. To date these centers remain virtually deserted, and we have no evidence to validate the regime's claims that more than 80,000 refugees have returned home. Indeed, Kabul's repeated claims that the Pakistani and Iranian Governments are physically preventing Afghan refugees from returning almost certainly are meant to disguise the regime's failure to lure a significant number home. There is no evidence suggesting that Islamabad or Tehran are blocking the return of refugees. Both governments have offered to receive UN inspection teams to verify that no such obstacles exist. To foster the impression that their program is working, we believe that Kabul and Moscow are reporting normal cross-border trade and commercial traffic as returning refugees, staging fake return ceremonies, and exaggerating the number of refugees who periodically return to Afghanistan to check on their property, businesses, and family interests.

On the basis of conversations with refugees and representatives of the leading humanitarian relief agencies, the US Embassy in Islamabad contends

that probably no more than a few thousand refugees have returned to Afghanistan under the national reconciliation program. In our opinion, the number of refugees flowing into Pakistan from Afghanistan exceeds the number traveling in the opposite direction.

Kabul appears to have had somewhat more success in its effort to entice the Marri tribesmen—who live on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border—to return to Afghanistan.

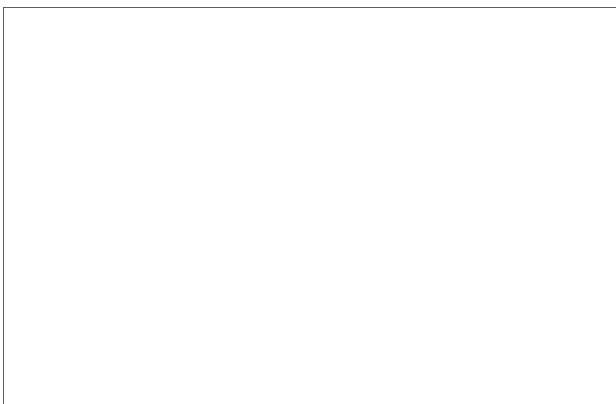
_____ nearly 5,000 tribesmen recently migrated from Pakistan's Baluchistan Province in response to a summons by tribal chieftain Nawab Khair Bux Marri, whose headquarters is in Kabul. The tribal leader and nearly 3,000 of his followers have been recipients of Afghan subsidies and military training since they moved to Afghanistan in 1979. Kabul probably hopes that the new migration will embarrass Islamabad and serve as a stimulus to other border tribes.

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own faction and the party's general secretaryship have greatly intensified the conflict between it and the rival Parchami grouping in recent months.

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The Khalqis: Climbing Back to Power? We believe the Khalqi faction's opposition to the peace initiative and recognition of Najib's tenuous hold on both his

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Underlying Weaknesses in the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan

The split in the PDPA dates back almost to the party's founding in 1965. By 1967, Khalq and Parcham had become separate factions. Each took its name from its newspaper. Differences over political tactics were an important factor in the original schism. [redacted] with the early Khalqis favoring revolutionary extremism and the Parchamis favoring more moderate tactics. The differences also have social and ethnic roots. Parchamis tend to come from urban and middle- or upper-class backgrounds and Khalqis from the rural lower class. Nearly all Khalqis are Pashtun, while nearly all Parchamis are from other ethnic groups. (Najib, a Pashtun Parchami, is an exception.) Subfactions based on personal following, family ties, tribalism, or ethnicity also exist. [redacted]

In 1977 the two factions united under Soviet pressure but only papered over their differences, which reappeared in mid-1978 after the party came to power. The dominant Khalqis exiled or jailed most important Parchamis and took control of the PDPA. Since December 1979, when Soviet troops overthrew the Khalqis and installed a government in which both factions were represented, the Parchamis have gained slowly at Khalqi expense. Nevertheless, the Khalqis still wield considerable influence through their large numbers in the Ministries of Defense and Interior. [redacted]

Moscow has been unable to heal the party's serious rifts and will have to pay a price for choosing one faction over the other. Eliminating Khalqis, for example, would weaken considerably the effectiveness

of the security forces. Abandoning the Parchamis would mean losing an educated class of administrators. [redacted]

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Despite repeated recruitment drives, building party membership is a perennial problem. The party routinely inflates its membership figures. It claimed 50,000 members in 1979; 120,000 in 1984; 134,000 in 1985; and 150,000 in 1986. The party apparently recruits heavily from the national youth group, the Democratic Youth Organization of Afghanistan. According to official statistics, half of the new party members in 1985 came from this group. Of the 120,000 members the party claimed in 1984, more than 70 percent were under 30, suggesting that the party may be having considerable difficulty recruiting older members. [redacted]

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Most Western observers estimated party size in the early 1980s at less than half of the regime claim. Moreover, many citizens, particularly in urban areas, undoubtedly have a party card only because it is necessary to obtain or hold jobs or to have access to government-supplied goods. Even if the party had grown at the pace suggested by official government figures, members would hardly have had time to be sufficiently indoctrinated in, much less committed to, Marxist theory. [redacted]

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[Redacted]

The internal disarray of the Parchami faction has, in our view, emboldened the Khalqis, moving them to demand a greater share of power from the General Secretary. In April, according to US Embassy reporting [Redacted] the Khalqis demanded an equal share of ministerial portfolios, the return of several prominent Khalqis from exile in diplomatic posts abroad, and the release of some prominent Khalqis who had been imprisoned since the Soviet invasion in 1979. Najib initially rejected these demands [Redacted] He eventually yielded to Soviet pressure, however, and released a dozen Khalqis from Pol-e Charkhi prison—

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Najib's troubles may be encouraging Khalqi leader Gulabzoi to see himself as a potential candidate to head the PDPA. Since Babrak Karmal's ouster, Gulabzoi has been a strong supporter of Najib [Redacted]

[Redacted] Gulabzoi commands the support of most Khalqis, and, as Minister of Interior, he also commands the loyalty of the Ministry's well-armed and reasonably well-disciplined paramilitary organization—the Sarandoi. Leading Parchamis apparently are worried about the use Gulabzoi could make of the Sarandoi. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Gulabzoi may believe that the Soviets are looking at him as a potential successor to Najib. We believe there is some basis for such a perception. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

The US Embassy in Kabul, for example, reports that the Soviets may have recently brought the Interior Minister to Moscow for private and unannounced discussions. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that Gulabzoi was upbraided for ignoring the wishes of Najib and the Soviets by trying to arrest the troublesome leader of a proregime tribal militia. He was promoted to full Politburo membership shortly after the event. Finally, press accounts claim that Gulabzoi—with the assistance of Soviet advisers—has replaced most Parchami district secretaries in the provinces bordering Pakistan with Khalqis loyal to him.

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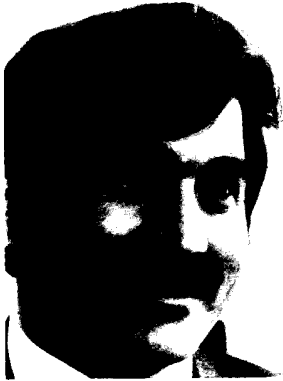
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Gulabzoi: Ambitious Adversary



By making himself an early and key collaborator in Moscow's decision to replace Babrak Karmal with Najib, Minister of Interior Sayed Mohammad Gulabzoi has increased his power (he was named a full Politburo member in June 1987) and improved his future prospects. He has emerged as the undisputed head of a strengthened and relatively united Khalqi faction, which he hopes

to lead back to power. His close identification with factional and Pashtun ethnic interests would probably ensure continued hostility from Parchamis and non-Pashtuns if he were to replace Najib.

Gulabzoi is intelligent, decisive, and quick to defend his interests. An ardent Khalqi ever since Hafizullah Amin recruited him in the 1970s, he gained a reputation for standing up to the Parchamis in the years after the Soviet invasion. Gulabzoi fought successfully to preserve his position and independence as Minister of Interior from the growing power of Najib's secret police.

[Redacted]

He has also tried to develop an ethnic base of support by posing as a champion of Pashtun causes in the regime and cultivating ties to his home province of Paktia.

[Redacted]

Gulabzoi has been careful not to anger the Soviets by his empire building. As Minister of Communications in the regime of Nur Mohammad Taraki, he participated in an apparently Soviet-supported coup attempt in September 1979 against Prime Minister Amin and took refuge in the Soviet Embassy when the attempt failed. Since 1979 he has made himself valuable to the Soviets by running an efficient (by regime standards) Ministry of Interior.

[Redacted]

Gulabzoi, a member of the Zadran tribe, was born in the Khowst region of Paktia. He has had little formal education but received some military training in the Soviet Union. As a young air force officer he took part in the 1973 overthrow of King Zahir Shah and was rewarded with the position of aide-de-camp to the air force commander.

[Redacted]

Following the coup Gulabzoi was named an aide to Taraki and a Central Committee member. He became Minister of Communications later that year. The regime's official biography claims that he is about 36, but he may be several years older.

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Although we have no conclusive evidence that the Soviets are considering dumping Najib, we believe that Moscow is keeping open the option of throwing its support behind Gulabzoi and the Khalqis.

[Redacted]

The Afghan Armed Forces: Steady Deterioration

We believe that the Soviet-Afghan peace initiative and unilateral cease-fire were designed, in part, to provide the Afghan army with time to recuperate, reequip, and train after suffering heavy losses in fighting during November and December 1986.

[Redacted]

In our opinion, the combination of disappointment over the failure of the cease-fire, an increase in overall insurgent military capabilities, tensions with their Soviet allies, increasing casualties and desertions, and the lack of significant battlefield successes this year all but ensure that there will be little improvement in the performance of the regime's armed forces for the foreseeable future.

Declining Morale. The morale of the regime's armed forces [Redacted] has plummeted since the start of Kabul's peace offensive, in part due to the failure of the national reconciliation process. Increasing insurgent firepower, battlefield cooperation, and logistic capabilities probably are demoralizing the regime military.

[Redacted]

Casualties and Desertions. Although information on casualties is fragmentary, we believe that regime military and paramilitary forces have sustained heavy combat losses since last January. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, the army has suffered heavy losses

in operations this year around the capital, in eastern Afghanistan, and in Qandahar Province.

[Redacted]

The defection of small units en masse and a continued high level of desertions are also limiting the military's effectiveness.

[Redacted]

Manpower Problems. The regime's decision in January to temporarily end forced conscription as a means of adding to the popular appeal of its national reconciliation program adversely affected the army's manpower situation.

[Redacted] As a result of this political maneuver, Kabul had to find other methods of meeting the army's personnel requirements.

[Redacted]

In our view, the regime's renewed conscription campaign is only marginally improving the military's manpower problems. As recently as June and July, Kabul was forced to send virtually untrained party and government cadre to reinforce regime units fighting near Qandahar.

Growing Success: The International Impact of National Reconciliation

Although the peace offensive has been a disaster internally, it has, in our view, scored notable diplomatic successes that have enhanced the regime's international stature. In a series of well-publicized

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Regime Military Operations in 1987

Since January, the regime's military operations have focused on curbing guerrilla resupply capabilities and preventing the insurgents from operating in and around urban areas. Regime forces, initially supported only by Soviet air and artillery strikes, have been deployed with little success against insurgent strongholds and supply routes in Qandahar, Kapisa, Paktia, Lowgar, and Nangarhar Provinces. In each case, Kabul's forces encountered stubborn insurgent resistance, requiring the deployment of Soviet ground units in their support. From late May through mid-June, for example, the regime's forces and Soviet Special Purpose Forces attempted without lasting success to close guerrilla resupply routes from Gardyz to Kabul. The US Embassy in Kabul reports that regime forces could not dislodge guerrilla forces from the Paghman area west of the capital in June and were forced to seek Soviet support to extricate themselves. In this series of engagements, well entrenched resistance forces repulsed several large regime attacks with all sides suffering heavy casualties in these battles.

[Redacted]

Regime forces also played a leading—and similarly ineffective—role in a series of operations in Qandahar in May, June, and July.

[Redacted]

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The subsequent assaults had little impact on the insurgents but destroyed much of the area's agricultural resources.

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In late June, regime and Soviet troops resumed operations near Qandahar, this time in the Malajat area south of the city. Because the regime's forces had been ineffective in the first Qandahar operation, Soviet forces took the lead in the Malajat fighting and the regime's forces provided second-echelon support. This operation [Redacted] also failed to remove the guerrillas and their bases from the Qandahar region.

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The Soviets almost certainly are frustrated with the deterioration of regime military effectiveness so far in 1987. Soviet-regime tensions have grown this year as a result of Soviet efforts to block attempts by regime units to surrender or defect to the resistance.

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In our view, military ineffectiveness has prevented regime forces from even remotely approaching the accomplishment of their major goal for 1987—the closing down of insurgent supply routes from Pakistan.

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high-level visits, Foreign Minister Wakil visited New Delhi in February, Indian Foreign Minister Tiwari visited Kabul in April, and Afghan Prime Minister Keshtmand visited Baghdad in early June. In addition, Zimbabwe—whose prime minister is chairman of the Nonaligned Movement—and Cyprus have recognized Kabul, although neither has set a date on which relations will formally begin. Austria agreed in early September to permit Kabul to open an embassy in Vienna. Afghan representation in Vienna almost certainly will result in Kabul's envoy gaining accreditation to the UN components headquartered in the

city. Moscow and Kabul, according to US diplomatic reporting, are also focusing on improving the Afghan regime's standing with such international organizations as the United Nations, the Islamic Conference Organization, and the Nonaligned Movement.

Moscow's actual and potential diplomatic successes on Afghanistan in the UN General Assembly, the Islamic Conference Organization, and the Non-aligned Movement are not solely due to Kabul's peace

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plan. Moscow has long used various forms of leverage—weapons, economic aid, and diplomatic support—on nonaligned states. The peace proposals, however, give those countries that have been resisting Soviet pressure a plausible pretext for putting distance between themselves and the insurgents on the basis of Moscow's purported readiness for a "compromise" peace. Moscow's efforts underline the Soviets' continuing commitment to the current Afghan regime and willingness to expend diplomatic and economic capital on Kabul's behalf. [redacted]

Courting the United Nations. The Soviets and Afghan regime—using the national reconciliation program as proof of their good intentions—are concentrating on reducing the number of nations voting for Pakistan's annual Afghanistan resolution at this fall's session of the UN General Assembly. Moscow began this effort in February when it took an unusually conciliatory tack on Afghanistan at the meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights. In previous Commission sessions Moscow had always loudly objected to any inquiry into human rights in Afghanistan. In the February meeting, according to US diplomatic reporting, the Soviets took a low-key approach, refused to respond to sharp US criticism of Moscow's Afghan policy, and arranged for Najib's delegation to invite the Commission's special rapporteur on Afghanistan—Austrian Professor Felix Ermacora—to visit Kabul in late July. Soviet and Afghan regime forbearance paid dividends as Ermacora's report described the "full cooperation of the Government of Afghanistan" and praised Kabul's national reconciliation plan "as a positive step in the restoration of the human rights situation in the country." Ermacora also publicly supported Moscow's contention that a quick withdrawal of Soviet troops would result in a "blood-bath" inside Afghanistan. [redacted]

The Soviets and Afghan regime, according to US diplomatic reporting, have also had some success in using national reconciliation to soften the attitude of the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) toward the Kabul regime. The Soviets persuaded High Commissioner John Hocke to visit Moscow in June, the first such visit by a head of the UNHCR. During the visit, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov attempted to convince Hocke that the

United Nations and other humanitarian organizations should begin planning for the "orderly and humane" return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran and that an organization should be established on the scene in Kabul to coordinate arrangements. With the blessing of UN Secretary General de Cuellar and UN Special Negotiator for Afghanistan Cordovez, Hocke agreed to send a committee of UNHCR technical experts to Kabul in late August or early September but later postponed the visit under US pressure. Hocke, according to US officials, may have agreed to arrange the visit in part to refute Cordovez's contention that he is "in the American pocket." Hocke's agreement to a visit almost certainly will stand Moscow and Kabul in good stead when they try to soften the UN General Assembly resolution on Afghanistan this fall.² [redacted]

Moscow and Kabul followed up this push in the United Nations' constituent forums with a broad diplomatic initiative aimed at acquainting many Third World, Islamic, and Western governments with their "desire" for a peaceful settlement of the war.

[redacted] Moscow and Kabul believe that, if they can persuade several countries in Africa and Latin America to change their votes, a snowball effect might be produced because these two geographical regions tend to vote as blocs in the UN General Assembly. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, the Afghan regime dispatched five teams of senior officials in July and August to central and southern Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Western Europe to explain the national reconciliation process and contrast it with the intransigence of the resistance and its external backers. Soviet diplomats abroad have also pressed their host governments—on Kabul's behalf—to change their votes at this fall's

² The activities in Afghanistan of two other international organizations are also likely to improve the international standing of Najib's regime. UNICEF has recently initiated a child immunization program in Afghanistan in which it is cooperating directly with the Kabul authorities, and the International Committee of the Red Cross is in the midst of significantly expanding its presence and facilities in Kabul. [redacted]

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UN General Assembly session. In Malaysia, Guinea Bissau, Uganda, and Ecuador, for example, Soviet diplomats, according to [redacted] media reporting, have pressed high-level foreign ministry officials with claims that the "conciliatory" Soviet-Afghan approach has been answered by Islamabad and Washington only with intransigence and an increased flow of sophisticated weapons to the insurgents. [redacted]

The recent Soviet- and Afghan regime-instigated session of the UN-sponsored negotiations on Afghanistan in Geneva almost certainly was intended to convince Third World audiences of Moscow's sincerity in seeking a political settlement of the Afghan war. In the preliminaries to the UN General Assembly session, Moscow and Kabul have stressed that, although they reduced the proposed timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal from 18 to 16 months, Pakistan's "insignificant" counteroffer of eight months rather than seven prevented the successful conclusion of the negotiations. Soviet and Afghan regime media probably will seek to sharpen this point by emphasizing that Kabul has cut the withdrawal timetable from 48 to 16 months since the UN-sponsored talks began in 1982. In our view, however, Moscow and Kabul will derive little propaganda value from the September negotiating session primarily because the Soviets had widely hinted beforehand that Kabul would offer a 12-month timetable. Nonetheless, the two-month reduction may give several of the nations being pressed by Moscow to change their votes on the UN General Assembly's Afghan resolution sufficient justification to do so.

[redacted]

We believe that Moscow sees these efforts as a useful prelude to the UN General Assembly session, where it probably will seek textual changes in Pakistan's Afghanistan resolution—and may even offer a counter-resolution of its own—acknowledging Kabul's national reconciliation effort and calling for an end to all foreign interference. It probably believes these changes are increasingly acceptable to some Third World states. [redacted]

[redacted]

Pakistan's UN Resolution

Pakistan's UN resolution on Afghanistan which has been debated every year since 1980 calls for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from the country and the restoration of Afghanistan's independence and nonaligned status. The resolution also reaffirms the right of the Afghan people to self-determination and appeals for the creation of conditions that would permit the return of refugees to Afghanistan with "peace and honor." Moscow and Kabul, [redacted] are likely to attempt to amend Pakistan's resolution to have it call for an end to "foreign interference" in Afghanistan. They are also likely to seek the addition of language praising the Afghan regime's attempts to promote "national reconciliation." [redacted]

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In our view, the Soviets—who believe the loss of even a few votes will embarrass Washington and Islamabad—will have some success in reducing the number of states supporting Pakistan's UN resolution. US diplomatic reporting indicates that Islamabad is uncertain of its ability to match the number of votes cast for the UN General Assembly resolution in 1986. According to US officials, the countries most susceptible to Soviet and Afghan regime blandishments are Zimbabwe, Cyprus, Congo, Iraq, Mozambique, Lesotho, Mauritania, Togo, Cameroon, and Uganda. To Washington's list of potential vote switchers, Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials add Peru, Sao Tome and Principe, Ghana, Benin, Mali, Burkina, Suriname, Guyana, Guinea Bissau, Lebanon, Kuwait, Zambia, Vanuatu, and Kenya. Pakistani officials recently suggested that Washington and Islamabad may have to resort to swapping foreign aid for UN General Assembly votes to shore up support for the Afghani-

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stan resolution. The Pakistanis—who claimed to have no funds available for such an effort—identified Benin, Mali, Uganda, Burkina, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Suriname as possibly open to such an offer. [redacted]

Kabul, the Islamic Conference, and the Nonaligned Movement. We believe Kabul and Moscow are seeking to weaken the Islamic world's publicly hardline anti-Soviet stance on the war by stressing the success of national reconciliation and petitioning Islamic states to support Afghanistan's readmission to the Islamic Conference. [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet officials are urging Islamic Conference members to show flexibility in their next resolution on Afghanistan to help the USSR withdraw with honor. Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, according to US officials, stressed this point to Islamic Conference Organization Secretary General Pirzada during the latter's visit to Moscow in February—the first such trip by an Organization head. Officials of Kuwait, Conference chairman until 1989, have told US diplomats they will ask Islamabad to be more responsive to Soviet proposals for ending the war. US diplomatic reporting also indicates that Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are worried that the recently concluded Iraq-Afghanistan cooperation agreement will have an adverse effect on the Islamic Conference Organization's attitude toward the war. Although the Conference's official stance probably will not change, we believe that the Soviets may succeed in persuading some members to upgrade their ties to Kabul. Iraq and Kuwait, for example, are seeking additional Soviet support in their confrontation with Iran and may be willing to concede more to Moscow on the Afghan issue. [redacted]

Kabul's delegations to two Nonaligned Movement conferences in June apparently also made some international headway. According to US officials, the Afghans met under Soviet auspices with the Algerian Foreign Minister at the Nonaligned Movement's "south-south" cooperation conference in North Korea and elicited from him praise for Kabul's national reconciliation campaign and a hint of expanded bilateral ties. The Afghan envoy to the Nonaligned Movement information ministers' meeting in Zimbabwe succeeded in preventing any mention of Afghanistan

in the meeting's final communique. At both conferences, Zimbabwean Foreign Ministry officials were acting as chairman. In our view, Soviet blandishments may have convinced Zimbabwean Prime Minister Mugabe to help soften anti-Kabul sentiment in the Nonaligned Movement. Moscow, according to US diplomatic reporting, recently offered Zimbabwe sophisticated fighter aircraft and contributed \$100 million in training and equipment to the Nonaligned Movement's "Africa Fund," which is designed to protect the Frontline States from South African military and economic pressure. [redacted]

Making the War an East-West Issue. As an essential part of their peace campaign, Moscow and Kabul have redoubled their efforts to identify Washington as the main obstacle to a political settlement of the war. In official media, in talks with foreign governments, and in public statements by high-ranking officials, Moscow and Kabul have repeatedly asserted that the United States is escalating and prolonging the war by ignoring Najib's peace overtures and providing increasingly sophisticated arms to the insurgents. The Soviets and Afghans are also making effective propaganda use of public statements by US officials and politicians spotlighting the flow of sophisticated US arms to the guerrillas, according to media reporting. [redacted]

We believe Soviet claims of US interference and intransigence in Afghanistan are attracting attention in Western Europe—the US Embassy in Stockholm, for example, recently reported that Swedes increasingly tend to juxtapose Afghanistan and Nicaragua—and are having some impact in the Third World and Middle East. In our view, any increase in the tendency of Third World and Islamic capitals to view the Afghan war as another insoluble East-West issue will reduce their willingness to attribute sole responsibility for continuing the war to the USSR, as well as weaken their resistance to recognizing Najib's regime. [redacted]

Moscow and Kabul almost certainly are encouraged by the international success of their peace initiative and are expecting more gains through its extension to mid-January 1988. They may soon make a proposal—now rumored in the media and some diplomatic

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circles—for the first direct talks among Moscow, Kabul, the resistance, Pakistan, and the United States. Even if these maneuvers are only negotiating tactics, Moscow probably believes—with good cause, in our view—that they will win valuable public relations points because the resistance and its backers will not call the Soviet-Afghan bluff. [redacted]

We believe the Soviets are incrementally creating an international environment in which Kabul's legitimacy is growing—despite the peace plan's domestic failure—and world opinion is increasingly focused on US aid to the insurgents. Moscow undoubtedly expects to reduce the level of international criticism of a continuing or increased Soviet presence in Afghanistan if the Geneva process fails to produce a political settlement of the war. Moreover, Moscow and Kabul almost certainly believe that the considerable success they have had in expanding the diplomatic acceptability of the Afghan regime will help them in the preliminaries to the UN General Assembly session in 1988. [redacted]

Driving Wedges: The Resistance, Pakistan, and National Reconciliation

The Insurgent Alliance and Kabul's Peace Plan. The Soviet-Afghan peace initiative has struck at the weakest point of the seven-party resistance alliance—its lack of internal unity and a coherent political agenda. In our view, the alliance was caught offguard by the peace initiative and has not fully recovered. It has been trying without success to craft a united political approach to settling the war since the peace initiative was launched. The seven leaders rejected the peace proposals on 17 January and announced—without giving details—that they had agreed that an interim government should oversee a three- to four-month Soviet withdrawal and devise Afghanistan's future political system. Their subsequent deliberations, however, have failed to describe how this transition would be managed or who would participate in it. Discussions about the various facets of a political settlement of the war appear to be weakening alliance cohesion by widening the gap dividing the traditionalist party leaders—Nabi, Mojadedi, and Gailani—from the fundamentalists—Khalis, Rabbani, Sayyaf, and Gulbuddin. [redacted]

We believe that there are three major policy disagreements between these two groupings, all of which are coming to a head because of the pressures exerted by the Soviet-Afghan peace campaign:

- **Zahir Shah:** The traditionalist leaders support a figurehead leadership role for former King Zahir Shah in an interim government largely because their parties and their families prospered during the royalist era. They also see alliance acceptance of a Zahir-led interim regime as a useful ploy for inducing the Soviets to withdraw. The fundamentalists, on the other hand, believe that Zahir is corrupt and argue that his lax and ineffective leadership spurred the growth of the PDPA and permitted Soviet influence to take root in Afghanistan. They also resent Zahir's decision to live comfortably in Rome during the war. Jamiat leader Rabbani—generally the promoter of compromise in the alliance—probably quashed any chance of the resistance supporting Zahir when he recently said that the former King was “not the solution” to forming an interim government.

- **Insurgent-sponsored elections:** Despite Hizbi Islami faction leader Gulbuddin's announcement in early May that the alliance had decided to hold an election for a representative assembly—with Afghan refugees electing 20 percent of the members and Afghans residing inside Afghanistan electing the remainder—the seven leaders have shelved the plan because they could not agree on electoral modalities. According to press accounts and diplomatic reporting, only Gailani and Gulbuddin, probably the most opportunistic of the alliance leaders, fully support such an election. The other five leaders apparently oppose an election and favor choosing a permanent leader for the alliance—who would also head an interim government—from among the seven party leaders.

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The Resistance Alliance

	Leader	Political/Religious Composition ^a	Area of Strength	Approximate Percentage of Insurgent Fighting Force ^b
Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan	Abdul Rasul Sayyaf	Islamic fundamentalist	Eastern Afghanistan (mainly Kabul)	5
Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) (Gulbuddin)	Gulbuddin Hekmatyar	Islamic fundamentalist	Eastern Afghanistan	20
Jamiat-i-Islami (Islamic Society)	Burhanuddin Rabbani	Islamic fundamentalist	Northern and western Afghanistan	35
Hizbi Islami (Islamic Party) (Yunus Khalis)	Mohammad Yunus Khalis	Islamic fundamentalist	Nangahar and Paktia Provinces	10
Jabha-i-Najat-i-Milli Afghanistan (Afghanistan National Liberation Front)	Sibghatullah Mojadedi	Moderate Islamic	Eastern Afghanistan	2.5
Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement)	Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi	Traditionalist	Eastern Afghanistan	25
Mahaz-i-Milli-Islami (National Islamic Front)	Sayed Ahmad Gailani	Moderate Islamic	Eastern Afghanistan	2.5

^a All alliance factions are predominantly Pashtun, except the Jamiat-i-Islami, which is ethnically Tajik.

^b There are an estimated 150,000 insurgent fighters.

• The PDPA's future: The traditionalist leaders apparently would acquiesce in a limited PDPA role— if the party shed itself of Najib and his closest colleagues—in an interim government and in a post-Soviet election. The traditionalists believe such a concession would be a useful tool for persuading the Soviets to withdraw and that the PDPA would inevitably be overwhelmed once deprived of Moscow's protection. The fundamentalists view any role for the PDPA as a betrayal of the holy war and those who have died in the fighting. [redacted]

Besides causing problems among the alliance leaders, we believe these policy issues have also sharpened tensions between the party chiefs, their military commanders inside Afghanistan, and leaders in the refugee camps. The Zahir Shah issue alone [redacted]

[redacted] has caused problems between the fundamentalist party leaders and a large

segment of the refugees, as well as between the traditionalist party leaders and their commanders. There also appears to be some disagreement between the military commanders of the moderate parties and their political leaders over the idea of joining an interim regime with the Afghan Communists and permitting the PDPA to participate in a post-Soviet election. [redacted]

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Zahir Shah: Cautious Onlooker



We believe that widespread name recognition and a lingering aura of legitimacy make Mohammad Zahir Shah, the former King of Afghanistan, attractive to Moscow, Kabul, and Islamabad as a potential figure-head for a PDPA-controlled "national reconciliation" government. [redacted]

[redacted] Zahir enjoys considerable popularity with many ordinary Afghans, who remember him as a benign and passive ruler and look back on his long reign (1933-73) as the "good old days" compared to the repressive and tumultuous regimes that followed. Support for Zahir is strongest among his fellow Durrani Pashtuns (the royal family is from the Mohammadzai branch of the Barakzai tribe, part of the Durrani confederation), who predominate in southern Afghanistan and the refugee camps in Pakistani Baluchistan. The Soviets must also remember Zahir's reign as a period of calm and friendly relations between Moscow and Kabul. [redacted]

The former monarch, however, is a cautious man who is deeply suspicious of Soviet intentions [redacted] and will not involve himself in any peace plan without the support of the bulk of the resistance alliance. Zahir will not seek to restore the monarchy but will probably feel dutybound to play a role in achieving a political settlement to the war if he is called upon by all sides to do so. [redacted]

Were he to return to Kabul as head of government, Zahir would not be a strong or dynamic ruler. He suffers from a reputation for being weak and indecisive, and during his reign he failed to provide effective leadership on key issues. He is, however, intelligent and tactful and probably could guide an interim government during the critical period of a Soviet withdrawal if he had the cooperation of all the major players. Once the initial task of such a regime was completed, we expect he would seek to retire from public life as quickly as possible. [redacted]

Zahir, now 72, has lived quietly in exile in Italy since he was overthrown by his cousin, Mohammad Daud. He enjoys good relations with the leaders of the three traditionalist resistance parties but is opposed by the leaders of the fundamentalist groups, particularly Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who accuse him of opening the door to Communism during his reign. [redacted]

Many insurgent field commanders, in our view, probably approve the alliance's election scheme as it now stands. Several of the major commanders—Ahmad Shah Masood in northern Afghanistan, Ismail Khan in western Afghanistan, and Mullah Malang in Qandahar Province—have devoted considerable time, effort, and resources to developing political as well as

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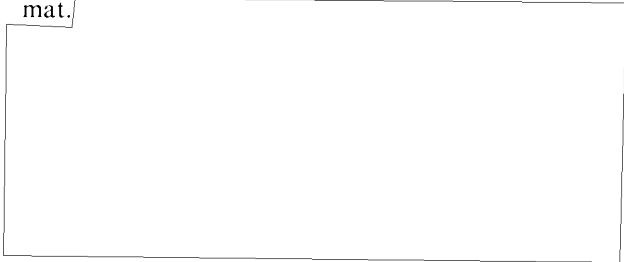
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military organizations and could expect to fare well in an election conducted according to the proposed format.



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The Alliance and Pakistan: Fighting Over Peace. The pressures generated by the Soviet-Afghan peace initiative are causing strains between the Pakistanis and the insurgents. [redacted] Islamabad continues to believe that Moscow wants to withdraw from Afghanistan but needs a "face-saving" way out. Pakistani Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan and his subordinates, in particular, apparently believe, according to [redacted] US diplomatic reporting, that, if Moscow can be convinced that a postwithdrawal Afghan regime will be stable and will refrain from slaughtering PDPA members, the likelihood of Soviet withdrawal will increase. Armed with these conclusions, the Pakistanis, in our judgment, believe it is incumbent on them—because of the alliance's disunity and to protect their own diplomatic position—to press the resistance leaders to accommodate some Soviet demands. We believe Islamabad interprets Kabul's recent two-month reduction in the withdrawal timetable as a signal of further cuts to come and will therefore again press the alliance to formulate coherent negotiating positions regarding an interim regime, Zahir Shah, and the future of the PDPA. [redacted]

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Outlook

We believe that Moscow and Kabul will continue to push their national reconciliation initiative for the foreseeable future. Although we believe the peace campaign will continue to unnerve the PDPA cadre, Soviet and Afghan regime officials apparently believe they can prevent the deteriorating domestic situation from getting out of hand. Moscow and Kabul are willing to accept the negative domestic impact of the initiative as long as they believe the effort is even marginally improving the international legitimacy of the Afghan regime, reducing international political support for the resistance, or producing pressure on Islamabad to accommodate Soviet demands in Afghanistan. [redacted]

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The Pakistanis have attempted to force the pace and direction of alliance deliberations on all three of the major issues that divide the fundamentalist leaders and their moderate colleagues. Pakistani pressure on these issues probably is causing growing tension between the alliance and Islamabad. The tension began to grow, in our judgment, early in 1987 when high-level Pakistani officials demanded that the alliance pledge to allow PDPA participation in a post-Soviet election. The Pakistanis soon thereafter, [redacted] urged the alliance to accept PDPA participation in an interim government and Zahir Shah as an interim leader. [redacted]

We see no prospect for a stabilization of the Kabul regime so long as the Soviets continue to hold out the possibility they may withdraw. In our view, the cadres' preoccupation with efforts to ensure their own survival cannot help but erode the regime's effectiveness, especially in the already loosely controlled urban areas outside Kabul. We believe that only a decision by the Soviets to announce their long-term resolve to remain in Afghanistan until the PDPA's position is consolidated—perhaps matched with a sizable increase in Soviet forces—would halt the corrosive impact of the peace initiative. [redacted]

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Najib's continuing effort to rid the senior levels of the PDPA and government of pro-Babrak Karmal Parchamis probably will not secure his hold on either the Parchami faction or the party as a whole. As recently as late June, for example, the US Embassy in Kabul reported that opposition to both Najib and the national reconciliation campaign was widespread among senior PDPA officials of both factions. Even the party's plenum on 10 June—during which Najib admitted that substantial opposition to his policies existed in the party's ranks—seems to have failed to significantly strengthen the General Secretary's hold on power. Although the plenum reduced the power of the leading pro-Babrak Karmal Parchamis, they are likely to serve as rallying points for those opposed to Najib as long as they remain in Kabul. Moscow's failure to remove them from the scene and recurrent rumors that Babrak Karmal will eventually return to Kabul suggest that the Soviets may be toying with the idea of replacing Najib either with Babrak Karmal or some combination of pro-Babrak Karmal Parchamis and the Gulabzoi-led Khalqis. [redacted]

There is no indication that the Soviets have any firm idea about how to curb PDPA factionalism. An official Soviet spokesman told a Leningrad audience in May that the PDPA lacked strong leadership and was in a "crisis situation" with factions fighting and "even murdering" each other. In addition to Najib's visit to Moscow in July, the Soviets, [redacted] [redacted] have had several senior party members visit Moscow since late January—including Gulabzoi, Yaqubi, Baryalai, Deputy Prime Minister Nur Ahmad Nur, and Prime Minister Soltan Ali Keshtmand—to discuss ways of uniting the party's factions.

[redacted]

The Soviets' recent appeasement of the Khalqis, their acquiescence in the rise of Gulabzoi's personal power, and his promotion to full Politburo membership suggest that the Soviets have not ruled out the possibility of dumping the Parchami faction altogether and giving the Khalqis another shot at power. [redacted]

Despite the uncertainty, we see little or no chance of a collapse of the regime. Because the PDPA is the only Afghan political tool available to the Soviets, Moscow almost certainly will not allow the regime to disintegrate. We also have no evidence indicating that the Soviets are worried that PDPA factionalism may spiral out of control. We are struck by the large number of PDPA Politburo and Central Committee members who still believe that the party leadership is a prize worth winning. Despite eight years of war, military setbacks, and intense party infighting, there apparently is no shortage of senior PDPA members eager to contest the leadership rather than formulate escape plans or curry favor with Moscow to ensure they are allowed to accompany withdrawing Soviet troops into exile. We believe their quest for power will continue with a ferocity limited only by the degree of self-discipline necessary to prevent the Soviets from decisively intervening to stop the factionalism. [redacted]

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Although we believe that Moscow and Kabul are deriving tangible and important benefits from the international dimension of their national reconciliation campaign, we do not believe that this is a tactic that can be pursued indefinitely. In the near term, Moscow is likely to reduce the number of anti-Kabul votes at this fall's UN General Assembly session, a success that almost certainly will give the diplomatic campaign additional momentum. Nonetheless, we believe that its vitality can be parlayed into more successes only so long as the military situation in Afghanistan does not deteriorate to the point where escalation is required. Given the continuing decline in the quality of the regime's armed forces and the increasing combat effectiveness of the insurgents, we believe that time may not be on the side of the Soviet-Afghan diplomatic initiative. [redacted]

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We believe that Moscow and Kabul will continue to benefit from forcing the pace of the alliance's political discussions. We believe that, even after nearly eight years of war, the thinking of the resistance leaders about a political settlement of the war is rudimentary

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at best. There are sharp—probably insoluble—differences among the insurgents over who would be allowed to serve in an interim regime and how the post-Soviet political system would be shaped. [redacted]

quickly to try to persuade and/or coerce a doubtful insurgent alliance into accepting arrangements for an interim regime that are acceptable to Moscow but that do not meet the minimum requirements established by the resistance. Islamabad's major point of pressure on the alliance is its control of the insurgents' supply pipeline, and we believe the Pakistanis would, as a last resort, manipulate the flow of supplies to remove resistance roadblocks to a settlement. The United States—in such a scenario—would have limited scope for influencing Islamabad's actions toward the resistance. The alliance undoubtedly would appeal to US officials to urge Pakistan to back off, raising the possibility of a public squabble between the United States, Pakistan, and the guerrillas. [redacted]

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In our view, Soviet and Afghan regime gains are already visible in the strains produced within the alliance, and between it and the Pakistanis, over a role for Zahir Shah, PDPA survival, and the recently aborted plan to hold an election for a representative assembly. The failure to hold the election probably will lend at least superficial credence to Soviet claims that the resistance is disorganized and incapable of behaving in a politically responsible manner. The alliance's failure to hold an election probably will also complicate a settlement of the war by convincing the Soviets that Islamabad cannot control the resistance and therefore cannot be counted on to help form a stable Afghan Government or create a political environment in which Moscow's Afghan clients can survive. [redacted]

The increasingly successful Soviet effort to portray the Afghan war as an East-West issue could hamstring US ability to influence the course of diplomatic events in Afghanistan. Soviet-Afghan highlighting of the essential role the United States plays in supplying arms to the insurgents is having an impact in the Third World, [redacted]

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Implications for the United States

Kabul's continuing bombing campaign in Pakistan and the success of the Soviet-Afghan peace initiative have convinced Islamabad that an early political settlement of the war is necessary. Although we do not believe that Pakistan will rush into an agreement accommodating Soviet demands, Islamabad almost certainly will agree to a Geneva arrangement—probably one that includes a 10- to 12-month withdrawal timetable and some role for the PDPA in an interim regime—that is less than optimal from the US viewpoint. [redacted]

[redacted] To the extent that Soviet-Afghan propaganda rings true there, US public diplomacy on behalf of the insurgents in the United Nations and elsewhere, in our opinion, tends to confirm for Third World and nonaligned audiences Moscow's contention that Washington is only interested in prolonging the war as a means of keeping the USSR bogged down. [redacted]

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The sense of urgency in Islamabad to reach an accommodation with Moscow and Kabul limits US ability to influence Pakistani relations with the resistance alliance, in our view. If Kabul proposes a 12-month withdrawal, the Pakistanis probably would act

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