



Directorate of
Intelligence

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Developments in Afghanistan



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1 Perspective—Cross-Border Assistance: Pakistan Delays Decision
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Pakistan's apprehensions about the possible Soviet response to and domestic political repercussions of an overt program of cross-border humanitarian assistance have delayed approval for over a year. Islamabad probably will maintain a wait-and-see attitude so long as there are reasonable prospects for progress in the UN-sponsored peace talks on Afghanistan and the negotiations on the new US aid package continue.

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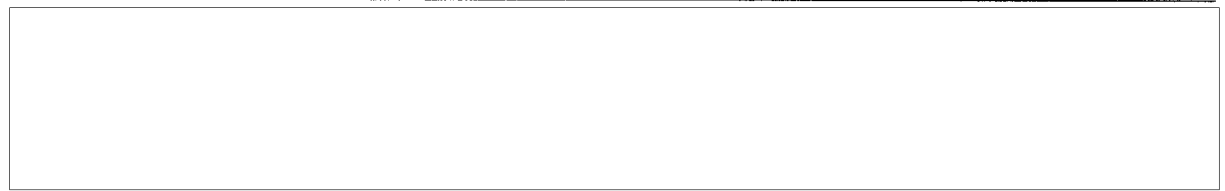
5 Briefs

9 Iran and the Afghan Resistance: Fostering Revolution in the Hazarehjat.
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Iran is increasing its influence in the Hazarehjat region of central Afghanistan, where Tehran-backed Shia insurgents are in ascendance. The spread of Khomeini-style fundamentalism in Afghanistan is an unwelcome development for the Soviets and could affect Moscow's willingness to negotiate a pullout of its forces.

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21 Burhanuddin Rabbani: Academician of the Resistance
 NESA, and *OCR*

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Under the leadership of Burhanuddin Rabbani, the Jamiat-i-Islami has become the preeminent insurgent group in northern and western Afghanistan, but the insurgent chief still faces a difficult challenge controlling his widespread and factionalized forces.

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Soviet Policy on Afghanistan: Public Signs of Change and Controversy
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Soviet leader Gorbachev's statement on Afghanistan at the recent Congress of the Soviet Communist Party suggests the Soviet Union is looking for new ways to resolve the conflict. Whether the statement signals a significant change in Soviet policy toward Afghanistan is unclear, however.

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Afghanistan: Selected Political Chronology, January-March 1986

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Developments in Afghanistan

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Perspective

Cross-Border Assistance: Pakistan Delays Decision

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Pakistan's apprehensions about increased domestic political opposition and heightened Soviet pressure have delayed for over a year Islamabad's agreement to an overt program of cross-border humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan. These considerations will continue to slow Pakistan's approval for the program, with the new civilian government in Islamabad clearly taking a more cautious approach to Afghanistan-related issues than the Martial Law Administration. Moreover, the Pakistanis probably will be unwilling to move ahead with an overt aid program so long as they feel there are reasonable prospects for progress in the UN-sponsored peace talks on Afghanistan.

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Cross-Border Aid as Originally Envisioned

When US-Pakistani discussions concerning formation of an organization in Pakistan to coordinate humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan began over a year ago, Pakistani officials told US Embassy officials that such a program could be rapidly implemented. Pakistan wanted to retain firm control over any assistance going to the Afghans.

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Last fall, Islamabad began organizing Pakistan Welfare International (PWI) as a nongovernmental agency with three primary functions:

- Working through the insurgent's seven-party alliance, PWI was to serve as a conduit for humanitarian assistance from foreign governments and private donors to Afghanistan.
- It would establish new aid programs, including health and education programs for civilians inside Afghanistan.
- PWI would coordinate the efforts of the many private voluntary organizations (PVOs) operating in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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The program's function as a conduit for humanitarian assistance created serious concern among PVOs that relief efforts would be politicized. Those apprehensions were heightened with the appointment of Abdullah Khan as chairman of PWI. He is widely viewed by the PVOs as favoring the alliance, especially Gulbuddin's Hizbi Islami group, and as antagonistic toward PVOs. Some PVOs have indicated that they would cease work in Afghanistan if forced to operate through PWI.

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President Zia . . . has consistently supported an overt humanitarian aid program but, with the ending of martial law, has indicated that the decision on the form of cross-border assistance is in Junejo's hands.

[redacted]



Yaqub Khan . . . Minister of Foreign Affairs . . . has consistently supported establishing an overt cross-border aid program, such as PWI, and continues to express optimism that such a program will be implemented shortly.

[redacted]



Prime Minister Junejo . . . will decide under what conditions cross-border assistance will be permitted . . . to date, has blocked the implementation of the overt cross-border aid program.

[redacted]

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Current Status

Although President Zia and Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan continue to voice support for an overt program of assistance, implementation of PWI has been hampered by domestic political pressures on the new civilian government. When martial law ended last year, Pakistani political groups that oppose Islamabad's support for Afghan insurgents became more vocal. Prime Minister Junejo fears that a well-publicized aid program would provide additional ammunition to the opposition and would erode his own developing power base.

[redacted]

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Islamabad also believes that an overt program would eliminate plausible denial of Soviet charges that it is abetting the insurgency in Afghanistan and could cause Moscow to break off UN-sponsored peace talks. Islamabad is sensitive to any undertaking that infers that Pakistan is following the wishes of Washington rather than its own independent foreign policy.

[redacted]

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Although Islamabad has continued to delay the overt program, it recently allowed a shipment of surplus nonlethal US military items to enter Pakistan under the provisions of the McCollum amendment. The Pakistanis insisted, however, that the entire shipment be consigned to the alliance, secrecy be maintained, and that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) oversee transportation of the goods to

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[Redacted]

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the alliance once they arrived in Pakistan. Recent discussions between US and Pakistani officials suggest that any shipments in the near future will occur under similar restrictions. [Redacted]

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So long as there are reasonable prospects for progress in the UN-sponsored peace talks on Afghanistan, the Pakistanis probably will be unwilling to risk being charged by Moscow with scuttling the talks by moving ahead on the overt aid program. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Briefs

Wintertime Combat Up [Redacted]

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Last month, combat in Afghanistan continued at a relatively brisk pace for the winter. Heavy combat was reported near Qandahar, with Soviet forces conducting heliborne assaults during the operations [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

The US Embassy in Kabul indicates that a Soviet motorized force conducted sweeps in the Lowgar Valley for several days in an attempt to uncover food and arms caches [Redacted]

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Combined Soviet and Afghan operations in Nangarhar Province continued, with the heaviest fighting reported in the Nazian Valley and Towr Kham on the Pakistani border [Redacted]

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Independent Afghan Army sweep operations were also noted in river valleys around the garrison at Hesarak-e Pa'in and northeast of Khowst as well as in Herat, [Redacted]

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The US Embassy in Kabul reports insurgents mounted several operations against garrisons in the Panjsher Valley. Heavy fighting persisted in the cities of Qandahar and Herat, according to the Embassy. Guerrilla forces in Paghman continued harassing actions. Kabul was generally quiet [Redacted]

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Afghanistan



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Pakistan-Afghanistan-UN:

Hints of Progress in Talks

[Redacted]

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UN negotiator Cordovez is hopeful that peace talks can resume in May, but progress hinges on the willingness of the Soviet-sponsored regime in Afghanistan to yield on the issue of direct talks. According to the US Embassy in Islamabad, Cordovez "had the impression" that Kabul could be persuaded to resume proximity talks on Soviet troop withdrawal if Islamabad agreed to undertake direct talks after the comprehensive settlement had been finalized. Pakistan has accepted a diplomatic note to this effect, but Cordovez reportedly said the Afghans need "a few more days" before deciding. The Embassy also reports that Pakistani Foreign Minister Yaqub has examined a draft withdrawal timetable that the Afghans passed to Cordovez—which has not been shown to US diplomats—but called it "no basis for negotiations."

[Redacted]

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Cordovez has typically been more optimistic than developments warrant. Pakistan has always maintained that direct talks were possible only upon completion of the settlement. The submission of a timetable will not advance the talks until the Afghans agree to resume them on an indirect basis—a process that could drag on for weeks, especially if rumors of a Soviet pullout are encouraging the regime to look more to its own interests. Nevertheless, on matters of major policy, Kabul is not an independent actor, and the Pakistanis probably believe their steadfast opposition to direct talks is beginning to pay.

[Redacted]

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New Spetsnaz Battalion

[Redacted]

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The eighth Soviet Special Purpose Forces (Spetsnaz) battalion in Afghanistan was identified at a garrison 60 kilometers northeast of Farah [Redacted]. This is the fourth Spetsnaz battalion deployed to Afghanistan since early 1985. The Soviets now have special forces troops at key locations along the southern and western frontiers, in addition to the eastern border area.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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Spetsnaz units apparently are becoming somewhat more successful in counterinsurgency operations. Spetsnaz troops, operating at night in 10- to 15-man teams, ambushed several supply trains from Pakistan and destroyed some insurgent base camps in Ghazni and Zabol Provinces in January and February,

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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**Iran and the Afghan Resistance:
Fostering Revolution
in the Hazarehjat**

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Iran is increasing its influence in the Hazarehjat region of central Afghanistan, where Tehran-backed Shia resistance groups are in ascendance. Although Iran's attempts to establish a Khomeini-style government in the Hazarehjat have increased fighting among local Shia resistance groups, as well as between Shia insurgents and Sunni groups that transit the region, Shia groups would be able to concentrate on fighting Soviet and regime forces if the gains of pro-Iranian groups in the Hazarehjat could be sustained. Fear of the spread of Khomeini-style fundamentalism in Afghanistan remains an important factor in Soviet policy calculations. It helps account for Moscow's reluctance to make concessions during ongoing UN-sponsored peace talks.

Tehran Increasingly Active

Iran has been consolidating its influence in the Hazarehjat region—where Afghanistan's Shia community lives.

Iran organized all Tehran-based resistance groups under the Sazman-i-Nasr group (Nasr), which it controls, and proposed a joint Pakistani-Iranian Committee on Afghanistan to coordinate and exchange information.

Iranian aid goes almost exclusively to favored Shia groups in the Hazarehjat, and that Nasr's policy statements on the indirect peace talks in Geneva are written by the Iranian Government.

Iran has also been more active in proselytizing in central Afghanistan, and pro-Khomeini cassettes and posters are widespread.

As evidence of Moscow's concern over Iranian subversive efforts in the Hazarehjat, Kabul protested Iranian behavior twice since the disappointing visit in February of Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko to Tehran. A week after Korniyenko's departure, Kabul issued a formal protest to Iran for sending a delegation of Iranian clerics into

Hazarehjat Society

The Hazarehjat is one of the most backward and isolated regions of Afghanistan. Because of their Mongoloid features, separate dialect, and minority (Shia) religion, the Hazaras have traditionally been regarded by other Afghans as the lowest social class.

the social structure of this poor rural area is based on a tenant-farming peasantry cultivating land for large landowners.

Members of all classes of Hazara society who have lived in Kabul tend to become Marxists or Islamic revolutionaries. Many, especially the Islamists, have returned to the region and provided the leadership for the most radical of the fundamentalist insurgent organizations: Sazman-i-Nasr and Sepah-e Pasdaran. With little affection for the traditional social institutions of the Hazarehjat, the Islamists are attempting to foster Iranian-style revolution—in our view, with some success.

Afghanistan to promote Islamic revolution—a demarche we believe Moscow probably inspired in light of gloating Iranian press reports of the clerics' "secret mission" during Korniyenko's visit. The Afghan Foreign Ministry, in an unusually strongly worded protest note last month, complained again about Iran's subversive behavior, including interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, border violations, and adverse propaganda.

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**Excerpts from Kabul's
Foreign Ministry Statement**

The Iranian Charge d'Affaires in Kabul was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on 3 March and handed an unusually strong protest note. Kabul complained that:

- *During the current year (21 March 1985–20 March 1986), Afghan territory "has been violated 63 times by the ground and air forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a result of which 20 people have been killed, 245 people wounded, and 19 people abducted to Iran. . . ."*
- *"Despite repeated requests, the propaganda, publicity, and organizational operations against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan have not been reduced, but the hours of hostile broadcasting of the Iranian radio and television against [us] have been increased and . . . is (sic) full of hostile articles and concocted subjects against [us]. . . ."*
- *"The authorities and leaders of [Iran] have expanded their interference in organizing, provoking, and instigating the resident Afghans and counterrevolutionary elements in Iran to such an extent that religious leaders, instructed by the high authorities, enter the territory of [Afghanistan] in order to carry out unfriendly secret actions which the Iranian media extensively publicize. Such actions are taken at the instruction of such personalities as Ayatollah Montazeri. . . ."*
- *"Some Iranian media . . . admit that the Islamic Republic of Iran gives broad material, financial, political, and military assistance to the Afghan*

counterrevolutionaries and exposes those persons at the Presidency, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps who are in charge of and oversee these actions. It is due to the involvement of these authorities that the Afghan counterrevolutionary bands have been organized in Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, Yazd, Esfahan, and other parts of Iran, and are sent to Afghanistan for murder, plunder, and subversion. . . ."

- *"It has become necessary once again, in the light of evidence and documents at hand, to state [Afghanistan's] strongest protests at the Iranian state [and ask it to] reconsider its position and method of approach . . . and not allow, by supporting reactionary and US-linked bands, to take up positions within the ranks of US imperialism and its collaborators. . . ."*
- *"The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan states that if the authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran do not cease, resolutely and effectively, the course of their interference and aggressions in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, conditions will be imposed on us such that we shall defend our national sovereignty and security at any cost. In that case undoubtedly the responsibility for their inevitable and dangerous consequences will rest with the Islamic Republic of Iran."*

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[redacted] the Iranians train and finance Shia guerrillas in four camps near Islamic centers in Qom, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Mashhad and outside of Tehran. The fighters are infiltrated into Afghanistan after six months of training and are supplied with light weapons. [redacted]

central Afghanistan, its influence has declined because of internal weaknesses that caused the departure of many of its original member groups, and the growth of more revolutionary Iranian-supported groups in the Hazarehjat.

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[redacted] Afghan mullahs trained in Iran enjoy support at the highest levels of the Iranian Government, including Ayatollah Khomeini and his designated successor Ayatollah Montazeri, who favors an activist policy on Afghanistan. Moscow, for its part, recently publicly charged Iran with operating 20 training camps for "counterrevolutionaries." [redacted]

- *Harakat-i-Islami (Harakat)* operates on the periphery of the Hazarehjat region. It is the most active in fighting the Soviets in the Qandahar region. Sheikh Asef Mohseini, the head of Harakat, is based in Qom but reportedly gets no arms from Iran. He is highly suspicious of revolutionary Islamic doctrine, and Harakat's relations with Iran have often been strained because it has rebuffed Tehran's "guidance," [redacted]

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How Important Is the Hazarehjat?

The region has strategic value to the resistance. Some insurgent groups active in western and northern Afghanistan—such as Jamiat-i-Islami groups in Herat, Balkh, and Kapisa Provinces—use supply routes that pass through the area (see map). The Hazarehjat's terrain, moreover, provides the insurgents with a natural redoubt from which to strike Soviet and Afghan convoys and installations on the highway encircling the region. The Soviets would be at a disadvantage during such assaults because the region's mountainous terrain makes vehicle land transit difficult and hampers effective helicopter support operations. [redacted]

[redacted] Its members are mainly of Tajik, Pushtun, and Turkmen ethnic stock, with some Hazaras.

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To date, the resistance in central Afghanistan has not played a significant role in the war effort. Attacks against Soviets and Afghan Government forces have been minimal. Much of the resistance's potential in the Hazarehjat has remained unfulfilled because of fighting among the numerous Iranian-backed groups. There also has been fighting between Shia groups and the mainstream Sunni insurgents based in Pakistan that seek to transit the region. [redacted]

- *Sazman-i-Nasr (Nasr)*, an Iranian-backed group, seeks the establishment of a Khomeini-style society in the Hazarehjat. Formed in 1972 by Shia students in Kabul, it moved to Iran in 1979 and became active in the Hazarehjat in 1980. We believe most Hazaras who are attracted to Nasr view it as more nationalist than pro-Iranian.

- *Sepah-e Pasdaran (Pasdaran)*, the most revolutionary of the Hazara resistance groups, is a direct instrument of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, [redacted] Its recruits are young Hazaras, uprooted from their villages, often without family ties and dissatisfied with the traditional social structure in the Hazarehjat. [redacted]

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Relations With Other Resistance Groups

The Pakistani-based resistance alliance has a history of troublesome relations with Shia groups in the Hazarehjat, partly because of Iranian meddling. [redacted]

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[redacted] Iran instructed Nasr to confiscate weapons and supplies from the Hizbi Islami-Khalis faction and Sayyaf's Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan in 1983 and 1984. [redacted]

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Major Resistance Groups

Four major Shia groups compete for power in the Hazarehjat:

- *Shura-Inqilab-i-Itifaq-i-Islami (Shura)* is a traditionalist, Hazara coalition of some 30 groups that united during local uprisings in 1979 against the Communist government. Once dominant in

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Selected Insurgent Groups and Insurgent Transport Routes in Afghanistan



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Even Hizbi Islami faction leader Gulbuddin—whose staunchly fundamentalist and anti-Western values most closely mirror Iran’s—is reportedly unhappy with Iran. He objects to the low level of support to Peshawar-based resistance groups. Moreover, his faction reportedly closed its offices in Iran last summer over alleged Iranian mistreatment of Afghan refugees in Mashhad. [redacted]

[redacted] 25X1

Individual Nasr commanders, however, make ad hoc transit arrangements with local Sunni commanders, because the Shias are not adequately supplied by Iran. The arrangements often include the collection of “tolls” from comparatively better supplied Sunni groups. Nasr, for example, began cooperating with Jamiat groups in Balkh Province under a 1984 agreement with their now deceased commander Zabiullah Khan, [redacted]

[redacted] The agreement provided for safe passage for Jamiat convoys to Balkh and Jowzjan Provinces, in exchange for a percentage of ammunition, medicine, and money for Shia commanders along the convoy route. The system appeared to be working well in late 1985, according to press reports. [redacted]

Revolutionary Groups Take the Lead

[redacted] the revolutionary groups backed by Iran, Nasr and Pasdaran, have displaced those in the Hazarehjat that are more traditionalist—a development we believe will give Iran an important foothold in the country. [redacted]

[redacted]

The contest among the resistance groups for the Hazarehjat is not over, however. [redacted]

[redacted] the Harakat still holds positions on the outskirts of the region, such as southern Balkh Province. [redacted]

[redacted]

Implications

... *For the Mainstream Resistance.* We do not expect the movement of resistance forces and supplies through the Hazarehjat—which has always depended on local and somewhat fragile arrangements—to become significantly more difficult. Because Iranian materiel support is minimal, we believe Shia insurgents have come to rely on Sunni groups that transit the area for needed supplies and weapons. Only a major breakthrough in the Iran-Iraq war, which would allow for a significant increase in Iranian materiel support for Shia groups in Afghanistan, would alter this assessment. [redacted] 25X1

... *For the War.* The growing capabilities of Iranian-trained forces operating in the Hazarehjat are likely to increase military pressure on the Soviets somewhat, but Shia groups probably will not make a substantial difference to the course of the war until Nasr and Pasdaran can sustain and further consolidate their position. Shia groups would then be able to concentrate on fighting Soviet and Afghan regime forces—a development we believe would be a major step toward opening a front west of Kabul. Soviet-Afghan forces now have only two outposts in the region—at Chaghcharan and Bamian—but a significant increase of antiregime activity would force them to garrison more units. [redacted] 25X1

... *For a Peace Settlement.* Growing Iranian control and intervention in Afghanistan would further complicate progress toward a settlement, in our view. Fear of rising pro-Iranian fundamentalism in Afghanistan was one of the reasons for the Soviet invasion and remains an important part of the Soviet policymaking calculus. [redacted] UN negotiator Cordovez’s March shuttle round indicates that, although Kabul and Moscow appear to have softened their demand that an Iranian-Afghan 25X1

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[redacted]

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[Redacted]

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bilateral agreement on noninterference be part of a settlement, Kabul still insists that Iran "sign off" on any peace agreement. [Redacted]

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Iran, which has consistently called for a unilateral Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan to be followed by the creation of an Islamic state in Kabul, has not backed down from these demands. Although we do not believe Tehran currently could torpedo a peace agreement—the level of military activity in the Hazarehjat remains only a nuisance to the Soviets—a substantial increase in Iranian-sponsored attacks would make Moscow more reluctant to make concessions. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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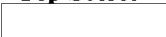
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of the estimated total of 7,000 to 11,000 insurgents in northwestern Afghanistan. Some Western observers believe that the predominance of ethnic Tajiks and widespread influence of a Sufi brotherhood have provided a social bond among western Afghans not apparent elsewhere in the northern tier and have made Ismail's organizational tasks easier. (S NF)

The insurgents' ability to sustain fighting in the west continues to be constrained by shortages of supplies. The region is remote from Pakistan, and caravans must transit extremely difficult terrain. Few supplies come from Iran, and Tehran has even occasionally hampered deliveries from Pakistan. Moreover, there

has been some factional bickering among the insurgents about the distribution of supplies,



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Combat Operations Since Mid-1985

Combat in the west has been nearly continuous since the summer of 1985.

Early July 1985. Insurgent forces already established in Herat city launched an offensive that expanded their control to about two-thirds of the urban area, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. With Afghan

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**Burhanuddin Rabbani:
Academician of the
Resistance**

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Burhanuddin Rabbani heads the Jamiat-i-Islami, the largest and most militarily capable of the Afghan resistance groups. Under his aegis, the Jamiat has become the dominant resistance group in northern and western Afghanistan. Rabbani's personal appeal and ability to get along with rival insurgent leaders, coupled with his skill at selecting and maintaining good insurgent commanders, have made him one of the most important and respected resistance leaders. His organization, however, shows signs of serious factionalism, which could erode combat effectiveness. Rabbani will begin a three-month stint as spokesman for the insurgents' seven-party alliance in April.



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Middle-of-the-Road Fundamentalist

The 46-year-old Rabbani, a former dean and professor at Kabul University and a Tajik from Badakhshan, is an Islamic fundamentalist who wants an Islamic political and social order in Afghanistan.

At the same time, Rabbani supports the free election of political leaders and multiparty politics. A Western scholar familiar with Afghanistan believes that Rabbani occupies the ideological middle ground between the dogmatic fundamentalists, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and the pragmatic fundamentalists, such as Yunus Khalis. Rabbani flatly rejects any role for former Afghan monarch Zahir Shah in a future Afghan government.

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Rabbani has long been involved in antiregime politics. According to Western observers, he became active in the Muslim Brotherhood while at Kabul University in the 1960s. Along with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now leader of a Hizbi Islami faction, Rabbani led Brotherhood protests against the Daoud regime and fled from Kabul in 1973 to organize resistance activity against Daoud. Following the failure of the fundamentalist-led uprising in the Panjshir Valley in 1975, Rabbani moved to Peshawar.

Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani . . . head of Jamiat-i-Islami . . . inspires strong loyalty from Jamiat members . . . a moderate fundamentalist who has promoted greater cooperation among Afghan resistance groups.

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Rabbani has a sound reputation among resistance leaders stemming from his strong credentials in three areas: classical Islamic culture,

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Sufism, and political Islam. His doctorate in theology is from Al Azhar University in Cairo, and he has written a book on rationalist philosophy in Islam. Rabbani is well known for his translations of Sufi poetry and his thesis on the 16th century Sufi poet Nur-al-Din Jami. Finally, Rabbani translated the works of Muslim Brotherhood founder Sayyid Qutb from Arabic to Dari.

Rabbani's popularity among resistance members also reflects his apparent lack of personal ambition. His longstanding efforts as diplomat and mediator among resistance factions have enabled him to attract support from diverse segments of Afghan society. According to a number of observers, he has shown the greatest tendency among resistance leaders to compromise and put together a united front.

Although he is often ill at ease with Western customs, Rabbani is generally pro-Western. He has traveled to France and several Arab countries in search of support for the resistance. He has developed good relations with his Pakistani benefactors and with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

Rabbani's Islamic credentials have not facilitated good Jamiat relations with Iran, however. [redacted] in mid-1985 that Iran had accused the Jamiat of being a "tool of US imperialism." Securing Tehran's cooperation for movement of supplies over Iranian territory to Jamiat fighters in western Afghanistan has been a major sticking point in the relationship.

Rabbani as Leader of the Jamiat

Rabbani has sought to centralize control of the Jamiat and to make himself the final authority of all major decisions. [redacted] Rabbani personally controls and allocates all the money and materiel received by Jamiat. He is considered to be highly adept at dispensing the organization's limited resources in such a way that subordinates do not feel slighted if their requests for support can be only partially satisfied.

But Rabbani is no autocrat, and his reluctance to crack down on unruly subordinates and his tendency to procrastinate over tough decisions have sometimes promoted factionalism.

[redacted] Rabbani's personal adviser, Sayyed Nurullah, has worked behind the scenes to replace Ismail Khan, commander of Jamiat forces in Herat, with a more conservative fundamentalist. Nurullah's troublemaking evidently has engendered some criticism within Jamiat, but Rabbani has not rebuked him.

Despite flareups of infighting, cooperation among Jamiat groups is generally growing. Improved communications, political awareness, and application of force have enabled skilled Jamiat commanders to develop spheres of dominance in northern and western Afghanistan. Ahmad Shah Masood has made the most extensive effort to spread cooperation, although Masood must often deal with strong rival insurgent groups as well as intense Soviet pressure. In Balkh Province, Maulawi Alam Khan has been trying to rebuild the strong organization that Zabiullah Khan had developed before his death in 1984. In Herat Province, Jamiat leader Ismail Khan has maintained an extensive organization.

[redacted] the three commanders share personnel for training, exchange letters, and communicate indirectly through the Jamiat office in Peshawar; the Balkh and Panjsher insurgents also communicate periodically by radio.

Rabbani's Relations With Other Insurgent Leaders

Rabbani—long a proponent of closer cooperation among the insurgent groups—pushed for formation in May 1985 of an insurgent alliance of the seven major moderate and fundamentalist groups. His moderate views and pragmatism will make him be an effective international representative as spokesman for the alliance for three months starting in April.

In our view, Rabbani's political savvy is considered an asset by fellow alliance leaders. In January 1984, he was designated by the alliance as spokesman for the meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization.

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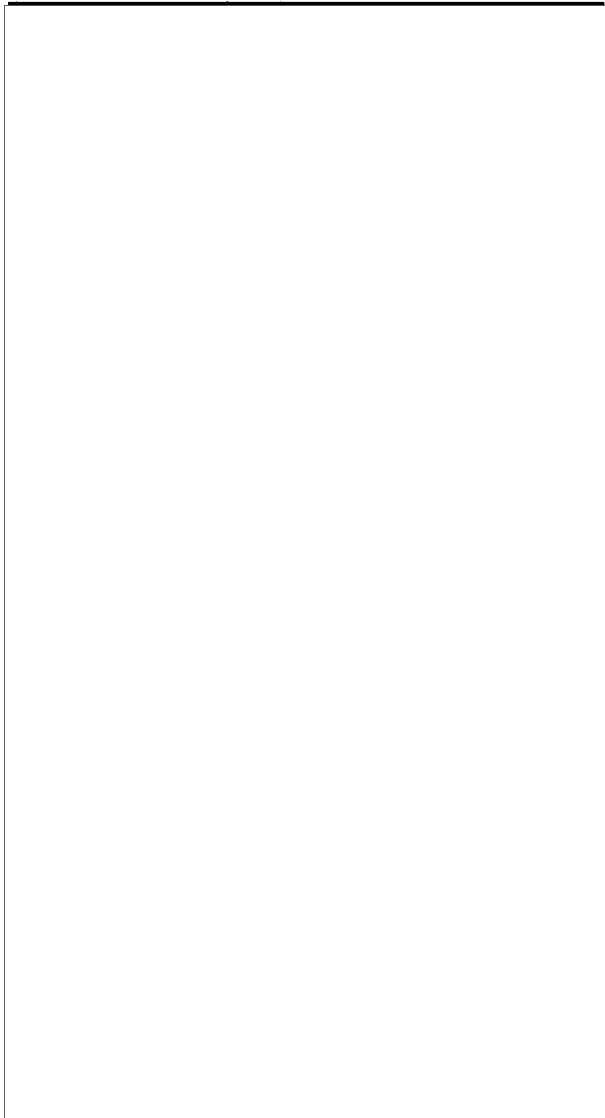
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Mojadedi's forces and the corruption of Mojadedi's family impede closer ties. Although Rabbani has had little personal contact with moderate leader Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, head of the Harakat-Inqilab-i-Islami, he consulted with Mohammadi on the choosing of a successor to slain Jamiat commander Zabiullah Khan, [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] Rabbani has had sometimes rocky relations with fellow fundamentalist leaders Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of one faction of Hizbi Islami. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Rabbani's relations with Gulbuddin have been marred by clashes between their groups inside Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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Outlook

Rabbani's reputation and interpersonal skills will, in our view, enable him to contain any serious factionalism within the Jamiat and help maintain Jamiat's position as the dominant insurgent group. But Rabbani's reluctance to crack down on dissenters and to rein in headstrong field commanders probably will hinder the group's operational capabilities from time to time. [Redacted]

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When trying to decide last year the order in which leaders would serve as alliance spokesman, the others wanted Rabbani to serve his term in November 1985 to coincide with the UN General Assembly's debates on the Afghan issue. [Redacted]

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Rabbani has succeeded in maintaining relatively correct relations with the three moderate insurgent groups in the alliance. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Rabbani respects Sibghatullah Mojadedi, leader of the Jabha-i-Najat-i-Milli, but that the weakness of

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**Soviet Policy on Afghanistan:
Signs of Change
and Controversy**

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General Secretary Gorbachev presented a new formulation of policy on Afghanistan in his report to the 27th Soviet Communist Party Congress—declaring that Moscow wants to withdraw soon and, as an apparent inducement to progress at UN-mediated talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan, claiming for the first time that he has a plan for a phased pullout. By including the formulation in the authoritative policy statement at the Congress, Gorbachev has increased his stake in resolving the Afghan conflict. The possibility that he is exploring more than a change in rhetoric is suggested by signs of tension between Moscow and Kabul that appear to reflect Soviet dissatisfaction with the status quo and fear in Kabul that Moscow is willing to compromise Afghan interests to resolve the issue. Nevertheless, Gorbachev has as yet given no sign he will abandon longstanding Soviet demands that foreign support for the Afghan resistance cease before Soviet troops are withdrawn.

Gorbachev's New Formulation

Gorbachev's statement on Afghanistan stood out in a Congress report that was long on its discussion of policy toward the United States but offered no specifics on relations with other individual countries, except China. Addressing the issue of Afghanistan in the context of the security of Soviet borders, Gorbachev sought to underscore Moscow's continued commitment to eliminating what it depicts as a security threat to its southern border. At the same time, he claimed that a concrete step had been taken toward disengaging Soviet troops. Stating that "we would like in the nearest future to bring the Soviet forces" in Afghanistan "back to their homeland," he added: "The schedule has been worked out with the Afghan side for a step-by-step withdrawal, as soon as a political settlement has been achieved which will provide for a real end to, and reliably guarantee a nonrenewal of, the outside armed interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of

Afghanistan." He did not make clear whether such a "political settlement" had to be implemented fully before the withdrawal began.

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Statements by Other Soviet Officials

Gorbachev's formulation on an early withdrawal from Afghanistan has thus far not been pressed by other top Soviet leaders, even when the occasion was appropriate, nor has it begun to appear in routine commentary. It is not clear whether this reflects Soviet discretion in a diplomatic probe or disarray resulting from less than a solid consensus for the initiative. Gorbachev's approach has been presaged, however, by two officials of the Central Committee's International Department:

- Vadim Zagladin, first deputy chief of the Department, observed in an interview on 9 January in *L'Humanite* that "we are pleased" about the Afghan regime's claimed increase in popular support because "we do not want to stay there indefinitely." In his speech to the Turkmen Communist Party Congress, he claimed that Moscow had already done "a great deal" to achieve a solution through negotiations, and pledged that "much more will be done in the nearest future."

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- Similarly, Karen Brutents, deputy chief with responsibilities for the Middle East and Latin America, was quoted as saying in an interview in *Al-Khalij* on 6 January that the Soviet Union wants to withdraw from Afghanistan "as soon as possible." "The sooner we execute this step," he added, "the better it will be."

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The Afghan issue was not raised in any public account of a Congress speech by a Soviet leader other than Gorbachev. Senior Soviet officials, in remarks to journalists following Gorbachev's Congress report,

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were pessimistic about the prospects for Soviet troop withdrawal and emphasized that Moscow's preconditions for a pullout still stand:

- In a press conference on 27 February, Politburo member Geydar Aliyev asserted that Moscow is "very interested in ensuring a gradual withdrawal" of Soviet forces but stopped short of repeating Gorbachev's wish that this take place in the near future.
- In a televised press conference on 28 February, First Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko said that the phased withdrawal had not yet been implemented because forces both in Pakistan and maybe even more, outside of Pakistan," were "holding back" Islamabad from "serious and businesslike talks" on a political settlement. At the conference, Chief of the General Staff Marshal Akhromeyev adopted an uncompromising tone, repeating longstanding Soviet charges that thousands of insurgents are being sent into Afghanistan from Pakistan. [redacted]

Evidence of Tensions Between Moscow and Kabul
Gorbachev's seeming doubts about the performance of the Kabul regime and about Soviet commitments to it appeared soon after he took power in March 1985. A shift in stance was apparent in Moscow's annual greetings message on the seventh anniversary of the Afghan revolution, published in *Pravda* on 27 April 1985. The message was less positive and supportive than those of previous years, omitting phrases that had previously signaled the inclusion of the ruling Afghan party among Soviet-approved "progressive" parties. [redacted]

Another indication of a deterioration of relations is Moscow's failure to accord normal protocol courtesies to Afghan leader Karmal during the Congress. No Soviet leader was reported to have received Karmal, although such a meeting was clearly required. Gorbachev met personally with all other foreign heads of state or government attending the Congress except for Angola's President dos Santos, who was received by Premier Ryzhkov. [redacted]

Karmal's Congress speech of 28 February appeared to reflect a lack of enthusiasm for Gorbachev's initiative. He failed to utter a word about the withdrawal

schedule, even though Gorbachev had pointedly drawn attention to Kabul's prior agreement, and he seemed concerned to defend the legitimacy of his regime's dependence on Soviet support. [redacted]

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Efforts To Broaden Political Base of Afghan Regime

Gorbachev's new formulation of Soviet policy appears to be accompanied by new Soviet efforts to redefine the Afghan domestic political structure. Recent authoritative statements have tied hopes for early Soviet disengagement to efforts by Kabul to extend the political base of the Karmal regime. Gorbachev clearly implied in an interview in *L'Humanite* published in *Pravda* on 8 February that the Kabul regime's ability to stand on its own would be a necessary precondition for Soviet withdrawal and expressed optimism on this score. [redacted]

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Moscow has strongly endorsed a plan—unveiled by Karmal at an extraordinary session of the Afghan Government's Revolutionary Council on 9 November—to broaden the Afghan regime's domestic support. The program, known as Karmal's "theses," was reported at length by both *Pravda* and *Izvetiya* when it was released. It includes:

- Bringing a large number of nonparty representatives into the Council of Ministers and the Revolutionary Council.
- Renewing an invitation to Afghan "compatriots who are living outside the country" to return "without prejudice and distinction."
- Encouraging and supporting "national traders and industrial capitalists" to help develop a mixed economy.
- Calling for support from all nationalities, tribes, and clans on the basis of "equal rights, fraternity, and friendship."
- Appealing to Islamic religious leaders to support the government in exchange for promises of official protection of religious institutions and education. [redacted]

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Karmal's theses are only the latest in a series of attempts by the Afghan Government to institute policies to broaden its political base. Such efforts have been promoted by Moscow since at least 1979, prior

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to the Soviet intervention, but have apparently met with little success. With the regime's limited popular support and no evident alterations of Moscow's longheld contention that withdrawal of Soviet forces must be preceded by termination of foreign support to the resistance, Gorbachev's new formulation does not seem likely to resolve the Afghan conflict. [Redacted]

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Moreover, Gorbachev's announcement of a phased withdrawal plan seemed designed in part to induce Pakistan to move beyond the UN-mediated proximity talks on Afghanistan and engage in direct negotiations with Kabul. According to Western media reports, UN mediator Diego Cordovez announced on 18 March that the Afghan Government had provided him with a document containing a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal. Western news accounts have said that Kabul has linked presentation of a timetable to Islamabad's agreement to hold direct talks. According to Kyodo News Service, Cordovez said that, although the format of talks was still unresolved, he now had all the elements required for a comprehensive settlement of the Afghan problem and cited Gorbachev's Congress statement as one of the factors that had improved the climate for a solution.

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Afghanistan: Selected Political Chronology [Redacted]

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January-March 1986

1 January Resistance leader Sayed Ahmad Gailani became the new spokesman of the Afghan resistance alliance on 1 January. His three-month term is part of a scheduled leadership rotation determined when the alliance was formed last May.

Early January The Afghan resistance attended the Organization of the Islamic Conference's Foreign Ministers' meeting, where Gailani was allowed to speak as a "guest." No member government proposed granting the resistance formal status in the conference, however.

11 January Kabul Radio announced that the Afghan intelligence service (KHAD) had been upgraded to ministerial status and renamed the Ministry of State Security.

17 January As part of its regime-broadening efforts, Kabul announced the expansion of its Revolutionary Council—the highest executive and legislative organ in the regime—by adding many nonparty members, including religious leaders, tribesmen, and members of private industry.

20 January The Kabul regime hosted a delegation of visiting journalists from Western Europe, the United States, and Japan. The journalists visited Jalalabad and some rural villages outside of Kabul, and met with government ministers.

Late January [Redacted] senior Afghan officers in the Ministry of Defense were arrested on suspicion of collaborating with insurgent groups. Scores of Army officers and government officials have been arrested in recent months on charges of coup plotting and espionage.

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[Redacted]

Mid-February Pakistani officials, concerned that a highly visible program of cross-border assistance would increase pressure from the Soviets and domestic political opponents, continued to delay final approval.

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- 21 February** A commission to draft a new constitution was named in Kabul, according to regime media.

- 23 February** Babrak Karmal, General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, arrived in Moscow to attend the 27th Soviet Communist Party Congress.

- 25 February** Resistance alliance spokesman Gailani leads a delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva, but Pakistan instructs the insurgents not to speak or to seek to be seated at the Commission.

- 3 March** A US aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for Afghans landed in Pakistan, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad. The shipment will be distributed by the resistance alliance inside Afghanistan.

- 7 March** Babrak Karmal returned to Kabul from Moscow, according to press reports.

- Mid-March** In a press interview, former Afghan King Zahir Shah said he remains devoted to the Afghan cause but has no plan to return to Afghanistan.

 Afghan resistance leader Abdul Haq met with British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in London. The meeting drew sharp criticism from the Soviet news agency TASS.

 An Afghan regime representative went to Libya to attend a conference on "the aggression of imperialism."

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