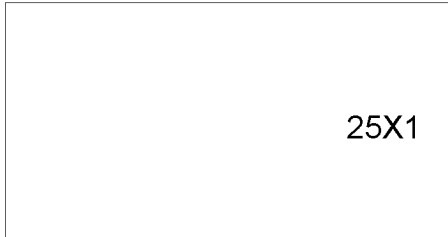
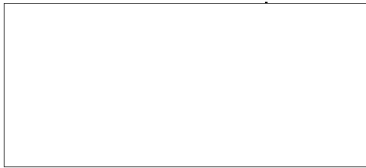




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Afghanistan Situation Report



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6 November 1984

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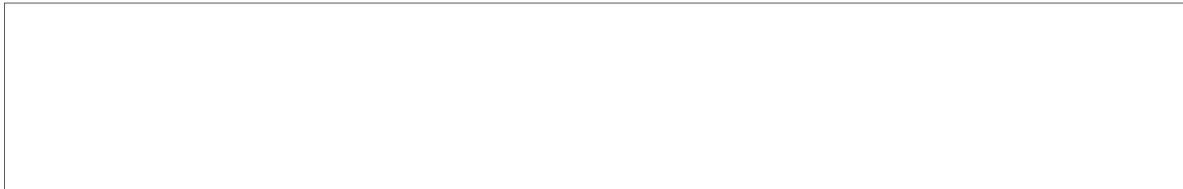
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

CONTENTS



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SAUDIS VIEW INSURGENT DISUNITY

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud asserted that the Afghan insurgents' lack of unity has little impact on their effectiveness.



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IN BRIEF

2

PERSPECTIVES

THE WAR IN OCTOBER

The Soviets continued efforts to block insurgent infiltration from Pakistan and began another offensive in the Panjsher Valley.



3

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AFGHANISTAN: PRELIMINARY 1984 CROP ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED AREAS

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Adverse weather has reduced this year's grain crop in Afghanistan's principal farming region, but military operations have had no significant effect on grain production except in the Panjsher Valley.



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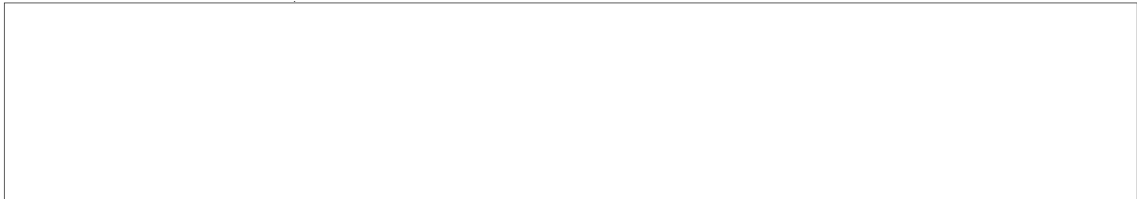




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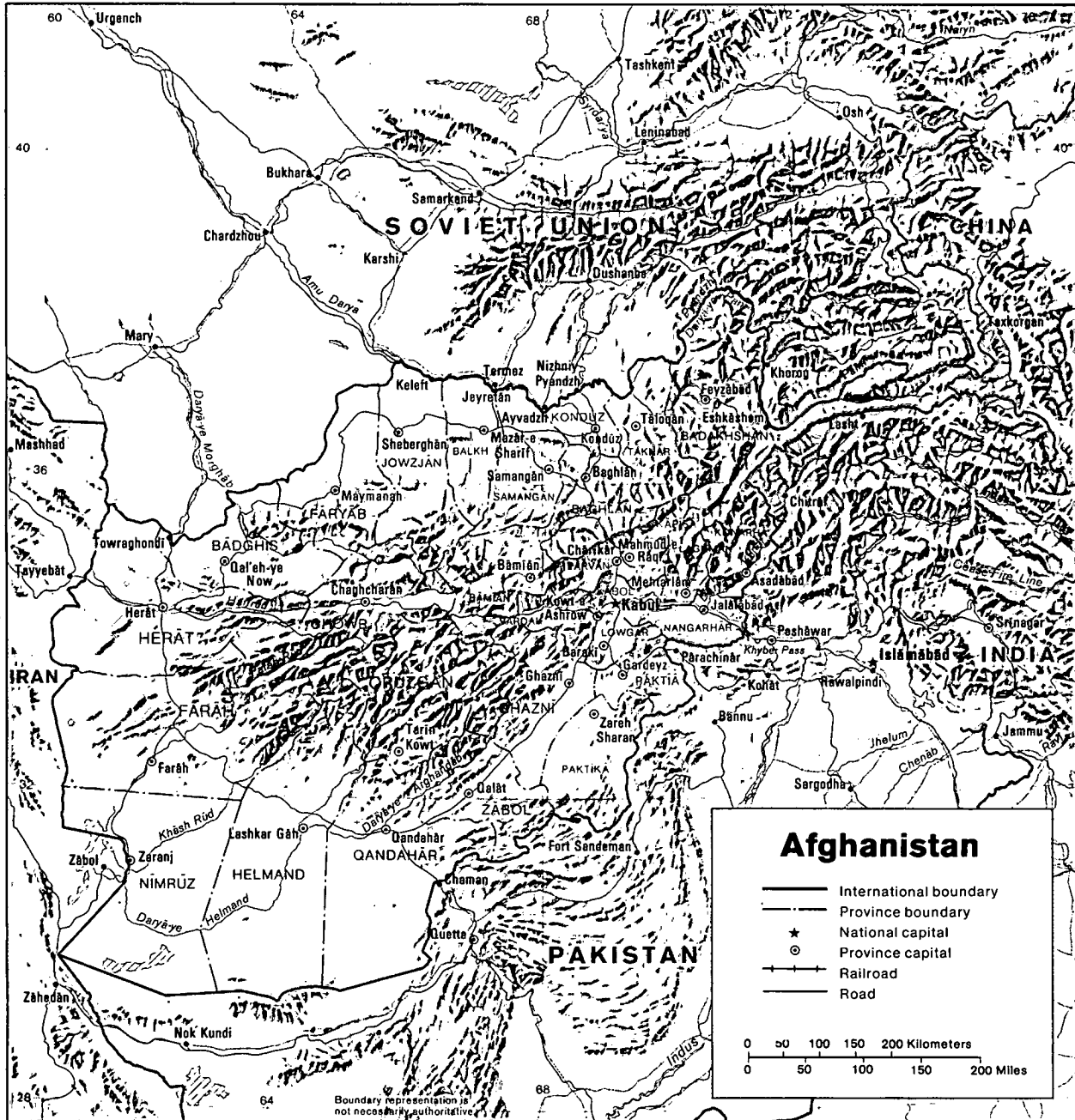
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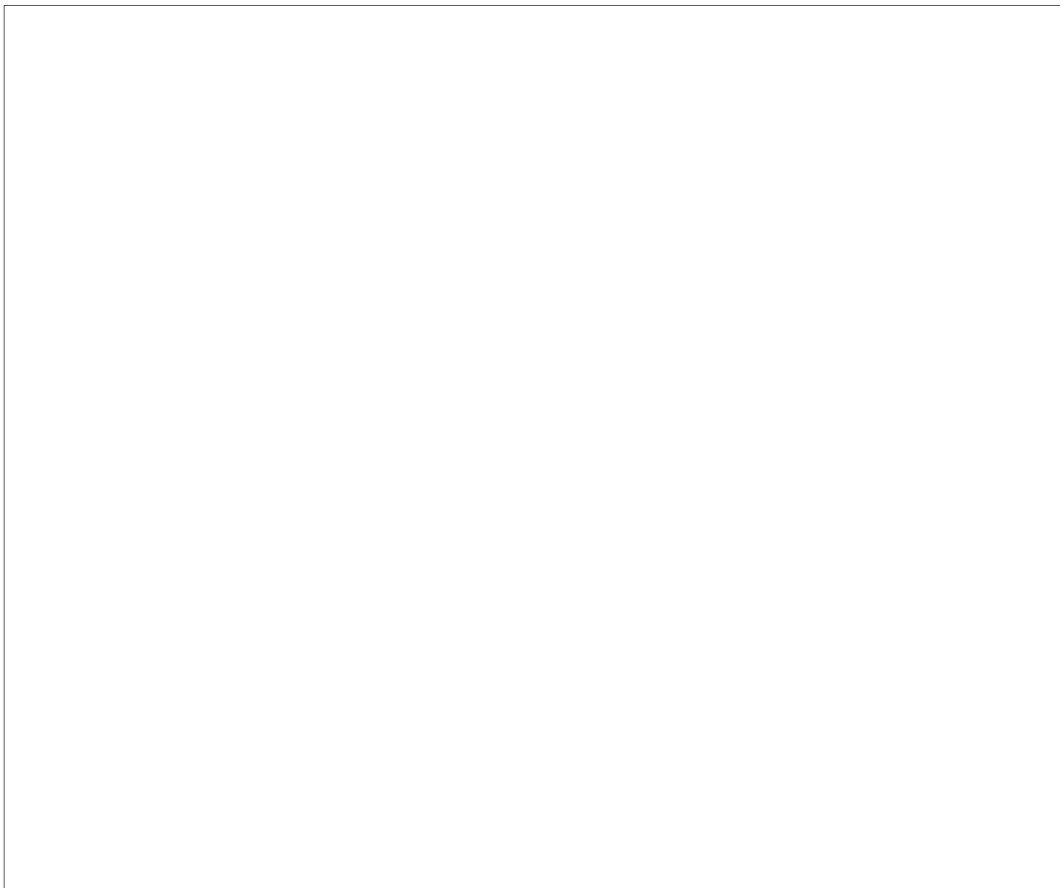
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SAUDIS VIEW INSURGENT DISUNITY [redacted]

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Saudi [redacted] told US officials that the Afghan insurgents' lack of military coordination and political unity have no significant effect on their ability to operate effectively. Saud said that the issue of unity should be addressed by international supporters sending aid through a single channel. Another Saudi Foreign Ministry official told US officials that the greatest amount of Saudi assistance goes to Afghan fundamentalist leader Sayyaf "because he has the most support among Afghans." [redacted]

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[redacted] the Saudis continue to aid other resistance groups, including the moderates. [redacted]

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Comment:

[redacted] assertion that lack of unity has no noteworthy effect may be designed to forestall any charges that aid to Sayyaf has increased rivalries in Peshawar. The Saudis have told resistance leaders that greater unity is a prerequisite to increased aid. Saudi assistance has been channeled through Sayyaf--perhaps the least popular of the Peshawar leaders--because of his support for Wahhabi missionary work among Afghans. Some Saudi aid, in any case, is likely to continue to flow to any militarily effective group. [redacted]

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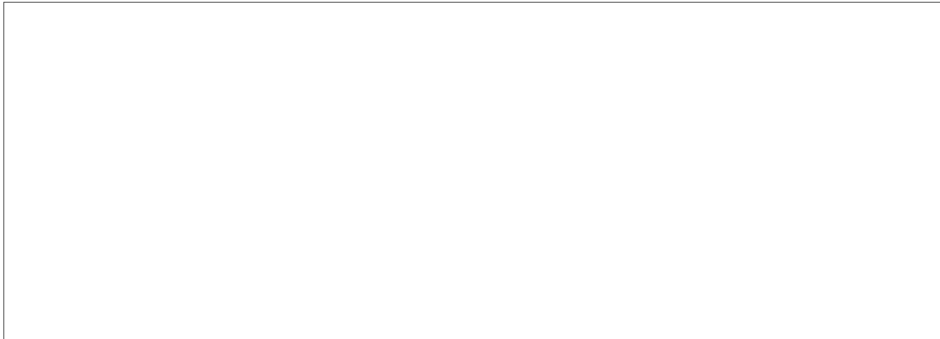
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IN BRIEF

-- According to US Embassy reports, the Kabul regime has gone out of its way to express sympathy over the death of Indira Gandhi, but privately many nonofficial Afghans are pleased by her death and hope Indian policy on Afghanistan will become less supportive of Moscow. [redacted]

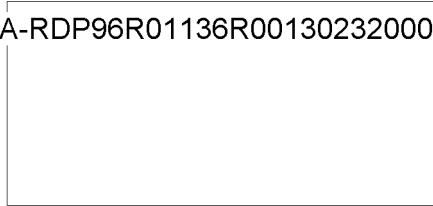
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PERSPECTIVE

THE WAR IN OCTOBER



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The level of combat in Afghanistan dropped during the first half of October but increased again after mid-month, [redacted]

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[redacted] This surge reflects the continued high priority they are giving to blocking guerrilla infiltration. Soviet and regime forces began another offensive in the Panjsher late in October, [redacted]

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Soviet and Afghan air and ground efforts have not been successful so far in either locating or engaging the insurgents. [redacted]

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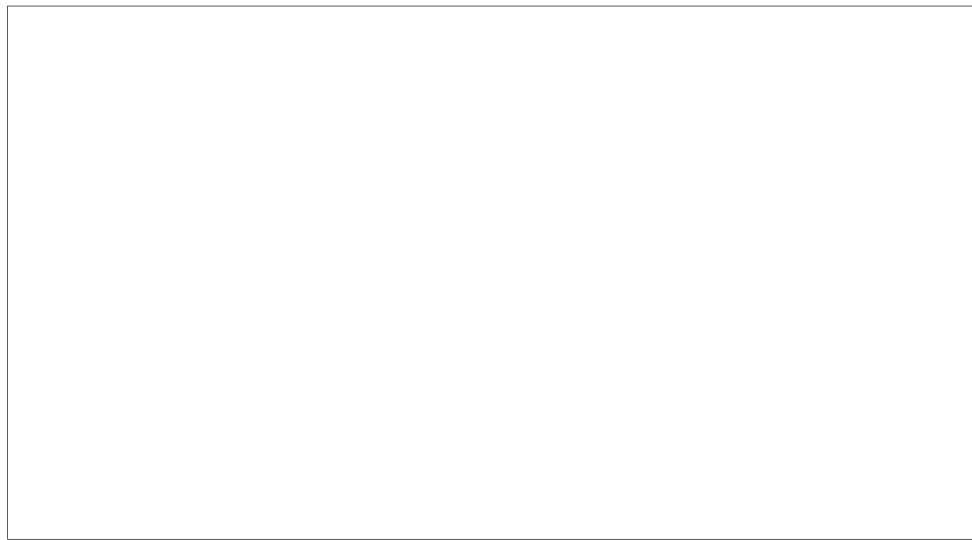
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Soviet Reinforcements and Rotations

Diplomatic sources in Kabul allege that the Soviets have recently undertaken a major augmentation of their forces in Afghanistan.

[redacted] there was only a modest increase of Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan in October:

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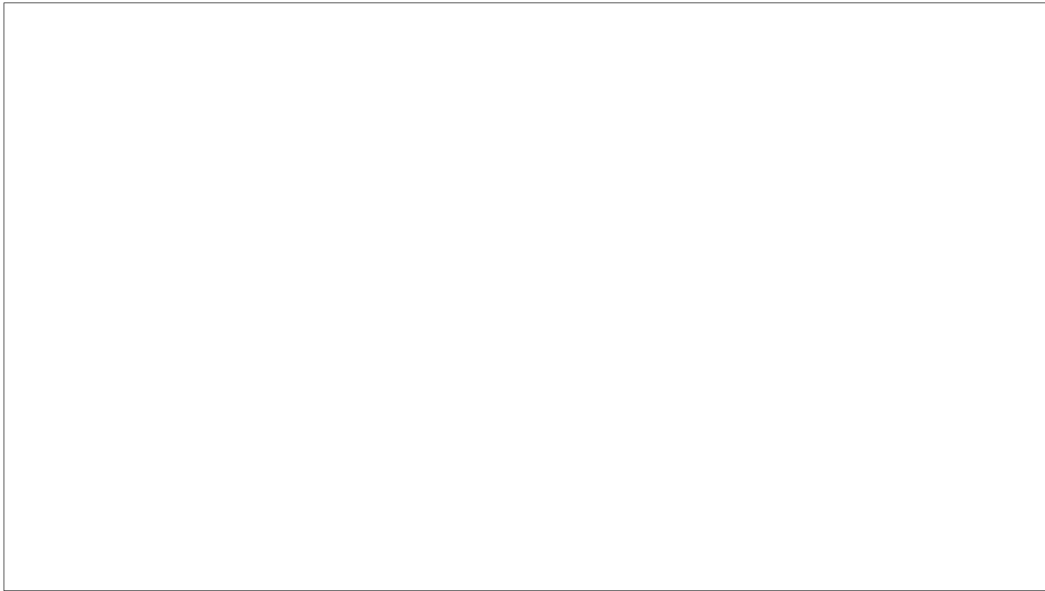
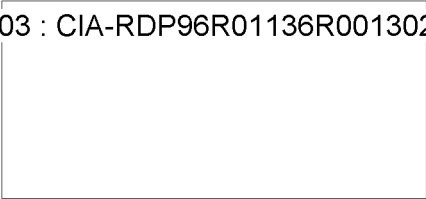


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Military Operations

Nangarhar, Paktia, and Lowgar

Soviet and regime forces conducted several operations against the guerrillas in the border provinces east of Kabul--Nangarhar, Paktia, and Lowgar--in another attempt to stem infiltration:

-- Major joint-service operations in the Jalalabad area of Nangarhar began on 13 October.



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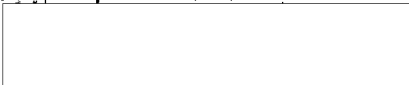
Because of the particularly rugged terrain, the Soviets expected that the effectiveness of their air and artillery strikes would be limited.

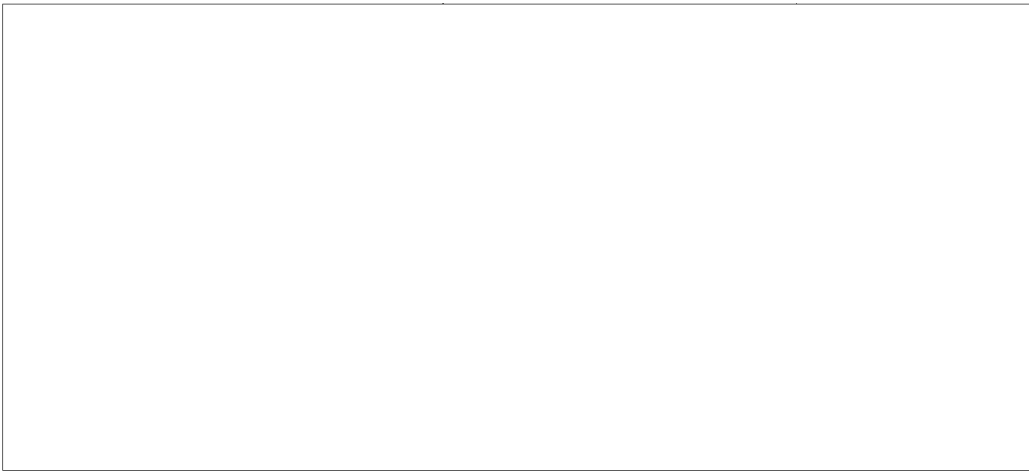
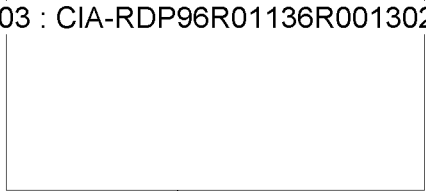


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Kabul

Insurgent operations in the Kabul metropolitan area slowed early in October as the result of increased Soviet defensive measures that entailed stationing armored forces between Bini Hisar and Kabul airport, strafing nearby villages, and conducting aggressive searches in central and outlying districts. House-to-house searches by the Soviets in the Shewaki area of Kabul uncovered a large cache of rockets, which regime authorities later determined had been pilfered from an army arsenal.



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The insurgents' activities in Kabul in October underscored the Soviets' persistent inability to secure the capital and its environs. Even during the quietest periods last month, the guerrillas continued to flaunt their ability to penetrate the Soviet defenses in the Kabul area by assassinating a group of KHAD personnel, attacking Bala Hissar, and striking the Bagrami textile mill.



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Some of the sharpest reminders of the enduring guerrilla presence were provided by rocket attacks on the city. In the second week of October, the guerrillas struck the Wazi Akhbar Khan neighborhood--the site of Radio Afghanistan, the major DRA military hospital, the Ariana Hotel, and the homes of several high-ranking officials. That district again came under fire in late October, when other sections of eastern Kabul also were targeted.



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The guerrillas demonstrated that the skies over Kabul are unsafe by striking Soviet aircraft, probably with SA-7s. According to the US Embassy, an MI-8 and an MI-6 were hit during daylight hours on 25 October. The MI-6, which has a troop capacity of 65, crashed shortly after being hit, whereas the MI-8 continued flying for a while before exploding in mid-air. [redacted]

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[redacted] So far, the insurgents have claimed relatively few Soviet and regime aircraft with SA-7s, but the guerrillas' increased training and experience with the missile system may now be yielding results. [redacted]

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Kabul's electric power problems eased temporarily last month. According to the US Embassy, sections of Kabul that were without electricity in September began receiving power for as much as 18 hours a day by the second week of October. The insurgents' destruction of more pylons between Sorubi and Kabul interrupted power supplies in mid-month, but most of Kabul had electricity during the evening by the end of October. [redacted]

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Outlook

The guerrillas almost certainly will be able to thwart the Soviets' recent campaign to curtail sharply their activities in the border area. They are more knowledgeable of trails and passageways in the mountainous border area and probably will continue to be able to evade successfully enemy search parties. Soviet and regime forces lack sufficient manpower to keep constant watch on the numerous routes to and from Pakistan. [redacted]

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The Soviets' renewed offensive in the Panjsher also seems doomed to have disappointing results for Moscow. Once again, the guerrillas were prepared for the assault and had taken appropriate defensive measures. Even if Soviet and regime forces prolong their occupation in the southern part of the valley, they will not have succeeded in eradicating guerrilla activity in the Panjsher. So far, the Soviets have not made preparations suggesting they intend to press the campaign against the insurgents in the valley throughout the difficult winter. [redacted]

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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: PRELIMINARY 1984 CROP ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED AREAS

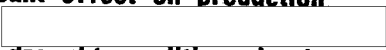


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A preliminary assessment of three crop areas in Afghanistan (the northern plains, the Panjsher Valley, and Herat Province) indicates that this year's grain crop has suffered damage from adverse weather and that military operations have not had a significant effect on production except in the Panjsher Valley. Based on



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meteorological data, we estimate that drought conditions in the northern plains--Afghanistan's principal dry land farming region--caused a 30 percent downturn in grain production there. Fighting in the Panjsher Valley--which has already experienced a major population exodus--has either destroyed or led to the abandonment of about 75 percent of the grainfields in that region. Grain output in Herat was virtually unaffected by the heavy military activity and is estimated to be about the same as in 1983. Together, these three areas account for roughly a quarter of the annual grain harvest.



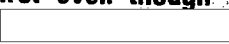
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Available meteorological data for the current crop season--although generally sparse and incomplete--indicates that snowfall was sufficient last winter to ensure adequate irrigation supplies. In the northern plains region, however--where virtually all of the nonirrigated crops are grown--rainfall during the critical February-to-April period was less than 50 percent of normal. Rain occurred only on 17 days compared to the average of 35 days.



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Most serious food shortages in the past have resulted from drought-induced crop shortfalls in the dry land agricultural regions. Drought not only reduces grain production drastically, but also desiccates the grazing pastures used by the nomadic herdsman who make up approximately 10 percent of the total population. When this occurs, the farmers and herdsman face possible starvation because they typically reside in remote regions with poor transportation and food distribution systems. Previous food aid has usually gone to the cities first even though the major need was in the remote countryside areas.



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Crop Assessment of Selected Areas

Northern Plains.

[redacted] major drought damage to most of the dry land crops here. Compared with 1983, we estimate that grain yields in the western portion of the region--in the vicinity of Meymaneh--fell by nearly two-thirds, while those in the east--near Qonduz and Taloqan--were reduced by about one-third. In the central portion of the region--south of Mazar-e Sharif--yields are likely to be similar to last year. As a result, we estimate overall dry land grain yields this year to be nearly 30 percent smaller than the slightly above-average yields estimated for 1983. A drop of this magnitude would pose a threat of serious food shortages in the hardest hit areas. [redacted]

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Panjsher Valley.

[redacted] Soviet and Afghan military operations caused the destruction or abandonment of about 75 percent of the grainfields in the valley. Such losses will have little impact on total Afghan grain output this year because the valley is only a minor grain producing region. Even so, they almost certainly will be devastating to the remaining people. Since 1979, more than half of the population has fled the area because of repeated Soviet attacks, [redacted]

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We estimate that two-thirds of the damage is a direct result of the fighting. [redacted]

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[redacted] If the Soviets are deliberately destroying crops in the Panjsher Valley, they probably intend stripping Masood's insurgents of their agricultural base in this strategic region. [redacted]

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Considerable damage was also caused by armored vehicle trackage, construction of military bivouac areas, bomb blasts, and artillery shelling. The heavy military activity also led to sizable abandonment as many villagers appeared to have fled the valley. [redacted]

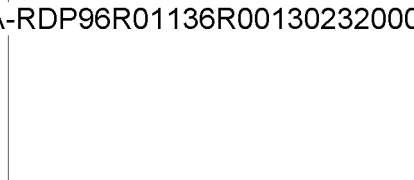
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Herat Province.

 little, if any, change in grain production between 1983 and 1984. A reduction in the amount of irrigation water available from the Harirud River probably was offset by a slight expansion in the area sown to grain this year. Despite heavy military activity in the province, there was no evidence of deliberate crop burning or destruction of irrigation systems. Damage caused by armored vehicle tracks, bomb craters, and artillery shells is estimated at less than one percent of the crop areas 

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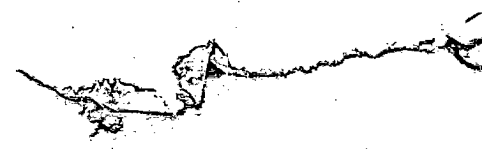
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