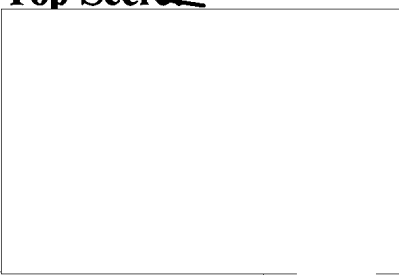


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Directorate of
Intelligence



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Afghanistan Situation Report



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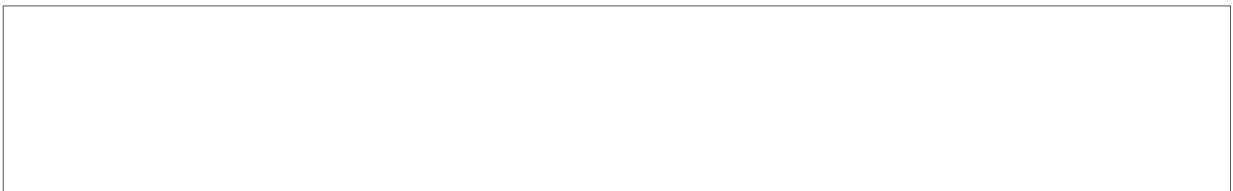
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Cabinet changes announced on 13 October do not represent a shift in the Parcham-Khalq balance nor any diminishing of President Babrak's power.

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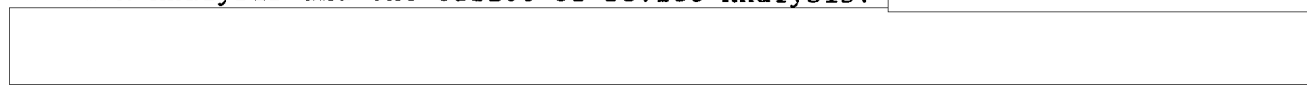
AFGHANISTAN IN SEPTEMBER 3

The insurgents scored major successes in Paktia Province during September and maintained a high level of activity near the Panjsher Valley and in western Afghanistan.

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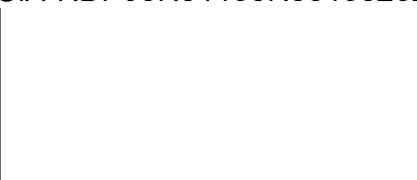
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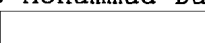
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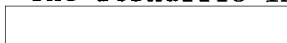
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REGIME CABINET CHANGES 

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Kabul media on 13 October reported the following Cabinet changes: The new Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and head of the State Planning Committee is Sarwar Mangal, who replaces Khalil Ahmad Abawi; the new Minister of Higher and Vocational Education is Burhanuddin Ghaisi, who replaces Sarwar Mangal; and the new Minister of Justice is Mohammad Bashir Baghlani, who replaces Abdol Wahab Safi. 

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Comment: The Cabinet changes do not represent a shift in the Parcham-Khalq balance nor any diminishing of President Babrak's power. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, Abawi was probably replaced because of heart disease. The reshuffle involved no particularly influential figures. 

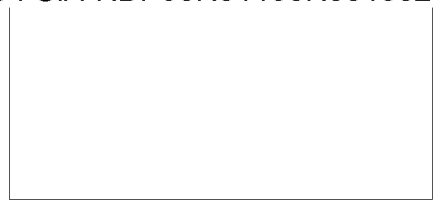
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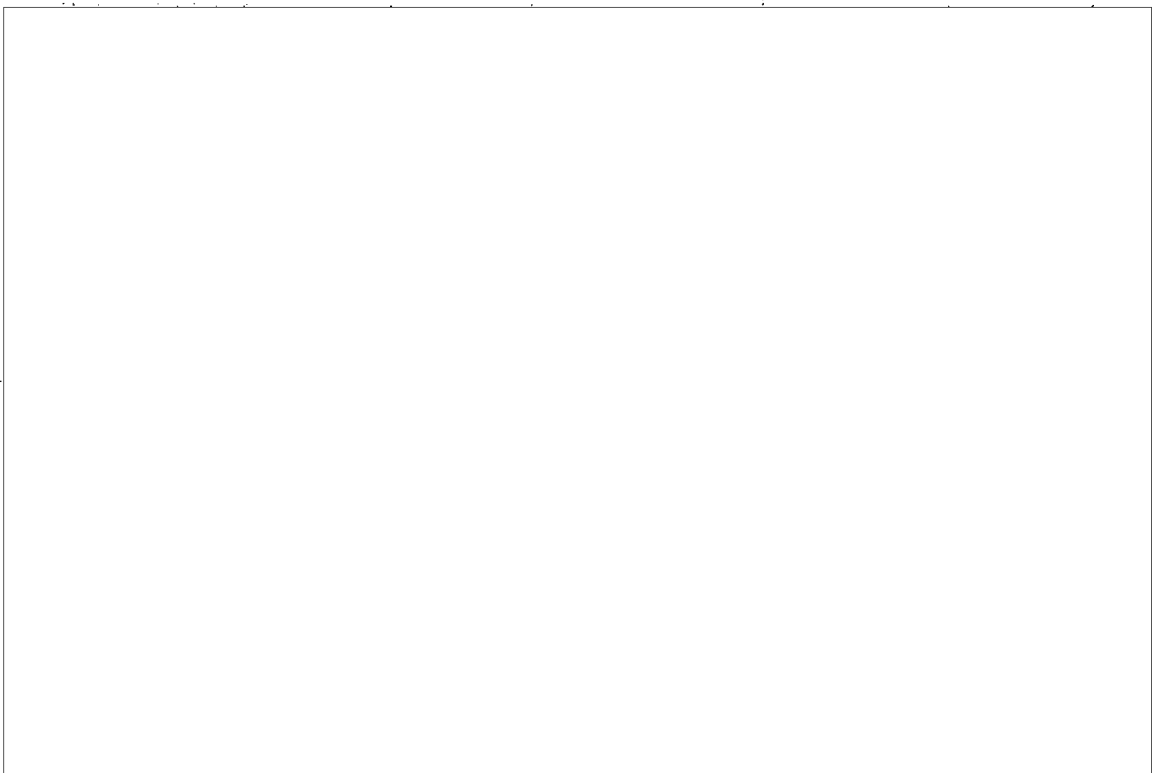
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IN BRIEF



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-- [redacted] insurgent forces are better equipped with arms and ammunition now than they were a year ago. However, recent heavy fighting in Lowgar and Paktia Provinces has caused some spot shortages of arms and ammunition in those areas.

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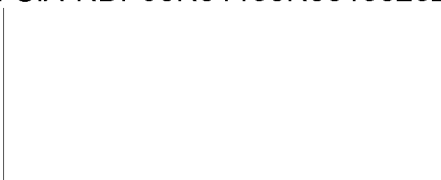
-- According to several Afghan resistance representatives, insurgent morale is good, and this year's food situation is better than that of a year ago. Shortages, however, have occurred in Ghowr and Badakhshan Provinces and in the Hazarajat region. [redacted]

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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN IN SEPTEMBER



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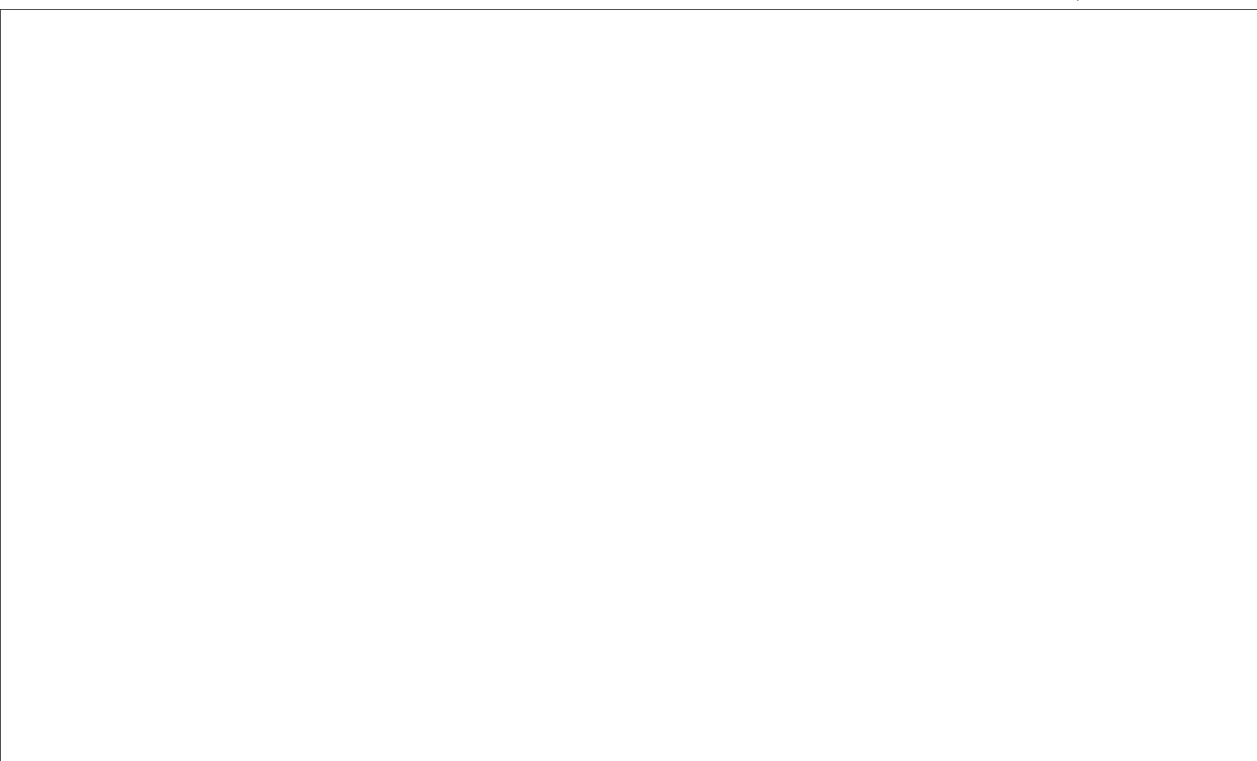
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The insurgents scored major successes in Paktia Province during September and maintained a high level of activity near the Panjsher Valley and in western Afghanistan, [redacted] Meanwhile, Kabul's relations with Iran worsened, and a massive conscription effort threatened the Afghan economy. [redacted]

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The Southeast. In Paktia Province, the insurgents may have inflicted the worst defeat on the regime since the loss of the elite 38th Brigade in May. [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet and regime troops complained repeatedly of shortages of ammunition and supplies and frequently requested air support. Aerial bombing of villages in the province caused heavy civilian losses, [redacted]

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According to US Embassy sources, insurgent successes in Paktia were the result of careful, long-term planning and cooperation by various insurgent groups. The strategy apparently included the blocking of the Lowgar Valley to convoy traffic over a period of several weeks to permit a strong insurgent assault on Khowst. [redacted]

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[redacted] since early August, the insurgents have frequently attacked military posts and interdicted convoys on the Kabul to Jalalabad road, creating supply problems for troops already under pressure in Nangarhar Province. Large Soviet and regime operations involving air, artillery, and airborne troops trying to block insurgent exfiltration routes reportedly killed nearly 100 insurgents. The guerrillas, however, remained active in the area, sporadically firing on the troops, [redacted]

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Panjsher Valley Area. [redacted]

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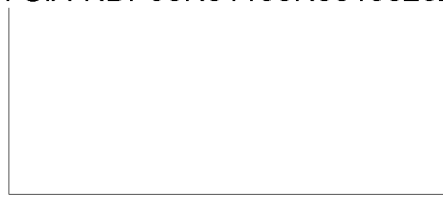
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Although the Panjsher itself remained calm, the northern Shomali area--contiguous to the Panjsher Valley and the approaches to the Salang Pass--was the scene of heavy fighting throughout much of September, according to Embassy sources. In the Shomali, Soviet and regime troops conducting sweep operations met stiff resistance and bombed many villages in the area, Embassy sources reported. The sources indicated that Masood's men were involved in much of the fighting, attacking convoys as well as Soviet armored vehicles and helicopters carrying out retaliatory strikes. Insurgents were also in force in the southern Shomali, according to the same sources, and, by remaining highly mobile,

[redacted]

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suffered relatively few losses while inflicting significant losses on Soviet and regime forces. [redacted]

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Kabul Area. Insurgent activity in the capital remained substantial during the first half of the month, according to Embassy reports, with the insurgents attacking government installations, including the Pul-e Charkhi generating station, with rockets and heavy machineguns. Assassinations of party members and KHAD informers also continued at a high level. The Embassy reported that the electricity supply was erratic because of low water levels and continued insurgent sabotage of transmission lines. By midmonth, however, insurgent activity declined as increased Soviet and regime patrols augmented security during the Id religious holidays, according to Embassy reports. [redacted]

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Other Areas. Herat Province [redacted]

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Embassy sources reported that travel was dangerous throughout the province, including on the road to Qandahar, west from Herat City to the Iranian frontier, and between Herat City and Towraghondi on the Soviet border. In Herat City security remained poor, according to Embassy sources, and on 11 September, MIGs bombed the southern and western areas of town. Regime officials and troops were regularly attacked both within the city and in the surrounding area. [redacted]

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The insurgents also remained active around Qandahar, [redacted] [redacted] Insurgent assassinations and attacks on isolated posts in the province were met with retaliatory attacks by the regime. [redacted]

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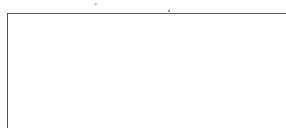


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Political Developments

Iranian Relations. While the Afghan Government expelled two US Embassy officials and increased its anti-US propaganda campaign during September, harassment of Iranian personnel in Kabul also was stepped up, probably in reaction to a perceived insurgent buildup in western Afghanistan. [redacted]

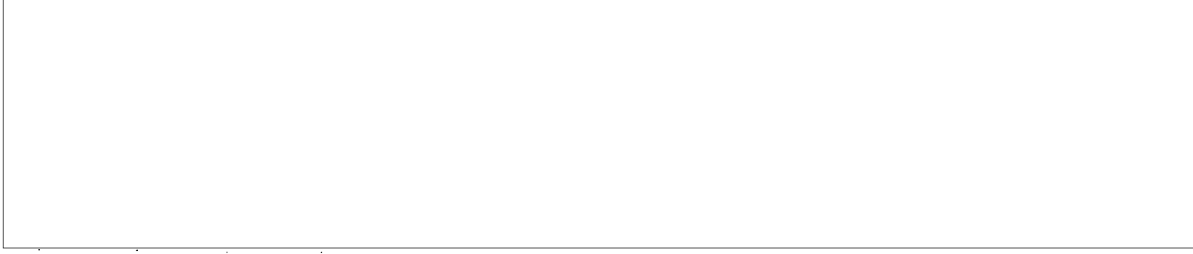
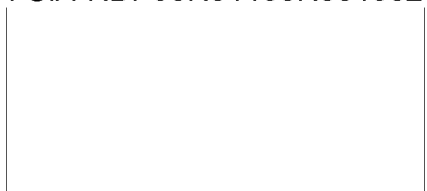
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Rumors on Defense Minister. The latest rumors of personnel changes centered on Defense Minister Qader, who is likely to be replaced soon, [redacted] Qader is reportedly mentally ill, works only until noon each day, has shown aberrant behavior, and has lost the respect of officers assigned to the Defense Ministry. According to Embassy reports, rumors of ministerial changes became widespread and intense during the month, with most agreeing that Qader will be a scapegoat for the regime's failure to contain the resistance.

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Economic Developments

Measures to ease military shortages not only heightened factionalism in the Afghan Communist Party but threatened the Afghan economy, according to Embassy reports. A massive conscription effort in the capital caused Khalqi Interior Minister Gulabzoi to protest that the drafting of recent reservists would severely disrupt the economy. Gulabzoi reportedly challenged the Parchamists to conscript the "tens of thousands" of draft-age men working for Parchamist-dominated KHAD. The dragooning of former soldiers is unlikely to lower the desertion rate and may spark the largest exodus of men from the city since last year's expansion of the draft age, according to the Embassy. [redacted]

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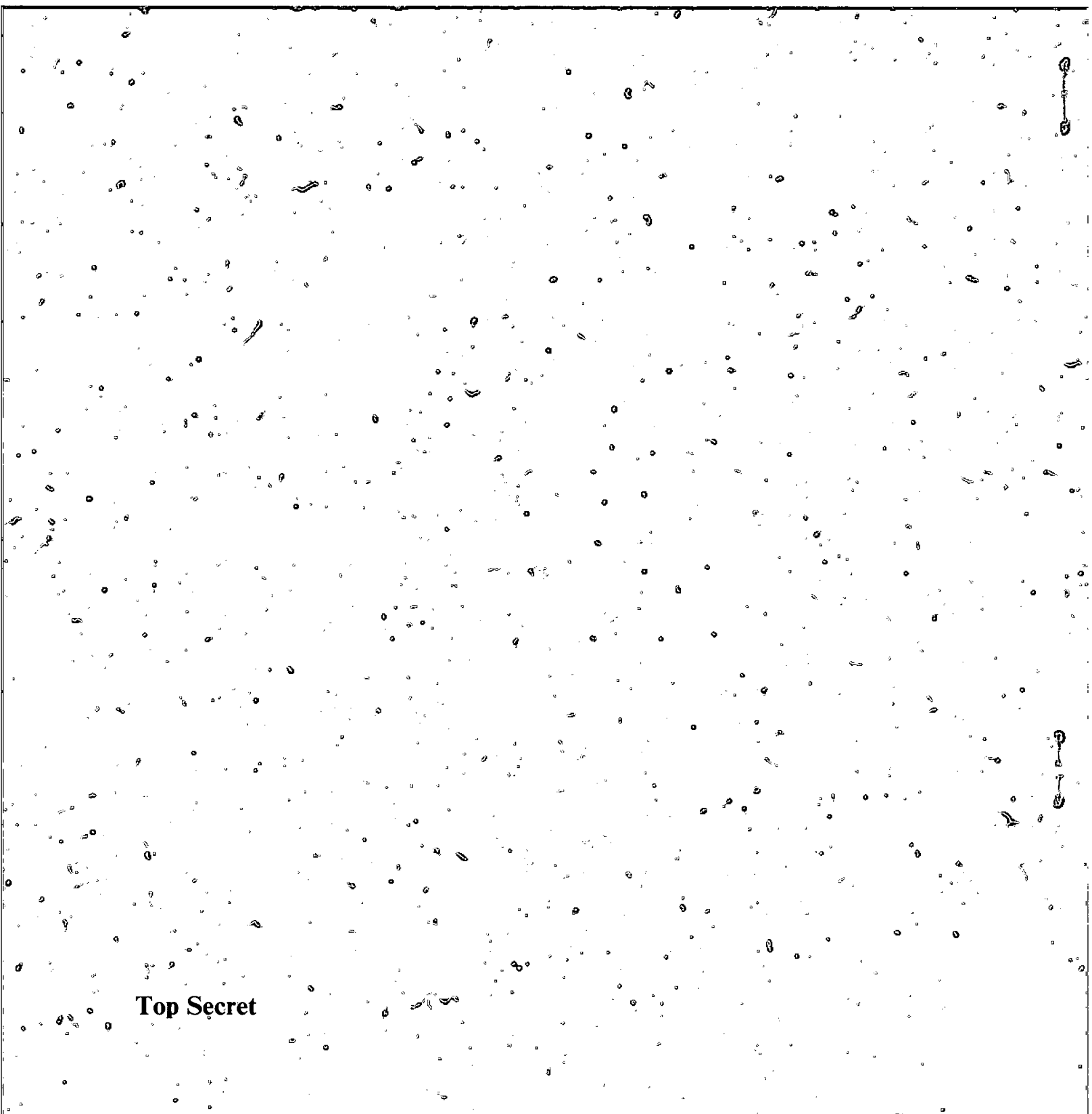
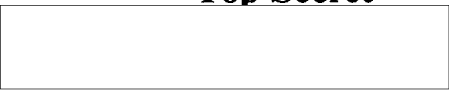


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