



Afghanistan

The myth of foreign meddling is used by the Soviets to justify their involvement in Afghanistan, for example, and Moscow professes that life would quickly return to normal if external enemies of the Kabul regime would cease stampeding the populace. In this instance, the Soviets may actually see the refugee situation as hampering their efforts to pacify the country, since the refugees are a source of recruits and support for the insurgent movement. This outweighs by far the burden they put on Pakistan or international aid donors. There is no sign, however, that the USSR is contemplating any turnaround in its Afghan policy--such as a reduction in the tempo of military operations--that would reverse the flow of the refugees. [REDACTED]

The influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan began with the Communist takeover of Afghanistan in April 1978, but the great majority fled the Soviet invasion of December 1979 and the subsequent occupation by Soviet troops. From January 1979 to September 1979 the refugee flow into Pakistan averaged 15,000 per month, but increased to an average of 59,000 per month from September 1979 to January 1980. Since January and following the

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spring offensive by Afghan and Soviet troops, the refugee population in Pakistan increased at a monthly rate of about 80,000. [REDACTED]

Although Afghan refugees are found all along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, they are concentrated in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan. Refugees from rural areas tend to stay in camps or groups near the border; those from towns have gone to the Pakistani cities of Peshawar and Quetta. Refugees come from all areas of Afghanistan, but the greatest number leave areas proximate to military activity south and east of Kabul. [REDACTED]

Nearly all the refugees are Pushtun tribesmen. The composition of Pushtun refugee camps varies. In most cases children under 14 make up roughly one-third to one-half of the total. In one of the largest camps, adult males make up 38 percent of the camp population, adult females 31 percent, and the children 31 percent. Nomadic migrants, also Pushtuns, are among the refugee population because their annual return to Afghanistan, which normally occurs with the onset of warmer weather, has been made hazardous by military activity in their grazing lands. [REDACTED]

In May 1980, the Afghan refugee population in Pakistan exceeded 750,000 people, most of whom were encamped in some 50 settlements near the Afghan-Pakistani border. Another 300,000 refugees have crossed into Iran. Many others have been absorbed into kin groups and related tribes in Pakistan. If Soviet antiguerrilla operations continue to expand or intensify, the refugee total in Pakistan alone may reach one million by mid-summer. [REDACTED]

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