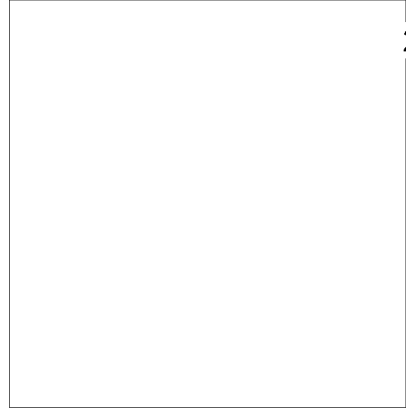




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IMC/CB

Afghanistan Situation Report



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15 February 1983

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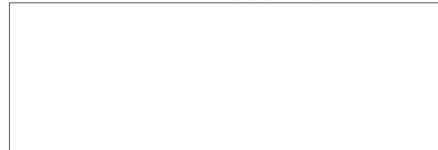
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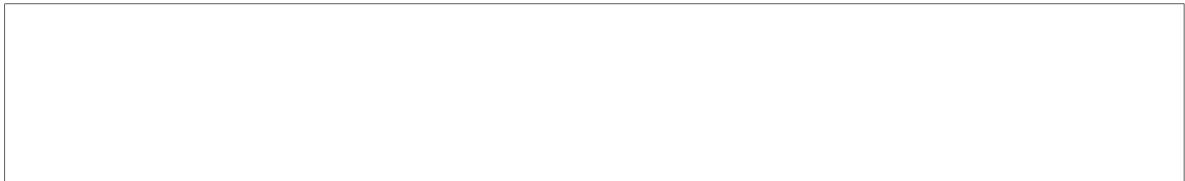
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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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Cordovez' talks raised hopes Moscow may be ready for concessions, but the Pakistanis are wary that apparent flexibility may prove illusory.

This document is prepared weekly by the Office of Near East/South Asia and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments on the issues raised in the publication should be directed to 

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QADER VISITS MOSCOW



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During his 5-9 February stay in Moscow, Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Qader met Defense Minister Ustinov, Marshal Sokolov, and a number of other high-ranking military officers,



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and visited several military installations. He apparently did not meet any important political figures. The US Embassy in Moscow believes the visit was useful to the Soviets in giving them a close look at the man they have to trust to run the Afghan military, but sees nothing to indicate that Qader is being groomed to succeed President Babrak. [redacted]

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[redacted] two of Afghanistan's corps commanders accompanied Qader--the [redacted] in Kabul believes this also points to a discussion of military rather than political matters. [redacted]

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Qader did not return to Kabul with the delegation, but the substantive part of his visit apparently has ended. [redacted]

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Comment: There has been speculation that Qader--who arrived in Moscow shortly after the UN Special Representative visited Kabul--was discussing a peace settlement. Generally regarded as more independent of Moscow than most Afghan Communist leaders, he has been mentioned as a possibility to head a coalition government that might be established as part of a negotiated settlement. [redacted]

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IMPROVED ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IN KABUL [redacted]

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Kabul's electricity supply has steadily improved since the 4 February black-out, according to the US Embassy. Although sporadic during the day, the power supply during the night is better than it was before the late December resistance attacks on the transmission line pylons. [redacted]

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Comment: Although Kabul's improved electricity supply is in part a result of warmer weather, the Afghan Government has demonstrated that it can repair damaged pylons relatively quickly. The government is also probably paying "protection money" to local leaders living near the transmission lines. The local leaders, however, may still be cooperating with the insurgents. [redacted]

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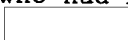
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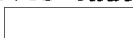
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IN BRIEF

-- UN officials report that the insurgents have driven out of the Konar Valley about 13,000 Afghans who had not been allowing the insurgents to traverse their areas. 

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-- Pakistan claims to have 2,874,944 Afghan refugees on its territory. The US Embassy believes that the refugee estimate is inflated by about 15-20 percent. 

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-- The US Embassy in Kabul has received a thirdhand report that the Soviets have offered the Afghan Government \$180 per 1000 thousand cubic meters (cm) for the import of Afghan natural gas beginning 21 March 1983. If accurate, the reported price would represent a hefty increase over the \$125 per thousand cm the Soviets reportedly paid in 1982 for Afghan natural gas. 

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PERSPECTIVE

CORDOVEZ NEGOTIATIONS: SOME PROGRESS, MUCH FOG

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the Afghans and Pakistanis have narrowed their differences on agenda items to be included in negotiations for a political settlement. These limited gains, however, are tentative and could prove illusory. Moscow's positive reaction to Pakistani demands for a troop withdrawal timetable and refugee repatriation have raised hopes at the UN and in Islamabad that the Soviets may be more willing to compromise. Although a major policy shift to disengagement cannot be entirely dismissed, this conciliatory stance more likely marks a more activist Soviet diplomacy.

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-- The Soviets probably want to project an air of reasonableness prior to March NAM meetings.

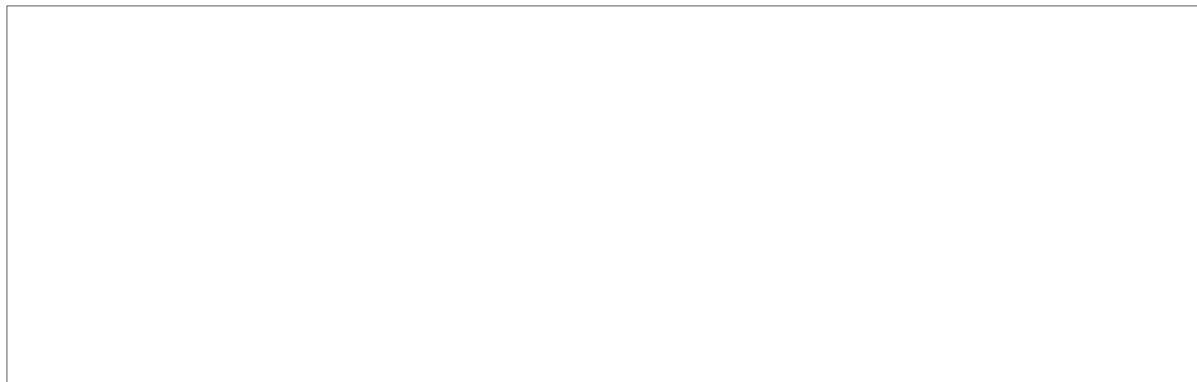
-- They may want to satisfy UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar's insistence upon a constructive Soviet response to the Kabul talks as a precondition for continued UN involvement.

-- The talks enable them to probe for flexibility in Pakistan's position.

We anticipate much harder bargaining in April when UN-mediated indirect talks resume at Geneva. The parties still have to agree on the interrelationship of the agenda's items before negotiations on substance can begin.

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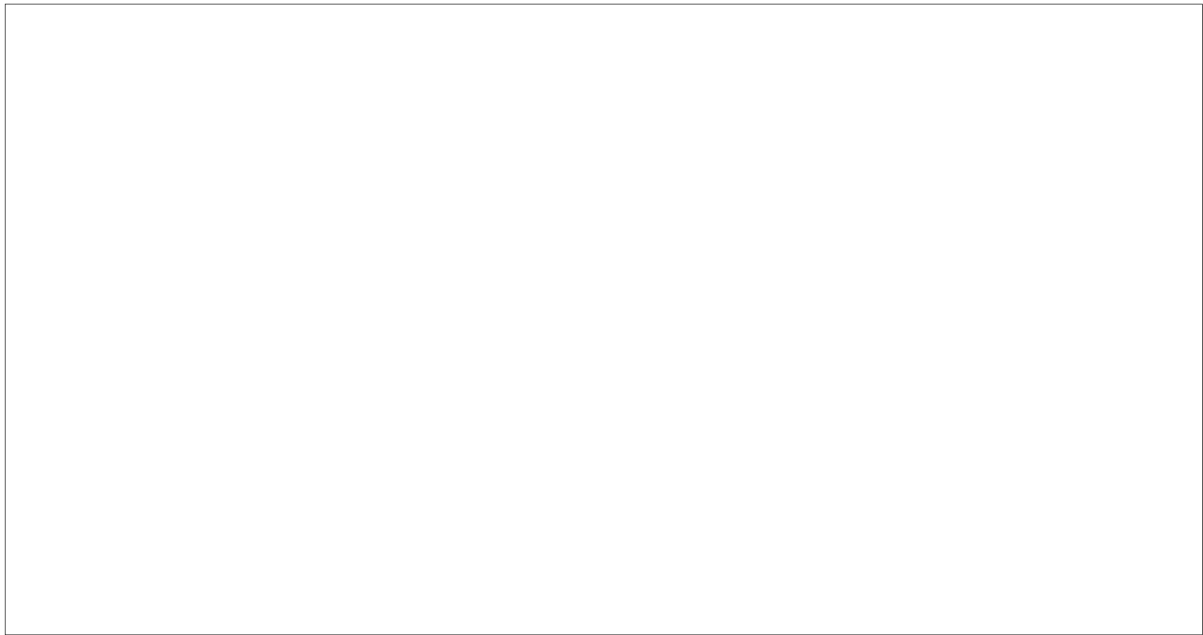


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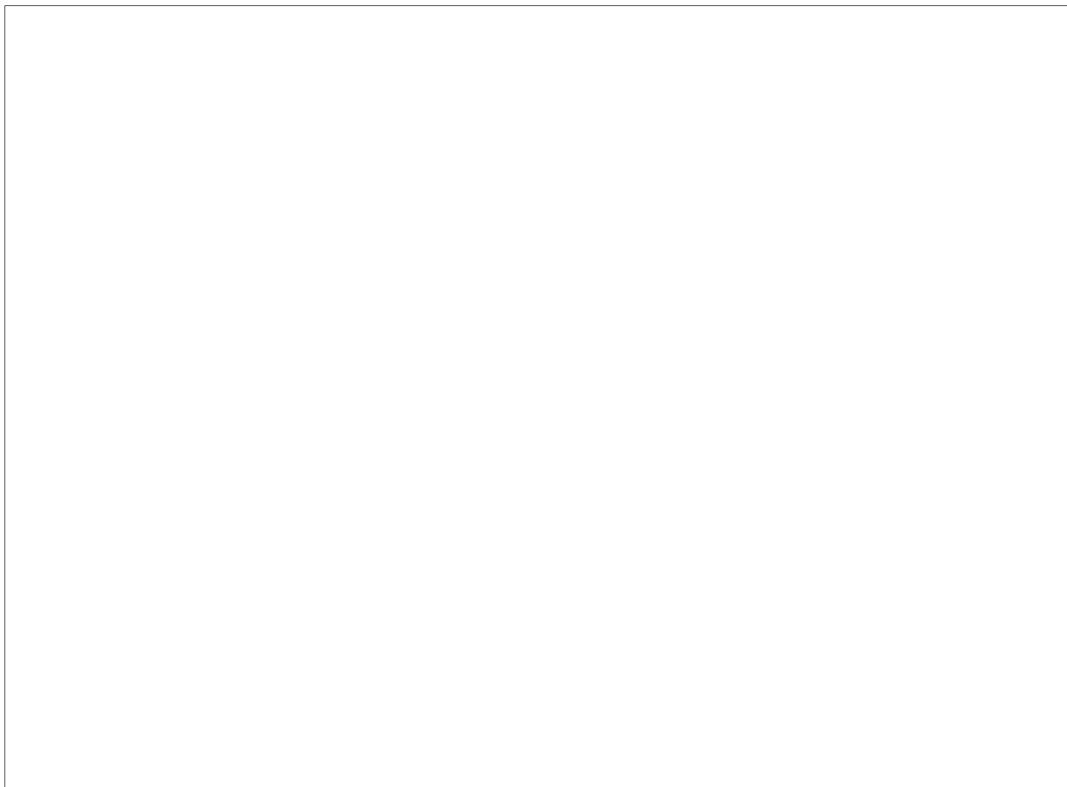
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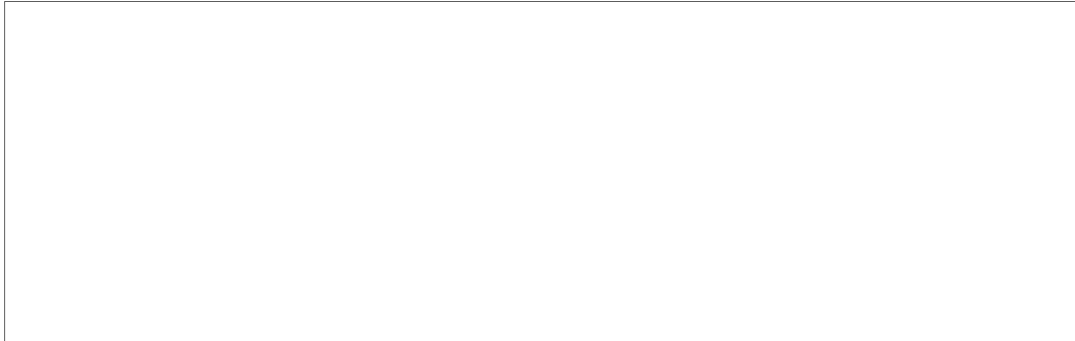
Soviet Perspective

In the immediate aftermath of Brezhnev's death, the new General Secretary Andropov met with Babrak and Pakistani President Zia. Soviet spokesmen known to be close to the new leader went out of their way "unofficially" to emphasize that he would be more flexible in the search for a political settlement. These actions fanned widespread international speculation about far-reaching Soviet concessions and also began causing problems for Babrak. In early December the Soviets apparently decided to damp down the speculation. Babrak, in Moscow for the 60th Anniversary celebrations of the USSR, was given the signal honor of having a press conference in Moscow and accorded a second "warm comradely meeting" with Andropov, and Pravda on 16 December authoritatively reiterated the USSR's position on the irreversibility of the Afghan revolution. 




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The test of Soviet seriousness probably will not come until Geneva. If the Soviets are merely maneuvering to get past the NAM summit and buy time for a new approach inside Afghanistan, they may well balk at translating into a written document the verbal concessions they made during the recent talks--as they did last summer in Geneva. If they have decided to use the negotiations to probe more seriously than heretofore for signs of Pakistani resolve, however, they could agree to some sort of document. As now framed, the assurances given Cordovez in Kabul preserve Soviet negotiating flexibility and could, without sacrificing consistency, be used to advance a settlement that would entail significant risks for both the Pakistanis and the resistance. 

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