

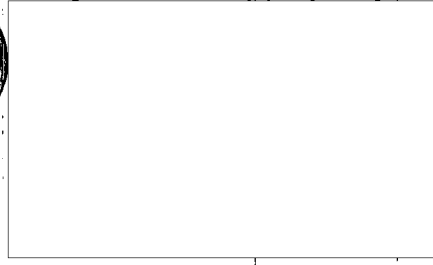


Directorate of Intelligence

~~Top Secret~~

file (2)

245



25X1

Afghanistan Situation Report



25X1

18 December 1984

~~Top Secret~~

NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX

18 December 1984

79

25X1

Page Denied

TOP SECRET

25X1



AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

CONTENTS




1

25X1

POSSIBLE SHIFT IN AFGHAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

1

Activities by an Egyptian official in Kabul imply Cairo is moderating its position with the Afghan regime. Egyptian officials in Cairo state their basic position is unchanged. 

25X1


IN BRIEF

2

PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: INSIGHT INTO SOVIET OPERATIONS

3

Afghanistan provides an opportunity to observe and assess the Soviet military capability to conduct military operations. The Soviets recognize their shortcomings and from time to time temporarily alleviate an issue, but the same problems reappear later. The overall military system stifles initiative and appears to be too rigid to make the changes necessary to ensure a professional, highly motivated, flexible force. 

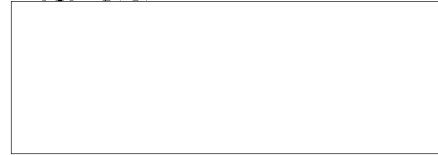
25X1

18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX

25X1



~~TOP SECRET~~



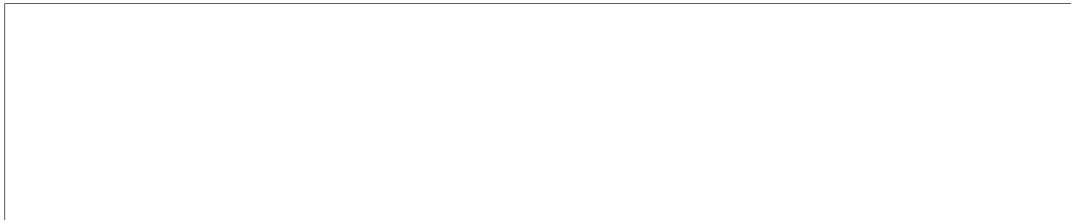
25X1

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



25X1

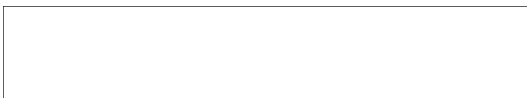
25X1



25X1

**18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX**

25X1



TOP SECRET

25X1



800084, 1-84

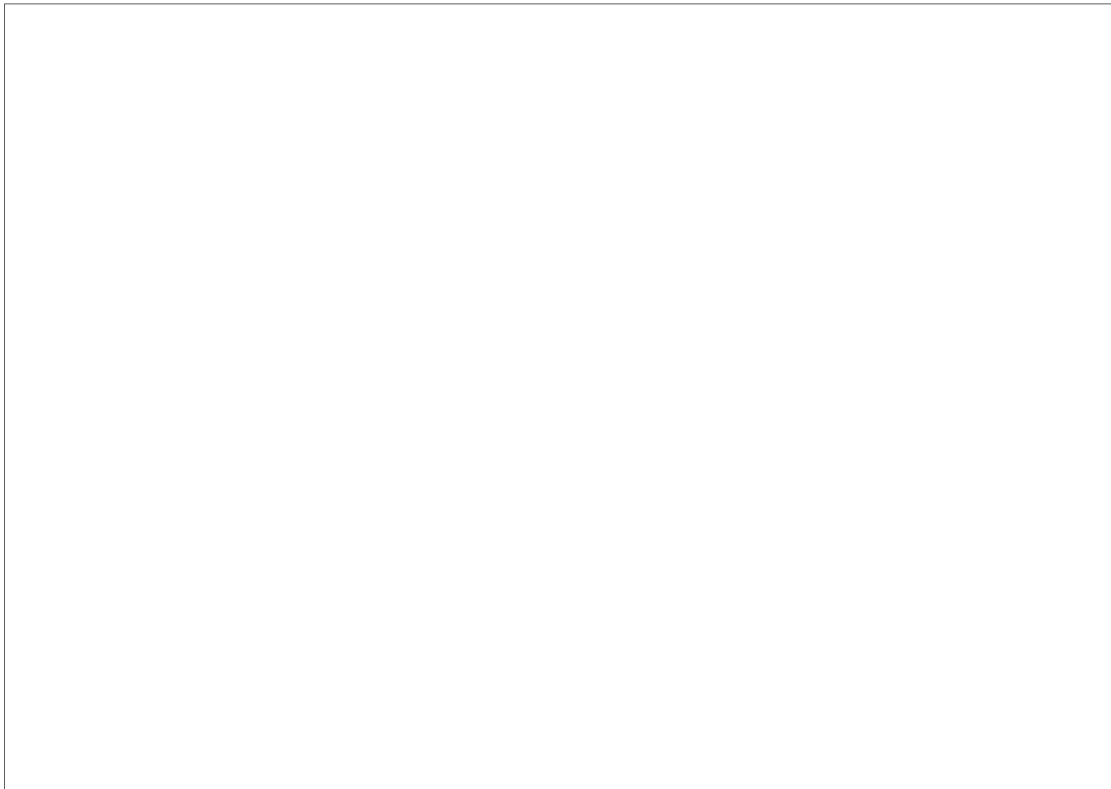
18 December 1984
NEA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX

25X1

TOP SECRET



25X1



25X1

POSSIBLE SHIFT IN AFGHAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS



25X1

US Embassy officials report the new head of the Egyptian Interests Section in Kabul is encouraging foreign diplomats to establish closer contacts with Afghans and has met with several high-level Afghan officials. The new Egyptian official reportedly believes visits by Muslim scholars and educators will offset Soviet influence. Egyptian officials in Cairo say the new contacts do not represent a change in Egyptian policy toward Afghanistan--the Egyptians have avoided contacts with DRA officials

25X1



25X1

**18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX**

25X1



TOP SECRET



25X1

Comment:

Egypt probably hopes to reduce potential threats to its officials in Kabul by moderating its public actions toward the government. Cairo probably hopes that Muslim scholars and educators will broaden contacts with Afghan Islamic leaders

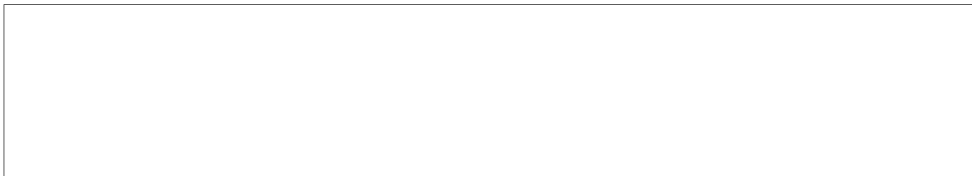
25X1

Egypt continues to support the resistance with guns and money and probably will speak out strongly against the Afghan regime at the Organization of Islamic Countries meeting beginning on 18 December.

25X1

25X1

IN BRIEF



25X1

- [redacted] insurgents in the Herat area were experiencing shortages of heavy weapons and ammunition earlier this year. The shortages were reportedly caused by delays in transporting arms through Iran, diversion of arms to noninsurgent buyers, and interdiction of arms convoys by rival insurgent groups.

25X1

25X1



25X1

-- [redacted] French medical directors closed at least one medical center in the Hazarehjat last September because insurgents were extorting money and sometimes physically abusing the staff.

25X1

25X1

-- [redacted] the regime has halted its campaign to force students to join the party youth organization because of widespread opposition by students and parents.

25X1

25X1

**18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX**

25X1



25X1

PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: INSIGHTS INTO SOVIET OPERATIONS



25X1



25X1

The overriding impression of combat operations in Afghanistan is of a large-scale Soviet effort which has, with few exceptions, been unable to come to grips with reality. Increased expertise in the use of the helicopter and the residual benefits of actual combat are more than overshadowed by a highly centralized, rigid, and conventional military approach to a difficult counterinsurgency problem. A marked lack of initiative at all levels, coupled with serious morale, discipline, and motivation problems, even amongst so-called elite groups, raises important questions as to how the Soviet forces will fare in a more conventional war.



25X1

Command and Control

The style of Soviet command and control remains very rigid, requiring decisions to be made at the higher echelons. It seems that General Staff Moscow has attempted to direct the war 2,000 miles away in Afghanistan. First Deputy Minister of the Soviet Union, Marshal Sergey Leonidovich Sokolov, controlled operations at the onset of the invasion and on several occasions has taken a personal interest in the daily operations of the 40th Army.



25X1

The combat operational authority of commanders at unit level is exercised through what the Soviets call operational groups formed from officers of a higher headquarters, whose responsibility begins and ends with that specific operation. In Afghanistan, the Ops Groups are probably formed from officers of 40th Army HQ with either the Chief of Staff or Deputy Commander of 40th Army in control. As the operation begins to unfold, the Ops Group deploys out of the 40th Army HQ to a forward secure area. Apart from the Soviet tendency for high-level interference, the practice may indicate in part that regimental HQs are not properly trained or equipped to handle a combined arms operation.



25X1

18 December 1984
NESAM 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX

25X1



25X1



The numerous examples of Moscow-level interference into the daily operations add credence to the assessment that the Soviet military remains a highly centralized organization which has trouble delegating significant responsibility to lower echelon commanders. This command and control system would, we suggest, be suspect in the context of a war in Europe where swiftly moving formations and units would be required to capitalize quickly on immediate opportunities.

25X1

Combat Operations

The Soviets have yet to perfect tactics to combat rebel insurgent groups. Operations are conducted primarily at the multi-battalion level jointly with Afghan forces. Ideally, the Soviets cordon off an area and the Afghan forces engage in search and sweep operations. Indirect fire support is provided both by Soviet and Afghan artillery units. Soviet and Afghan helicopter gunships and aircraft strikes also provide support when available. The decision for Soviet units to chiefly provide blocking forces probably stems from a military appreciation of Soviet troop strength and a conscious political decision to attempt to keep Soviet casualties to an acceptable low level.

25X1

On the whole, large-scale Soviet multi-battalion operations have been well-planned and executed but have resulted in few positive accomplishments. The Soviets continue to be burdened with an inflexible, inappropriate military method of operation and suffer the same difficulties that all Western armies have in attempting to win counterinsurgency campaigns by force of arms alone.

25X1

The Soviets have not been able to develop and maintain secure means of moving personnel, equipment, and logistical supplies routinely from one area to another. Casualties from ambush have remained a serious concern. In general, the Soviets dedicated special troops, positioned convoy control posts, improved convoy operating procedures, and cleared vegetation along some roads in order to improve the security of lines of communication (LOCs). In order to reduce the effectiveness of rebel ambushes and to improve the security of LOCs, the Soviets and Afghans also began forming several road traffic control units.

25X1


18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX



25X1


TOP SECRET

Training


Traditionally, Soviet training is geared to produce a team of well-drilled soldiers and junior officers who follow set directives from higher authorities. Such training does not suit a counterinsurgency environment, and there have been few indications of training schools either in the USSR or Afghanistan specifically designed for preparing troops for Afghanistan. The average Soviet conscript arrives in Afghanistan having completed only compulsory preservice training. The junior officer arrives after the normal officer education. Both are expected to be trained on the job within units and then leave Afghanistan after the required two-year tour. Specialists, i.e., drivers, gunners, etc., on the other hand, arrive after six months at a specialist school and serve the remaining 18 months of their conscription in Afghanistan. 

25X1

Intelligence Operations

The successful operation freeing several Soviet civilian hostages in February of 1983 was accomplished primarily due to an emphasis on improving the intelligence effort. The reevaluation of Soviet and Afghan intelligence capability that took place throughout 1983 resulted in a change in ambush operations. Ambushes normally lasted 24 to 48 hours; however, lately in some cases personnel have been expected to remain in a specified area up to ten days. 

25X1

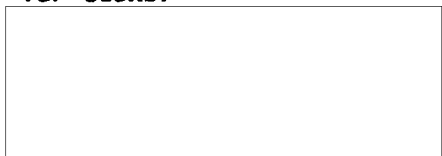
During the past four years in Afghanistan, the Soviets experienced difficulty in maintaining secrecy during the planning and execution of combat missions. The Soviets estimated that the rebels were, in some cases, aware of their operations several days in advance. This security problem seemed to be due in part to the fact that operations became stereotyped; their sequence and form obvious to the rebels. For example, normally heavy air reconnaissance flights first saturated the combat operational area. Airstrikes by fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter gunships then occurred, followed shortly by artillery strikes. Next, an influx of ground force battalions commenced. This predictable sequence allowed time for the rebels to vacate an area or properly prepare for a fight. 

25X1


Although Soviet military doctrine and writings acknowledge the importance of deception, the indications are that the 40th Army has not

18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX


25X1



25X1


practiced it very well. Additionally, over the past four years the Soviets almost ignored the rebel intelligence capability. The Soviets need to vary their operations and practice more effective deception. Stereotyped operations without proper deception and a lack of appreciation for an enemy's intelligence capability in a war in Europe would place the Soviets at a significant disadvantage. 

25X1

The Soviets have not properly used specially trained troops. The airborne have not jumped, the Spetznaz have not operated in small clandestine groups, and the air assault brigade, although trained for rapid action, has not effectively or aggressively hampered the rebels. 


25X1

Use of Helicopters

On the whole, the Soviets are satisfied and understand helicopter limitations. We are aware that the Soviets have used helicopters effectively and extensively as troop carriers and resupply vehicles in a fire support role. In addition, the Soviets have demonstrated a growing appreciation of the value of tactical heliborne assault operations. Not only are air assault troops used in this role, but it is not uncommon for motorized rifle troops to routinely participate in such operations as well. There has been Soviet concern, however, over availability of helicopters, qualified pilots, almost nonexistent night flight training, and vulnerability to rebel surface-to-air hand-held missiles. 

25X1

Future Tactics

Soviet methods of operation in the beginning of 1984 suggest an improvement in tactics. Night ambushes in Qandahar reportedly employed air operations to aggressively engage the rebels. The 103rd Guards Airborne Division attached artillery spotters/observers down to company units, which should make artillery support more responsive to the needs of infantry. The ground forces were given tactically sound tasks such as seizing heights and occupying choke points, and certain specialized reconnaissance groups were formed for specific search and destroy missions. Air support was tasked with close-air support, minelaying, cover, and heliborne assault missions. It is difficult to tell, however, whether we are seeing only individual incidents of tactical competence or a new trend. 

25X1

18 December 1984
NESAM 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX


25X1



TOP SECRET




25X1

Even with proper tactics, there are no guarantees of decisive success. What is needed is a comprehensive plan to ensure the continual use of sound tactical principles, instill more aggressiveness, promote commander initiative, and continue serious experimentation with new tactical approaches. 

25X1

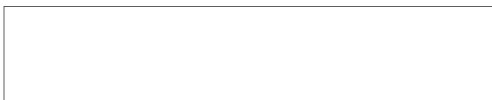
In Summary

The lessons learned from Soviet operations in Afghanistan have revalidated and enhanced previous assessments based on Soviet writings and personal observations of Soviet activity in a peacetime environment. The Soviets recognize their shortcomings and from time to time temporarily alleviate an issue, but the same problems reappear. The overall military system remains too rigid to be able to initiate the necessary changes and to ensure a professional, highly motivated, flexible force. The present Soviet military system stifles initiative and creates an expectation that decisions are for higher commanders. Such a style of operation provides NATO with opportunities to exploit inherent weaknesses and thus thwart an otherwise strong military machine. 

25X1

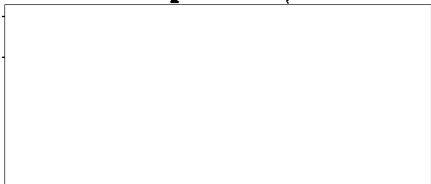
18 December 1984
NESA M 84-10319CX
SOVA M 84-10221CX

25X1



Top Secret

25X1



Top Secret