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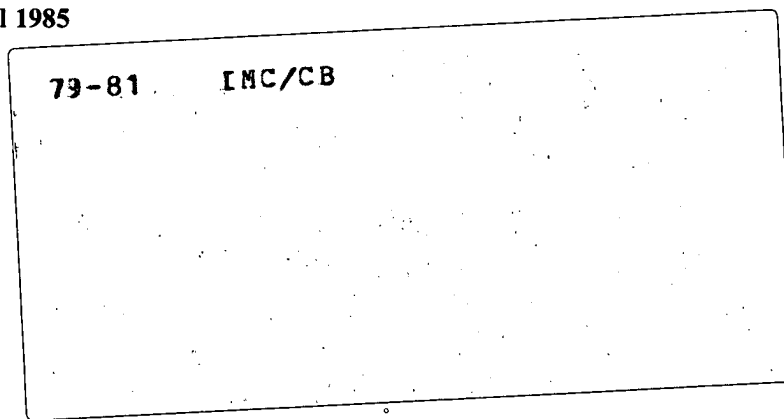
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Afghanistan Situation Report



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30 April 1985



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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

CONTENTS



1

1

3

25X1

IN BRIEF

4

PERSPECTIVE

ABDUL RASUL SAYYAF: THE DIVISIVE UNIFIER



5

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Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, a central figure in the splintered Afghan resistance, has been accused by other leaders of corruption and misuse of Arab funds, almost all of which are channeled through him.



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30 April 1985
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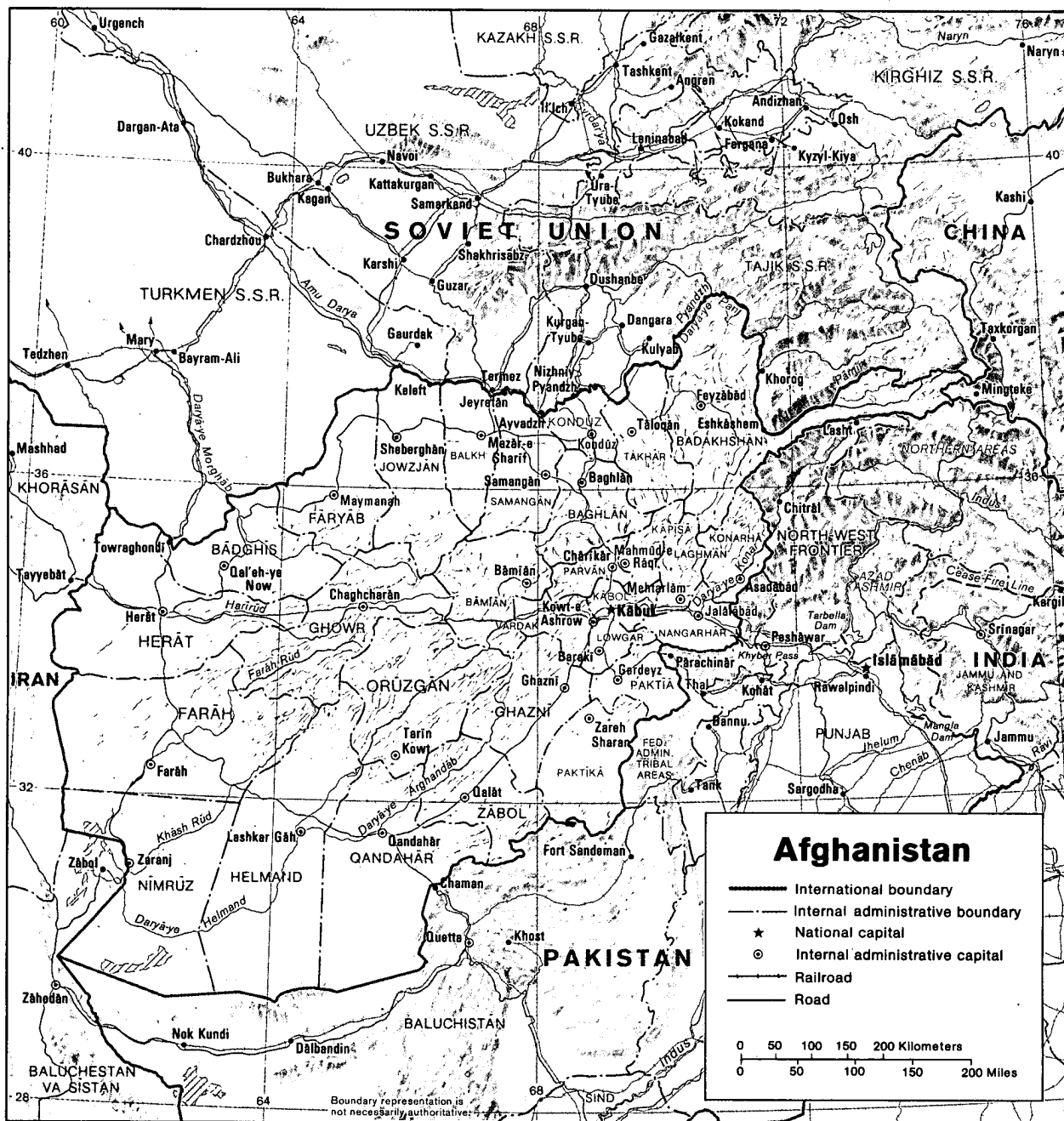
30 April 1985
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30 April 1985
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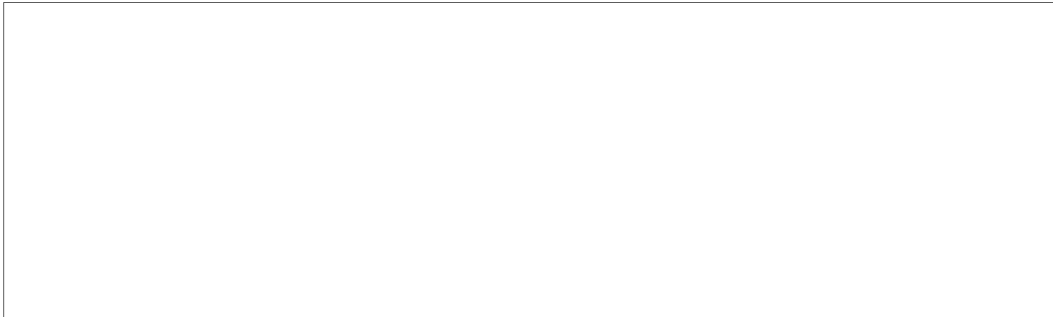
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IN BRIEF



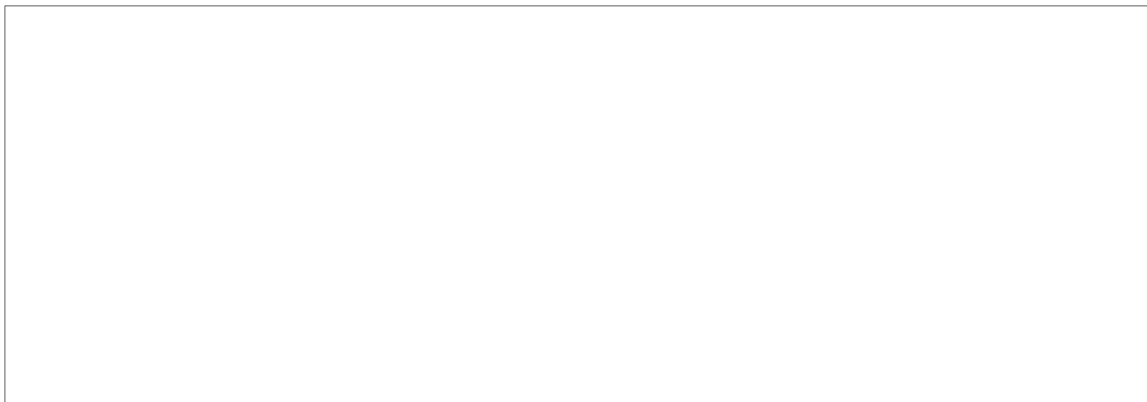
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-- The Consul General in Peshawar reported that on 27 April a Jamiat-i-Islami arms depot south of the city exploded during a firefight. [redacted] the fight began when several Soviet prisoners seized weapons and tried to escape.

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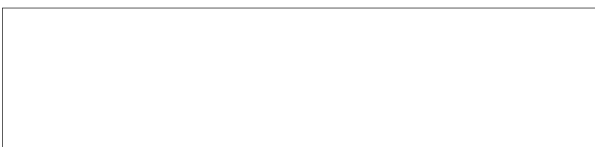
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-- Moscow television on Saturday carried a rare hour-long documentary on Afghanistan to mark the seventh anniversary of the coup that brought the Marxists to power. The documentary made it clear that the Afghan problem would not be resolved any time soon because of the steady increase in outside support for the resistance and appealed to Soviet patriotism by playing up the allegedly "heroic role" of Soviet soldiers. [redacted]

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30 April 1985
NESA M 85-10086JX
SOVA M 85-10082JX

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PERSPECTIVE**ABDUL RASUL SAYYAF: THE DIVISIVE UNIFIER**

Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, an astute and ambitious opportunist, has been a central figure in most attempts to unite the splintered Afghan resistance movement. But in most cases, he has been a hindrance more than a help. Sayyaf has used his role as principal conduit of Arab money to the **jihād** (holy war) to build his own insurgent organization, in competition with and at the expense of other resistance leaders. They, in turn, accuse him of corruption and misuse of funds, resent his position as the Arabs' "fair-haired" boy, and have increasingly refused to cooperate with him. Although the Peshawar-based seven-party Fundamentalist Alliance, which he heads, seems on the verge of being revamped or replaced, we believe he will continue to be one of the key players in the resistance as long as he retains the political and financial backing of his Arab supporters.

Rise to Prominence

In March 1980 Sayyaf was elected Chairman of the Islamic Alliance for the Liberation of Afghanistan (IALA), a loose coalition of six major Peshawar-based resistance groups.

Sayyaf was chosen because he was a prominent Muslim who had suffered for his faith (he spent six years in Kabul jail for his religious activities) and he did not pose a threat to the leaders of the other groups. The IALA never effectively united the fractious resistance movement and the "moderate" parties soon withdrew. It was officially dissolved in April 1981.

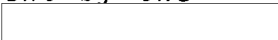
Sayyaf used his IALA credentials to enhance his personal power, however. In September 1981, still using his title as IALA chairman, he made a widely-publicized tour of the Arabian Peninsula seeking support for the Afghan cause. At the same time, he began to assemble his own resistance organization.

In February 1982 Sayyaf was elected president of the newly-formed seven-party Fundamentalist Alliance,

30 April 1985
 NESAM 85-10086JX
 SOVA M 85-10082JX

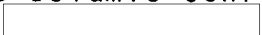
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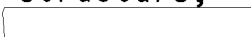
officially named the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahedin. (The three-party Moderate Alliance used the same name.) He held the office for much of the following year. In May 1983 the Alliance was reorganized, and Sayyaf used Arab funds to secure his election to a two-year term as president by the Alliance's Supreme Council (Shura). 

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Growing Isolation

Criticism of Sayyaf's handling of funds and efforts to build his own organization became common and his grasp on the Alliance began to slip. In January 1984, Yunus Khalis, leader of one faction of Hizbi Islami, withdrew from active participation and Burhanuddin Rabbani, head of the Jamiat-i-Islami, was chosen as spokesman of the organization before the Islamic Conference Organization summit in Casablanca. 


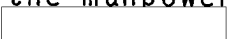
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The following month, Sayyaf took advantage of the absence of his opponents to muster a bare quorum of the Shura, demote his rivals from key committee posts, and replace them with his own men. While Sayyaf's maneuver consolidated his control of the Alliance's structure, it sent resistance unity to its lowest ebb. 

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Sayyaf became conciliatory in later months. 

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 In March 1985 Rabbani told US diplomats that he, Khalis, and Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, head of the largest Hizbi Islami faction, had told Sayyaf that he must relinquish his position, and that no matter how many votes he could buy in the Shura, he lacked the manpower in the field to sustain his leadership. 

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30 April 1985
 NESA M 85-10086JX
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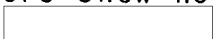


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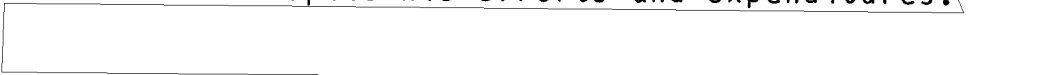
Prospects

If a new coalition with a rotating chairmanship replaces the two current alliances, Sayyaf will lose his role of first among equals. But we believe that his foreign backing will ensure prominence on the Peshawar scene for the foreseeable future. His Arab benefactors show no signs of abandoning their favorite Afghan. 

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Sayyaf's insurgent organization remains small and ineffective despite his efforts and expenditures. 

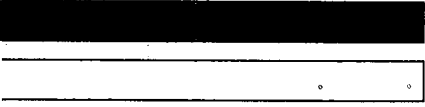
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30 April 1985
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