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Afghanistan Situation Report

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11 February 1986

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

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CONTENTS

FIGHTING WIDESPREAD IN EARLY FEBRUARY

[Redacted]

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Fighting continued last week in Herat, Qandahar, Nangarhar, and Ghazni Provinces. Combat has broken out in the Ghazni capital. Insurgents carried out rocket attacks in Kabul, and heavy fighting was reported in the Panjsher Valley.

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[Redacted]

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FOOD PRICES INCREASE IN KABUL

[Redacted]

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Recent insurgent attacks on supply convoys have caused shortages in Kabul, and prices have risen noticeably since the beginning of the year.

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IN BRIEF

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PERSPECTIVE

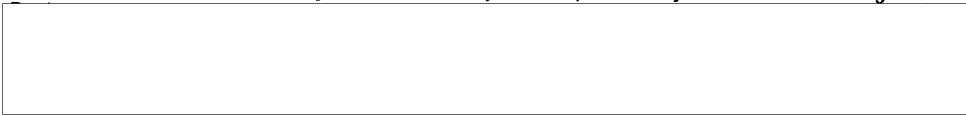
THE WAR IN JANUARY



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Soviet and Afghan troops were active in Nangarhar, Ghazni, Qandahar, and Herat Provinces in an effort to cut insurgent supply lines, while resistance forces attacked garrisons, outposts, and convoys.



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This document is prepared weekly by the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis and the Office of Soviet Analysis.



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PUBLICATION NOTE

Unless major developments warrant otherwise, we will not publish the **Afghanistan Situation Report** next week. The next report will appear on 25 February 1986.



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FIGHTING WIDESPREAD IN EARLY FEBRUARY



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The fighting in Ghazni Province since early January shows no signs of letting up. According to sources of the US Embassy in Kabul, insurgents have carried the fighting into the provincial capital itself. The Soviets are reported to have suffered numerous casualties and the loss of at least six tanks and three aircraft in the last week.



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heavy fighting also occurred in Herat, Nangarhar, and Qandahar Provinces; over 90 Soviet and Afghan soldiers were reportedly killed during a coordinated insurgent attack in Herat



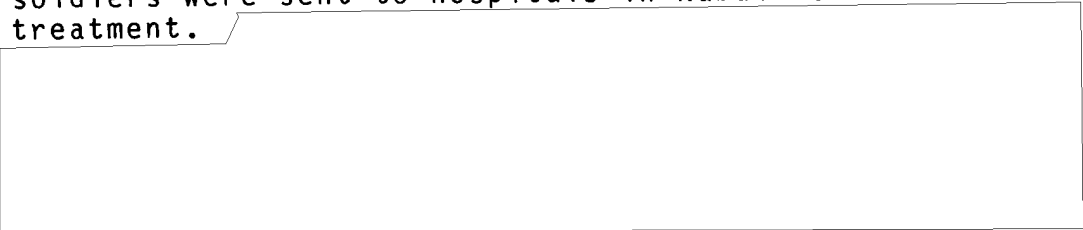
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In Kabul, insurgents fired multiple missiles at the Afghan Ministry of Defense, Darulaman Palace and the airport, and engaged in running gun battles with security personnel on 5 and 7 February.



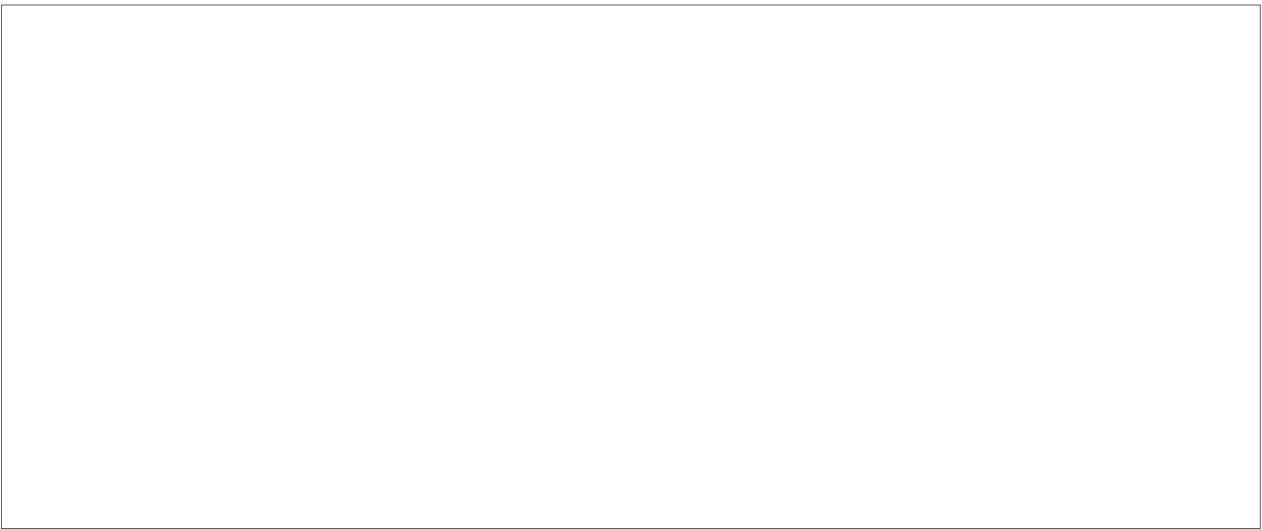
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fighting was very heavy in the Panjsher Valley last week, and over 100 wounded Afghan soldiers were sent to hospitals in Kabul for treatment.



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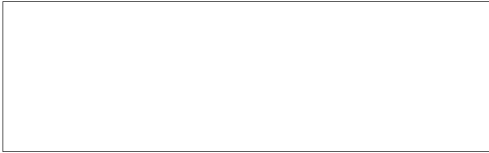
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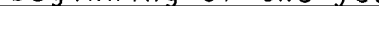

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FOOD PRICES INCREASE IN KABUL 

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Food prices have increased sharply in Kabul since the beginning of the year, according to   press reports. The price increases follow several insurgent attacks against convoys travelling to Kabul on the Salang Highway in early January. 

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Comment: Because Kabul has relatively small stockpiles of food, it needs to be resupplied frequently. Even a relatively brief closure of the Salang Highway, whether due to insurgent activity or the weather, can cause



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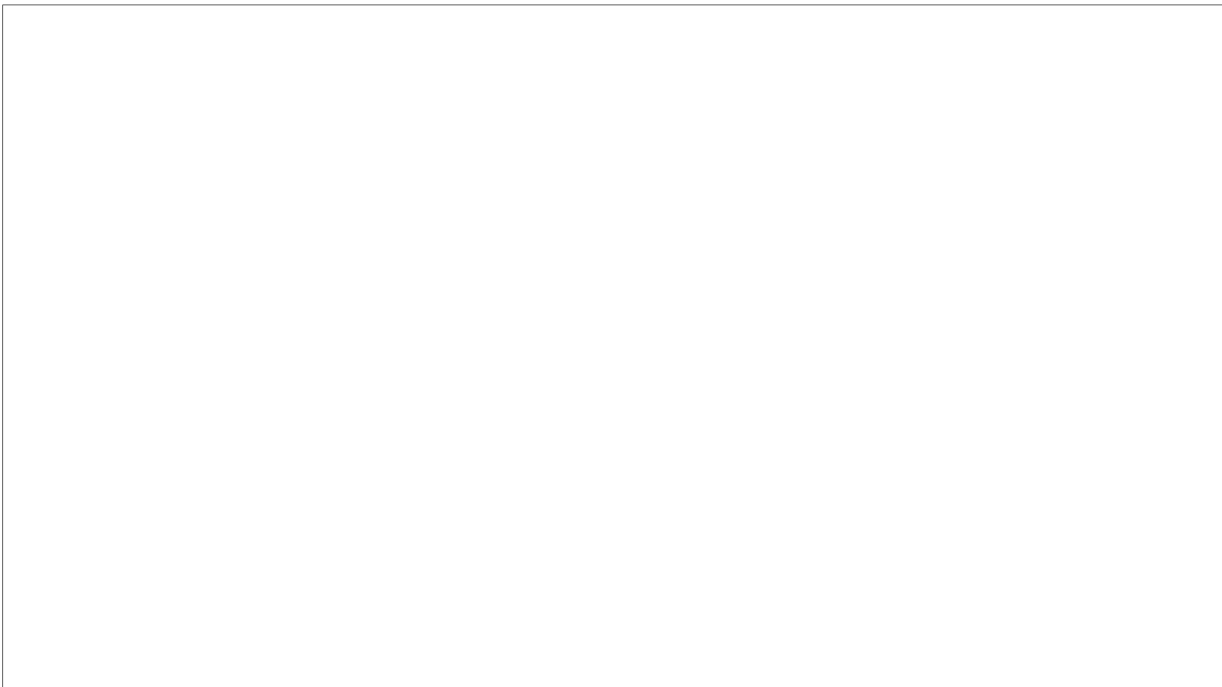
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shortages and price increases. Food prices in the capital, however, have risen only moderately over the past few years, as the Soviets and Afghan regime have made a determined effort to show Kabul's citizens--and the world--that they can keep disruptions to a minimum. 

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IN BRIEF

-- Top Pakistani officials--including President Zia and Prime Minister Junejo--have cleared US aircraft supporting the humanitarian cross-border Afghan aid program to land in Pakistan, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad. The Pakistani officials want the program to remain as "covert" as possible, with minimal publicity surrounding the aid shipments. Islamabad fears a highly visible assistance program would increase Soviet pressures on Pakistan and fuel criticism by opposition parties. 

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PERSPECTIVE

THE WAR IN JANUARY



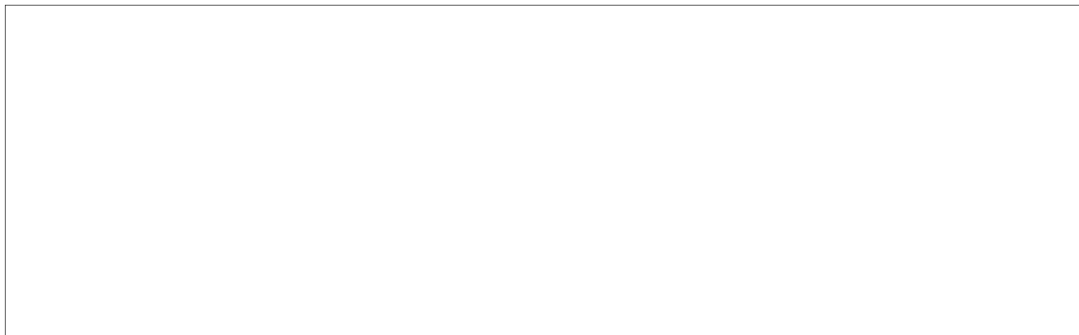
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Despite bad weather and extreme cold, Soviet and Afghan forces launched operations in Nangarhar, Ghazni, Qandahar, and Herat Provinces in January. Soviet Spetsnaz forces initiated small-unit ambushes throughout eastern and southern Afghanistan in an effort to cut insurgent supply lines. The insurgents staged numerous raids on Afghan and Soviet garrisons and resupply convoys. The Pakistanis scrambled F-16s against intruding Afghan aircraft for the first time, but no contact was noted.



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Soviet-Afghan Forces Stay Active...



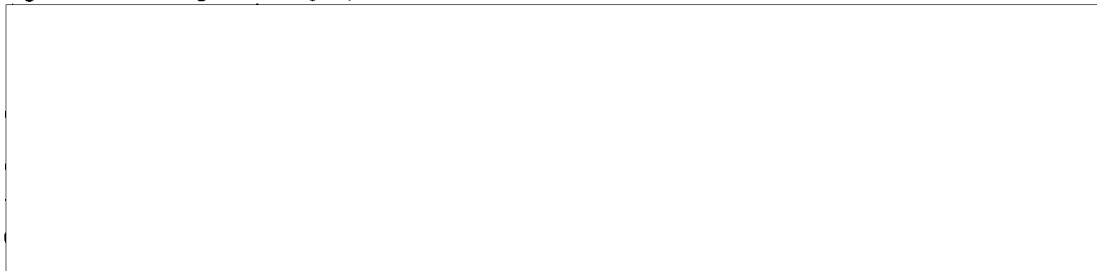
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...Near Kabul. Combined Soviet-Afghan combat operations involving approximately 1,800 troops were carried out both north and southwest of Kabul during early January.



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The Soviet deployments may have been in reaction to insurgent attacks on highway traffic near the Salang Tunnel and against regime sympathizers in northern Kabul Province.



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Insurgents near Kabul rocketed the airport, Soviet Embassy, and Darulaman Palace. The US Embassy reports that nighttime small arms fire was infrequent; Afghan security patrols within the city appeared relatively active, probably due to the presence of a delegation of Western journalists invited by the Karmal regime. [Redacted]

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The US Embassy in Kabul reports resumption of daily Soviet IL-76 transport flights into the capital in an apparent effort to bring in supplies and equipment not getting through by surface vehicles. [Redacted] there was also an increase in military activity at the Bagram airfield and the Soviet base at Jabal os Saraj in late January. [Redacted]

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...In the South. [Redacted] Soviet and Afghan forces have targeted insurgent supply lines crossing southern Afghanistan for special attention, with some success. The Soviets have made widespread use of both day and night ambushes by helicopter-supported elite units to interdict this traffic. Insurgents ascribe the success of the operations to the Afghan Intelligence Services's (KHAD's) infiltration of their organizations and the increased collaboration of Pushtun tribes in the region with Afghan authorities. [Redacted]

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Insurgent Activity

Insurgents remained active throughout Afghanistan, staging guerrilla attacks on isolated border posts and

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resupply convoys. The intensity of attacks ranged from harassment fire on Afghan and Soviet garrisons to attacks on convoys which reportedly killed scores of government troops.

[Redacted]

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Insurgent commander Masood's mobile groups ambushed a Soviet battlion in the Panjsher Valley and destroyed an ammunition dump and nine armored vehicles, according to a source with access.

[Redacted]

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Other Developments

[Redacted]

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Discipline Problems. The state of discipline and morale in the Afghan Army continued to remain poor.

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[Redacted] there is general discontent about delays in receiving replacement troops. The number of Afghan defections remains high, casting doubt upon the ability of the Afghan government to raise the strength of the armed forces.

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Soviet forces in Afghanistan also suffer from discipline problems.

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Outlook

The Soviets will focus on interdicting insurgent supply lines and clearing roads during the remaining winter months. Harsh weather in the mountains will limit Soviet air support for convoys traveling the main supply artery between Kabul and Termez. The Soviets will probably conduct quick sweep operations along this vital transportation link in the hope of preempting insurgent ambushes. 

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