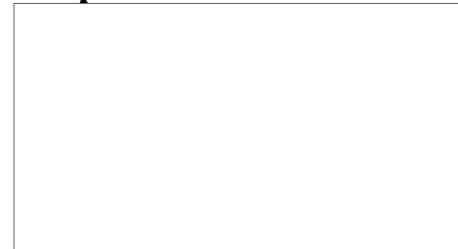




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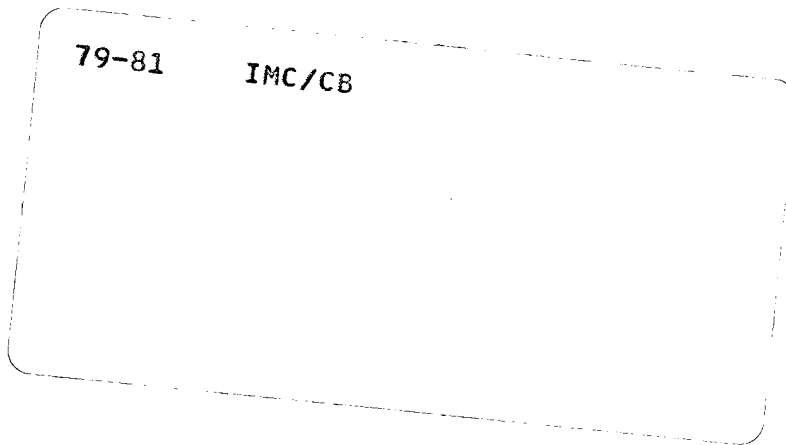
Afghanistan Situation Report



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4 March 1986

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AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

SOVIET OPERATIONS IN EASTERN AFGHANISTAN [redacted] 1 25X1

Soviet and Afghan units continued operations in Nangarhar Province in late February. The Soviets also carried out helicopter strikes near Herat



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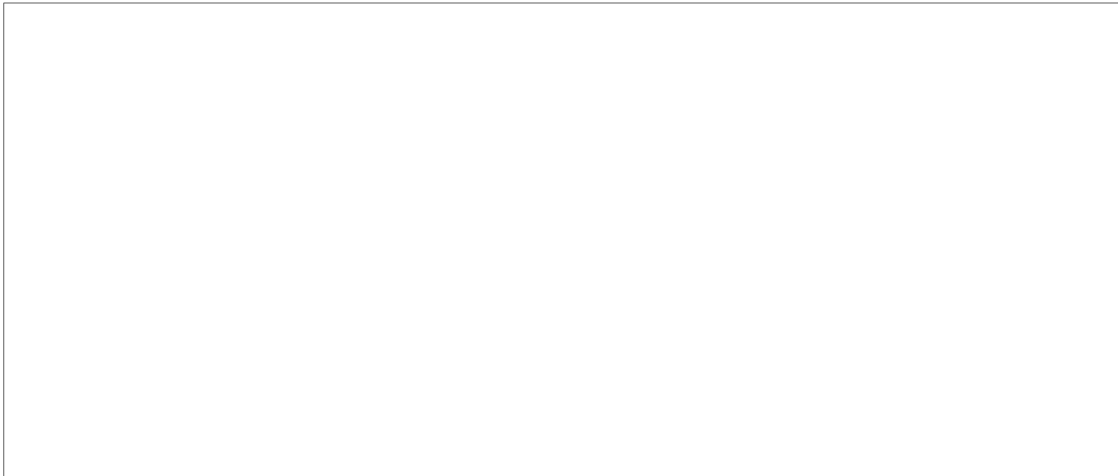
They lost three helicopters in the Kabul region. [redacted]

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CHINA DISAPPOINTED WITH SOVIETS' STANCE ON WITHDRAWAL [redacted] 1 25X1

Chinese officials, skeptical of the Soviets' willingness to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan, probably will continue to support Pakistan's refusal to engage in direct talks with Kabul. [redacted]

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IN BRIEF

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[Redacted]

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PERSPECTIVE

AFGHANISTAN: SAYED AHMED GAILANI--THE GUCCI PIR

[Redacted]

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Sayed Ahmed Gailani, the current spokesman for the resistance alliance, is articulate, polished, and well-known in the West. However, his personal shortcomings [Redacted] and inefficient combat organization will hamper any efforts he might make to increase his role in the resistance. [Redacted]

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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. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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SOVIET OPERATIONS IN EASTERN AFGHANISTAN

[Redacted]

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Soviet and Afghan regime units were involved in fighting in Nangarhar Province that began in January. According to a well-informed diplomatic source, Soviet forces have gradually been forced to assume more of the combat duties from Afghan forces during the operation.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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The Soviets lost three helicopters in the Kabul region in as many days beginning on 20 February, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. Although Soviet officials apparently ordered increased use of flares to protect aircraft using Kabul airport from guerrilla antiaircraft missiles, they did not curb helicopter and transport flights.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] the Soviets have conducted repeated helicopter strikes during the past two weeks that have destroyed several villages and damaged a vital irrigation network.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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CHINA DISAPPOINTED WITH SOVIETS' STANCE ON WITHDRAWALS

[Redacted]

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China remains pessimistic about the Soviet Union's willingness to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. A senior Chinese Foreign Ministry official in Beijing told US Embassy officers recently that Soviet signs of flexibility are only meant to play for time to consolidate control. Sun Yuxi, acting director of the Ministry's South Asia Division, dismissed Gorbachev's remarks at the Soviet Communist Party Congress as "nothing new." Sun stated that China continues to support the UN-sponsored indirect talks on

[Redacted]

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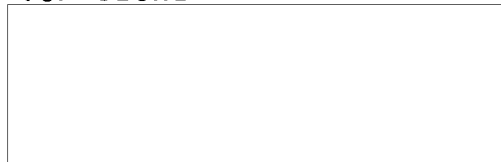
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Afghanistan, but is dissatisfied with Cordovez' ostensibly uncritical acceptance of the Soviets' claims of willingness to pull out their forces. Earlier, Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian, reacting to Gorbachev's overtures at the US-USSR Geneva summit, told the Chinese National People's Congress in January that the Soviet Union had "shown no sincerity" about a pull-out. 

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Comment: We believe that Beijing will remain firm in its opposition to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and will continue to support Pakistan's refusal to engage in direct talks with the Kabul regime. 

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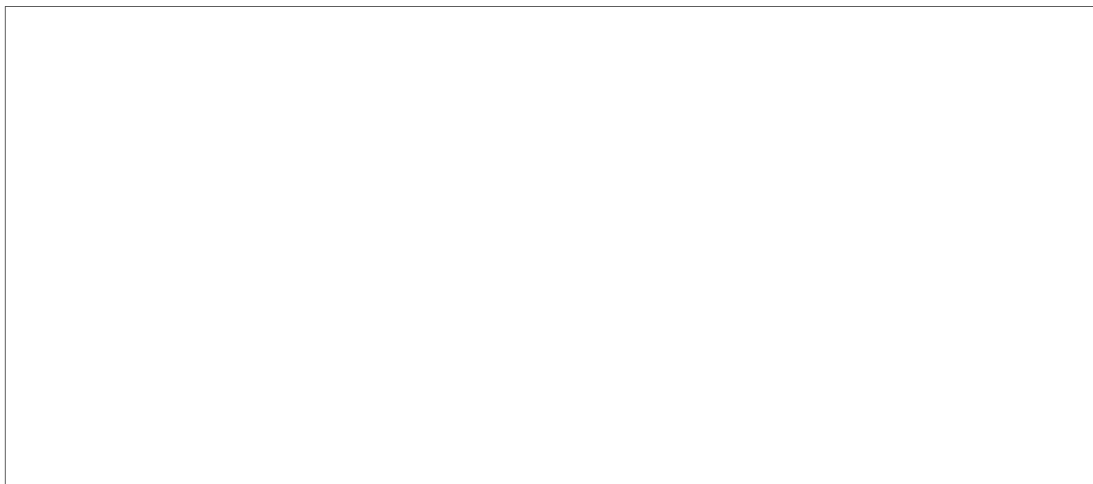


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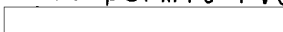


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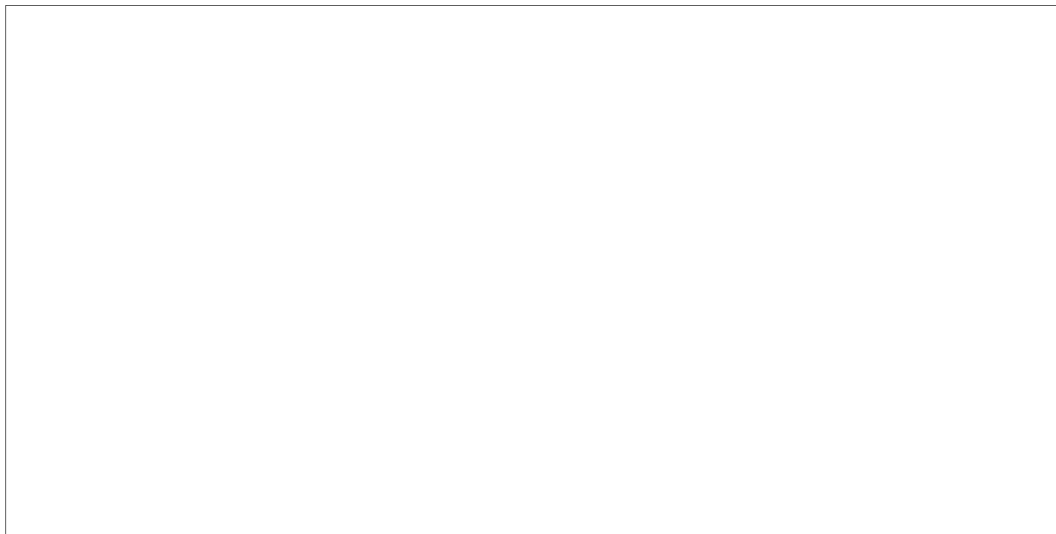


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IN BRIEF

-- US aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for Afghans landed in Pakistan on 3 March, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad. The initial shipment-- originally intended to be channeled through the seven-party alliance and private voluntary organizations (PVO)--will go entirely to the alliance for distribution inside Afghanistan. It is unclear whether Islamabad will permit PVOs to distribute future shipments. 

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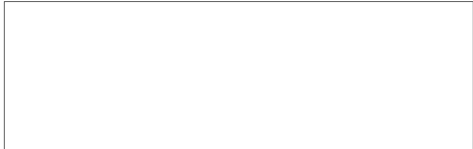
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-- According to the US Consulate in Peshawar, Afghan resistance alliance spokesman Sayed Ahmed Gailani is considering visiting Washington 20-21 March and hopes for an appointment with President Reagan. 

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-- The Afghan Government is seeking to open an embassy with a resident ambassador in Helsinki in an effort to enhance the legitimacy of the Karmal regime. 

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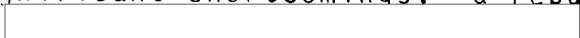

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PERSPECTIVE**AFGHANISTAN: SAYED AHMED GAILANI--THE GUCCI PIR** 


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Sayed Ahmed Gailani, who began a three-month term as spokesman of the Afghan resistance alliance on 1 January, represents insurgents who favor the return to power of Afghanistan's traditional elites. Well-known in the West, where he has traveled widely and demonstrated strong public relations skills, he is an articulate, polished, and highly visible resistance spokesman. He also has significant shortcomings: a reputation for lavishness,  involvement in opium trafficking, and poor relations with Pakistani officials. Moreover, his resistance group--the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA)--is reputed to be corrupt and inefficient on the battlefield. These problems will prevent him from using the spokesman position to expand his base of support. 


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Tied to the Past

Gailani, a man strongly identified with the pre-Communist Afghan regime, probably envisions a post-Communist Afghanistan that would provide for the separation of church and state, a parliamentary form of government, and possibly the participation of erstwhile King Zahir Shah as a figurehead leader. He was a religious adviser to Zahir Shah for nearly 15 years (1956-70), and his wife is the granddaughter of former King Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1919). Gailani has frequently visited the King in exile and in 1984 spearheaded an aborted movement to convene a grand assembly (jirga) to elect Zahir Shah as the figurehead leader of a resistance government-in-exile. 

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Restoring Zahir Shah to power is anathema to fundamentalists--such as resistance leader Gulbiddin--who blame the former monarch for creating conditions that led to the Communist coup and subsequent invasion. They also view Gailani's officials as effete intellectuals who harbor dangerous secular ideas about social reform and modernization. 

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Public Relations Prowess

Gailani's speaking skills, secular outlook, and attire contribute to his effectiveness as a proponent of the Afghan resistance cause in the West. According to the US Consulate in Peshawar and foreign journalists, he appears by far the most intelligent, sophisticated, and elegant of the Peshawar resistance leaders. He has traveled widely--including trips to the United States, Europe, and throughout the Near East--to publicize the resistance cause. [REDACTED]

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Gailani has also shown himself to be an able representative of the resistance in Third World international forums. His January trip to the 16th Foreign Ministers Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was quite effective [REDACTED]

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Islamic Credentials: Impeccable but Tarnished

Gailani's impressive Islamic credentials account for much of his following within Afghanistan. He claims descent from the Prophet Mohammad and, as the head of a "saintly" family and leader of the Qaderi school of Sufism, Gailani claims spiritual authority over six million Afghans--primarily in Paktia, Paktika, and Qandahar Provinces, and the cities of Herat, Jalalabad, and Mazar-e Sharif. An expert on Afghanistan estimates Gailani has a few hundred thousand followers in the areas bordering Pakistan. [REDACTED]

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Despite his respected religious lineage, Gailani is often attacked by fundamentalist resistance leaders and some of his own commanders for insufficient devotion to Islam and an extravagant and self-indulgent lifestyle, including his reputation for preferring designer clothes to traditional Islamic dress. [REDACTED]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Gailani also sullied his reputation by serving for two months in 1978 as religious adviser to Marxist former President Taraki. [Redacted]

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An Inconsistent Showing on the Battlefield

Gailani's military organization, in our view, has performed far worse than its fundamentalist counterparts. It also is among the least respected of the resistance groups, both by other insurgents and by the Pakistanis. [Redacted]

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Gailani has a poorly disciplined military command and is not up to the demanding task of forming one. His appointment of family members to key leadership positions in NIFA, moreover, has been a frequent source of criticism by other resistance leaders. [Redacted]

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Gailani's reportedly corrupt lifestyle and his inability to supply his forces are a large part of the problem, in our view.

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[Redacted]

Nevertheless, Gailani's group has had a few successes.

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[Redacted]

The resistance succeeded in capturing more than half of the city's surrounding outposts and precipitated a major Soviet offensive to relieve the besieged Afghan garrison at Khowst. Gailani's group also claimed responsibility for blowing up 150 power transmission pylons in Paktika Province during a single attack in 1984, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad. [Redacted]

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Prospects

[Redacted] Gailani claimed in early January that the Pakistanis had recently threatened to cut off all military assistance to Gailani by September

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1986. Because of the Gailani group's relatively poor performance, Pakistan currently does not give NIFA as much military aid as other more adept--and mainly fundamentalist--resistance groups. [REDACTED]

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Gailani may also find his group at a disadvantage in obtaining humanitarian assistance. The new head of a recently formed cross-border relief program, for example, may favor the fundamentalist groups at Gailani's and other traditionalists' expense, according to the US Embassy in Peshawar. [REDACTED]

Even with material support, traditionalist resistance leaders like Gailani will often be at a disadvantage in military operations because their following is based primarily among the highly tribalized and fractious Pathans. It is also difficult to establish an effective command structure in groups whose tradition requires that decisions be taken by a village elder, rather than someone trained in modern warfare. Tradition also dictates that each group fight for its region alone--a value system that virtually precludes the establishment of such effective tactics as use of mobile units. [REDACTED]

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Gailani's media skills and knowledge of Arabic are likely to help the alliance gain support for the Afghan resistance internationally during his tenure as spokesman of the seven-party resistance alliance. But because the spokesman position lasts only three months, Gailani, or any other resistance leader, will be unable to use the post as a political stepping stone. [REDACTED]

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More importantly, Gailani's organization and leadership are unappealing to the new breed of resistance commander that is professional, fundamentalist, and has no interest in restoring Afghanistan's traditional elites. Gailani's lack of support among the new commanders and the fundamentalists, in general, will severely circumscribe his chances for a larger role in the resistance. [REDACTED]

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