Directorate of
Intelligence

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Developments in Afghanistan [redacted]

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7 February 1986

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Developments in Afghanistan

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Perspective

Pakistan: Afghanistan Policy Post-Martial-Law

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The lifting of martial law on 30 December probably will not result in early changes in Pakistan's policy on Afghanistan, but a number of potential developments—including more serious problems along the Afghan border, a disappointing US aid package, an economic downturn, or a credible Soviet peace overture—could make it more difficult for Islamabad to sustain public and Cabinet support farther down the road. President Zia and Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan, who remain committed to supporting the resistance, almost certainly will continue to be the principal architects of policy, while Prime Minister Junejo and the National Assembly will probably focus more on domestic policy. Although the extraparliamentary political opposition will continue to target US-Pakistani ties—and by extension Islamabad's policy towards Afghanistan—we believe it will not be in a position to challenge seriously Pakistan's current policy supporting the resistance.

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Internal Pressures Manageable

Civilianization probably will mean a change in the style and form of foreign policy making, if not in the substance. President Zia retains a firm grip on foreign policy and, according to the US Embassy in Islamabad, his commitment to the Afghan resistance is unshaken. Nevertheless, Zia will be careful to portray Junejo as Pakistan's chief executive officer and probably shares the Prime Minister's conviction that Pakistan must more vocally assert its independence in foreign affairs. Zia, as well as other members of the civilian Cabinet, are likely to stress that Pakistan will be the final arbiter of how to implement its policy on Afghanistan.

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We believe Prime Minister Junejo will concentrate on building a government party and power base, but in so doing he is likely to give at least the appearance of distancing himself—and Pakistan—from the United States. His main political vehicle, the Pakistan Muslim League, sets as its goals—albeit largely rhetorical ones—the achievement of Pakistan's economic independence and nonalignment in foreign policy. Junejo's foot-dragging on going public with the formation of Pakistan Welfare International, the organization designed to channel humanitarian aid inside Afghanistan, probably is early evidence of his concern that Pakistan's support for the Afghan resistance remain low key.

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Although civilianization has reduced the prominence of at least one outspoken and influential critic of the policy toward Afghanistan—former North-West Frontier Province Governor Lt. Gen. Fazle Haq—the government almost certainly will have to contend with other politicians and members of the military who object to the policy. In discussions between US and Pakistani officials since the end of martial law, both civilian and military officials have been quite willing to voice

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opinions other than the "party line." Consensus building is likely to quickly become a part of the political process—a development that we believe will both slow down the decisionmaking process and, on occasion, send mixed signals on foreign policy to Washington.

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A Weak Opposition

Pakistan's disorganized opposition, having lost its principal rallying point with the departure of martial law, will continue to see criticism of the US-Pakistani relationship as one of its more promising issues. It will draw on widespread popular suspicions about Washington's steadfastness as an ally to argue that Islamabad's Afghan policy unnecessarily exposes Pakistan to Soviet aggression. More extreme opponents will charge that the United States is using Pakistan as a pawn for a confrontation with Moscow. Some also will argue—the current warming trend in Indo-Pakistani relations notwithstanding—that the real threat to Pakistan's security is India and that involvement in Afghanistan simply weakens Pakistan's ability to defend itself along its eastern border.

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The opposition, in our view, has its work cut out if it is to mobilize public opinion against Afghan policy, however. The most recent poll by Gallup Pakistan in December indicates that most Pakistanis—even supporters of parties that call for direct talks with the Babrak regime—endorse current policy toward Afghanistan. According to the poll, two-thirds of the respondents opposed direct talks even though many had mixed feelings regarding the presence of refugees in Pakistan.

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Looking Ahead

As demonstrated in the December debate on foreign policy in the National Assembly, the government can secure parliamentary support for its Afghan policy with careful lobbying and should be able to continue to do so over the near term.

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We believe, however, that several developments over the longer term could heighten the Assembly's concerns about Afghan policy:

- A sharp rise in Soviet military pressure—such as cross-border raids and air violations—could stimulate parliamentary demands that the regime account for its handling of the Afghan situation.

- A disappointing aid package from Washington. Recent conversations with US officials indicated that Pakistani officials are beginning to accept that US budgetary constraints will mean a post-1987 assistance program that falls well below Islamabad's request. But, unless Islamabad does a thorough job of briefing the National Assembly and preparing public opinion, Pakistanis' dashed expectations will be viewed as another indication of Washington's unreliability as an ally and the folly of current policy toward Afghanistan.

- Economic hardship would result in an outcry against the burden of the Afghan refugees, heighten economic competition between the refugees and local

Pakistanis, and probably escalate social violence in the areas where refugee camps are concentrated. Barring a drought, we believe a sharp economic downturn is unlikely over the next two years, however.

- A credible Soviet peace overture. Serious efforts by Moscow to find a diplomatic solution to the war would be received favorably in Islamabad, in our view. To be acceptable, any peace proposal would have to include at least a partial troop withdrawal, acceptance of the Durand line as the recognized international border, and promises to cease interference in the tribal affairs of Pakistan's border areas.

In our view, any of these developments would make Afghan policy an exploitable issue for the opposition and potentially erode support for Zia's Afghan policy in the Cabinet or among the military.[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

Briefs

Military Activity Slows [redacted] 25X1

Combat activity across Afghanistan was generally light in late December and early January. Combined Soviet-Afghan operations [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] were carried out both north and southwest of Kabul during late December 25X1
and early January. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

Additional combat operations in the Bagram Airfield region occurred in late January involving several armor, motorized rifle and artillery units, [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] Soviet and Afghan troops were involved in combat operations near 25X1
Ghazni from 13-20 January [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1
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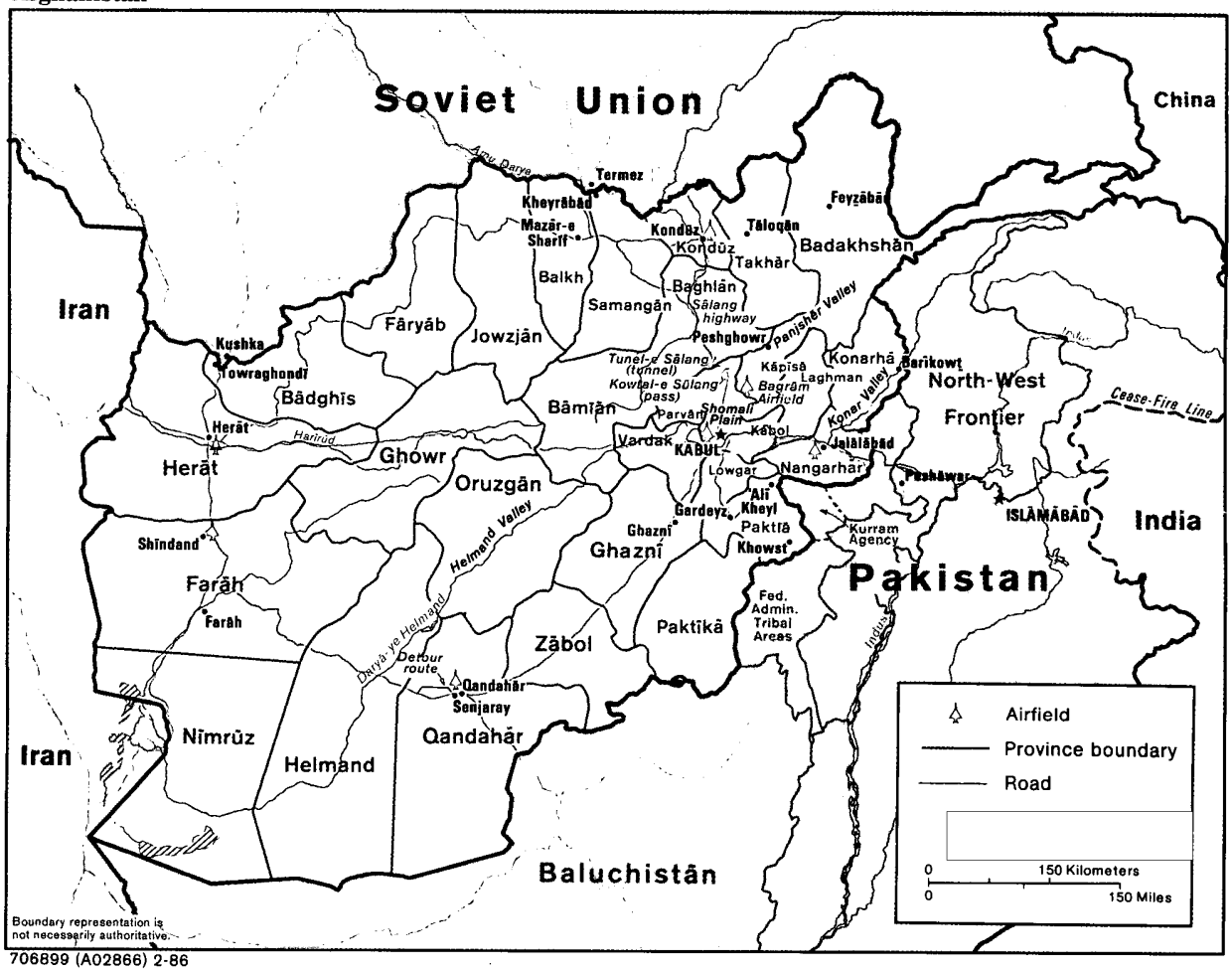
Afghanistan



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Soviets Reroute Traffic Near Qandahar 25X1

the Soviets are rerouting traffic west of Qandahar city to lessen insurgent pressures on Soviet convoys. traffic is detouring off Route 1 between Senjaray and a point approximately 45 kilometers west of the city (see map); no traffic was observed on the portion of Route 1 being bypassed. A Soviet bivouac site and three road security positions were established along this well-traveled detour route between 1982 and mid-1984. Major elements of the two motorized rifle companies housed there were out of garrison probably carrying out road security or sweep operations. The road security positions, built since late 1984, were also unocuppied . A road security unit was also identified about 34 kilometers southeast of Qandahar, suggesting that insurgent pressure on Soviet convoys along that route is also a problem.

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Crackdown on Insurgent Sympathizers 25X1

The Afghan Ministry of State Security (KHAD) and the KGB have arrested military and civilian personnel on suspicion of collaborating with Hizbi Islami and Jamiat-i-Islami insurgent groups,

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Problems With Cross-Border Aid Program 25X1

The US Embassy reports that Islamabad is delaying the official announcement and startup of Pakistan Welfare International, a newly formed clearinghouse for humanitarian assistance inside Afghanistan. In December, the Cabinet voted against the relief agency, after President Zia had approved the plan. Prime Minister Junejo is said to favor the establishment of a nongovernmental agency headed by Afghans that would work with the insurgents and private organizations without an overt Pakistani connection. major Western private voluntary organizations have serious reservations about the official Pakistani organization and may end their humanitarian efforts inside Afghanistan rather than work through it.

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Islamabad is worried that a program that highlights its support for the insurgents might increase Soviet pressure on Pakistan. The new Cabinet, named by Junejo in late January, is expected to reconsider the cross-border relief issue but is unlikely to approve a program as highly visible as Pakistan Welfare International. Private voluntary organizations doubt that Pakistan Welfare International will distribute humanitarian assistance impartially; its new chairman has close ties to fundamentalist resistance leader Gulbuddin's Hizbi Islami faction and is opposed to moderate resistance groups. [redacted] 25X1

Western Journalists Invited to Afghanistan [redacted] 25X1

As part of Kabul's recently intensified campaign to bolster its legitimacy and portray its leadership as benign reformers anxious for peace, the Afghan regime invited journalists from Canada, Japan, the United States, and Western Europe to Kabul in late January. The journalists—the first to be officially invited to Kabul since the war began—met with various government officials, including Babrak Karmal, and visited Jalalabad and a showpiece complex of rural villages outside of Kabul. The government used the visit to display its efforts to broaden popular support by emphasizing Islam, wooing Pashtun and Baluch tribesmen, encouraging "national capitalism," and building a ruling "national front" representing various segments of Afghan society. [redacted] 25X1

According to the US Embassy in Kabul, the Soviet Ambassador to Kabul, Tabeyev, has also been pushing the "national front" thesis, presumably as part of Moscow's peace offensive on Afghanistan. Tabeyev said that Afghanistan would hold parliamentary elections after the Afghan new year (21 March). He claimed that resistance leaders such as Gailani, Mojadeddi, and Rabbani would be welcome in the "front," and hinted that the Soviets were in contact with other resistance figures, without much result. [redacted] 25X1

Soviets Introduce New Artillery Into Afghanistan [redacted] 25X1

The Soviet army is introducing several new types of artillery into Afghanistan,

[redacted] 25X1

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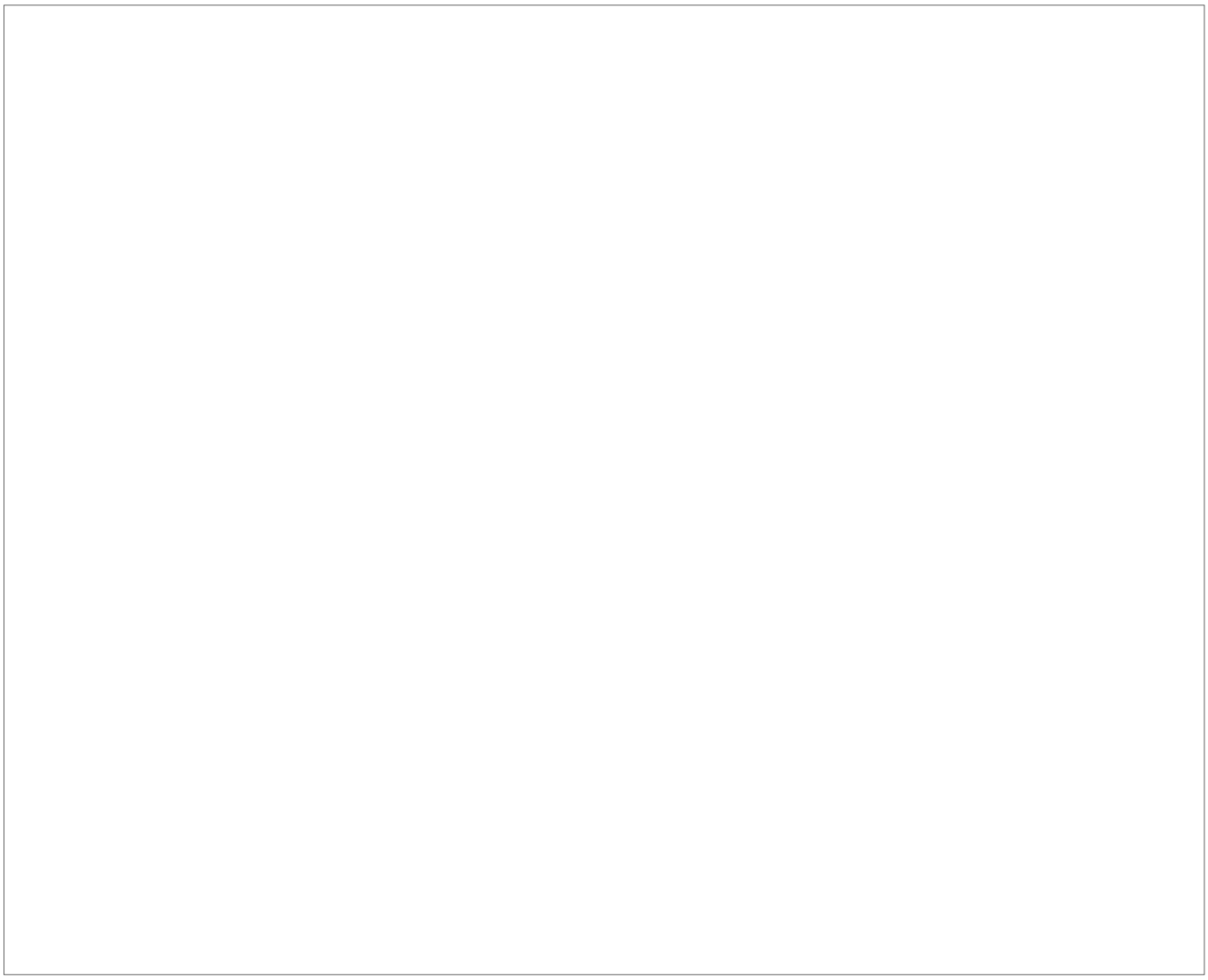

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Resistance Enters Critical Phase [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] with long experience in Afghanistan recently provided his views on the state of the war and the future course of the insurgency. [redacted] 25X1 [redacted] the next two to three years will be critical years for the resistance. If present trends in the quantity and quality of weapons supplies continue, the insurgents could be in a position to turn Afghanistan into the Soviet Union's Vietnam. Moscow would then have to either consider negotiations seriously or significantly escalate its war effort. In any case, Moscow would be forced to factor Afghanistan into every other strategic calculation it makes in the world. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

The resistance faces formidable obstacles, however, in his view. Key indicators of insurgent effectiveness over the next two years will be their ability to coordinate attacks, the assurance of a steady stream of sophisticated weaponry, including better air defense weapons, and a decision by the resistance alliance in Peshawar—admittedly difficult—to expand the political and military authority of the most effective resistance commanders. The resistance should focus its efforts in 1986 on planning a type of "tet offensive"—a series of coordinated attacks countrywide that would have tremendous military and psychological effect. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] the major change in 1985 was the large number of new weapons that resistance groups have received in country. With the exception of effective ground-to-air missiles, the insurgents are much better supplied than in the past. At the same time, the escalation in Soviet military activities since 1984 has had its costs for the resistance—travel is more difficult, casualties are up, civilians are paying a high price, and the resistance has had to move out of many villages to mountain strongholds, further away from their civilian base of support. [redacted] 25X1 25X1 25X1

Soviet Influence on Afghan Education [redacted] 25X1

Soviet education programs in Afghanistan are designed to refashion Afghan society along socialist lines and reduce significantly the dominating influences of tradition and Islam. Through education and other Sovietization measures, the Soviets are attempting to increase support for an unpopular regime and ideology and to create a cadre of pro-Soviet Afghans capable of ruling and maintaining a stable pro-Communist regime in Kabul. In our view, however, it will take many years at best for Soviet indoctrination programs to pay off because of ineffective regime control outside the capital, widespread hostility toward the regime, and the pervasive disinterest in secular education among the largely Muslim Afghan population. [redacted]

Curriculum Changes

The Soviets have been seeking to influence the education of Afghans, either directly or through regime and party programs, since the Marxist takeover in April 1978. During its first month in power, the regime changed curricula—adding material translated directly from Russian texts and some written by Soviet experts, replaced high school principals with members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), and created one new secondary school with Russian as the language of instruction. The Soviets have placed continuing emphasis on curricula, faculty and staff, textbooks, and new education programs in their effort to influence Afghan education. [redacted]

The Soviets have superimposed curricula almost identical to those used in the Soviet Union. The "new educational" system, according to the Kabul press, was needed to accommodate "the need for the sound mental and physical development of students according to the altered socioeconomic, political, and cultural demands of the Afghan society." Afghan officials, with the aid of Soviet advisers in the Ministry of Education, developed 10 curricula designed to implement a unified teaching program, upgrade the level of sociopolitical consciousness of the students and teachers, and train the young generation in a spirit of loyalty to the homeland and the revolution, [redacted] 25X1

New courses and course content have appeared in Afghan elementary, middle, and high schools. In 1980, the regime shortened the existing 12-year preuniversity system to parallel the 10-year system then in use in the USSR. In April 1983, Russian became a required subject in primary and secondary schools. In 1984, the US Embassy in Kabul reported that an Afghan Ministry of Education document prescribed that children in the seventh and subsequent grades study such subjects as "Socialism, The Dream of the World's Working Class," "The Struggle of the Two World Systems (Communism and Capitalism)," and "The Three Principal Forces of the Revolution." Children were also required to take courses on the PDPA, the April Revolution, and Afghanistan's reliance on the support of the USSR. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] in 1984 upper elementary and secondary school classes included such topics as Communist philosophy, scientific socialism, socialistic economy, and biographies of Marx and Lenin. [redacted] 25X1

Textbooks and Materials

Existing texts have also been substantially revised to include pro-Soviet and pro-Communist themes. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] in 1979 Soviet advisers began to replace West German materials with teaching materials translated directly from Russian texts. Soviet Tajiks and Uzbeks translated textbooks into dialects of their respective languages for their ethnic kin in Afghanistan. [redacted] 25X1

Soviet scholars have reinterpreted and rewritten Afghan history to bring it in line with Marxist theory for new Afghan textbooks. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] Soviet scholars drafted a new history of 25X1

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Soviet Education Strategies

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To implement their education goals in Afghanistan, we believe the Soviets are using local languages, blocking development of Afghan nationalism, and undercutting the traditionally strong role of Islam.

Using Language. *As they did in Muslim areas of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviets are encouraging the use of native languages in education programs. We believe the Soviets expect that the preservation of ethnic identity through language will fragment Afghan society, set back the development of Afghan nationalism, and eventually lead to a wider use of Russian, easing the path for further assimilation of Afghans into Soviet culture. Local languages—including Uzbeki, Turkmen, and Baluchi—are now languages of instruction from the first grade. Students learn one of two main Afghan languages—Dari is favored over Pushtu—later on. Literacy course materials reportedly are available in regional languages.*

Russian language training is widely incorporated into all levels of education. Many departments of Kabul University require students to take Russian. A source of the US Embassy in Kabul reported that in 1982 Russian language training started in the first grade in some experimental schools.

all Russian language teachers are Russians, and each student receives one hour of Russian language instruction each day.

The regime has severely curtailed—and in many schools eliminated—classes in foreign languages other than Russian. Russian has replaced English as the foreign language taught in elementary schools,

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by 1984 English, French, and Turkish were dropped from the foreign languages department. A source of the US Embassy in Kabul reported that the regime dropped the study of Arabic in secondary schools by 1982.

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Playing Down Islam. *The Soviets and the regime have also attempted to reduce the traditionally strong role of Islam in the schools, although Babrak and his colleagues pay vigorous lipservice to the importance of Islam. The regime has closed many schools operated by mullahs and reduced the number of hours of Islamic instruction in the secular schools. An excerpt from a paper presented at a teaching conference in Kabul in 1983 pointed out that social science teachers in Afghanistan must overcome Islam and direct youth to study Marxism-Leninism.*

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Soviet political training has replaced theological courses in the secondary schools, according to a source of the US Embassy in Kabul. Theology, once taught four times per week at the Kabul Military School, has been decreased to one hour per week and does not include study of the Koran.

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religion is being taught in some of the lower grades, but by Communist-trained and -controlled officials.

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Afghanistan and translated it into several Afghan languages. This history stresses two themes: that Afghanistan has been dominated by the struggle of the working classes against imperialism and that the country's independence is largely owed to the "fraternal assistance" of the Soviet Union. An eighth-grade history book published in 1984 focuses heavily on the USSR and the April Revolution, giving only passing and mostly unfavorable attention to earlier periods of Afghan history.

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Faculty and Staff

Since April 1978, the Soviets have rapidly moved reliable personnel into the educational system in Afghanistan. A large number of Soviet advisers initially took posts in the Ministry of Education and, following the 1979 invasion, were assigned to the Ministry's Curriculum and Textbook Department, according to press accounts. Soviet personnel in the Ministry approve all important policies and help design and implement new curricula. A Soviet Uzbek heads the recently created Uzbek Department of the Afghan Ministry of Education, according to a Western journalist.

Soviet teachers, instructors, and advisers now play key roles in Afghan education. We believe several hundred Soviets are advising or teaching in Afghan schools. Soviets teach most of the Russian language courses and head political and social education departments in secondary schools, ensuring that instruction is based on Marxist-Leninist theory.

New Programs for Children

The Babrak Karmal regime has initiated new education programs in day-care centers, nurseries, and kindergartens, most of them built in Kabul since the Communist takeover, according to jounalistic accounts. Many are associated with workplaces, such as the Kabul bus institute where the regime established a nursery for children below three years of age and a kindergarten for three- to six-year-olds. the Soviet-administered activities in a Kabul nursery for 1,200 children amount to brainwashing.

Low enrollments in areas where regime schools exist reduce the impact of the indoctrination program, in our view. In Kabul, probably the most secure city, we estimate that less than 25 percent of eligible first graders are enrolled. The hundreds of thousands of rural Afghans who have migrated to Kabul usually do not send their children to school. Some parents who view education favorably are reluctant to enroll children because they fear insurgent reprisals; others resent the regime's indoctrination efforts. 25X1

Afghan Students in the Soviet Union

In our judgment, extensive Soviet programs to train and indoctrinate Afghans by sending them to the USSR for schooling have produced limited, and sometimes counterproductive, results. 25X1
relations 25X1
between Soviet citizens and Afghans have deteriorated since 1978; 25X1
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US Embassy sources indicate that most Afghans, like other Third World students trained in the USSR, are antagonized by Soviet prejudices against non-Europeans and the boorishness of many Soviet officials. 25X1
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we 25X1
estimate that some 10,000 Afghans, including some 25X1
2,000 military personnel, annually attend Soviet institutions for training and education. The Soviets also emphasize political training courses for party members, midlevel regime officials, teachers, 25X1
administrators, and foreign trade officials, 25X1
In 1984, the Kabul press reported 25X1
that Afghans were attending 66 educational institutions in 24 locations in the Soviet Union. 25X1
the majority of facilities are in 25X1
Tashkent, Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. Approximately 20 percent of the Afghans studying in the USSR are developed into informants of the Afghan intelligence service (KHAD), 25X1
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The Soviets and regime have recently emphasized sending Afghans who are very young—seven to nine 25X1
years old—for up to a decade of instruction in the USSR. Babrak Karmal cited the need for sending thousands of youth to obtain training abroad, particularly in "friendly countries," in 1985. 25X1
during the last four 25X1
months of 1984, more than 700 youths departed Kabul for Tashkent, and another 25X1

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The above photo, taken in 1981, shows Afghan children at the Kabul Airport awaiting their departure to the Soviet Union for training.

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300 left for the USSR the following August. Most of these students come from Kabol and Nangarhar Province and are children of party members or come from the regime-controlled orphanages.

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The regime, probably realizing the need for greater influence in the rural areas, approved a plan in early 1985 to send to the USSR some 600 youth from Afghan tribes near the Pakistani border and Shia minority groups in central Afghanistan,

More than 15 percent of Afghan students enrolled in higher and technical education attended schools in the USSR in 1982, according to regime statistics and our estimates. Most of these seek higher and technical education in the USSR to escape military service and insurgent reprisals; a smaller number go because they are party members and expect better jobs and salaries when they return, They receive a higher quality education—especially in medical and technical fields, and enjoy a higher standard of living than in Afghanistan.

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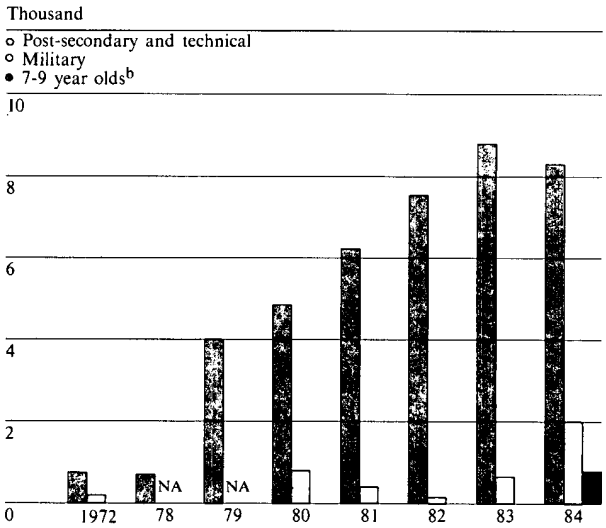
Afghan Students in the USSR, 1972-84[a]



[a] The figures for post-secondary and technical students are an estimate of full-time students in the USSR at the end of each year. The figures for military students are reported departures for training in the USSR.
[b] The seven to nine year olds left in 1984 for 10 years of schooling in the USSR.

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The regime has more than enough applicants for the approximately 3,000 scholarships reportedly available each year for study in the USSR. Afghans complain that only students well connected to the regime get the eagerly sought scholarships to Eastern Europe, mainly Czechoslovakia and Poland. The East Europeans probably grant several hundred each year.

A Long Road Ahead

In our view, it will take many years, perhaps more than a generation, for the Soviet effort to produce significant changes in Afghan attitudes through education and indoctrination. Lack of security in most of the country limits both the extent and effectiveness of the Soviet and regime education effort to a few areas, mainly the largest cities. Many, if not most, Afghans who are being trained in the USSR will probably reject Soviet values either because of bad personal experiences with Soviet citizens or simply because Soviet values conflict with Afghan traditions.

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In our view, the Soviets expect significant results from their efforts only after the generation that is now training begins functioning in the middle and upper echelons of the Afghan Government. Accordingly, they will continue to pursue their indoctrination of Afghans through education—either directly or through the regime and party apparatus. The Soviets almost certainly realize they are currently making little progress toward their goal of building an ideologically motivated and effective cadre. We believe Soviet experience in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Mongolia gives the current leadership hope that it can in the long term attract and train a core of opportunists and ideologues willing to do their bidding.

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We expect the regime to increase its efforts to entice and bribe tribes and local groups in rural areas to participate in education/indoctrination programs. It is our view that any gains in these rural areas would only be temporary, however. Traditional Afghan values—including the predominance of local and tribal concerns, distrust of any central government, Islamic faith, deep-seated anti-Communism, and the importance of vengeance—all work against Soviet and regime success.

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Soviet Heliborne Assault Operations in Afghanistan [redacted] 25X1

Heliborne assaults play a significant role in Soviet operations in Afghanistan. The mobility and versatility of helicopters allow Soviet and Afghan forces to achieve surprise, improve mobility, and overcome some of the obstacles caused by difficult terrain. The Soviets, moreover, are improving their tactical proficiency and—particularly this past year—have been increasing the number and size of heliborne assault operations. Raids by smaller heliborne teams, often composed of Special Purpose Forces (Spetsnaz), are also now a key part of Soviet attempts to interdict insurgent supplies coming from Pakistan. [redacted]

Heliborne assaults have succeeded in keeping the insurgents off balance, but have not allowed the Soviets to inflict large-scale insurgent casualties or gain decisive victories. Although effective air assault operations in a guerrilla warfare environment are difficult under the best of circumstances, the development of effective air assault tactics in Afghanistan is hampered by a standard Soviet doctrine for assault operations—designed for a war in Europe—that places more emphasis on air support for ground forces than independent air assaults. We believe better results would also require overcoming longstanding problems with intelligence and command and control, increasing the tempo of combined air assault and ground force operations, and more sophisticated tactics (including night assaults) from smaller units. If the increased level of air assault activity is to be sustained, moreover, the Soviets may have to add more helicopters and troops. [redacted]

Air Assault Operations

The Soviets use MI-8 helicopters to transport air assault troops and MI-24 attack helicopters to provide fire support before and during assault landings. Helicopter regiments and squadrons are based at six major airfields throughout Afghanistan—Konduz, Bagram, Kabul, Jalalabad, Qandahar, and Shindand—with permanent detachments at Feyzabad and Ghazni. When required to conduct a larger operation, helicopters from various units will come under the operational control of one commander. [redacted] 25X1

Elements of all Soviet ground force units in Afghanistan have taken part in helicopter assaults. However, the majority of air assaults are conducted by specialized units trained and equipped for air assault operations, rather than by regular motorized-rifle units. These specialized forces constitute over 12,000 men out of the estimated 42,000 combat troops in Afghanistan and include airborne, air assault, and Spetsnaz units. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

At the start of the war, the Soviets clearly faced problems in arriving at successful assault tactics and in command and control. The insurgents were nevertheless often impressed with the quality of assault forces, who they distinguished from run-of-the-mill Soviet soldiers. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

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MI-8 (Hip): Primary troop transport for air assaults . . . also used for search-and-rescue, logistic support, artillery spotting . . . usually carries guns and rocket pods . . . can carry up to 24 troops, but during assaults typically carries 5 to 15 . . . currently over 130 in Afghanistan.

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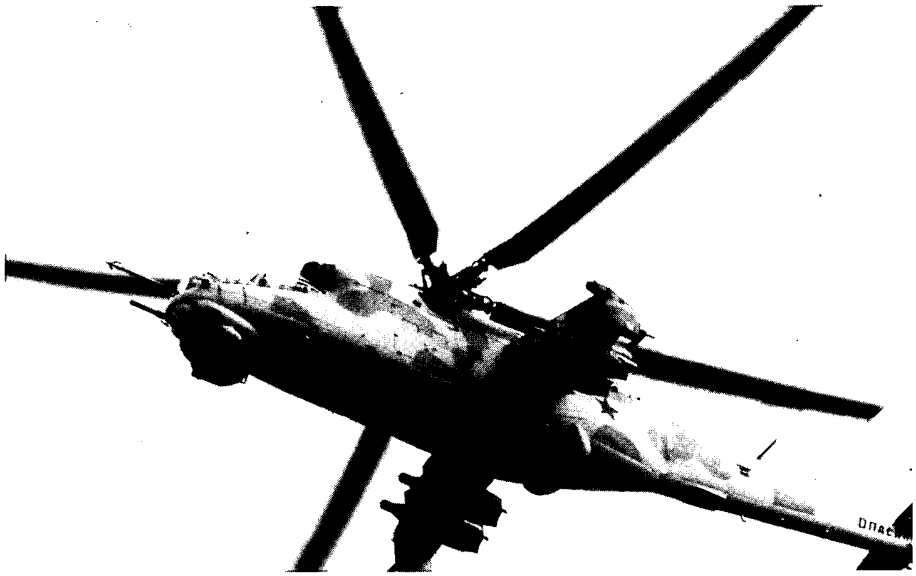
MI-24 (Hind): Provides fire support before and during air assaults . . . also escorts logistic and search-and-rescue flights . . . can carry troops but rarely does . . . armament includes mixture of 12.7-mm and 30-mm gun, 57- and 80-mm rockets, AT-3 and AT-6 antitank missiles . . . modifications for Afghanistan include infrared countermeasures, heavier armor . . . currently almost 120 in Afghanistan.



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MI-6 (Hook): Largest helicopter in Afghanistan . . . size and poor maneuverability make it easy target . . . vulnerability plus poor performance at higher altitudes and temperatures keep it from being used in assaults . . . follow-on MI-26 more capable, but not deployed in Afghanistan . . . currently 50 in Afghanistan.

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The Konar Offensive. Fighting in the Konar Valley in May–June 1985 demonstrated a new level of Soviet proficiency in conducting air assaults. While ground units moved up the main valley, the assault forces swept the ridges and tributary valleys in an effort to trap the insurgents. A key feature of the assault operations, was the use of SU-25s and 220-mm multiple rocket launchers to sow extensive minefields to prevent insurgents from escaping.

the Soviets were unable to translate their tactical successes into a decisive victory. the insurgents took only light casualties and were able to reassert their control over the valley quickly after the Soviets withdrew. The Soviet advance was characterized as slow and methodical, some heliborne units dropped onto exposed positions were surrounded and killed, and even Spetsnaz troops reportedly took heavy casualties.

The Panjsher. Soviet use of heliborne assaults in the Panjsher Valley had mixed success last year. They showed they can launch air assaults in the Valley with little warning but, as in the Konar, have not solved the problem of forcing the insurgents to stand and fight. The Soviets, moreover, were unable to mount successful air assaults to rescue prisoners, following the insurgent capture of the Afghan garrison at Peshghowr last June.

Elsewhere. Air assaults in other parts of the country have continued at varying levels of intensity. In western Afghanistan, assault operations appear to be smaller and less frequent than in the east. There is only a single helicopter squadron based in the Farah-Herat region: we believe the low and flat terrain allows armor and support vehicles wider scope than in the mountainous east, and may account for the lower level of air assault operations.

In eastern and southern Afghanistan, the increase and redeployment of Spetsnaz battalions early in 1985 resulted in an increase in small air assaults against insurgent convoys and other targets of opportunity. Spetsnaz groups typically operate in small teams, from 20 to 25 men, to conduct ambushes and raids and collect intelligence. the Soviets have been conducting more attacks, many featuring helicopter landings, against insurgent supply routes.

Problems With Air Assault Operations

Although the nature of guerrilla operations makes air assault operations difficult under the best of circumstances, we believe the overriding reason for the mixed results of Soviet air assault operations is the absence of a well-developed Soviet counterinsurgency strategy. Soviet heliborne assault units are trained and organized primarily to seize key enemy positions and terrain features, such as river crossings, in Europe, but the most important aim of air assault operations is to find, fix, and destroy insurgent groups and their leaders. The Soviets have made only minor adjustments to tactics and force structure in Afghanistan, moreover, and have failed to develop a strategy emphasizing independent heliborne assault operations. Consequently, Soviet commanders are unwilling to use large air assault forces without direct support by ground units, and air operations develop too slowly to catch the insurgents by surprise. In addition, air assault units—despite their elite nature—are not trained for night attacks and do not have the intimate knowledge of local terrain and insurgent tactics needed to exploit fully their mobility and firepower.

These basic deficiencies are compounded by a host of other problems that plague the Soviet military in Afghanistan:

- Difficult terrain and severe weather.
- Command and control failures, many due to equipment problems, especially the lack of

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compatibility between different radios; heavy centralization of control also sometimes leads to conflicting commands and detailed tactical direction by officers not on the scene.

- Poor leadership. A desire to avoid casualties inhibits aggressive leadership. Junior officers often fail to concentrate units or maintain vigilance in the field.

- Lack of heavy lift prevents artillery firebases from relocating quickly and restricts their use to positions on or near major roads. Operations tend to be limited to areas already within artillery range, and airpower must be employed even more intensively to make up for lack of organic firepower.

- Inadequate reconnaissance and intelligence. Delays in processing and disseminating intelligence reduce the surprise capability of assault forces.

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Prospects

We believe the increase in Soviet air assaults is part of a general increase in operations, prompted by a combination of more aggressive leadership from the new commander of the Southern Theatre of Military Operations, Soviet Army General Zaytsev, and more insurgent activity. The Soviets probably view air assaults, usually in conjunction with ground forces, as the most effective way to keep the insurgents off balance and maximize the utility of their limited number of combat troops. Soviet satisfaction with the Konar operation, moreover, suggests that they will continue to perform large-scale air assault operations of this type, most likely in areas where the concentration of insurgent forces is high, such as the Panjsher and Konar Valleys, in Paktia Province between Gardeyz, Ali Kheyl, and Khowst, or possibly in the Helmand Valley.

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A substantial increase in air assault activity would require augmenting Soviet assault forces. We believe more transport and attack helicopters would be needed. The Soviets may also choose to add air assault units or employ regular motorized rifle troops more often in assault landings.

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Soviet Logistics in Afghanistan 25X1

Soviet logistic operations in Afghanistan suffer greatly from local physical constraints and poor planning. Increased Soviet activity combined with Afghanistan's limited road network and the absence of a railroad produce considerable congestion on existing roads and make supply convoys vulnerable to resistance attacks. The Kowtal-e Salang (Salang Pass) and the Tunel-e Salang (Salang Tunnel), in particular, are major bottlenecks on the only ground line of communication between the transshipment facilities at Kheyrabad and the majority of Soviet forces. But we believe many of the Soviet logistic deficiencies observed in Afghanistan would reappear in other combat environments, even those with a much better logistic infrastructure, because of poor command and control.

Constructing Logistic Facilities

To facilitate the movement of supplies into Afghanistan after the invasion, the Soviets began constructing permanent bridges across the Amu Darya river, and transshipment points at Kheyrabad and Towraghondi. Construction of a railroad/highway bridge across the Amu Darya river from Ayvadzh to a point north of Kholm was completed in May 1980. A preexisting railroad/highway bridge also crosses the Kushka river near Kushka, providing access to the Towraghondi transshipment point in northwestern Afghanistan.

Between 1980 and 1981, the Soviet and Afghan regime engaged in extensive construction of logistic facilities along the main roads. The major Soviet supply depot was built at Pol-e Khomri and divisional depots were established at Kabul, Bagram, Konduz, and Shindand. Supply depots were also established at the major airfields in Kabul, Bagram, Qandahar, Shindand, and Herat. Storage facilities were built at most regiment and brigade headquarters, and ammunition and petroleum, oil, and lubricant (POL) storage facilities at major airfields in the Turkestan Military District were expanded. Along the eastern route, two tactical pipelines, probably for aviation and diesel fuel, were completed between Termez and Pol-e Khomri by mid-1980; an extension to Bagram was completed in 1982. In western Afghanistan a pipeline carrying both aviation and diesel fuel was completed from Kushka to Shindand by late 1984. Other facilities vital to the logistic effort—such as helipads, runways, and airfields—were upgraded or built 25X1

Hard surface roads in Afghanistan are few in number and low in capacity. The main Soviet lines of communication were built by the Soviets in the late 1970s. In western Afghanistan, a paved road leads from the Towraghondi transshipment point south to Herat, Shindand, and Qandahar. In eastern Afghanistan, a paved road leads from the Kheyrabad transshipment point south to Pol-e Khomri, then over the Salang Pass to Kabul and Qandahar (see table). 25X1

Logistic Operations

Until the Soviet surface logistic system became well established, most supplies were transported to Afghanistan and in country by Military Transport Aviation (VTA). Prior to the invasion, in June 1979, VTA deployed eight AN-12 medium transports to Bagram Airfield; these remain the core of an in-country net linking the major airbases in Afghanistan. 25X1

Today both ground and air transport assets are utilized extensively for transporting supplies into and within Afghanistan. Many supplies from the USSR are delivered to the transshipment points by rail and transported to various depots and units by ground 25X1

Selected Afghan Routes

Route	Distance *(kilometers)*	Surface Type/ Condition	Surface Width *(meters)*	Shoulder Width *(meters)*	Terrain	Remarks
Jeyretan-Na'ebabad	55	Bituminous/ good	7.3	1-2	Undulating	800-meter hwy/RR bridge across the Amu Darya river. Route serves the Kheyrabad rail-to-road transshipment point.
Na'ebabad-Pol-e Khomri	200	Bituminous/ fair	7.3	1-2	Mountainous	
Shir Khan-Kabul Shir Khan/Pol-e Khomri Pol-e Khomri/Kabul	425 248 177	Bituminous/ fair	6-7	1-2	Mountainous	Ferry across Amu Darya river between USSR border and Shir Khan. Forty-five bridges, one tunnel, and 20 galleries on this route. Longest bridge, 145 m; the Salang Tunnel is 2.67 km long.
Kabul-Pakistan border near Towr Kham Kabul/Sarowbi Sarowbi/border	275 71 204	Bituminous/ good	6.4-7.2	1-2	Undulating to mountainous	Route leads to Khyber Pass; seven tunnels along route.
Kabul-Qandahar	525	Bituminous/ fair	6.4-7.2	1-2	Hilly	
Konduz-Kholm	110	Earth/poor	4.2-9.1	None	Undulating to hilly	
Golbahar-Sarowbi	105	Gravel/poor	6.7	None	Hilly	
Towraghondi-Qandahar Towraghondi/Herat Herat/Qandahar	715 115 600	Bituminous concrete/good Concrete/ good	Over 7.2 6.4-7.2	0-1 1-2	Hilly Hilly to flat	

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convoys. Some supplies reportedly are trucked in from Ayvadzh, USSR, along the eastern route. 25X1 25X1 25X1

Because airlift is limited in capacity and is more expensive than ground resupply, we believe it has made a much smaller quantitative contribution than ground transport to the overall logistic picture. Nevertheless, the speedy response time of heliborne and fixed-wing airlift assets to tactical requirements has made them vital to the Soviet logistic effort. 25X1 25X1 25X1

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Bottlenecks

The construction of the major 40th Army supply depot at Pol-e Khomri was a major error on the part of Soviet logisticians, in our view. Most supplies both from the USSR to Kabul and to areas of major Soviet combat operations in eastern Afghanistan must pass through bottlenecks that leave supply convoys vulnerable to insurgent ambush:

- The roads leading south from Jeyretan and Shir Khan join just north of Pol-e Khomri and a single road continues south to Kabul.
- The route from Shir Khan to Kabul has 45 bridges, 20 galleries, and the important tunnel at the Salang Pass.

The Salang Tunnel is the major choke point along this route and has been the site of numerous insurgent ambushes. Soviet and Afghan regime security measures, moreover, limit traffic to a one-way flow, alternating direction daily.

The Soviets apparently recognize the problems associated with locating their major supply depot at Pol-e Khomri. They have been taking steps, for example, to locate ammunition stocks elsewhere.

As the number of ground convoys increased, logistic routes became congested. By mid-1982, road traffic throughout Afghanistan averaged between 30 and 35 columns daily, totaling 1,350 to 1,500 vehicles. Choke points along the Kabul-Termez highway, like the Salang Tunnel, rapidly became even more of a problem.

To control the stepped-up flow, in 1982 the Soviets established nine traffic control posts along the main highway routes leading from Kabul to Termez, Feyzabad, Gardeyz, Jalalabad, and probably Ghazni, but these have had little success, in our view.

Coping With Convoy Attacks

Successful rebel attacks against supply convoys have been a serious problem for the Soviets, who have had to allocate more and more resources to convoy security. Convoys are not allowed to move without an escort and are sometimes delayed for days. Security measures have generally consisted of the use of troop trucks, armored personnel vehicles carrying security forces, and tanks dispersed throughout the line, but, wheeled vehicles, which are more effective against ambushes and generally permit the convoy to travel at greater speeds, are being employed more frequently in place of tanks and tracked vehicles. In addition, helicopters are frequently used for added security and reconnaissance.

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Beginning in late 1981, the Soviets added 25X1 *independent security battalions to their forces in Afghanistan in an effort to relieve combat elements from road and installation security duties. The role of the security battalions, however, has been generally limited to securing fixed installations.* 25X1 *Motorized rifle battalions continue to be assigned to convoy security duties.* 25X1

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The Supply Scorecard

Ammunition. Overall the supply of munitions is adequate, despite spot shortages. Much of the ammunition for ground forces is delivered to Afghanistan by rail and then transported to depots 25X1 25X1

However, helicopters and transport aircraft frequently are used for resupply within the country, especially to alleviate spot shortages. The Soviets maintain munitions depots at the two main transshipment points, the major airfields, the 40th Army logistic 25X1 25X1

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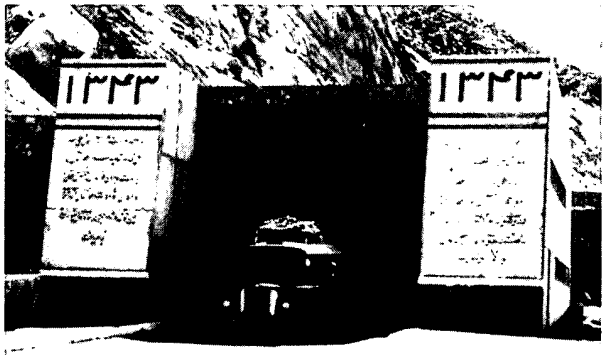
The Salang Pass and Tunnel:
A Key Link in the Logistic Chain



The south entrance to the Salang Tunnel and its snow gallery.

The Do Shaka Highway Tunnel Kowtal-e Salang, "The Salang Pass Tunnel," is located on the strategic north-south route that connects the ferry crossing at Shir Khan and the major Soviet transshipment center at Jeyretan with the Afghan capital of Kabul. This highway is a vital link between the Soviet Union and its forces and bases in eastern Afghanistan, including the headquarters of the 40th Army in Kabul. The tunnel, for which there is no bypass, sits midway on the only route leading to the hub of all Soviet military operations in the area. The Soviet tactical POL pipeline, extended in 1982 from Pol-e Khomri to Bagram, parallels the route through the tunnel.

The tunnel is a single-bore, stone-lined structure, approximately 2,675 meters long, 7.6 meters wide, and 5.2 meters high, with footpaths on each side of the roadway. The extreme weather conditions and its high elevation required the construction of a 410-meter-long gallery at the tunnel's south entrance for protection against avalanches, rockslides, and snowstorms. Nineteen other galleries, including one 1,975 meters long immediately north of the tunnel, are located along this primary highway.

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Keeping the tunnel and pass open has been a major challenge to both the Soviet forces and the members of the conscripted Afghan Labor Corps. Blizzards and snowstorms that may occur at any time during the year, severe flooding in the spring, and rock and debris slides are the main natural obstacles to keeping the route open year round. Soviet convoys in the area, moreover, have been a favorite target of the insurgents. The rugged mountainous terrain affords the attackers ideal protection while the convoys are extremely vulnerable.

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Destruction or closure of the tunnel for an extended period would halt all ground transport of forces and supplies from the northeast. This would include POL because of the pipeline running through the tunnel. There are no railroads in Afghanistan and, with the closure of the Salang Tunnel, the Soviets would have to rely on air transport—a more expensive and less efficient method.

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facility in Pol-e Khomri,

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POL. POL supplies have been a serious problem for the Soviets and the Afghan regime, with shortages occasionally affecting combat operations. Resistance sabotage is the major problem effecting smooth operation of the pipelines. Insurgent attacks to obtain

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fuel supplies and disrupt the fuel flow have caused the loss of thousands of gallons of fuel and rendered the pipelines inoperative for short periods of time. They occasionally cause a curtailment of air operations and make fuel resupply to both air and ground units more cumbersome. After destroying a section of the pipeline, the resistance frequently withdraws to positions from which they can ambush Soviet repair teams.

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The combined Soviet-Afghan offensive in the Konar Valley in May-June 1985 demonstrates poor Soviet logistic planning and operation during a period of sustained combat.

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Medical and Sanitation Supplies. The Soviets are also experiencing some problems with medical supplies. The patient load in Afghanistan is straining medical supply levels and there have been serious shortages of surgical materials and pharmaceuticals, as well as spot shortages of bed linens and clothing. The Soviets maintain at least seven field hospitals in Afghanistan at airfields and major deployment areas and they have continued to expand and upgrade these facilities. They also maintain a medical supply depot in Pol-e Khomri.

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Conclusion

The Soviet logistic system in Afghanistan has experienced recurring deficiencies, limiting the number and scope of military operations that the Soviets can conduct. Major problems have been the result of mismanagement, shortage of motor transport, and difficulties in maintaining route security. Such logistic difficulties have not shown up in exercises or rear-service training, probably because these activities do not adequately simulate real wartime conditions.

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