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MID Military Intelligence Digest



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Pages i, ii, 1-6 and 9-17 are non-responsive
and are not included



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Strategy and Resources

Net Assessments, Force Structure Changes, Future Trends/Estimates, Regional Overviews, Defense Economics/Military Budgets

Afghanistan: Stalemate Continues

(C) The Taliban's advance in the east has halted for now, and Interim President Rabbani retains control of Kabul. However, few prospects exist for long-term stability in Afghanistan. The UN, although marginalized, still may play a role if it is willing to lower its expectations.

(C) Kabul is fairly quiet after the recent victories of Masood, Rabbani's military commander, over the Shia Hezb-i-Wahdat and the Sunni ultrafundamentalist Taliban. Government forces have driven the Taliban well to the south and west of the capital.

(C) The defeat of the Taliban was not surprising; the group's forces were advancing away from the Pashtun provinces that had welcomed them and toward the strongholds of the more secular Kabulis and ethnic Tajiks, who disagreed with the new militia's strict orthodoxy. Moreover, the Taliban, untested in major combat, were fighting a well-trained, well-equipped army that knew the terrain well. Reports from Afghanistan indicate that troops from other factions assisted Masood's forces, probably reflecting the widespread fear that the Taliban, had its forces captured Kabul, would have been willing to share power with no one.

(C) Elsewhere, the Taliban is having some success in Farah and Herat against Rabbani's ally Ismael Khan. Rabbani's foe in the north, Uzbek leader Dostam, has suffered defeats by Masood's forces in Samangan, Konduz, and Faryab Provinces, and Kabul radio has reported large numbers of defections from Dostam's units.

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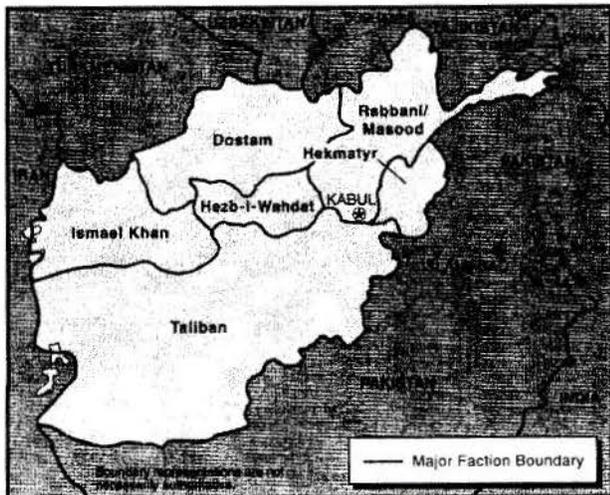
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“Rabbani, able to bargain hard, has snubbed the UN and is staying in place for now.”

(b)(2), (b)(6)