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Afghanistan: Mujahedin Attacks on Kabul

the Pakistanis had recently increased the supply of arms not just to Hekmatyar, but also to the other main Mujahedin groups. Their aim was to co-ordinate a major attack on Kabul. CIA expected the offensive to begin before the end of this month and - as usual - claim to have some hopes that it might succeed in bringing down Najibullah.

2. Last Friday the Mujahedin launched a two-pronged attack on Kabul. We have reliable intelligence that at least one Mujahedin group was expecting a coup against the régime that day. In the event, however, nothing appears to have happened and Najibullah's forces seem to have successfully repulsed the offensive, which was not large-scale. Hekmatyar has reportedly denied that this was the start of the major attack he had been predicting.

3. Even if the Mujahedin do succeed in mounting a major assault on Kabul before winter sets in, victory is unlikely to come easily. There are three main reasons for this. First, although Mujahedin military activity has increased in a few areas (and on 3 October the commander of a provincial capital went over to them) the régime's forces are not badly overstretched; secondly, in Kabul itself Najibullah has a large garrison, air power and a well-prepared and extensive defensive perimeter; and thirdly, there is the possibility of fighting breaking out within the Mujahedin because the other groups will probably want

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to prevent Hekmatyar seizing Kabul. A coup against Najibullah would, however, improve Hekmatyar's chances of success.

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