

war

ilian support given to the resistance fighters, the Soviets now employ helicopter gunship assaults in a campaign to crush aid to the rebels. This Soviet campaign has forced the rural population into the towns and the rebels into the hills, denying the rebels food, shelter and information. These tactics were also employed in this past summer's Soviet offensive. Unfortunately, "The target of this unprecedented show of force was not so much the rebels as the civilians, who have apparently been lending them support." (Time, May 7/84).
 Less than 3 months ago two deserters from the Red Army des-

of Afghanistan have the Soviets succeeded in terrorizing the local population to prevent their helping the guerrillas.
 Nevertheless, the Soviet Army is not without its weaknesses. Very poor morale is probably their greatest handicap. Explained 19-year-old Russian defector Nikolai Ryshkov, "We were told we would be defending the southern part of the Soviet Union and would be facing American and Chinese mercenaries. When I arrived, my opinion changed. I didn't see any mercenaries - only Mujahideen (rebels) and Afghan people... The officers can't take any leave, they don't get

and small children would be put in a room and grenades."

cribed in London, England, "how they were forced to shoot villagers and kill women and children while serving in Afghanistan..." Said Igor Rykov, aged 21, "The officer would decide to have a village searched and if it was found it contained a single bullet, the officer would say, 'This is a bandit village. It must be destroyed.' The men and young boys would be shot and the women and small children would be put in a separate room and killed with grenades." Igor Rykov went on to explain how "He had seen five villages of between 100 and 200 people each, destroyed in this way in Kandahar province. Many more had been destroyed by air attacks." (The Times, June 28/84).
 However, only in some regions

any vodka and they take it out on the privates. In my unit, two soldiers committed suicide because they couldn't take the pressure anymore." (Edmonton Journal, Dec. 6/83).
 Additional difficulties the Soviets encounter include "Their unfamiliarity with the terrain and the lack of any specialized training in guerrilla warfare. The highly centralized, rigidly controlled Soviet armed forces, primarily trained for large-scale offensive operations in Europe, have found it very difficult to adjust to hit-and-run conflict in the adverse conditions prevailing in Afghanistan." (Asian Survey, April/84).



Afghan rebels stand atop a captured Soviet-built armored vehicle

Future Prospects

The outcome of the war in Afghanistan will undoubtedly have a tremendous impact not only for Afghanistan and the surrounding regions, but also for the USSR and the Western World.

Should the Afghan Mujahideen unify and receive substantially more weapons, a rebel victory is not entirely out of the question. As feared by the Soviet communist government, such a victory could very well spark renewed resistance against Soviet rule within the once-sovereign Moslem states to the north of Afghanistan.

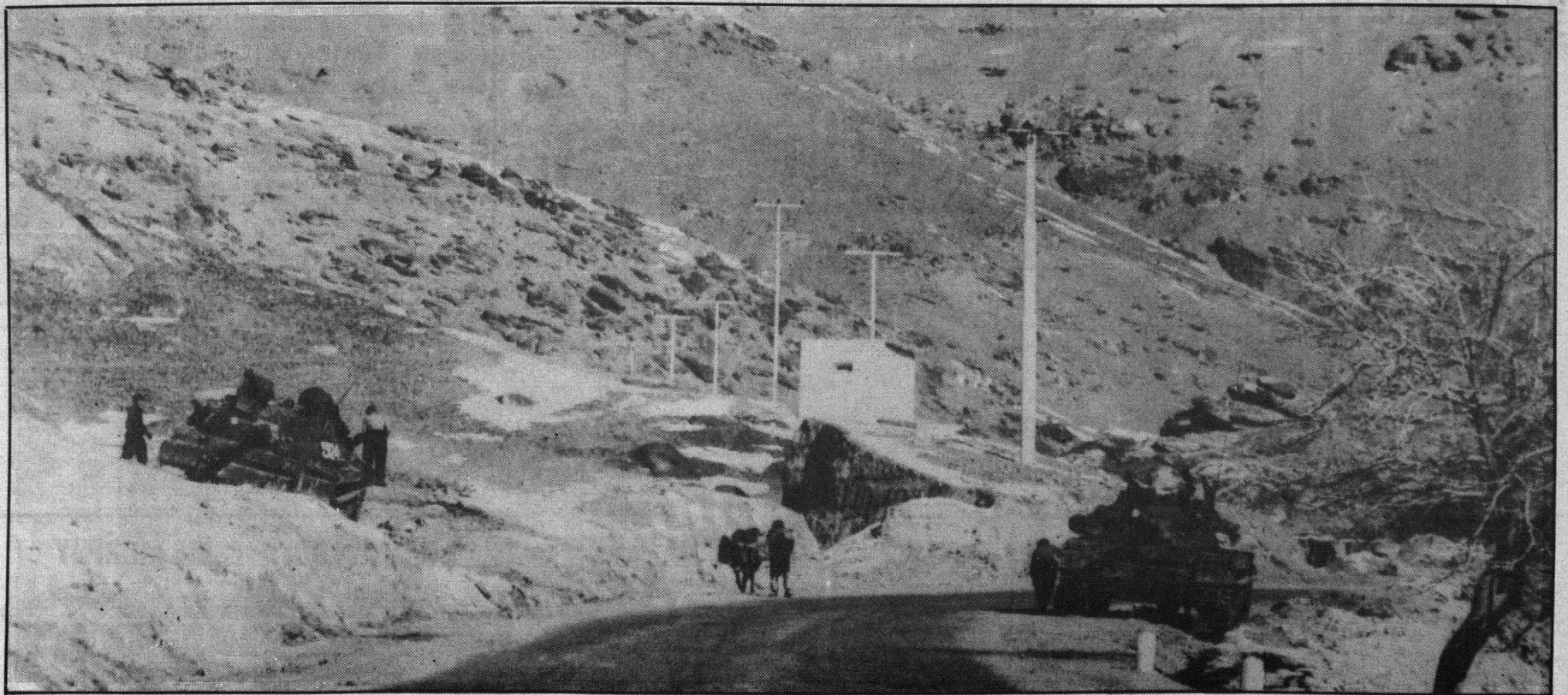
However, should the Soviets crush the Afghan resistance movement, it may have disastrous consequences for surrounding coun-

tries like Pakistan and Iran. A Soviet victory in Afghanistan followed by control of Iran could trigger a domino-type situation giving the Soviets tremendous influence in the oil-rich and volatile mid-east region

When the Russians invaded the Moslem countries of Uzbekstan, Turkstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikstan and Kingizstan about 60 years ago, it was 10 years before the Soviets finally brought the freedom fighters to their knees. With an unprecedented five million Afghans having fled their homeland in just five years, before long the Russians may not have to worry about how they can defeat the rebels. In Afghanistan, there may soon be no more people left to fight.

control some 80 per cent of the country underlines their military. However, the Afghan rebels, called "Mujahideen", are not without their weaknesses; perhaps their greatest weakness is their lack of political unity. Their political and ideological differences have not only weakened their forces but has also resulted in fighting amongst themselves. Furthermore, thousands of Afghans themselves work for the Afghan KGB, which has allowed the Soviets to penetrate and weaken the Mujahideen

problems plaguing the Mujahideen include poor communication, lack of both mine detectors and medical assistance for the wounded, and a shortage of food and ammunition. In fact, past estimates indicated that as much as 50 per cent of the Mujahideen are those made by and/or recruited from the Russians them-



Two Soviet T62 tanks guard a road to Kabul, Afghanistan's capital

Photo Service