



DRA women join the struggle.

in order to counteract imperialist interference. It has also been a shared DRA-Soviet position that the latter's troops would withdraw when foreign interference in Afghanistan's affairs ended. This position was reiterated innumerable times over the past year. It was clear in Comrade Gorbachev's address at the CPSU congress in February, wherein he declared Soviet commitment to a troop withdrawal «in the nearest possible time.» The Soviet Union's tremendous peace efforts aim not only at avoiding nuclear war in the world, but also at ending the 'small' wars that sap the strength and resources of the peoples struggling for liberation and progress.

In early 1986, the DRA and the Soviet Union agreed on a timetable for Soviet withdrawal if it was possible to halt foreign aggression against Afghanistan. In May, Comrade Najib called for «vigorous efforts to achieve the speediest settlement» and invited refugees to return home to an «honorable life in peace and tranquili-

ty.» In the 19th plenum of the PDPA Central Committee, held in July 1986, Comrade Najib promised the end of the war by the 10th anniversary of the revolution (April 1988). The DRA's commitment to a political solution was reiterated at the Harare Non-aligned Summit, the 41st UN session and other international forums. Last autumn, six Soviet regiments withdrew from Afghanistan as a good will sign which also attests to the growing ability of the DRA to shoulder its own self-defense.

Due to the DRA and Soviet efforts, substantial progress was accomplished in the UN-sponsored Geneva talks (which have been conducted indirectly between Pakistan and Afghanistan for over four years, due to Pakistan's refusal to recognize the DRA). In May, the two sides agreed on the principle that Soviet withdrawal would occur simultaneously with the end of external interference in Afghanistan. In August, there was agreement on international guarantees for a settlement and the return of refugees to Afghanistan.

However, the talks were suspended without agreement on the time framework for the Soviet withdrawal and the means of monitoring the cut-off of aid from Pakistan to the counterrevolutionaries.

VICTORIES IN THE FIELD

The PDPA's correct political line has impacted on the military situation as well. Comrade Najib's speech at the 20th plenum of the Central Committee reported: «Our state organs throughout the country, without waiting for reciprocal steps, carry on talks with tens of ringleaders of the counter-revolutionary bands every day. So far such talks have taken place with hundreds of bands. In the course of one year's time, tens of thousands of people have joined the side of revolution (DRA *Foreign Affairs Bulletin*, November 1986). Parallel to the political progress, the army has been strengthened as have the popular militias, not least by incorporating