



DRA popular militias

Afghanis who were formerly with the counterrevolution.

In April 1986, the DRA army abolished the counterrevolutionaries' complex at Zhawar, in the east of Afghanistan, bordering Pakistan. This was the climax of a previously begun campaign to cut the counterrevolutionaries' supply and communications lines with Pakistan, in order to bring an end to their sabotage. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, which can hardly be considered sympathetic to the revolutionary government in Afghanistan, commented in its August 2, 1986 issue, that the destruction of the Zhawar complex «may turn out to be a turning point in the war in Afghanistan, bringing the suppression of the Afghani resistance closer.» *Jane's* also noted the important contribution of the militias alongside the DRA army, noting that the militias contained many former «resistance fighters» who know the territory and the ways of the counterrevolutionary bands. *Jane's* also verified the fact that the locally-based

counterrevolutionaries have tended to cease fighting and «concentrated on revival of the social and economic infrastructure,» which is exactly what the DRA wants and needs.

The victory in Zhawar was followed a few months later by a victory in Herat, in the west, close to the Iranian borders. Added to the Pashtun tribes' closing their territory to the counterrevolutionaries in 1985, these two victories have effectively sealed the borders. By summer, numerous press reports affirmed the recognition of western political and intelligence circles that the counterrevolutionaries were increasingly on the defensive. Their customary «December offensive» was notable this year only by its absence. Enlightened voices in the western press have pointed out that the US is now faced with two alternatives: either to negotiate seriously with the Soviets on Afghanistan, or to greatly escalate support, perhaps to the point of providing troops, to the counterrevolutionaries.

US support to the counterrevolutionaries via Pakistan is «the largest expenditure in a covert CIA operation since the Vietnam war» (*Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1986.) This is an investment that the US administration may not easily let default. Nor do current events indicate a lessening of the Reagan Administration's hostility to peace, the Soviet Union and newly independent countries. On the contrary, the 'Irangate/contras' affair shows the proportions which CIA operations can assume under a retrograde administration like that of Reagan, in trying to reverse the tide of history. The results of 'Irangate', on the other hand, may serve to limit the Reagan Administration's ability to carry out its most aggressive plans. It is only deplorable that there has been so little domestic opposition in the US itself to the CIA's 'Afghangate'. Now is the time for a broad international campaign supporting the DRA's peace initiative in order to bring stability and progress to the Afghani people. ●