

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT
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AFGHANISTAN/
USSR

ROBINSON: A battle of the airwaves today in Afghanistan. Moslem guerrillas used wooden shortwave radios to barrage their country with anti-Soviet, anti-government broadcasts, marking this week's fourth anniversary of the Soviet invasion. Official government radio countered with Soviet propaganda. As Peter Jennings explains in this special report, today's war of words is but the latest chapter in the real war that neither side seems able to win.

JENNINGS: Four years after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, an unwinnable war drags on unwinnable for either side. These are some of the Afghan guerrillas who prevented a Soviet victory, but they've not prevented Soviet domination. It is not a television war; there are pictures only when the occasional camera team accompanies the guerrillas, the mujahidin. There is no independent reporting from those areas which the Soviets control. As this team of mujahidin wanders the mountains in search of Soviet targets, these are the statistics of war. There are slightly more than 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, which is about the size of Texas. The war taxes all of its 28 provinces. U.S. intelligence estimates it costs the Soviets about \$3 billion. By international standards, it is a small one. Casualty figures for both sides are said to be high, but the reporting is unreliable. Why, after four years, have the Soviets not done better? SELIG HARRISON (South Asia Expert): First they miscalculated because they couldn't control the Communist regime that took over in 1978, and then they miscalculated in 1979 because they thought that they could come in for six months and stabilize things and leave. What superpowers often do, they forget that the mere presence of foreign soldiers in other countries becomes the main issue.

JENNINGS: There are half a dozen major Afghan guerrilla groups. Sometimes they fight among themselves for political superiority, but they all fight as did their ancestors, relentlessly against any foreign invaders. In very general terms, the Soviets control most of the cities, and the Afghan guerrillas have greater freedom in the countryside. The Soviets keep a tight rein on the Afghan army. Still, deserters like these two Afghan soldiers are commonplace. Deserters from the Soviet army get a lot of attention, but they are not numerous. This soldier was told he'd be fighting Chinese and American mercenaries.

UNIDENTIFIED SOVIET SOLDIER (Voice of Interpreter): As to why I deserve it, in principle I don't agree with the Soviet policy. I was against the invasion of Afghanistan. I just didn't want to be part of this dirty war.