

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 6-AWASHINGTON TIMES
29 April 1936

Woman medic defies Soviet invaders

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

To the Soviets and their puppet regime in Kabul, French medical doctor Juliette Fournot is a "prostitute" for the Afghan resistance forces, but among the Mujahideen freedom fighters she is a legendary figure dedicated to saving lives.

The petite blonde, whose features show no trace of the horrors she has witnessed in war-torn Afghanistan during the past six years, knows the country well. She first lived there when her father worked for the United Nations in the late 1960s.

"It was the growing period, when you open your mind and you learn everything about the outside world," Dr. Fournot, 32, said in a recent interview. "I was very much impressed by Afghanistan, especially the Afghan people."

She studied medicine in France and in January 1980 was asked by the French group *Medicins Sans Frontieres* — Doctors Without Borders — to direct its Afghanistan relief effort. Dr. Fournot has tended the wounded and provided medical training in rural areas of the country, often in the midst of the ongoing war against Soviet occupation.

Doctors Without Borders is a non-political humanitarian group, but Dr. Fournot is an outspoken partisan for Afghan liberation. She said the Soviets continue to "pacify" Afghanistan brutally. "But they can't control it totally because the resistance is widespread; it's a huge country and the people are proud and won't bend."

Details on Soviet atrocities that foreigners bring out of the country are "pretty disturbing to the Soviets," she said.

"Through propaganda" the Soviets are "alleging that we, the women doctors, are the prostitutes of the Mujahideen," Dr. Fournot said. "They are trying to attack us, hoping that we will stop working inside."

The lies, she said, have undercut support for the resistance among some of the less educated Afghans, who are steeped in Muslim religious traditions and tend to believe disinformation broadcast by Soviet radio stations.

But a State Department official who has spoken to dozens of Afghan resistance leaders said Dr. Fournot was universally praised by them.

"Rival Afghan leaders fiercely denounce each other, but whenever Juliette's name comes up, their praise for her is unanimous," said the official, who requested anonymity.

Karen McKay of the Washington-based Committee for a Free Afghanistan, who has known Dr. Fournot for years, agrees.

"The courage and the self-sacrifice of people like Juliette are the stuff of which legends are made," Mrs. McKay said in an interview. The Soviets have offered a reward to the person who kills Dr. Fournot, she said. "She has taken terrible risks in her work that are hard for those of us outside Afghanistan to fully appreciate."

In a report presented earlier this week at a conference on Afghanistan, Dr. Fournot said Soviet policy in the central Asian nation was one of "terror, human destruction and scorched earth."

Dr. Fournot documented Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan based on her experiences:

- Bombings during a wedding ceremony in the village of Jalrez that killed "dozens" of people, and at Arkupruk on market day, when 40 people were killed and 25 others were treated at her hospital for napalm burns.

- Dumping cluster bombs with thousands of anti-personnel mines that "are designed not to kill but to maim." In a protracted guerrilla war, crippled persons are a greater burden than the dead.

- Planting bombs disguised as household items such as toy trucks, pens and tobacco boxes, which have blown off the hands and feet of Afghan children. In some publications, the Soviets have admitted setting the booby-traps.

- Strafing caravans of Afghan refugees headed for the Pakistan or Iranian borders.

- Massacres of civilians, such as the killing of 629 villagers — more than half of whom were children — in Kunduz Province in 1984. Another

massacre in Laghaman Province claimed between 500 and 1,000 lives, she said.

The Soviet massacres of innocent Afghan civilians have been in reprisal for acts by the rebels or "random violence to terrorize the people," Dr. Fournot said.

"This has been described in interviews with Russian soldiers who defected and who described how they were told to massacre people and how to affect [local Afghans] by tor-

turing kids in front of their parents," she said. "In fact, there are a fair amount of Russian soldiers who couldn't bear it, they just couldn't go through with it."

The Soviets, she said, use two types of soldiers in Afghanistan: regular troops sent for six-month tours "to harden their nerves," and special forces — both Air Force and Soviet GRU military intelligence

"Spetznaz" troops — that specialize in assassinations, torture and psychological warfare.

The Soviets' counterinsurgency campaign against the Afghan resistance has targeted "everything that can support the Afghan resistance," including foreign journalists and the hospitals and clinics of Doctors Without Borders.

Eight hospitals run by Doctors Without Borders have been destroyed in Soviet bombing attacks, she said, and three medical teams have been ambushed by helicopter gunships since the war began.

"Each year it becomes more difficult and dangerous to maintain clinics inside Afghanistan to treat the sick and injured and train Afghan paramedics," she said.

Dr. Fournot warned against believing recent reports hinting at a possible Soviet troop withdrawal, saying "major increases" in weapons and troops indicate just the opposite.

"Last year I was going across the plain of Khorst and there were normal activities of the garrisons being supplied from Kabul," she said. "But about two months ago, about 14 Antonovs [Soviet transports] a day were landing, unloading soldiers and equipment. Now the spring offensive has started, so there is nothing at all to" Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's supposed willingness to withdraw troops.

Dr. Fournot said Soviet military action inside Afghanistan "has reached the level which, if sustained, may result in the destruction of an entire people."

She said the predominantly Moslem Afghans should not be confused with fundamentalist Iranians or radical Libyans.

"They just want to be free at home. . . . They don't even hate the Russian; they often say that once they have freed Afghanistan, they will go and open that huge jail that is Russia."