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AFGHANS SHORT ON MONEY, ARMS
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WASHINGTON

Millions of dollars in U.S. military aid never reach the Afghan guerrillas who began fighting Soviet invaders five years ago today, and the result is "a death sentence" for civilians, four Afghan resisters and a U.S. senator say.

"I question the management of the American Aid Program," Sen. Gordon Humphrey, R-N.H., said Wednesday, joining four resistance fighters at a news conference. "It appears most of our aid is being lost in a leaky pipeline."

He said that after the expenditure of "many hundreds of million dollars," Afghans fighting more than 100,000 Soviet troops "remain critically, tragically and scandalously short of the weapons and supplies they so desperately need."

The resistance fighters charged that U.S. military aid is either inadequate, of inferior Soviet or Chinese manufacture or lacks sufficient ammunition.

However, President Reagan, in a statement marking the fifth anniversary of the invasion, said Wednesday his administration will continue to support the Afghan people's "noble struggle" to resist Soviet forces.

Reagan also warned the Kremlin that the Soviet occupation remains "a serious impediment" to improved relations. A resumption of arms talks between the superpowers is less than two weeks away.

Western diplomats in Islamabad, Pakistan, said Soviet occupation troops in Afghanistan have gone on alert to guard against guerrilla attacks on the anniversary.

The state of alert has become a yearly occurrence since Soviet troops invaded on Dec. 27, 1979, and the resistance fighters appearing with Humphrey, one of whom lost a leg in combat, pleaded for more and better arms to repel fresh Soviet attacks.

The Afghan group also included Mohammad Nasim, a 7-year-old boy whose left fingers were blown off when he picked up a Soviet-dropped "butterfly bomb" -- an explosive disguised as a toy.

Charles Brockunier, 45, a Cambridge, N.H., freelance journalist who has been in Afghanistan four times with the fighters, said he was "very distressed"

to find faulty and inadequate weapons supplied to the Afghans and the acute lack of ammunition.

The United States, at first covertly through the CIA but now with the blessing of Congress, has been supplying the Afghans with Soviet and East bloc-made arms captured in Mideast wars, Vietnam and elsewhere.

"In truth," Humphrey said, "I have yet to find one first hand source who claims the U.S. aid program is working." He said he would pursue the matter when the new Congress convenes in January.

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Humphrey also criticized the State Department for not taking account of aid to the civilian population.

'Food, water, shelter, medicine, roads and schools are primary targets of current Soviet military operations,' he said. 'The State Department's business-as-usual policy in Afghanistan is nothing short of a death sentence for the Afghan people.'

Matthew Erulkar, legislative director for the Federation for American Afghan Action that sponsored the news conference, said that between \$380 million and \$400 million had been spent in U.S. arms aid to the Afghans but only \$50 million had actually reached the fighters.

No one present could identify the 'leak' in the pipeline.

Through interpreters, the four Afghan fighters said what was urgently needed was accurate, shoulder-held anti-aircraft weapons, mortars, machine guns and sufficient fresh ammunition.

Soviet invasion forces in Afghanistan have now been at war with the guerrillas longer than the Red Army's engagement in World War II.

In an emotional plea for more aid on the occasion of the anniversary, the Committee for a Free Afghanistan in Washington said, 'This war has had a devastating effect on the population. The Soviets are slowly succeeding in their policies of cultural and migratory genocide.'

The committee quoted recent State Department statistics that there may have been as many as 40,000 Soviet casualties, including 8,000 dead, in the five-year war.