

Recent Soviet attack overpowers Afghans

United Press International
ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Soviet troops backed by more than 300 tanks have launched a major offensive in Afghanistan's Laghman province northeast of Kabul, Afghan Moslem rebels reported Monday.

"A fierce battle started Sunday between the Mujahedeen (rebels) and Soviet forces in Laghman province," said a spokesman for Hizbe Islami, an exiled Islamic party with headquarters in the northern Pakistani garrison town of Peshawar.

Laghman is northeast of the Afghan capital of Kabul and adjoins the two eastern provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar, scenes of previous heavy fighting between Moslem rebels and Soviet and Afghan government forces.

"The Soviet forces are concentrating in Alishing and Alingar valleys," he said.

The spokesman, whose report could not be independently confirmed, had no details on the fighting in Laghman province.

Soviet forces, centered in Kabul and the major provincial cities of Jalalabad to the southeast, Kandahar to the south and Herat to the west have recently staged major offensives in Kunar province and the adjoining Kama valley which lies near Jalalabad in Nangarhar province.

The Soviet juggernaut has virtually overwhelmed the rebels who are mostly armed only with light antiquated bolt action rifles and captured Soviet-made automatic rifles and machineguns.

The Hizbe Islami spokesman also claimed that rebel forces killed 36 Soviet soldiers in Kama valley Saturday.

Religions return to China; regime tolerates minority

United Press International
HANGZHOU, China — The exodus of incense floated once again around the crimson pillars of the Buddhist temple of Ling Yin.

"Incense is again manufactured and we can sell it since we have returned to our temple," said the portly monk sitting behind a table displaying incense.

For Buddhists, lighting incense in temples or at home is a sign of faith. Incense sticks vanished from shops throughout China a decade ago when Mao Tse-tung launched his anti-religious "Cultural Revolution."

Its return indicates religion — in more than 115 million, a mere drop in the bucket of China's 4,000-year history — is in again and flourishing under the current regime's tolerance for individual freedom.

Religious leaders estimate the number of believers of all faiths, including home worshippers, at no more than 115 million, a mere drop in the communist nation's 1 billion population.

All over this vast nation Buddhist temples are being reopened. Buddhism is the majority religion, with a

claimed 100 million believers. The Buddhist association headquarters in Peking has been reformed.

Thousands of Islamic mosques are also open again. Islam is China's second largest religion, with 13 million worshippers.

Christian churches, representing a comparatively minor religion in China, again hold services.

The Moslem Koran and Christian Bible are being published again at the new Institute of Religious Research opened last year at the University of Nanjing. The institute also plans to publish the Buddhist scriptures.

The Taoist movement, the only religion that originated in China, is forming an association and trying to open a temple in Peking.

The philosophy of Confucius also is no longer banned and a Chinese Christian delegation attended a world religious conference last September in New Jersey.

The state is paying for repairs to houses of worship. Most were looted during the Cultural Revolution.

Salaries, including back pay in some cases, have been restored to some religious officials.

Roman Catholics in Peking have elected a new bishop.

More than 20 leaders of the Buddhist, Moslem and Christian groups have been elected members of the national parliament.

At the 4th century Ling Yin temple in Hangzhou, 30 monks again live behind the temple after being barred for more than a decade.

"No young monks are in our group," said Wang Li, eyes twinkling beneath his white cap. He wore a gray robe of the old Chinese style.

"Our youngest monk is 53. The future of Buddhism in China — that remains to be seen," he said in frank pessimism.

"Some people come here to pray. No young people. But some traditions and habits still exist in older people's minds. Now we can practice freedom of religion."

In Peking, attendance has soared in recent months at the only two Christian churches open.

Nationwide, the Moslems seem to

benefit most from the new freedom. "Moslem people receive privileges," said the prayer leader of a mosque. "Surely you have noticed the many Moslem restaurants in Peking."

Minority ethnic groups in China, as opposed to the majority Han, number only 5 percent of the population — but cover 60 percent of the land. Most are Moslems. Without their "unity," the party press says frankly, China cannot modernize. China wants no unrest among its Moslems.

Ziao Sianfu, director of the government religious affairs bureau, indicated the party thinks religion will be around only for a while so the party might as well accept it.

"Religion will die out only when science and technology are highly developed and people's material and cultural lives are improved," he says.



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Freed hostage suspect in take-over of embassy

United Press International
BOGOTA, Colombia — One of three hostages released by leftist guerrillas Sunday has been detained by military authorities for suspected involvement in the seizure of the Dominican embassy, a military source said Tuesday.

Guerrillas of the April 19 movement, known as M-19, who captured the embassy Feb. 27 and took 57 hostages, Sunday released Alfredo

Byfield, an honorary Jamaican conference secretary, Guillermo Triano, a Colombian foreign ministry official, and Tito Libio Tiburcio, a Dominican who was a secretary at the embassy.

But still held captive were 18 di-

plomats, including U.S. Ambassador Diego Asencio and two private Colombian citizens who apparently remained inside voluntarily to sell photographic and written records of the 41-day-old drama.

The M-19 says it will hold on to its diplomatic hostages until Colombian authorities release 311 jailed leftists and pays a \$50 million ransom.

After receiving a routine medical checkup at a military hospital Sunday, Libio Tiburcio was transferred to army intelligence headquarters, the source said.

Libio Tiburcio denied to reporters after his release that he was involved in the taking of the embassy.

ciou is under suspicion of "submitting information" to the M-19 before their assault on the Dominican embassy.

Libio Tiburcio was employed as a secretary in the embassy for four months previous to its takeover. He has lived in Colombia for the past 10 years.

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