



# Find a Way Out...

Source: "In Russia, Foreboding About America's War in Afghanistan," by Tom Lasseter, McClatchy Newspapers, December 23, 2009



**In 1979**, the Red Army began its invasion of Afghanistan, a move that plunged the Soviet Union into a decade of guerrilla war and hastened the collapse of the Cold War empire.

**Today**, as former Soviet soldiers watch American troops trying to pacify the same stretches of Afghan land they once fought for, aging Soviet generals and grunts alike are reminded of a war they'd rather forget.

**Aging Soviet soldiers are still haunted by the Afghan war, where they lost 14,000 lives and only ended in retreat.**

"**Bitterness and regret that we were drawn into this war**," said Alexander Tsalko, who commanded a helicopter unit in the Afghan war. "Those who fought there do not want to talk about it when they're not drunk."

General Igor Rodionov lamented, "On one hand, I was indignant when I understood what this decision to invade Afghanistan would result in. I could say that to my friends, but I could not say it out loud because I was a general."

General Rodionov said in a gravelly voice, "We could fight for two weeks in this gorge, killing the Afghans. In return they kill our guys. We have used all our water, ammunition and food, and then we must go back to our rear position. Then the mujahedeen would return to the gorge, and the whole thing continues." His conclusion: "**Our sacrifices were not needed.**"

These Soviet soldiers said that no matter how smart the Obama administration's plans are for turning the tide, they stand little chance in a country that's known as **the graveyard of empires**. Tsalko advised, "It's very hard to fight in Afghanistan. **Your leadership will have to find a way out.**"



**Join our 376<sup>th</sup> Peace Vigil to end the wars!**  
Every Saturday, 1-3pm, at Rte. 59 & N. Middletown Rd. in Nanuet, NY  
For info: [www.rocklandaction.org](http://www.rocklandaction.org) 1/30/10

*Rockland Coalition for Peace & Justice*