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From Associated Press Reports

Soviets drop 'liquid fire'

LONDON — Soviet planes are dropping "liquid fire" bombs on Moslem guerrillas in Afghanistan and powerful fuel-air explosives that kill anyone within a quarter-mile radius with shock waves, Jane's Defense Weekly reported Wednesday.

The magazine, issued by the authoritative Jane's Publications, said the Soviets have been using the weapons since last summer in eastern Afghanistan in a major battlefield testing program.

The "fuel-air explosive" bombs detonate while in the air, releasing a volatile chemical cloud about 15 yards in diameter. That, in turn, is detonated by a second charge, causing lethal shock waves.

Similar weapons have been in U.S. stockpiles for years.

Jane's said the "liquid fire" bombs split in the air, showering a black, tar-like substance that can lie on the ground for months. But when stepped on, the blobs burst into flames, emitting "sickening fumes," and cannot be extinguished until the blobs burn out.

"Trucks which have driven over the droplets have burned out completely as a result," said the report, written by Yossef Bodansky, identified by Jane's as a consultant to the U.S. Defense and State Departments. Bodansky did not identify his sources.

Jane's Defense Weekly is a specialized magazine covering military affairs. It is published by Jane's, which produces 14 yearbooks on military equipment and hardware, including "Jane's All the World's Aircraft" and "Jane's Fighting Ships." The weekly said the Soviets

have used the "liquid fire" weapons to "effectively block axes of transportation for vehicles for long periods."

The droplets can easily be spotted on Afghanistan's dirt roads, Bodansky wrote, but he added, "In developed countries, such as Western Europe, the black droplets would be invisible against asphalt and paved roads or runways."

The Soviets are engaged in a major offensive against Afghan rebels in the Panjsher Valley north of Kabul and elsewhere in the country.

Lover says he saw pistol

EUGENE — A former lover of Elizabeth Diane Downs testified Wednesday that he saw Downs' .22-caliber pistol the night before she left Arizona for Oregon.

Robert Knickerbocker said he noticed the pistol in the trunk of her car as he helped her load the vehicle April 1, 1983.

Knickerbocker said Downs offered to loan him the pistol several days earlier because her former husband had threatened him. Knickerbocker said he declined her offer.

The prosecution contends Downs shot her children so she could be free to join Knickerbocker.

"The last time I saw the pistol was the night before she left," Knickerbocker said.

Downs, 28, is charged with murder, attempted murder and assault in the shooting of her three children May 19, 1983.

Prosecutors say the children were shot with a .22-caliber Ruger semiautomatic pistol. Authorities say the weapon has not been found.

Knickerbocker said Downs called him almost every day after she arrived in Oregon and wrote to him often.

He began to refuse the telephone calls and returned her letters unopened because he was getting back with his wife, Knickerbocker said Wednesday.

Knickerbocker testified that Downs called him the day after the shooting, telling him about the attack. He said Downs did not sound upset.

Weapons test voted down

WASHINGTON — The House voted 238-181 Wednesday night to prohibit the testing of a U.S. anti-satellite weapon against an object in space so long as the Soviet Union continues its voluntary moratorium against such tests.

The move, engineered by Reps. George Brown, D-Calif., and Lawrence Coughlin, R-Pa., represents a sharp rebuke to President Reagan. The president declared more than a month ago that the United States should continue to develop satellite killers because verification obstacles make a comprehensive arms control pact with the Soviets virtually impossible.

Also, the House, with overwhelming support from Republicans and Democrats alike, voted to bar the introduction of U.S. military forces "into or over El Salvador or Nicaragua for combat."

Reagan told a news conference Tuesday night he could envision no situation in which American troops would intervene in Central America.

But Rep. Mel Levine, D-Calif., said "some of us have very deep concerns, in fact some real fears, that this administration in 1985 might reconsider its stated position."

Efforts at similar legislation have been turned aside in the Republican Senate.

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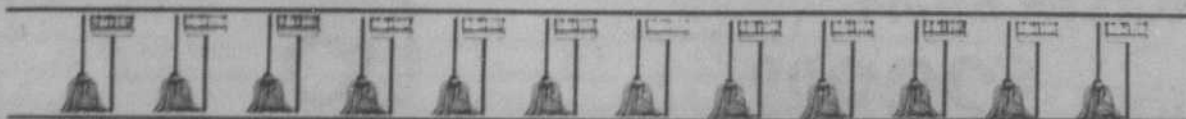
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