



The Other Side of The Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War

Ali Ahmad Jalali, Lester W. Grau

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As we have throughout our history-the Philippines, Haiti, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Vietnam and Somalia-Marines will encounter guerrilla forces in the 21st century. Marines must understand potential adversaries, and learn as much as possible about them. The mujahideen of the Soviet-Afghan War prevailed against a larger and decisively better equipped foe, the Soviet Army. The Other Side of the Mountain presents the story of the mujahideen's fight against that foe. On 27 December 1979, Moscow ordered the Soviet Army into Afghanistan. Organized, equipped, and trained for the execution of combined arms operations, that force embodied the concept of blitzkrieg. Nine years later, it withdrew in defeat. The Other Side of the Mountain was written from the reports of mujahideen combat veterans and provides a tactical look at a decentralized army of footmobile guerrillas waging war against a technologically superior foe. Absolute supremacy of firepower did not guarantee victory. Native knowledge of terrain and detailed study of a known adversary offset that advantage. In particular, the chapter on urban combat will be of great interest to commanders concerned with force protection. This book and its companion volume, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan*, published for the United States Marine Corps in 1996, offers a chronicle of the Afghan War by the warfighters. The Marine Corps of the 21st century will have tremendous advantages over guerrilla forces. Our equipment, technology, training, and support are the best in the world. Yet, technological superiority is not in and of itself a guarantee of success. Insight into our adversary's capabilities, tactics and motivation will provide the decisive edge. The Other Side of the Mountain will help us gain this insight. I heartily recommend this book to all Marines.

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