

Armed (1) ..... the teeth they came out of nowhere, an army of discontented students and so-called patriots determined to (2) ..... an end to the civil war that has torn Afghanistan apart (3) ..... the retreat of the Russian forces in 1989. Last week, after a five-month battle, the newcomers had brought a large section of the country (4) ..... their control and got (5) ..... of one of its most powerful warlords. And now the Taliban stood (6) ..... the very gates of the capital, Kabul.

Among Afghanistan's 20 million people, many of whom live in refugee shelters around the country and in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran, the Taliban success ignited hope (7) ..... an end to years of chaos and suffering at the hands of the divided Mujahedin. The new army, (8) ..... to reliable sources, will force the Mujahedin to (9) ..... fighting among themselves or risk completely losing the gains of their victory (10) ..... the Soviets.