

Statement by the Sec of State for External Affairs,
Mark MacLurgan, in the HoC, Ottawa, April 22, 1980
"Afghanistan & the Olympics"

Madam President,

The Soviet Union's move into Afghanistan at the turn of the year caught the world by shocked surprise. The depth of international opposition can be measured by the strength of the vote in the Emergency Session of the United Nations General Assembly called to deal with the question in early January: one hundred and four governments cast their votes in condemnation of Soviet action.

That action continues. The Soviet leaders are proceeding to tighten their hold on what was, and has been for decades, an independent neighbouring country.

Such international behaviour cannot go unheeded. The country responsible cannot claim for itself immunity from the consequences of its own freely chosen course of action.

There has been broad agreement internationally that the Soviet action can only be met by concrete measures, adopted by members of the international community as expressions of concern over unacceptable and unjustifiable policies. These measures are not, and cannot be uniform: nor can they themselves secure the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. They do, however, reflect a full range of national reactions which when added together constitute an impressive and deliberate demonstration of world opposition to the Soviet invasion.