

The consequences of the Soviet intervention for the people of Afghanistan are evident enough. But our primary concern here is with the threat this action poses to international peace and stability. It is not surprising that other non-aligned countries, in the region and elsewhere, feel threatened; that they are asking themselves: whose turn will be next? In a region of the world which has been afflicted by endemic unrest and conflict, the Soviet action adds a particularly dangerous dimension to an already serious situation. We must stand ready, Mr. President, to give our collective support to all efforts which may be undertaken by the countries of the region to bolster their national security and territorial integrity. In this Organization, in particular, we must record our complete rejection of the motives for Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. We must, in the words of the procedure that has been invoked to convene us here, unite for peace.

What the Security Council was prevented from doing, we must now set out to do here. The world community that is represented here must condemn the U.S.S.R. action in Afghanistan as a clear violation of the basic principles of the Charter. We must demand the immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan of all Soviet troops. This surely is the first essential step to restoring stability in the area and to enabling the Afghan people to exercise their inalienable right of self-determination.

Mr. President, we are not asking the impossible. We are asking of the Soviet Union what the Soviet Union would ask of any other state if the roles were reversed. We are concerned about the impact of the Soviet action on so much that we have accomplished by working together here and in the other agencies of the United Nations. The climate of international confidence has been badly shaken. The indivisibility of détente has been challenged. Relations between many of our countries and the Soviet Union are going to be under increasing strain as we try to make it clear to the Soviet Union that it will not be held immune from the consequences of its actions. The lessons of history have left their imprint on us as they have on the Soviet Union.

Mr. President, my delegation whole-heartedly supports a firm judgement by this Assembly against what has happened in Afghanistan. While we recognize that resolutions of this Assembly have no mandatory force, we submit that a resolution to this effect will carry the judgement of the large majority of the nations of the world and that, as such, its political and moral value cannot be casually dismissed and ignored. If the many past initiatives of the U.S.S.R. on non-intervention and non-use of force are not to be emptied of their content, now is the time for that country to live up to its professed beliefs. Only in total respect of one another's sovereignty and independence, will we be able to continue striving for international co-operation and understanding.