



# COMMUNIQUÉ

N°:  
No.: 256

December 23, 1987.

## EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

On the eighth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, called upon the Soviet Union to take concrete action to end its brutal occupation of Afghanistan.

"After eight years, the war in Afghanistan continues to cause untold suffering. Over five million Afghan refugees wait in camps for the war to end and for peace to be restored to their country. Their misery is compounded by the continuing attacks on their villages and camps in Pakistan which cause the deaths of thousands of innocent people." Mr. Clark said.

"More than one million Afghans have so far been killed in this war. It is one of the great human tragedies of our age that the war continues and in the past year, has increased in intensity." Mr. Clark expressed Canada's continuing commitment to assist the people of Afghanistan in the months and years ahead.

Mr. Clark noted that discussions have been under way for many months concerning the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan: "While these discussions are welcomed, they must be backed up by concrete action." he added.

Mr. Clark stressed that the basis for a peace settlement is clearly evident. "On this anniversary," he noted, "the first requirement is the complete and speedy withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan." Mr. Clark went on to state "Only through this withdrawal will it be possible for political independence and non-alignment to be restored to Afghanistan." He expressed the hope this would happen next year.

Mr. Clark said, "The prospects for peace appear to be better now than at any time in the past." He noted the positive tone of the discussions between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Washington earlier this month.