

Mr. President,

We are gathered here in extraordinary session because the territorial integrity and the political independence of one of the members of the Organization has been infringed in complete disregard of the fundamental principles of the Charter. We are gathered here because a great power -- the Soviet Union -- has, in default of its special responsibilities and in defiance of principles that are binding on all, invaded and occupied a smaller and non-aligned neighbour nation. We are gathered here because the exercise by the Soviet Union of a self-protective veto has rendered the Security Council incapable of exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The grave breach of international peace which has been committed by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan cannot and must not be ignored. The notion that, by doing so, we would be interfering in the internal affairs of a member state is, surely, one of the most fantastic ever to have been advanced in the councils of this Organization.

It is well to probe into the arguments used by the Soviet Union and its friends in Kabul to justify the military intervention that has taken place. The assistance of the Soviet Union is said to have been requested by the Afghan leader who has not been allowed to live to regret it. This assistance has also been represented to many of our governments as consisting of "limited military contingents" which will be withdrawn once external aggression has ceased. Such claims are difficult to reconcile with the facts of the situation which show nearly 100,000 Soviet troops -- in excess of the total armed forces available for the defence of Canada -- involved in the effort to repel an "external aggressor" who is nowhere to be seen.

No, Mr. President, the facts are that the Soviet forces are not battling an external aggressor; they are battling Afghans who, for the crime of resisting an alien government imposed on them by undemocratic means, are being branded as counter-revolutionaries. There can be no justification for such action. The international community cannot condone such a transparent attempt by a great power to extend its sway over a smaller neighbour who has represented no threat to the security of the Soviet Union. If each of us were to interpret our security concerns as requiring conformist regimes along the length of our national borders, the Charter of this Organization would, indeed, be reduced to a scrap of paper.