



# Statements and Speeches

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## THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

A Statement by Ambassador W.H. Barton, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, at the Sixth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, New York, January 11, 1980

### Editorial note

*The question of Afghanistan was debated at meetings of the United Nations Security Council from January 5 to 9. Following a veto on January 7 by the Soviet Union of a draft resolution calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from that country, the question was then referred, by procedural resolution, to an emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly. This emergency session, the sixth in United Nations history, was held from January 10 to 14. It culminated in the adoption of a resolution calling for an "immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan" by a vote of 104 (including Canada) to 18 against (Afghanistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen, Ethiopia, German Democratic Republic, Grenada, Hungary, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, Ukraine, U.S.S.R., Socialist Republic of Vietnam) with 18 abstentions (Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Congo, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Madagascar, Mali, Nicaragua, Sao Tome, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia). The Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador W.H. Barton, stated the Canadian position in an address to the United Nations Security Council on January 7, 1980 and then again before the Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly on January 11, 1980. Following is the text of Ambassador Barton's statement to the General Assembly:*

We are gathered here in extraordinary session because the territorial integrity and the political independence of one of the members of this 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

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