

But it all hangs on Soviet troop withdrawal. That is the sine qua non. Everyone understands it. If we are back here, same time, next year, it is solely because the Soviet Union continues to believe that nihilism is preferable to negotiation; that butchery is preferable to bargaining. It all raises a series of inescapable hypocrisies. Here we have a country, the Soviet Union, which regularly reminds this Assembly, during debates on regional conflicts, that resolutions, once passed, must be honoured. But this resolution, on the "Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security", is never honoured by the Soviet Union.

Here we have a country, the Soviet Union, which regularly -- almost obsessively -- lectures this Assembly on the right to self-determination of certain peoples. But self-determination, when applied to the people of Afghanistan, becomes a nullity. Here we have a country, the Soviet Union, which regularly denounces, in this Assembly, acts of territorial aggression, and proclaims, in this Assembly, the sanctity of territorial borders. But when it comes to Afghanistan, the aggression is naked, and the increasing cross-border violations of Pakistan's territorial integrity matters not at all. It's awfully useful to have a dialectic which is so infinitely malleable.

Here we have a country, the Soviet Union, which is forever reminding this Assembly of "gross and massive" violations of human rights. Yet before us is Afghanistan, where violations of human rights are not merely gross and massive, they are grotesque and universal. Nothing could convey it better than this excerpt from the Helsinki Watch report whose findings, incidentally, were largely confirmed by the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission. I quote:

"From our interviews, it soon became clear that just about every conceivable human rights violation is occurring in Afghanistan, and on an enormous scale. The crimes of indiscriminate warfare are combined with the worst excesses of unbridled state-sanctioned violence against civilians. The ruthless savagery in the countryside is matched by the subjection of a terrorized urban population to arbitrary arrest, torture, imprisonment and execution. Totalitarian controls are being imposed on institutions and the press. The universities and