

The current régime in Afghanistan, which was installed by the Soviet Union, is opposed by the vast majority of the Afghan people. In spite of the presence of almost 100,000 Soviet troops, the Afghan resistance movement controls most of the countryside and has mounted an effective opposition to the Soviet occupation. The Government of Canada is deeply concerned by the suffering and hardship which the Afghan people are experiencing under foreign occupation, including the bombing of innocent civilian populations, and the destruction of the homes and means of livelihood of these people.

The most stark indication of the severe conditions imposed on the Afghan people is the exodus of approximately three million refugees from their homeland. It is now estimated that at least one Afghan in seven lives in a refugee camp outside the borders of his country. Canada has contributed over 13 million dollars toward the support of refugees and further assistance is to be provided. This assistance, however, meets only an immediate need. What the refugees need most is to be able to return to their farms and villages in safety and honour under a settlement which restores freedom to Afghanistan.

A solution of the Afghanistan situation can only be brought about by the withdrawal of Soviet forces and by allowing the Afghan people to choose freely how and by whom they will be governed.

The Government of Canada wishes to ask again that the Soviet Union respond positively to the international efforts aimed at achieving a solution which encompasses the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the restoration of a fully independent, non-aligned Afghanistan.