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Condemnation of the Soviet Union's action in Afghanistan

The Soviet Union's invasion of an independent nation is a "gross violation of international law", and "a clear reversal of the process of decolonization begun more than a quarter century ago", stated Ambassador W.H. Barton, Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, during the Emergency Session of the United Nations Security Council on Afghanistan in New York on January 7. Respect for the principles and obligations of international law was "a cornerstone of the United Nations" which all members were committed to, Mr. Barton continued. "There cannot be one law for the Soviet Union, and one for the rest of the world," he declared.

More than 50 nations had manifested their profound concern over the violation in Afghanistan of one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter.

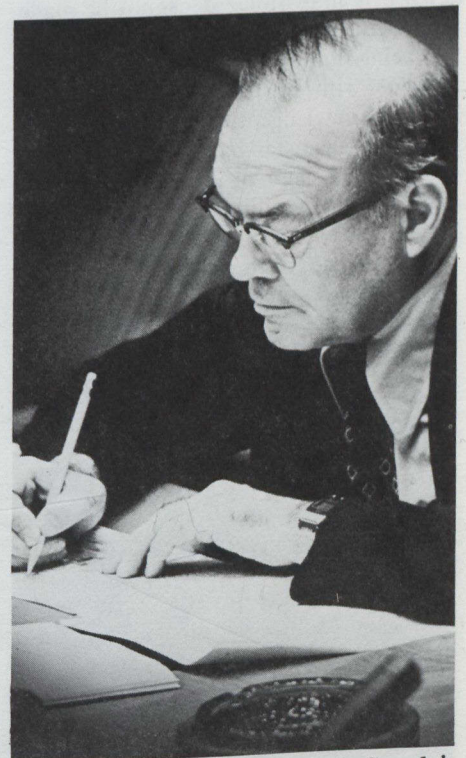
"Canada has had no option therefore but to associate itself with all those — and there are very many of them — who have condemned the Soviet action in Afghanistan as a blatant use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of a smaller neighbouring state." The remainder of Ambassador Barton's statement follows:

...We are being asked to believe that Afghanistan was threatened by outside aggression, and that the military might of a great power — the Soviet Union — was necessary to rescue Afghanistan from its plight. Surely no one believes it — and it disappoints my Government to think either that the Soviet leaders have talked themselves into believing it, or are seriously asking others to believe such a contention.

Canada's view

The view of the Canadian Government is that, before the Soviet invasion and indeed now, the situation in Afghanistan was one of civil war rooted in the resistance of a substantial part of the Afghan population which has been increasingly alienated by the policies of a regime which had come to power by undemocratic means. All evidence suggests that the Soviet Union is deeply implicated in the *coup d'état* of December 1979, and indeed one of the reasons for the Soviet military intervention was to place in power a wholly subservient regime.

As we have seen, it is easy enough to parachute an alien regime into a country, call it revolutionary and then call all



Ambassador Barton expressed Canada's concern over the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in a statement to the Emergency Session of the United Nations Security Council in New York, January 7.

One-hundred-and-eighty-nine years ago this week... The Government announced that it would divide Quebec into the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. The law to this effect was passed May 18 and was given royal assent on June 10 of the same year.