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AFGHANISTAN

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Flora MacDonald, today made the following statement on the situation in Afghanistan:

The Canadian Government was informed on December 27 by the Soviet Ambassador, acting on instructions from his Government, that the Soviet Union had decided to send limited military contingents to Afghanistan to counter what are alleged to be continuing acts of external aggression against that country.

The Canadian Government cannot accept the reasons cited by the Soviet Union for its military intervention in Afghanistan. It can find no evidence for the contention that Afghanistan has been the object of external aggression. The situation in Afghanistan, in the view of the Canadian Government, is one of civil war based on the resistance of a substantial part of the Afghan population to the policies of a régime which seized power by means of a coup d'état in April 1978 and whose tenure of power has been marked by increasing internal dissent. The military intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan is, therefore, an intervention in a situation of civil conflict and not of external aggression.

The Canadian Government accordingly rejects the view that the situation in Afghanistan is such as to justify action under Article 51* of the United Nations Charter which, in any event, would require an immediate report to the Security Council.

The Canadian Government deeply regrets the action taken by the Soviet Union which will have an adverse effect on stability in the immediate region, in other parts of the Asian continent, and on the climate of détente which depends on an atmosphere of mutual confidence and on the practice of restraint by all the states concerned in all parts of the world.

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*Article 51 of the United Nations Charter reads as follows:
"Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent

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