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STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.

STATEMENT BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
MARK MACGUIGAN,
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
OTTAWA, APRIL 22, 1980

"AFGHANISTAN AND THE
OLYMPICS"

*Statement by the Sec of State for External Affairs,
Mark MacLurgan, in the HoC, Ottawa, April 22, 1980
"Afghanistan & the Olympics"*

Madam President,

The Soviet Union's move into Afghanistan at the turn of the year caught the world by shocked surprise. The depth of international opposition can be measured by the strength of the vote in the Emergency Session of the United Nations General Assembly called to deal with the question in early January: one hundred and four governments cast their votes in condemnation of Soviet action.

That action continues. The Soviet leaders are proceeding to tighten their hold on what was, and has been for decades, an independent neighbouring country.

Such international behaviour cannot go unheeded. The country responsible cannot claim for itself immunity from the consequences of its own freely chosen course of action.

There has been broad agreement internationally that the Soviet action can only be met by concrete measures, adopted by members of the international community as expressions of concern over unacceptable and unjustifiable policies. These measures are not, and cannot be uniform: nor can they themselves secure the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. They do, however, reflect a full range of national reactions which when added together constitute an impressive and deliberate demonstration of world opposition to the Soviet invasion.

For its part, and after the fullest consultation with allies and friends, Canada adopted a broad spectrum of measures under the previous Government which have been reaffirmed by the present Government. Visits to the Soviet Union by ministers and high-level officials have been cancelled. Similarly a wide range of exchanges in education, culture and sport, along with a wide variety of exports of manufactured goods and agricultural products have been halted. Thus, Canadians in a broad spectrum of fields of endeavour -- artists, sportsmen, farmers, academics and businessmen, to name a few -- have been called upon to make sacrifices in the process of Canada's response to Soviet aggression.

In the framework of the Government's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, one issue has remained undecided: participation in the 1980 Olympic Games, scheduled to be held in Moscow in July. This Government believes that the international situation brought about by Soviet aggression in Afghanistan makes it wholly inappropriate to hold the Olympics in Moscow.

Since taking office, the Government has maintained that it is up to the Soviet Union to create the conditions under which the Games may properly take place. Obviously, such conditions do not now exist. Furthermore, there is no

present intention on the part of the USSR to create them. We have said from the beginning that an Olympic boycott would be advisable only if effective. Our policy has therefore been to work actively towards an effective boycott. In the course of the last several weeks, we have canvassed our friends in the Western Alliance and Third World states to determine whether a boycott of the Moscow Olympics would be an effective instrument in displaying our abhorrence of the actions of the USSR in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister took a personal initiative in writing a number of world leaders on the subject. The results of these consultations, coupled with conversations I had with foreign ministers present during the recent independence celebrations in Zimbabwe have convinced the Government that the criteria for an effective boycott are now clearly present. I expect similar announcements in support of an effective boycott by other governments within the next days.

To ask our athletes, who have been training for four years and more for their chance at an Olympic gold medal, to forego that chance is a hard thing for any free country to ask of its citizens. The Government is, however, convinced that withdrawal from the Olympics is the clearest and most effective way available to make plain to the leaders of the Soviet Union that the world condemns the

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Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and its defiance of international demands for its withdrawal. If as the Soviet Union claims, the 1980 Olympics are a vindication of Soviet policies, then by not participating in those Games, we repeat to the Soviet leadership and the Soviet people that the Soviet Government's actions in Afghanistan stand condemned by the world.

The Canadian Olympic Association has requested a firm indication of the Government's position in this matter. The Government has considered the situation thoroughly. We have decided that the circumstances leave us no choice but to urge the Canadian Olympic Association to inform the Organizing Committee for the 1980 Olympics that Canadian athletes will not be participating in the Games. The Government does not intend to use coercion to bring about a withdrawal. It will not revoke passports or take powers to circumscribe the right of Canadians to travel freely abroad. But should Canadian athletes participate in Moscow, they will do so without the moral or financial support of the Government of Canada.

Several nations are actively planning for athletic events in which their athletes can participate as some compensation for not having gone to Moscow. If Canadian athletes, through their accredited sport governing bodies,

make it clear that they wish to participate in such events, the Government will make it possible for them to do so. Moreover, the Minister responsible for Fitness and Amateur Sport will have his officials meet with national sport governing body representatives immediately to determine whatever opportunities may be available, or may be developed, to offset this setback to our amateur athletes and provide alternative competitive forums in their pursuit of excellence.

The Government is aware that the final deadline for acceptance of invitations to the Games is May 24. While any dramatic change in the situation in Afghanistan seems unlikely, the possibility cannot be entirely excluded. The Government therefore intends to continue monitoring the situation closely. It remains up to the Soviet Union to create the conditions in which the Olympics can take place. Should it become apparent that, contrary to present evidence, these conditions are being created, the Government is prepared to reassess the request it is making today.

Finally, Madam Speaker, we ask Canadian athletes and Canadians generally to support this important decision which has been taken in the national interest. We all recognize the sacrifice this represents for our athletes who have trained so hard and for whom we have so much respect.

It is, of course, not their fault any more than it is the fault of other Canadians who are also being asked to support Government policies designed to impress upon the Soviet Union that international terrorism in all of its manifestations -- whether by armed students or disciplined troops -- is unacceptable to Canada. The Government urges Canadian athletes to respect its advice. We are confident that they and the Canadian Olympic Committee will have the national interest at heart and will decline to participate in the Moscow Games in the interest of Canadians and free peoples everywhere.

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the people living around Gros Morne National Park over the federal government's park plans. Buchans - a Mining Town traced the growth and death of a union. What's That Got To Do With The Price of Fish? described the fishing industry and They Club Seals, Don't They?, which toured Canada, explored the seal-hunt controversy. Brookes' latest production Some Slick, which also toured Canada and has been adapted for television, is a musical fantasy of offshore oil. The Bard of Prescott Street, about a St. John's street musician and Irregular Entertainment - more than you ever wanted to know about Bingo, are not only light but pure Newfoundland.

ERIKA RITTER has spent the last five years alternately writing plays and vowing she will give up writing plays to concentrate on writing fiction. The main thing that keeps her devoted to the theatre however, is that medium's facility for providing an author with instant reaction and the intoxicant of on-the-spot audience recognition of her characters as people they know and possibly are. Her chief success in Canada has been with two comedy dramas The Splits, 1978 and Automatic Pilot, 1980, both dealing with uptight urban life as befits a writer who emanates from Canada's un-urban prairie west.

She is most interested in achieving a type of cinematic realism in her plays and to this end tries very hard to develop a real personal closeness to the characters she writes about. For her recent play Automatic Pilot, she researched the world of stand-up comedy inhabited by the central character by performing at a comedy cabaret in Toronto and felt that she would never have been able to handle the character without that kind of primary research.

In addition to her six plays, Erika Ritter has had published several short stories and articles and has also written for radio and television.

SHELDON ROSEN present chairman of the Guild of Canadian Playwrights, has been writing for the stage since 1971. In that time he has had 11 plays produced. He has written for children's theatre, mime, CBC television and

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