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LETTER DATED 17 JANUARY 1980 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ITALY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that the nine member States of the European Community issued in Brussels, on 15 January 1980, the following statement on the situation in Afghanistan:

"The Foreign Ministers of the nine countries of the European Community have focused their attention on the Afghan crisis, in the light of its dramatic developments, the debate in the Security Council, and the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

"The nine Ministers have reaffirmed their grave concern with regard to the crisis created by the military intervention of the USSR in Afghanistan, which represents a serious violation of the principles of international relations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

"They have emphasized that the explanations given by the Soviet Union to justify its intervention in Afghanistan are unacceptable. They take the view that the Soviet intervention constitutes a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of a non-aligned country belonging to the Islamic world, and constitutes - furthermore - a threat to peace, security and stability in the region, including the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and the Arab world.

"It is with great concern that the Foreign Ministers of the nine countries of the European Community have noted that despite the almost universal protests against the Soviet military intervention, the Soviet Union has vetoed a resolution on the Afghan crisis sponsored by non-aligned countries and supported by a large majority of members of the Security Council.

"They urge the Soviet Union to act in conformity with the resolution on the Afghan crisis adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations with an overwhelming majority, which calls for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan.

"The nine countries of the European Community have devoted continuous efforts to the cause of détente, and they remain convinced that this process is in the interest of all members of the international community. They are, however, convinced that détente is indivisible, and has a global dimension. They therefore urge the Soviet Union, in conformity with the standards and principles of the United Nations Charter, to allow the Afghan people to determine their own future without foreign interference.

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"In formulating their position on this important question, the Foreign Ministers of the nine countries of the European Community have also been clearly aware of the sufferings borne by the Afghan people as a whole, as a result of the crisis, including those Afghans who are being forced to leave their country."

I should be very grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Umberto LA ROCCA
Ambassador
