



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/42/PV.61
12 November 1987

ENGLISH

Forty-second session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 9 November 1987, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)
later: Mr. SALAH (Vice-President) (Jordan)
later: Mrs. ASTORGA GADEA (Vice-President) (Nicaragua)
later: Mr. MATOS PROENCA (Vice-President) (Portugal)

- The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security [31] (continued)

- (a) Report of the Secretary-General
- (b) Draft resolution
- (c) Amendments
- (d) Sub-amendments

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87-64365/A 1202V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 31 (continued)

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

- (a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/600)
- (b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/42/L.16)
- (c) AMENDMENTS (A/42/L.19)
- (d) SUB-AMENDMENTS (A/42/L.21)

Mr. WOOLCOTT (Australia): For eight years now the Assembly has been urging the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. For eight years we have been listening to unconvincing rationalizations of its original intervention and of the continued presence of Soviet troops in that small and still suffering country. For eight years the Australian Government has joined with the great majority of the Members of this Organization in expressing its concern at the toll in human lives and the plight of those who have been forced to remain and of those who have chosen to flee as refugees. This tragedy has continued for far too long; it must be brought to an end. A fair and equitable political solution must be found which will enable the proud people of Afghanistan to live in freedom and dignity under a Government that they themselves choose. It is time for Soviet troops to leave Afghanistan once and for all. Successive resolutions of this Assembly have called for their immediate withdrawal. So far the Soviet authorities have not respected the calls of this Assembly.

This Assembly has on a great many occasions rejected claims by the Soviet Union that its troops entered Afghanistan at the invitation of the Government of that country. The simple fact remains that Afghanistan was invaded so that a more compliant régime could be installed in Kabul. The problems that continue to

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

exist in Afghanistan - the suffering, the killing, the maiming and the destruction - are a direct result of that invasion and of the continuing presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

What then have been the consequences of the Soviet Union's refusal so far to implement the resolutions of this Assembly? I can think of eight.

First, the Soviet Union, a permanent member of the Security Council, is failing in its duty to play its part in maintaining international peace and security.

Second, the Soviet Union, which is often quick to criticize others for alleged failure to observe General Assembly resolutions, in this case refuses to recognize the Assembly's competence.

Third, the Soviet Union's present emphasis on the need for a new system of international peace and security is clouded by the failure of the Soviet Union itself to respect a very basic element of the Charter: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Fourth, the Soviet Union now finds itself ensnared in Afghanistan, where it seems clear the majority of the Afghan people have mounted an increasingly effective and costly resistance.

Fifth, inside Afghanistan the Soviet Union has in the past attacked and bombed the civilian population and has used methods which have provoked widespread condemnation within the international community.

Sixth, while the Soviet Union remains in Afghanistan, some other small, developing, non-aligned countries can hardly feel secure about their own immunity from external intervention.

Seventh, in addition to its tragic consequences for the people of Afghanistan, this conflict has been a major source of tension in the region and has aggravated

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the level of mistrust between the Soviet Union and the United States, the lessening of which is so important to the improved understanding between these two great Powers which all of us wish to see.

Eighth, Afghanistan's neighbours, Pakistan and Iran, have also had to endure a severe burden in sheltering massive numbers of refugees who have chosen and continue to choose to flee from the situation which the Soviet Union has caused. The way in which Pakistan has shouldered the bulk of these responsibilities and the role of humanitarian relief organizations, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in relieving the sufferings of the Afghan refugees have been admirable. Australia has contributed considerable humanitarian and relief aid to the refugees and we shall continue to bear our share of this burden.

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

The situation we have outlined is certainly depressing. It is important, however, not simply to focus on what has happened in the past. In situations of conflict and tension diplomacy must always look ahead and hope, not back in despair. So it is the future which should now concern us most. How can the United Nations help in restoring a climate of international confidence which takes account of the Soviet Union's concerns about its own security interests in that region and in which a lasting solution to the Afghanistan problem can be achieved. This is partly a matter of political will.

The climate of confidence can be created only if the Soviet Union, and all the parties concerned, seek earnestly a political solution in Afghanistan, a solution which sees the withdrawal of Soviet forces and which permits the Afghan people to exercise their fundamental right of having a government of their own choosing.

The Government of Australia has noted with interest Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's recent statement to this Assembly, in which he expressed the sincere desire to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan as soon as possible. We welcome that declaration and urge the Soviet Union to establish an acceptable timetable for the complete withdrawal of its forces.

We are aware, too, that the administration in Kabul has been speaking of a new and more flexible approach and of recent changes in its own policies.

Mr. Shevardnadze also noted in his statement that the United Nations plays an important role in seeking a peaceful solution in Afghanistan. Indeed, it does. The Australian Government has continued to follow, with hope and interest, the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, in seeking to facilitate a settlement of this serious problem. His efforts have earned Australia's support and commendation.

(Mr. Woolcott, Australia)

We have been interested to read in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, that in relation to Afghanistan, significant progress has been made in negotiations to find such a settlement and that these efforts have reached an advanced state. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that a neutral, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan, under a government in which the voices of all Afghans should be heard, will yield great benefits to all. The Australian Government wishes the Secretary-General well in his continuing endeavours.

No delegation would be happier than mine to see the removal of this item from the General Assembly's agenda.

Australia believes important changes are under way in the Soviet Union which have opened up new opportunities to reduce international tensions.

We have ourselves sought in recent years to improve our relations and broaden the base of our contacts with the Soviet Union. This desirable process would naturally be accelerated by real movement in the near future on the part of the Soviet Union towards a lasting political settlement in Afghanistan. The international community will continue to watch Soviet actions in Afghanistan in the hope that its actions in the very near future will give substance to these hopes.

In the meantime, the General Assembly should continue to react to what remains a violation of basic Charter principles and the abdication by a great Power of its special responsibilities to the international community.

The General Assembly has a responsibility to reiterate to the Soviet Union its accountability to the international community for its actions. Australia will, therefore, vote in favour of the draft resolution before us, as it stands in A/42/L.16, in the sincere hope that the Soviet Union will in the very near future comply with the moral force of the Assembly's actions.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation regrets to say that, in spite of some encouraging progress in the search for ways to a just settlement of the Afghan problem, it has not been resolved so far and the General Assembly has found itself once again embroiled in a debate on this problem.

We strongly feel that the reason behind it is that a number of States Members of the United Nations which have a direct or indirect bearing on the armed interference from outside in the internal affairs of Afghanistan have for the eighth year now not only failed to show willingness to contribute to the solution of the Afghan problem but on the contrary have been making every attempt to exploit the situation around and inside that country in their narrow selfish political interests with a view to preserving an area of tension at the Soviet Union's southern border, cast aspersions on our policy in the context of Afghanistan and on the positive processes that are under way in that country, and raise artificial obstacles to the emerging relaxation of the overall international situation. Such an approach, which has been manifest throughout these years in the debates on the agenda item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", as well as in the relevant resolutions that have been adopted so far, was not constructive, did not correspond to the actual situation in Afghanistan itself and at the Afghan-Pakistani talks in Geneva, and did not contain the elements of new thinking that are now beginning to emerge in dealing with international affairs. Not that such an approach reflects in any way the steps that were taken by the Soviet side towards resolving the Afghan problem.

Our delegation declares from this rostrum with full candour and responsibility that an early achievement of an Afghan settlement through peaceful means is one of the top priority goals of the current efforts of the Soviet Union in the

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

international arena. Our country is ready to do everything it can to ensure that the Afghan knot is unravelled on a just and mutually acceptable basis and that peace, tranquillity and constructive life at last become reality in Afghanistan.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

We are not pursuing any far-reaching goals with respect to that country and do not have any intention to bring it within the sphere of our own influence. Those that engage in spreading fabrications about the USSR's purposes and intentions to that effect hardly believe that themselves. It is our sincere desire to see Afghanistan an independent, neutral, non-aligned country and, naturally, friendly to the Soviet Union. And we do not invest the notion of "friendly" with any special meaning. Afghanistan is our neighbour and our desire to maintain relations of friendship and good-neighbourliness with it is quite understandable.

If any problem, particularly one so complex as that of Afghanistan, is to be resolved, one must understand above all what lies behind it. Obviously, this is essential, especially since, in the statements in the general debate by the representatives of the United States, Pakistan and some other countries, attempts were once again made to portray the matter as if this question arose as a result of the sending of Soviet troops to Afghanistan. This was mentioned even in the early stage of the general debate. We cannot possibly agree to such an interpretation because it is absolutely not in keeping with the true facts. The origin of the Afghan question - and this is well known - was not the sending of our military contingent there, but the armed interference from outside, which began, incidentally, long before our troops appeared in Afghanistan, and which led to the destabilization of the situation inside the country and forced the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to turn to us for assistance. As for the Soviet troops, we are not going to keep them long in Afghanistan, especially since a political decision to withdraw our military contingent has already been made by the Soviet leadership and will be implemented - on the understanding, of course, that the interference from outside in the internal affairs of Afghanistan is ended.

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On that basis, the purposes of an Afghan settlement, as we see it, should be, first, to end the interference and guarantee that it will not be renewed - which will make it possible to withdraw our troops; and, second, to give an opportunity to the Afghan people themselves to normalize the situation in their country and deal with all other internal Afghan affairs. In our view, it is possible to achieve these external and internal goals, at the Afghanistan-Pakistan talks on a political settlement which are carried out in Geneva with the assistance of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Diego Cordovez, and on the basis of the current course towards national reconciliation being pursued in Afghanistan. These are parallel, logically interlinked and mutually complementary processes. All the efforts of the leadership of Afghanistan, which meet with the full understanding and support of the Soviet Union, and not the Soviet Union alone, are now focused precisely on promoting and advancing these processes.

The present situation in Afghanistan is shaped in many ways by the national reconciliation policy that has been in effect there since the beginning of this year. That policy is unquestionably the manifestation of political wisdom and will, as well as the non-traditional approach of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to the problems besetting its country. At the root of this policy is the desire to bring to an end the bloodshed inside the country, bring peace to the land of Afghanistan and achieve national accord by promoting a broad dialogue with the various opposition forces within and outside Afghanistan and setting up a representative coalition Government. Furthermore, in the framework of this policy the Afghan leadership has taken some bold and far-reaching practical steps. Specifically, the cease-fire with regard to those armed groups of the opposition that are not engaged in active hostilities has been extended by another

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six months - that is, to 15 January 1988. In keeping with this decision, the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan have been instructed to confine their actions to protecting the State border, and public and military facilities, escorting transport columns and carrying out other exclusively defensive missions.

Activities of other political parties in addition to the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) have been officially permitted. The process of legalizing the parties and groups that previously operated in secret or registering new parties seeking national reconciliation has already begun. Under the law that has been passed, they will have the right to join the National Fatherland Front, put up their candidates for election and print their own publications.

Patriotically-minded Afghan clergy have already expressed their desire to establish an Islamic party. The conditions also exist for the emergence of a peasant party, as well as of parties that reflect the interests of liberal circles among the national bourgeoisie.

A decree has been issued on a general amnesty applicable to all Afghans who have been involved in the fight against the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, including leaders and members of armed groups. As of today more than 6,000 people have been released under this amnesty.

The idea of establishing a coalition Government, with a broad policy platform unifying all those that advocate an end to the bloodshed and agree that Afghanistan should remain in the long run an independent, neutral and non-aligned State is increasingly taking practical shape. Recently an offer was made to the opposition to fill about half the posts in a future coalition Government, including those of Prime Minister and Vice-President.

These practical steps by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan clearly and obviously corroborate its statement that the Party does not claim a monopoly on

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power in the country but is willing to share it with the opposition and accept any reasonable compromises for the sake of safeguarding the supreme interests of Afghanistan. Indeed, the reconciliation process is already introducing even now some substantial adjustments in the political system of the Afghan society, the main ones being the establishment of a multi-party system and of a coalition Government.

It cannot be said that the implementation of the national reconciliation policy is proceeding smoothly. Some extremist counter-revolutionary groups have so far rejected the proposals of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, while continuing to count on armed struggle. Such a position lacks any sense of reality.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan is the largest political party, with nine years' experience in leading Afghanistan during what has been an extraordinarily difficult, watershed period in its history. Refusal to engage in dialogue with the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan on the establishment of a future coalition Government only delays a peaceful settlement, both inside and around Afghanistan.

The ideas of national reconciliation and a coalition Government are receiving increasingly active support, not only among the population of the country, but also among numerous refugees, who have found themselves - for one reason or another - outside Afghanistan, as well as among those opposition forces who value highly the interests of their country and oppose the designs imposed upon them with a view to continuing the undeclared war against Afghanistan "to the last Afghan".

Some 90,000 refugees have already returned to the country from camps in Pakistan and Iran, in spite of numerous obstacles. Thirty thousand members of armed groups of the opposition have laid down their arms and ceased hostilities against the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Over 100,000 members of their families have returned to a peaceful life with them.

In the meantime, the national reconciliation policy is bringing forth in practice some elements of a truly coalition Government. In Afghanistan, this process is developing from the local level up. There are now in the country districts and provinces, which are headed by former leaders of armed opposition groups, who have declared their readiness to co-operate with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to achieve national reconciliation. Some 6,000 representatives of the opposition are actively participating - on the basis of equal rights with representatives of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan - in the work of village, community, district and provincial commissions for national reconciliation.

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These positive processes are, however, encountering bitter resistance from certain outside forces that would like to see the events in Afghanistan develop in accordance with their scenarios, rather than in accordance with the will of the Afghan people.

Although the United States Administration officially declares its readiness to contribute to an Afghan settlement by peaceful means, those statements, unfortunately, fail to be backed up by concrete actions; in fact, its actions testify, rather, to the opposite. Those actions demonstrate the desire to continue the policy aimed at a military solution to the problem and at slowing down a political settlement by expanding the scale of the undeclared war against Afghanistan. It is no secret that United States military and financial assistance, first, to the most extremist groups of the Afghan counter-revolution, has been steadily increasing. During the period from 1980 to 1983, Washington annually allocated an average of \$100 million in military assistance to Afghan rebels. Later the United States Administration began to provide several hundred million dollars every year for the same purpose. In 1987, the amount of such assistance has reached \$670 million and, in 1988, it is expected to be more than \$1 billion.

There is an impression that the United States Administration continues to rely on interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, using the territory of Pakistan as a springboard for carrying out its plans with regard to that country. There has been stepped-up training in special camps on the territory of Pakistan, with the help of foreign instructors, of groups of saboteurs and terrorists, who, having received from their bosses and guardians the most advanced weapons, are then infiltrated into Afghanistan, where they terrorize the innocent population, fire at populated centres and stage explosions and arson.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

Speaking of advanced weapons which are supplied to these groups, one cannot fail to mention the United States Stinger and British Blow-pipe missiles. Indeed, some of those missiles are being used in Afghanistan to shoot down civilian and transport aeroplanes. As a result, dozens of passengers, including women and children, die. But those "freedom fighters" who are supplied with the missiles apparently also consider them to be a good source of personal income. They sell some of the United States and British missiles to any person or group willing to pay cash. As a result, we witness a direct encouragement of international terrorism. Some time ago, Washington and London dismissed the reasonable warning about the particular danger involved in making such missiles available to Afghan extremist groups and their like. But, where is the guarantee that the Stingers and Blow-pipes, which are being sold clandestinely at Pakistani bazaars, are not already in the hands of international terrorists and that they will not be used tomorrow against the civil aircraft of any country, including the United States and Britain?

Evidently not everyone in this Hall is ready to acknowledge the unquestionable truth that outside interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan continues, and that, unless it is stopped and guarantees are provided that the interference will not be resumed, it is impossible to discuss seriously a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. But, after all, it is precisely in the spirit of such an understanding that the Afghan-Pakistan talks are now being conducted through the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, talks that we believe to be the most realistic path leading to a settlement. Therefore, the Soviet Union actively supports the activities of the United Nations along these lines. It greatly appreciates the efforts of Mr. Diego Cordovez, which are aimed at giving a continuous momentum to the talks, and is ready to assist his mission in every way possible. As is pointed out in the Secretary-General's report on agenda item 31,

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during his meeting with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 29 June 1987, Mikhail S. Gorbachev expressed his

"strong support for the United Nations diplomatic process". (A/42/600, para. 9)

We know that the talks are not proceeding smoothly; nevertheless, substantial progress has been made recently. It is emphasized in the same report that:

"The negotiating process towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement has reached an advanced stage. Substantial though not sufficiently sustained progress has been made ...in the efforts to conclude the international instruments that will comprise the settlement." (A/42/600, para. 2)

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The negotiations have now in fact reached the final stage and there are grounds for hope that in the near future the parties will achieve final agreements and sign the relevant documents for the settlement which will ensure an end to interference and provide for international guarantees that interference will not be resumed and for the voluntary return of refugees, and also will put on record the interrelationship of these processes with the time-frame for withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

We call on the participants in the Geneva negotiations, particularly the Pakistani side, to show good will and greater flexibility and to make one more - perhaps the last - effort in order to translate the emerging agreement into reality.

We consider that the United Nations, as a universal international Organization, could make a weighty contribution to an early settlement of the Afghan problem by actively assisting in the Geneva negotiating process and by creating an increasingly favourable political climate for bringing peace to and normalizing the situation in and around Afghanistan.

For the last eight years the General Assembly has been adopting a draft resolution - prepared by Pakistan in co-sponsorship with a group of countries - on the agenda item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security". The Soviet delegation, and delegations of a number of other States, considering the draft resolution as biased, unconstructive and one-sided, have voted all these years against the draft resolution. Its main shortcoming is, in our view, that the call for the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan, as contained in the draft resolution, is not balanced with a call for scrupulous abstention from outside interference in the internal affairs of that country. Furthermore, it appears to us that the draft resolution also fails to reflect such a positive development in the Afghan

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situation as the substantial progress that has been taking place at the Geneva talks.

At the forty-second session of the General Assembly the Pakistani delegation, regrettably, once again submitted without any changes its draft resolution on Afghanistan which has become sort of "traditional". Our fundamental attitude to the draft resolution, as submitted, remains unchanged.

At the same time, a number of delegations from non-aligned States, aware of the shortcomings in the draft resolution and desirous of contributing to the speeding-up of the process of the peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem, have expressed their willingness to introduce certain amendments. We support these constructive efforts and view the new approach to the draft resolution as positive. This approach makes it possible to avoid unnecessary confrontation at this session and contributes to the ultimate goals of an Afghan settlement. The inclusion of such amendments would make it possible to balance the draft resolution, make it acceptable also to those States that previously abstained or opposed it and create real conditions for its adoption by consensus.

The Soviet delegation calls on the delegations of other countries to support the amendments to the draft resolution submitted by Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic, thereby demonstrating realism, a constructive approach and good will towards the Afghan problem as a whole and towards ways of achieving its early peaceful settlement.

The question stands in the following terms: Is Pakistan on this occasion again striving to ensure that the General Assembly should again be split during the voting on the draft resolution on Afghanistan, which would, of course, in no way contribute to its implementation? Or, on the contrary, would the delegation of Pakistan and the other sponsoring delegations demonstrate an interest in giving the

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draft resolution a chance of being unanimously adopted? For our part, we are firmly in favour of the second possibility.

Unfortunately, the sub-amendments introduced by Pakistan to the compromise amendments of Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic are evidence of the die-hard nature of the confrontational approach. Nevertheless, we venture to hope that this is not the last word from the Pakistan delegation and that efforts towards mutual understanding and co-operation will be continued.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Eduard Shevardnadze, in his address before the forty-second session of the General Assembly, noted the existence of a new encouraging trend in the Afghan settlement, one that is:

"... in keeping with our sincere desire to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan as soon as possible, and in this we are meeting with the full understanding of the Afghan leadership." (A/42/PV.9, p. 18)

We are ready to contribute to the further development of this trend, so as to make it an irreversible process, and we expect that our willingness will meet with understanding and support from all other States.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): Once again, for the eighth time since January 1980, the General Assembly is considering the question of Afghanistan. Regrettably, in spite of all efforts made and positions stated by the international community, as represented in the United Nations, the question of Afghanistan remains without a satisfactory solution that would enable the Afghani people to exercise their absolute right to self-determination, free from outside intervention.

The Afghani people has gone through exceedingly difficult and complex circumstances as a result of foreign military intervention against that heroic Muslim people, a people with a centuries old civilization and history.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

This has not only led to the deterioration of the internal situation, the eruption of armed conflicts and constant acts of violence but also compelled millions of Afghans to leave their homes and flee to neighbouring sister countries. All this has resulted in suffering, agony, displacement and destruction such as was never before witnessed by the people of Afghanistan or its territory and towns. This situation is not confined to the territory of Afghanistan but has gone beyond it to encompass the territories and boundaries of another sister Islamic country, whose circumstances have compelled it to be host to millions of brother people. The trans-border incursions and the concomitant destruction of many villages and towns in Pakistan have further complicated the situation and created a new threat to international peace and security in that sensitive region of West Asia.

Since this situation came into being Egypt has followed it with grave concern. It has expressed from the outset its intention to stand by the Afghan people in their legitimate struggle to bring about a satisfactory settlement of their problems.

On another level Egypt has affirmed its support for the people of Pakistan as they shoulder the burden of hospitality to the millions of Afghan brethren. My country has made clear its unequivocal, firm position regarding the settlement, declaring that it must take account of the following conditions: first, the need for all international Powers, big and small alike, to respect the United Nations Charter and not to resort to the use or threat of use of force in international relations; secondly, the need to respect the right of the Afghan people to choose their national path and form of government free from outside interference, acts of violence and subversion; thirdly, the need for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the cessation of foreign armed intervention in the affairs of

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Afghanistan, and respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence; and fourthly, the need to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and boundaries of the countries neighbouring Afghanistan and not to affect in any way the peoples of those States or their property.

In less than two months the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan will have lasted for eight years, during which period many resolutions calling for the termination of this situation have been adopted. Nevertheless, none of those resolutions has yet been implemented.

We have followed with great interest and appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, to ensure the implementation of these resolutions through proximity talks with the parties directly concerned in the settlement of the question.

Despite the fact that the Secretary-General's report (A/42/600), refers to the achievement of some progress, we remain convinced that a decisive step towards the speedy withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of Afghanistan and commitment to a time-frame agreed by all the parties concerned, would be the most important elements in providing the objective conditions that would make it possible for the people of Afghanistan to enjoy stability and tranquillity and lead to the reconstruction of internal institutions by a national consensus of the Afghan people.

Egypt reaffirms the importance of responding to the efforts of the Secretary-General with a view to such a settlement, Egypt is also convinced of the importance of the role we can all play, whether individually or in the framework of the United Nations or other important groupings, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and regional organizations, to advance towards that settlement.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Words of truth and a sincere, honest opinion should offend nobody. As a matter of fact, frankness is the measure of sincerity in relations among friends. We therefore once again urge the termination of this sad situation surrounding Afghanistan so as to provide an opportunity for the peoples of the region to live in peace and security, free from external interference. Such interference can only impede the development and stability of those sister societies.

Mr. FERM (Sweden): When future historians write the history of the 1980s the bitter and bloody war in Afghanistan will assume a prominent place. They will ask, as we do, what motivated a super-Power, with 280 million inhabitants and with vast military capabilities, both conventional and nuclear, to invade a neighbour, a small, non-aligned, developing country, and subject its people to many years of relentless, indiscriminate warfare. They will ask, as we do, how it was possible that a permanent member of the Security Council felt free to motivate its invasion by falsely pretending that it had been invited into the country by a legitimate Afghan Government.

Many aspects of the war in Afghanistan remain hidden from us, but what is not hidden is the ugly face of the war. The numbers of those killed and of those that have had to flee their homes and their country are enormous. Perhaps as many as one third of the Afghan population are now refugees, living in poverty and insecurity.

Soviet troops have committed serious violations of international law and humanitarian principles in their indiscriminate warfare against the Afghan people. During the long course of the war we have seen reports of the use of area bombardment, anti-personnel mines and so-called toy bombs, as well as the wilful

(Mr. Fern, Sweden)

destruction of crops. There have also been many reports of gross violations of human rights, including torture, summary executions and other forms of victimization of the civilian population. My Government condemns these practices.

Many of the victims are children, the most vulnerable group in any population. It is impossible to say how many children have died since the war started - from starvation, as a result of poor health care or as direct victims of the bloodshed in the country. Some shocking estimates speak of millions. Many of those who have survived have never seen the land of their parents. When will they be able to return to their homeland? The children of Afghanistan cannot speak for themselves. It is the duty of the international community to speak for them, the future generations of Afghanistan.*

*Mr. Salah (Jordan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

The situation in Afghanistan has been on the agenda of the United Nations ever since the Soviet invasion in late 1979, and rightly so. The invasion and the continued presence of Soviet troops constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter. This is particularly disturbing in view of the fact that the Soviet Union is a permanent member of the Security Council and as such is entrusted with a special responsibility for upholding international peace and security. The world has the right to expect a permanent member of the Security Council to live up to its legal and moral obligations instead of violating the fundamental rules of international relations.

Through the years the General Assembly has stood firm on the issue. Every year it has adopted - by an overwhelming majority - a resolution which contains the elements necessary for a peaceful and fair end to the conflict: that is, that all foreign forces must be withdrawn from Afghanistan, that the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government must be respected, that the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be upheld, and that the millions of Afghan refugees must be able to return to their homes in safety and honour.

These elements also reflect the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. It is on this basis that the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Under-Secretary-General Cordovez, have undertaken efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of the conflict. They have the full support of my Government in these endeavours. It is our hope that all the parties concerned will actively facilitate these talks.

The Swedish Government has, from the beginning, repeatedly and categorically condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the aggression against the Afghan people. We intend, this year as in the past, to support the draft resolution on

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the subject. We do so out of solidarity with Afghanistan and its people but also because it is our deep conviction that international affairs must be conducted in strict compliance with the United Nations Charter and international law. Sweden is a small and peace-loving nation pursuing a policy of neutrality, and we consider it not only our right but also in our national interest to protest whenever the rights of a small nation are trampled by big Powers. In a wider perspective, no country - not even the big and powerful in our time - will gain from a situation in which the rules of international law are replaced by the law of the jungle.

My Government has listened with interest to the new signals from Moscow, which have been interpreted by many Governments as a willingness to find a solution to the conflict. But it is imperative that the words be translated into action by the speedy withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

During this tragic conflict the Swedish Government has firmly supported various humanitarian activities carried out by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and by non-governmental organizations to assist the victims of the conflict. It should be noted in this connection that the neighbouring countries, in particular Pakistan and Iran, have had to face a refugee problem of gigantic proportions. They have done so with great generosity and at considerable sacrifice.

It is of paramount importance that international assistance to the victims of the conflict be continued, in particular to the most vulnerable groups of the Afghan people. Sweden will continue its support for these activities.

The last operative paragraph of the draft resolution before us requests that this item, "The situation in Afghanistan", be discussed also at the next session of the General Assembly. This we have decided now year after year. I cannot avoid asking myself for how many more years this Assembly will have to discuss the

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

conflict. Are the historians to write that the war continued into the 1990s? It is our fervent hope that this will not be the case. The responsibility for putting an end to the war lies primarily with the Soviet Union. Let nearly one decade of suffering for the Afghan people be enough.

Mr. ENDREFFY (Hungary): Since the last session of the General Assembly some favourable changes have taken place both in the general international situation and in and around Afghanistan which might facilitate the attainment, at long last, of a comprehensive settlement of the issue before us. In the present statement I need not dwell on the development of the international situation; rather I should like to concentrate on the specifics as they affect the prospects for a negotiated settlement.

In his report to the General Assembly last year the Secretary-General emphasized that bold and decisive steps of national reconciliation would be needed to ensure that the settlement commanded the support of all segments of the Afghan people. In this regard, I should like to refer to the changes that have taken place in Afghanistan, particularly to the policy of national reconciliation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. In order to normalize the situation, thousands of commissions of national reconciliation have been set up all over the territory of Afghanistan to negotiate with the opponents of the Government. To create conditions more conducive to the process of normalization, a unilateral cease-fire has been declared. The draft of a new constitution is being debated. A law has been promulgated on the establishment and activities of political parties.

These and other measures have contributed to a situation which, in our understanding, provides a better basis than ever before for enabling the Afghan people to live a normal, peaceful life.

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

Positive developments have been emerging also from the Geneva talks held this year. Having studied the report of the Secretary-General, we have been gratified to note that

"The negotiating process towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement has reached an advanced stage. Substantial though not sufficiently sustained progress has been made ..." (A/42/600, para. 2)

In the two rounds of talks held at Geneva from 25 February to 9 March and, subsequently, from 7 to 10 September, the existing gap between the positions concerning the time-frame for withdrawal was further reduced.

With respect to the Geneva talks, I should like to express my delegation's appreciation of and support for the Secretary-General's efforts. We should like to see them continued with renewed vigour.

We express the hope that the decision of the General Assembly will reflect the positive changes I referred to in the earlier part of my statement. We cannot pretend that nothing has happened since last year, and we should be well advised to avoid a situation in which we would again be required to vote on a one-sided draft resolution, such as draft resolution A/42/L.16, that divides the membership.

(Mr. Endreffy, Hungary)

Such a course of action would not serve any useful purpose and would certainly not contribute to the attainment of our joint goal - a negotiated settlement. Therefore, we would appeal to delegations to support the amendments introduced by Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic in document A/42/L.19. The additions proposed in that document are not directed against the interests of anyone; rather, they would improve and balance the draft resolution and make it acceptable to all.

Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia): The situation in Afghanistan is one of those questions that represent a serious source of tension and confrontation in international relations and burden the overall situation in the world. This is one of those trouble spots where a political solution would certainly have far-reaching positive effects on international peace and security.

Yugoslavia, like the entire international community, is following with attention the diplomatic efforts to find the way out of the existing situation. We have noted that the directly interested parties are showing an increased readiness to seek the basis for a political solution to this problem through dialogue and negotiations within the United Nations. We consider that this should be done even more resolutely and without hesitation.

In this context, we have also noted the assessment in the report of the Secretary-General that

"The negotiating process towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement has reached an advanced stage"

as well as his conclusion that

"Substantial though not sufficiently sustained progress has been made in the past year in the efforts to conclude the international instruments that will comprise settlement". (A/42/600, para. 2)

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

We have always proceeded from the position that international problems, irrespective of their nature and complexity, cannot be solved by the use of force, intervention or the imposition of solutions from outside that are by their nature alien and therefore unacceptable. In this context, we have from the very beginning resolutely opposed foreign military intervention and the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan.

We have pointed to the need for the urgent and immediate withdrawal of foreign troops and the creation of necessary conditions for the realization of the inalienable right of the Afghan people to decide on its internal social system and development freely and independently, without outside pressure and foreign interference. Those are, in our opinion, the essential prerequisites for ensuring full respect for Afghanistan's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status, short of which there can be no lasting stabilization of the situation in that country and in the broader area of South-West Asia. Along those lines, we have fully supported and continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez.

The problem of Afghanistan has thus demonstrated once again that solutions in relations among sovereign States cannot be imposed by military intervention and foreign will, since doing so only further complicates those relations and transforms them into new dangerous sources of international tension. It is our impression that the directly involved parties are becoming ever-more aware of that fact.

Together with other non-aligned countries, Yugoslavia has been consistent in opposing the use of force, military intervention, encroachment on sovereignty and independence and the denial of the right of peoples and countries to choose their internal social solutions and determine their development freely and independently,

(Mr. Pejic, Yugoslavia)

irrespective of who pursues this policy and where it is pursued. Political developments in the world have best demonstrated that such a policy is untenable.

Those were also the main reasons that motivated non-aligned countries in initiating at the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly the adoption of the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States. On this occasion I should like to refer again to the provision from that Declaration that no country or group of countries has the right to intervene or interfere in the internal affairs of other States in whatever form, for whatever reason or under whatever pretext.

Ever since the outbreak of the Afghan crisis, Yugoslavia has been stressing the need for its peaceful solution on the basis of respect for the authentic aspirations and interests of the Afghan people. We continue to maintain that position.

The progress towards a political solution mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General should encourage the international community and the world Organization to address themselves even more actively to finding a solution to the crisis in Afghanistan through the withdrawal of foreign troops and the elimination of the situation created by foreign intervention, so as to enable the people of Afghanistan to decide its own destiny freely and independently and without any form of foreign interference.

We earnestly hope that the efforts of the Secretary-General to overcome the existing differences and obstacles on the road to a peaceful solution will bear concrete results. The success of these efforts not only would make possible the elimination of a serious source of international tension, mistrust and bloc-rivalry in an area already shaken by dangerous conflicts and instability, but would also greatly contribute to the strengthening and affirmation of the role and influence

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of the United Nations in resolving all other outstanding international issues affecting peace and security in the world. It would also enable the millions of Afghan refugees to return home and participate in political and other processes in the reconstruction of their country. This is not only a humanitarian but also a political problem which constitutes a great burden on neighbouring countries.

The draft resolution before us contains, in our opinion, a widely acceptable basis for a comprehensive and just solution to this problem. Consistent in its policy, Yugoslavia will vote in favour of the draft resolution this year, as it has done on similar draft resolutions in the past.

Mr. TURKMEN (Turkey): The plight of an entire nation which has remained for eight years in the grip of a traumatic confrontation cannot be easily described. In fact, the title of the important item on our agenda today, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", does not pretend to describe the massive tragedy that has befallen that country. It has come to symbolize, however, for the past eight years, the overwhelming support of the international community for the Afghan people in their determined and persistent efforts to recover and fully exercise their inalienable rights, free from any unlawful outside intervention. The legitimate struggle being waged by the people of Afghanistan for national liberation has gained the admiration of the whole world, because of their endurance and moral strength.

In its eighth year, the military confrontation in Afghanistan remains a major source of tension, with far-reaching implications, particularly in the East-West context. More than ever before, the present intense conflict in Afghanistan points to the constantly growing urgency of the need for a political settlement.

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

The parties concerned should co-operate in good faith with the Secretary-General who has, through his Personal Representative, so diligently endeavoured to promote and facilitate the emergence of a mutually acceptable political solution which will encompass the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the voluntary return of the Afghan refugees to their homes in safety and honour and the restoration of the international status of that Muslim country as a bona fide member of the Non-Aligned Movement. The sincere efforts of Pakistan in the search for a peaceful solution have not yet been fully reciprocated. The Afghan nation as a whole must be given the chance to regain peace in its own country and to live in harmony with its neighbours. It is with these considerations in mind that Turkey has this year too sponsored the draft resolution relating to the situation in Afghanistan.

During the past year the issue of the time-frame emerged as the principal outstanding point for finalizing the package structured in the course of the proximity talks. Despite the expectations which were created of narrowing the gap between the positions of the parties in this regard, we regret to note that no substantial movement has been made and that no agreement has yet been possible on this last important point. We appreciate that the parties are faced with critical decisions. We hope that in future rounds it will be possible, with vision and political courage, to take the decisive step towards a mutually acceptable time-frame that would ensure the speedy withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. The prospects of a political settlement would be negatively affected if this step were to be held in abeyance for too long.

The events of the last eight years have obviously created a saga of suffering and sorrow in and around Afghanistan and have given rise to internecine divisions in various segments of the Afghan society. The need for the Afghan people to begin to tend their wounds under a comprehensive settlement is both urgent and

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fundamental; hence, the need for a genuine reconciliation. It would be unrealistic, however, to expect such a reconciliation to take place under the circumstances at present prevailing in Afghanistan. It is already apparent that such a programme is unacceptable to the Afghan resistance and the Afghan refugees. There is no benefit to anyone in using the concept of national reconciliation as a propaganda instrument, without actually creating the conditions necessary for that process. In particular, it is impossible to pursue such a policy hand in hand with simultaneous military operations against the Afghan people. That is basically why progress towards a genuine national consensus on Afghanistan has so far remained illusory.

In the course of the past year we have also noted with serious concern the sharp escalation in the continued violations of Pakistan's air space and territory, which have often resulted in loss of life as well as material damage. It would be a mistake to underestimate the dangers inherent in such acts. It is clear that these violations should be discontinued. We can only applaud the mature stand adopted by Pakistan in the face of provocations and invite attention to the harmful effects and complications such inadmissible actions could create for the peace-making process.

Five million Afghan refugees, mainly in Pakistan and Iran, and the continuing flow of new ones not only constitute a reminder of the magnitude of the humanitarian dimension of the problem, but also underline the urgency of the need to work out a just and comprehensive political settlement of this active confrontation. Pakistan has for years been providing a haven for the largest concentration of refugees anywhere in the world. The solution of this problem is directly related to a political settlement. The problem of Afghanistan, which has been identified with a period of grave tension at both the regional and the global

(Mr. Turkmen, Turkey)

level, must now be addressed with the forward-looking approach which the Afghans as a nation and international public opinion have long waited.

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan said today that Afghanistan is a test case for the strengthening of global confidence. We agree with him, and we are encouraged by his assessment that a ray of hope can now be detected in the situation surrounding Afghanistan.

The draft resolution before us aims at translating these expectations into a recommendation to the parties concerned. It does not conflict with the negotiating process or run counter to the framework for a comprehensive settlement that has been developed through diplomatic efforts, but on the contrary expresses support for both. It is a restrained, moderate appeal for a peaceful end to a serious conflict situation. The least that can be done to encourage an honourable settlement that will enable Afghanistan to live as a non-aligned Islamic country at peace with itself and with its neighbours is to support the draft resolution.

Mr. OTT (German Democratic Republic): The German Democratic Republic notes with satisfaction that an encouraging development has lately been apparent in regard to the situation in and around Afghanistan.

Efforts towards a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the problem have got under way. In the context of addressing this conflict also there has been increasing awareness that a reasonable solution must be sought only at the negotiating table and through dialogue based on equality and strict respect for the United Nations Charter. There is no alternative.

This point of view, which was reaffirmed by the Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic in this forum some weeks ago, is also guiding my delegation in the current debate. Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer said:

"The German Democratic Republic welcomes the initiatives taken by the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union for a political

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

settlement of the situation that has developed in the region. The process of national reconciliation which the Afghan Government has initiated must no longer be affected by foreign interference." (A/42/PV.10, pp. 76, 77)

The German Democratic Republic sees its position confirmed by the experience of previous years that interventionist discussions and actions that go against the legitimate interests of the Afghan people, far from being helpful, tend rather to complicate a political solution to the situation that has developed around Afghanistan.

Particular attention should be given to the following statements by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly:

"I have stressed in the past that a negotiated settlement is the only possible way to achieve peace in Afghanistan"

and

"bold and decisive steps of national reconciliation would be needed to ensure that the settlement commands the support of all segments of the Afghan people". (A/42/600, para. 10)

My delegation fully subscribes to that assessment. The German Democratic Republic notes that initiatives of the People's Democratic Party and the Government of Afghanistan have set off a process which deserves to be constructively assisted by all Member States of the United Nations. This process serves the just cause of the Afghan people, which has chosen the path of national democratic transformation and is striving to build a society free of exploitation and oppression in which all Afghans can take their place.

(Mr. Ott, German Democratic Republic)

This is the goal of the intensified efforts being undertaken by the Democratic People's Party and the Government of Afghanistan to give effect to their policy of national reconciliation nation-wide. To that end, over 3,200 commissions have been set up across the country. A series of confidence-building measures were taken by the Afghan leadership to set in motion the national dialogue to end the bloodshed and to lend momentum to the exchange of views about the country's future development.

Those measures include the cease-fire by the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which was announced on 15 January 1987 for a six-month period and was then extended unilaterally up to 15 January 1988. One of the first results of the consolidating and deepening process of national reconciliation is the return of over 90,000 refugees to their Afghan homeland and the fact that more than 30,000 members of the armed oppositional groups within the country have by now laid down their arms. The amnesty for 6,000 detainees and legal provisions for government assistance and the restitution of previously held property to returning refugees also serve the purpose of reconciliation. Another move has been the invitation to all oppositional quarters inside and outside the country which are honestly ready for talks and participation in the nationwide process of reconstruction to join a coalition Government of national unity.

The admission of additional political parties and the draft of a national constitution which is being broadly discussed among the Afghan people are geared to the further democratization of their country.

It is evident that the course of national reconciliation is suited to guaranteeing the independent, sovereign, non-aligned and neutral status of Afghanistan and to proceeding with the transformation along national democratic lines when armed hostilities have come to an end. It is undeniable that ever

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broader sections of the Afghan people are joining in to sustain this process. Recent congresses of the national business community, the clergy and Islamic scholars and artists, who had voiced their clear support of it, were not the least evidence of this fact.

There has been ample proof, we believe, of the firm determination of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to stabilize the situation in the country. It is, however, just as essential to create external conditions for peace in and around Afghanistan. This requires above all stopping all designs to incite oppositional elements to violent acts and to finance and equip them with sophisticated weapons.

The German Democratic Republic whole-heartedly supports the initiatives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which indicate its sincere interest in developing good-neighbourly relations with the States of the region and actively assisting in restoring the regional situation to normalcy.

This was manifest also in the indirect talks between the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and Pakistan held in Geneva under the auspices of the representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Diego Cordovez.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/42/600) to the General Assembly notes that these talks have reached an advanced stage. It is fair to say that the readiness of the Afghan side to have a further shortened time-frame for the return of the limited contingent of Soviet troops, which is in the country at the Afghan Government's request, has not been the least factor in this regard. We share the view reflected in the Secretary-General's report that further progress depends not on one side alone.

The Soviet Union, too, contributed constructively to the desired solution through the return of six regiments from Afghanistan in October 1986. It will be

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recalled that it declared its readiness to deploy back also all its other troops on the basis of international guarantees for the inviolability of Afghanistan's frontiers.

It has been the German Democratic Republic's basic position that Afghanistan and its neighbours do not have any problems with one another that could not be resolved peacefully, by way of negotiation. A political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan would no doubt be in the interest of all the parties concerned. It would mark an important step towards the restoration of peace and security both in the region and beyond.

In a spirit of active solidarity, the Government and people of the German Democratic Republic will continue to support the aspirations of the Afghan people and its Government for national reconciliation, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We are firmly convinced that the Afghan people will not allow itself to be deprived of its gains in many spheres of social life, and that it will maintain the status of a non-aligned country that wishes to have good relations with all States. A realistic and reasoned approach by all Member States of the United Nations could very much contribute to that end. A balanced resolution taking account of the interests of all the parties to the conflict would be practical.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic would therefore appreciate a decision that would be acceptable to all sides by showing regard for the legitimate interests of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and it would be pleased to support any such decisions coming about by way of consensus.

Mr. VONGSAY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): For the ninth consecutive time, the General Assembly is addressing the so-called Afghan problem. In the course of previous debates, no prospect for a

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solution has been glimpsed due to lack of political will on the part of those who have meddled and continue to meddle in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Some have refused to take into account all the elements of the matter. Some have sought so far to impose their own views upon that independent and sovereign country, as may be seen from some of the essential provisions of the resolutions adopted to date by the Assembly.

The Afghan people, like all peoples of the world, intends to exercise its alienable right to determine the form of its own Government and to choose its own economic, political and social system, free of all interventions, subversion and external constraint of any kind whatsoever. This sacred and inalienable right was exercised by the Afghan people in April 1978, the date on which the people's democratic régime was founded.

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Democratic Republic)

This is a domestic matter exclusively within the purview of this sovereign, independent country and its people, which have thus freed themselves from the oppression of the old régime. It is quite normal that the radical changes brought about in the wake of the April Revolution should have generated discontent and frustration amongst a minority of people whose policy has been to aggravate the pauperization of the masses. This Revolution cannot infringe upon the sovereignty or independence of any country whatever.

To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to refer to the comments of Mr. Wakil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, before this Assembly on 28 September last:

"Concerning the objective realities in my country, I should like to state that with the victory of the April Revolution, our people rose only to fight against backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, disease, poverty and unemployment in our society." (A/42/PV.14, p. 7)

It is truly regrettable that the champions of human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples should have chosen to make an enemy of the Afghan people, which has legitimately made use of its fundamental rights in conformity with the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter and universally accepted standards of international law.

It is common knowledge that an undeclared war, which was begun nine years ago by the enemies of the new régime, is not only being pursued but, indeed, is being stepped up yearly against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and its long-suffering people. This undeclared war, like all armed conflicts, has not only ruined the country's economy, plunged the population into mourning, mutilated thousands of children, women and the elderly, but has also brought about a massive

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exodus of people beyond the national borders who are now living in the distress of exile.

Perhaps international and local imperialist and reactionary circles, which actively finance and support this undeclared war, may be satisfied or happy with the harmful effects of their immoral and reprehensible policy against the valiant Afghan people. We do not believe so, because the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, far from being vanquished, continues heroically and victoriously to defend the gains of its April Revolution.

These imperialist and reactionary circles must realize that the more they persist in their policy of State terrorism, the more they become mired in an impasse, the greater will be the discontent of their own people, who are capable of making the distinction between a just cause and an immoral and unjust cause, and the more serious will be the results of this undeclared war upon peace and security regionally and internationally.

It would therefore be better for all the parties concerned to rethink the problem, taking duly into account all of the aspects and all of the facts. It is only by acting in that manner that we will ultimately succeed in finding a just and lasting political solution both to the problems of peace and tranquillity within Afghanistan and to the dangerous and destabilizing situation prevailing around this independent sovereign country.

In that spirit my Government can but express words of praise for the good will and sincerity with which the Afghan Government has made a series of proposals that are unquestionably constructive and realistic. I refer especially to the policy of national reconciliation which entered into force on 25 January this year.

All people of good faith were duly impressed by the scope and significance of the measures that country's Government took in the framework of its humanistic

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policy of national reconciliation vis-à-vis all Afghan patriots who wish to join in this process. It is worth mentioning here some of these historic measures: a proclamation of general amnesty, including the release of prisoners; a new agrarian legislation; the restoration of property to those who return to the country; encouragement and development of private investment; a proclamation of unilateral cease-fire and its extension; and the adoption of a new law guaranteeing the practice of multi-party politics. Furthermore, the draft of the new constitution - which the leaders of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan consider as the constitution of reconciliation - will once it enters into force, guarantee the strictly independent, sovereign and non-aligned character of the country.

We are pleased to learn that to date more than 80,000 Afghan patriots, who had been wasting away in refugee camps built in certain neighbouring countries, have returned to the country and that several thousand members of armed opposition groups, having laid down their weapons, are now actively co-operating with the Government in order to preserve peace and security in their respective communities.

What is even more striking is that the Afghan Government proposed, in a spirit of equity, that the opposition parties should take a share in power, something we heartily welcome. This is a positive development in the situation the international community as a whole should encourage and actively support.

Another positive development we should welcome is that the recent indirect negotiations in Geneva between Afghanistan and Pakistan have made considerable progress, as can be seen from the report of the Secretary-General and the letter the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs addressed to him on 1 November this year. We know that, thanks to the Afghan side's spirit of accommodation in Geneva, substantial progress has been made in the consideration of the problem relating to

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the timetable for the withdrawal of the limited Soviet military contingent. Obviously, in order to find a just and lasting political solution to the Afghan question, we must also guarantee freedom from foreign interference in the internal affairs of the country. This means that all of Afghanistan's neighbours and all the Powers that have so far supported and continue to support an undeclared war against it should cease and desist from acting in this fashion. We cannot forget that that is the fundamental issue.

Hence the Afghan Government, sincerely desirous of co-operating actively with the international community in order to find a just and equitable political solution without delay, will this year make its contribution towards securing the adoption of a resolution that would truly be balanced and applicable. The amendments the delegations of Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic have submitted to draft resolution A/42/L.16 now before the Assembly contain, in our view, positive elements reflecting the happy developments that have occurred in Afghanistan and elsewhere, the inclusion of which in the text of the draft resolution can only make it more balanced and applicable, since they duly take into account the legitimate aspirations of all the parties concerned.

My delegation thus appeals to the international community, and more specifically to the Assembly, overwhelmingly to adopt these draft amendments. For reasons well known to all, we will vote against draft resolution A/42/L.16 as it stands.

To conclude, I should like to reaffirm the support and solidarity of the Lao Government and people to the people and the Government of Afghanistan in their heroic struggle to safeguard their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. STORHAUG (Norway): The Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan has now been going on for nearly eight years, and the Soviet Union continues to maintain a large number of troops there. Every year since the invasion in 1979 the General Assembly has called unequivocally for the foreign occupation to end. The overwhelming majority of the Assembly has thus rightly rejected the imposition on the Afghan people of a régime installed by force. The military intervention constitutes a grave violation of the fundamental norms and principles governing international relations. It is imperative that the principles laid down in the Charter be strictly upheld.

The Soviet invasion clearly had an adverse impact on the international climate and negative effects on ongoing attempts to solve important international questions. Today the Soviet Union has the opportunity in Afghanistan to contribute significantly to creating an atmosphere conducive to the lowering of tensions in the world. Norway is convinced that if the Soviet Government heeds the appeals of the international community for a peaceful solution this will have positive effects on other unsettled issues. Moreover, after almost eight years of fierce resistance it should be obvious to the Soviet Union and the régime in Kabul that the efforts to subjugate the Afghan people are futile.

Norway is concerned about the adverse impact of the Soviet military invasion on the situation in the region. Armed incidents along the common border of Pakistan and Afghanistan have led to increased tensions in the area. We strongly urge restraint in order to prevent further escalation and widening of the conflict.

To my Government, one of the most agonizing features of the conflict is the suffering of the Afghan people. The Soviet occupation has resulted in the largest refugee problem in the world. About 5.5 million have fled their homeland, and as many as 2 million may be displaced within Afghanistan itself, adding to the disintegration of its society. The last year has seen no fundamental changes in

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the human rights situation in the country. This is hardly surprising, as the armed conflict continues, and has intensified in recent months. As stated in the last report by the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, it is a fact that the Soviet presence

"is the main reason for the intensity of the armed conflict and the existence of 5.5 million refugees and is an obstacle to the free exercise of the right to self-determination".

Norway believes that the immediate, complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is the necessary first step in the process of restoring the independence of the country and enabling the refugees to be repatriated. We therefore reiterate our strong appeal to the Soviet Union to make decisive efforts in seeking a peaceful settlement by withdrawing all its troops without delay. A complete Soviet withdrawal would also lend credibility to the process of national reconciliation, which in the Norwegian Government's view is a prerequisite for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Afghan conflict.

We strongly support the tireless and constructive efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about a political settlement at the diplomatic level. Although the last round of the so-called proximity talks in Geneva in September this year ended without final agreement, the negotiating process has made significant progress towards the conclusion of the international instruments that will comprise a settlement. In his latest report the Secretary-General states that during the last rounds the negotiations have centred on the issue of a timetable for troop withdrawal, an issue that has to be resolved. In the Secretary-General's words:

"It must by now be all too evident to the two Governments that early agreement on a short time-frame for the withdrawal of troops would give decisive impetus to the Afghans' own efforts towards reconciliation." (A/42/600, para. 8)

(Mr. Storhaug, Norway)

The draft resolution contains, in our opinion, all the essential elements for a just and durable settlement: complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; self-determination of the Afghan people; the right of the Afghan refugees to be repatriated with safety and honour; and restoration of an independent, non-aligned status for Afghanistan.

The draft resolution and the Secretary-General's efforts deserve the full support of the international community.

In conclusion, we pay tribute to the way in which Pakistan is discharging its responsibility of being host country to the largest refugee population in history. The refugee influx is a tremendous burden on the resources of a developing country. Pakistan merits our respect and support. We also express our gratitude to the humanitarian relief organizations working in the area - in particular, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which have contributed so much to alleviating the sufferings of the Afghan people.

Mr. OLZVOY (Mongolia) (interpretation from Russian): Our interdependent world is now witnessing encouraging events and trends in the process of the peaceful defusion of hotbeds of tension in various regions and the growing understanding of the need for a comprehensive system of international peace and security that takes into account the interests of all the parties concerned. For instance, the present debate in the General Assembly is taking place at a time when, as pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, "Efforts to resolve the problem related to Afghanistan have reached an advanced stage". (A/42/1, p. 5)

On 15 January of this year Afghanistan announced a policy of national reconciliation, which provides, in particular, for such important measures as a unilateral cease-fire, the liberation of political prisoners, the adoption of a law on political parties, the drafting of a new constitution, the establishment of a coalition Government of national unity, the adoption of comprehensive measures guaranteeing the conditions necessary for the return of Afghan refugees, and other essential measures.

This bold humanitarian policy, which is broadly supported by the various sectors of the Afghan population and peace-loving forces throughout the world, confirms the genuine desire of the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to continue the national dialogue that has started in the country.

The Mongolian People's Republic believes that Afghanistan's policy of national reconciliation is a constructive basis for the stabilization of the situation inside the country and the achievement of a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. The policy of national reconciliation in Afghanistan opens up real possibilities for the cessation of the bloodshed on Afghan territory and the unification of the efforts of all Afghans genuinely interested in strengthening independent, sovereign and non-aligned Afghanistan.

(Mr. Olzvoy, Mongolia)

According to information from Afghanistan, more than 30,000 until recently armed opponents have gone over to the side of the Government and more than 90,000 refugees have returned to their homeland. The unilateral cease-fire declared by the Government has been extended by six months. There is national discussion on the drafting of a new constitution. In other words, Afghanistan's policy of national reconciliation is becoming more of a practical reality with every passing day. The Mongolian people is bound by strong ties of traditional friendship and fraternity with the Afghan people and welcomes the first tangible successes of Afghanistan's policy of national reconciliation.

The Mongolian People's Republic believes that the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan depends first and foremost upon the immediate cessation of outside intervention and a guarantee that it will not be resumed. Unfortunately, the scale and nature of such intervention are not decreasing. In particular, supplies of the most modern military technology to the dushmani are increasing.

The Mongolian People's Republic continues to favour the peaceful settlement of the Afghan question. That is why we welcomed the results of the most recent round of Afghanistan-Pakistan indirect discussions in Geneva, at which most of the important elements of the comprehensive settlement of the situation in Afghanistan have been agreed. We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to ensure further progress in the Geneva negotiation process on the political settlement of the Afghan question.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has repeatedly demonstrated its readiness to make compromises and has stated that, in accordance with the agreement, foreign troops in Afghanistan at the request of its Government will be returned to their homeland within the time-frame and their numbers reduced

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to a minimum as soon as foreign intervention in the internal affairs of that sovereign State has ceased. Our delegation shares the view that with the necessary goodwill it will be possible to agree on a time-frame for the return of the Soviet troops to their homes.

In these conditions, our Organization must take into account this new situation and must adopt a realistic approach to the question. In so doing it would contribute to the efforts to bring about the peaceful settlement of the Afghanistan question.

For the past eight years, since the beginning of the debate on the question of the situation in Afghanistan, the Assembly has adopted each year a similar draft resolution which in practical terms has been one-sided. The Mongolian delegation believes that the time has now come for the General Assembly to abandon that one-sided attitude and adopt a position that is in keeping with the radical interests of all the parties concerned in the conflict. That is why we fully support the proposal of the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan that the draft resolution should contain not only an appeal for the withdrawal of foreign troops, but also an appeal for the cessation of interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Our delegation is also in favour of the General Assembly's welcoming the progress made at the Geneva talks between the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the assistance of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. Such provisions in a General Assembly resolution would reflect the spirit and reality of the present period of history and would provide the bases for the practical implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Olzvoy, Mongolia)

For this reason the Mongolian delegation welcomes the constructive initiative of Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic and supports the amendments presented by those delegations in document A/42/L.19. At the same time, we understand full well that the fate of the compromise, and therefore the success of the efforts to ensure the early settlement of the situation around Afghanistan, does not depend on the goodwill of the Afghan side alone. Taking into account the new situation, our delegation hopes to see flexibility and progress on the part of the other side, in the interest of peace on the soil of Afghanistan and security in Asia as a whole. This is precisely what is needed in the present circumstances.

Mr. LI Leye (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Eight years have passed since the Soviet armed forces invaded and occupied Afghanistan; and for eight years the Afghan people have been subjected to untold sufferings. More than a million Afghans, including the elderly, women and children, have been brutally massacred. At the same time, several million Afghan people, finding life under the foreign military occupation intolerable, have fled the country and sought refuge in alien lands. Countless houses, schools and mosques have been destroyed. Years of continuing war have rendered the economy of Afghanistan destitute, farmland waste and territory fragmented.

The foreign troops, however, have not been able to conquer the heroic Afghan people through their prolonged occupation of the country. The Afghan nation has a fine tradition of resolutely resisting foreign aggression and defying brute force in defence of its national survival and independence. Over the past eight years facts have amply proved that the policy of military conquest based on blind faith in force is doomed to failure.

Over the past eight years, a super-Power has expended huge amounts of human and material resources for this unjust war. Many sturdy young people who should have worked for the peaceful construction of their own country have been sent to fight on the battleground in Afghanistan. Tens of billions of dollars have been spent to maintain this unwinnable war. That super-Power has been condemned year after year by all the justice-upholding countries in this Hall as well as in other forums. Caught in this dilemma, it is no wonder that even the foreign military occupying authorities have to admit that Afghanistan has become a bleeding wound.

What caused this bleeding wound? How can it be cured? On those questions the authorities concerned remain evasive. They have made a lot of statements but taken no action.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

As is known to all, Afghanistan used to be an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned country. As a result of foreign armed invasion, its peace is disrupted, its sovereignty violated and characteristics of independence, neutrality and non-alignment lost. Therefore the crux of the Afghanistan issue is foreign invasion and the occupation of a sovereign State. The key to its settlement lies in whether the foreign occupying authorities are willing to cease their aggression against Afghanistan, immediately withdraw all their troops from that country and stop their gross interference in its internal affairs. However, it is regrettable that the foreign military occupying authorities are still insisting on troop withdrawal only after the termination of outside interference. To them, the presence of their over 100,000 troops in Afghanistan is not outside interference, but rather what they call performing an internationalist obligation. While embellishing their own naked military interference as an obligation, they attribute the Afghan people's struggle against foreign aggression to outside interference which should be removed as a pre-condition for their troop withdrawal. Such absurd logic aimed at confusing right and wrong is utterly untenable. It can only serve to prove that to this day they still have no sincerity regarding troop withdrawal.

Recently, the foreign military occupying authorities have further stated that they regard national reconciliation as a prerequisite for political settlement, insisting on reconciliation first, troop withdrawal afterwards, which means that the realization of national reconciliation is a pre-condition for the troop withdrawal. We all acknowledge that to realize national reconciliation and turn Afghanistan into an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned country is the ardent desire of the Afghan people, who have seen the ravages of the eight-year war. It is also supported by all justice-upholding countries. However, the reality is that on the one hand the foreign military occupying authorities are

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

talking glibly about national reconciliation and stressing that such reconciliation can be carried out only within the framework of the "national reconciliation programme" of the Kabul régime and on the other hand they continue to use military force to suppress the Afghan people's resistance.

It is not difficult to see that such so-called national reconciliation is designed, through the threat of force by the foreign military occupying authorities, to bring the Afghan people to their knees and force them to accept the fait accompli created by the foreign aggression. What needs to be pointed out in particular is that during the same year when "national reconciliation" was very much on their lips the foreign military occupying authorities launched three successive large-scale military encirclements in Afghanistan. All this has served to show fully that the so-called national reconciliation preached by them is nothing new but a continuation of national repression.

China and Afghanistan are close neighbours and the two peoples have enjoyed traditional friendship and lived in harmony for many years. Proceeding from the principled stand of safeguarding the basic norms guiding international relations and the principles of the United Nations Charter, and out of the desire to maintain security and stability in that region, the Chinese Government and people resolutely oppose the super-Power's aggression against and military occupation of Afghanistan, deeply sympathize with the Afghan people's sufferings and firmly support them in their just struggle against aggression. We hold that this bloody war in Afghanistan should have ended long ago. We are always in favour of a political settlement of the Afghanistan issue and support all efforts that could facilitate its just settlement.

We are of the view that since the Afghanistan issue was created by foreign aggression and Afghan national harmony is likewise undermined by foreign aggression, only the speedy withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan and

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

the termination of the military occupation of that country can bring the war to an end, heal the bleeding wound and enable the Afghan people to realize genuine national reconciliation, free from outside interference, to choose their own government according to their own free will and to decide the destiny of their own country. Only in this way can Afghanistan restore its status as an independent, sovereign, neutral and non-aligned country and that region achieve peace and stability.

(Mr. Li Luye, China)

This is the ninth time that we have considered the Afghanistan question here. Over the past eight years, the United Nations General Assembly at each session has adopted a resolution on the Afghanistan question by an overwhelming majority, calling for the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan. This fully reflects the just position of the vast number of Member States in safeguarding the principles of the United Nations Charter and opposing all outside aggression and interference. The Pakistan Government has upheld the basic principles of the relevant resolutions adopted at successive sessions of the United Nations General Assembly sessions and has made unswerving efforts for the political settlement of the Afghanistan issue. For this, we wish to express our appreciation. The humanitarian spirit displayed by Pakistan, Iran and other countries in providing succour to the Afghan refugees is also admirable. Here we would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his unremitting efforts for a just and reasonable settlement of the Afghanistan issue on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

At this current session, Pakistan and 47 other countries have submitted a draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, once again calling for the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan so as to allow the Afghan people to exercise their right to self-determination free from outside interference. The Chinese delegation believes that the adoption of this draft resolution will serve to promote a political settlement of the Afghanistan issue. Therefore, we shall vote in favour of this draft resolution. We hope that all the justice-upholding countries will support this draft resolution, thus contributing to an early, just and reasonable settlement of the Afghanistan issue.

Mr. KIKUCHI (Japan): At the end of next month the international community will mark a tragic event - the Soviet Union's brutal and unprovoked

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

invasion of Afghanistan in the final hours of 1979. In the eight years since then, hundreds of thousands of Afghan men, women and children have been killed, and millions have been forced to leave their homeland. But the Soviet troops remain. The Soviet Union alleges that interference from other countries has prolonged the fighting, but, as all the world knows, it is in fact the Afghan people themselves who are fiercely opposing the Soviet military occupation and its interference in the affairs of their country.

Although the Soviet side called for a cease-fire earlier this year, it has continued to carry out numerous military operations against the Afghan people. But the people remain steadfast in their resistance and they continue to wage an effective armed struggle throughout the country. Their will can never be crushed militarily.

While the forces of repression, injustice and violence continue to wreak havoc throughout the country, diplomatic efforts aimed at a comprehensive political settlement have been steadfastly pursued. We wish, in particular, to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and his Personal Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, for their tireless endeavours for a peaceful settlement, particularly in conducting proximity talks in Geneva and in negotiating with other parties concerned on the time-frame for withdrawal. According to the Secretary-General's recent report, although substantial progress has been made, it has not been "sufficiently sustained". Japan strongly hopes that the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative will persevere in their efforts to bridge the differences on this issue, and it assures them of its full support. At the same time, Japan calls upon the parties concerned to co-operate in those efforts and work towards a negotiated settlement.

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

We should bear in mind that the settlement of the problem must be based on the following principles. First, Soviet troops must be immediately and completely withdrawn; secondly, Afghanistan must attain political independence and regain its non-aligned status; thirdly, the right of self-determination of the Afghanistan people must be fully respected; and, fourthly, the safe and honourable return of Afghan refugees must be secured.

Japan firmly believes that efforts towards reconciliation must be consonant with those principles.

In this connection, the idea of so-called national reconciliation advocated by the Soviet side, although it sounds good, must be treated with caution, for it skirts the issue of a complete withdrawal of Soviet troops, which is an absolute prerequisite. Furthermore, national reconciliation must be achieved in a manner agreed upon by the Afghan people themselves and must not be effected for the purpose of keeping the present regime in Afghanistan.

The Afghans who have sought refuge in Pakistan represent the largest concentration of refugees in the world. Although exact figures are unavailable, it is estimated that there are 2.8 to 2.9 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. In addition, according to the Government of Iran, there are 2.2 million Afghans in that country.

Large refugee populations impose enormous burdens on host countries and seriously threaten regional stability. In particular, Japan recognizes that Pakistan is experiencing many difficulties in accommodating such a massive influx of refugees, and Japan pays a high tribute to the humanitarian efforts that the Pakistani Government has been making to cope with the situation. For humanitarian reasons, as well as in the interest of regional peace and stability, Japan has

(Mr. Kikuchi, Japan)

extended active co-operation to Afghan refugee relief activities in Pakistan and Iran through the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees and the World Food Programme, as well as through other organizations. Japan will continue to make its best efforts for the alleviation of the problem.

Japan has supported successive United Nations resolutions on Afghanistan which confirm the basic principles I have just outlined. This year's draft resolution (A/42/L.16) likewise has our firm and unreserved support.

I am encouraged to note that, according to the Secretary-General's report, the negotiating process "has reached an advanced stage"; but, at the same time, I feel it is important that we guard ourselves against undue optimism, because the environment remains very fragile. Thus, at this juncture, it is all the more important that the international community maintain pressure on the Soviet Union to end its illegal occupation of Afghanistan, by adopting the draft resolution by an overwhelming majority. To this end, I urge all Member States to support this draft resolution.

Mr. TSVETKOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from French): The People's Republic of Bulgaria has on more than one occasion clearly stated its position on the General Assembly's consideration of the question of the situation around Afghanistan.

I should like to note that recently there have been many important events that give us grounds for hope and optimism about the chances of reaching a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the problems around Afghanistan.

The trend of these events in recent years proves clearly and unambiguously that in order to attain that goal we must seek new avenues and show political will and realism. The initiatives by the Soviet Union aimed at promoting a new, multifaceted approach to the problems of peace and security in Asia - including the question of the situation around Afghanistan - and, in particular, the constructive proposals put forward in the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostock in June 1986, fall within the framework of such a policy.

The political line of national reconciliation proclaimed by the Government of Afghanistan in January 1987 constitutes, for all those prepared to co-operate with that Government in the common interests of the country, the expression of such political will and realism. This program of national reconciliation is based on very simple and very clear principles: a cease-fire, rejection of armed struggle and bloodshed in the settlement of questions related to Afghanistan's present and future, a guarantee of the equitable representation of all the people in the country's organs of power and economic life, a general amnesty, respect for the Islamic religion, preservation of historic, national and other traditions. There is a political orientation that is both internal and external. If the long-hoped-for lasting peace were to be established on Afghan soil, if the outside interference could be brought to an end, the presence of a limited contingent of Soviet troops in the country would no longer be necessary.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

This is not a propaganda gesture by the Afghan Government, as some have sought to portray it, but a real, practical step towards a peaceful and lasting settlement of the problems around Afghanistan. In that connection, we need only emphasize that, after the proclamation in January 1987 of this initiative of national reconciliation, many positive, concrete actions and decisions were taken by the Afghan Government: There was the unilateral proclamation of reconciliation as well as the proclamation of a general amnesty, resulting in the return of 80,000 refugees to their homeland. The draft of a new Constitution was published and submitted for discussion. The sincere desire was expressed to form a Government of national unity, with the participation of all the democratic forces and all the opposition parties that support a peaceful settlement of the country's internal problems.

Bearing in mind all those developments, we can rightly state that in many ways 1987 has proved to be a decisive year in the life of Afghanistan.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria welcomes and fully supports the constructive political line of the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, aimed at achieving national reconciliation and completing the democratization of Afghan society and at forming a Government with the participation of the political forces that, for one reason or another, are outside the country but sincerely desire to make their contribution to building a new, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan. The successes achieved by the Afghan people in their political, social and economic life show clearly and unambiguously that, despite the enormous difficulties, the process of democratization of the country is irreversible.

Unfortunately, the forces which, because of their selfish interests, do not wish to accept that state of affairs continue to stir up tension in the region around Afghanistan and, in so doing, spend enormous sums - millions of dollars annually. We need only emphasize that the so-called secret assistance officially

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granted by the United States Administration to finance extremist elements has already cost more than \$600 million this year. These sums are being spent for the most sophisticated weapons, which are then delivered to the extremists, thus financing a whole network of camps and bases along the borders of sovereign, independent Afghanistan. The money is used to pay mercenaries to burn and destroy schools, hospitals and economic facilities, to carry out acts of diversion and sabotage, to massacre peaceful citizens in the country. During the years of the undeclared war against Afghanistan, apart from countless human victims, damage amounting to more than \$1 billion has been inflicted upon the country.

Despite those enormous difficulties and obstacles, the Afghan people have resolutely committed themselves to the process of democratic change and national reconciliation by expressing their sincere desire and aspiration to live in peace, understanding and co-operation with their neighbours.

In the present complex international situation, it is more necessary than ever before that all the countries sincerely interested in the quest for a just and lasting solution to the situation around Afghanistan show realism and political goodwill. It is precisely the Government of Afghanistan that for years has been taking such an approach, exerting sustained efforts to achieve a political settlement of the situation. Its most recent external political initiatives, embodying the fundamental principles of a peaceful settlement of the conflict and reflecting the interests of all the countries in the region, are the concrete expression of that aspiration of Afghanistan. The decision by the Soviet Government to withdraw part of its limited contingent in Afghanistan is also within the framework of such a policy. Thus, the Soviet Union has clearly shown that it is prepared to co-operate to ensure the real acceleration of a political settlement of the problem, to give a new and substantial impetus to the Geneva talks.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

The People's Republic of Bulgaria fully approves of and supports these sincere efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. We believe that the principal prerequisite for achieving such a settlement is the unconditional and total cessation of all forms of external interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

At the same time, we are encouraged to see that the large majority of States that took part in the Assembly's general debate and many of those who have spoken on this agenda item have called for a peaceful solution to the situation around Afghanistan, have stated their opposition to outside interference and have supported the negotiations in Geneva as the most appropriate avenue to the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

In that connection, the People's Republic of Bulgaria is following with interest and hope the negotiations under way in Geneva with the assistance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Diego Cordovez.

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The Bulgarian Government believes that the United Nations can play a positive role in these negotiations for the restoration of peace and security in the region. Serious progress in these negotiations last year makes us optimistic. Real chances are emerging for overcoming the differences that remain which in our view are not very substantial: given goodwill and greater realism by all interested parties, they could be settled in the very near future. Optimistic signs also emerge from the report of the Secretary-General on the question, which notes inter alia that

"The negotiating process towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement has reached an advanced stage." (A/42/600, para. 2)

All this enables us to conclude that at present more than ever there are real objective conditions for arriving at a peaceful and lasting settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

The adoption of an equitable resolution on this question, acceptable to all, a resolution that would reflect and hail the progress achieved and the sincere efforts made by the Afghan Government, could contribute to the realization of the process of national reconciliation and, internationally, to the Geneva talks if it were to receive the support of the parties directly concerned.

The amendments to draft resolution A/42/L.16 proposed by two non-aligned countries (A/42/L.19) are aimed in that direction. I should like to state that my country would support a draft resolution which, in addition to the provisions already put forward, also included an appeal for strict observance of the principle of non-interference in relations concerning the situation around Afghanistan, supported the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to arrive at a solution of the problem, and welcomed the progress already made in the Geneva talks.

(Mr. Tsvetkov, Bulgaria)

Otherwise, my delegation would find itself obliged to vote against the draft resolution presented, which, far from being balanced, gives a false and distorted image and engages in an erroneous interpretation of the real situation, and the adoption of which would not contribute in the least to the positive process under way with a view to the peaceful settlement of this problem.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): During the years that this item has been inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly, the situation inside and around Afghanistan has changed. The course of events during the past few years indicates that it is necessary to look for new ways to solve the so-called Afghanistan question, which urgently requires new, unique solutions and a manifestation of political will.

The present discussion has demonstrated that an ever-increasing number of participants in the debate, when analysing the processes taking place in Afghanistan, is coming to the conclusion that the prospects for the establishment of peace in that region are becoming more tangible as time goes on. An ever-increasing number of countries shares the view that a military solution to the problem around Afghanistan is not possible. It is regrettable that certain initiators of that discussion are, as it were, unwilling to change their intentions and continue their efforts to use the United Nations against the interests of a genuine settlement of the question of Afghanistan and instead are using it to attack the internal and foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. In trying to maintain tension in the region they have not abandoned their attempts to hold back a political solution to this problem and to block those positive trends that are emerging at present.

In the view of my delegation that is a short-sighted policy. It is far removed from the new political thinking and the objective requirements of

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security. It holds no promise for the future. It conceals an unwillingness to rethink policy towards Afghanistan to take into account the newly emerging realities and to join the genuine efforts to eliminate the hotbed of tension around that country.

Afghanistan continues to be the subject of vicious torrents of lies, provocation and large-scale subversion. Having unleashed an undeclared war against that country, the forces of imperialism and reaction which, in order to achieve their purposes, prefer to use Angolans against Angolans, Nicaraguans against Nicaraguans and Afghans against Afghans, continue to build the momentum of interference. Modern arms in increasing quantities are being delivered to the counter-revolutionary bands. Millions of dollars are turned into blood and suffering for all Afghans and are protracting a war foreign to them.

However, in spite of the great difficulties and losses brought to that fledgling State by the undeclared aggression, the Government of Afghanistan tirelessly and systematically has been making efforts to intensify the process of political settlement within the country. Facts today in Afghanistan pertinent to this discussion and which have been adduced in the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, have demonstrated that quite clearly. As a result of that policy it has been possible to achieve the principal goal, which is to avoid an economic breakdown and to prevent a lowering of the living standards of the people. This past year has brought new hopes to the long-suffering Afghan soil.

Proceeding from the supreme interests of its people, which yearn for the cessation of a fratricidal war and the establishment of peace, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan at the beginning of 1987 proclaimed a policy of national reconciliation and appealed to all Afghans to stop fighting and to start a dialogue in the name of peace upon Afghan soil. In accordance with the

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declaration by the Revolutionary Council, the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan ceased their military operations on 15 January. Events since then have clearly and obviously demonstrated who is genuinely interested in the establishment of a just peace and tranquillity on Afghan soil and who, guided by self-interest, is trying to continue the bloodshed in martyred Afghanistan.

The truth today is that there is no alternative to bloodshed apart from mutual compromise. An increasing number of people involved directly or indirectly in the conflict understand that. That is shown in the almost daily reports of groups of Afghans who have for a long time acted against their people with weapons in their hands but who are now going over to the side of the people.

Slowly but definitely the number of refugees returning to their own soil is growing. During the past period, in spite of the obstacles set up by various countries, approximately 90,000 returned. Is that figure large or small? Of course it is small if one takes into account the overall numbers. However, the scale of those moving back can be correctly understood only if the difficulties that have to be overcome by people in returning to their homes and hearths are taken into account.

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One of the most important elements of the process of national reconciliation in Afghanistan is the extending of a dialogue with the opposition forces, the adoption of a policy to establish a coalition government and the attempt to unite all the national and patriotic forces. Unquestionably, the ongoing process is attracting increasing attention in the international community.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR has observed the appearance of a genuine possibility of eliminating the dangerous hotbed of tension virtually in the very centre of the Asian continent. This would certainly be in keeping with the interests not only of the Afghan people but also of all those who are genuinely, and not only in words, trying to unblock and settle the existing conflicting situations.

However, our delegation wishes to emphasize that the process of national reconciliation presupposes a high degree of political responsibility on both sides, because to stop the bloodshed and eliminate this regional conflict is possible only with goodwill on the part of all those directly or indirectly involved, including the forces behind them.

The policy of national reconciliation is not peace; it has not yet broken the old prejudices; it has not been heeded by all the enemies of the people's authority. The counter-revolutionary bands continue to commit their terrorist acts, and this is inducing the government forces to give them due rebuff. The influential protectors of the dushmani are doing everything to discredit the constructive initiatives of the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. There is no end to the dispatch of bandit groups and weapons into Afghanistan from Pakistan. There is an enormous growth in the supply of weapons by the United States to the dushmani formations.

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It is quite clear that the policy of national reconciliation spans the genuine possibilities for a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. The key to it should be the guaranteed cessation and the non-resumption of interference from outside into the internal affairs of that country. The sooner this is achieved, the sooner it will be possible to withdraw the Soviet troops.

As was stated in a speech at the International Forum for a Nuclear-Free World and for the Survival of Mankind by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev stated:

"... the solution of this problem requires reciprocity on the part of the United States and of Afghanistan's neighbours, as well as international efforts." (A/42/132, p. 14)

A serious contribution to the cause of settling the situation around Afghanistan is being made, in the view of our delegation, by the Afghan-Pakistan talks in Geneva, with the mediation of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Mr. Cordovez. During the talks, work on three documents has virtually been completed. This is the bilateral Afghan-Pakistan agreement on non-interference and rejection of intervention, the declaration on international guarantees on non-resumption of interference and the bilateral agreement on voluntary return of refugees. Given a genuine desire on both sides to reach agreement, the present stage in the talks could be the last concluding phase. The Afghan side has such a desire. There is no doubt that negotiations would have been concluded had Pakistan demonstrated the same degree of readiness to achieve compromise.

Afghanistan is now at a crossroads in its history. National reconciliation is the way into the future of the Afghanistan people. Those who are waging an undeclared war against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan cannot propose to its people anything other than further human victims, further suffering and privations, and further destruction and losses.

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As for the Afghan people themselves, they have made their choice. The programme of national reconciliation put forward by the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan serves the cause of establishing Afghanistan as a sovereign, independent State following a policy of non-alignment and good-neighbourliness. Its implementation would contribute to the elimination of a serious hotbed of tension in this region of the world; and this would be in keeping with the fundamental interests of all the countries of the region.

The events that have taken place in Afghanistan during the past year should become the basis for a new constructive approach to the Afghan problem by the United Nations. However, the draft resolution presented by the delegation of Pakistan in document A/42/L.16, as in previous years, bears the stamp of confrontation and bias. It completely ignores the fact that the basic component of any solution to the Afghan problem is not the withdrawal from that country of foreign troops but the unconditional cessation of interference into the internal affairs of Afghanistan and international guarantees that it will not be resumed.

In the view of the delegation of the Ukrainian SSR, the General Assembly can make a useful contribution to a settlement if it adopts a resolution that can be implemented in practice and is acceptable to all of the members of the international community.

In this connection we welcome the constructive approach of those delegations which in document A/42/L.19 have proposed important amendments to the draft resolution. One of them deals with the most substantive element of the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan, namely, the need for the strict observance by all of the principle of non-interference in relation to that State. The second amendment welcomes the progress at the Geneva talks. And that we feel contributes to the establishment of a favourable atmosphere for the speedy conclusion of this process and the conclusion of the relevant agreements between

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the parties concerned. Moreover, the way the amendment is formulated is fully in keeping with the conclusions in the report of the Secretary-General on this question in document A/42/600.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR considers that the adoption of these amendments could contribute to the elimination of existing differences and make the draft resolution on the subject under discussion more balanced. At the same time, in our opinion the sub-amendments submitted by Pakistan are evidence of its unwillingness to do away with confrontation in favour of a mutually acceptable compromise.

Count YORK von WARTENBURG (Federal Republic of Germany): The Permanent Representative of Denmark has already set forth the joint position of the 12 member States of the European Community on the situation in Afghanistan. Let me underline this joint position by the few remarks I should like to add on behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

For almost eight years now, since Afghanistan has been occupied on 27 December 1979, the Afghan people through its determined resistance against the Soviet Army, an army now numbering about 115,000 men, has clearly demonstrated that it is unwilling to put up with a régime imposed upon it.

By its military power, and through a régime which depends totally on this military power, the Soviet Union attempts to force its will upon this small, courageous people fighting for its freedom.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

For the Federal Republic of Germany, respect for human rights, the maintenance of peace and the right to self-determination is an indispensable requirement in the relationship among nations and governments. These principles in particular have been violated by the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan for eight years.

In the course of this long period the Afghan people has been and still is putting up with innumerable privations, resisting the occupation forces in spite of all the psychological and physical repression that spares not even children, women and old people. The world public has been made aware of this, to its dismay, by the reports of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Felix Ermacora. Our humanitarian ideals and duties require us to make the cause of the Afghan people our own.

In the summer of 1987 the régime in Kabul gave Mr. Ermacora the opportunity to travel to Afghanistan so as to be able to fulfil his task as Special Rapporteur. That is true, and it is regarded by the Federal Government as a matter of course: a United Nations representative should always have the opportunity of travelling to any United Nations Member country in the fulfilment of his tasks. In September 1987 we heard speculations according to which Mr. Ermacora had changed his position on the human rights violations in Afghanistan. He refuted such rumors. His newest report containing his findings is before the General Assembly.

Nearly 5 million Afghans have been compelled to leave their home country and to seek refuge in the neighbouring countries, especially in Pakistan, which meanwhile has received more than 3 million refugees. In addition to the political and economic burdens entailed, Pakistan is exposed to considerable pressure on account of armed violations of its frontier.

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Federal Republic of Germany)

We all owe express recognition to Pakistan for its humanitarian efforts and its prudent attitude towards armed provocations.

The Federal Government takes note of the so-called policy of national reconciliation pursued by the régime in Kabul since the beginning of 1987. However, my Government has arrived at the distressing conclusion that this policy does not serve the resurrection of the fundamental rights of the Afghan people, as demanded by the international community.

The Federal Government endorses the demand made by the non-aligned and Islamic countries for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan and for the reconstitution of its independent and non-aligned status.

An end must be put, as soon as possible, to the war in Afghanistan through a political solution. With great attention the Federal Government is closely following the mediating efforts undertaken by the United Nations Secretary-General through his Personal Representative, Under-Secretary-General Diego Cordovez. The Federal Government welcomes and supports those efforts. They constitute in our view the only possibility of achieving a settlement to this problem, the only possibility of a settlement acceptable to all parties concerned that bring back peace and liberty to the Afghan people. We would like to encourage the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to continue to pursue these efforts energetically and actively.

It is with interest that my Government has taken note of the proposals made by the Soviet Union on international security. My Government hopes that the Soviet Union will live up to the preparedness it has so often voiced to bring about a political solution in Afghanistan.

(Count York von Wartenburg,
Federal Republic of Germany)

My Government fervently strives for the goal of seeing Afghanistan in full peace, freedom and independence, and as a sovereign non-aligned State concentrating on its future and its further development. The Afghan people should be enabled soon to decide on those crucial issues in free exercise of its right to self-determination.

Mr. SUXOI (Brunei Darussalam): Brunei Darussalam has always defended the principles of the equality of nations, non-intervention and non-aggression. We oppose foreign occupation whether it is being perpetrated by big countries in smaller countries, or by small countries in other small countries, and whether it is taking place in our region, as in Kampuchea, or in Afghanistan.

It is for this reason that my delegation continues to participate in the General Assembly's deliberations on this agenda item. Despite repeated appeals for the withdrawal of the occupying forces and the efforts to promote a negotiated settlement leading to the restoration of Afghanistan's independence and non-aligned status, the situation remains the same. The foreign forces are still entrenched in Afghanistan, obstructing the people of Afghanistan in their effort to regain freedom and independence. The continued presence of the foreign troops and the ensuing resistance waged by the Mujahidin have resulted in the death of many peace-loving Afghans who were forced to take up arms against the might of the occupation forces in order to safeguard their independence, faith, culture and traditions. Many have been made homeless, and millions of Afghans have been condemned to facing the hardships of migration in neighbouring countries, in particular Pakistan and Iran.

When such tragedy befalls an independent and non-aligned country, it cannot remain an agenda item for so long without a solution being found. Indeed, the international community has a moral obligation to address this issue and to ensure

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that a sovereign country like Afghanistan is not left to the mercy of the military adventurism of another. Every nation has the right to exist in the way its people choose. But as long as foreign troops remain in the country in flagrant breach of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, there can be no freedom of action there, nor can it have peace and stability.

For this reason we would welcome an immediate solution to the Afghanistan situation so that there can be peace and stability in Afghanistan and in the region. We welcome the substantial progress that characterized much of the negotiation that took place last year and early this year. The prospect of possible compromise between Pakistan and the country concerned on the withdrawal time-table is encouraging, and my delegation hopes this will result in speedy actual troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

We fully subscribe to the views of the Secretary-General when, in his report of 29 September 1987 (A/42/600), he stresses that peace in Afghanistan can be achieved only through a negotiated settlement, and not by military means. We hope this course of action will continue to be pursued by all parties concerned in order to achieve the objective of the settlement, that is, self-determination by the Afghan people. We commend the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts as well as those of his Special Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, for bringing the conflicting parties closer to achieving this objective.

(Mr. Suyoi, Brunei Darussalam)

But my delegation is also perturbed to hear of the efforts by the occupying force to consolidate the Kabul régime through military operations within Afghanistan and various well-publicized public relations initiatives. We are all too aware that such efforts will not be conducive to the kind of negotiated settlement the Assembly envisage. The international community must, therefore, continue to give the firm support that the Mujahidin and the freedom-fighters need in their current struggle. It is a continuing source of strength for them. We should continue to show support for their cause until Afghanistan once again becomes independent and non-aligned, as it was before the occupation.

It is not my delegation's intention to speak ill of another country with regard to its international behaviour, even if it constitutes a violation of the Charter and the rules and principles of international law, let alone be hostile to that particular country. But it is of great concern to my delegation that what is happening in Afghanistan involves the use of force against the territorial integrity and independence of another country, which, no matter how one looks at it, one cannot but interpret the event in Afghanistan as an intervention against another sovereign State, in violation of the Charter. And the fact that it is committed by a permanent member of the Security Council, a country which helped to draw up the Charter of the United Nations, is worrying for us, particularly the smaller countries.

It is, therefore, a matter of the utmost importance that my country has joined with other countries in sponsoring draft resolution A/42/L.16. We are convinced that the draft resolution provides a reasonable framework for a just and lasting political settlement of the Afghanistan problem. We urge the Assembly to adopt the

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draft resolution by an overwhelming majority, so as to give the Afghan people their freedom to determine their own form of government, and to choose their economic, political and social system, free from outside intervention, and to create the necessary conditions to enable the Afghan refugees to return to their homes. The General Assembly must take a clear stand when violations of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States are committed.

Mr. BUI XUAN NHAT (Viet Nam): Since the last session of our General Assembly, the world situation has witnessed important developments favourable to international peace, relaxation of tension and the trend of dialogue for solving problems in various parts of the world. The situation in Asia in general, and in South-West Asia in particular, has also developed in this direction. The new developments in the region, especially those related to Afghanistan, have indeed broken the stalemate of the past eight years, opening up a new prospect for a peaceful, comprehensive solution to the problems in South-West Asia, contributing to international peace and security.

On 15 January 1987, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan made public a policy of national reconciliation with a view to strengthening the unity of the entire people in the cause of national construction and defence, and to bringing about a peaceful, prosperous life for the Afghan people, who have for centuries undergone untold suffering and hardship under a backward, feudalist régime. The initial results during the past 10 months of implementing this policy are very encouraging. Together with the unilateral cease-fire observed since 15 January 1987, extended until 15 January 1988, a general amnesty has been proclaimed, resulting in the release of more than 6,000 prisoners. Over 3,200 commissions of national reconciliation have been set up throughout

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Afghanistan to undertake negotiations with opposing forces to solve the outstanding problems of the past and to prepare for co-operation in running and building up the country in the future. Moreover, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has expressed its willingness to forge a Government of national unity consisting of all forces, including the opponents, that are ready to participate in the process of national reconciliation.

In response to this humanistic policy of national reconciliation, nearly 90,000 people who had taken refuge in neighbouring countries have returned to their homes. Thirty thousand people of the opposing forces have laid down their weapons and taken part in the process of national reconciliation. Initial as they are, the results of the policy of national reconciliation have helped to create an atmosphere of enthusiasm and national concord among all strata of the Afghan people, and have been warmly welcomed by public opinion all over the world.

In parallel with the process of national reconciliation in Afghanistan, the process of talks at Geneva between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the participation of the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, Mr. Cordovez, has also resulted in significant progress. Both sides have almost completed three of the four documents, and the gap between the positions of the two sides concerning the time-frame for the withdrawal of Soviet troops has been narrowed down to eight months. For its part, the Soviet Union has expressed its readiness to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan as soon as possible, in keeping with the agreement of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

In this process, the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Cordovez, for an early peaceful solution to the

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problems in South-West Asia, including those in and around Afghanistan, have been greatly appreciated. Realities in the past year have confirmed the Secretary-General's assessment in his report that:

"The negotiating process towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement has reached an advanced stage. Substantial ... progress has been made in the past year in the efforts to conclude the international instruments that will comprise the settlement ... A negotiated settlement is the only possible way to achieve peace in Afghanistan because the degree of national reconciliation that such a settlement must entail, to allow the Afghan people to decide their own future, could not be achieved by military means ... bold and decisive steps of national reconciliation would be needed to ensure that the settlement commands the support of all segments of the Afghan people." (A/42/600, paras. 2 and 10).

In the face of such a situation, the imperialist and reactionary forces are feverishly intensifying their acts of sabotage and interference against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, in the hope of reversing the situation - in particular, hindering and undermining the on-going process of national reconciliation in Afghanistan. In pursuit of the undeclared war launched eight years ago against Afghanistan, they have increased financial aid from \$530 million last year to \$630 million this year to the Afghan extremists to carry out acts of sabotage against the cause of national construction and development of the Afghan Government and people, and their peaceful life. Moreover, a large number of modern weapons, including Stinger and Blow-pipe missiles, have been supplied to the

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tremists this year. The money and weapons have been used to destroy more than 300 schools, 131 hospitals, 224 mosques and many production establishments in the urban and rural areas, causing heavy loss of life and property to the Afghan people.

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Together with these acts of sabotage and disruption, the imperialist and reactionary forces are trying by all possible means to undermine the ongoing process of national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Failing in their attempts to set up a Government in exile, last April they rigged up the so-called National Council of Mujahidin of the extremists to oppose that popular process of national reconciliation. However, all their schemes and acts of sabotage and interference have suffered ignominious failure. They cannot prevent the steady advances of the Afghan revolution and the growing trend towards dialogue to solve problems in the region.

In contrast with the new positive developments taking place in South-West Asia during the past year, draft resolution A/42/L.16, on the situation in Afghanistan and its implication for international peace and security, is unchanged as compared with earlier resolutions, by demanding the withdrawal of foreign forces without guaranteeing an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, an independent, sovereign non-aligned State and a Member State of the United Nations. This outmoded and one-sided draft resolution must, therefore, be updated and rectified, if it is not to be rejected.

In such circumstances, the amendments in document A/42/L.19, introduced by Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic, deserve our Assembly's total support and approval, because they not only reflect the flexibility, goodwill and constructive attitudes of the parties concerned, but, if adopted, would help to produce a more balanced draft resolution that would contribute to the early, peaceful solution of the problems in and around Afghanistan and the establishment of peace and stability in the region.

Together with the forces in the world that cherish peace and justice, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam warmly welcomes and strongly supports the reasonable and sensible position of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as reflected in its humanistic policy of national reconciliation, its stand at the Geneva talks and

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its new approach this year to the question under discussion. This flexible and constructive position and approach on the part of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has not only demonstrated the invincible strength of the Afghan revolution, but also shown the goodwill and determination of its Government and people to solve, once and for all, the problems in and around Afghanistan and to contribute to peace and stability in South-West Asia and the world.

In our view, it would be a positive and constructive approach on the part of the international community at this juncture to encourage and support the new developments, especially the ongoing process of national reconciliation in Afghanistan and the Geneva talks, and to reflect them in the debate and resolutions at this session of the General Assembly, thus contributing to the search for an early, peaceful, comprehensive solution of the problems in the region, including those in and around Afghanistan and to peace and stability in South-West Asia.

Mr. LEWIS (Canada): This year the debate on Afghanistan assumes a new level of importance. It is a level imposed by the Soviet Union itself. This year, we not only deal with the tragedy of Afghanistan, but ask ourselves the question, does Afghanistan define the limits of glasnost?

It is no revelation to say that during the months leading up to this debate, many countries vacillated between anticipation and apprehension: anticipation because all the noises emanating from the Soviet Union suggested a possible change in its Afghanistan policy; apprehension because, despite the more positive rhetoric, nothing seemed to change. Apprehension has won out.

The Soviet Union may be shifting its international stance on many fronts, but so far Afghanistan is not among them. The pending accord on an intermediate-range nuclear forces agreement, the various initiatives and the new posture here at the United Nations, the release of some Soviet dissidents - all these things have given hope and weight to the concept of glasnost. Alas, however, it does not extend to Afghanistan.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

The words of the Soviet Union today, while soothing, give not a single guarantee of changing policy. The Soviet Ambassador talked of wanting Afghanistan to be a friendly country. He said that Soviet troops would not be long in Afghanistan. He talked warmly of the United Nations peace process, to which the Governments of both Afghanistan and the Soviet Union are committed. Those are words used as seductive tools of the diplomatic trade; words as intoxicants, to give hope; words as palliatives; but not words as truth.

The truth is that in that forlorn, ravaged country of Afghanistan the present policies of the Soviet Union hark back, paradoxically and inexplicably, to those of the days of Stalin. Dialectical materialism may show a new and enlightened face to the world, but it continues to show an old and brutal face to Afghanistan.

It is a matter of extreme disappointment that one of the areas - namely, Afghanistan - that could give most credence to General Secretary Gorbachev's new approach to international policy remains excluded from it.

Last February the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, in a speech in New Delhi, said:

"The Canadian Government welcomed the very positive formulations contained in General Secretary Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech on Pacific security ... but a distinction must be made between an expression of intent on the one hand and constructive action on the other ... Nothing would more dramatically illustrate Mr. Gorbachev's determination to follow through on his Vladivostok speech than a withdrawal from Afghanistan."

Not only are we nowhere near a withdrawal but, in a fashion which demonstrate utter contempt for world opinion, events during this last year show that the Soviets speak softly and carry the hammer of subjugation. The litany is plain for all to see.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

In 1986 the alleged pull-out of six Soviet regiments was supposed to presage a continuing withdrawal. Whether or not they actually left, whether or not they were actually replaced, is now irrelevant conjecture. What is true, irrefutably true, is that upwards of 110,000 Soviet troops remain in Afghanistan prosecuting their occupation with savage force. Where is glasnost?*

*Mrs. Astorga Gadea (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

At the beginning of this year, the Government of Afghanistan trumpeted a so-called policy of national reconciliation. It was a sham from the outset. There never was a realistic possibility, on the terms as announced, that the puppet régime in Kabul would share real power with true representatives of the Afghan people. Even if one accepted at face value the claim that between 60,000 and 70,000 Afghans have returned to their country - even, using the words of the Ambassador of the Soviet Union today, if one extended that to 90,000 - there remain 5 million political refugees outside. The Soviet Union should ask itself: If their plan of national reconciliation is so fair, so appealing, so irresistible, why is it spurned by the huge majority of those who have fled?

Further, even if one accepted at face value that 1,700 to 1,800 villages now have national-reconciliation committees, that still represents only 5 per cent of the 31,000 villages in the country. National reconciliation is a Trojan horse filled with Soviet soldiers and designed to defeat self-determination. Where is glasnost?

Then we have the war itself. So aghast is the world at the carnage in Iran and Iraq that we tend to overlook the carnage in Afghanistan. It is, in fact, worse. More than a million Afghans have been killed or permanently disabled. That represents fully 9 per cent of the population since 1979, when the Soviets initially invaded.

Since last year's debate on this item, a series of independent and authoritative reports have documented what can only be called a chronicle of horrors in Afghanistan. Researchers from the Gallup organization in Pakistan, working in conjunction with the University of Geneva and funded from France and Sweden, have just released preliminary findings of an in-depth survey of the Afghan refugee population. These show that there are 3.15 million registered refugees in

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

Pakistan, with between 200,000 and 300,000 unregistered. Seventy-five per cent are women, and children under the age of 15; 96 per cent were engaged in some form of settled agriculture in Afghanistan before the war, giving the lie to the Soviet proposition that it is only a nomadic population which has been uprooted and disinherited. The same survey estimates that, of the 1 million dead and disabled, 46 per cent were killed by aerial bombardment, 33 per cent by bullet wounds, 12 per cent by artillery and 3 per cent by personnel mines. Since 1979, casualties have risen steadily, doubling in the last two years as the war has increasingly intensified.

From the Helsinki Watch Committee, at the beginning of 1987, came the third in a series of reports cataloguing the deprivations in Afghanistan. Members of the General Assembly will remember that the first report was entitled "Tears, Blood and Cries: Human Rights in Afghanistan"; the second was entitled "To Die in Afghanistan"; and this one is called "To Win the Children: Afghanistan's Other War". It is a blood-chilling document based on hundreds of first-hand accounts and on testimony of the incredible toll taken of the children. One extract will suffice:

"Children are among the most victimized. They are bombed in their schools and during religious instruction in their mosques. They are burned alive in locked rooms, their charred bodies unrecognizable to their grieving parents. Village children are shot while fleeing to caves in the mountains or en route to refuge in Pakistan or Iran. City children are spied upon and urged to inform against their families and friends. Children are trained as spies, saboteurs and assassins. Nursing babies are taken from their mothers in prison, never to be seen again."

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

Amnesty International has released a study entitled "Afghanistan: Torture of Political Prisoners". With scrupulous care and based on individual interviews and testimony gathered and cross-checked from former political prisoners, Amnesty International has come to the conclusion that torture in Afghanistan is widespread, systematic and frequently carried out in the presence of Soviet personnel. I shall not here read from the evidence nor detail first-person accounts. It is, categorically, an abomination. Afghanistan is not simply a country at war; by the thousands its citizens suffer the agony of torture and the finality of extra-judicial execution in a manner which bespeaks barbarity.

Finally, I have in my possession a report about to be released by the Independent Counsel on International Human Rights, which deals with Afghanistan. The Independent Counsel consists of lawyers from Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom and Malta, who have collectively years of experience, credibility and scholarship in international and humanitarian law dealing with human rights, refugees, armed conflict, mercenaries and all related matters which flow therefrom. Their inquiry is, I think, unique. They have carefully assessed all of the international law which could credibly be applied to the present situation in Afghanistan. They have construed that law as narrowly as possible, so that no measure of distortion or extremism could flaw their analysis. During January, March, August and September of this year, the Independent Counsel or members of its staff made prolonged trips to Pakistan, visited all the main refugee camps and conducted hundreds of interviews, often on a random and spontaneous basis. All interviews were taped so that all translations could be checked. The interviewing technique was adversarial, in order to elicit opinions uncoloured by sympathetic bias. Interviews that were not regarded as trustworthy were discounted or

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

discarded. Endless numbers of additional contacts were made and yet further interviews conducted with relief workers, journalists, diplomats and representatives of international agencies with extensive knowledge of Afghanistan.

Everything was then measured - I may say in a very cautious and prudent way - against the norms of international law, and this is what the Counsel found: There is a systematic practice of torture carried out by members of the KHAD secret police, sometimes in the presence of doctors and Soviet officials. Civilians have been the victims of indiscriminate attacks and attacks by means of indiscriminate weapons, in violation of the laws of war and international human rights. There is evidence of massacres of civilians by Soviet troops. Extra-judicial executions are uniformly carried out, in direct defiance of international jurisprudence. Soviet troops are not inhibited in their choice or use of weapons: they use booby traps and explosive household objects as part of their ordinary arsenal, in blatant violation of the most fundamental laws of war. The war is being waged without restraint on the civilian population of Afghanistan and the physical and religious structure which supports it. Unlawful attacks by Soviet and Democratic Republic of Afghanistan forces on illegitimate targets are widespread and systematic. There is substantial evidence to support the allegation that the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union have been pursuing policies aimed at the forced depopulation of Afghanistan. There is a co-ordinated policy of forcibly transferring children from Afghanistan to the USSR. There is evidence that the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union are involved in a complex and premeditated attack on a traditional society and its values and that the attack is being pressed at every level of social organization: the village, the agricultural infrastructure, the religion, education, the children and health and life itself.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

Above all, and in a way which tends to corroborate the terrifying spectre raised last year - and many of my fellow representatives will remember that extraordinary paragraph in the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan - this report says:

"In the view of the Independent Counsel on International Human Rights, there is considerable evidence that genocide has been committed against the Afghar people by the combined forces of the DRA [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan] and the Soviet Union".

In the name of Canada, I put all this on the record of the General Assembly because Afghanistan is an oft-forgotten war. With the exception of this annual debate, the insensate destruction of that country and its people receives very little international attention.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

Somehow the Soviet Union must be brought to recognize that the selective application of glasnost, an application which figuratively and literally eliminates Afghanistan, is unacceptable to the world community. This is particularly true because of the events of the past year. Despite all the public protestations about wanting to withdraw, despite all the stories of Soviet soldiers returning battered and maimed to a grieving homeland, or not returning at all, despite all the talk of national reconciliation again here today, the war is more out of control than ever. The military engagements now number 450 to 500 a month compared to 300 to 350 in 1986, and they are double what they were in 1984-1985. What is more, as everyone here knows, the sabotage within Pakistan proceeds apace, and the bombing of border refugee camps has reached unconscionable proportions.

What is worse is the extreme disappointment which attended the last episode of the proximity talks in Geneva in September. After all, the talks were requested by the Government of Afghanistan, and the United Nations assumed, as did much of the international community, that an acceptable timetable for withdrawal would finally be put in place. Instead, the Soviet side make a so-called concession which was no real concession at all; it served only to frustrate the process further.

We salute the patience and stoicism of the Government of Pakistan. Its position is desperately difficult, yet it hangs in and copes with the largest refugee population in the world. We salute the Afghan Mujahidin, their courage and their new solidarity under unified leadership. It is almost unimaginable that they have withstood the formidable Soviet juggernaut. But the toll is horrific.

Above all, we salute the work of the Secretary-General and the use of his good offices to attempt to effect a settlement. But of course that settlement will never come in a way that allows all the groups and people within Afghanistan to determine their own future until the Soviet regiments withdraw.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

In his report submitted last September, the Secretary-General states the following:

"On 29 June 1987, during an official visit to Moscow, I myself met with General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev, who expressed his strong support for the United Nations diplomatic process and assured me that the main concern of the Soviet Union was that Afghanistan should have a neutral and independent régime, not hostile to the Soviet Union nor indeed to any of its neighbours. The General Secretary expressed the expectation that a settlement would be concluded as soon as possible." (A/42/600, para. 9)

It is frankly beyond Canada to imagine how one builds a régime which is neutral, independent and without hostility through terror, torture and war. It is equally beyond Canada to know how a settlement can be concluded unless the Soviets leave Afghanistan. That is the pre-condition of peace. That is the pre-condition of a new Government which will embrace the return with honour and safety of all its people and will itself be representative of all its people.

Every year we adopt resolutions exhorting the Soviet Union to consecrate a formula for settlement. This year, today, the Soviet Union asks us to accept amendments to the traditional draft resolution which would skew the text, allowing for Soviet support and with it, presumably, consensus. What a wholesale betrayal of the people of Afghanistan that would be: the entire world co-opted in the service of the destruction of a nation; no guarantee of Soviet troop withdrawal; no guarantee of a free, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan; no more moral pressure and authority from this the council of the world here assembled. Canada will have no part in those proposed amendments.

(Mr. Lewis, Canada)

I repeat, every year we adopt resolutions exhorting the Soviet Union to consecrate a formula for settlement. Every year we plead for an end to the insanity. Every year we return with the words still ringing in our ears. Every year we are greeted with prevarication, rationalization and defiance. Every year we try again, all of us. We are undeterred.

If ever there were a test for glasnost it is Afghanistan. So far the Soviet Union has failed and is failing the test. Dare any of us hope that at this time next year the cry of the dove will be heard over that scarred and anguished land?

Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand): The invasion and occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet forces constitutes a gross violation of the fundamental norms and normal practices governing relations among States. It violates the generally accepted principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and poses a serious threat to international peace and security. The situation in Afghanistan is therefore a matter of grave concern to us all.

Almost eight years have elapsed and the situation in Afghanistan remains unchanged. The illegal occupation of that hapless country continues despite the fact that the General Assembly has adopted eight successive resolutions by an overwhelming majority calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and the urgent achievement of a political solution.

The continued presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan is a denial to the Afghan people of their legitimate right to self-determination and has brought widespread suffering to the Afghan people and tragic consequences to their motherland. The prolonged war has already cost hundreds of thousands of lives. Over 5 million Afghans, or nearly one third of the total population, have fled to seek refuge in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. About 2 million more Afghans are displaced and uprooted within the country itself. The war has led also to

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

destruction of agricultural infrastructure and crops, resulting in serious shortages and hunger. Human rights are being violated, with victims ranging from the aged to young children. This situation must not be allowed to continue.

The influx of over 5 million Afghan refugees into neighbouring Pakistan and Iran has indeed created a gigantic humanitarian problem for the two countries and for the international community as a whole. Thailand, as a country of first refuge for more than a quarter of a million Kampuchean and other Indo-Chinese refugees and displaced persons, well appreciates the magnitude and dimension of the refugee problem now confronting Pakistan and Iran. My delegation would therefore like to pay a well-deserved tribute to them for the admirable humanitarianism they have displayed in helping alleviate the plight of uprooted Afghans. My delegation also wishes to express its profound appreciation to the donor countries and the various United Nations bodies and agencies, as well as other humanitarian organizations, for their assistance and active support in this regard.

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

Moreover, armed incursions and shelling by foreign or puppet forces in Afghanistan into Pakistani territory should be strongly condemned, and their cessation demanded by the international community, as they constitute acts of violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Thailand's view and position regarding the situation in Afghanistan is well known internationally. My Prime Minister, when he addressed this Assembly on 7 October 1987, reiterated Thailand's position on the issue:

"The situation in Afghanistan was caused by the single-minded pursuit of unilateral goals on the part of one of the world's most powerful nations. The problem can be resolved only on the basis of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, which demand the total withdrawal of foreign forces and the exercise by the Afghan people of their right to self-determination.

"The position of Thailand on these issues has been firm and consistent. Our position is based on the United Nations Charter and international law, and is in harmony with a majority of the Member States." (A/42/PV.28, p. 11)

Thailand is therefore insistent in its demand for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan and is desirous of securing a comprehensive political settlement of the problem. Such a settlement should be based on the following elements: the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops; the exercise of self-determination by the Afghan people; respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan; and the safe and honourable return of the Afghan refugees to their motherland.

During his visit to Moscow in June this year, the Secretary-General was assured by General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union's strong support for the United Nations effort in quest of a solution to the Afghanistan

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

problem. Thailand welcomes that development and perceives it hopefully as an indication of better prospects for a peaceful settlement. However, my delegation would like to stress that a just and durable solution to this problem cannot be achieved through mere gestures or symbolic acts alone. Those directly concerned, particularly the Soviet Union, must show their sincerity and genuine desire for a just and lasting solution to the problem. They can do this by redoubling their efforts to bring about an agreement on the total withdrawal of foreign forces within the shortest possible time-frame. Solving the Afghanistan and other similar problems in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions would be shining testimony to the spirit of glasnost and the renewed confidence in the United Nations ability to assist in the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts.

My delegation notes with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan, contained in document A/42/600. My delegation is gratified to learn of the agreement on the implementation assistance scheme and of finalization of the relevant provisions of a draft fourth instrument on interrelationships. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its support for the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative. Thailand has consistently supported the Secretary-General's role in behalf of the world community. During the general debate, my Prime Minister, if I may quote him once again, assured the Assembly that

"The Secretary-General ... enjoys Thailand's confidence and support in his patient efforts to find peaceful solutions to these problems. My country is always willing to assist in these efforts, any time, anywhere." (A/42/PV.28, p. 11)

(Mr. Kasemsri, Thailand)

My delegation joined with other delegations in sponsoring draft resolution A/42/L.16 because we are convinced that the draft resolution provides a reasonable framework for a just, equitable and lasting political settlement of the Afghanistan problem. The draft resolution focuses, among other things, on the basic issue of the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan and calls for their immediate withdrawal. It looks forward to the return of the Afghan refugees to their homes in safety and with honour. It reaffirms the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their own economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint. It emphasizes the cardinal principles of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of nations and, in this case, the non-aligned status of Afghanistan.

It is my delegation's firm conviction that only by strict observance of these principles by all nations big and small can a political settlement of the Afghanistan problem be achieved. My delegation therefore wishes to urge the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution by an overwhelming margin, in order to underline once again the importance the international community attaches to the underlying principles and to the pressing necessity of finding an urgent political solution to this tragic problem.

Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand): It is nearly a decade since the Soviet Union invaded its small neighbour, Afghanistan. This is the eighth successive session at which the General Assembly has had before it a draft resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops. The continued failure of the Soviet Union to comply with this call and its attempts to divert international attention from its responsibility for the present situation in Afghanistan must not blind us to the issue of principle. The use of force in international relations is contrary to Article 2 (4) of the Charter of this Organization. The violation of that basic

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

tenet of the United Nations is all the more reprehensible because it is the action of a major Power, a permanent member of the Security Council. Small Member States cannot but be concerned at the implications for their own independence and their own sovereignty.

New Zealand appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General, through his Personal Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Diego Cordovez, to seek a negotiated settlement. We welcome the progress Mr. Cordovez has made in his painstaking consultations since the thirty-ninth session of the Assembly. The Secretary-General's report records noteworthy achievements in the agreements reached on the implementation assistance scheme and on the mechanism through which talks between the parties were held from 25 February to 9 March and 7 to 10 September this year.

The visit to Afghanistan in July and August by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Mr. Ermacora, was, we hope, a step towards remedying the existence there of violations of fundamental human rights. We trust that co-operation will be further extended to the Special Rapporteur in order to ensure that future missions have a comprehensive view of the situation in that country.

But progress on that one aspect of the issue has highlighted the fundamental and continuing impediments to a political settlement. New Zealand shares the Secretary-General's regret at the persistence of the gap between the positions of the parties concerning the time-frame for troop withdrawal. We are also concerned about the related question of the establishment and nature of the government which will remain in Afghanistan after Soviet troops are withdrawn.

(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

There is an urgent need for a genuine dialogue amongst the various Afghan parties which does not presuppose the continued dominance of one group. Policies announced at the beginning of this year appeared to give ground for guarded optimism. Such optimism has not been justified by subsequent events. Without progress and dialogue amongst the Afghans, the progress which the Secretary-General's Personal Representative has made on other aspects will not bear fruit. Accordingly, we welcome the offer by Mr. Cordovez to facilitate communication between Afghan groups.

The need for a solution to the question of Afghanistan is obvious. Apart from the continuing carnage and the damage wrought in Afghanistan itself, the conflict is felt very directly in neighbouring countries through border incursions and the strains which over four million refugees have imposed on the social, economic and political fabric of their host countries. It threatens stability in the entire South Asia region and it is a significant impediment to an improvement in the general climate of international relations.

The deep concern of the whole international community is evident from the steady increase in the numbers of countries supporting the resolutions on Afghanistan adopted by this Assembly. It is important that the Assembly continues firmly to demonstrate its rejection of the use of force in international relations. New Zealand will again vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Assembly. We urge other Members to do likewise and, most importantly, we urge the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to redouble their efforts to bring an end to this tragic and bloody conflict.

Mr. YUSOF (Malaysia): At the outset I should like to express the appreciation of the Malaysian delegation to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan (A/42/600). We are convinced that the report clearly reflects the objective situation prevailing in that country.

(Mr. Yusof, Malaysia)

According to the report, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union had expressed his strong support for the efforts of the United Nations to solve the Afghanistan problem. He had assured the Secretary-General that Afghanistan should have a neutral and independent régime, neither hostile to the Soviet Union nor to its other neighbours.

My Government welcomes this affirmation of the role of the United Nations in the search for a political solution in Afghanistan. All too often have nations rejected the role of the United Nations. Not infrequently have the hopes of the victims of aggression or armed conflict been frustrated by vetoes in the Security Council. It is therefore heartening to hear Mr. Gorbachev's affirmation in relation to Afghanistan.

It has been nine years since Soviet military forces intervened in Afghanistan in support of a régime it had earlier installed in Kabul. During that period the massive and sophisticated Soviet military machines have not been able to provide stability or security to the régime - much less to pacify the highly independent and freedom-loving people of Afghanistan. The rifts created by the Soviet Union have become so enormous. One gets the feeling that this adventurism has undermined the very foundations of Soviet foreign policy - particularly those policies pertaining to security and peace. The Soviet Union has had serious thoughts on the ramifications of the history of Afghanistan and other neighbours upon their own. They seem to realize the cynicism of their military actions.

In the light of these new thoughts, it is not surprising to note that Mr. Gorbachev had tacitly admitted the Soviets' serious blunder in Afghanistan in his speech at Vladivostok in July 1986. It would appear that all Afghans are the tragic victims of Soviet policies.

(Mr. Yusof, Malaysia)

The Secretary-General's report has made it quite clear that negotiations for a settlement have reached a dead end. His efforts have been stalled on the question of a time-frame for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Despite the assurances of Mr. Gorbachev, despite the admission of serious political error, this difficulty experienced by the Secretary-General is most perplexing. We can only conclude that the Soviet Union is unwilling to take the practical step to withdraw its forces. It is frightening to note that any permanent member of the Security Council, or any super-Power for that matter, would proffer and act in contradiction at one and the same time.

The latest ploy has been that national reconciliation is taking place in Afghanistan. If this is so, is it not more plausible to initiate the withdrawal of Soviet forces? Is it not the inalienable right of all Afghans - in keeping with their history, traditions and honour - to exercise their self-determination free from coercion or domination? Is it not the proper conduct of good neighbourly relations to allow Afghans to exercise their rights in a manner which would enable them to stand tall in the world community? For national reconciliation to be truly meaningful to all in Afghanistan, it can only be conducted in the absence of Soviet forces and in the presence of a United Nations supervisory force. As a super-Power, as a permanent member of the Security Council and as a big neighbour, the Soviet Union can make that happen. It can demonstrate to the world the meaning of its pre-eminence.

As a friend of the Afghan people, my delegation makes this appeal to the Soviet Union to withdraw its occupation forces from Afghanistan at the earliest practical time and to assist the Secretary-General in every way to enable the Afghan people to establish their national reconciliation. All Afghans must have the free and unrestricted right to choose their own government - indeed a neutral

(Mr. Yusof, Malaysia)

and independent régime, neither hostile to the Soviet Union nor to its other neighbours, as desired by Mr. Gorbachev and Members of the United Nations. Any other imposition on Afghanistan will not bring peace to that country - unless that is the intention of the imposition.

My Government does not believe that Mr. Gorbachev wishes to perpetuate instability in Afghanistan. His leadership has demonstrated a strong desire to occupy a position of responsibility in the search for international peace and stability. He has manifested support for multilateralism on global issues and has advocated a strong role for the United Nations in the resolution of international conflicts. In Afghanistan, Mr. Gorbachev has the ideal opportunity to demonstrate this fresh political thinking.

The debates in this Hall have established that the war in Afghanistan is a major destabilizing factor in Asia and in the world. It has torn apart the fabric of the Afghan nation. It has brought about serious pressures on other neighbouring States, especially on Pakistan, which has been forced to shelter and care for millions of Afghan war refugees and victims of terror and repression. As a result, Pakistan's own security has been severely threatened. Constant cross-border provocations are aimed at intimidating Pakistan into accepting the Russian presence in Afghanistan.

The General Assembly has repeatedly condemned the Soviet invasion. The Assembly, through this debate and by voting for draft resolution A/42/L.16, must once again express its concern for the restoration of peace and independence in Afghanistan. The United Nations has the responsibility of bringing this about. We have the responsibility to ensure that the premise of the draft resolution is based on accepted principles of the United Nations Charter. In the discharge of this responsibility, we are not motivated by anti-Soviet sentiments, nor do we ignore the legitimate security interests of the Soviets. Our purpose is to put right

(Mr. Yusof, Malaysia)

a blatant wrong, to enable the people of Afghanistan to attain genuine self-determination and to re-establish peaceful coexistence in the region. In effect, we shall be striving to provide a solid unequivocal mandate for the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General and his Personal Representative deserve not just our gratitude, but our clear support for their untiring efforts to promote the negotiations on the conclusion of the international instruments for settlement.

(Mr. Yusof, Malaysia)

The Government of Pakistan too deserves our appreciation for its own positive contribution to the peace process and for its patience and forbearance in the face of tremendous pressures. We sincerely hope that the views expressed here today will encourage Pakistan in its determination to contribute to a just and enduring settlement in Afghanistan.

The political and strategic dimensions of the war in Afghanistan are equalled by the extent of its human tragedy. In the continuing conflict millions have become victims. The suffering of Afghans both within and outside the country is intolerable and unacceptable to civilized societies. In its mitigation the offer of material assistance is only a small solace. Even so, Malaysia is deeply grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and many other charitable organizations, as well as donor countries, for their invaluable assistance to the Afghan refugees, who are forced to live in misery and despair.

My delegation feels that draft resolution A/42/L.16 represents a balanced and objective approach towards a just and peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. It contains important principles of the United Nations Charter which we all support and are convinced can be the only basis for a solution to the occupation of Afghanistan. We are sponsoring this draft resolution in the firm belief that it will contribute to lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. We are against the continuation of the present conflict; we are against the perpetuation of instability in the subregion. We therefore call upon Member States to join us in giving the draft resolution the overwhelming endorsement it deserves.

Mr. AL-HOSSANI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): The foreign policy of my country is based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law, which enjoin respect for the territorial integrity

(Mr. Al-Hossani, Oman)

and political independence of all States and the right of peoples to self-determination and to choose their own system of government without any foreign intervention.

The current situation in Afghanistan is a violation of those principles. It is an attempt to impose a fait accompli, which cannot be accepted by any free people. Therefore, my delegation, like all delegations that believe in the right to a decent life, joins the majority of the members of this Assembly in calling for serious efforts to arrive at a comprehensive solution to the problem of Afghanistan based on the elements clearly defined in General Assembly resolution ES-6/2, of 15 January 1980.

My country sympathizes with the plight of the people of Afghanistan, who are suffering simply because they want to live in freedom and independence. How could it be otherwise bearing in mind the numbers of those displaced, killed or wounded, orphaned or widowed, or forced to flee their homeland, simply because they want to live in freedom under a system of their own choosing? The world shamed by this tragedy, which continues without any gesture from those who should show the necessary goodwill to alleviate the sufferings of these people and respond to their just demands.

My country appreciates the constructive efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to bring about a comprehensive solution to the problem of Afghanistan, which is threatening international peace and security in that sensitive region of the world.

We also affirm our support for the Government of Pakistan and pay a well-deserved tribute to it for the noble, humanitarian role it is playing as host to millions of Afghan refugees, in spite of the circumstances and limited potential of this generous country.

(Mr. Al-Hossani, Oman)

Recently, my delegation did not hesitate to sponsor and support a draft resolution on the situation in Kampuchea, because we believe in the right of people to a decent life. Today, we are taking a similar step and following the path chosen by a large number of States represented in the Assembly by supporting the draft resolution on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. We hope that the adoption of this draft resolution will facilitate a peaceful settlement, in the interest of the people of Afghanistan and their tranquillity and stability, the harmony and security of the neighbouring countries, and international peace and security.

Mr. MAKSIMOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Important changes are taking place in the political life of Afghanistan at the present time. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has firmly proclaimed a policy of national reconciliation and appealed to all Afghans to observe a cease-fire and begin a dialogue so that peace and harmony may reign in their suffering land.

A carefully planned programme of national reconciliation takes into account the characteristic elements inherent in the socio-economic structure of Afghan society and its national, cultural and religious traditions. The declaration on national reconciliation reaffirmed by the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan on 3 January 1987 proclaimed that the objective of the policy of national reconciliation is peace throughout the country, the cessation of the fratricidal war and bloodshed, the happiness of the people and the progress and prosperity of the country. The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan is actively carrying out a broad range of measures to ensure further democratization of the society.

(Mr. Maksimov, Byelorussian SSR)

Nearly 10 months have elapsed since the adoption of the Declaration on national reconciliation. During that time, the policy of national reconciliation has borne tangible results. Through peaceful means, more than 1,600 villages have been freed. Recently, more than 30,000 armed mutineers have accepted the truce conditions and together with them 110,000 members of their families have returned to a life of peace. During that time tens of thousands of refugees have returned to their homeland.

After the Declaration of the policy on national reconciliation, the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan undertook far-ranging measures, including an extension of the unilateral ceasefire until 15 January 1988, the declaration regarding the establishment of a multiparty system within the country, and the creation of coalition administrative bodies at all levels.

There is no political persecution of those who formerly followed a different political policy. There is implementation of universal amnesty for prisoners, as a result of which more than 6,000 people have been freed from prison. The draft of the new constitution for the country has been submitted for general popular discussion and in it Islam is declared the religion of the people of Afghanistan.

On 6 July 1987, the Afghan press published the law on political parties confirmed by the Presidium of the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. The parties may nominate candidates for election to organs of State power and administration and may freely express their views on political, social, economic and cultural issues and they may publish their own publications. This law is now being implemented.

In Kabul, for example, according to press reports, it has become known that clergymen are preparing to found the Islamic Party of Afghanistan. The Afghan leadership is engaged in a search for compromise with other political forces,

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including the right wing. The Afghan Government has declared its readiness to enter into contact with all forces and circles that support national patriotic positions. The ruling party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, has declared its readiness to share power with representatives of the opposition - with all national patriotic elements. The inclusion of opposition forces at various levels of government is already taking place and is now moving upwards to the level of villages, districts, regions and provinces. The membership of the Central Government includes five ministers who had formerly worked in earlier régimes.

Right now Afghanistan is resolving the national problems that have accumulated in the past few years. It is rendering assistance to more than 2 million nomads. It is also giving assistance to refugees returning to their homeland, and for this purpose a special administration has been established in the country.

In resolving the land question, Afghanistan is taking into account the interests of all land users and the traditions of land use. The development of industry is based on the actual application of the policy of national reconciliation. Assistance and support are being rendered to the private sector and mutually profitable relations are being set up between the State sector and national entrepreneurs.

The commissions on national reconciliation which are being established on all levels from the centre to the provinces, regions and villages serve as an important instrument for the implementation of the policy of national reconciliation. The work of these 3,200 small and large commissions includes the participation of approximately 91,000 patriots, who support the stabilization of the situation and of peace in the country. Of them, approximately 6,000 are former representatives of the opposition.

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The Government of Afghanistan has declared that it is ready to share posts in more than 20 ministries with its partners in reconciliation including, if necessary, the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

To ensure human rights in Afghanistan, after the April revolution more than 400 decrees, regulations and decisions were adopted. The fundamental principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which form the provisional constitution of the country, include all the basic provisions of international covenants on human rights. They provide for respect for and compliance with the national, historic, cultural and religious traditions of the Afghan people. They also contain provisions on the equality of all citizens, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin. Article 28 of the principles proclaims that all Afghan citizens are equal before the law.

More and more levels and groups of the Afghan people are being won over to the policy of national reconciliation and the achievement of a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan is more and more becoming a tangible reality.

In the course of the past year, significant progress has been noted in the process of the Geneva negotiations. There has been a noticeable lessening of the differences between the sides on the question of the timetable for the withdrawal of the limited contingent of Soviet troops. All of this strengthens the hope for a speedy achievement of a political settlement of the Afghan problem.

However, the path of implementation of the policy of national reconciliation is still strewn with serious difficulties. The imperialist circles and local reactionary forces are making desperate attempts to halt the process of normalization of the situation in Afghanistan and are interfering in its internal

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affairs. There is no slackening of the military actions in the country. They are now being carried out primarily by bands of mercenaries sent to Afghanistan by extremist groups entrenched in neighbouring Pakistan.

After the beginning of the implementation of the reconciliation programme, certain Western countries sharply stepped up their military assistance to these groups. They supply them with modern weapons, including anti-aircraft missiles, such as the Stinger and Blowpipe. As a result, civilians, including old people, women and children, continue to perish. Favourable pre-conditions for successful progress towards national reconciliation and the diffusing of the Afghan problem are created by the policy carried out by the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union in their bilateral ties and on the international scene.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, pointed out that national reconciliation in Afghanistan was a matter of course, and exclusively for the Afghans themselves, including those beyond its borders. What is needed here is dialogue, negotiations and more trust between the opposing sides. In principle, the question of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has been resolved. We favour a reduction in the withdrawal timetable. However, interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan must cease and guarantees must be given that it will not be resumed.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR believes that the cessation of ~~interference~~ interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and guarantees of its non-resumption are indispensable conditions for a peaceful settlement of the situation in the country. We are in full agreement with the view of the Government

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of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan that the process of negotiations in Geneva and the process of implementation of the policy of national reconciliation, as two parallel and simultaneous policies, will lead to a speedy political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan and around it.

The interests of international peace and security require joint efforts to put an end to any actions that might prolong the war and aggravate the tension. Of course, if the Members of the United Nations intend in the near future to achieve a cessation of the destructive war in Afghanistan, to reject paths of military solution, then they must make changes in the relevant resolution so that it can effectively promote the ensuring of peace in the region.

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Such changes are indeed being suggested. In the proposed amendments to the draft resolution Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic rightfully suggest that along with an appeal for the withdrawal of foreign troops the draft resolution include a new paragraph calling for strict observance of the principle of non-interference in relation to Afghanistan. They propose also that a phrase be added welcoming the progress at the Geneva talks.

We attach great importance to the letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, Mr. Abdul Wakil, stating that the inclusion of those provisions in the draft resolution would enable all the parties concerned, including the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, to support the draft resolution. This constructive position of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is convincing testimony to its desire for a political settlement of the Afghan question and to its active and helpful participation in the preparation of a balanced draft resolution that could actually be implemented.

On the other hand, the sub-amendments proposed by Pakistan attest to a lack of desire in certain well-known circles, first and foremost in Pakistan, to achieve a just solution to the Afghan question in general and to the question of the withdrawal of Soviet troops in particular.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR favours the continuance of constructive efforts to reach a mutually acceptable solution and a decision that would open the way to the speedy, just settlement of the Afghan question.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): As the General Assembly meets once again to review the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security, my delegation is conscious of some important developments in or related to Afghanistan since the Assembly considered the question last year.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Prominent among them are, of course, the unflagging endeavours of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative to achieve a negotiated settlement of the Afghan problem. We have taken appreciative note of the prolonged businesslike negotiations conducted in Geneva through the good offices of the Secretary-General between the parties concerned. More significantly, we note that differences concerning the time-frame for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan have been considerably narrowed, although, unfortunately, not as yet bridged. My delegation is not unaware that over the past year or so new efforts have been undertaken in Afghanistan aimed at achieving national reconciliation in a society torn apart by eight years of searing conflict. The recent proposal made from this very rostrum for a possible peace-keeping role for the United Nations following the withdrawal of all foreign forces from that beleaguered land has, similarly, not escaped our attention. To this list must be added new elements of dynamism and flexibility recently manifested across a wide spectrum of Soviet initiatives pertaining to international peace and security.

These are certainly new, noteworthy and even encouraging developments. Yet my delegation does not see a change on the ground in Afghanistan, where the basics are concerned. I refer to the hard fact that nearly one third of the entire population of Afghanistan, voting as it were with their feet, have taken shelter in refugee camps in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. My delegation's continuing anxiety over the situation in Afghanistan has reference also to the equally bitter reality of the prolonged presence of more than 100,000 foreign troops in that country. Our sense of unease and disquiet over the situation in Afghanistan is linked equally to the fact that death and destruction have replaced caracul and dried fruit among Afghanistan's better-known features. Most of all, however, Nepal is particularly perturbed over the serious implications of the fact that a super-Power which has

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a special responsibility under the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security should be the interventionist Power in Afghanistan. Clearly, this fact raises the possibility of wider escalation of the conflict in terms of both destruction and, alas, extension into neighbouring regions.

My country's position on the situation in Afghanistan has been spelt out clearly from this rostrum on seven previous occasions. It is a position of principle based on universally accepted norms of inter-State behaviour, not on prejudices or fluctuating political exigencies. It is, of course, conditioned also by our humanitarian concern over the plight of the brave Afghan people, with whom Nepal has traditionally had friendly relations. Finally, it is also moulded by Nepal's unshakeable conviction that small States, especially those on the periphery of militarily stronger Powers, have as much right as any other States to live in an environment of stable peace. This explains why Nepal has always opposed foreign intervention and occupation wherever and whenever it has taken place, in whatever form and on whatever excuse.

On this occasion my delegation wishes to express its solidarity with and support for the Afghan people, and our deep appreciation to all States, especially Pakistan and Iran, and humanitarian relief institutions that have responded so well in meeting the urgent relief and rehabilitation needs of millions of Afghan refugees. It is our hope that they will continue to respond generously until all Afghan refugees return home in honour and safety.

It is because of these considerations that Nepal is, as always, ready to support any negotiated settlement of the Afghanistan problem that secures the unconditional withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan, ensures the right of all Afghans to determine their own political destiny freely, without any outside interference or coercion, respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

non-aligned status of Afghanistan and creates an environment favourable to the voluntary return of all Afghan refugees in dignity and safety.

It is precisely for these reasons that Nepal is honoured to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/42/L.16, now before the Assembly. In our view, it contains all the elements necessary to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem. It is our hope, therefore, that it will be adopted by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. PITARKA (Albania): For the ninth time since the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan on 25 September 1979, the General Assembly is considering the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. The aggression committed against Afghanistan by the Soviet social imperialists has been condemned by all of world public opinion as a grave crime against the freedom and independence of the people of a sovereign country and as a threat to peace and security in the region and beyond.

The debate on this item at the current session of the General Assembly is proof of the concern aroused by the ongoing Soviet occupation of Afghanistan among the entire international community and the great importance the latter attaches to this issue. A number of representatives have spoken about the agony and suffering the aggressive war and occupation continue to inflict on the Afghan people, and about the grave consequences they entail not only for the Afghan people but also for neighbouring peoples, which besides the heavy economic burden of providing for the Afghan refugees are also subject to military provocations and the systematic violation of their territorial integrity. The peoples of the world, progressive world public opinion, and every honest individual have raised their voices and are doing so ever more powerfully, demanding that the occupying Soviet troops be immediately and completely withdrawn and that the Soviet Union put an end to all aggressive activity and intervention against Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

Facts bear witness to the fact that the situation in Afghanistan remains grave. Throughout the period since the last session of the General Assembly, while Soviet propaganda has unremittingly continued to make a fuss about Moscow's "readiness" and "willingness" to solve the problem through negotiations, the occupying Soviet troops have continually intensified their efforts by force of arms to suppress the armed resistance of the Afghan people. The period saw an escalation in the scope and intensity of military operations and a consistent

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increase in the arsenal of arms used in those operations. Consequently, thousands of civilians, especially women and children, have been killed or wounded.

The abundance of tactics and operations employed to intimidate and suppress the Afghan people was lately enriched with "gifts" for innocent Afghan children: booby-trapped toy-shaped bombs have been widely introduced in various regions inhabited by Afghans.

All this has resulted also in a steep rise over the past year in the number of Afghan refugees forced to abandon their ancestral homes and set out on the road of emigration in search of refuge. As they persist in their crimes, the Soviet occupiers cynically continue to trumpet the stale farcical allegation that they were invited into Afghanistan as saviours and peace-keepers. But that absurd claim has long been refuted, first and foremost by the very armed resistance of the Afghan people aimed at driving the Soviet aggressors out of their country, resistance that is eloquent proof of the fact that the Afghan people have never reconciled themselves to Soviet occupation and domination.

In the face of the resolute armed resistance of the Afghan people and patriots, and of the condemnation by freedom-loving peoples and countries of the aggression against Afghanistan, the Soviet occupiers are relying ever more on a so-called peaceful settlement of the Afghan problem. The deceitful proposals cooked up in Moscow and served in Kabul on the so-called national reconciliation and truce in Afghanistan and the loud trumpeting of the "withdrawal" of several Soviet regiments from the country are nothing but new political manoeuvres aimed at consolidating by other means and in different ways Soviet occupation and domination and the position of the Kabul Government. These are marketed by Moscow for propaganda consumption and are being used as diplomatic capital to eradicate the bad image as aggressors and invaders it has incurred for itself among sovereign

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

peoples and countries and world public opinion as a whole. Moreover, the Soviet leadership is endeavouring to conceal its old intention to expand its hegemony into new areas and regions of the world under the cover of demagoguery and the "peaceful guise" of the so-called new political thinking.

In addition, by putting forward its deceitful proposal for a political solution - "national reconciliation" to be realized through the creation of a coalition government with the participation of all Afghan political forces - Moscow is trying to paint the occupation and the patriotic resistance in the colours of a civil war among opposing forces in the country. In that way Moscow can show itself off as an external auxiliary factor, invited to be present to help resolve national discord and contradictions. Moreover, its eagerness to ensure that the Kabul régime gets the green light to enter negotiations to be held under the auspices of the United Nations or allegedly to fix a time-frame for the removal from Afghan territory of the occupying troops are in the same way part and parcel of those tactical demagogic manoeuvres.

The delegation of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania has on more than one occasion voiced its opinion in this Assembly that the tragedy the Afghan people is living through is a consequence also of the severe rivalry between the super-Powers for spheres of influence and world hegemony. We also hold that the "sympathy" and "concern" of the United States and its alleged support for the Afghans against the Soviet occupiers are prompted by selfish imperialist motives and should therefore deceive no one, least of all the Afghan people who from their own experience and the experience of other peoples cannot fail to realize that what worries the United States of America and other imperialist Powers is not their suffering and fate but the imperialist ambitions of those Powers. The United States of America itself is an enemy of the freedom and independence of peoples and has itself committed and continues to commit aggression.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

It is not difficult to see that in the case of Afghanistan United States imperialism is preoccupied first and foremost with the Soviet Union's penetration and expansionist intentions in the region and in other strategic regions where the United States of America has its own hegemonistic aims. In addition, it continues to strive to take advantage of the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan to show itself off as a "champion of peace" in order to divert the attention of sovereign countries and peoples from its aggressive expansionist policies and activities in various regions of the world.

But the brave Afghan people are determined to take their problems into their own hands and decide for themselves the fate of their country. A piece of supporting evidence of that is their armed liberation struggle against the Soviet occupiers, which is the only way they can win national independence and freedom. The brave actions of Afghan patriots against the occupying forces and their tools in the regions of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Paktia, Nangarhar and elsewhere in Afghanistan, the heavy human and material losses they have inflicted upon the occupiers, and the constant growth of the people's resistance covering every inch of the country's territory constitute the most eloquent rebuttal the Afghan people offer to the aggressor's every claim, political and military tactic or action.

(Mr. Pitarka, Albania)

We are of the opinion that the only correct solution to the Afghan question is the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all the occupying Soviet troops. The Soviet Union and every other imperialist Power should cease efforts to interfere in the internal affairs of the Afghan people or to impose upon them régimes unacceptable to them. The Afghan people should be left free to act and decide their national issues for themselves. The resolute support and solidarity given by the peoples and the whole of progressive world opinion to the Afghan people in their struggle serves, to the same degree, all freedom-loving peoples and countries in their struggle against the aggressive and hegemonistic schemes of the super-Powers and the other imperialist Powers, and in their efforts to defend their national independence and freedom and international peace and security.

The Albanian delegation deems it necessary to reiterate once more from this rostrum that the Albanian people and their Government will continue to condemn the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan, and to extend their solidarity and resolute support to the Afghan people in their struggle for their just cause, which will undoubtedly triumph.

Mr. SIDDIKY (Bangladesh): A few days ago I had the privilege of meeting with some Afghan freedom fighters. They were remarkable in the simplicity of their behaviour and the sturdiness of their resolve. They did not dilate at length on abstract concepts of sovereignty. They merely wanted their freedom. I had no doubt in my mind that they would soon obtain it for themselves, and glory as well.

But why must these people and their compatriots confront death to obtain something that is rightfully theirs? All they ask is that Member States, irrespective of their strength and power, conform to the United Nations Charter, to which they stand publicly committed. It is for the Assembly to ensure that that is done.

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

The Afghan tragedy comprises several elements. There is, first, the fierce, ongoing struggle for freedom being carried on, the pangs of which are exacerbated by a massive foreign military presence. This intervention occurred in clear violation of the fundamental principles of the Charter. In the resulting conflict more than a million people have perished. The past few months have witnessed intense fighting in the provinces of Konar, Paktia, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Konduz and Herat. An overwhelming majority of the world public has blessed the legitimate aspirations of the brave freedom fighters.

Secondly, the situation has led to the displacement of a vast populace within and beyond Afghanistan. Nearly 5 million Afghans have sought shelter abroad. More have been forced to leave their own homes and villages and roam the country. There will be a manifold increase in the miseries of the homeless in the weeks ahead, when the cold winter snow shrouds the land.

Thirdly - and this is a pleasing thought - the tragedy has generated deep sympathy in the international community. The Government and people of Pakistan are willing and generous hosts to 3 million Afghans. Many have also found welcoming homes in the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries. The hosts deserve our thanks. Our gratitude is also due to other donors, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme for the colossal support they have rendered to the Afghans.*

*Mr. Matos Proença (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Siddiky, Bangladesh)

Obviously, any possible solution of this issue must take into account these elements. Foreign troops must withdraw within the shortest possible time-frame. The atmosphere must be made conducive to the return of the victims of the Afghan diaspora to their homes in safety and honour. We must ensure that such a tragedy does not recur, and that the Afghanistan of the future is sovereign, independent and non-aligned. It is my delegation's belief that the draft resolution under consideration takes note of these factors. That is why Bangladesh has sponsored it.

It is surely not enough that the draft resolution be adopted. It must also be complied with in spirit and content. We urge the parties so to do. Some recent actions of major global Powers on certain issues have generated an ambience of hope. Let the Afghan people also partake of this new and burgeoning sense of optimism. Let this growing feeling pervade everywhere, be it Turtle Bay in New York, Red Square in Moscow or the streets of Kandahar.

Bangladesh joins others in expressing sincere appreciation of the efforts in this respect of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and we commend those of his Personal Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez.

We welcome the progress in the talks in Geneva so far, but let us not lose sight of the fact that the core problem is the presence on Afghan soil of foreign troops. For the Geneva talks to succeed, therefore, the sine qua non is the immediate provision of a short time-frame for their withdrawal.

There is a lesson to be learnt from Afghanistan for all of us. No nation which loves freedom can be easily crushed. Bangladesh's policy in supporting the draft resolution is in consonance with our oft-stated aims. We should like to see all nations free to pursue their own destiny.

And in Afghanistan we would like to hear once again that paean of praise to the Almighty emanate unfettered from mosques and minarets, and reverberate through the hills: "Allahu Akbar!" - God is great!

Mr. ZAPOTOCKY (Czechoslovakia) (interpretation from Russian): The

Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, guided by the principles of its peace-loving foreign policy, follows all world affairs with great interest, including all those initiatives whose objective is the preservation and strengthening of peace, security and comprehensive co-operation between peoples. We have been following with scrupulous attention the development of events in various regions of the world, for experience teaches us that regional hotbeds of tension can quickly grow into a global conflict, with tragic consequences.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

We therefore note with satisfaction the positive changes and measures recently adopted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in the interest of the process of normalization of the situation around Afghanistan. The policy of national reconciliation proclaimed and consistently carried out by the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan since the beginning of this year is creating conditions for a just and lasting settlement of all issues relating to the development of the Republic in the future and its relations with the other countries of South-West Asia.

The Government of Afghanistan has carried out a wide range of initiatives and adopted measures whose objective is to ensure peace and security in the country, carry out negotiations and achieve agreement with the armed opposition, the Afghan organizations and individuals beyond the borders of the country, and, on the basis of a broad coalition, begin building a new, independent, sovereign Afghanistan carrying out a policy of non-alignment.

On 15 January this year, units of the People's Army of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and a limited contingent of Soviet troops began a unilateral cease-fire. The Commission of National Reconciliation, whose membership includes representatives of the country's leadership, Islamic circles, the intelligentsia, nationalities and tribes, and outstanding figures in the country, is carrying on negotiations about reconciliation with armed opposition groups. Material and other conditions are being created for the Afghan refugees returning home from abroad, to enable them to become an organic part of the life of the country. A general amnesty has been declared and put into effect. A law regarding the legalization of a number of political parties has been adopted. The draft of the new constitution submitted for general discussion proclaims the Islamic character of the country, reaffirms its non-alignment, traditional spiritual values and the structure of

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local and central government. The revolutionary leadership has taken major practical steps to establish a coalition Government. The Government has set up a structure for the private sector and is establishing mutually beneficial co-operation with it and, in so doing, is creating conditions for its further growth.

The large-scale programme of national reconciliation encompasses all classes and strata of the Afghan population. It gives each Afghan the possibility of genuinely full-fledged participation and the true right to decide his own present and future and the political, social and economic development of his country.

We are convinced that, in present conditions in Afghanistan, the policy of national reconciliation is the sole means to overcome existing problems. There is no alternative to it. The correctness of this view is attested to by the results achieved from the beginning of this year in the implementation of the policy of national reconciliation. Therefore, Czechoslovakia welcomes the policy and fully supports its implementation.

However, both within Afghanistan and on the international scene, there are at work forces which, for various reasons, do not see, or do not wish to see, those fundamental positive changes taking place in Afghan society. They deliberately do not notice how the approach of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to resolving its own affairs and the situation regarding the country as a whole is changing. They reject all that is positive and, in their own political, economic and ideological interests, continue to engage in political interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State - the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

Some of those forces not only support the existence of dubious groups that can hardly be distinguished from terrorist organizations, but also supply them with modern weapons and give them financial, material and structural support. They

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describe their policy as a democratic means of reaching a decision. They continually cause tension and an atmosphere of hysteria and mistrust and worsen the international situation in the region. They use their economic and political power to drag many States, which until recently were still dependent, into a campaign against the progressive development of Afghanistan, a development whose objective, as in a number of other developing countries, is the elimination of feudal backwardness and the building of a modern, independent State.

There are still countries members of the United Nations that annually vote for resolutions calling for, inter alia, the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan. However, those same countries, through their behaviour and refusal to accept the concept of national reconciliation in Afghanistan, torpedo the most appropriate means of creating conditions in which that demand can be fulfilled. An inalienable, integral part of a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan are the Geneva consultations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are taking place under the aegis of the United Nations. In this connection, we appreciate the patient attitude and unflagging interest of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, with regard to the Afghanistan-Pakistan dialogue, and the tireless mediation efforts of his Personal Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, who is promoting a gradual rapprochement of the positions of the two sides.

Czechoslovakia, like the other members of the United Nations, welcomes those negotiations and is sincerely concerned to see that they culminate successfully in the adoption and signing of treaty documents creating a framework for resolution of the question at the regional level. In the interest of the speedy achievement of that objective and in view of the complexity of the matter, we propose that the Geneva consultations be raised to the level of direct negotiations and that their

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membership be expanded so that yet another country involved - Iran - may participate.

The delegation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has made considerable efforts during this session to achieve constructive agreement with all those that arrogate to themselves the right to interfere in the situation around Afghanistan. If those efforts were met with understanding, still more States might be able to vote for draft resolution A/42/L.16. That would create conditions for a gradual consensus and for a settlement of the so-called Afghan question, which would mean its removal from the Assembly's agenda. It can only be regretted that the constructive approach of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has not received support. Those who reject it are clearly conveying their interest in preserving Afghanistan as one of the hotbeds of tension. Their acting thus is counter to the interests of the Afghan people and of international peace.

Since the draft resolution does not reflect the positive efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to settle the situation, and contains a one-sided interpretation of the situation, the Czechoslovak delegation cannot vote for it.

(Mr. Zapotocky, Czechoslovakia)

We believe that the step taken by several non-aligned States to balance the one-sided draft resolution is correct. We support the proposals of the delegations of Democratic Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic which, in our view, reflect this realistic and constructive approach. The adoption of these amendments could lead to a shift in the right direction in resolving this question.

With regard to the sub-amendments by Pakistan, we believe that they exclude the possibility of such a shift because they are aimed at further imbalance and one-sidedness in the draft resolution. We should like to believe that the delegation of Pakistan would once again ponder this question and not insist on its proposal.

Therefore, we call on all States Members of the United Nations simultaneously to unify their efforts, show sufficient reasonableness and political far-sightedness, and make way for and support national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and a political settlement of the situation around that country. Only with the unification of those two processes can we ensure what world public opinion so ardently desires, namely, the elimination of yet another hotbed of international tension and a general improvement of the international atmosphere.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): When the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shevardnadze, addressed the Assembly a little over six weeks ago he spoke about the process of change - perestroika - going on in his country which, in his words, is more than a strictly domestic affair of the Soviet Union. Perestroika was relevant for the Soviet Union's domestic as well as foreign policies.

The debate on the issue we are discussing today, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", provides an opportunity to reflect for a moment on the practical meaning of these words in relation to the

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

item before us. The question then arises: Has perestroika yet changed the fate of the people of occupied Afghanistan, or will it do so in the near future, or will oppression, violence and terror continue? Will the Soviet Union draw the conclusion from its ill-fated policy on Afghanistan that has resulted in so many innocent victims and irreplaceable losses and, therefore, fundamentally change its policy?

Unfortunately, looking at the facts so far we cannot but observe that Afghanistan is still occupied by over 110,000 Soviet troops. Between 1979 - the year of the Soviet invasion - and 1987 are eight years of tremendous suffering by the great majority of the Afghan people. Millions left their homes and fled the country in search of shelter from the war that ravages it. More than 5 million refugees are now living temporarily in Pakistan and Iran. What we see are bloodshed, deliberate destruction, hunger, disease, violation of human rights and a total disruption of the economy in Afghanistan. What we observe is the continuation of heavy attacks, bombardments and cross-border raids from Afghanistan into neighbouring States, particularly Pakistan. What we see is a tenacious and audacious resistance: Afghan freedom fighters who, bearing testimony to the Afghan people's traditional fierce attachment to their independence, have managed to keep large parts of the country outside the effective control of the occupier and the régime the Soviet Union has put in place in Kabul.

In this context, allow me to quote Mr. Shevardnadze and ask what he meant when he said the following in his statement to the General Assembly:

"It is now becoming increasingly clear that the Afghans themselves are able to decide the future of their own country and indeed are doing so. This new encouraging trend is in keeping with our sincere desire to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan as soon as possible, and in this we are meeting with the full understanding of the Afghan leadership." (A/42/PV.9, p. 18)

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

Unfortunately, the Afghan people have not yet been given back the opportunity to decide the future of their own country, and there is as yet no withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in sight, not even an agreement on an acceptable and irrevocable timetable. The latest report of the Secretary-General makes clear that an agreement on such a timetable will be of paramount importance for a solution. The General Assembly, for the eighth time, now urges the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops immediately. Proposals for withdrawal in a period of 18 or 16 months are thus not even close to the expressed wish of the great majority of the international community assembled in this Hall.

An agreed settlement of the conflict, including a timetable for the speedy withdrawal of the Soviet troops, will not merely provide a good basis for national reconciliation. It is more than that: it is a necessary prerequisite for it - not the other way round.

We therefore once again urge the Soviet Union and the authorities in Kabul to agree to a speedy withdrawal of the Soviet troops according to a fixed timetable, so that the settlement plan which has been so carefully worked out under the auspices of the United Nations can be implemented. The reconciliation process will then have its necessary basis to build upon, leading, we hope, to a truly free, democratic, independent and non-aligned State which, with the help of the international community, will, it is hoped, soon be able to recover from the devastating consequences of eight years of an unprovoked and unwarranted war.

Allow me to conclude by paying tribute to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, other international agencies and the countries of refuge, all trying to alleviate the situation of the Afghan people in and around Afghanistan. My delegation also wishes to reiterate its firm support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative,

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

Mr. Cordovez, for their tireless efforts to bring about an early comprehensive solution to the problem of Afghanistan. The Netherlands and many other countries will continue to support them in their endeavours. If there is one international issue where what is meant by strengthening the role of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in solving regional problems can be shown, it is the question of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Mr. KANE (Mauritania) (interpretation from French): When, on

14 January 1980, the General Assembly adopted by a large majority its resolution ES-6/2, on the situation which had just been created in Afghanistan, it expressed the grave concern of the international community at the potential risk which foreign intervention in the internal affairs of an independent, sovereign, non-aligned State posed for the region as a whole. In supporting that resolution, Mauritania demonstrated its concern for and solidarity with the brother Muslim Afghan people, to whose fate it could not remain indifferent.

Eight years have elapsed since then and the tragedy and sufferings of that friendly brother people have not abated; quite the contrary. However, from the outset the overwhelming majority of the international community strongly deplored that situation and defined the conditions which could bring peace, security and understanding to that country, thus averting the torment of a protracted conflict in that region with all the attendant suffering and destruction.

Those conditions are: respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned status of Afghanistan; the cessation of all outside interference in that country's internal affairs; the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops; and an invitation to all interested parties to help bring about the conditions necessary for the voluntary return to their homes of all Afghan refugees.

Those four crucial elements in a just and lasting settlement of the crisis situation in Afghanistan remain valid because, although they have been adopted and constantly repeated in subsequent resolutions, the Afghan people, far from having the peace and security they desire, continue to live a tragedy that affects their daily lives, their country and their relations with the people of neighbouring countries.

(Mr. Kane, Mauritania)

Thus, from the outset of that crisis uninterrupted waves of refugees have continued to crowd into neighbouring countries, where, despite the local solidarity of peoples, they create serious economic, social and political problems. Their prolonged presence in refugee camps, quite apart from the accompanying problems of insanitary and overcrowded conditions, constitutes a very heavy burden for those countries, which, nevertheless do their duty admirably and show humane solidarity. My country fully recognizes the sacrifices made by the peoples and Governments of those States in supporting the cause of another people in difficulty. We also wish to take this opportunity to welcome the generous contributions made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, non-governmental organizations and sister States to relieve the suffering of those refugees.

The tragedy of the Afghan people and the situation prevailing in Afghanistan continue to be of concern to the international community. The United Nations Secretary-General, in particular, who has been involved in this question since the outbreak of the crisis, has made commendable efforts to finding a solution to the conflict. My Government welcomes the fact that, thanks to his dedicated, discreet and effective action, talks have taken place among the parties concerned on finding an acceptable compromise which may enable the country to choose the form of Government it wishes to have freely and without outside interference.

The hopes raised over a year ago by the announcement of the withdrawal of certain foreign troops have not been fulfilled. The promises of domestic reconciliation have come up against the continued presence of foreign troops. There continue to be just as many refugees in neighbouring countries. Despite a certain measure of progress in the Geneva talks, the settlement of the crisis continues to face an obstacle course. Mauritania is convinced that only the total,

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unconditional and effective withdrawal of all foreign troops will enable the Afghan people to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination and attain effective national reconciliation. Therefore, as in past years, it will support the draft resolution on this issue.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): The delegation of Zaire has given careful consideration to the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security. It followed with special attention the talks held from 25 February to 9 March 1987 and from 7 to 10 September 1987 in Geneva between officials of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is clear from those talks that the positions of the two Governments on the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan are still far from converging. This matter has political, military and strategic implications for both parties and it would seem to be essential to adopt new approaches so as to bridge the gap between the two Governments, bearing in mind that the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan is the essential pre-condition of the peaceful, comprehensive settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. That is the price that must be paid to preserve Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned status.

My delegation believes that the inalienable right of all peoples to choose their own form of government and their own economic, political and social system without any kind of interference, subversion, coercion or constraint from outside must be guaranteed in the case of the Afghan people, which is the victim of foreign armed intervention on its territory.

Last year there was a glimmer of hope when, on 28 July 1986, the Soviet Government announced in Vladivostok its decision that by the end of 1986 six

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

regiments with equipment and weapons would be repatriated from Afghanistan. These would be, specifically, one tank regiment, two motorized infantry regiments and three anti-aircraft regiments, which were to return to their permanent bases in the Soviet Union before the end of the year.

My delegation's question in this connection is whether those six regiments have in fact left Afghan territory, because two fundamental steps have to be taken before a comprehensive settlement can take place. First, the arrangements necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the comprehensive settlement of the question must be made. Secondly, there must be common agreement on a fixed time-frame for the withdrawal of all foreign troops stationed in Afghanistan.

The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Diego Cordovez, has spared no effort in trying to resolve those two important questions. To this end he has undertaken several missions to Islamabad, Kabul, Tehran and the Headquarters of the Organization, while the Secretary-General himself has travelled to Moscow and Washington to meet the two designated guarantors of the comprehensive settlement of the question.

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My delegation wishes to convey its appreciation and encouragement to the Secretary-General, the results of whose missions of good offices and mediation appear to indicate that the process of negotiations on a comprehensive settlement of the question has reached an advanced stage. The formulation of the international instruments in connection with that settlement is progressing satisfactorily, especially since the Afghans themselves face the need to begin considering the way to ensure the reunification of the Afghan nation, which is a prerequisite for the prompt and effective implementation of the settlement.

In that context, the relevant provisions of the draft fourth instrument on interrelationships which provides for a consultative procedure with the assistance of the Secretary-General's representative, have been completed. Similarly, the operational aspects have been set out in a memorandum of understanding that will enter into force at the same time as the instruments constituting the settlement. In approving that memorandum, the two Governments decided that the provisions should be carried out by the Secretary-General as part of his mission of good offices.

Unfortunately, the progress made in this area does not extend to the time-frame for the withdrawal of foreign troops or the related matter of the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees.

My delegation therefore believes that efforts to achieve that negotiated settlement can lead to peace in Afghanistan, national reconciliation and the reincorporation and resettlement of Afghan refugees, and can make it possible for the Afghan people to determine its own future.

On the basis of these objective elements, my delegation decided to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/42/L.16, which is now before the Assembly for adoption along with the sub-amendments proposed by the delegation of Pakistan. In doing so my delegation wished to encourage the Governments of Pakistan and

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Afghanistan on the one hand and the various interested parties in Afghanistan on the other to make every effort to reach an early political solution in keeping with the provisions of the present draft resolution, the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan being a pre-condition of the achievement of that objective.

Mr. AL-SHAKAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): One element of Bahrain's approach to international relations is consistent opposition to the threat or use of force against the national sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of any State, foreign occupation and interference in the internal affairs of other States on any pretext whatsoever. Accordingly, Bahrain has repeatedly stated its firm belief that in their international relations States should act in conformity with those fundamental principles of foreign policy. That belief is based on the principles of the United Nations Charter that prohibit invasion and occupation and require full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and a commitment by States to good-neighbourliness.

Bahrain supports the just, peaceful settlement of all regional conflicts in accordance with the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law, the purpose of which is to preserve the rights of States Members of the Organization and maintain international peace, security and stability.

We reaffirm our basic conviction that the main pre-conditions of a just, political settlement of the question of Afghanistan are the ending of military occupation through the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces from the territory of that occupied land and full respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Occupation and invasion must never be permitted to achieve any gains on the pretext of a political settlement.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

The General Assembly has been discussing the question of Afghanistan for eight years, ever since the invasion and occupation of that country by the forces of a neighbouring super-Power. Those foreign forces remain there, while the struggling people of Afghanistan continues to fight for freedom and political independence. The situation in Afghanistan is a source of concern and sadness. In spite of the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly since 1980, the most recent of which was resolution 42/33, of 5 November 1986, the Afghan people is still deprived of the ability to choose its own Government or determine its own political system free from any foreign interference or pressure.

My delegation has carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General (A/42/600) of 29 September 1987. We have taken note of the progress made last year in the negotiations, with the good offices of the Secretary-General, on a peaceful, comprehensive settlement of the question. Unfortunately, these fell short of achieving the comprehensive settlement that is so long overdue. We regret that the latest round of proximity talks between the parties concerned, which were held in Geneva last September with a view to achieving national reconciliation, were inconclusive. The parties have been unable so far to overcome the difficulties obstructing the just, comprehensive political solution of the problem of Afghanistan outlined by the General Assembly in its resolutions since 1980. In those resolutions the General Assembly called for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and for the preservation of Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character. It also reaffirmed the right of the Afghan people to determine its own form of government and its own economic, political and social system free from outside intervention. It called upon all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement of a political solution to the question of Afghanistan and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to promote such a solution.

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

I should like here on behalf of the delegation of Bahrain to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez, for their tireless efforts and contacts with officials of the parties concerned in the rounds of talks to implement arrangements aimed at a peaceful settlement of the question of Afghanistan and reach agreement on a time-frame for the withdrawal of the foreign forces.

In his report to the General Assembly the Secretary-General has affirmed the need to take bold and decisive steps of national reconciliation to ensure that the settlement commands the support of all segments of the Afghan people where all Afghans can express their right to self-determination. We once again affirm our basic conviction that the Geneva and other talks on finding a political solution to the question of Afghanistan cannot achieve the desired objectives unless there is total respect for the rights of the Afghan people - its inalienable right to self-determination and to the free choice of its own future, including its own appropriate political régime and economic approach, without any foreign intervention or coercion of any kind. Only with the restoration can Afghanistan once again become a free, independent, neutral and non-aligned country.

We are hopeful that the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative will in the near future be able, in co-operation with the parties concerned, to overcome the remaining obstacles to the realization of a just settlement and putting an end to the suffering and the plight of millions of Afghans who have been forced to flee their homes and country and live in exile in neighbouring countries, whose hospitality and generosity reflect the values of Islam and its noble principles and ideals.

Given our sense of responsibility and deep faith in the lofty Islamic values and in the principles of the United Nations we declare from this rostrum our full solidarity with the people of Afghanistan in its struggle for freedom and

(Mr. Al-Shakar, Bahrain)

independence. We should like to affirm at the same time Bahrain's support for that people's just struggle for eight years to put an end to the occupation of its land and alleviate the suffering of the refugees outside their homeland.

To this end my country has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/42/L.16. We hope that its adoption by the General Assembly will express the international community's general and complete support for the restoration to the Afghan people of their inalienable rights to freedom, self-determination and the preservation of their country's independent and non-aligned Islamic character, free from any foreign interference or coercion, and also expedite progress in settling this important issue which, if left unresolved, will undermine international peace and security.

Mr. CISTERNAS (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): The enormous task of representatives who have heard, with different shades of meaning, a repetition of the same central idea on the issue of Afghanistan will not deprive our words of the certain sense of tragedy they must necessarily have.

At this stage in our debate brevity would be in order, but we must emphasize the grave importance of the events that are taking place in that region today, events which lead us to take two basic stands here: the first, to bring a complaint, the second, to pay a tribute.

Today we will not go into greater detail about the flagrant violation by the Soviet authorities of the principles of international law embodied in the United Nations Charter. For them non-intervention in internal affairs, self-determination of peoples and non-use of force are theoretical expressions which can be successfully opposed by force of arms. Let us simply mention the cruel decision to trample upon a country by violating its borders, devastating its cities and

(Mr. Cisternas, Chile)

countryside and eliminating its legitimate authorities in order to impose a totalitarian ideology enslaving a people through the brutal and overwhelming presence of 110,000 fully armed soldiers.

The artful massive attack, which has created almost 5 million refugees, approximately one third of Afghanistan's population, was also intended to achieve the subjection of its youth and children psychologically and physically through the villainous deceit of the "humanitarian policy of national reconciliation".

We wish to join in the heartfelt statements of well-known personalities from various countries who, in shock, have been able to validate reports of the existence of brightly coloured camouflaged mines which imitate objects that attract children and explode when children touch them, convinced that they are only dealing with innocent toys.

It is difficult to conceive of the human spirit being so evil and calculating in order to commit such an atrocity. Today there are hundreds of Afghan children and young people who have been blinded and are now living in despair. This behaviour is revealing of the senseless paths men can follow in the service of evil. It is a living and painful example of the distorted truth of the totalitarianism that today is stifling Afghanistan.

The international community cannot distance itself from these moving facts; it cannot remain insensitive to their cruelty.

The Soviet Union's invasion of the territory of Afghanistan almost a decade ago, planned and executed by vastly superior armies in number and training, has however not been an easy operation. The youth of Afghanistan, remembering perhaps that the name of their country means "Land of freedom", have decided to stand up to the invader - which possesses an enormous and efficient military machine - with meagre and even primitive means as their only last-ditch defence.

(Mr. Cisternas, Chile)

We recall here the freedom fighters.

It is to that people and that youth that we pay tribute today. We extend to them our fraternal and heartfelt greetings. Taking a heroic stand that ennobles them, they have set aside ideals and dreams to offer hard combat to the implacable invader that has destroyed their families and levelled their towns and universities and is attempting to demolish their culture and religion by imposing alien forms or by forcing them to flee for their lives.

The problems the Soviet presence has brought to Afghanistan are not ending or disappearing, nor can that presence be sanctioned with the passing of time. The problems are being compounded and spread because the acts of depredation continue. The number of refugees fleeing into Pakistan is beyond belief.

We cannot here ignore the interests of the Moscow leadership not only in subjecting a people but also in eliminating what is most important to it: its culture. The authorities imposed by the occupying force have distorted the age-old values of this people, replacing them with meaningless practices and norms which the people reject or treat with disdain. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan must cease; the enormous damage caused must be undone and the population of that country must be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination without further delay or subterfuge.

When the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan himself, in this forum, acknowledges the existence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran and explains that they have received confusing and erroneous information about the domestic situation in their country, and that same representative admits to the presence of Soviet regiments in Afghan territory, describing it as limited and saying it is dwindling, one can clearly see the origin, the political orientation and the real direction of the Kabul Government and the role of the Soviet Union in it.

(Mr. Cisternas, Chile)

My country is therefore co-sponsoring the draft resolution on this item. We feel that the international community must take a strong and categorical stand on this deplorable situation, which must cease.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan): The statement made this morning in the name of Afghanistan was filled with abuse and slander against my country and my Government which is not worthy of response. But I wish to address certain false assertions made in that statement which need to be exposed for the record.

The first and foremost is the set of assertions relating to so-called outside interference. It has been unabashedly stated once again that the over 100,000 Soviet troops entered Afghanistan on invitation to help in rebuffing outside interference. The myth of such an invitation was rejected by the world community when it was first contrived to provide a post-facto justification for the Soviet military intervention eight years ago. It remains equally discredited today. Indeed, the tragic consequences of the military intervention have served to highlight its illegality and brutality. One may ask, when these over 100,000 foreign troops descended on Afghanistan where did they go and what did they do? They did not proceed to the southern borders of Afghanistan to defend it against a so-called and imaginary aggression, but concentrated in Kabul to dislodge the régime of the day. The first reports emanating from the Afghan capital were of the assassination of the then President and the installation of a new puppet régime. One may ask, where are these foreign troops stationed now? According to Mr. Najib,

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they are operating in 18 of the 30 provinces of Afghanistan. Indeed, these foreign troops are engaged regularly, year after year, in relentless military operations in an attempt to liquidate the Afghan resistance, which is indigenous and has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country.

More can be said about the real source of aggression. Throughout history, refugees have taken shelter away from the direction of the aggressor. If Pakistan were to be the aggressor, as the statement attempts to argue, Pakistan would not have had 3 million refugees seeking shelter on its soil. The location of the Afghan refugees undoubtedly indicates the direction of the aggression.

The only foreign presence in Afghanistan is that of the Soviet forces, and it is the Afghan nationalists who have launched a freedom struggle against the occupation of their country. The Afghan people refuse to be subjugated by the onslaughts of a foreign army. Their struggle is just; they have the right to carry it on by all means, and they deserve international support. The Afghans living in exile and the Afghan émigrés, who include intelligentsia and prominent Afghan personalities, have all of them, without exception, with one voice lamented the occupation of their country and the suffering of the Afghan nation under foreign military subjugation.

The second set of assertions relates to refugees: that they have left their country on account of malicious propaganda by world imperialism, that they are living in inhuman conditions in Pakistan and that Pakistan is preventing them from returning. The tragedy of Afghanistan is of staggering proportions and a measure of it is the fact that one third of the population has fled the country. Over 3 million Afghans are in Pakistan. They face a life of exile and deprivation. They suffer hardship, but it is the inhuman conditions of foreign occupation and the ravages of the conflict resulting from it that have forced them to leave their

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

hearths and homes. Their villages and towns have been bombarded and razed to the ground. Hundreds of thousands of their compatriots have lost their lives. It was these intolerable conditions and not any imaginary propaganda that forced them to leave their homeland.

These conditions continue to persist in Afghanistan and so does the refugee influx into Pakistan. We continue to receive refugees from all over Afghanistan. Last March, when the province of Kunduz in the north was subjected to harsh military reprisals, thousands of Afghans trekked hundreds of miles to seek safety in Pakistan. The Afghan refugees refuse to return to Afghanistan unless the conditions which drove them away are changed. This requires the termination of the foreign military intervention. The United Nations and other international agencies and impartial observers can ascertain the facts for themselves. The Afghan refugee camps are open and many international humanitarian agencies operate there to provide relief.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

The third set of assertions related to the so-called programme of national reconciliation and the allegations that Pakistan was obstructing its progress. The Afghan resistance, the refugees and prominent Afghans all over the world have rejected Kabul's national reconciliation. They rightly maintain that reconciliation cannot materialize under conditions of foreign occupation. It is strange that the Kabul régime, which is seen by the Afghans as puppets sustained by a foreign army, which has maligned the resistance as bandits and counter-revolutionaries for nearly seven years, should now expect the Afghan people and the resistance to rally round it and accept its leadership in response to promises of national reconciliation. It is equally astonishing that the Kabul régime expects this national reconciliation to materialize under the patronage and protection of foreign forces.

The farce of national reconciliation is exposed by the brutal fact that, throughout the summer, Afghanistan was once again subjected to intensified military operations involving foreign forces. The aim of those operations, which wreaked destruction in several provinces and major cities, was to consolidate the control of the puppet régime. Kabul's national reconciliation seeks the same objective, but the puppet régime continues to depend on the foreign forces for its survival as it did earlier. It thus remains devoid of legitimacy and discredited in the eyes of the Afghan people.

The fourth set of assertions relates to the Geneva negotiations to mislead international opinion. Kabul's statement attributed progress at Geneva to its own initiatives, proposals and flexibility. The actual position, however, is different. Kabul's initiatives and proposals are no more than manoeuvres to avoid the issue of the time-frame for withdrawal.

(Mr. Khan, Pakistan)

The text of a comprehensive settlement was ready as early as 1984. Pakistan was ready to conclude the settlement provided a short time-frame was made available. Since then, new questions have been raised by Kabul to avoid the time-frame issue. Until now, the situation has not changed. At the last Geneva round, Pakistan was willing to continue with the negotiations for as long as was necessary in order to finalize the time-frame issue, but the other side stalled and had no interest in carrying the talks forward.

In fact, the Kabul statement is disturbing in its reference to the Geneva talks as it impinges on the integrated nature of the settlement being negotiated at Geneva and the agreed principle calling for the simultaneous implementation of its component parts, namely, the four instruments, the texts of which have been elaborated and which await the provision of a short time-frame for finalization.

The objective evaluation of the Afghanistan situation is found in the decisions and resolutions of the international community, which clearly identify the Soviet military intervention as the root cause of the Afghanistan problem. This military intervention is not only a violation of international principles: it has produced one of the darkest tragedies of our times.

Mr.ROSHAN-RAWAAN (Afghanistan): I have asked to speak to clarify some points raised by the representative of the military régime of Islamabad. Once again, as in previous years, that delegation has tried to portray the presence of the limited military contingent of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan as the only cause for the situation prevailing in and around my country. The fact is that interference in the internal affairs of my country began long before the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan - on the basis of a treaty of friendship, co-operation and good neighbourliness with the Soviet Union, and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations - invited the limited military contingent of the Soviet Union to assist us.

(Mr. Roshan-Rawaan,
Afghanistan)

In this connection, I should like to remind my colleague from Pakistan that, months before we made the decision to request the assistance of our northern neighbour, a high-ranking delegation of my country visited Islamabad to discuss the threats posed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of my country as a result of interference by Pakistan in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

The position portrayed today by the delegation of Pakistan added no new element in this regard and I think it is now clear to the international community, after eight years, that the root cause of the situation prevailing in South-West Asia is interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan from abroad, but mainly from Pakistan. The invitation to the Soviet Union to dispatch the limited military contingent to Afghanistan was the result of this interference in our internal affairs.

In a campaign of distortion of the truth, which has unfortunately been the practice of my colleagues from Pakistan for some years, they misquoted the Secretary-General of the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the President of the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan as if he had said that the limited military contingent of the Soviet Union was operating in 17 provinces in my country, which is not the case. They are not engaged in any military activities. They are there to assist our people and our armed forces to repel any threat posed from abroad to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of my country.

Once again, the delegation of Pakistan attempted to speak on behalf of the Afghan refugees abroad. In fact, they said that the refugees do not want to return to their homeland. If that is the case, then one might ask why the Government of Pakistan refused to accept a delegation from the national commission for

(Mr. Roshan-Rawaan,
Afghanistan)

reconciliation from Afghanistan, as proposed by my Government, to visit the refugee camps in Pakistan, to hear their wishes and to prepare the conditions for their return to Afghanistan, in consultation with the Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan tries to convince us that the only role played by Islamabad is to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees. If that is indeed the case, then why do we hear Pakistan talking in this Assembly on behalf of the refugees? If the only rule is to provide humanitarian assistance, I think they should allow the refugees to speak for themselves and not arrogate to themselves the right to say on their behalf that they reject the policy of national reconciliation or do not wish to return to Afghanistan.

I do not think I have to dwell on the policy of national reconciliation itself, because it is very clear. On the other hand, the reason that the delegation of Pakistan tried once again to assert that it is not going to work shows its hostility and enmity towards this programme - this humane programme, which is the only alternative to war, bloodshed, tears and destruction in Afghanistan.

(Mr. Roshan-Rawaan,
Afghanistan)

I am surprised that the delegation of Pakistan should also have spoken about casualties and deaths. I think one must ask which forces are responsible for all those casualties and are fanning this undeclared war against Afghanistan? Which country's territory is being used as the main springboard for aggression against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan? I believe that, no matter how many crocodile tears are shed in the General Assembly over the fate of Afghanistan they cannot hide the fact that the Government in Islamabad is directly responsible, as the main conduit for weapons and the main springboard for aggression against Afghanistan, for the suffering of the Afghan people.

I should like also to shed some light on the question of negotiations, which was also touched upon by the representative of Pakistan. We have always kept our word regarding the understanding that details of the negotiations would be regarded as confidential. That pledge has been broken many times by the delegation of Pakistan, particularly in this Hall. Today, they also referred to what happened in 1984. Let me clarify that point. Whatever happened in 1984 was the result of the fact that, at the negotiating table, the delegation of Pakistan was trying to put the cart before the horse. It wanted to discuss the question of the withdrawal of troops first, and their presence, as I have said, was the result of interference; it was not the cause of the situation that prevails. And eventually, as a result of our logic, our reasoning, our arguments, the delegation of Pakistan agreed that we should discuss all four documents constituting the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan together.

(Mr. Roshan-Rawaan,
Afghanistan)

I should stress that the first document to reach the level of virtual completion at which it now stands was that on mutual relations, particularly non-interference and non-intervention.

Bearing all this in mind, I think that what was asserted by my colleague from Pakistan does not hold water. There is no truth in it.

The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.