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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN STATES

DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS
BETWEEN STATES

Letter dated 19 May 1988 from the Permanent Representatives of
Afghanistan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Joint Afghan-Soviet Statement of 15 May 1988 (see annex).

We would be grateful if you would have the text of the document circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 72, 130 and 137 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Shah Mohammad DOST
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Plenipotentiary, Permanent
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* A/43/50.

ANNEX

Joint Afghan-Soviet Statement of 15 May 1988

On the day of 15 May 1988, when the Geneva Accords on the political settlement of foreign aspects of the Afghan problem come into force, the Soviet Union and Afghanistan consider it necessary to make the following statement:

The Accords signed in Geneva have been received with satisfaction and hope by the Soviet and Afghan peoples and all over the world. Each of the parties, which put its signatures under the Agreements, should do its utmost to ensure the attainment of the goals, for the sake of which work on the provisions of the Geneva Accords was carried out for six long years.

The pivotal issue of settlement of the situation around Afghanistan remains that of putting an end to interference from the outside in the home affairs of the Afghans. The commitments to this effect contained in the Accords are of an absolutely specific and unambiguous character: an end shall be put to interference; the very material basis, which is now used for such interference, shall be eliminated. It is necessary to see permanently to the implementation of the important provisions of the Agreement on the principles of mutual relations, in particular non-interference and renunciation of intervention between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

In conformity with the Geneva Accords, the return home is starting today of the limited contingent of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. As was determined by the Agreement on interconnection for the settlement of the situation related to Afghanistan, the withdrawal of the troops will be carried out in the course of nine months, one half of the contingent is to be withdrawn within the first three months, i.e., by 15 August 1988.

The Soviet troops came to Afghanistan at the request of its legitimate government with fair and noble aims. The Soviet Union has always unreservedly respected and continues respecting the sovereignty of its southern neighbour. This respect underlies the relations of good-neighbourliness and co-operation between the two countries, which have been maintained for more than one decade. In its turn, Afghanistan has always looked upon the Soviet Union as the country which has more than once come to its assistance in difficult times for the Afghan people, guided by the principles of good-neighbourliness.

Now that the Soviet troops are returning home, one can again see the whole absurdity of the speculation on the allegedly "expansionist aims of Moscow" and its striving to use Afghanistan for reaching "the warm seas". If the Geneva Accords had been concluded earlier, which was precisely the wish of the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, the return of the Soviet troops home from Afghanistan would have also started earlier.

Today, the day that the Soviet troops are beginning to return home, the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan consider it necessary to stress the great significance of the traditional, historical friendship between our countries, which has become particularly strong and tempered in the years difficult for Afghanistan, and is sealed by blood spilled jointly in the name of that country's radiant future by the Afghan patriots and Soviet internationalist soldiers.

The Soviet Union and Afghanistan are firmly convinced that the signing and coming into force of the Geneva Accords can and must facilitate the settlement also of the internal aspects of the Afghanistan problem. The policy of national reconciliation pursued in Afghanistan has already created the necessary prerequisites for such developments. In today's Afghanistan, all the sectors of the Afghan society, all the nationalities, have equal political, economic and social rights. Equal opportunities are open to all the Afghans to work for the benefit of their country, to participate in its political life on the multiparty basis. The Islamic religion and its traditions and customs are profoundly honoured and recognized by the State. Coalition bodies of power are being set up all over the country. The Afghan leadership states that it is prepared to contribute further in every way possible to that process, to forming in Kabul a coalition government on the broadest basis.

On the day when the Geneva Accords come into force, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan again reiterates its call to all the opposition forces for a cease-fire, for ending the fratricidal war and bloodshed, and for sitting down to the negotiating table, for building jointly a peaceful and prosperous State. It expresses confidence that the Afghan refugees, for whose return home as citizens enjoying full rights all the necessary conditions are created, will actively join in that process of construction.

The Soviet side believes that this policy enables the settlement of the Afghanistan problems between the Afghans themselves.

Proceeding from the provisions of the joint Soviet-Afghan statement on the results of the meeting of Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and President Najibullah of the Republic of Afghanistan at Tashkent on 7 April 1988, the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan have reaffirmed their preparedness to strengthen and develop in every way possible large-scale Soviet-Afghan co-operation in all fields.

The Soviet side will further develop economic co-operation with Afghanistan and broaden trade and contribute to the development of direct ties between the Soviet Republics, regions and cities with the provinces and cities of Afghanistan. The Soviet side reaffirms its intention to give assistance to Afghanistan to bring to normal life the Afghan refugees going back home from Pakistan and Iran. The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan appeal to all States to contribute to the rehabilitation of the war-ravaged Afghan economy, to the economic and social development of the Republic of Afghanistan, both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of multilateral programmes of assistance, including along the lines of the United Nations Organization. The Soviet Union is prepared to take an appropriate part in international programmes of this kind.

The Soviet and Afghan sides evaluate highly the work done to create a United Nations control mechanism for the observance of the implementation of the Geneva Accords, and voice the hope that the activities of the United Nations observers will effectively help towards the implementation of the Geneva process. The Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan are convinced that the conscientious fulfilment in full by all the sides of their commitments under the Geneva Accords is sure to permit reaching the speediest solution to the foreign aspects of the Afghanistan problem, and this will, in its turn, become an important impetus to a full and comprehensive Afghan settlement. They are also convinced that the experience of Geneva will stimulate a quest for the settlement of other regional conflicts with all their specific complexities and specific features.
