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THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL  
PEACE AND SECURITY****SECURITY COUNCIL  
Forty-fourth year**

Letter dated 16 February 1989 from the Permanent Representative of  
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations  
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a statement issued by the Soviet Government on 15 February 1989.

I should be grateful if you would have this text circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) A. BELONOVOV

ANNEX

Statement issued by the Soviet Government on 15 February 1989

Acting in strict compliance with the Geneva agreements, the USSR has completed the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. There is not a single Soviet soldier left in that country.

When signing the Geneva agreements, the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan proceeded from the premise that the precise fulfilment of commitments under the agreements by all the parties could and should provide a reliable basis for ending the protracted conflict between the warring Afghan groups, and help restore peace on Afghan soil and stabilize the situation in the region as a whole.

The constructive policy of the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan created every possibility for terminating the bloodshed on Afghan soil and searching for mutually acceptable compromises, taking into account the legitimate interests of all the sides and parties involved in the conflict.

The Government of the Republic of Afghanistan has put forward a programme for national reconciliation. It has advocated Afghanistan's rebirth as a non-aligned and neutral State maintaining good-neighbourly relations with all countries. The Soviet Union has treated these highly important initiatives with complete understanding and has given them support, for a stable and thriving Afghanistan also meets our interests.

How the situation will evolve in Afghanistan depends in many respects on whether the other parties to the Geneva agreements follow the example of the Soviet Union and the leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan, and whether the armed opposition operating out of Pakistan and Iran shows a sense of responsibility, self-restraint and an ability to think in terms other than terms of violence. It is more obvious today than ever before that there is no need for the opposition, if it is not averse to rational thinking in principle, to force an open door by continuing the fratricide while the problems confronting the Afghan people can be solved at the negotiating table.

Whether the Afghan situation will develop along the lines of national accord and the creation of a broad-based coalition Government, as envisaged by the relevant resolution of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, or along the lines of escalating war and tension in and around the country, depends to a large degree on those who have, over all these years, aided and abetted the armed opposition, supplying it with sophisticated weapons. The Soviet Union reiterates its proposal for an immediate cease-fire between the warring Afghan groups and a simultaneous end to arms shipments to Afghanistan by all countries, including the USSR and the United States.

It is quite clear that in the present circumstances, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, a special responsibility rests with Pakistan, which should strictly observe its obligations under the Geneva agreements and prevent its

territory from being used for the purposes of interference in Afghan domestic affairs.

The Soviet Union cannot ignore statements by individual representatives of the Pakistani leadership about the possibility of creating a Pakistani-Afghan confederation. This kind of discourse is effectively aimed at directly infringing upon the sovereign rights of the Afghan people.

The United Nations, with its rich experience of peace-making in various regions, has a major role to play in steering along the right course the processes under way in Afghanistan. Its programmes for economic and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan are its specific contribution to peace-making in Afghanistan. It is important that the machinery for this aid moves into top gear as soon as possible.

The refugee problem is a most serious one for Afghanistan. It worries all Afghans irrespective of their political views. But it cannot be solved without a cease-fire. Only after the war is ended will it be possible to tap the possibilities for the return of refugees, possibilities that are inherent in the Geneva agreements.

The Soviet Union is prepared to do everything in its power for Soviet-Afghan economic co-operation, to continue serving the interests of our peoples - both at this stage, facilitating a transition to a life of peace, and after the achievement of a comprehensive Afghan settlement. This readiness is also reflected in the Soviet Union's active involvement in multilateral aid to Afghanistan through United Nations channels.

Having left Afghanistan of its own free will and in agreement with the Afghan leadership, the Soviet Union will continue promoting a peaceful and comprehensive Afghan settlement.

We hope that the Afghan people will opt for the path of peace and accord, since this is the only way the bloodshed can be ended and calm restored on the ancient land of Afghanistan.

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