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TEXT OF STATEMENT BY SINGAPORE'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, PROFESSOR TOMMY KOH, AT THE UN GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON "THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN" ON 12 JANUARY '80

In all sincerity I would like to tell you that of the nine distinguished Presidents of the General Assembly under whom I have served, you are the best. Your presidency of the 34th Session of the General Assembly has set new and high standards of efficiency, competence and impartiality which I hope will be emulated by your successors.

I have listened carefully to the statements made in this debate by the Soviet Union and by the delegations which support her. In essence their case is based upon the following four propositions.

First, the Soviet forces in Afghanistan are there at the invitation of the Government of Afghanistan.

Secondly, the Soviet forces played no part in the overthrow and execution of President Hafizullah Amin which occurred on the 27 December 1979.

Thirdly, that the present debate constitutes an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and is therefore contrary to paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the UN Charter.

Fourthly, that the Government of Afghanistan requested military assistance from the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union agreed to render such assistance in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

I shall ..... /2.

I shall attempt to analyse briefly each of the four arguments adduced by the Soviet Union and her supporters. I shall begin with the first proposition. The Soviet Union says that at all relevant times her armed forces were in Afghanistan at the invitation of the government of that country. We know for a fact that on the 25 and 26 December 1979 a massive Soviet airlift into Kabul took place. In over 200 flights approximately 10,000 Soviet troops were transported into Afghanistan. The critical question is who had invited the Soviet troops to enter Afghanistan on the 25, 26 and 27 December until President Amin was killed and Babrak Karmal was appointed as his successor? The Soviet statement does not make this clear. It cannot be seriously contended that President Amin had invited the entry of Soviet forces in order to depose and to kill him. Is it the contention of the Soviet Union that the request for Soviet military assistance had come from Babrak Karmal? If this is the answer it will not stand up to scrutiny.

In April 1978, the government of President Mohammed Daud was overthrown by a coup d'etat carried out by communist members of the Afghan Armed Forces. On the 30 April, a new government was established with Nur Mohammad Taraki as Prime Minister and Babrak Karmal and Hafizullah Amin as Deputy Prime Ministers. Three months later, on 6 July, Babrak Karmal was dismissed from his post as Deputy Prime Minister and sent to Czechoslovakia as the Afghan Ambassador. A few weeks later Babrak Karmal was recalled from Prague by his government. He refused to return. Instead, he lived in exile in the Soviet Union until after the coup against President Amin on the 27 December. Therefore, if the Soviet forces had entered Afghanistan between the 25 and 27 December at the request of Babrak Karmal, he had no authority to make such request because he was not the leader or even a member of the Afghan Government at the relevant time.

I shall now turn to examine the second question. The Soviet Union has denied that its Armed Forces had either engineered or participated in the coup against President Hafizullah Amin. I find the Soviet denial unconvincing. According to press reports, on the evening of December 27, Soviet troops surrounded the Presidential Palace in Kabul and fighting occurred between Afghan soldiers defending the Palace and the Soviet forces. According to

such reports, the Soviet troops also attacked Afghan forces guarding Radio Afghanistan and other key government installations and took control of them.

The Soviet Union has contended that the present debate constitutes an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and is contrary to paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the UN Charter. The validity of this argument depends upon whether or not the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan since 25 December contravenes the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Afghanistan. If the Soviet forces have been in Afghanistan, at the invitation of the government of that country, then the Soviet contention is valid. It collapses as being without foundation in view of the fact that the Soviet forces have entered Afghanistan since 25 December in violation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Afghanistan and that the Soviet forces had either engineered or participated in the overthrow of President Hafizullah Amin.

The fourth and final argument of the Soviet Union is that the government of Afghanistan had requested military assistance from the Soviet Union and the government of the Soviet Union had agreed to provide such assistance in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. Article 51 states that nothing in the Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member state. The article, however, requires that the member state shall report the measures taken by it in the exercise of this right of self-defence immediately to the Security Council. In the opinion of my delegation, the Soviet Union has failed to make out a case under Article 51. The article gives no power to a country such as the Soviet Union to send its armed forces into the territory of another country and to overthrow its government. The facts do not establish that between 25 and 27 December, Afghanistan was the victim of an armed attack by a third state and that the government of Afghanistan had appealed to the Soviet Union for military assistance in order to repel such armed attack. At the relevant time, Afghanistan was not at war with any foreign power. There were no foreign soldiers on the territory of Afghanistan except Soviet troops. The government of Afghanistan did not, between 25 and 27 December, appeal to the Soviet

Union for help in order to repel an armed attack by a third state.

An objective analysis of the facts and of the relevant provisions of the UN Charter has led me to the following conclusions. First, that contrary to Soviet contention, Soviet forces entered the territory of Afghanistan without the invitation of the legal government of that country. Secondly, contrary to Soviet contention, Soviet forces either engineered or at least participated in the overthrow of President Hafizullah Amin. The question whether Hafizullah Amin was a good or bad ruler is irrelevant because, as Ambassador Bishara of Kuwait has explained, the nature of the regime of a country does not justify foreign armed intervention in the internal affairs of that country. Thirdly, that the present government of Afghanistan headed by Babrak Karmal is imposed by the Soviet Union on Afghanistan. Fourthly, the present debate is not an interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and is not contrary to paragraph 7 of Article 2 of the Charter. Fifth and finally, that Article 51 of the Charter cannot be invoked by the Soviet Union to justify its violation of the territorial integrity and political independence of Afghanistan and its interference in the internal affairs of that country.

The Soviet actions in Afghanistan have already created several grave consequences for the world. On the international plane, it has created a new climate of fear and of anxiety throughout the world. It has put a stop to the process of detente and confidence-building. It has revived the cold war and intensified rivalry between the great powers. It has undermined the prospects for fruitful negotiations in the field of arms control and disarmament, especially between the two superpowers.

For us in Asia, the Soviet armed intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan is a particularly significant event. It is the first time since the end of the Second World War that the Soviet Union has deployed its armed forces against a country in Asia. It makes many of us in Asia wonder whether the Soviet Union is turning its attention to Asia in view of the relative stability of relations between eastern and western Europe. Is Afghanistan an isolated incident or is it indicative of Soviet ambitions in Asia?

If the latter, who is next, after Afghanistan?

My country is a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Nations. Members of our Movement attach the highest importance to the principle that every state should respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every other state, to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and to the principle of non-use of force in relations between states. I agree completely with Ambassador Clark of Nigeria, when he said that we must demonstrate our adherence to these principles by applying them to all states, whether they be from the west or from the east or from the Non-Aligned Movement itself. The actions of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan are in clear contravention of these principles. Members of the Non-Aligned Movement must therefore demand that the Soviet Union withdraw immediately and unconditionally its forces from Afghanistan, that the Soviet Union should cease its interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and that all states should refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan so that the people of that country will be able to decide its own destiny and to choose its own form of government according to its own wishes.

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