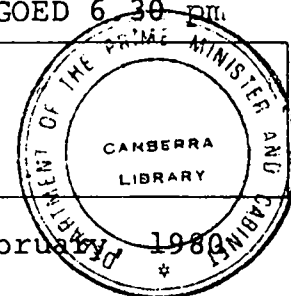




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# PRIME MINISTER



FOR MEDIA

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## ADDRESS TO THE NATION

I speak to you at the earliest possible opportunity, following Andrew Peacock's discussions in South and South East Asia, and my own discussions in the United States, Europe and New Zealand.

The purpose of our visits was to seek a plain exchange of views about the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. These consultations are essential to help us in the responsible development of Australia's foreign policy. Beyond that, it would be irresponsible merely to sit back and fail to act on great issues which are of ultimate importance to us - merely because others have not acted before us. That would be a poor way for Australia's government to safeguard the interests of this nation.

We sought to consult with our regional partners and with world leaders about this act of Soviet aggression and the nature of the response that is needed. When Afghanistan was invaded over seven weeks ago, I described the behaviour of the Soviet Union as an act of ruthless opportunism; an act of expansion with potentially grave consequences. These views have been reinforced by our meetings with the leaders of major European and Asian countries and most recently New Zealand.

It was known before we left that, broadly speaking the United States' views would be similar to our own. But previous reports indicated that the European response might be somewhat different. Instead, what we found in Europe was an essential coincidence of views about the Soviet's behaviour; a recognition that it has created new and serious tensions.

In fact, on the eve of my meeting with Chancellor Schmidt, he and the President of France, in a joint statement, spoke of the Soviet intervention as unacceptable, creating grave dangers for peace. The brutal takeover of the government of Afghanistan and the assassination of its leader have been almost universally condemned. They have created uncertainty and apprehension.

As Australians, we must realise the increasing importance to Australia of what is going on in other parts of the world. In both Europe and Asia, a principal point about the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan was that it represented an attack on a non-aligned country, a member of the Third World, and a member of the Islamic Conference.

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Striving to be free from the effects of rivalry between super powers, all non-aligned countries must now seriously ask how they can protect themselves from Soviet aggression in the future. On this occasion, the Soviet Union has shown scant respect for non-alignment. Another point that has heightened international concern is that, at a time when energy supplies are becoming scarce, the Soviet Union is better placed to exert influence or even control over Middle East oil. Such control could threaten the very survival of industrialised countries.

As the new President of Iran has said, "the Soviets are at our doors - if they succeed in reaching the Persian Gulf, they will control, not only Iran, but the whole of the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent".

As to the nature of the response needed, it has been my view from the outset, that the only course open to independently-minded nations, is to make it plain to the Soviet Union that such behaviour will not be tolerated. I find this view is widely shared. 104 members of the United Nations General Assembly and subsequently, 25 Islamic foreign ministers, denounced the Soviet Union's behaviour.

Those who maintain that what we are witnessing is a return to the Cold War should bear the strength of opposition in mind. The essence of the Cold War was a tension between super powers. The essence of the present situation is that condemnation is coming independently and unorchestrated from a diversity of sources - from the Third World, from the non-aligned, from the Islamic countries, as well as from the developed countries of the West.

I maintained during my discussions, that future dangers are most likely to emerge in countries outside rather than inside Europe. For many years, Europe was the theatre of tension and conflict affecting the whole world. Since the War, there have been clear divisions in Europe between Communist and non-Communist powers. These were tested during the blockade of Berlin. The West met that challenge with firmness and unity. As a result, alliances have been formed; commitments have been made, so that any future Soviet challenge in Europe would reinforce the Western alliance.

However, in most of South East Asia, South West Asia and Africa, lines are not clearly drawn. Whatever detente meant to Europeans, the Soviets have not regarded it as applying to their behaviour outside Europe. As a result, the Soviet has probed, pushed forward, and penetrated; destabilised governments and sought to increase its influence in large parts of the Third World - the Middle East, Angola, Yemen, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Kampuchea. Thus, Afghanistan is the latest, though most serious, in a long history of Soviet intervention and expansion.

Now, a great responsibility rests on independently-minded countries, wherever they are, to secure respect for the integrity and independence of nations. It is not enough to leave this task to the United States alone. Recent events have heightened the need for the United States to demonstrate determination in world leadership. That leadership has been forthcoming.

The President, in his State of the Union address to the American Congress, spelt out specifically that an attack on the Persian Gulf region would be regarded as an attack on the vital interests of the United States, and would be met accordingly. This is the kind of leadership based on strength that only the United States can give; a leadership, which is essential if the independence of nations is to be secured.

It is not enough to be convinced that what the Soviet Union has done is wrong. We must act upon that conviction. Immediate steps have already been taken in many countries, including Australia, to show the Soviet Union that there is a cost to its behaviour. Over the longer term, we will be increasing our patrolling and surveillance in the Indian Ocean. We shall seek to enlarge our defence cooperation with friendly countries in South East Asia. We shall sustain programmes to raise our national defence preparedness to a new level. But we need to understand that a military response can never be more than part of the answer. Because this is so, we will be increasing our civil aid to countries in the South Pacific. Furthermore, nations must do what they can to strengthen the fabric of their own societies - socially and economically.

All this will require a constant and continuing effort. If we are to be successful, we must apply ourselves with a collective determination that will endure, a determination that recognises that our own freedom and the independence of nations cannot be taken for granted and cannot be secured without cost.

Finally, I want to say something about the Olympic Games. The issue before us is not the boycotting of the Olympic Games. The issue is the occupation and invasion of Afghanistan. We would have preferred that an Australian team compete in the 1980 Olympics without any need to take into account considerations other than those of international sport. But we must view the world as it is, not as we would like it to be.

It is the Soviet Union which has argued that the Olympic Games is an event of great social and political significance. It is the Soviet Union which has said that the awarding of the Olympics to Moscow is convincing testimony to the general recognition of the historic importance and correctness of its own foreign policy. These views were expressed in June last year, and distributed in printed form to Communist Party activists.

Now we have the invasion of Afghanistan, demonstrating that the host nation for this year's Olympics is abusing the rules of the international community. It is also abusing the Olympic charter in claiming credit and support for its foreign policy on the basis of the fact that it has been awarded the 1980 Olympic Games.

If, in the face of this, athletes were to go to Moscow, it would be seen by the government and the people of the Soviet Union as an endorsement of Soviet foreign policy. It will not be what the visiting athletes say that is important; the importance will lie in the Soviet Union's interpretation of their presence.

Soviet aggression must not be given that triumph. That is why the Australian government will remain strongly opposed to our athletes going to Moscow.

I wonder with the benefit of hindsight how many Olympic officials and athletes would have gone to Berlin in 1936 had they known beforehand the propaganda use to which their presence would be put.

As you know, Australia has taken a number of measures in scientific and cultural fields, in trade, in grains and in fisheries - a number of which will have a significant cost for Australia. On the question of sanctions it is important to take actions which are supported by major trading nations. There is no point in Australia making decisions about commodities which can easily be obtained from other sources. We are in consultation on these matters especially with the United Kingdom and the United States. Of all the measures that are open to independent nations, a boycott or the movement of the Olympic Games would have the most effect in the Soviet Union. It cannot be hidden. It will be visible to the Soviet people and that will expose the emptiness of the Soviet Union's claim that the Olympic Games represents world wide approval of their foreign policy.

Our decisions in the face of international tension and difficulty have been measured and responsible. Of course, they will involve the nation and individuals in some cost. But this confirms the seriousness with which we view the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and the dangers that arise from it. It demonstrates the government's determination to do what it must in the interests of all Australians.

By its invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has created considerable tensions. The responsibility now rests with the U.S.S.R. to indicate that it is prepared to contribute to world peace, to respect the integrity and independence of nations, and to forego subversion and outright invasion as instruments of foreign policy.

The history of recent decades has not been encouraging. Until such time as the Soviet's commitment to these objectives is forthcoming, independent nations of the world have no option but to undertake a greater effort, and a greater response, at a greater cost to preserve the independence and freedom of their own people.

For our own part, we will meet that challenge.

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