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Senate

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. **TSONGAS**. Mr. President, let me begin by commending the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. **BRADLEY**) on his statement. I am pleased to join with him this morning in this joint effort to raise the issue of Afghanistan.

Mr. President, as I speak today, a forgotten war rages far away. It is not a war against hidden terrorists. It is not a war against a guerrilla movement. It is not a war pitting brother against brother.

It is a war, Mr. President, of classical dimensions—invasion, conquest, and occupation. It is the Soviet war against Afghanistan.

This war being waged in the mountain recesses of a landlocked nation matches an awesome superpower against the peasant fighters of a near feudal society. Snipers face regiments and divisions. Rifles face tanks and helicopter gunships.

The kill ratio, they say, is six Afghans for every Soviet soldier. The civilians are not being counted.

It is a brutal war and a lethal war. It is also far removed. After the first flush of outrage, Americans are letting Afghanistan fade from view. With memories of our own quagmire in Vietnam, Americans are content to let the Soviets wallow in theirs.

That troubles me; it troubles me deeply. I fear that the Afghans are modern day victims of an old philosophical debate. We are all familiar with the classical textbook debate on existence, "Does a tree in a forest make a sound when it falls if there is no one around to hear it?"

Is there a war in Afghanistan? Does anyone hear it, feel it? Can a war be a real war, if Walter Cronkite does not bring the blood and fury to the evening news?

As the war heats up in Afghanistan, our attention fades, our consciousness dims. The war recedes from view.

This is unfortunate. The war in Afghanistan is much more than a case of aggression and resistance. The war epitomizes the Soviet dilemma in the Third World, and sets out a new wealth of opportunities for America. I, for one, plan to help keep this war in plain view.

First, however, let me make one point clear. I do not view the Afghan war as a confirmation of old cold war ideas. Some do. Some of my colleagues, profess great compassion for the "freedom fighter" in Afghanistan, but at the same time thwart the freedom fighters of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Nicaragua.

Under these rules, if a group fights against the Soviets, they are freedom fighters. If they fight against our "friends"—no matter how corrupt, venal or brutal—they are Marxists, or terrorists, or worse. That mindset expresses a traditional cold war approach. It is not my approach, and I venture to say, it is completely out of step with the reasons why these struggles are launched.

I believe we should look at the Afghan war in broad terms. It is part of a larger human drama. People of color in South Africa share the aspirations of the Afghan freedom fighter in the struggle against racial domination. The people of the Western Sahara, there territory

occupied by Morocco, have fought the Moroccan Army to a standstill. During World War II, occupied France spawned a heroic underground resistance against Fascist Germany. During the 1950's and 1960's, European colonies all over Africa and Asia rose up in defiance of colonialism and imperialism. So, too, have the brave rebels in Czechoslovakia and Hungary fought for their liberty against Soviet tanks. And now, the war in Afghanistan.

Different times, different locales, different players. But the same strivings. Liberty and self-determination are not ideological concepts. In the Third World, indeed in the world over, the call of freedom and anti-imperialism can reach all men and women.

Now those ideas are lodged firmly in Afghanistan where an imperial power has occupied a small country and found more trouble than it bargained for.

The war America is apparently prone to forget has cost the Soviets over 5,000 casualties. Some 85,000 Soviet troops occupy the country. Arrayed against them are practically every one of the 17 million inhabitants of Afghanistan.

The puppet regime of Babrak Karmal has utterly failed to win any popular support. Army units defect regularly to the rebels. There is almost no one left to run the government but Soviet officials and technicians.

The Red Army is assuming more responsibility for the war as the Afghan army shrinks in size. In desperation, the Soviets are reported to be using nerve gas, napalm, and biological weapons. Often they hit civilian targets as a retaliatory tactic. The Afghan resistance is equipped only with the most rudimentary firearms to do battle with Soviet power.

Yet the war goes on. Driven by their Islamic hatred for atheistic communism and infuriated by foreign domination, the Afghan resistance has sustained its resolve. Early predictions of a quick Soviet victory have proven false. Some say the Soviets will be bogged down in Afghanistan for years.

The Soviets have bitten off more than they can chew in Afghanistan. If they leave, the Babrak Government will fall almost instantly. If they stay, they risk military embarrassment and a protracted war. If they augment their troop strength, they will suffer more criticism from the Third World and tacitly admit that they are losing the war. While it is true that the Soviets stand to gain from their first real combat experience since World War II, the experience may well come at a terrible price. The alleged Soviet "pullout" of yesterday is a rather unsophisticated ham handed public relations stunt that fooled no one. It only serves to make future troop increase all the more glaring and hypocritical.

It is easy to gloat over this Soviet debacle in Afghanistan. We could easily write this off as a "one for us" episode in the Soviet-American rivalry. That would be a mistake. The invasion of Afghanistan is much more than that. It is a dramatic symbol of Soviet frustration and failure in the Third World. Afghanistan is the visible symptom of a profound shift in Soviet fortunes.

To many Americans, this assertion must come as a shock. We almost expect American reverses in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. But, our competitor is in deep trouble for the first time.

Let me attempt to put this into a historical context. After World War II, the colonial empires of Europe were rocked by independence movements and liberation struggles. One after another, the Third World nations were born in a crucible of anticolonialism and nationalism.

During those years of struggle, the Soviets provided the liberators with weaponry and ideology, while the United States was either passive or openly allied with the colonial and dictatorial powers. The record of American blunders is there for all to see, paving the way for effortless Soviet successes. We supported the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal against the liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, and delivered the future rulers of those countries to the Soviets. We supported Batista, of course, and propelled Castro into Soviet hands. Dziem in South Vietnam, Samoja in Nicaragua, the Shah in Iran, and Haile Selassie in Ethiopia were all friends whose manner of governance insured their demise, our disgrace, and Soviet success.

Under such circumstances, the Soviets were logically perceived as the champions of self-determination while the United States was perceived as the defender of imperialism. And, sad to say, there were cases where that perception was accurate. South Africa threatens to be the next example of this dynamic.

This historical record, in essence, has given the Soviets an enormous momentum of good will and credibility in the Third World. This baffles us. "Are we not the international good guys" as one Senator implored during the Senate hearings on Vietnam?

The answer is clear enough. If you were the leader of a struggle for independence, would you not favor those who helped you; and would you not be inclined to disfavor those who opposed you? Would you be concerned that your enemies seemed to be a more democratic, open society, while your friend, the Soviet Union, was authoritarian and repressive? In the heat of battle, those distinctions count for little; a friend's failings are easily excused.

The Soviets who had nothing to lose in this period and everything to gain, played their hand very well indeed. This winning hand has several remaining opportunities for future success—the Palestinian issue, apartheid in South Africa and an occasional U.S.-supported despot here and there.

Beyond those few remaining opportunities, the outlook for the Soviets is grim. The era of liberation is coming to an end. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, they in effect, told the world that the honeymoon with the developing world was over.

When the United Nations voted 104 to 18 to condemn the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviets lost their impeccable revolutionary credentials. It became clear that the Soviets were not above invading a Third World nation despite all

their liberationist rhetoric. In their brutal act of aggression, the Soviets lost their innocence.

This loss of revolutionary innocence is but one side of the Soviet failure in Afghanistan. More fundamentally, the invasion is a stark symbol of waning Soviet influence and control over the socialist states of the Third world.

The Soviet decision to invade Afghanistan was a last ditch, desperate measure. As the client Amin regime steadily lost ground last year to a blend of national, religious, tribal, and individual forces, the Soviets concluded quite simply that they were losing in Afghanistan. In the marketplace of ideas, Soviet client state-ism was not selling in Southern Asia.

Ideological appeals did not work. Socialist solidarity did not work. Anti-American, anticapitalist slogans did not work. The people of Afghanistan were unmoved. So, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan to force a client state into line.

This profound failure of Soviet foreign policy is not unique. It has been repeated in less dramatic and more subtle terms all over the globe. Afghanistan brings to life and light the new Soviet dilemma in the Third World.

I believe that the bloom is off the rose of Soviet-style socialism in the developing world. Country after country is turning instead to a mixed economy, one more centrally planned than our own, but integrating the advantages of free enterprise incentives.

I have spoken previously on the Senate floor as to the successes of such African countries as Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, and Kenya, all of which have mixed economies. Malaysia and Singapore are examples from Asia. I have also spoken of the conference held 10 days ago in Boston where the titans of American capitalism met and negotiated with representatives of "Marxist" Angola and Mozambique, as well as Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Principe, and Sao Tomé. In time, I predict that even President Julius Nyerere, of Tanzania, a distinguished African statesman and a committed socialist, will move in the same direction.

Why is this happening?

It is happening because these leaders have realized that pure socialism is not the best road to development. And make no mistake about it, the priority need of the Third World is development. In the past, there was no shortage of Third World leaders who were content to spend their days steeped in ideology and reminiscing about the wave of liberation. But, today's leaders are different. They are less ideological and more pragmatic. The guerilla chieftain has become an administrator. His priorities are economic, not military. His needs coincide with American, not Soviet, capabilities.

America's opportunity is contained in this Soviet eclipse. All over the Third World, subtle shifts in development strategies are reducing the Soviet role and opening the door to American and Western participation.

Our foreign policy has not yet grasped the full implications of this shift. Part of the problem is our preoccupation with Soviet military expansion. A forest of Soviet missiles and ships disguises the trees of ideological impotence in the Third World. As we rush to arm ourselves to confront a perceived military threat we barely notice this new vulnerability in the Soviet position.

Afghanistan tells us in harsh and strident terms that the Soviet star is falling. What was once a subtle trend, is now plainly exposed, for all to see. The passing of liberationist needs and the coming of development priorities has changed the political landscape of the Third World. The new pragmatism relates to the mind. Afghanistan relates to the heart.

Will we exploit this situation? Given our shoot-ourselves-in-the-foot proclivities, that is an open question. One point needs saying, however: If we retreat into a cold war mentality, we will not only miss a ripe opportunity, we will find ourselves more isolated than ever before.

So Afghanistan becomes an historical pivot. For the Soviets, it is a disastrous misfortune. For the United States, it is an unprecedented opportunity. For the Third World, it is a lesson in the virtues of nonalignment.

Most Third World countries need no lessons to understand nonalignment. But for those still in a thrall to a Soviet or even an American patron, the lessons of history are clear. Fealty to a superpower contains the seeds of self-destruction. It contradicts basic nationalist aspirations and warps national objectives. Such loyalties cannot be sustained because, eventually, all nations want to be themselves and not someone's surrogate.

The war in Afghanistan shall not be forgotten; not now; and not in the future. So much import in one small little war. So much significance for America, for the Soviets, and for the Third World.

We will remember Afghanistan, and for the right reasons. All those who cherish freedom, self-determination, and national development will join us.