



# Department of Justice

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REMARKS

OF

THE HONORABLE EDWIN MEESE III  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

REFUGEES AT THE KACCHAGARHI REFUGEE CAMP

WEDNESDAY MARCH 26, 1986  
NEAR PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

(This text is a transcript of remarks actually delivered  
by the Attorney General at the event noted above.)

I thank you for your greeting and I am honored to be here among this group of brave and dedicated people.

It is my pleasure to bring you greetings from our President, President Reagan, and from the people of the United States.

We understand your situation and your gallant fight for liberty. More than 200 years ago the forefathers of our country fought to establish liberty and freedom, fighting then against what was at that time one of the strongest nations, if not the strongest nation, in the world. Just as others came to assist us in our time of need then, so it has been our purpose since that time to assist others who are seeking freedom.

The United States has stood as a nation dedicated to freedom through two world wars and our dedication is no less today. We have demonstrated this commitment through recent events in such places as Grenada, Haiti, and the Philippines, and we stand with freedom-loving men and women around the world in Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, and particularly in Afghanistan.

Today I have come here on behalf of my President to promise you, the Afghan people, that we, the people of the United States, will continue to support your heroic struggle against the Soviet empire. In the words of our President, the time has come for America "to resume its historic role as a leader of the free

world," and therefore "we must stand by all of our democratic allies."

The President has said that "we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives -- on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua -- to defy Soviet-supported aggression and to secure rights which should be the rights of all people since birth."

Today we are here in Pakistan only because we cannot go to Afghanistan. Because, obviously, the Soviets would not receive us. But we don't need to travel to Afghanistan to see the signs of the scars and the tragic consequences of Soviet domination. Here, ten miles from the border, we can see this in the faces of the refugees, and we learn from you of the various physical and mental scars of torture, rape, of toxic gas, of famine, of scorched earth, and genocide, which as you have already said, is the sign of the type of occupation engaged in by the Soviet army.

The truth is here for all the world to see. Although the Soviets try to suppress the truth by jailing and murdering journalists, nevertheless the world knows what the situation is in Afghanistan and they know what is taking place there.

Many journalists are willing to risk their lives in order to bring the story to the world of what is going on in Afghanistan. One such journalist was Dr. Charles Thornton, from our country who was killed in an ambush by the Soviets while he was traveling to bring to the world the story of another heroic group in

Afghanistan, the volunteer doctors whom your people so desperately need.

The Afghanistan people have suffered seriously at the hands of the Soviets, by direct casualties, by war-related famine, by disease and hardship. And others have had to flee as refugees.

The world asks "why are the Soviets doing this to Afghanistan?" The answer is, in a way, simple. It is part of their desire to dominate the entire world.

The Afghan people possess strategic lands that the Soviets want, which would enable them to extend their influence in this part of the world.

But you and your people will not submit. You prefer freedom and self-government to the dictates of Marxist-Leninist strongmen, and you will resist, as you have said, the invader to the extent of your entire population.

Your struggle is an example and a symbol to peace loving and freedom-loving people all over the world.

I join you in commending the country of Pakistan for its efforts and support, and for assisting the refugees.

In our struggle for freedom in our country many years ago, our forefathers developed a defiant motto which expressed the same spirit that I have seen here today.

Their motto was, "Live free or die."

The people of the United States stand with you in your fight for freedom.