

**Remarks by Mr. Cyrus Vance,
Secretary State of the United States**

On behalf of President Carter, and as an honorary Vice-President of the US Olympic Committee, it is an honor to welcome this distinguished Committee to the United States and to Lake Placid, and to welcome athletes from around the world to the 1980 Winter Olympics.

As we meet here tonight, the world faces a serious threat to peace which raises an issue of fundamental importance to the Olympic movement.

From their beginnings in ancient Greece, the Olympics have symbolised some of humanity's noblest principles. Foremost among these is peace.

The modern Games reflect this principle in the opening ceremonies, when doves are released to symbolise peace.

The ancient games were held in the city-state of Elis. They marked a "truce of the gods". During this truce, open warfare against or by the host city-state was forbidden.

In the view of my government, it would be a violation of this fundamental Olympic principle to conduct or attend Olympic Games in a nation which is currently engaging in an aggressive war, and has refused to comply with the world community's demand to halt its aggression and withdraw its forces.

Let us be clear about the fundamental issue we face.

This is not a question of whether a national team should be barred from competing on political grounds. We welcome every team this Committee has invited to these Winter Games.

The question we now confront is entirely different. It is whether the

Games should be held in a country which is itself committing a serious breach of international peace. It is our conviction that to do so would be wholly inconsistent with the meaning of the Olympics.

It is impossible to separate this decision from its political consequences. To hold the Olympics in any nation that is warring on another is to lend the Olympic mantle to that nation's actions.

We already see the nation selected as hosts of the Summer Games describing its selection as recognition of "the correctness of (its) foreign policy course" and its "enormous services... in the struggle for peace".

The inescapable fact is that the struggles of nations and peoples to preserve their independence-to preserve peace now and for the future-will be contradicted and diminished if the Olympics are held in a nation whose continuing aggression has been condemned by an overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly.

Responsibility' for this matter should not be shifted to the athletes. That would only force them to carry a burden which properly belongs to the leaders of the Olympic movement. None of us wants our athletes to suffer. But neither should we let them be exploited.

Beyond the effects of this decision on efforts for international peace, we should be concerned about its consequences for the Olympic movement.

The United States deeply values the Olympic Games and the principles on

which they rest. We are immensely proud of our own athletes and those of other nations who have trained long and hard. We do not want to see the Olympic movement damaged.

But if the basic principles of the Olympics are ignored, the future of the Games themselves will be placed in jeopardy.

Throughout the world, there is broad and growing opposition, among governments and people, to going forward with the Games as planned, as if nothing has happened. To do so would imperil the broad popular interest and support upon which this and future Olympics depend.

The preferable course would be to transfer the Games from Moscow to another site or multiple sites this summer. Clearly there are practical difficulties, but they could be overcome. There is also precedent for cancelling the Games. Or it would be possible, with a simple change of rules, to postpone the Games for a year or more.

Let me make my government's position clear : we will oppose the participation of an American team in any Olympic Games in the capital of an invading nation.

This position is firm. It reflects the deep convictions of the United States Congress and the American people.

To avoid such problems in the future, we support the establishment of permanent homes for the summer and winter Olympics.

I know that this distinguished body will carefully weigh the issues now before you. By upholding the principles of the Olympics when they are under challenge, we will preserve the meaning of the Olympics for years to come.

C.V.

