

**AFGHANISTAN ASKS FOR AID TO REPAIR ECONOMY. AT AGN MEETING.**By **Chaitanya Kalbag**

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MANILA, April 30, Reuter - Afghanistan appealed on Saturday for the Asian Development Bank to help resettle refugees and repair its war-damaged economy.

Afghan Finance Minister Mohamad Kabir urged the Manila-based bank to resume lending to Kabul, suspended after Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan in 1979, and to send a mission to evaluate aid needs.

He said Kabul hoped the "masses of our people who are living abroad as emigrants" would return following the Geneva peace accord which paved the way for a Soviet troop withdrawal starting on May 15.

An estimated five million people have fled the fighting to Pakistan and Iran while a further 1.5 million have had to leave their homes and move elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Kabir said Kabul had set up a ministry to handle rehabilitation but added it did not have enough resources.

The Afghan minister also urged the bank to admit the Soviet Union as a member.

"In our opinion participation of ... the Soviet Union could contribute considerably to the economic development of member countries," he said.

Oleg Mozhaikov, one of two Soviet observers at the meeting, told Reuters on Friday that Moscow looked upon membership of the bank as part of its efforts to restructure its economy.

Bank officials said no formal application had been received from Moscow, while U.S. officials added Washington would oppose a Soviet membership bid.

The bank's annual meeting here, attended by about 1,500 delegates from 47 member countries, was drawing to a close on Saturday.

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