

Proletariats of all countries, unite

Communist Party of the Soviet Union. CENTRAL COMMITTEE

TOP SECRET

No.P177/220

To Comrades Brezhnev, Kosygin, Andropov, Gromyko,
Suslov, Ustinov, Ponomarev, Zamiatin

Extract from Protocol No. 177 of the CC CPSU Politburo meeting
of December 29, 1979

About a response to President Carter's appeal via the Hot Line regarding the
Afghanistan issue.

Affirm the draft of Comrade L.I. Brezhnev's response on this issue.
Transmit the response via the Moscow-Washington Hot Line.

CC SECRETARY

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Subject to return within 7 days to the
CC CPSU (General Department, 1st Sector)



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THE JOINT STAFF

29 December 1979

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE SPECAT~~

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USA/USSR

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Dear Mister President,

In answer to your message of 29 December I consider it necessary to inform you of the following.

It is impossible to agree with your evaluation of what is occurring in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Through your Ambassador to Moscow we have confidentially sent the American side and you personally a clarification, based on facts, of what is actually occurring there, as well as the reasons which caused us to respond favorably to the request of the Government of Afghanistan for the introduction of limited Soviet military contingents.

The attempt taken in your message to cast doubt on the very fact of the request of the Government of Afghanistan to send our forces to that country seems strange. I am compelled to note that it is certainly not a question of anyone's perception or lack of perception of this fact, or agreement or disagreement with it, which determines the actual state of affairs, which consists of the following.

Page 1 of 5

Declassified/Released on 3-17-93
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by S. Tracy, National Security Council

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The Government of Afghanistan in the course of nearly two years has numerous times turned to us with such a request. In point of fact, one of these requests was sent to us on 26 December of this year. This is equally known by us and by the Afghanistani Government which sent us these requests.

I want to once more stress that the limited Soviet contingent in Afghanistan has only one goal--to provide assistance in repulsing the acts of external aggression, which have been taking place for a prolonged period of time and have now assumed even greater scale.

The claim that the Soviet Union allegedly did something to overthrow the Government of Afghanistan, which appears in your message, is absolutely unacceptable and fails to accord with actuality. I must with all certainty stress that the change in the Afghanistani Government was effected by the Afghanistans themselves and only by them. Ask the Afghanistani Government.

What is said in your message in relation to the fate of the families of the former leaders of Afghanistan also fails to accord with reality. We have at our disposal information contradicting the reports you have received.

I must, further, clearly state to you that the Soviet military contingents did not take any military action against Afghanistan and we clearly do not intend to do so.

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You have reproached us in your message that we did not consult with the Government of the USA in reference to the Afghanistani matter before introducing our military contingents into Afghanistan. Permit us to ask you--did you consult with us prior to beginning the massive concentration of naval forces near Iran and in the region of the Persian Gulf, as well as in many other cases, about which you should have--at a minimum--notified us?

In connection with the content and spirit of your message I consider it essential to again clarify the point that the request of the Afghanistani Government and the satisfaction of this request by the Soviet Union are exclusively a matter for the USSR and Afghanistan, which regulate their mutual relations themselves, by mutual agreement, and naturally cannot permit any sort of interference from without in these mutual relations. They, as any member state of the UN, enjoy the right not only to individual self-defense, but to collective defense as well, which is envisioned by Article 51 of the UN Charter, which the USSR and USA formulated themselves. And this was approved by all member states of the UN.

There is, of course, no basis for your assertion that our actions in Afghanistan allegedly threaten the peace.

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In light of all of this, the immoderate tone of certain formulations in your message hits us squarely between the eyes. What is the purpose of it? Would it not be better to evaluate the situation more calmly, keeping in mind the supreme interests of the world rather than, ultimately, the mutual relations of our two powers.

Concerning your "advice", we already informed you, and here I repeat again, that as soon as the reasons which prompted the Afghanistani request to the Soviet Union disappear, we fully intend to withdraw the Soviet military contingents from Afghanistani territory.

And here is our advice to you: the American side could make its contribution toward ending the armed incursion from without into Afghanistani territory.

I do not believe that the work to create more stable and productive relations between the USSR and USA can be in vain unless, of course, the American side wants it to be. We do not. I think this would not be to the benefit of the United States of America itself, either. It is our conviction that the way relations develop between the USSR and the USA is a joint matter. We believe that they must not be subject to vacillation under the influence of some kind of attendant factors or events.

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Despite disagreements on a number of issues in World and European politics, which we understand quite clearly, the Soviet Union is an advocate of conducting affairs in the spirit of those understandings and documents which were adopted by our countries in the interests of peace, equal cooperation, and international security.

L. Brezhnev

29 December 1979

Page 5 of 5

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