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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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ACTION

12.29.  
'79

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB.*

SUBJECT: Our Response to Soviet Intervention  
in Afghanistan (U)

One of our basic problems with the Soviets, as has been the case with all our recent predecessors in office, is maintaining our credibility in Moscow. We have frequently protested Soviet actions (bases in Vietnam, Cubans abroad, etc.). Since we have not always followed these verbal protests up with tangible responses, the Soviets may be getting into the habit of disregarding our concern. (C)

Warren Christopher will be meeting with our major Allies in London on Monday. They will be looking to us for leadership, for specific evidence that we are unwilling to let the Soviets get away with this invasion with impunity. With this in mind, you may wish to instruct Christopher to inform these governments that we are taking tangible steps in our bilateral relationship with Moscow to manifest our displeasure. (S)

Since in your conversations yesterday with European leaders you drew a parallel between the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 and the one in Czechoslovakia in 1968, it may be useful for you to know what actions Johnson and Rusk took after the August 20, 1968 Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. (You may be sure the Soviets have the list at hand and will draw comparative conclusions about the international environment in which they operate. The same will be true of most countries of the world, especially those anywhere near Afghanistan.) Within three days of the invasion:

- (1) The President made a strong public statement.
- (2) Secretary of State made a public statement.
- (3) We initiated a Security Council meeting.
- (4) We suspended bilateral talks with the Soviets on peaceful uses of the atom.
- (5) Embassy Moscow was instructed to restrict all official and social contacts with Soviet officials.

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Review 12/29/85

*De-classify on OADR*

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(6) We sent the same instructions to all US diplomatic missions worldwide.

(7) Rusk told Dobrynin on August 23 that there would be no movement on other issues until the situation in Czechoslovakia was clarified.

(8) The State Department actively discouraged US business ties with the Soviet Union.

(9) We stopped, turned down or delayed requests for export licenses to the Soviet Union.

(10) We stopped participation in trade fairs in the Soviet Union.

(11) We cancelled pending cultural exchanges with the Soviets. (C)

As you will recall, the invasion of Czechoslovakia also resulted in the cancellation of the scheduled first round of SALT talks between Washington and Moscow. While I would oppose any freeze on our efforts to achieve SALT ratification, I think it would be a mistake to confine our response to this Soviet intervention in Afghanistan to words. In this connection, I enclose a memorandum from Marshall Breamer of the NSC Staff which lists a menu of actions we could take to evidence our displeasure with Moscow. I would welcome your guidance on what you feel might be done. I do think something definite in our bilateral relationship with Moscow should follow this extraordinary act of Soviet arrogance and brutality and that Warren Christopher should inform the Allies on Monday what specific steps we intend to take. In my judgment, such resolve on our part would have significant benefits for us, both domestically and internationally. (S)

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Afghanistan: Steps in the Framework of US-Soviet Relations

There are three kinds of impact we hope to achieve vis-a-vis the Soviets in our responses to the Soviet moves in Afghanistan. The first is punitive: we want them to pay a price for infringing fundamental principles of international behavior. The second is coercive: we want them to withdraw their troops and allow Afghanistan to return to a semblance of sovereignty and neutrality. The third is deterrent: we want to prevent the Soviets from crossing further thresholds, such as hot pursuit of rebels across international frontiers or escalation of the fighting with the rebels to a massive scale.

1 of 3  
inter  
related  
2  
multiplicity

We are also interested in the impact of our responses on other international actors, including European Allies, nervous Eastern Europeans, nonaligned Third World countries, and Islamic governments. Thus, even actions that may make little impression on the Soviets can be of value for other audiences; some US actions could cause concern to our Allies.

Maximum  
initiation  
&  
action  
by others

Many of the steps we might take cut across other high-priority national objectives, including maintaining the strategic nuclear balance. We have already faced this kind of dilemma in considering whether to give priority in the Security Council to achieving our objectives in the Iran hostage situation or to mobilizing international action on Afghanistan. There may also be opportunities as well as problems for us in this crisis to the extent we are able to gain new collaborators or settle old problems, as in our efforts to gain base access on the Indian Ocean periphery.

To achieve these objectives, there are political, economic and military actions we can take in each of two broad categories -- bilateral and multilateral. Soviet reactions may also take the form of countermoves across a broad spectrum. In choosing one course of action over another, the irrevocability of an action will be one important factor to consider. To cite only one example, failure to implement the SALT fractionation limits can lead to testing of a high number of RV's on a single missile, permanently precluding verifiable lower warhead limits and severely affecting MX vulnerability.

Need  
to  
act

With regard to the possible impact on the Soviets of various steps, Moscow will not be much swayed by deterioration in the climate of US-Soviet relations. This deterioration almost certainly was anticipated, and has therefore been discounted in advance. Certain steps affecting US-Soviet relations may have the desired effect on other countries, but the most effective steps in getting our point across to Moscow are likely to be those that strengthen opposition to the Soviets worldwide.

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