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The Intervention in Afghanistan and the Fall of Détente

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I am sure that their actions would have been the same. There would have been the same involvement, the same invasion. There would have been the same support for the regime, especially taking into account the fact that we had treaties with that country—four treaties: 1921, 1931, 1973, and 1978—plus the insistent requests of the leadership of the country. Therefore, our involvement was a good thing in terms of providing assistance to the people and to the state. This is all I wanted to add.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Valentin. I have one question for your side just to follow up on what you have been saying. It is a very difficult question for you or for anyone from the Russian side to answer, but I still think we need to get it on the table as early as possible. In this early part of the Soviet involvement with Afghanistan after the Saur revolution—after April 1978—what, in your opinion, was the prime factor behind that involvement: ideology, which we heard something about earlier on, or strategy? I know it is very hard to separate the two, but just in order to get the discussion about motivations going, I wanted to ask that question of the Russian side. Anatoly?

DOBRYNIN: Well, this is a very difficult question, but it is the central issue. Of course, I cannot give you the definitive answer, which would cover all of our involvement, from the beginning to the end. The answer would have to be very nuanced, because much hinges upon the state of mind of the Soviet leadership. I could judge this a little bit from behind the scenes; but still it is a complex question.

What the General said is correct. We had treaties, so we had to help. But mainly, I think, ideology was the key factor. We did not

specifically mention it as the number one motivation; we did not proclaim it. But subconsciously, still the driving factor was ideological. Recall what Karen said. Who handled this situation at our end? It was first of all the International Department of the Central Committee of the Party. Who were the main advisers sent from Moscow half a year later? They were mostly Party advisers and organizers. We sent military and security people, but to a lesser extent, and mostly at a later stage. In the beginning it was mostly the Party who gave them advice on how to handle the situation—not exactly on how to organize a party, but on how to reduce the disagreements among them and to promote unity. So without proclaiming that ideology was the priority, we acted in a way that was consistent with that interpretation.

Mr. Brezhnev came close to proclaiming this, by the way. He did say that our goal was to "help the liberation movement," and he said that our policy toward Afghanistan had "nothing to do with détente." There was a clash between our view and the American view on this. You said that our activities in Afghanistan contradicted détente, and Brezhnev insisted that they did not. As a matter of fact, he made this shortly after the *coup d'état*. He made a special statement again defending our thesis that liberation movements could always rely on the Soviet Union to support them, and that this had nothing to do with détente or our relations with the West. Three or four months later President Carter made a statement insisting that we had to choose between cooperation and confrontation. Zbig was saying exactly the same thing after the April coup. He said, "Aha! This is the beginning of the grand design of the Soviet Union to penetrate in the territory of the oil-rich countries." He immediately began looking for some sort of grand design. As far as I could understand, there was no design in

Russia. None at all. There was a simple contradiction between our two points of view. We considered it a local issue in which the United States had no concern; you saw it in geostrategic terms. This was my overwhelming impression.

When the intervention happened, what was the reaction from your side? Your president spoke with the Pakistanis, and then Zbig reported to the National Security Council that there was a threat to Iran and Pakistan from the Soviet Union. Do you remember this? He talked about the threat of an axis. What axis did he have in mind? On one side was the United States, Saudi Arabia, China, Pakistan, and, I guess, Iran, too. On the other side was a Soviet-Afghan-Indian axis. Nothing of the kind ever came to our minds! My colleagues here from the Russian military, intelligence, and diplomatic services can attest to this. Never, in any papers or any discussions, did we have any idea of such an axis. I don't want to blame anyone, I simply want to mention our differing understandings of events. From the beginning—from the coup until the intervention—our two governments had a completely different perspective on events. We saw things in a completely different way. In the beginning, our chief idea was to help the revolution, and the ideological motivation prevailed. Of course, we had strategic considerations in mind to some extent, because all of this took place on our southern border.

We must see this against the background of Soviet-American relations. They were bad. There was a lull when we were preparing for the summit meeting; but then, after the summit came the Cuban brigade, and so forth—I do not want to enumerate the conflicts, but relations were very bad. In the Soviet Union, we felt that the situation inside Afghanistan was very difficult. It was unstable. We became frustrated

with the struggle between Taraki and Amin, and we tried to do our best to bring them together. Nothing that we did helped. We began to think more and more about what we could do to stabilize the situation. We were not prepared to be involved militarily, but gradually we began to think about whether that might be necessary. This is the most important point I would like to make. When we discuss this later, I would like to make sure that it very clear. Yes, we would help with the Afghan military; yes, we would help with sanitation; yes, we would give economic assistance; yes, we would provide armaments; but, no, we would not send troops. We did not begin to think seriously about that until much later. It was not our intention early on. We made a very clear and deliberate choice at that time: we did not want to repeat our experience in Czechoslovakia, or the American experience in Vietnam. We did not speak in terms of those events specifically, but nevertheless that was the idea. From the spring until December we sent more and more military assistance, but still we were not prepared to intervene militarily. Only in December did we entertain that option. But I think we will have time to discuss this in detail later.

WESTAD: We will come back to that last point, Anatoly, certainly. That was very useful. Among the many points that you made—and it is one that you make in your newly-published book—the one that stood out in my mind is how well Soviet policy in Afghanistan fit into the concept that some Americans had—Dr. Brzezinski in particular—of Soviet strategic aims. When the Saur revolution came along in early 1978, it fit into a preconceived pattern of Soviet intentions in the region that shaped American thinking. Bill?

must take into account the link between strategic and ideological factors. That is all.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Valentin. Anatoly, before you take over, could I redirect part of my first question to you—my question about the Herat events and the changes that took place? Were you involved in this at all in Washington?

DOBRYNIN: In what?

WESTAD: In the discussions about Soviet-Afghan relations in the spring of 1979, when discussion began about introducing Soviet troops.

DOBRYNIN: I will answer your question. But let me say first that I was a little bit surprised by Bill's statement. We are not here to repeat dogmas of the Cold War, from your side and ours. I know them quite well; you know them, I am sure. But I am trying to tell you how we really thought. There was no discussion in the Kremlin about any grand design. None. There was no such discussion in the press—well, the press did not matter—nor in the Politburo, the Foreign Ministry, or the Central Committee. I do not know about the military, but I am sure they did not discuss it either. There was no such discussion anywhere. I spoke privately with Brezhnev, Gromyko, and Andropov, and there was never a single word about it. On the contrary, even in one of the meetings of the Politburo, Brezhnev asked me,"Anatoly, where is the `Arc of Crisis?' I read somewhere about this in something from TASS. Brzezinski was talking about it. What is this all about?" At the very beginning, during the coup, not a single person in our government was

thinking about any grand design. In fact, we had no plan of any kind until the very end. But we will deal with that later.

In March 1979, when there was the decisive discussion, Taraki and Amin asked us to send troops. What happened in that discussion? Everyone agreed that it was important not to lose Afghanistan, but not a single person mentioned introducing troops. No one spoke of any grand design to capture the Middle East. Why not? One of the reasons was no one wanted to spoil relations with the United States. But there were many other things. Nobody was thinking in terms of Lenin's theory, or Carter's theory, or Brzezinski's theory; there was unanimous agreement that we should not send troops. Please accept this as a fact.

WESTAD: Ilya Gaiduk, please.

ILYA GAIDUK: Thank you. I have a question for Karen Nersesovich. He said that Moscow had not immediately extend recognition to the new regime after the April revolution, and that there was hesitation—a lack of information. On the American side, we constantly hear this idea of a grand design, of a master plan to increase Soviet influence in the world. Maybe my question somewhat violates the chronological scheme of our discussion, but I am interested in knowing what were the origins of the inter-party relationship between the PDPA and Moscow? How did Moscow see PDPA's role before it came to power? Was there any discussion about the relationship in case the PDPA or one of its factions came to power?

WESTAD: Thank you, Ilya. Karen is already on my list a little further down, so we will get to that point in a moment. But first Mark.

high command was, in fact, meeting. And they were, in fact, in bunkers, as shells were firing over their heads; they were not feeling very feisty. They were not looking for a fight at all. Not only that, but what they were relating back to Mr. Brzezinski in the course of that meeting was that the military was in total collapse. People were defecting left and right, and there was no way of pulling together a counter-coup. That was the most dramatic single moment that I am aware of in the thing. But he was clearly willing, and interested in pursuing that; it simply turned out not to be possible. Again, we had not made the kind of preparations that would have been essential to do that. The Huyser mission was ambiguous from the very beginning in terms of what he was supposed to do, and how he was supposed to do it. He certainly was not there to lay the groundwork for a coup. Some people wished that he would do that; but those were not his instructions.

WESTAD: Anatoly, I am sorry for holding you so long.

DOBRYNIN: Two brief remarks. First, about Islamic fundamentalism: I would like to testify that in Soviet foreign policy during that period, this issue did not really exist. On the practical level, nobody discussed the issue—not in the Politburo, and not in the Collegium of the Foreign Ministry later on. At that time we really did not think it was a big problem. At least, I do not remember any single document, or a statement, or discussion in government circles, about fundamentalism.

Second, I would like very briefly to mention for your information two or three events in diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union on Iran. In 1978, of course, the Soviet Union was alarmed by the armament which you sent, the generals you sent, the other

military personnel you sent, and so on. It was a major buildup. Moscow began to worry about what the United States was up to. At that time you supporting the Shah; but in our minds, we were concerned that you were not only supporting the Shah, but possibly also engaged in more intriguing things having to do with Afghanistan or our southern borders. We did not know exactly, but we were a little bit worried. That is why Brezhnev wrote a personal letter to Carter, which I personally delivered. He specifically expressed the worry of the Soviet government about these new developments, and asked for an explanation, or at least some assurances. The next day we received an official response from Cy—these were not published communications, of course—in which he said that he was authorized by the President to say that there was no specific reason for us to worry, and that the United States would reassure us that it was not going to interfere in Iranian domestic affairs.

Shortly after this, your Embassy was seized by the mob, and angry demands were heard all over the United States to do something. We were thinking that you were really quite right to be upset, because your Embassy was seized. We expected you would do something. But at the same time we were a little bit worried that you would use the situation to intervene militarily. I was instructed again to go to Brzezinski quietly, and to explain our worries. I said that we understood your emotional connection with your hostages—and by the way, in the Security Council, we supported your demand that they should be released. It was rather rare case of our making coordinated statements. But to Brzezinski I mentioned that we were a little bit worried. He reassured me that there was no planning for military intervention. One of the reasons why, he said, was because if there were military intervention,

almost certainly all of the hostages would be killed. "This is one of the reasons why we will not do it," he said; "Of course we continue to study many others options; but a large-scale military intervention is out."

The picture changed in 1980, with Afghanistan. I came to Washington from Moscow on January 20, and I had a private meeting with Cy. It was off the record; we would do this from time to time—talk off the record, without any mutual obligation. We discussed Iran a little bit, and we discussed Afghanistan. Then he said, "Well, may I ask you a personal, but frank question?" I said, "Okay, go ahead." "Are you going to interfere with your military troops in Iran or Pakistan?" I said no. He said, "May I personally be sure that you will not introduce your troops in Iran or in Pakistan?" Before leaving Moscow, I had had a discussion in the Politburo on the situation in Afghanistan—not preparing for these questions, because we really did not expect them—and nobody even thought about Pakistan or Iran. They were completely out of the picture. So I said, "Cy, I can tell you that as of two days ago in Moscow, there was no intention to intervene militarily in Iran or Pakistan. You can relate this information to the President. This is my word." Thus it is sometimes how the situation changes within the span of two years: first we were afraid; then you were afraid. This is how it goes.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Anatoly. Carol?

CAROL SAIVETZ: I would like to ask our Russian colleagues how much attention they actually gave to Iran, given the simultaneity of the disintegration of the situation in Afghanistan and the overthrow of the

really and seriously opposed to it. I do not think that the KGB played any outstanding role in this affair.

WESTAD: Before turning to the American side and asking a little bit about what you observed, I would like to clear up any remaining questions on the planning and the decision making. Specifically, I want to turn to Karen and to Anatoly to address the political decisions that were made. We heard a great deal now, and in great detail—for which we are very grateful—about how the planning was done stage by stage. But what is difficult for an outsider such as myself to understand are the reasons behind the final decision. I want to ask both of you your opinion about the most important reason why, after all these problematic preliminary decisions that had been made over almost two years, in the end the leadership—not unanimously, but still with such force—came down on December 10th, it seems now, to the decision to invade. Anatoly, you want to go first?

DOBRYNIN: Well, I do not want to make a long analysis; probably I will just quote several documents which were not published before, but I think I could give you now.

On September 20th, Brezhnev stated rather bluntly in his report to the Politburo—and it is a Russian text, so I will not translate, but will let the translator do it; I will speak in Russian—"Events moved so fast that we had little opportunity to decide how we could get involved in those events from Moscow. Now our task is to decide what we can do from now on in order to secure our position in Afghanistan, and to strengthen our influence in that country. It is reasonable to believe that Soviet-Afghan relations will not change significantly as a result

of the recent changes in the situation, and will develop in the present direction. Amin will be pressured to do this by the current situation, and by the difficulties he faces now, and will face, for quite a long time. That notwithstanding, we will need to monitor his actions while working with him. The work will be extensive and quite complex and sensitive."

Here is one more interesting telegram in connection with an order our ambassador received to meet with Taraki and Amin and to try to persuade them by any means to show a sense of responsibility for the revolution: "In the name of saving the revolution"—this is from the letter to them—"you must unite and act in accord, from a united position." That was our Politburo's appeal to them. If they refuse to talk with each other, then our ambassador was instructed: "After consulting with Taraki, meet with Amin separately, and give him the same information."

I have one more interesting telegram. It is a response to another telegram, which, unfortunately, I have not seen, and I do not know where it came from. This telegram gives instructions. It is addressed to Puzanov, Pavlosky, Ivanov, and Gorelov—to four leading officials in Kabul. It says: "We cannot work on the assumption that Amin would be arrested by our battalion in Kabul, because it would be regarded as a direct interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan with long-term serious consequences."

WESTAD: Excuse me, Anatoly, what is the date on that one?

DOBRYNIN: September 13 or 15. I think it is on the 13th.

BRUTENTS: Is that a response to something else?

DOBRYNIN: Yes, it is a response to some other request. This is the response that was sent. I did not see the incoming telegram; this is the outgoing one.

Now let us go on. Here is one very interesting memo. I think it sheds some light on many of our questions here. It was written by Andropov, and addressed to Brezhnev. It exists only in one copy, was sent only to him, and was hand-written. There is no date on that. It seems like it was in the beginning of December, judging by the text. I thought I might just read it to you; it is approximately half a page long. He is writing to Brezhnev: "After the coup and the murder of Taraki in September of this year, the developments in Afghanistan assumed a character unfavorable for us. The situation in the government, the army, and in the state apparatus is aggravated. They are practically disorganized as a result of mass repressions carried out by Amin. At the same time we have been receiving information about Amin's behind-the-scenes activities which might mean his political reorientation to the West. He keeps his contacts with the American *chargé d'affaires* secret from us. He promised tribal leaders to distance himself from the Soviet Union and to pursue a neutral policy. In closed meetings, he attacks Soviet policy and actions of our specialists. Our ambassador was practically expelled from Kabul. As a result of that, there are rumors about disagreements between Amin and Moscow, and about a possibility of his anti-Soviet steps in the diplomatic corps in Kabul. Those developments had created, on the one hand, a danger of losing the achievements of the April revolution inside the country; and on the other hand, a threat to our positions in

Afghanistan. Now there is no guarantee that Amin, in order to secure his personal power, would not turn over to the West. An increase of anti-Soviet feelings among the Afghan population has been reported." This is a characteristic of the situation that developed by the beginning of December 1979. Then in the second paragraph he writes: "Recently a group of Afghan communists, who are now residing abroad, contacted us. In the process of consultations with Babrak Karmal and Sarwari we found out—they informed us officially—that they had worked out a plan for moving against Amin and for forming new state and party organs. However, Amin began mass arrests of the politically unreliable. Five hundred people were arrested, and three hundred of them were killed. In these circumstances, Babrak Karmal and Sarwari, without changing their plans for an uprising, appealed to us for assistance, including military assistance if needed. We have two battalions stationed in Kabul, so we can provide certain assistance if there is a need. However, just for an emergency, for extreme circumstances, we need to have a group of forces stationed along the border. If such an operation is carried out, it would allow us to solve the question of defending the achievements of the April revolution, resurrecting the Leninist principles of state and party building in the Afghan leadership, and strengthening our positions in that country." This is a memo for a discussion. I do not know Brezhnev's reaction to it, but judging by the further developments, it is quite clear.

I would like to add to what General Varennikov said. On December 8 there was a meeting in Brezhnev's office of "the three"—not "the four"—on Afghanistan. Now I will be reading in English. "In their argument for a military intervention in case Afghanistan is lost, Ustinov and Andropov cited dangers to the southern borders of the Soviet Union and a

possibility of American short-range missiles being deployed in Afghanistan and aimed at strategic objectives in Kazakhstan, Siberia, and other places." Then came the meeting of December 12. General Varennikov described everything in detail, so I do not need to repeat it.

I would like to point out one more thing: in the last month or month and a half before the invasion, the American factor was not constantly present in our so-called deliberations. In general, if you look at the situation in Afghanistan, we did not have any government-to-government channels to discuss developments in Afghanistan with the Americans. I am not speaking about the military side, or about the intelligence side. I am speaking of the diplomatic level. There was nothing like this at all. I can say that only at the very last moment, in December, this question emerged on the diplomatic level, and only in connection with the NATO decision [to deploy INF in Europe?]—and it was formulated with the worry in the back of our minds that there might be bases in Afghanistan. We thought that if Afghanistan was lost, then, as they say, the vacuum would be filled by the Americans. But overall, I would say, the American factor did not play that big a role until the very end. I am speaking about the political discussions in the Politburo. The exception is the discussion of Amin's possible turn to the West; that has already been noted here. There were no other discussions. Even if you look at the Politburo decisions on the introduction of troops that have been published, and that we have here, it is very interesting to note that America is almost never mentioned in any documents.

There are two possible explanations for this. One is that the Politburo still believed that they would be able to salvage their

relations with the Americans at some level. Our relations at the end of the Carter administration were unfortunately bad. Both sides share the blame equally; but there still was some hope. However, the final decision with regard to the United States was the following: "The risk of inaction was at least as great as the risk of action." That is as far as the American factor was concerned. In other words, what was at stake in Afghanistan was worth the risk. There was one more overall discussion on January 20 where Carter was mentioned, among other things; but the record of that discussion says: "Even though the Carter administration organizes a big campaign on the world scale against us, nonetheless, in our countermeasures against America, we should not allow Afghanistan to affect the wide range of issues in which we are involved together with the Americans." That was put into the decision. It was the last time it was said in the hope that something could have been repaired in the relationship. It was an internal document, and the U.S. government's actions were characterized in it very negatively. That document is very characteristic of our state of mind.

In all subsequent decisions in 1980, we never returned to that issue again. Moreover, we became very harsh in our line with regard to Afghanistan. In fact, it was written in one of the decisions that all attempts to negotiate a settlement on Afghanistan with the Americans were futile and hopeless. And then the events developed following their own logic. There was a campaign against us in your country. We were trying to defend ourselves—I mean the political side, of course.

So this was the way the events developed. And I agree with the General: the decision to introduce troops was very painful for us; it was preceded by a lot of deliberations difficult for both the political and the military sides; and foreign policy considerations played a big

role. Unfortunately, it all developed in such a way that by the beginning of 1980 we had nothing in common. You know the reasons for that situation.

Let me correct you a little about the SALT treaty. It was slightly different from what has been said her. First, we had the "splash"—the summit, the signing, the hugs. By the way, when they were hugging each other, I was standing right behind them, Gromyko was also standing there, and Grechko. Grechko asked him—

BRUTENTS: Ustinov.

DOBRYNIN: Ustinov, that's right. Ustinov asked Gromyko: "What do you think? Will they kiss each other?" [Laughter.] Gromyko responded: "I think they will!" Ustinov said: "No, they will not!" [Laughter.] But it turned out that Gromyko knew the state of mind of both leaders better. They did kiss after all. It was very unexpected for everybody. But after those tragic events of November and December, our relations became very bad.

You know our current assessment of the situation in Afghanistan very well. We discussed it in our Parliament recently. We can practice autoflagellation now; history has passed its judgment, and we are not going to dispute it. But still it would be nice to analyze what happened day by day, chronologically, and to find out what day-to-day considerations, rather than grand plans on the global scale—"grand designs"—were entertained by the two sides—the concrete issues that both sides dealt with month by month.

The last thing I would like to mention is this. One of you said something about the timetable. I was in Moscow in January; I was in the

hospital. I left on January 20. As always, I met with Brezhnev. Every time I came to Moscow I used to meet with Brezhnev so that he could give some instructions on how I should conduct myself in the United States. Gromyko joined us. He was laconic. He said, "Be careful, and advise us how to be careful—how to prevent Carter from getting us both into a lot of trouble. He is behaving like an elephant in a china shop now." That is what Gromyko said. I told Brezhnev what all this might mean for our relations. I understood that it might lead to a total disruption of our relations. But Brezhnev said to me: "Do not worry, Anatoly, we will end this war in three or four weeks." This was his farewell word to me. I did not argue; I did not know all the details. But it shows the state of mind of our leader then. I am sure that our military thought differently. But he, I do not know why, thought exactly so—that the war wold end very soon. And that state of mind influenced very important decisions that were being made—and those that were not made as a result. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Anatoly.

BRUTENTS: What was your source? The meeting on December 8—

WESTAD: We all know Anatoly the diplomat; now we have been introduced to Anatoly the historian. I talked about not expecting any sensations here. I think we actually got a couple of them just now. These are completely new materials that nobody has ever seem before. At least for me, they make several of the loose pieces that I had concerning decision making on Afghanistan fall into place—particularly the December 2 memo from Andropov.

was nothing to lose in the U.S.-Soviet relationship by signing these pieces of paper saying we were equivalent? Had we left ourselves no option but to accept your going into Afghanistan? Did you feel that the correlation of forces enabled you to treat us with disdain, more or less as Brezhnev did in his communications to Carter? I certainly sensed a strategic optimism in military circles, and perhaps in the Politburo, too.

DOBRYNIN: I just quoted to you the decision of the Politburo after the invasion, made after Carter made a number of very anti-Soviet statements concerning our internal domestic affairs, saying that we should do everything possible not to spoil the broad and wide relations we had with the United States. That statement was made only for the members of the Politburo. So I must dispute what you are telling us. U.S.-Soviet relations were on our minds, and were very important. But there was not a lot of optimism. Brezhnev was very glad to have signed the [SALT II] treaty; but other events, such as the Cuban brigade affair, signaled major problems in our relations. And, finally, it became very clear that there would be no SALT. The United States was not going to ratify it. It was very clear; you know how it happened. So, this question about the strategic relationship was rather irrelevant in the minds of the Politburo at that time. We signed a very good treaty, but it went out the window.

ODOM: Can I ask Karen Brutents to respond also?

WESTAD: I think we will have to get back to that question in the next session, because we really need to take a break now. But before we take

political point of view in order to demonstrate our seriousness.

WESTAD: Thank you, Mark.

I would like now to turn to the Russian side. Anatoly, I wanted to start with you. I see that you are ready. But before you get started, let me just alert everyone to the important materials that we have about this in Anatoly's newly-published memoir, which all of us have been frantically trying to read. There is quite a bit of fascinating material there about the immediate aftermath of the Afghan intervention, and about some of the conversations Anatoly had with Brzezinski and others.

DOBRYNIN: Well, I presume that at some point we will discuss what we did after the introduction of the troops. Are we only going to discuss what happened during the immediate reaction now?

WESTAD: I think we could start with the period immediately after the troops were introduced, and then we can see how far we can get.

DOBRYNIN: Okay.

Mark here was in the same shoes as I in Washington. Was it tranquil? I would not say so. [Laughter.] It was a rather hot spot. I sat there reading all those speeches day after day. We are all emotional people—even diplomats are, sometimes. I had a rule: I would sit for one hour, completely alone—without any of my assistants—after we discussed things, just to give my own feelings a chance to subside.

But I would like to say a few general words of interest to all of you. Our government did not have the same good habit yours did of

communicating with its embassies. When your embassies wrote an assessment, you would get feedback from your government, saying this was good, and that was not quite so good, and so forth. But for us, it was like sending an assessment into a black hole. If I sent a telegram to Moscow, I would never know what the reaction was until I went there myself and had a chance to discuss it with people. While I was in Washington, we received not a single piece of information—not me, nor my colleagues—from our own intelligence people on Afghanistan. Nothing. There was a splendid ignorance We were trying to guess what was going on.

So, I come to the second question on your agenda: what kind of reaction did the Soviet leaders foresee? There was no energy spent in Moscow at all on this. There was no discussion of what other actions we should take besides sending in the troops. One reason for this, first of all, is that they thought that our relations were so bad that the intervention would not change very much. This was their way of thinking—this was Gromyko's, at least. In addition, we really did not have plans for an invasion throughout 1978 and 1979. We had none until the very last minute—in December. That is why, as Karen mentioned yesterday, nobody was involved on the expert side. On the 6th of December there was the first decision, made by three fellows. On the 12th of December, there was another. made by three plus Brezhnev. Though in our protocol it said "all the members of the Politburo" agreed. they were not there. Look at the way they signed it: on the 28th. There was a bureaucratic trick. They were not present, but then later on this was given to them to sign onto. Only a very few people knew about it. Who could have prepared for the international reaction? Presumably, that was the Foreign Ministry's job; but nobody—not even

Kornienko, who was number one at the time—knew anything about it. We did not have any contingency discussions. The military, I am sure, did some contingency planning with respect to their own business; but they never told Gromyko. So we did not prepare any elaborate list of possible American or Western reactions.

Of course, there was a general understanding at the top level that there would be a bad reaction. There would be propaganda, and so on; everybody knew this. But as far as I know, nobody discussed at the Politburo what concrete actions the West might take. Nothing. The Soviet leaders did not foresee any specific Western reaction; just a negative one. You will notice from the briefing materials that only on January 20th did the Politburo discuss for the first time the Western reaction. There was a meeting of the Politburo, and they gave instructions to different Ministries, to prepare in a general way a response to the Western reaction. The instructions were not very concrete—merely to prepare to denounce the Americans, and so on. There was not a single specific proposal. You see in this decision of the Politburo. What exactly did they want? I will now read in Russian the decision of the Politburo on the 28th of January: "In our relations with the United States, now and in the future, we should contrast the confrontational position of the Carter administration with our steady and firm line in international relations"—this is the directive that went to all of us diplomats!—"notwithstanding the fact that Washington will continue to conduct an anti-Soviet campaign, and that it will make efforts to coordinate the actions of its allies. Our countermeasures"—Soviet countermeasures, it means, but it does not specify what kind of countermeasures—they were never discussed, but it was assumed that there would have been some sort of countermeasures—"Our countermeasures

should be carried out on the axiom that we should not exacerbate the entire complex of our relationship with the United States."

What kind of message could we, the professional diplomats, extract from that directive? What kind of conclusions could we take from that? I remember receiving that part of the directive in the Embassy. On the one had, we needed to follow a firm line. Did it mean that I, sitting in Washington, should speak firmly to Brzezinski? I tried to speak firmly with him when it was necessary, but was that the point? What could I do concretely? There was nothing guidance here. They only give us an abstract goal: the right one, I should say; we certainly should have tried to avoid straining our relationship with the United States further. I totally agreed with that. But how were we to do it practically?

The U.S. position was absolutely clear, especially after Carter spoke in Congress about the Carter Doctrine. Unfortunately, at that moment, our leadership did not think seriously and deeply about what political, diplomatic, and other consequences there might be besides military consequences. Of course, they understood that this was a bad thing to do, and that we had be ready, especially with propaganda.

So, in responding to your question, I can say that we did not seriously consider the U.S. reaction. I asked people later about this. There was no consideration of this either in the Foreign Ministry or in the Central Committee. Later, certain things were prepared; but they were prepared for specific issues. For example, you wanted to boycott the Olympics, and we had to respond to that—and so on, for each of the individual questions. But there were no countermeasures.

I have to say, also, that when I read Turner's report yesterday—the CIA report—I was a little bit surprised. According to the report,

the CIA told the American leadership that they should not expect any kind of large-scale intervention. This was in the period immediately before the introduction of our troops. He even said when the first troops were moving into Afghanistan that the CIA expected that only a very small force would move into the country. At first, I thought that your intelligence was not very capable; but then I realized that your failure to foresee the intervention was not your fault. It was our fault, because we decided to introduce troops only on December 6. You simply did not have time to figure it out, because we ourselves had just learned about the decision. For us it was finalized on the 6th. There was very little time left for you to orient yourself; and there was very little time for our diplomatic service to orient itself as well.

Thus, unfortunately, I have to tell you that our diplomatic service was not ready to carry out any kind of effective counter propaganda, or to attempt to justify what had already been done in Afghanistan.

I think that that explains the state of relations between you and us at that time. I can tell you about one interesting little meeting with Brzezinski on December 6. I knew nothing about the coming decision in Moscow, and as far as I understood, he had no idea either. What did we discuss? We talked about the ratification of SALT II. He was telling me that it would probably be ratified by March. "After SALT II is ratified," he told me, "we can talk about SALT III." That was planned for April. He also said that we could talk about controlling the deployment of middle-range missiles in Europe. He was just thinking aloud; we were examining the horizon. But that was on December 6, when the introduction of troops was about to begin! We were quietly sitting and discussing those things.! He also said that the President would be

glad to receive the General Secretary in Washington in June—in the summer or in the fall of 1980. He said that it would not be necessary to sign a treaty at that meeting; just to meet to exchange opinions would be very good. I agreed with practically everything that he said. I wrote to Moscow that that would have been a good idea. Moscow did not respond. Naturally—they were in the middle of making decisions to introduce troops into Afghanistan.

Afterwards. the American side did not make any significant presentations to us, to be very honest—at least, not at the diplomatic level. Tom Watson went to the Foreign Ministry twice. Once he met with Komplektov—he was head of the department—and he also met with Maltsev, who was not the best expert on those issues. Their discussion was, of course, absolutely useless. After that—or maybe a day before that—Marshall Shulman met with my deputy in Washington. I was in Moscow at the time. He talked with Vasev. Marshall told him that there was a concern in Washington that we had our contingent of troops near the Afghan border, and that the troops were moving toward Afghanistan. He said, "We would like to know what the purpose of that movement of troops toward Afghanistan is, in accordance with the treaty of 1972." You remember that treaty, which was signed during the Nixon administration; Vasev was not an expert on this. So the conversation went nowhere. And that was it. There was no warning of any sort. There was nothing like that. I do not want to accuse you of anything here. You did not know either. But, still, you were already signaling to us that there was something wrong. We did not respond.

So the decision was taken at the top level. Only five men—or three men—knew. None of them was an expert on the United States. There was no mechanism for anticipating the American reaction—nothing.

After we introduced our troops, nobody organized an interdepartmental body. There was a commission of three or four; Ponomarev was sometimes invited, and sometimes he was not invited. Three were permanent members. That was it! This demonstrates that there was a great deal of ignorance among our leadership about the United States. Obviously this action would have foreign policy implications. But they simply ignored this. They were probably very much concerned with the military consequences; but they ignored the diplomatic ones. After your reaction, we simply tried to defend our position in our propaganda. But of course this put us on the defensive internationally.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Anatoly. I will return to you later on for some follow-up comments on your later meetings.

I want to go to Sergei Tarasenko now; then I will turn things over to Marshall.

TARASENKO: Anatoly Fedorovich raised the question of how it all looked on the diplomatic front from the Embassy's point of view. At that time, I was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I would like to share my personal impressions of how it all happened.

I personally—and the entire Ministry—learned about the invasion five minutes after Ambassador Thomas Watson left Maltsev's office, where Maltsev told him that the entire world knew that a massive military interference was being carried out against the Republic of Afghanistan, and that was why we were introducing our troops. When the person who took notes during the discussion came down, we immediately saw in his face that something was wrong. He said, "Troops have been introduced." My heart sank. I immediately realized that it would lead to no good.

more, as we find ourselves increasingly in lower-level conflicts rather than total wars, military power is being used for clearly political purposes. That dividing line as to who directs how the military power is applied must be thought through more carefully. Clausewitz did not give us much guidance as to where the dividing line was; he simply told us there had to be political direction at some level of military endeavor. I believe that thoughtful political leaders and thoughtful military leaders—in the kind of combination we have here around this table—must address this issue in the years ahead in order that we better understand why it can be bad for a country to be successful militarily—as the Soviet Union was in Afghanistan, and as the United States was in Vietnam.

LEGVOLD: Stan, thank you very much. From your first comment, I would put you in the category of people who believe that choices that were made mattered during this period of time. They mattered fundamentally. And the problem with choice was this issue of misperception that I referred to: it was very important that we did not make accurate assessments of the motivations, capabilities, and intentions of the other side. Secondly, you are suggesting that, from 1977 to 1980, we were the victims of an inadequate integration of military power and foreign policy choice. That is an issue which has not been resolved today, and which may only be getting worse.

Now, on the list I have Anatoly Dobrynin next; then Marshall; and then Bill Odom. I would appreciate it if each of you would be brief. Anatoly?

DOBRYNIN: Two points. First, I would not like to leave the impression

for the future historians that détente was a complete failure in Soviet-American relations. Today all we have discussed is failure. It was only another five years before we had another détente—although no one used the word "détente;" the word was anathema for President Reagan. But still, it was détente. We had a very good relationship; there were very good developments on many points that we are now discussing in a critical way. They were solved, or on the way to being solved. We should not lose perspective on this: détente was not doomed because it was détente, but rather because of the objective circumstances.

To answer your second point: the principal reason for failure in this period was definitely the existence of completely contradictory conceptions of détente in your country and in my country. This was a fatal contradiction. The ideological approaches were completely different. We had entirely different views of how the would develop. There was no clear vision of a common goal at all, except for avoiding nuclear war—and that was a good result of détente, by the way. But it was the only common goal. On all other issues, and on all other interpretations of the meaning of détente, each side was thinking, of course, that it was right, and the other was wrong. So, as you mentioned, misconceptions played an important role in the failure of détente.

Now, about military misconceptions: both sides were looking at the most worst possible scenario. You were thinking that we were going to seize the Middle East oil fields; we were thinking that you wanted to overrun us militarily—to force us into à new arms race, and to press us from a position of strength. We were convinced that, in Afghanistan, we were engaged in a very local conflict; but you did not accept that. That was our feeling.

Of course, there were mutual suspicions and mistrust all through the period. Brezhnev had them; same for Carter. I know that many of you, of course, know President Carter; but I happened to meet both of them. On the basis of my personal encounters with them, I had the impression that they both wanted peace, and they both wanted to have good relations. They were both sincere on this. I discussed this with Carter; I discussed it with Brezhnev. They were for peace, for better relations, for agreements—but you know how it happened. Circumstances conspired against this, and they were not strong enough leaders to impose their will on the situation.

Of course, military détente is impossible without political détente. We had no political détente. Of course, it was very bad that we did not attempt to find common or collaborative measures to find a way out of our difficulties. Diplomacy was completely absent during this period. There were only a few discussions on Afghanistan, but they were very vague, I would say. But domestic conceptions of détente were very important to its fate, in your country and in my country. In your country, as you know, the majority of the American public sincerely came to believe that détente was a bad thing; they came to believe that we outplayed the Americans; that the U.S. government was always on the defensive; that Russia was using détente as a cover for imposing its will. In my country, there was no problem supporting détente, because in our minds détente was very simple: détente meant peace—no nuclear war. Beyond that, no one really looked into what détente meant.

Two final things. First, you made our troops in Afghanistan a single issue for the whole of your foreign policy, and for relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. There was nothing else that you wanted to discuss—only the presence of our troops there.

During Vietnam War, two weeks before Nixon came to Moscow for the first time in 1972, there was a huge bombardment of Hanoi. The Soviet government held an eight-hour discussion on whether or not to accept Nixon, or to refuse to accept him, because Vietnam was our ally. The view prevailed that the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was so important that we could not really cancel Nixon's visit. I do not want to blame you entirely, because we share the blame for the failure of détente: but in this case, you put everything on this one issue—either we had to make a complete withdrawal very soon, or there would be no U.S.-Soviet relationship at all.

Second, during that period we had very narrow foundation for our relationship. By the end of the Carter administration, there was very little left on our bilateral agenda. There was really only one small link—the SALT talks—which we tried to maintain as a bridge between us. But when it failed, we had nothing left—only contradictions. That was a very dangerous situation.

We made a mistake, too, by the way, in stubbornly refusing to have a meeting until we had SALT. This was a diplomatic mistake. If we had a meeting in 1977 or 1978, probably we could have found some way to help turn around Soviet-American relations. Perhaps we could not have finished SALT; but still we might have saved the relationship. Instead, the irritants and challenges piled up. We were moving steadily apart until we came to the middle of 1979. It was a very bad situation. We finally reached an agreement on SALT and had our meeting, but there was no ratification, and we had not even a single bridge remaining between us.

Those are not all of the reasons for the failure of détente, but they are important. I would like to repeat, however, that the

dismantling of détente in the late 1970s did not mean that détente did not come back later on. Even a very anti-Soviet figure like Reagan could come to the conclusion that this confrontation was not favorable to the United States, ultimately. We came to that conclusion, too. There was a later positive development in our relations based upon a new détente.

In the present post-Communist time, we need, if you like, to redefine our goals and our means. Unfortunately, we both still do not have a clear vision of common goal in a post-Communist world. There is no common goal. Yugoslavia demonstrates this. There is discord in the United States over how to handle Russia; there is great disillusionment in Russia about the United States. Let us face it. Of course, our great asset is that there is no threat of a nuclear war. From this point of view, we have a clear horizon. But our two countries have not yet found a common vision of the future, and they have not worked out a partnership—because as of now, we do not have equal partnership; let us admit it. But there is a possibility. The whole history of Soviet-American relations proved that it was possible to have a good partnership. So, I finish my comments on a more hopeful note.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Anatoly. Marshall?

SHULMAN: Mr. Chairman, I hope you will regard this as a mini-intervention. I would like at some appropriate time to take the floor to respond to Anatoly's discussion of the deterioration of relations. But my purpose in raising my hand was to respond to something that Stan Turner said. It is something that I want to get onto the record promptly in the discussion.

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