

MEMORANDUM

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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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-2-

(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 Brent 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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