

**April 10, 1980**

**CPSU CC Politburo Decision on Afghanistan, with  
report by Gromyko, Andropov, Ustinov, and  
Zagladin, 7 April 1980**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

CPSU CC Politburo Decision on Afghanistan, with report by Gromyko-Andropov-Ustinov-Zagladin, 7 April 1980 regarding the role of Soviet troops in Afghanistan under Karmal's government and that continuing tension with the US

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Top Secret

#P191/IV

To: Comrades Brezhnev, Kosygin, Andropov, Gromyko, Kirilenko, Suslov, Ustinov, Ponomarev, Rusakov, Zimyanin, Arkhipov, Zamyatin.

Excerpt from Protocol #191 of the Politburo CC CPSU session of 10 April 1980

Concerning our further policy on issues related to Afghanistan

To approve the considerations on this issue submitted by the Politburo CC CPSU Commission on Afghanistan (memo attached).

The Commission should continue monitoring the development of the situation in Afghanistan and around it closely, and solve the emerging problems as they arise according to the considerations stated in the memo, submitting relevant proposals to the Central Committee of the CPSU as necessary.

The Departments of the Central Committee upon consulting the Commission should carry out a coordinated propaganda policy on the basis of the considerations stated in the memo, and guide the central organs of the press, radio, and television accordingly.

Secretary of the CC  
[attachment:]

To #IV of Protocol #191

Top Secret

CC CPSU

We are presenting some considerations concerning our further steps in relation to the situation in Afghanistan and around it.

Situation in Afghanistan and the role of the Soviet troops.

1. The development of the situation in Afghanistan after the introduction of the limited contingent of the Soviet troops in December 1979 confirms our assessment that it was a timely and a correct action. It undermined the plans to overthrow the revolutionary regime in DRA and prevented the emergence of a new hotbed of military threat on the Southern borders of the Soviet Union. It put an end to Amin's adventuristic policy line, which led to the goals and objectives of the April [1978] revolution being discredited, to abandoning cooperation with the Soviet Union, and to establishing close ties with the West. The cadres of the People's Democratic party, the army, and the administrative apparatus loyal to the revolution had been saved from physical execution. Gradually the conditions for active participation in the revolutionary movement of both the former groups "Parcham" and "Khalq," along with other representatives of patriotic and national-democratic forces, are being created.

The new leadership of the DRA headed by B. Karmal with comprehensive assistance from the Soviet Union in general correctly outlined the tasks related to internal normalization, the organization of military resistance to the internal and external counterrevolution, for overcoming the harmful consequences of the Amin regime, and for achieving a relationship of trust with the tribes and other strata of the population, and began to work on practical solutions to those problems.

2. At the same time the situation in Afghanistan remains complicated and tense. The class struggle, represented in armed counterrevolutionary insurrections, encouraged and actively supported from abroad, is occurring in the circumstances where a genuine unity of the PDPA is still absent, where the state and party apparatus is weak in terms of organization and ideology, which is reflected in the practical non-existence of local government organs, where financial and economic difficulties are mounting, and where the combat readiness of the Afghan armed forces and the people's militia is still insufficient. The efforts that had been undertaken notwithstanding, such important political problems as establishing relations with Muslim clergy, tribal leaders, and middle and petit bourgeoisie have not yet been solved. The agrarian reform has not been completed, especially in the Eastern and Southern regions of the country.

3. The Soviet troops stationed in Afghanistan provide decisive assistance in establishing control over the situation in the country. Together with the Afghan armed forces they have successfully carried out operations for elimination of armed rebel formations in several provinces of the country. As a result of those operations, the organized armed forces of the counterrevolution have suffered substantial losses, and thus the military threat to the existence of the new regime has been significantly reduced.

These are all reasons to believe that after the military operations planned for the immediate future are completed, there will be a relatively long period during which, even with support from abroad, the counterrevolutionary forces would probably be unable to carry out any large-scale military actions. Such a prognosis is supported by the fact that already now the counterrevolutionaries have had to change their tactics; they are mostly engaging in terrorist acts and small group actions. At the same time they are putting their stakes on economic sabotage, disruption of transportation and food supplies, arousing religious, nationalist, and anti-Soviet feelings, [and] animosity toward the government and its undertakings. However, one should not exclude the possibility of the counterrevolution making an effort to organize massive uprisings in certain provinces of the country.

4. In these circumstances the need for carrying out consistent and purposeful measures for achieving a genuine ideological, political, and organizational unity in the ranks of the PDPA, and for strengthening its influence in the country, for unifying all national-patriotic forces, for creating an effective apparatus of local government, for improving the combat readiness of the army, the state security forces, and the people's militia, for solving the primary economic tasks, and for improving the work with tribal leaders, assumes the primary importance.

5. Meanwhile our troops in Afghanistan will have to continue to carry out their tasks of defending the revolutionary regime in the DRA, defending the country from external threats, including sealing off the borders of the country together with the Afghan forces, ensuring the safety of the major centers and communications, and also building up and strengthening the combat readiness of the Afghan armed forces. Only when the situation in Afghanistan stabilizes, and the situation around the country improves, and only upon a request of the DRA leadership, may we consider the question of the eventual withdrawal of our troops from the DRA.

Situation around Afghanistan and the relevant objectives.

The development of the situation around Afghanistan has recently been characterized by a certain stratification of the forces hostile to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and to the Soviet Union.

1. The United States and China continue to hold to a hard line aimed at changing the political regime in Afghanistan and at the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet troops. Other countries exhibit a certain readiness to search for compromise solutions for a political settlement in the existing situation, even though those solutions, as a rule, are unacceptable.

Thus, in contradiction to the USA position, the majority of the Western European countries do not demand the withdrawal of the Soviet troops as a preliminary condition for any settlement, but consider it a part of the process of such a settlement. Gradually the understanding emerges that there could not be any resolution of the Afghan question without accepting the fact that Afghanistan, being the Soviet Union's immediate neighbor, is a part of the zone of Soviet special interests. Our decisively negative reaction to the absolutely hopeless plan of "neutralization" of Afghanistan proposed by the British, and aimed at the change of the Afghan political regime by removing its current leadership, definitely encouraged this evolution in the positions of the Western European countries.

2. A tendency to abandon the initial positions of sharp condemnation of the Soviet actions in Afghanistan by some of the countries that held such positions before is emerging among the members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Their positions are changing toward searching for such a settlement that would allow Afghanistan to maintain its status as a nonaligned country. This is the line taken by India, which is concerned about a possibility of Pakistan's rearmament with the assistance of the USA and China, and about the buildup of the USA military presence in the Indian Ocean and in the Persian Gulf.

The government of Pakistan has recently been showing some signs of unwillingness to follow the USA policy on the Afghan question blindly. One such sign was the willingness to receive the Cuban Foreign Minister as a representative of the state chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement in Islamabad. Although the Cuban initiative of offering good offices for bilateral negotiations between Afghanistan and Pakistan with the goal of normalization of their relations so far did not produce any concrete results, such steps would be expedient in the future, and this is exactly what the Cubans are going to do, using their contacts with many nonaligned countries.

3. At the same time, it would be advisable for us to maintain our contacts with the countries that express interest in searching for a political settlement of the Afghan situation. During such meetings we should continue to consistently develop the idea that the basis of any political settlement should be a complete and guaranteed cessation of all aggressive actions and all forms of subversive activities and interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

During our meetings with representatives of Western European and other countries it is important, as always, to point out that the questions concerning the current regime in Afghanistan, the composition of the government and the like, could under no conditions be a subject of negotiations; and that any questions whatsoever concerning Afghanistan could not be discussed or resolved without the DRA government, without its current leadership.

4. Concerning the possible set of issues for discussion in connection with the Afghan settlement, besides the question of real guarantees of non-renewal of armed and foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, we should raise such questions as the reduction of the USA military presence in the Indian Ocean and in the Persian Gulf, the creation of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, and the

liquidation of foreign military bases there--all this against the USA efforts to limit the discussion to Afghanistan itself. Raising those questions would allow us to put pressure on the Americans and to influence the negotiating process for our benefit. Besides, it would permit us to increase the number of countries that view our position on Afghanistan favorably, or at least with understanding.

5. It is advisable to work on the question of encouraging other countries of the socialist commonwealth to take a more active part in providing Afghanistan with assistance in political, economic, and other spheres. This question needs special consideration.

6. Therefore, our policy in the questions of an Afghan settlement should be aimed at, first, helping decrease the tension which was created by the West in connection with the introduction of the Soviet troops into Afghanistan; secondly, at creating more favorable external conditions for internal consolidation of the revolution in the DRA, and for making the revolutionary changes irreversible; and thirdly, at creating conditions for the future eventual withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, when it would be justified by the political and military situation in the country and in the region in general.

7. We should begin with the assumption that at certain point in time we could sign a new treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, which would make it clear for everyone that we are ready to ensure the defense of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, of its socio-economic and political regime from all forms of external aggression. This question could be discussed in the future taking into account the development of the situation, but it needs to be solved positively. Those who inspire the aggression against Afghanistan will not have reasons for objections against a defensively-oriented treaty of the kind that the USA has with dozens of countries.

Such a treaty will not mean that Afghanistan loses its status of a nonaligned country. One just needs to be reminded that Pakistan has been accepted into the nonaligned movement regardless of the existence of the American-Pakistani agreement of 1959, according to which the USA considers it to be "vitally important for national goals and for general peace to preserve the independence and the territorial integrity of Pakistan," and pledges to take "necessary measures including the use of armed forces" in a situation of aggression against Pakistan and upon the request of the Pakistani government.

In relation to this, it would be expedient for Afghanistan not only to maintain, but also to strengthen its role in the Non-aligned Movement, using it for building up its contacts with other non-aligned countries.

8. It is assumed that realization of the considerations mentioned above will require a close and constant coordination of actions between the Soviet Union and the DRA leadership on all aspects. Our rich experience of relations with new Afghanistan will help ensure such coordination.

We are requesting your consideration.

A. Gromyko Y. Andropov D. Ustinov  
V. Zagladin

7 April 1980  
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[Source: APRF, f. 3, op. 82, d. 176, ll. 9-17; translation by Svetlana Savranskaya.]