

Documentation

The world reacts to Soviet action

Carter: Brezhnev lies

President Jimmy Carter made the following statement to the Washington press corps immediately following the Soviet coup d'etat in Afghanistan.

Such gross interferences in the internal affairs of Afghanistan is in blatant violation of accepted international rules of behavior. This is the third occasion since World War II that the Soviet Union has moved militarily to assert control over one of its neighbors, and this is the first such venture into a Moslem country by the Soviet Union since the Soviet occupation of Iranian Azerbaijan in the 1940s....

Soviet efforts to justify this action on the basis of the United Nations Charter are a perversion of the United Nations. They should be rejected immediately by all its members. I have discussed this serious matter personally today with several other heads of government, all of whom agree that the Soviet action is a grave threat to peace. I will be sending the Deputy Secretary of State to Europe this weekend to meet with representatives of several other nations to discuss how the world community might respond to this unwarranted Soviet behavior.

Soviet military action beyond its own borders gives rise to the most fundamental questions pertaining to international stability, and such close and extensive consultation between ourselves and with our allies are urgently needed.

In answer to questions about the reply of Leonid Brezhnev to Mr. Carter's protest over Soviet action in Afghanistan, the President told ABC-TV interviewer Frank Reynolds the following:

He responded in what I consider to be an inadequate way. He claimed

that he had been invited by the Afghan Government to come in and protect Afghanistan from some outside third nation threat. This was obviously false because the person that he claimed invited him in, President Amin, was murdered or assassinated after the Soviets pulled their coup. He also claimed that they would remove their forces from Afghanistan as soon as the situation should be stabilized and the outside threat to Afghanistan was eliminated. So that was the tone of his message to me which as I say, was completely inadequate and completely misleading....

He is not telling the facts accurately....

My opinion of the Russians has changed most drastically in the last week than even the previous two and a half years... And I think its imperative... that the leaders of the world make it clear to the Soviets that they cannot have taken this action to violate world peace not only in that region but throughout the world without paying severe political consequences.

Soviet Union

Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev sent the following telegram to Babrak Karmal, the head of the new government in Afghanistan.

I warmly congratulate you upon your election to the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and to the highest state posts in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

On behalf of the Soviet leadership and on my own behalf, I wish you great success in all your multifaceted activities, for the good of the friendly Afghan people. I am confident that, in the current circumstances, the Afghan people will be able to defend the gains of the April revolu-

tion and the sovereignty, independence and national dignity of the new Afghanistan.

The Vatican

In both his homily for New Year's Day and his speech before blessing a crowd in St. Peter's Square, Pope John Paul II noted that international tensions have dangerously worsened during recent days, "particularly on the Asian continent," and asked the faithful to pray for peace, to prevent the "terrible nightmare" which would result from an international nuclear conflict.

The Pope said he had received scientific information in a report detailing the extent of damage to life and civilization that would result from such a conflict. In an apparent reference to the recent NATO decision to modernize its nuclear arsenal, he said, "topics that have impressed European public opinion during the last weeks of the year that has just ended require us to think with concern about the future... We are thinking of the cities in the West and also in the East that... could be completely reduced to heaps of rubble."

The principal findings of the report mentioned by the Pope were that between 50 and 200 million people would die from the immediate or indirect effects of nuclear explosions if even 200 of the existing 50,000 nuclear bombs were detonated. Food resources would be drastically reduced due to radioactive contamination of farmland; dangerous genetic changes would occur in humans and in plant and animal life; and changes in the atmosphere would bring further, as yet unknown dangers.

France

In sharp contrast to his usually optimistic year-end messages to the nation, French President Giscard d'Estaing posed the question, "Will 1980 bring us peace or war?" While it can be assumed that good use is being made of the hot line between Paris and Moscow set up during Giscard's trip to the Soviet Union, there is no official public statement on Afghanistan.

The danger of war exists. We are

living in one of those periods when the balance of the world hangs on the ability of a few men to be cool-headed. I hope that the wisdom of leaders will prevail.

France is working for peace. It is doing so immediately through its firm and realistic diplomacy which has contributed to eliminating the threats of destabilization from the African continent; it is doing so for the future through initiatives such as the North-South dialogue in order to eliminate the causes of inequalities and tensions in the world.

The crisis? It does indeed threaten us.

We are going to feel a new shock, as a result of the oil price increases recently confirmed in Caracas... But France is not the same as it was in 1973... It is better armed to resist the shock. Of all the industrialized countries, ours is the one which has endowed itself with the most complete energy policy. Our nuclear plants... are progressively entering line. They have already permitted the creation of 100,000 jobs. In the ten years between 1975 and 1985 they will represent a capacity equivalent to 45 million tons of oil per year. This is a little as though the French had built with their own hands an oil field capable of producing annually more than half of what our British neighbors draw from the North Sea, and a field which will not run out...

Great Britain

In a 200-word note to President Brezhnev, the full contents of which were not disclosed, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said she was "profoundly disturbed" by the Soviet Union's thrust into Afghanistan. Thatcher told Brezhnev that Britain was "frankly puzzled" by the assertion that the intervention had been at the invitation of the new Afghan government. She further criticized the Soviet Union for interfering into the internal affairs of its neighbor.

The Foreign Office issued a statement, Dec. 28: "The British Government condemns the Soviet action in Afghanistan. We believe the people in Afghanistan have a right to

choose their own government without outside interference."

Geoffrey Rippon, Tory backbencher, and Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, stated: "NATO powers must realize that their interests do not stop at an arbitrary line in the Atlantic." He urged an effective NATO presence in the region, adding that the Afghanistan events showed that Britain had withdrawn prematurely from the Gulf in the late 1960s.

Labour Member of Parliament Neville Sandelson stated: "Soviet expansionism is a major threat to Western survival. Britain must wake up to the dangers. Moscow simply exploits detente to its own advantage. We should resolve in the new year to halt hypocrisy and strengthen our own defenses."

West Germany

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's official spokesman, Klaus Boelling, issued the following statement Dec. 28:

The Federal Government has noted the events in Afghanistan with great concern. It sees in the entry and engagement of foreign troops in Afghanistan an exceptionally serious situation, which raises basic questions of international relations. The Federal Government will examine these questions with its allies and friends and also will contact countries from the region whose vital interests are affected by the events. The consultations have begun.

The Ambassador of the Soviet Union in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Semyonov, this morning handed over a note from his government to the Federal Republic of Germany in which the Soviet action is explained. On this occasion, the Ambassador was told that the note must be considered as exceedingly momentous and grave. The Soviet note will be carefully examined.

Two days later, West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher gave a more strongly-worded statement in an interview with the newspaper Welt am Sonntag.

The Federal Government and its allies have watched with great con-

cern the dangers for the independence of Afghanistan, which resulted from the coup in 1978 and the Soviet activities. The marching in and deployment of Soviet troops into this country create an extremely serious problem, raising questions not only of the international order, but also of the principle of the indivisibility of detente and trust-building. ... The recent imperialistic policy of interventionism and establishing of spheres of influence has no future. ... It is profoundly reactionary.

China

The Chinese government delivered the following note to the Soviet ambassador in Peking on the Soviet action in Afghanistan:

The Chinese government demands that the Soviet authorities immediately stop their aggression and intervention in Afghanistan and withdraw all their armed forces from that country.... Afghanistan is China's neighbor and therefore the Soviet armed invasion of that country poses a threat to China's security.

Iran

The Iranian government issued the following statement on Soviet action in Afghanistan:

We announce to the Soviet government that now that we are struggling against U.S. imperialism, the occupation of the neighboring country by the Soviet army is in fact weakening our struggle against the United States and is regarded as hostile action against the Iranian nation.

This Islamic government of Iran cannot agree with military intervention by any country in another country, especially military intervention by a superpower in a small country.

Because Afghanistan is a Muslim country and a neighbor of Iran, the military intervention of the government of the Soviet Union in the neighboring country of our coreligionists is considered a hostile measure, not only against the people of that country but against all the Muslims of the world.