

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

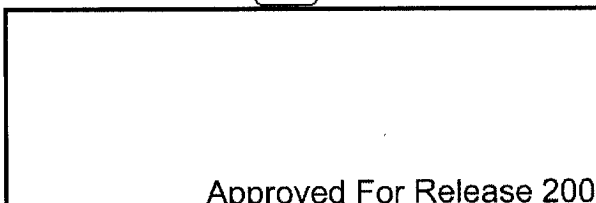
SUBJECT: Western European Reaction to U.S.-Soviet Tension (S)

Under the direction of the NSC Staff, CIA has prepared the memorandum at Tab A which analyzes probable West European responses to a sharp downturn in U.S.-Soviet relations. The study has been cleared by State and Defense. Its principal conclusions are:

- The European stake in detente in Europe is very large and they will want to protect it; the prospect of heightened tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union thus causes deep apprehension among the Europeans.
- How the Europeans interpret the events in Afghanistan will strongly influence their response to the measures the U.S. takes against the Soviet Union. If they accept that the Soviet invasion has broad strategic implications, and they have not yet definitely reached this conclusion, they will be more willing to take steps to shore up Western security in South Asia and the Middle East.
- The Germans are most vulnerable to Soviet countermeasures and have the most to lose from revived U.S.-Soviet tension. Because of this, Schmidt will seek to maintain FRG reconciliation with Moscow and Eastern Europe -- especially East Germany.
- Unlike the UK, the Italians are also vulnerable to Soviet pressure; the French will play an independent hand.
- Under these conditions, most Europeans will hesitate to reinforce East West tension. They will instead stand apart a certain distance to try to limit and confine the crisis, and to ensure that detente in Europe is not damaged at the core. (S)

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With these factors in mind, the paper suggests that European support for U.S. actions against the Soviet Union will depend especially on their confidence that:

- Their relations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and especially inner-German relations, can be insulated to some degree from the U.S.-Soviet confrontation.
- The U.S. intends to preserve the framework of detente in Europe to the greatest possible extent, and in particular to pursue ratification of the SALT agreement and negotiation of further arms control agreements focused on Europe.
- The U.S. will not play the China card so strongly as to encourage a Soviet backlash in Europe or elsewhere.
- The U.S. itself is acting in response to an objectively perceived and substantial external threat rather than to domestic political imperatives, and can maintain firm control and steady management of its policy toward the Soviet Union despite the pressures of an election year. (S)

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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January 8, 1980

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM: ROBERT D. BLACKWILL *RB*

SUBJECT: Western European Reaction to U.S.-Soviet Tension (S)

The Interagency paper on Western European reaction to a downturn in U.S.-Soviet relations is at Tab A. Should you wish to forward it to the President, a transmittal memorandum containing the paper's principal conclusions, is at Tab I. (S)

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*Condense into DR*

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Review on January 8, 1986.

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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC 0155-80

7 January 1980

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Western Europe: Responses to US-Soviet Tension in Wake of  
Afghan Crisis

Almost from the beginning of the Cold War, detente has been a powerful aspiration for the Europeans. They pursued it earlier and more intensely than did the US -- because of their proximity to the Soviets; their individual weakness and hence vulnerability to Soviet threats; their sense of shared social and cultural destiny with Eastern Europe, hence hopes for political reconciliation; their uncertainty that US security guarantees would prove effective in a real crisis; their discomfiture at the dominant role assumed by the US in the West as a result of the Cold War.

All these concerns remain alive in Western Europe. The European stake in detente has grown even larger over time. In particular, since the Soviet Union achieved strategic parity with the US, the Europeans have viewed detente not as a product of assured security but rather as an essential ingredient of it. Chief among the benefits of detente for Europe have been the relaxation of political tensions on the Continent and the framework for arms control negotiations that has been established. Detente has also become an important condition for the effective management of domestic politics in European countries where parties of the left play important roles, because with East-West detente, sharp polarization between left and right is easier to avoid. Europeans count on preserving and extending the trade gains and the freedom of movement between East and West that have accompanied detente. (European Community exports to the Soviet Union grew

This memorandum, requested by the staff of the National Security Council, was prepared by [redacted] the National Intelligence Officer for Western Europe. It was coordinated with the NFAC Office of Political Analysis and takes into account comments received from Robert Blackwill, NSC; Jenonne Walker, State S/P; Sandra Vogelgesang, State/EUR; and Paul Cassidy, DOD/ISA. Questions and comments may be addressed to [redacted]

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five-fold from 1970 to 1978; and the number of immigrants to West Germany from the East was over 57,000 in 1978 alone.) The Europeans also hope that in a climate reasonably free of tension, the Soviets will exercise restraint not only on the Continent but in the Third World, where the Europeans must preserve their access to raw materials.

Therefore the prospect of heightened tension between the US and the Soviet Union creates deep apprehension among the Europeans. They would necessarily share in that tension and in the uncertainties it would create. They would see the interests they have pursued through detente put in jeopardy -- their security first of all. The adequacy of means they have to defend themselves against Soviet pressure would be again in doubt. At the same time, a clash between the superpowers would threaten the Europeans' own freedom of action in relation to both the US and the Soviets, and compel them again to rely on US management of the East-West crisis at a time when their doubts about the adequacy and steadfastness of US leadership are grave.

Because they have so large a stake in East-West harmony, the Europeans have often been reluctant to support the US when they believed the issues in question were peripheral rather than central to the East-West relationship from their particular perspective. This view was most dramatically reflected in the Europeans' attitudes toward the Vietnam and even Korean wars. It was also evident in the European reservations about the US alert during the 1973 Middle East war. It is reflected in Europe's heavily nuanced approach to Africa -- the argument that although the West should oppose Soviet or Soviet-sponsored incursions there, it should do so more by means of economic and technical aid to the Africans than by challenging the Soviets or the Cubans directly. Yet the Europeans have firmly stood with the US in cases where they believed the East-West balance was directly attacked -- in Berlin, for example, or during the Cuban missile crisis.

How the Europeans interpret the events in Afghanistan will strongly influence their response to the measures the US takes against the Soviet Union. They are likely to view the Soviets' actions as prompted in part by the need to maintain control over the Moslem population within the Soviet Union, by concerns arising from threats to the Soviet role in Eastern Europe, and by obscure internal struggles related to the coming succession. On such an explanation, the Soviet move into Afghanistan might be thought to have rather limited significance in the long run, and to call for only quite restrained reactions on the part of the West.

Yet the Europeans also appreciate that Soviet behavior may have major strategic implications, requiring certain kinds of firm resistance on the part of the West in order to ward off any further expansion of Soviet influence in the Third World, to prevent in particular eventual Soviet dominance in the Middle East oil producing region, to deter the Soviets from

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similar behavior in Europe itself (possibly Yugoslavia), and to discourage Soviet efforts to exert political pressure on the Europeans based on Soviet "successes" elsewhere.

European responses to Soviet behavior in Afghanistan will also be affected by the course the Soviet intervention takes in the longer term, and by the threats and inducements the Soviets pose in the European theater as US-Soviet relations chill. Public opinion will be important too -- it may surprise European governments by pressing for a firm reaction to the Soviets.

At this stage of the crisis, however, the Europeans emphasize that the Afghan crisis is primarily a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the Third World -- especially the Moslem nations -- and that any response to the Soviets must include the participation of such countries. They have stressed that the Western reaction should be directed specifically to the region of Afghanistan, that it should be restrained in any case, and that major elements of detente such as SALT should be preserved as far as possible.

However the Europeans eventually assess the Afghan crisis, the extent to which they will support US actions depends crucially on their own special interests and vulnerabilities in relation to the Soviet Union. The British will probably be most forthcoming. The government of Prime Minister Thatcher, which is uniquely sensitive to Soviet abuses of power and to ideological differences that persist between the East and the West, has already shown a willingness to undertake firm defense policy measures at considerable cost. Moreover, the British are less vulnerable to the Soviets than the Continental countries; they are still protected to a certain extent by a special relationship with the US; and they have rather less to lose economically by trade restrictions. The British also have traditional links to South Asia that allow them to influence events in that region independently of actions the US may take.

The countries on the Continent, however, are highly dependent on continuing oil supplies from the Middle East and would find the prospect of growing Soviet influence on those supplies profoundly alarming. France, in particular, has championed the idea of a special link between Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and has been willing to intervene in Africa -- even militarily -- to quell disturbances that might create opportunities from which the Soviets could profit. Yet President Giscard, whose government is already under pressure from the Gaullists in view of next year's presidential elections, cannot afford to provoke their criticism by taking measures against the Soviets in obvious deference to US wishes; he must maintain a certain distance from US policies. Apart from such domestic considerations, the French government believes that it retains a "special relationship" with the Soviet Union which it would be extremely reluctant to jeopardize. The French

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have worked especially hard to win Soviet support for the French proposal for a Conference on European Disarmament, and they are most unlikely to take actions that would undermine that effort.

Italy has an interest in supporting US measures against the Soviet Union in order to preserve the status it has lately won in the Alliance for backing theater nuclear force modernization and to enhance its role as EC President and Venice Summit host in the coming months. But the government is especially vulnerable to Soviet economic pressures and inducements -- in particular the Soviets are an important natural gas supplier for Italy -- and the Italians would press hard for compensation for any costs it might incur in supporting US actions. Domestically, a climate of hostility between the superpowers places the Italian government in an awkward position because of its need for some degree of political cooperation from the Italian Communist Party. Thus, some Italians would be tempted to minimize the crisis, but many others would view it as an opportunity to push the PCI back into a quasi-illegitimate status.

West Germany clearly has the most to fear from revived US-Soviet tension. It is most directly vulnerable to Soviet pressures -- for example in Berlin -- and it has won, correspondingly, the greatest direct benefits from detente. Chancellor Schmidt's own Social Democratic Party initiated West Germany's reconciliation with the Soviets -- the Ostpolitik -- and has pursued and defended it for more than a decade. The Chancellor must demonstrate enough firmness against the Soviets in crisis to escape unfavorable comparison with his rival in this fall's elections, the conservative Franz Josef Strauss. But at the same time he cannot afford to abandon detente in Europe -- and thus the prospects for some continuing improvement in inner-German relations in particular -- unless he has no other option. To do so would risk splitting his party, whose vocal left wing prizes detente especially highly. It could also severely strain his close relationship with French President Giscard. The West Germans might well contribute to a stronger Western position in Southwest Asia but they will try to protect their hard-won reconciliation with the Soviets and Eastern Europe -- especially East Germany.

Under these conditions, most Europeans will certainly hesitate to reinforce East-West tension. They will try instead to limit and confine it, to ensure that detente in Europe is not damaged at the core. They may be tempted to view their proper role as that of mediator between the superpowers, as often in the past. While recognizing that they must stand with the US to the extent that broad strategic interests are involved, they will also be tempted both collectively and individually to stand apart a certain distance -- to preserve and enhance their own influence over how the crisis evolves.

In any event, their support for US actions against the Soviet Union

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following the Afghan invasion will depend especially on their confidence that

- their relations with Eastern Europe, and especially inner-German relations, can be insulated to some degree from the US-Soviet confrontation;
- the US intends to preserve the framework of detente in Europe to the greatest possible extent, and in particular to pursue ratification of the SALT agreement and negotiation of further arms control agreements focused on Europe;
- the US will not play the China card so strongly as to encourage an uncontrolled Soviet backlash in Europe or elsewhere;
- the US itself is acting in response to an objectively perceived and substantial external threat rather than to domestic political imperatives, and can maintain firm control and steady management of its policy toward the Soviet Union despite the pressures of an election year;
- such measures will impose real costs on the USSR, outside the European framework, of a kind that will dissuade it from future such actions and that will limit the gains it can derive from its Afghan move (rather than merely signaling the West's displeasure);
- while some costs may be incurred in their own relationships with the Soviets, the position of the West in the Middle East may be improved (by wider base rights, for example) and relations with the Third World generally will at least not be impaired;
- they will not be asked to take actions that will clearly not command the necessary domestic political support;
- they will be consulted fully on the implementation of US actions;
- the US will help compensate for any economic costs the Europeans may incur by supporting US actions;
- to the maximum extent possible they can individually avoid the risk of Soviet reprisals by acting collectively in some multilateral context;
- US-European cooperation in the current crisis might lead to a larger European voice in the broad range of East-West issues.

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TO BRZEZ INSKI

FROM BLACKWILL

DOC DATE 08 JAN 80

KEYWORDS: USSR

EUROPE WEST

SUBJECT: CIA ASSESSMENT OF WESTERN EUROPEAN REACTION TO US - SOVIET TENSION

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

DUE:

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FOR ACTION

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