

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

R #28

~~TOP SECRET~~
TOP SECRET

February 29, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB.*

SUBJECT: Message to Brezhnev

In the attached weekly report, I lay out more fully the considerations which in my judgment dictate greater prudence than allowed in the presently envisaged approach. I think we are being sucked too early into a formal dialogue, which the Soviets can then exploit in various ways, depending on circumstances.

I have made some proposed revisions in the enclosed message. As I indicate in the weekly report, I think it would be better to convey it orally, since how we do it can be almost as important as what we do.

My recommendations are:

1. The Vice President does it in your name from a written text which he reads to a high-level Soviet at the Tito funeral;
2. This is reinforced by an appropriate discussion between Vance and Dobrynin;
3. I have Dobrynin out to my house for lunch (so the fact of my meeting with him in the White House does not become known) to reiterate that this is a serious approach, on which we can deliver from our end;
4. If you feel strongly that a written and signed message is preferable in spite of the concerns expressed in the weekly report, I would recommend that an envelope, addressed to Brezhnev personally in your own handwriting and sealed on the back with your personal seal, be conveyed to Watson, with instructions that he request an urgent appointment with Brezhnev himself. This will minimize the likelihood of leakage.
5. Finally, if you decide to take (in my view) the more risky step of sending an emissary, you send someone like Donovan, who is not so visibly identified in the public mind with the "soft" school of thought and whom the Soviets will thus take more seriously and about whom a possible leak will create fewer political problems for you.

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Review March 1, 1986

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

PER 8/15/97 NCC-96-211
 BY *J* NARS. DATE 9/11/97

SECRET/SENSITIVE

Vance
DRAFT 2/29/80

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#29

His Excellency
Leonid I. Brezhnev,
Chairman of the Presidium of
the Supreme Soviet of the USSR,
Moscow.

2B min.

Dear Mr. President:

You and I have exchanged communications on various occasions in discharging the great responsibilities incumbent upon us as leaders of our two countries. I believe the present situation is sufficiently serious that the most direct possible communication is necessary, and I therefore appreciate your receiving my special emissary for that purpose.

The deterioration of US-Soviet relations, which is contrary to the best interests of either of us, can be analyzed in different ways, and I think each of us has stated his own viewpoint. What is clear is that relations between our two countries are of critical importance in preserving world peace. It is in full consciousness of this responsibility that I believe we must consider our relations and seek ways of turning them in a more positive direction, showing due restraint in a potentially dangerous international situation.

The essential step for a fresh start is to eliminate the presence of foreign troops from Afghanistan's soil. You have expressed the intention of withdrawing Soviet forces. What is required now is concrete action towards this end.

In your speech of February 22, you spoke of the withdrawal of Soviet troops on condition of guarantees by the United States and the neighbors of Afghanistan that outside interference would

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

PER 6/20/95 NKE/RE MR-NLC-94-58
BY CP NARS, DATE 9/14/95

be ended. In my recent letter to President Tito, I indicated our support for a neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan acceptable to the Afghan people. With the prompt withdrawal of all Soviet troops, we would be willing to join with the neighbors of Afghanistan in a guarantee of Afghanistan's true neutrality and of non-interference in its internal affairs. [Could we not each guarantee the inviolability of Afghanistan's frontiers together with Afghanistan's neighbors, taking the necessary steps to translate this into reality?]

In addition to any guarantees pertaining to Afghanistan, we would see benefit in a commitment by both the United States and the Soviet Union to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan and Iran and not to interfere in their internal affairs. We carefully noted the statement in your speech about the importance for the United States of ensuring the security of the routes along which oil is delivered. It seems to us that reduction of tensions in Afghanistan and mutual commitments to non-interference in Iran and Pakistan would contribute to the stability of the region and would thus be in the best interests of everyone.

Let me turn for a moment to the Olympics. You know our position that we cannot participate in Olympic Games in Moscow ^{at not} under present circumstances. Would postponement of the Moscow

Practical steps need to be defined for the withdrawal of troops and the issuance of a credible assurance.

Does it include the issue? To a day?

Olympic Games for a year open the way to a solution of the problem? If we are able to resolve the principal question, i.e., the ^{prompt} withdrawal ^{of} Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the games could go forward at that time.

I believe it is important for our two countries to do everything in our power to maintain the momentum of arms control negotiations. The ratification of SALT II continues to have top priority on my agenda. Serious discussion about other pressing issues of nuclear weapons would offer hope for further steps in reducing tensions brought on by the military competition.

I do not assume that it will be easy to put our relations back on a favorable course, but it is my earnest desire to achieve this. [I regard the problem from a long-term perspective, and I see no alternative to a policy of cooperation--including economic--between our two countries, based on equality and mutual respect, seeking negotiated solutions, reducing tensions, and displaying restraint in situations where our interests conflict.]

I welcome any concrete suggestions you may have, either immediately or at some later time. Perhaps as a next step, our two Foreign Ministers could meet to discuss in the broadest context the issues that we face. You can be assured of my most serious interest in doing our part to remove the obstacles to improved relations.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

naive
ignores
reality
of complexity
sounds
crazy