

SUBJECT.



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Afghanistan

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 January 1980

Dear Malcolm,

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T17/80

Thank you for your timely letter about Afghanistan. I very much agree with your approach. The Russians have cynically imposed their will on a non-aligned country by military force in gross violation of international law and under the flimsiest of pretexts.

If we are to prevent a recurrence of what has happened it will be essential to convince the Russians that, in planning their intervention in Afghanistan, they seriously under-estimated the likely world reaction. The West has a major role to play in this. I agree that the measures we take are unlikely to dislodge the Soviet Union from Afghanistan itself (though it may be harder than they think to control that country). But unless there is a sustained Western reaction, the temptation for the Russians to choose the military option again will be the greater. Their next victim could be a country of even greater and more direct importance to the West than Afghanistan.

I therefore welcome the firm measures which the Australian Government have announced. I am particularly glad that Australia, the United States, Canada and the EEC have taken action on grain sales to the Soviet Union. This should have a major effect in bringing home to the Soviet Union the gravity of their action and the seriousness of the Western response.

The United Kingdom played an active part in initiating the very telling condemnation of the Soviet Union in the United Nations General Assembly resolution for which 104 countries voted. Later

/this week

this week we shall be announcing other measures. High level and Ministerial contacts with the Soviet Union will be suspended. Military exchanges will be cancelled and certain other events which might convey a public impression of business as usual will be avoided. On technology we shall call for a review in COCOM of means of tightening its rules vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The British/Soviet credit agreement which expires on 16 February, will not be renewed and we shall not maintain the very favourable export credit terms which it prescribed. Peter Carrington has just finished his tour of Turkey, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and India. We are considering in the light of his talks ways in which the countries of the region can be helped to meet the challenge of the Soviet invasion.

To be effective, Western action needs to be concerted. There has been much discussion in NATO and the Nine and, although there are differences, we hope that most of our Allies will take steps similar to the British ones.

The following are some of the matters on which the British and Australian Governments will, I hope, keep in touch:-

- (i) Relocation or a widespread boycott of the Olympic Games would severely hurt Soviet prestige. There are of course practical difficulties because it is not in our Governments' powers to take the necessary decisions. But Western Governments would be failing in their duty if they did not make their views plain. Yesterday I asked our national Olympic Association here to consider urgently an approach to the International Olympic Committee proposing that the Games should be moved. I know that you have taken a similarly clear line with your own Association.

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- (ii) We need to support Pakistan and, as a corollary, provide reassurance to India about what we are doing. We should aim to encourage greater understanding between Pakistan and India.
- (iii) The situation in Iran remains complex and unstable. The question of the hostages continues to face the Americans with very serious difficulties. But the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has changed the situation radically. The Iranians must be convinced that their long-term interests lie with the West.
- (iv) We need to encourage the moderate non-aligned countries to maintain their present firm stance.

Your remarks about the longer term are equally important. There is a pressing need for a more coherent Western policy to manage crises in the Third World and to deter Soviet opportunism. It may be that the lack of a firm Western reaction to earlier events in Angola, Ethiopia and Cambodia encouraged the Russians to believe that the West would tolerate their actions in Afghanistan.

I welcome the chance of discussing all this personally with you on 4 February. Meanwhile I suggest that our governments should continue to exchange views through our High Commissions.

Yours sincerely,

(SGD) MT

The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, CH, MP.