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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T9/80

Subject on Afghanistan P 2
Situation since Military Intervention.
Dear Margaret:
cc Iran P 7

As I know you will agree, the Soviet Union's invasion and occupation of Afghanistan are matters of the gravest concern. In my view, the Soviet action represents one of the most serious security challenges which our countries have faced in the post-war era. This naked aggression has implications in Southwest Asia and the Middle East, as well as globally, in the bilateral relationship between each of our countries and the Soviet Union, and in the multilateral relationships which have developed among the countries of the West and the Warsaw Pact involving European matters in the past decade. A failure on our part to respond adequately to the Soviet challenge in Afghanistan can only encourage Moscow to move in the future even more aggressively. Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf, Yugoslavia and even Turkey come immediately to mind. By the same token, a strong united Western response can correct Soviet perceptions, restrain Soviet behavior and ultimately advance the cause of detente to which both our countries are dedicated over the longer term. I know that you share my view that in these circumstances, it is imperative that you and I and our representatives in Washington and London maintain close and continuous consultations and coordination.

You are already familiar with the measures which I announced on January 4 involving our bilateral relations with the Soviet Union, and I appreciate your support for these actions. I had previously announced my decision that the SALT II Treaty not be called up for Senate action in light of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. I did not withdraw the Treaty because I believe its ratification would be in the interest of the West, and I hope that circumstances will, in time, make it possible for me to request that the Senate proceed with action on the Treaty. Further, I believe that it is important to continue our efforts in MBFR to reach agreement with the East which will lower military forces and tensions in Europe and to pursue vigorously our TNF arms control proposal. In my judgment we should also continue to participate in the CSCE process which if carefully managed promotes Western interests.

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However, I feel strongly that we would be making a grave error should we, in the interest of preserving an atmosphere of detente, attempt to separate developments in Southwest Asia involving the Soviet Union from the bilateral or multilateral relations which we have with the USSR. The process of detente can continue only if we, collectively and individually, make clear to the Soviet Union that actions such as its invasion and occupation of Afghanistan must have serious consequences for the Soviet Union in other areas of the world, including Europe.

The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan is simply not consistent with detente in Europe, and this must be made clear to the Soviet leadership. If Moscow does wish to pursue detente, then in the wake of Afghanistan it must give us evidence of such a desire. The most convincing confirmation of Moscow's desire to retrace its steps back to policies consistent with the principles of detente would be an early and total withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. To this point, I regret to say that we have seen no evidence that that is Moscow's intention and the continually growing USSR deployment in Afghanistan appears to us to suggest that the Soviet Army went to that small and defenseless country to stay. And in the light of other Soviet activities in the region--especially in Ethiopia and the Yemens--we would have to regard a prolonged Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as part of a calculated strategic thrust against the West's vital interests.

We have already noted a predictable tendency in the Soviet Union's propaganda to try to divide the United States and Western Europe over the matter of Afghanistan. Indeed, I think we can expect the Soviets to launch a "peace offensive" in Europe in the near future. Moscow will undoubtedly hope that by offering various inducements to West European countries they can secure a "business-as-usual" approach by these countries, a tacit agreement to let concern about the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan fade away. I know that you will be particularly sensitive to this Soviet objective and will work with me and our colleagues from the other Western European countries to ensure that this Soviet aim is not realized.

Finally, I want to assure you that I am prepared to commit the United States to take the necessary steps to enhance security in Southwest Asia and the Middle East,

not just because of U.S. interests, but because of the broad stakes the West in general has in this region's stability and the flow of oil. In this effort, it will be important for the United States to have the support-- and some cases the direct involvement of our European allies. The challenge to our common and crucial interests in this area is unprecedented; it calls for an unprecedented and coordinated Western response. This includes support for Pakistan, intensified political involvement with specific nations stretching from South-west Asia to the Eastern Mediterranean, increased security involvement and military presence, increased economic assistance, as appropriate, and arms support to friendly nations. The United Kingdom's role in this effort will be particularly important and I look forward to learning of Peter Carrington's impressions after his visit to the region.

I want to thank you for your support in these trying times. I will be anxious to have your views in the coming period on the posture that we should adopt to convince this Soviet leadership and the following one that they cannot undertake naked aggression such as in Afghanistan without the most serious penalties for them.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jimmy Carter