

*Nobel Symposium 95*

**The Intervention in  
Afghanistan  
and the Fall of Détente**

Lysebu  
September 17-20, 1995

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Transcribed by Svetlana Savranskaya  
Edited by David A. Welch and  
Odd Arne Westad

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**The Norwegian Nobel Institute  
Oslo 1996**



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## INTRODUCTION

This is the full transcript of the Nobel Symposium held at Lysebu from 17 to 19 September 1995. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the reasons for the collapse of the period of detente in US-Soviet relations in the late 1970s, and especially the causes and effects of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. The participants at the symposium were former political, diplomatic, and military leaders from Russia and the United States, and a small group of American, Russian, and European scholars with special knowledge of this period.

The symposium was the final meeting in a series of conferences on this topic organized by the Center for Foreign Policy Development of the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. In addition to looking more closely at the deterioration of US-Soviet relations from 1977 to 1980, this project aimed at investigating some of the comparative aspects of processes of decline in great power cooperation. The transcripts of the first conferences are available at the Watson Institute.

We are very grateful to the former leaders who agreed to participate throughout the series of conferences. It is their willingness to share their experiences with a wider audience which has given this project its unique character. Some of the "veterans" became close collaborators with the organizers of the the conferences in providing the necessary record of documents -- often requesting and overseeing the declassification of large numbers of documents from their own institutions. Without their participation and assistance, this project would not have succeeded the way it did.

We are also grateful to our main institutional collaborators -- the Watson Institute, the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Science, and the National Security Archive. The head of the Institute of General History, Alexander O. Chubarian, was very helpful in organizing the preparations for the symposium in Moscow. The staff of the National Security Archive -- and especially Malcolm Byrne and Vladislav Zubok -- assisted by expertly putting together the briefing book and chronology for the symposium. Svetlana Savranskaya of Emory University and David A. Welch of the University of Toronto worked miracles with transcribing and editing the many hours of tapes.

Our main thanks goes to James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, who were the inspirators of this project at its infancy and throughout its existence. Their efforts and abilities made this exceptional enterprise succeed.

-- Odd Arne Westad

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **RUSSIAN VETERANS**

**Mr. Anatolii Dobrynin**

USSR ambassador to Washington 1962-1986.

**Mr. Karen Brutents**

Former Deputy Head, CPSU CC International Department, expert on Soviet Third World policy.

**General Valentin Varennikov**

Former Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of Ground Forces in the USSR General Staff.

**General Leonid Shebarshin**

KGB resident in Teheran in the late 1970s, later Head, First Main Directorate (foreign intelligence), KGB.

**General Makhmud Gareev**

Former First Deputy Chief of USSR General Staff.

**Mr. Sergei Tarasenko**

U.S. and Middle East expert, USSR Foreign Ministry, later Eduard Shervardnadze's main policy adviser.

### **AMERICAN VETERANS**

**Admiral Stansfield Turner**

Former Director of Central Intelligence.

**General William Odom**

Former Director of Soviet affairs, NSC.

**Dr. Marshall Shulman**

Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, 1977-1981.

**Mr. Mark Garrison**

Former Deputy Chief, US Embassy, Moscow.

**Dr. Gary Sick**

Former NSC staff member, Iran and Middle East expert.

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<b>Dr. Francis Sejersted</b>	The Norwegian Nobel Committee
<b>Mr. Michael Sohlman</b>	Nobel Foundation

#### INVITED GUESTS

<b>Mr. Yuri Fokine</b>	Russian ambassador to Norway
<b>Mr. Thomas Loftus</b>	U.S. ambassador to Norway
<b>Dr. Thomas Blanton</b>	National Security Archive
<b>Dr. Terrence Hopmann</b>	Watson Institute, Brown University
<b>Dr. Olav Knudsen</b>	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
<b>Dr. Olav Riste</b>	Institute for Defense Studies
<b>Dr. Dan Smith</b>	Peace Research Institute in Oslo
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#### INTERPRETERS

<b>Ms. Irina Arm</b>
<b>Ms. Lina Pekler</b>

# AGENDA

## **Sunday, September 17:**

Introduction and social events.

## **Monday, September 18:**

### *Session 1: Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, 1978-79.*

What were the reasons behind the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan after the April 1978 coup? Which strategic objectives did the Soviet leadership have in the region? How did relations between the Soviet and the Afghan leadership develop up to August 1979? What were US perceptions of the Soviet role, their motives and plans? What was the relationship between the US government and the Afghan rebels up to the fall of 1979?

### *Session 2: The United States, Iran, and Afghanistan.*

How did events in Iran influence US perceptions of Soviet actions in Afghanistan? What were the Soviet views of development of the Iranian revolution and Iran's links with the United States? Which strategic objectives did the United States have in the region? How did the US links with the Afghan rebels develop up to the Soviet intervention?

### *Session 3: Reasons for the Soviet intervention.*

The purpose with this session is to follow Soviet decisionmaking and planning month by month from August 1979 to the intervention took place in December. What did the United States know and how was the Carter administration preparing to respond?

### *Session 4: Follow-up questions to sessions 1,2 and 3.*

## **Tuesday, September 19:**

### *Session 5: After the Afghan intervention.*

What was the initial reaction in Washington to the Soviet intervention? What kind of reaction did the Soviet leaders foresee? What significance did the Afghan intervention have on US policymaking with regard to the Soviet Union for the remaining months of the Carter administration? How did Soviet perceptions of the war and the Western reaction develop in 1980-81?

*Session 6: Follow-up questions to session 5.*

**Wednesday, September 20:**

*Session 7: Why did detente collapse?*

In the minds of the veterans, looking back at their experience and the results of these three meetings, what were the most important reasons why detente collapsed? Domestic US or Soviet politics? Third World rivalries? The dynamics of the arms race? Incompatible ideologies and societies?

*Session 8: Follow-up questions to session 7.*

Lysebu 17.-19. Sept. 1996



From left: Malcolm Byrne, William Odom, Vojtech Masny, Stansfield Turner, Leonid Shebarshin, Anatolii Dobrynin.



From left: James Blight, Malcolm Byrne, Odd Arne Westad, Geir Lundestad.





From left: John Gaddis, William Odom, Dan Caldwell.



The symposium at sea.

Robert Legvold

Marshall Shulman





Collette Shulman, Stansfield Turner

Vladislav Zubok, Michael Sohlman

Geir Lundestad, Marshall Shulman,  
Odd Arne Westad

Sherry Jones, Karin Turner

Valentin Varennikov

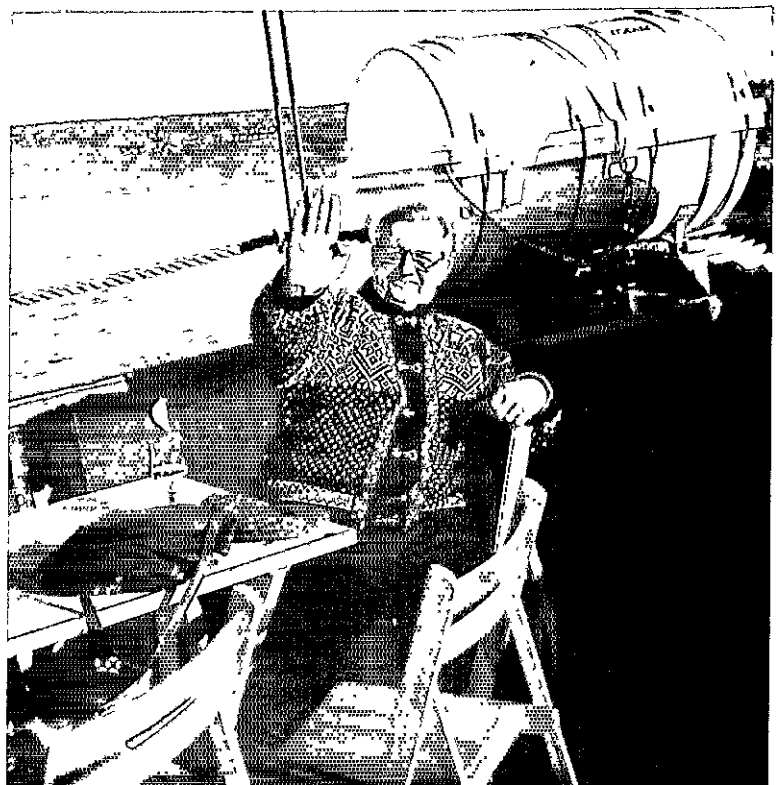


Photo: Sigrid Langebrekke.

SEPTEMBER 18



SESSION 1

**AFGHANISTAN AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1978-FALL 1979**

ODD ARNE WESTAD: Could I call the meeting to order, please? My name is Arne Westad. I am with the Nobel Institute. I am going to be chairing our sessions today and tomorrow before Bob Legvold arrives, and takes over for the final session. As some of you know, Bob chaired the two first conferences in the series, and did so in an admirable way.

In my opinion, this symposium promises to be one of the most interesting oral history events for quite some time. That is not only my opinion, but also that of some of the many people who would have liked to be here, but whom, unfortunately, we could not fit into the program. There was a large and substantial interest from different individuals and organizations to be present here, but room at the table is quite limited, so we had to limit ourselves to the group of eminent participants who are here.

Unfortunately—as Bob said at the start of the third conference—the themes that we are dealing with during this series of conferences have taken on a particular contemporary relevance. This relevance has increased substantially in the past couple of weeks. I am referring to the events in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia; those events, and the development in the relationship between Russia and America, remind us in a very powerful way how fragile a relationship such as this can be, even when you have a long period of stable and even friendly development

beginning, in this case, with the end of the Cold War. I think that we need to look at what we are going to discuss today with reference to what we are seeing happening around us. It is impossible to ignore it. This is going to be a discussion about historical events, but as I think all of us would agree, historical events do have their contemporary relevance, and in this case the contemporary relevance is rather obvious.

Around this table we have a number of those people who made crucial decisions in international affairs in the late 1970s—and later, in some cases—and who are in a position to tell us much more than we know today about what went on behind the scenes in their respective administrations. That said, this is not a conference where we will be looking for sensations. Of course, we don't mind if a few happen to come along; but our main purpose here is to get a clearer understanding of those very processes which led to the collapse of détente and a renewed Cold War of the 1980s. The way we want to do this is by focusing on the events relating to the Afghan crisis of 1979–1980. We want to use Afghanistan as a focal point for understanding larger processes surrounding the breakdown of détente. In that way this conference more closely resembles the series which Jim and Janet and others conducted on the Cuban missile crisis some years ago than the first two conferences in this series, which dealt with very broad topics. At least for one of the sessions here, we are going to attempt to follow developments in one specific area month by month and even week by week. So it will be a very different kind of conference in that respect.

One thing has not changed, however, from the first two conferences in this series: this will be a conference with veterans from both sides

in focus. It is you—the veterans—who are going to run the discussion. The questions are going to come primarily from you to the other side, or to your own side if you wish. You are in focus at all times.

Let me say a little bit on practical ground rules. First of all, this is not a forum for making speeches, as I am sure all of us are aware. We have a lot of people around the table who would like to speak and who would like to get in on the conversation. No intervention should be more than seven to eight minutes long. Here I am talking about the veterans. A question or a comment from one of the scholars around the table should be two to three minutes long at a maximum. We are going to give preference to the veterans. If anyone goes on for substantially longer than that, I will ask you to return to your topic later on. You will be able to return to it during the conference—possibly the next time you speak. Now, of course, the reason why we are doing it this way is not only because we want to get as many people as possible on record, but also because we want to get as much interaction as possible. This was a problem at the first two conferences; we did not have the degree of interaction that we were looking for. Sometimes this was because we spent too much time on one topic and were not able to move along. We will try to avoid that this time, but I rely on your cooperation.

I am going to be very rude over these two days: I am going to call all of you by your first names, even those of you whom I do not know very well. The reason for this is not that I want to be rude, but because we want to have as informal a discussion as possible around the table. I think this would be much better than addressing each other as "General Odom" or "Ambassador Dobrynin." This is the standard that we followed at the first two conferences, and I think it would be a good

idea to follow it here.

There is no press in this room; nothing that is said in this room will be reported to the press by us in any other way than through the transcript, which will be available later on. Someone asked me about this before we started, so I thought I should mention it now. Of course, all will have a chance to see the transcript before it is finally edited.

There is one other significant issue that I would like to raise. We all make mistakes. We all do things that in hindsight we would have liked to do differently, or not to have done at all. Of course, there is a tremendous difference between the possible outcome of the mistakes I make in tutoring my students, and the possible consequences of mistakes that the veterans around the table may have made while in office. My point is that this is no tribunal. This is not a setting where there is any reason for you to do what the Americans call "Taking the Fifth." I don't know how that translates into Russian, but it means not giving evidence that tends to incriminate oneself. The point here is to get closer to historical facts, to historical developments, and to the mindsets of the period that we are dealing with. I think the best way for us to do that is to base your memories, what you remember, on the documents that we have available in the briefing book. I hope that all of you have had a chance to go through the briefing book before the conference, and that you will be able to refer back to the materials in the briefing book as we move along. It is really an exceptional set of documents, which bring us, in my opinion, closer to understanding the events surrounding Afghanistan even before the conference starts than anything that we had so far.

We will be passing on, then, to the first topic on our agenda for

this first day of the symposium, which we called "Afghanistan and the Soviet Union from 1978 to the Fall of 1979." The purpose of this particular session is to get as close as possible to what the real relations between the Soviet Union and the Afghan leaders were after the April 1979 coup in Afghanistan; to look at which strategic objectives the Soviet leadership had in that region; and to examine how these relations between the Soviet leaders and the Afghan leaders developed up to the summer of 1979. We are dealing here with a pre-history, in a way, of the Afghan intervention. On the U.S. side, there are two things that we want to deal with in this first session: American perceptions of the Soviet role in Afghanistan—of the motives and the plans that lay behind Soviet activities in Afghanistan and on the borders as you saw them from Washington; and secondly, the relationship between the U.S. government and the Afghan rebels—those fighting against the Communist regime in Kabul up to the fall of 1979—which, as Malcolm [Byrne] pointed out yesterday, is one of those points that we returned to when we touched on Afghanistan in our earlier conferences. This is the purpose of the first session, which will run to 10:30, when we have our first break. I invite you to raise your hand if you wish to speak.

Anatoly?

**ANATOLY DOBRYNIN:** I think one element is missing here: Soviet-American relations. We should not be dealing only with Soviet-Afghan and American-Afghan relations. We should be looking also at the interaction between the United States and the Soviet Union.

**WESTAD:** That is certainly right. We need to touch on that as well. We will have an occasion to come back to that in more detail in the

following sessions, but I do think that it is something that we necessarily need to keep in mind for this session as well.

Karen, could I call on you, since I know that you were dealing with these relations?

**KAREN BRUTENTS:** Beginning is not a gratifying task, but I will try.

I would like to begin by fulfilling a request from Georgy Markovich Kornienko. He wanted to express his gratitude for the invitation you sent him, and his regret that he could not be present here, for reasons you all know. He would have liked very much to participate in these deliberations about issues in which he was involved to some extent. In his opinion, it would be very important to concentrate our attention on the causes which brought about the Afghan events—the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. It would be important for both sides to focus on this question of causes, and only secondarily on the details of the process—on the so-called decision-making. For my part, I also would like to begin by thanking the conference organizers their hospitality. They made it possible for me to bring almost my entire family here.

I think it is well-known that the Soviet Union had nothing to do with the April coup. I would like to call your attention to the fact that in its own documents—in cables from Kabul—the American Embassy also called the April events a "revolution." The Soviet Union had nothing to do with it.

I would like to share an additional personal observation on this point. I accompanied Ponomarev on his trips to Kabul twice. During the first trip—I think it was in September of 1978, during one of the meetings with Taraki—when we were about to leave, he took me aside and



said, "Tell Ulyanovsky that he always used to tell me that we were a backward country that was not ready for a revolution yet; but, you see, now I am sitting in the Presidential Palace and receiving you here." This was the essence of his statement. He was in a slightly arrogant mood, overestimating the situation; but he made this comment to me on the side. Ulyanovsky was a deputy chair of the International Department, and was in charge of Afghanistan.

Relations between Soviet and Afghan leaders, as far as I could judge—and, of course, I was not very closely involved in that—were friendly; even, I would say, fully trusting. However, there was some distinction right from the beginning between Taraki and Amin. Here in the chronology I see mention of the trip the Simonenko group made to Kabul. That particular group received different treatment from Taraki and Amin. The group came on the invitation of the Afghan leaders to help them organize the state and party apparatus—more on the technical than on the political side. And while Taraki was saying that it was necessary to open all the doors for them, and to give them full access to all the materials, Amin held a somewhat different view, which was very characteristic of him in general. His view was that there are some state affairs that are confidential—secret—and that should not be known by anybody other than the leadership. The very first contact clearly demonstrated the difference between the two. But still, let me reiterate, there was trust, and our leadership treated the two equally for some time.

However, there clearly emerged a difference in views on the situation in Afghanistan between our leaders and the Afghan leadership. Even though neither our top leaders nor our middle-level officials knew the Afghan situation and its background very well, they were still

capable of making better, more reasonable recommendations and plans than the Afghan leaders were themselves. Amin, as far as I could judge, was a very harsh person. I had a chance to talk to him on two occasions. He was a rough man, and his positive qualities—of a person with a very strong will, and a very good organizer—developed into their negative extremes. My impression of him was that he believed that everything should be resolved with force—otherwise one would not be able to achieve anything in Afghanistan. I remember that he told me a proverb: "You do not know Afghans; an Afghan thinks one thing, says another thing, and does a completely different thing." Our leadership believed that one could not achieve any result with such a forceful and rough attitude. So, this difference became clear very quickly. But for some time this difference did not lead to a worsening of the atmosphere of the relationship; it did not break the trust that existed between the two leaderships. Of course, this trust was not absolute, but the maximum kind of trust that is possible between politicians, or between leaders of states—no more than that. Thank you.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Karen. Before I let you have the next question, Marshall, let me welcome Gary Sick, who just came in. We are incredibly glad that you could join us, Gary. We know that you did so on a very short notice, and had a very strenuous journey. He literally just stepped off the flight from New York. We are very, very glad that you could join us this morning. Thank you very much. Marshall?

**MARSHALL SHULMAN:** I found Karen's remarks very interesting. There are a number of questions that I would like to ask. First of all, the personality of Amin comes through very clearly; but the personality of

Taraki does not. One of the things that puzzled me, as I read the documents, was whether you perceived, in those conversations that you described, the depth and intensity of his ideological commitment, and whether it worried you at the time? Secondly, I am interested in whether at the time—at the time of the April military coup, or the revolution—whether your intelligence prepared you for the possibility of the overthrow of Daud—whether you understood that it was simply going to be a funeral, or whether it was going to be a military overthrow to be followed by a political revolution? Did you understand what was happening at the time? Following from that is the question of what the Soviet preferences were. Had you understood that Daud was going to be overthrown, would you have regarded that as being in the Soviet interest, or would you have preferred that Daud remain in power? I take it that, in retrospect, there is no doubt that from the Soviet point of view, you would have been better off if Daud had continued rather than have the team of Amin and Taraki take over with all the difficulties that involved. But at the time, what was your judgment?

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Marshall. Who on the Russian side would like to respond to this? Karen?

**BRUTENTS:** Your questions are very interesting. I can tell you my own opinion, and the opinion that existed in the International Department. To some extent, I can provide some indirect information on some of our leaders.

First, there may have been some intelligence reports about an imminent downfall of Daud, and about a possibility of certain radical changes in the country, like those that happened; but I had never seen

any of those. However, there were reports about dissatisfaction with the Daud regime in different strata of the population: dissatisfaction not only from the left, but also from the nationalist circles. By the way, I disagree when they call the Afghan regime Communist. I would call it a strange mixture of nationalism with some elements of Marxism, of Communist ideology. I did not say that you called it Communist, just that I disagree when the regime is called Communist in general. And even that Communist ideology was used as a means to solve some national problems, i.e., to develop some social techniques in order to achieve modernization, and to solve other national tasks as they were understood. In short, according to the information that we had been receiving, there was widespread dissatisfaction even among the officers who were trained in the United States. They also wanted some modernization; they saw a different life in the United States, and so on. There was a widespread dissatisfaction with Daud. He did not carry out the reforms that he had promised to undertake. You know all that. There was an element that one may conditionally call progressive: the drive for centralization—not only the strengthening of his personal power, but also scaling down the power of the tribes. I saw such reports, but nothing more than that.

Secondly, on Taraki: I had a very definite impression of him. I thought that he did not fit the role that he was going to play. In what sense do I mean this? I think that he was a kind of "soft" person. He had some teacher-like qualities; maybe minister-like. He was a poet. That is well-known. I thought that his ideological convictions were more sincere than those of Amin. One more thing struck me about him: he was in some sort of self-aggrandizing trance. I had this strong feeling that the man was just drowning in ecstasy from the successes already

achieved. We saw him on his 64th birthday. He was greeted with a cake 64-floors high. All the newspapers were filled with reports about him, and so on. Of course, there was an Eastern taste to that, but nevertheless, it was striking. This is the answer to your second question.

To answer your third question, I would like to call your attention to the fact that the Soviet leadership did not immediately extend recognition to the new leadership. There were certain concerns, and there was a certain lack of information in general. I do not know about the top, but there were conversations at our level that, if not Daud, then something like Daud would have been better than what emerged soon after the April revolution. This is a short answer to your questions. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you, Karen. Valentin?

VALENTIN VARENNIKOV: I would like to follow up on some of the questions that Karen has raised. I also agree with Marshall Shulman that the Soviet Union was satisfied with Daud. We had very good relations with the country when Daud was the leader. And we did not want anything else. I agree with Marshall completely on that.

Now let me say a word about "the putsch." I would like to stress that recently we have a tendency to call anything that happens a putsch. For example, they called it the August putsch of 1991 in the Soviet Union. It was nothing like a putsch at all. The same should be said about the April putsch. It was not a putsch, it was a genuine people's revolution—which, by the way, the Americans knew, as Karen has told us. Of course it was a people's democratic movement. I am very far from

thinking that there was any Marxism involved at all, as somebody said here. It was a people's democratic movement. And that is exactly why the Soviet Union, naturally, supported this movement. We supported this movement also because, for us, Afghanistan is not five or ten thousand kilometers away; it is right next to us. Moreover, it is an Islamic country. Our Islamic republics have borders with a foreign Islamic state. It was not like we did not care about it. Of course we had to support it by all means. As far as our involvement is concerned, I have to say that that was a good involvement—not only in the interest of Afghanistan as such, and not only in the Soviet interest, but also in the interest of the entire world. We were not going to conquer, to occupy, or to pump something out of that country; not at all. We were going to help. And that was our motivation—to help.

At the same time, I have to tell you that the events of April 1978 were indeed unexpected for us. There are facts that tell you about it. In March 1978 a session was held with the Foreign Ministry, the KGB, the Defense Ministry, and some other agencies to discuss the situation and to report the findings to the government. And the report said that the situation in Afghanistan was acute, but that there were no signs of a coming explosion. Nothing. We did not expect anything like what had happened. And after that session in March, another session was planned for April to analyze the situation in Afghanistan and to come up with substantive conclusions about what was happening there and how we should expect the situation to develop. And then suddenly the revolution came.

In view of what I have just said, I would like to stress the fact that Soviet involvement in the developments in that country was only logical. If you put anybody else in the Soviet place at the time—if any other country had to play the role of the Soviet Union—at the time,

I am sure that their actions would have been the same. There would have been the same involvement, the same invasion. There would have been the same support for the regime, especially taking into account the fact that we had treaties with that country—four treaties: 1921, 1931, 1973, and 1978—plus the insistent requests of the leadership of the country. Therefore, our involvement was a good thing in terms of providing assistance to the people and to the state. This is all I wanted to add.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Valentin. I have one question for your side just to follow up on what you have been saying. It is a very difficult question for you or for anyone from the Russian side to answer, but I still think we need to get it on the table as early as possible. In this early part of the Soviet involvement with Afghanistan after the Saur revolution—after April 1978—what, in your opinion, was the prime factor behind that involvement: ideology, which we heard something about earlier on, or strategy? I know it is very hard to separate the two, but just in order to get the discussion about motivations going, I wanted to ask that question of the Russian side. Anatoly?

**DOBRYNIN:** Well, this is a very difficult question, but it is the central issue. Of course, I cannot give you the definitive answer, which would cover all of our involvement, from the beginning to the end. The answer would have to be very nuanced, because much hinges upon the state of mind of the Soviet leadership. I could judge this a little bit from behind the scenes; but still it is a complex question.

What the General said is correct. We had treaties, so we had to help. But mainly, I think, ideology was the key factor. We did not

specifically mention it as the number one motivation; we did not proclaim it. But subconsciously, still the driving factor was ideological. Recall what Karen said. Who handled this situation at our end? It was first of all the International Department of the Central Committee of the Party. Who were the main advisers sent from Moscow half a year later? They were mostly Party advisers and organizers. We sent military and security people, but to a lesser extent, and mostly at a later stage. In the beginning it was mostly the Party who gave them advice on how to handle the situation—not exactly on how to organize a party, but on how to reduce the disagreements among them and to promote unity. So without proclaiming that ideology was the priority, we acted in a way that was consistent with that interpretation.

Mr. Brezhnev came close to proclaiming this, by the way. He did say that our goal was to "help the liberation movement," and he said that our policy toward Afghanistan had "nothing to do with détente." There was a clash between our view and the American view on this. You said that our activities in Afghanistan contradicted détente, and Brezhnev insisted that they did not. As a matter of fact, he made this shortly after the *coup d'état*. He made a special statement again defending our thesis that liberation movements could always rely on the Soviet Union to support them, and that this had nothing to do with détente or our relations with the West. Three or four months later President Carter made a statement insisting that we had to choose between cooperation and confrontation. Zbig was saying exactly the same thing after the April coup. He said, "Aha! This is the beginning of the grand design of the Soviet Union to penetrate in the territory of the oil-rich countries." He immediately began looking for some sort of grand design. As far as I could understand, there was no design in



Russia. None at all. There was a simple contradiction between our two points of view. We considered it a local issue in which the United States had no concern; you saw it in geostrategic terms. This was my overwhelming impression.

When the intervention happened, what was the reaction from your side? Your president spoke with the Pakistanis, and then Zbig reported to the National Security Council that there was a threat to Iran and Pakistan from the Soviet Union. Do you remember this? He talked about the threat of an axis. What axis did he have in mind? On one side was the United States, Saudi Arabia, China, Pakistan, and, I guess, Iran, too. On the other side was a Soviet-Afghan-Indian axis. Nothing of the kind ever came to our minds! My colleagues here from the Russian military, intelligence, and diplomatic services can attest to this. Never, in any papers or any discussions, did we have any idea of such an axis. I don't want to blame anyone, I simply want to mention our differing understandings of events. From the beginning—from the coup until the intervention—our two governments had a completely different perspective on events. We saw things in a completely different way. In the beginning, our chief idea was to help the revolution, and the ideological motivation prevailed. Of course, we had strategic considerations in mind to some extent, because all of this took place on our southern border.

We must see this against the background of Soviet-American relations. They were bad. There was a lull when we were preparing for the summit meeting; but then, after the summit came the Cuban brigade, and so forth—I do not want to enumerate the conflicts, but relations were very bad. In the Soviet Union, we felt that the situation inside Afghanistan was very difficult. It was unstable. We became frustrated

with the struggle between Taraki and Amin, and we tried to do our best to bring them together. Nothing that we did helped. We began to think more and more about what we could do to stabilize the situation. We were not prepared to be involved militarily, but gradually we began to think about whether that might be necessary. This is the most important point I would like to make. When we discuss this later, I would like to make sure that it very clear. Yes, we would help with the Afghan military; yes, we would help with sanitation; yes, we would give economic assistance; yes, we would provide armaments; but, no, we would not send troops. We did not begin to think seriously about that until much later. It was not our intention early on. We made a very clear and deliberate choice at that time: we did not want to repeat our experience in Czechoslovakia, or the American experience in Vietnam. We did not speak in terms of those events specifically, but nevertheless that was the idea. From the spring until December we sent more and more military assistance, but still we were not prepared to intervene militarily. Only in December did we entertain that option. But I think we will have time to discuss this in detail later.

**WESTAD:** We will come back to that last point, Anatoly, certainly. That was very useful. Among the many points that you made—and it is one that you make in your newly-published book—the one that stood out in my mind is how well Soviet policy in Afghanistan fit into the concept that some Americans had—Dr. Brzezinski in particular—of Soviet strategic aims. When the Saur revolution came along in early 1978, it fit into a preconceived pattern of Soviet intentions in the region that shaped American thinking. Bill?

BILL ODOM: I want to take issue with what you've just said. I think Anatoly's intervention has demonstrated the depth of the internalization of ideology on the Soviet side. You say your strategy was peaceful coexistence, and that formula has taken on a very specific content. It has changed over the years; but it had been defined in the third Party Program as a specific form of the international class struggle. Lenin long ago talked about dividing the Third World and the West, undermining capitalism's foundations in the Third World. Now, I do not know whether the theory describes the reality in an accurate way; but the formulas you use when you talk to us about this region of the world immediately inspire the inference that you are trying to swindle us as bourgeois people who cannot understand Marxism-Leninism, and that you are trying to treat us like you like you treated some bourgeois elements in Eastern Europe during World War Two. That is one point I want to make, and I think we need to get it on the table.

When Brzezinski is talking about a strategy, you may not call it a strategy, but if you read your own documents, it is clear that you had a grand strategy. Now, that you were not implementing it in a very specific and candid way here is another issue. That speaks to your competence, not to the presence of a strategy.

Now, on to the next point I would like to make. Put yourself on the Arabian Peninsula, or in Teheran, or in the White House, considering the U.S. interests in that region, as they had been since World War Two. Notice that in the fall and the spring of 1977 and 1978 a "national liberation movement" having nothing to do with Soviet intentions in the Third World occurred in the Horn of Africa. Later in the summer of 1978, strangely, a Soviet-backed—or Soviet-supported—Communist party took over in South Yemen. Already at the same time Taraki has taken

over in Afghanistan. Now, would you see these as completely unconnected? Were those events totally unconnected in your own mind? In other words, did you look at Afghanistan as if what went on there would not be seen in Washington, in Riyadh, and in Teheran as related to the Horn and to Yemen?

I would like to add a question: elaborate for us exactly what "technical assistance" means, particularly when it comes from the International Department and the Party. It strikes me that it means assistance at organizing state and party institutions which ensure stability and control for this leadership. That is a very important thing for us, because we assess that as a very aggressive Soviet assertion of control.

Now, when we looked at this set of events from the perspective of Riyadh and Teheran, we were very concerned. It looked as if there was either an opportunistic or a well-calculated—I do not think it makes a difference which one—Soviet strategic offensive into this region. It looked as though the Soviet Union was taking advantage of opportunities. As General Varennikov knows, in combat one takes advantage of opportunities. The nicely laid-out battle plan goes away when the first shot has been fired, and from that point forward one must take advantage of opportunities. Opportunities were emerging, and the Soviet operatives were taking advantage of them. And as you took advantage of them, as Karen Brutents said, you made some very poor tactical decisions in assessing ideologically the stage of historical development in Afghanistan, in Ethiopia, and in South Yemen. But that is different than saying, "Oh, we were just innocents, we had very naïve, very limited interest down there; there was nothing in the overall grand scheme of things that was offensive about this. It is patently absurd

for the West to think that there was any connection between the two." I just think that if we are going to have a candid conversation, it is very difficult to take that kind of answer seriously. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you, Bill; that was very useful. Valentin is next on my list. But before I turn to Valentin, there is one thing I want to get into the discussion at this point as a follow-up to what Bill was saying. Valentin may be one of the right people to answer.

One of the dramatic turns in the Afghan-Soviet relationship seemed to happen around the Herat events in the spring of 1979. We have a great deal of material in the briefing book relating to the discussions among the top Soviet leadership at that time on what to do. The conclusion is: we are not going to get involved militarily with our own forces. Valentin, in answering some of the issues that Bill took up, could you also refer a little bit to those discussions, and to the outcome of those discussions? I think it would help us in further debate.

VARENNIKOV: I agree with Bill that, of course, there are strategic and ideological links. They undoubtedly exist. Anatoly did not say otherwise.

I would like to stress that we can coexist peacefully. Lenin, as we have mentioned here, said that there should be peaceful coexistence of the two socio-political systems. This we do not reject even now. And World War Two confirmed for us that such coexistence was possible. More than that, it had shown that states with different socio-political systems could fight together against a common enemy. What Lenin had said long ago was confirmed by history.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, I would like to emphasize that we should look at the events of that time with the eyes of that time, not of today's. The Cold War was present, and there was suspiciousness on both sides. Confrontations emerged from various causes, and sometimes without any cause at all. In that whole context, the strategic situation that emerged in the region on the southern Soviet borders demanded immediate, decisive measures from the Soviet leaders. What exactly do I mean? Exactly this: first, Iran. During the Pahlevi leadership, the U.S. presence was dominant in Iran, no question about it. Second, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. The American Navy was constantly and solely present there. Third, if we take Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan, of course, it was following recipes given by the Americans. Let us admit that; it is the truth. If that is true, it is apparent that the Soviet Union had to take care that the threat from the South—remember, the Cold War was still raging—did not move closer to the border. It was important to make sure that Afghan territory did not become a bridgehead against the Soviet Union. Does that make sense? Yes, it does, of course. That is exactly why the Soviet Union had to support the regime—quite apart from the fact that it was a popular democratic revolution, and quite apart from the ideological reasons. They were all interconnected with the strategic views. And the strategic views on that region were just as I have described earlier.

Later today we will trace how those views evolved month by month—through August, September, October, November, and December—and even week by week. We will talk about that. But I just wanted to mention the following. Here I have in front of me the documents that were published after the revolution in Iran—after the documents were seized

from the American Embassy in Teheran. You see, there are many very interesting moments here. If you would like, I can even read these; everything they say is very interesting. I would like to draw your attention to the following. For example, Church, a U.S. Senator, who went to Pakistan on an official visit in 1984, and then unofficially to Afghanistan, made a report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. On page 14 of his report he wrote, "In January 1980 the United States confirmed the existence of arms supplies to the Afghan opposition in Pakistan as provided for in the CIA program of covert arms supplies." What kind of supplies did you send? Arms, of course. Anatoly did not say explicitly, but I will, that of course we supplied arms also, along with everything else. We sent arms to one side, and here we see that you sent arms to the other.

I would like to draw your attention to one more interesting thing. Here, for example, Stork, in his article "American Presence in Afghanistan"—which he wrote in 1980—said that, already in 1973, after the Daud anti-monarchy coup, the CIA created a special base for training potential Afghan guerrillas in the territory of Pakistan. Khekmattiar was in charge of the camp. Therefore when I hear that we overestimated the leaders of that so-called Communist movement, I want to tell you, dear gentlemen, that I know this question very well; I lived and worked in the region for several years. Take Vilgebin Khekmattiar, for example. In the beginning he was a member of the PDPA, fighting against the king, Zahir Shah. Zahir Shah was overthrown. Then Daud emerged. Daud was overthrown, and Taraki emerged. Taraki disappeared, and Amin emerged. Amin disappeared, and Najibullah came to power. Najibullah left the post, and a new government came to power—Rabani and others. We must take all these personalities into account. But also, as I have said, we

must take into account the link between strategic and ideological factors. That is all.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Valentin. Anatoly, before you take over, could I redirect part of my first question to you—my question about the Herat events and the changes that took place? Were you involved in this at all in Washington?

**DOBRYNIN:** In what?

**WESTAD:** In the discussions about Soviet-Afghan relations in the spring of 1979, when discussion began about introducing Soviet troops.

**DOBRYNIN:** I will answer your question. But let me say first that I was a little bit surprised by Bill's statement. We are not here to repeat dogmas of the Cold War, from your side and ours. I know them quite well; you know them, I am sure. But I am trying to tell you how we really thought. There was no discussion in the Kremlin about any grand design. None. There was no such discussion in the press—well, the press did not matter—nor in the Politburo, the Foreign Ministry, or the Central Committee. I do not know about the military, but I am sure they did not discuss it either. There was no such discussion anywhere. I spoke privately with Brezhnev, Gromyko, and Andropov, and there was never a single word about it. On the contrary, even in one of the meetings of the Politburo, Brezhnev asked me, "Anatoly, where is the 'Arc of Crisis?' I read somewhere about this in something from TASS. Brzezinski was talking about it. What is this all about?" At the very beginning, during the coup, not a single person in our government was



thinking about any grand design. In fact, we had no plan of any kind until the very end. But we will deal with that later.

In March 1979, when there was the decisive discussion, Taraki and Amin asked us to send troops. What happened in that discussion? Everyone agreed that it was important not to lose Afghanistan, but not a single person mentioned introducing troops. No one spoke of any grand design to capture the Middle East. Why not? One of the reasons was no one wanted to spoil relations with the United States. But there were many other things. Nobody was thinking in terms of Lenin's theory, or Carter's theory, or Brzezinski's theory; there was unanimous agreement that we should not send troops. Please accept this as a fact.

**WESTAD:** Ilya Gaiduk, please.

**ILYA GAIDUK:** Thank you. I have a question for Karen Nersesovich. He said that Moscow had not immediately extend recognition to the new regime after the April revolution, and that there was hesitation—a lack of information. On the American side, we constantly hear this idea of a grand design, of a master plan to increase Soviet influence in the world. Maybe my question somewhat violates the chronological scheme of our discussion, but I am interested in knowing what were the origins of the inter-party relationship between the PDPA and Moscow? How did Moscow see PDPA's role before it came to power? Was there any discussion about the relationship in case the PDPA or one of its factions came to power?

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Ilya. Karen is already on my list a little further down, so we will get to that point in a moment. But first Mark.

**MARK GARRISON:** First, I would like to follow up with an additional question to Valentin regarding the military's perception of the strategic significance of Afghanistan in 1979. From our Embassy in Moscow in the spring of 1979, we did an analysis stimulated by a cable from Kabul that had made comparisons between Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan. Malcolm Toon and I both had been in Czechoslovakia at that critical time in the late 1960s. We responded to that question by saying that, in our view, there was no comparison between the strategic significance of Czechoslovakia for the Soviet Union and the strategic significance of Afghanistan. We predicted that there would be no Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan because Afghanistan did not have sufficient strategic significance for Moscow. I seem to hear Valentin saying that we were wrong—that Afghanistan was extremely important from the military-strategic point of view. And I wonder if, already in the middle of 1979, the military had a different point of view from the political leadership regarding Afghanistan. Did the military feel that every necessary measure should be taken to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a springboard against the Southern flank of the Soviet Union?

**VARENNIKOV:** Let me respond to Mark and to everybody else.

I agree with what had been said here about ideological and strategic goals—they are interrelated. That is why we took all necessary measures in terms of our ideological goals, including providing material and technical assistance to Afghanistan: in order that the *strategic* goals would be achieved, so that we would not have to face the question of introducing troops into Afghanistan. After we had resolved the ideological questions, we would have secured ourselves from

everything else that I have already mentioned.

As far as I understood your question, Mark, you understood my previous intervention as saying that in March of 1979 we were already considering introducing troops in order to prevent the establishment of a possible springboard against us in Afghanistan. No. Not at all. We thought that by helping Afghanistan—by removing the negative elements emerging in the country, in every sense—including in the leadership of that country—we were ensuring our strategic position in the South *without* introducing troops into Afghanistan. This is how it was.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Valentin. Alexander Chubarian?

ALEXANDER CHUBARIAN: I would like to mention just a couple of things in regard to the question posed by Arne. He said the key question was whether ideology or strategy prevailed. In our first session we are dealing with the problems of Soviet foreign policy. I agree with my colleagues; in our theoretical arsenal, we called it a synthesis of ideology and security. George Kennan was the first to call it "dualism." I think he was closer to the truth. But, Arne, those two things were always present. They were interacting and eroding each other. It was a constant synthesis and a constant contradiction—where one or the other would assume the prevalent position from time to time.

Secondly, I wanted to mention that at our last conference in Lysebu we discussed events in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. But we should not forget that it was a global confrontation of two superpowers. And there was a certain logic of confrontation. The Soviet Union felt that logic of superpower confrontation; it already felt itself a superpower. That is why in many areas—in many regions where such

developments emerged—we often saw them through the prism of superpower interests. We were always sensitive to the question of whether they could harm our position as a superpower.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Alexander. Karen Brutents?

**BRUTENTS:** Ilya apologized that he was violating the timetable, but I think that we already have chaos instead of a timetable here. Therefore, I feel that I can also contribute to the chaos.

We have touched upon many questions, including the causes of the intervention, and how to explain it. I would like to say that of course we had a "grand design." Yes, we had one. But it was a very different one from the one you described. You cite Lenin, naturally, and the theory of world revolution. In this sense we had a "grand design." But this was an absolute abstraction. There was no "grand design" in terms of real strategy. You also have a "grand design": to establish democracy everywhere, preferably on the American model. But this is not the "grand design" we are talking about. When we are speaking about a "grand design"—when we are trying to refute the allegation, as Anatoly did—we have a different thing in mind. I do not want to invoke the names of people who are not here, but who persistently argued that there was not just a Soviet plan, but a historical Russian plan, which was being realized here. Historical evidence had been cited—incorrectly, by the way, and inexcusably, from a historian's point of view—that, allegedly, Molotov and Hitler were negotiating about that, and that Molotov asked him for certain things. There is even such an allegation in one of the documents—that there was a Soviet plan to march to Saudi Arabia and to strangle the United States by cutting off its oil

supplies. There was nothing like that, of course. Why was such a theory constructed? Because one needed to influence policy. And eventually, as your authors have pointed out, the events in Afghanistan, as well as some of our earlier actions, had been used in order to turn President Carter in that direction. And after the December events, unfortunately, President Carter adopted that theory. In his meetings with the press he began speaking about the Soviet "grand design," about the Soviet plans, etc. This is my response to your statement.

However, in certain things I am willing to admit that you are partially right—in regards to how you perceived our actions, and how you could have perceived our actions. But this is a different question. And I have no doubt that the absence of trust between the two sides—the absence of good communications, and the lack of understanding of the other side's motivation—also played a role in the sad developments that took place. I would like to reiterate: such a perception is understandable.

By the way, I would like to put my personal position clearly on record. I believe that our decision to intervene in Afghanistan was a big mistake. The way it was arrived at was very poor. But the question remains, what moved the people who initiated that process? What were their considerations like? We will probably never be able to answer this question fully. The people who made the decision have passed away and left us. They took part of the mystery with them to the grave.

**CHUBARIAN:** Not all of them passed away. Ponomarev is still alive.

**BRUTENTS:** Practically all. Boris Nikolaevich played only a secondary role in this. It was not the main role, surely.

One answer to this question is evident for me: for them, the most important consideration was the interests of the country—the security interests as they understood them. In connection with this, I have a question to ask of our American colleagues: what kind of response did they expect from the Soviet Union? They were augmenting their military might in the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. We were receiving information about planned military intervention in Iran. Pakistan was receiving a flood of weapons for the Afghan Mujahadeen. What was that? Was that your "grand design"? Was that a tactical "grand design"? What kind of reaction from the Soviet side did you expect? What were you thinking about?

I have a second question. This one is for my colleagues here. Maybe somebody can answer this question; I cannot. Here we have documents from the Politburo meetings of March 17, 18, and maybe March 19—Brezhnev met with Taraki on March 20, so it should have been before that. As far as I know, Taraki called Kosygin on the 16th. Kosygin implicitly gave him a negative answer even before the consultations began. He said that it was a very complicated thing; that they would have to think about it; that it would be better if they handled the military situation themselves, although we would provide technical assistance, and so on and so forth. On March 17, at the Politburo meeting, they talked about introducing our troops, and there were practically no objections. But on March 18 it was an entirely different atmosphere. Kirilenko said the following—you can check this, we have the record: "We leave the decisions of March 17 in force, only without introducing the troops." I do not know what had happened during those 24 hours. Other individuals whom I asked about it did not know either, even those who were very close to the decision making—as close as

anyone present here; maybe even closer. This is my question.

I have taken too long. I am finishing; I am sorry, Mr. Chairman.

The last point I wanted to mention is about ideology. I am returning to the issues we have already discussed.

WESTAD: I am sorry, Karen. Could you possibly hold that over to the next session?

BRUTENTS: I have only two phrases. I have told you before, and I am absolutely convinced, that by that time—and for a long time before that—ideological considerations did not play any major role whatsoever in our policy. State interests, as they were then understood, were the main consideration. The ideological coloring remained. Some people were influenced by it; but the prevalent consideration was always state interests. If you look at the practical side of things—if you look at how we reacted to various movements—you will see this. For some reason, we reacted differently to the same kinds of movements in different countries. In some cases we provided active assistance; in other cases we reacted passively; in some cases we even reacted negatively. And in Afghanistan, of course, security considerations played the major role from the very beginning. One could more appropriately call them strategic considerations, as Valentin did in his intervention. These concerned the neighboring countries, and so on. This is all I wanted to say.

This was the case not only with us; it is interesting to look at the documents that we have here concerning Iran. You were discussing the situation in Iran in 1978, before the revolution. Look at your discussion points—not a single one was about democracy. You were

talking about the Shah, SAVAK, and the like. Suddenly, in September 1979, you started talking about human rights in Iran in the Brown memorandum. Do you understand this? I do not need to explain this to you. I think you understand everything.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Karen. You raised many good questions. I am very glad you got to them during this discussion.

We have to take a break before the next session. I have several people on my list. I have not forgotten any of you. But before we break, I want to pose one brief question for the Russian side that will carry over to the next session and that is connected to what Karen just said. If any of you, in some very brief sentences could answer this, I would appreciate it: what was the main reason why the Soviet leadership during and after the Herat crisis decided *not* to send Soviet forces into Afghanistan at that stage? If any of you could give us just a very brief comment on that, we would let this session rest, and then we can pass on to the next session after the break. General Lyakhovsky?

**ALEXANDER LYAKHOVSKY:** I wanted to speak about something else. However, as far as Herat is concerned, when the so-called riot began there in March—when a part of the Herat division went over to the opposition—the Afghan leadership panicked. They appealed to the Soviet leadership in panicky tones. As has been said here, there was even a decision to send in troops—not a firm decision, but I suppose an expression of opinion that it would be a good idea to introduce troops. More than that, the Defense Minister, Marshall Ustinov, gave an order to mobilize two divisions in the Turkestan military district bordering with Afghanistan. They were mobilized, right on the border. They were ready to be sent



in. They could have been introduced if there was a decision by the political leadership to send them in. But later, after some more thinking and deliberation—after weighing the opportunities and the possible consequences of the introduction of troops into Afghanistan; after the analysis; after finding out exactly what happened in Herat—they decided not to send the troops. And as far as Herat was concerned, it turned out that it was not as bad as the initial information from Taraki and Amin led us to believe. This was also confirmed by the later developments, when the riot was suppressed and the people's government was resurrected. Two divisions that were mobilized on the border with Afghanistan undertook military exercises, and the reservists were sent home. In other words, at that time our politicians showed a great deal of caution. They listened to the experts and decided not to introduce troops.

Later, when Amin murdered Taraki—and we have already discussed our relationship with both—well, the fact is that we did not trust Amin very much. There was even some speculation that he was a CIA agent, by the way; I would like to ask Admiral Turner about this.

**WESTAD:** Whether Taraki was a CIA agent?

**LYAKHOVSKY:** No, whether Amin was a CIA agent. What was the basis for our suspicions?

**WESTAD:** I am sorry, Alexander. I think we will be able to return to this later on. We are running very much overtime now. Would it be possible for you to hold off on that, and then I will come back to that in the next session? Thank you very much.

We have to break now for fifteen minutes, and I will come back to all of you who wanted to speak in the beginning of the next session. Thank you all very much.

SESSION 2

THE UNITED STATES, IRAN, AND AFGHANISTAN

WESTAD: Okay, back to business. We are now going to explore the regional events, strategies, and perceptions in the period leading up to the Soviet intervention. We are going to deal in part with events in Iran, but also with the overall strategic picture. I am going to hold those of you who have interventions going in that direction until we get to these specific issues.

Before we get started on that, I want very briefly to come back to Valentin and to Alexander Chubarian on the issue of Soviet decision-making around events in Herat in the spring of 1979. This is when the Soviet leadership decided *not* to intervene in Afghanistan in a situation that was very similar in many respects to the situation in which the Soviet leadership *did* decide to intervene. So I will turn to Valentin very briefly on this first, and then to Alexander Chubarian. We will close this discussion there and then pass on to the issues that we have listed on the agenda for this session. Valentin, please?

VARENNIKOV: Thank you. I would like to split this question into two parts. Firstly, I would like to respond to what you have just said; and then, secondly, I would like to give a chronology of all the events of 1979, beginning in March, and those that happened later—the process of working out the decision to introduce troops. I would like to reserve this part for a later intervention.

WESTAD: Absolutely; we will get to that later part in the third

session—the actual decision to send in the troops. But if you now could concentrate on the issues of the spring of 1979, I would be grateful.

**VARENNIKOV:** Certainly, I understand.

Now, about Herat. I wanted to say that, in the spring, Taraki, in the conversations he held with our leadership, tried to pressure them, saying that Iran and Pakistan were sending military personnel into Afghanistan dressed in civilian clothes—this is literally what he was saying—and that they were helping the opposition in all respects, yet the Soviet Union could not provide help to the government. In other words, he tried to provoke the Soviet leadership. Of course, taking the objective situation into account, I cannot say for sure how many Iranians had actually been sent to Herat, and how they helped organize the uprising; that is another issue. But it is a fact that there was an uprising, that a major part of the troops went over to the opposition, and that the situation was very grave. The temptation for us was very strong: Kushka and Herat are right next to each other—about 70 kilometers, just about two hours' distance for motorized units. It could all have been resolved quickly. However, we did not go in. We decided to do what Alexander has just described. Some divisions were mobilized on the border. In this way we tried to make an impact on the hotheads who organized those calamities. I do not know for sure whether that made a difference, or whether Kosygin's attempt to persuade the Afghan leadership to mobilize their own forces to suppress the uprising played the major role. Maybe both did; I do not know. But, in any case, as you know, the uprising was suppressed, and order was restored.

I would like to read to you one curious telegram, which is very

characteristic, and can shed some light on the issues that we are discussing. This is a telegram from Secretary Vance dated September 1979. He is sending his recommendations to the American Embassy in Islamabad. This is what he says: "We share the concerns of the Embassy in Kabul about the increased activity of U.S. officials visiting refugee camps in Pakistan. We think that you should be more careful." Correct, one should be more careful. But the fact that those refugees were turned into fighters was no secret for us, not even in March when the uprising happened—not only in Pakistan, but in Iran also. Still, in the meetings in March 1979—on March 17, 18, and 19—the final and firm decision was made not to introduce troops into Afghanistan.

By the way, Kosygin met with Taraki on March 18. Kosygin was very firm and direct with him. The decision was made that the stabilization of the country should be the business of the Afghans themselves. This was our decision.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Valentin. This is very useful information; it presents the thinking at least from the military side at that time. Alexander Chubarian?

**CHUBARIAN:** I just wanted to say that, several months ago, at one of the meetings of the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences at which Boris Nikolaevich Ponomarev was present devoted to the situation in the archives, the participants raised the issue of the Afghan events. When we were talking about the developments of the spring 1979, Ponomarev very definitely stated that the political leadership was against any involvement from the very beginning. It was against sending in or using any troops whatsoever. As far as that first Politburo meeting is

concerned, where it was decided to mobilize some of our divisions, he said that it was the initiative of our military who wanted to make some sort of military demonstration, as Valentin has just said. In the political leadership, according to Ponomarev, the position was not to interfere militarily from the very beginning.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Alexander.

We then go on to discuss some of the wider regional implications of the issues that have been put on the table already. I want to underline for this session some core questions as we see them. First of all, how did the events in Iran influence the U.S. perceptions of Soviet actions in Afghanistan? How did these play together in the minds of American policymakers? Second, what were the Soviet views of the developments in Iran, and of the development of the U.S.-Iranian relationship? Third, in the opinion of those of you who are present here now, what were the strategic objectives of the United States in the region at large, as events were unfolding in Iran and in Afghanistan? Now I am talking about the period from the beginning of 1979 in particular and up to mid-fall of that year. And then, lastly—and this has been put on the table several times already—I think we need to address the question of how U.S. links with the Afghan rebels developed up to the Soviet intervention. It has already been mentioned by Valentin and by others as an important element in Soviet decision-making.

I will start on the American side. Gary?

**GARY SICK:** I listened to the first session with great interest. It seems to me there is a difference here between facts and perceptions,

and this seems to be where the problem ultimately lies. Of course, perception is reality, as far as policy makers are concerned, so what you believe, in fact, drives what you do regardless of what the facts are, it seems to me. I would simply like to look very briefly at the perceptions of these events in Washington.

I might begin by saying that the disagreements that I hear between the American and the Russian side were actually played out on the U.S. side as well. This was a debate that was not only between Russians and Americans; there were different perceptions inside the U.S. government. Some people had very, very strongly held views that were actually closer to what Ambassador Dobrynin articulated, others held equally strong views that were very close to what Bill Odom identified. This was a debate that was constantly playing itself out.

To go to your last question first: in terms of U.S. objectives, there was a very strong perception of a strategy in collapse. Because of Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and certainly the events in Iran, there was in the United States a perception that, regardless of whether there was a Soviet "grand design" or not, our strategic position was collapsing. Starting about the time of the Iranian revolution, I would say, the U.S. objective was to apply a tourniquet to stop the flow of blood—that really was the objective. And in some respects, I think, it had less to do with any Soviet design, or the lack of a design, than it did with simply perceiving that U.S. interests in the region were being severely harmed and something had to be done. There was a palpable sense of panic in Washington during that period of time: something had to be done to stop this.

With regard to the events in Iran and Afghanistan, let me be very brief. I am not sure that I know everything that I should know about

this; but my impression, as sort of a desk officer watching these events from my position in the White House, was that the Shah was much more interested in Afghanistan than we were. The United States was not putting him up to playing games in Afghanistan; my reading of it was quite to the contrary. Again, I did not know everything; but my impression was that the Shah was very interested in what was going on in Afghanistan, and that the United States really did not care very much about what was happening there. My feeling was that the United States had lost interest in Afghanistan many years before—that it had pretty much decided that it was in the Soviet sphere of influence. We wanted to maintain a position there, but we were not going to go in and fight—or do anything, for that matter, to stir up trouble. It just was not worth it. But I think the Shah was interested in doing that. How much he was actually doing I am not sure. But he certainly was not doing it at American instigation. It was not something that we were asking him to do.

On the other hand, he was coming to us and saying, "Should not we do more on Afghanistan?" And he was disappointed with the answers that he was getting from Washington. The answers were slow in coming, and they were generally negative when they arrived. However, one thing that may surprise our Russian colleagues—maybe it will not surprise them—is that, as the Iranian revolution began to emerge—and it certainly was a revolution: whether or not some of those other things should be called coups or whatever, this was definitely a revolution—there was a certain point of view in the U.S. government that saw the Soviet hand in the events that were going on there. I vividly recall a discussion with a colleague of mine at the time in which we were debating the causes of this revolution in Iran. His attitude was that it certainly could have



been just a bunch of clerics putting a movement together to overthrow someone as strong as the Shah. His view was that there had to be something else behind it. And he said that he saw the Russians orchestrating this. I disagreed very, very strongly. I said that there was not a shred of evidence to support that, and I thought that it was purely propaganda. His answer to me was, "Well, you are simply being naïve. By the time you find the evidence, the Russians will be sitting in Teheran." That was a very strongly held position inside the U.S. government at the time. I must say, as someone who was on the other side of that argument, that it was a very hard argument to defeat, because when someone said, "Well, you are just being naïve," and "How else do you explain all of these things that are going on?", I had no very good answer. I tended to lose those arguments. But that was a very strong perception. When you add that to Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and then the events in Afghanistan as well, I think you can see how Cold War perceptions were shaped by certain fixed attitudes. That the facts might have been different—and even were *known* to be different by some people inside the government—had almost no effect.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Gary. Leonid?

**LEONID SHEBARSHIN:** I quite agree with Gary that it was a revolution. It was not a coup d'état, or some kind of temporary phenomenon. It was a people's revolution, as we used to call it, and in my view, it was quite justified. It was a people's revolution because the masses were involved in the events. Moscow's hand quite definitely was not behind these events. We were sympathizing with Khomeini—not so much with

Khomeini, but with those closer to us from an ideological point of view, and who had more congenial views on the future of relations between Iran and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Khomeini was not attractive to us, but he had a very strong point in his favor: he was rabidly anti-American. That is why we tried to find some way to establish an understanding with Khomeini and his entourage. That is why we were supporting him in our propaganda. We never uttered a word of criticism addressed to Khomeini until—I do not remember now how many years, and how many unhappy incidents it took before we started to see the other side of the revolution.

I should say that the events in Iran—the downfall of Shah—were unexpected for us. In August or September 1978 my service came to a firm conclusion that the Shah was doomed. We could not fix any firm dates when the event was going to take place, but we concluded that new people were bound to come to power in Iran. There were certain illusions about the role and influence of the Mujahadeen and Fedayeen in Iran—those leftist groups, which were very active during the initial stages of the revolution, and which were crushed somewhere in 1981, if I remember correctly, by Khomeinists. They were attracted to the Soviet Union, not so much because of our ideology, but by the hopes of material and moral and political support from our side. So my service and the Embassy established good links with them, and to a certain extent, came under their influence. There were illusions that they were bound to play a grater role in the future Iran. And these were justified by their actual potential.

The illusion was not shared by the Soviet leadership—at least, I can be sure about one person. I was sent to Teheran in May 1979, during the initial stages of the revolution, when hopes were running high. I

was received by Mr. Andropov, who told me that he had studied the situation and had come to the conclusion that the leftist groups—the Mujahadeen, the Fedayeen, and Tudet—Tudet was not very much in the picture—had no immediate future in Iran. He felt that the clergy, headed by Khomeini, would consolidate their power, and he felt that we had to face this fact. "Maybe," Andropov said, "in a few years"—he did not specify how many: five years, or ten years—"when Iranians become disillusioned in the clergy, the leftist backlash will come again."

When I came to Teheran, and when I studied the situation on the ground, I became convinced that Andropov was right that Khomeini was there to stay. We tried to do all we could to develop some kind of rapprochement, some kind of understanding, with Khomeini and his entourage. But very soon we saw, as he put it, that "America is worse than Britain; Britain is worse than America; and Russia is worse than both of them." [Laughter.] It was his practical slogan. But in any case, we never gave up hope, and we managed to establish certain not very effective channels which allowed us to communicate with the leadership of Iran. By the way, Khomeini was very careful in any matter which concerned the Soviet Union. He had a very old respect for his northern neighbor, considering Russian-Iranian relations over the decades and even centuries.

How did we see the American position, and American actions with respect to Iran? We saw, and we were convinced—we were getting confirmation from our sources there—that the Americans were bent on restoring or maintaining some kind of presence in Iran, and improving relations with the new regime. There were unofficial missions, and, I believe, some colleagues or subordinates of Admiral Turner visited Iran in the first half of 1979. Americans tried to maintain their contacts

among the officers of the Iranian Army who stayed in Iran. Many Generals fled the country, but some of them stayed. If I remember correctly, somewhere in June or July of 1979, the United States granted Iranian requests for aircraft spares. Then there was a dissident, pro-American lobby in the establishment. It was not yet sorted out: along with the rabid anti-Americanists—along with Khomeini's people—there were people like Bazargan, like Gozbadah (an opportunist), and Amir Antisam—who, I believe, was much closer to the American government than is decent for a government servant of another state. [Laughter.]

WESTAD: What exactly do you mean by that, Leonid? [Long laughter.]

SHEBARSHIN: So the pro-American lobby was very active, and it was not decided at that time—at least until October or November—whether pro-American changes in Iranian policy were possible.

In October, I believe, Prime Minister Bazargan—who was a rather neutral, balanced person with certain pro-American sympathies—met with Mr. Brzezinski in Algiers. Things came to a certain pass. The capture of the American Embassy and the capture of hostages, in my opinion—which was supported by certain reports from our Iranian friends—was prompted not by any external considerations; it was purely a daring, unusual, unorthodox move on the part of the Khomeinists to settle their internal problem with what they called the "bourgeois liberals." It was definitely unusual. They took a very great risk, but after that the "bourgeois liberal" opposition was practically eliminated. Anti-Americanism and internal problems combined to create that crisis. I can assure you, we had no hand in the capture of the American Embassy. The same fate was awaiting us; we knew that. And we knew about

preparations for such an event—a step that would have balanced the first seizure. It would have been a move against the other superpower, the lesser Satan. There were two Satans: the greater one was the United States, and the lesser one was the the Soviet Union. I think that covers it.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Leonid. You have given us many interesting bits of information, and some useful provocations. But before I let some of the American veterans take the floor, I would like to let some of the scholars in on the discussion. Vojtech, does your comment fit into this?

**VOJTECH MASTNY:** Not really. I was responding to your question about Herat.

**WESTAD:** Okay, in that case, I think we should hold that until we return to the Afghan situation. I am sorry about that. Jim Hershberg?

**JIM HERSHBERG:** Yes, this fits in.

There are many possible questions to take up, but I would like to put one on the floor for both Americans and the former Soviet officials. It concerns both sides' perceptions during this period of the phenomenon of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, particularly with respect to its implications for Soviet Central Asia—an issue that is perhaps more important in retrospect than it appeared at the time. In particular, from the Soviet side, I would be interested to hear to what extent concerns about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism to Central Asia was a motive in decision making with regard to the Iranian and the Afghan

situations. And from the American side, I would be interested to hear Marshall, Gary, and Bill put on the record the discussions that were taking place—especially in the NSC—about possible vulnerabilities in Soviet Central Asia to the nationalities issue, and whether it was in the American interest to exacerbate them by exploiting the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

**SICK:** Very briefly, in response to Jim's question: The United States, I think, was confused about Islamic fundamentalism. It did not have a clear understanding of it, except that it was new, and, to the extent that it involved overthrowing the Shah, that it was a disaster from the American strategic perspective.

With regard to Soviet Central Asia, the Iranians all have a theory about why the revolution took place. Their view is that the Shah was an American creature, so nothing could happen to the Shah unless the United States wanted it. That, then, means that the overthrow of the Shah, and the replacement of the Shah by Khomeini, was an American plot. They have a hard time explaining why the Americans wanted to overthrow the Shah and replace him with Khomeini, but they all believe that that is what happened. It is the inscrutable American strategy in the region that explains why this happened.

One of the explanations that is very convenient to understand why the Americans may have plotted to destroy their own interests is that they had a greater interest: namely, the promotion of Islam in the region as a counterweight to atheistic Communism. This was one possible answer. Although I am making a joke, there is some measure of truth in that—not in terms of the U.S. plotting to do it, but when the worst did happen, and the revolution had taken place, and militant Islam was alive

and well in Iran, there were those who were prepared to say, "Well, it was not what we wanted, but at least there is some small glimmer of hope out of this situation, which is that at least Islam is not very convenient for the Soviets to meddle around with, and that this may hurt Soviet interests in Central Asia." But I think this was simply making the best of the very bad situation.

From my perspective, that is the way it looked. We had no deep understanding of Islamic fundamentalism, or of where it might lead. And, I think, we were surprised—as I believe the Soviets were surprised—at the way it played out.

WESTAD: Stan, or Bill, do you want to follow up on this? Bill.

ODOM: I will add a few points. First, I would like to corroborate Gary's point about our ignorance. I think we really were insensitive to the internal developments of Islam. Not many people at the policy level in the U.S. government knew the difference between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims until the Shah fell, and then that became a matter of great interest. I would amplify his point about what this meant for U.S. and Soviet interests there. My own point of view, and Brzezinski's point of view—and, I think, Sam Huntington's point of view, although he had left the NSC staff in the fall of 1978—was that a radical Islamic revolution had the "objective" consequences, if I can use the Marxism-Leninist sense of that term, of damaging U.S. interests. It was therefore objectively in the Soviet interest, very much as General Shebarshin pointed out. So, in that regard, we saw the Shah's fall as a big strategic loss.

One final point on Jim Hershberg's question. What did we do about

it? Did we see it as a potential instrument for affecting Soviet power in Central Asia? I do not recall connecting radical Islam with that movement. What I can say is that there was an NSC working group which Paul Henze ran, which, very early in the administration—I have forgotten precisely when it started; I think it was after the completion of PRM-10 Comprehensive Net Assessment, which would have meant sometime in the fall of 1977 or spring of 1978—looked at the nationality problems in the Soviet Union. I know that Henze, Brzezinski, and I, certainly, were keenly aware of the nationality problems. And we thought it was strategically a terribly important issue. Yet it was one thing to think that it was a terribly important issue, and to think that it created very strong potential fissures in the Soviet political system. It was quite another thing to work out a way to use that for policy purposes. My brief interrelationships and contacts with that working group confirmed my suspicions that there was a big difference between knowing there was a problem and making use of it. It was not easy to get from one to the other. The ideas about how to exploit it were elementary and not very well developed, insofar as I was aware of them. I was very busy with other things, and was only able to bring myself abreast of what that group was doing occasionally.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Bill. Could you, or anyone else on the American side, follow up a little bit on this in terms of actual policy recommendations? What were the recommendations with regard to U.S. policy that came out of that group in the period that we are dealing with now?

**ODOM:** I would react with very brief comments, and then maybe ask Stan



Turner if he could add more. My vague recollections are that we had standing, constant requirements that we give guidance to Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, and some other public media means. Our control of the media on the U.S. side was extremely limited—as far as the official control is concerned. The unofficial, private media was enormous and without official guidance, but one had to think carefully about what guidance one wanted to give these limited government controlled means. The nationality issue was an implicit backdrop for some of the programming. I can remember that. Beyond that I do not remember specifics.

**WESTAD:** Stan, do you want to follow up on that, and perhaps also in that context, if you can, talk a little bit about what Leonid mentioned in terms of U.S. contingency plans with regard to Iran during the period we are dealing with now? Obviously, the Russian side had an impression that the U.S. was preparing, under certain circumstances, a major intervention in the region.

**STAN TURNER:** I would only confirm what I think Bill Odom has expressed very well. First, we did not understand Islamic fundamentalism; we really were totally in the cold here when this phenomenon overtook us in Iran. Secondly, we were focusing our attention on the nationalities problem in the Soviet Union. I can remember briefing the Congress one time on the connection between the nationalities problems and the problems in the Soviet economy. Specifically, we saw the difficulty that the Soviet leadership did not want to put factories and other infrastructure into the Asiatic Muslim areas of the Soviet Union; and yet that was where the population was growing, whereas the population

was not growing to meet the needs elsewhere. But tying those two together—that is, seeing if we could use Islamic fundamentalism to help undermine the situation—I do not think occurred to us, because we were not alert to the Islamic fundamentalism issue until it overwhelmed us in Iran.

I'm sorry; what was your last question?

**WESTAD:** It was on contingency planning with regard to the developing situation in Iran. I am talking now about the pre-hostage crisis situation. If I understood Leonid correctly, he was indicating that the Russian side suspected that there were actual American plans for military operations, or for large-scale covert operations, in Iran to influence the course of political developments there during the 1979 period.

**TURNER:** No, I know of no plans for military intervention in Iran as the crisis began to build with respect to the Shah. I do not think we saw it in those terms at all, and I do not think we felt we had the military capability to do that without a tremendous buildup. In those circumstances it was a very difficult situation; it would have had to have been based on sea power alone, since we were not going to get any help from local countries to stage forces as we did in the Gulf War.

**WESTAD:** Leonid, could I come back to you for one second on this? What kind of American plans or American options were you thinking about on the Soviet side with regard to Iran in this period?

**SHEBARSHIN:** I do not remember that we anticipated a direct and

large-scale military intervention by the United States in that area. They had to take into consideration the effects that Stan spoke about. It was our very clear-cut position that we would not idly watch any American action in the Persian Gulf; you remember some warning to this effect was given by Brezhnev in December 1978, I believe. But covert actions, according to our knowledge, were under way in Iran. And not only covert actions of, let us say, a peaceful kind. There was also the infamous mission in April 1980 which ended in failure in Tabas. We understand that this was not a straightforward attempt simply to rescue the hostages and fly them back to the States. According to my information, the aim of the operation was to eliminate Khomeini, whereupon your people in Iran would have sprung into action through an insurrection, or a mutiny, or something like that—I do not know. The operation was a flop. But, in any case, it supports my thesis that contingency plans were being developed in the States, and some of them were implemented.

WESTAD: Stan, and then Gary.

TURNER: I can only give you my assurance that I know of nothing connected with the rescue operation in Tabas other than releasing the prisoners. I mean, we had a hundred and twenty troops, or something, there. We did not have the military capability to do anything more. You are suggesting, of course, that they would have joined up with undercover people in Teheran. I can see your line of reasoning. I wish the CIA had been confident that we had that kind of capability in Teheran. But we did not, at that time. We were having enough difficulty just getting the intelligence necessary to run that operation

through the few operatives we did have in Teheran. We could have done nothing that would have challenged the government in Teheran. I was obviously intimately involved in that entire operation, and I do not recall anybody suggesting that this could also achieve the purpose of toppling Khomeini.

**WESTAD:** Gary, could you briefly talk a little bit about what U.S. aims were as the situation developed? What was the best that you could have hoped for in Iran as the crisis unfolded up to the fall of 1979?

**SICK:** It is a little difficult to answer what the best outcome would have been, because, by January or February of 1979, people had given up any hope of a best outcome. People were talking about the least bad outcomes. Let me address that, and I will be very brief.

First, we have all noted the lack of understanding about Islamic fundamentalism at high policy levels in the United States. The ignorance was really abysmal—much worse, for instance, than that of the British, who had been there for a long time, and who, in fact, had maintained contacts with Shi'ite groups, with high clerical leaders, and so forth. The British were fairly knowledgeable and sophisticated about that, because they had played the clerical card in Iran on several occasions. The United States was light years behind them. Stan has probably forgotten, but I vividly remember attending a Cabinet meeting in November or December of 1978 in which my colleague Stan explained to the Vice-President what an Ayatollah was.

**TURNER:** I'm not sure I knew. [Laughter.]

**SICK:** That is the level at which we were operating at that stage. To say that we were going to be making sophisticated use of the clerical forces for other purposes is just nonsense. We were not even close to having the capability of doing that.

With regard to intervention, I know that you are aware of several intelligence missions that went to Iran to meet with people, and that actually helps to answer the question that you have asked as well. Those did take place. There were intelligence missions, put together from people at CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency, who went to Iran to brief Bazargan, Yazdi, and some other leaders at the time. This was part of the strategy dealing with what we might see as the least worst outcome in Iran: it was an attempt to try to bolster and develop relationships with the Bazargan group, which was, as you said rightly, more pro-American than almost anybody else in that particular circle of people who were running the country. This was a deliberate attempt on our part to convince them that it was possible to have a relationship, and to provide them with information that they might find useful. The information which was provided in those briefings—which will not surprise you—concerned the danger to Iran from the Soviet threat. We tried to make them aware of that threat so that they might cooperate with us. We were grasping at straws. The chance of actually building a firm relationship was not very good. We were using what capabilities we had, and they were not very strong.

In the end, we put too much weight on the Bazargan group, I think. There was a certain amount of wishful thinking involved: that the Bazargan group would somehow triumph out of this whole situation, and would basically exercise power. There was some possibility of that happening, but it was very remote. And we were never prepared to put

the kind of tangible behind it that might have led to such an outcome. Our effort was very, very tentative. But I can understand that you would have picked up these little signs and made something more of them. There was no depth; there was no substructure; and there was never any serious preparation for a military intervention in Iran.

WESTAD: Olav Njølstad, and then Anatoly.

OLAV NJØLSTAD: I have a question for the American side. If I am not mistaken, Brzezinski writes in his memoirs that he thought that the United States should have at least considered the possibility of using elements within the military of Iran to see if there was some possibility of establishing a pro-Western, pro-American alternative if the Shah had to go. I would be interested in hearing some comment on that information. If this was not thought of by the administration, the question would be, why not? I would also like to have your comments on the role of Jimmy Carter's position on non-interventionism. Was that so important that it really precluded any serious discussion within the administration about this kind of alternative? Was his position disputed? In Musgrove, we saw that there was obviously some discussion within the administration about intervention in the Horn of Africa. Brzezinski took the position that the Americans should probably do more. It would be curious if that question did not arise with respect to Iran, which was such an important asset to the United States.

So: how important was Carter's position—and probably many of you here shared his position on non-intervention—compared with the more realistic assessment of the possibility of doing anything militarily in Iran? How did these two factors weigh against each other?

WESTAD: Thank you, Olav. Those are very good questions. Jim, is this related to documents?

HERSHBERG: Yes. Here is the relevant sentence from Brzezinski's memoirs, on page 382 of *Power and Principle*. It is in connection with General Huyser's mission to Teheran in January 1979. Brzezinski does talk about his support for a coup, and does mention that he felt very much alone, "especially since I suspected that my urging of a coup for broader strategic concerns was undermining my credibility with the President, who found my advocacy of a coup morally troublesome, as well as irritating." So, Olav's comment is certainly correct; but it is specifically in the context of the Huyser mission in the January-February period.

WESTAD: Briefly on this, Gary.

SICK: If you think it is worth it.

WESTAD: Yes, go ahead.

SICK: Basically, on February 11, 1979, as the old regime was collapsing totally, this issue became quite serious. On that day there was a meeting in Washington that went on most of that morning. Most of the high level people were involved in it. Brzezinski clearly wanted the Huyser mission and the military, whom he thought possessed the necessary capability, to resist this collapse—to stand up and do something. That option was explored at some length. There were direct telephone calls with the U.S. general who happened to be in northern Teheran where the

high command was, in fact, meeting. And they were, in fact, in bunkers, as shells were firing over their heads; they were not feeling very feisty. They were not looking for a fight at all. Not only that, but what they were relating back to Mr. Brzezinski in the course of that meeting was that the military was in total collapse. People were defecting left and right, and there was no way of pulling together a counter-coup. That was the most dramatic single moment that I am aware of in the thing. But he was clearly willing, and interested in pursuing that; it simply turned out not to be possible. Again, we had not made the kind of preparations that would have been essential to do that. The Huyser mission was ambiguous from the very beginning in terms of what he was supposed to do, and how he was supposed to do it. He certainly was not there to lay the groundwork for a coup. Some people wished that he would do that; but those were not his instructions.

**WESTAD:** Anatoly, I am sorry for holding you so long.

**DOBRYNIN:** Two brief remarks. First, about Islamic fundamentalism: I would like to testify that in Soviet foreign policy during that period, this issue did not really exist. On the practical level, nobody discussed the issue—not in the Politburo, and not in the Collegium of the Foreign Ministry later on. At that time we really did not think it was a big problem. At least, I do not remember any single document, or a statement, or discussion in government circles, about fundamentalism.

Second, I would like very briefly to mention for your information two or three events in diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union on Iran. In 1978, of course, the Soviet Union was alarmed by the armament which you sent, the generals you sent, the other



military personnel you sent, and so on. It was a major buildup. Moscow began to worry about what the United States was up to. At that time you were supporting the Shah; but in our minds, we were concerned that you were not only supporting the Shah, but possibly also engaged in more intriguing things having to do with Afghanistan or our southern borders. We did not know exactly, but we were a little bit worried. That is why Brezhnev wrote a personal letter to Carter, which I personally delivered. He specifically expressed the worry of the Soviet government about these new developments, and asked for an explanation, or at least some assurances. The next day we received an official response from Cy—these were not published communications, of course—in which he said that he was authorized by the President to say that there was no specific reason for us to worry, and that the United States would reassure us that it was not going to interfere in Iranian domestic affairs.

Shortly after this, your Embassy was seized by the mob, and angry demands were heard all over the United States to do something. We were thinking that you were really quite right to be upset, because your Embassy was seized. We expected you would do something. But at the same time we were a little bit worried that you would use the situation to intervene militarily. I was instructed again to go to Brzezinski quietly, and to explain our worries. I said that we understood your emotional connection with your hostages—and by the way, in the Security Council, we supported your demand that they should be released. It was rather rare case of our making coordinated statements. But to Brzezinski I mentioned that we were a little bit worried. He reassured me that there was no planning for military intervention. One of the reasons why, he said, was because if there were military intervention,

almost certainly all of the hostages would be killed. "This is one of the reasons why we will not do it," he said; "Of course we continue to study many others options; but a large-scale military intervention is out."

The picture changed in 1980, with Afghanistan. I came to Washington from Moscow on January 20, and I had a private meeting with Cy. It was off the record; we would do this from time to time—talk off the record, without any mutual obligation. We discussed Iran a little bit, and we discussed Afghanistan. Then he said, "Well, may I ask you a personal, but frank question?" I said, "Okay, go ahead." "Are you going to interfere with your military troops in Iran or Pakistan?" I said no. He said, "May I personally be sure that you will not introduce your troops in Iran or in Pakistan?" Before leaving Moscow, I had had a discussion in the Politburo on the situation in Afghanistan—not preparing for these questions, because we really did not expect them—and nobody even thought about Pakistan or Iran. They were completely out of the picture. So I said, "Cy, I can tell you that as of two days ago in Moscow, there was no intention to intervene militarily in Iran or Pakistan. You can relate this information to the President. This is my word." Thus it is sometimes how the situation changes within the span of two years: first we were afraid; then you were afraid. This is how it goes.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Anatoly. Carol?

**CAROL SAIVETZ:** I would like to ask our Russian colleagues how much attention they actually gave to Iran, given the simultaneity of the disintegration of the situation in Afghanistan and the overthrow of the

Shah in Iran? I would love to hear whether you talked about trying to cultivate some of the Khomeini forces and establish links with them. I would love to know about your ties with Mujahadeen, with the Fedayeen, and with the Tudeh party. What were they supposed to be doing at that time? This relates to this question of perceptions: given that Iran was clearly a strategic loss for the United States, and given that Soviet troops were in Afghanistan in 1979, was Iran next? I can remember reading in Western press discussions about the Soviet Union being ready to invade Iran; there were discussions about how wide the mountain passes were between the southern border of the Soviet Union and Iran; about whether the Soviets would dare to introduce troops; and what would happen if they did.

DOBRYNIN: This was purely your imagination at that time, clearly.

[Laughter.]

SAIVETZ: Well, not only mine. But given the simultaneity of the two events, how much attention really was given to Iran, and how much effort was given to cultivating ties with some of the leftist but pro-Khomeini or anti-Shah forces at the time as things were unfolding in Teheran?

WESTAD: Leonid, before you get going on this, Marshall would like to follow up with a specific question.

SHULMAN: I would actually like to make a brief comment that relates to the hostage problem and the intervention in Afghanistan. What we have heard, I think, is very useful testimony that there was no serious American planning to intervene militarily in Iran. But at the level of

psychological warfare, there was some discussion of the possibility of some form of military intervention. There was discussion in the American press—speculation, and that sort of thing. This was my impression at that time. It was partly intended to bring some psychological pressure on Iran, to convince them of the seriousness of the hostage business, and to induce them to ease the situation. Whether there was any serious military planning behind it, I had no knowledge, but I was conscious of the fact that there was discussion of it, and an effort to create some impression that might have some useful effect on the Iranians.

My belief, however, was that as the crisis in Afghanistan built up, that psychological warfare seemed to create an impression in Moscow that there was a real possibility of an American military intervention in Iran. It occurred to me that there might have been some discussion in Moscow that an American military intervention in Iran might have an effect on the international repercussions of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Marshall. Leonid?

**SHEBARSHIN:** Certainly, Iran was traditionally considered to be a very important country for the Soviet Union, and for Russia. We had centuries of relations—relations which were not always happy; but in any case, they existed. We had considerable economic and strategic interests in Iran. One of the facets of our strategic interests was to push the Americans out of Iran—to push their intelligence monitoring stations, the CIA, and the American military advisers that were there out of the country. We saw in the Iranian revolution a chance to

achieve at least some of those objectives. We had to develop numerous contacts among all the forces which had a reasonable chance to influence Iranian politics. We were not very optimistic about our possibilities as far as Khomeini and his entourage were concerned, for obvious reasons; but then, at the same time, leftists and the neutral groups—even some nationalist groups; not Iranians, but Azeri and Turkman groups—were going to play a certain role in Iranian affairs. So we tried to establish contacts with all of them. That was being done by my service, by military intelligence, by the Embassy people, and by our economic people who remained there. We had some very important projects underway, in spite of the revolution, in Isfahan, for instance, and in the North. So I do not say that we were very successful; but we did our best to achieve certain results.

We could not neutralize completely the anti-Sovietism of the Khomeini government, but in any case, the period of acute aggravation of our relations—from 1980 to 1981, when there were raids on our Embassy, and all kinds of vilifications addressed to us—was temporary. After that, our relations more or less took normal shape. As far as I know, they develop quite normally now in spite of certain potential conflicts of interest. It is in our national interest to develop our ties with Iran. The American administration considers it to be in its own national interest not to allow Russia to develop ties with Iran. Are we going to accept the American view? No, I think not. Are Americans going to accept our view? I think not. So, let us try to accommodate each other and to see the justice of other people's positions.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Leonid. There is one question I feel we have to raise before we break, and that is the issue that was brought up

again and again in the contemporary Soviet discussion about events unfolding in Afghanistan linking the issue with Iran. The reasoning goes something like this: since the United States was losing Iran as an ally against the Soviet Union, and equally importantly as an intelligence listening post, the United States had an increased interest in trying to influence the situation in Afghanistan. Through covert operations, and by supporting the resistance in Afghanistan—those opposed to the Communist regime before the Soviet intervention—the United States might be able to replace in Afghanistan some of the facilities that they had lost in Iran. This seemed to play a rather important role in Soviet reasoning at the time. I just wanted to get some comments on that from the American side before we break. Bill, if you could follow up on that as well, I would be very grateful.

**ODOM:** Let me answer that quickly by saying, as I think both Valentin and Leonid would understand, that if you look at that part of the world from the American point of view, Afghanistan is not much of an alternative to Iran. Afghanistan carries tremendous strategic risk and burdens, and offers not much in the way of return. I know of absolutely no consideration of trying to exploit Afghanistan as an alternative. In fact, as we looked at the map, that idea would not even have occurred to us.

Now, Let me relate that back to the point I wanted to make here, Arne. Maybe you have something different in mind; but on military intervention plans, let me point out for the record some things that took place. PRM-10 Comprehensive Net Assessment was followed by Presidential Directive 18, which set out a national strategy and the military component of it. It left some things undone for follow-on

studies, but, in general, it called for emphasizing restoring the conventional balance in Europe because of the decline from the 1960s to the late 1970s, and for holding firm in Korea and East Asia. It also identified the Middle East and southwest Asia as an area among our priorities, if not on the same level with the Far East. The Defense Department was directed to create a Rapid Deployment Force, which is well-known. Defense did very little in 1977, after it received this order—or through 1978, for that matter. It did almost nothing. When events in the spring of 1979 became more and more tense with regard to Iran, I was directed by Brzezinski to draft a memo from him or the President—I have forgotten which—to Harold Brown and to the chairman of Joint Chiefs, asking, "What have you done lately to create a Rapid Deployment Force?" This memo was signed and sent, and that began a considerable interaction between the White House and the Pentagon on creating a Rapid Deployment Force.

The Pentagon did not want to do it. The Military leadership did not want to do it, for very obvious reasons. General Rogers, SACEUR in Europe, was being pressed to upgrade forces on the Central Front. He saw any development of a Rapid Deployment Force for southwest Asia as competing for the forces and the logistical support that he needed for Europe. He did not see in our budget any possibility of getting the additional resources. The Navy and the Army had completely different views on the command and control arrangements for the area. So there were a number of factors of that sort that more or less kept our military planners paralyzed until they came under tremendous pressure.

Then in the spring, summer, and fall of 1979, a series of command post exercises took place called the "Positive Leap" series, in which scenarios were developed for projecting U.S. force into the region in

the event that we needed to do that. Now, why might we need to do that? In the studies leading up to PD-18—Sam Huntington had done an analysis which he called "Cricons", that is, — Crisis Confrontations. He looked at the East-West balance, and he asked, "Can we develop a set of criteria that give us some idea of where we are most likely to have a crisis confrontation with the Soviet Union?" I cannot recall his specific criteria now, but I remember him coming into my office and saying, "I know where the next U.S.-Soviet confrontation will be." This was April or May of 1977. I said, "Yes, Iran." And he said, "How did you know?" [Laughter.] I said, "Well, because . . ." I did not have a very structured view; I had a very loose, vague view. It was nothing compared to Sam's very rigorous reasoning. But he offered with a set of criteria which said that if you look at the competing interests very much as Leonid has described them, you can see that this is a point with a potential for a very serious U.S.-Soviet confrontation. So we were already beginning to focus on Southwest Asia and specifically Iran.

Gary may recall that, after PD-18 was signed, we talked with him and with Bill Quandt. We had become aware in our studies of that region that the internal situation in Iran was potentially very volatile, and we wanted to launch a series of studies on it. In fact, we wanted the DDI to begin studying that. What Bill Quandt and Gary made us aware of, and what I became increasingly aware of as I dealt with our various agencies, was that, for arms control verification reasons—and for other reasons—we did not want to look at the possibility of instability in Iran. We did not want to think about alternatives; we did not even want to know about impending disasters. Trying to get the American bureaucracy to take that issue seriously proved difficult, and we failed abjectly.



As Karen Brutents was pointing out earlier, sometimes you may have had a grand strategic design, but were unable to do any real work putting it into effect. We had a big concept on our side; and although we had directed some planning, it soon crashed on the shoals of bureaucratic resistance and competing interests. But you certainly would have been aware of the public comments on the Rapid Deployment Force. Your intelligence services probably knew about the Positive Leap exercises; you would have been right to infer that the U.S. was trying to develop a military capability to project force into southwest Asia.

Let me end by saying why that had become terribly critical for us. Little me give you a little more detail about U.S. strategy in the area—not always the conscious strategy, but sometimes the implicit strategy. It was traditionally based on straddling the fence by having a foot in both the moderate Arab and Israeli camps. We played a balancing strategic role. But there is also a confrontation, which we tend to forget about in the U.S., between the Arabs and the Persians that is just as old. We had traditionally been able to have relationships with both the Persians and the King of Saudi Arabia. As long as we were on both sides of that confrontation, we could keep the balance of power in region, and maintain stability, without much military force. With the collapse of our position in Iran, however—which, you rightly pointed out, tended to work to your advantage—the only way we had of compensating and restoring the balance was to project military power into the region—or, at least, to have the potential to do that. That was the logic, at least from the NSC planning point of view—and, I am quite sure, from Brzezinski's point of view. That is what we were up to.

I could not agree more with Stan Turner on the Iran rescue

mission. I wish we could have accomplished that. I was intimately involved in the Iran rescue mission, and I will tell you, it was so demanding that, coupling it with a covert action to topple the government would have driven the commander of the operation crazy. He probably would have committed suicide from the strain, if we had added that objective. [Laughter.]

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Bill. This, in my opinion, is one of the most fascinating interventions we had the whole morning. Thank you very much for sharing that with us.

We have to break for lunch. Some of the veterans have suggested that, instead of extending the lunch break to three o'clock, we should reassemble here at 2:30 to provide give us a little bit more time for the next session, in which we go through the Afghan intervention step by step. Is that acceptable to all of you? [General agreement.] Okay, we will come back here at 2:30. Thank you all very much. It has been a very interesting and very useful morning.

SESSION 3

REASONS FOR THE SOVIET INTERVENTION

**WESTAD:** Okay, we should start the third session. Before we do, I have a couple of announcements concerning additional materials that are now available at the back of the room and that we have passed around just now. The one that all of you should have on your desk is testimony that Marshall gave to the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs on January 30th, 1980. This document is titled "East-West Relations in the Aftermath of the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan." In addition to that there is a brief report which we received from Alexander Ogonovich Chubarian from *Rosarkhiv* just before the meeting started. It is a fascinating little snippet in terms of getting an inside look at what was happening in Moscow on the very day that these events started. It is a meeting on December 26 at Brezhnev's dacha with Brezhnev, Ustinov, Gromyko, and Chernenko participating. Two CIA documents were also just passed around, which we received from Stan Turner. One is titled, "Soviet Options in Afghanistan," dated September 28, 1979; and another one is titled, "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan: Implications for Warning," dated October 1980. We also have—I believe from Leonid Shebarshin—a document, which, I guess, is Kryuchkov's report that you were referring to.

**SHEBARSHIN:** It is Kryuchkov's report to the Congress of People's Deputies in either December 1989 or December 1990—I am sorry, the precise year has slipped my mind. A commission had been set up to investigate the circumstances surrounding the introduction of our troops

into Afghanistan. That was Kryuchkov's report.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Leonid, for providing that.

**MALCOLM BYRNE:** One other document that has been passed around refers more to one of the earlier sessions today. It is a transcript of the Kosygin-Taraki conversation—probably one of the conversations on March 18—that was reproduced on Soviet-Russian television and transcribed in FBIS.

I would like to give my general thanks to everyone for passing on these materials, even at this late date. I think that they will be very helpful. In particular, I want to thank Marshall Shulman, whom I neglected for some reason to mention yesterday as someone who contributed in a very important way to getting his own materials out of the State Department and making them available for our discussions.

**WESTAD:** That is right, Malcolm; thanks to all of you—Leonid, Marshall, Stan, and Alexander—for providing these materials.

The purpose of this third session—our last session today—is to move to the planning and implementation of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. What we are trying to do here is something we have not tried before during this series of conferences, and that is to go in detail through the last stages of the planning and execution of this operation. This means necessarily that the focus in this session will be on the Russian side. I also hope that it will be possible for the participants from the Russian side to ask questions of the American side about what they knew and what they were observing, and to comment on what they were seeing the Americans doing in the region, and how that

influenced Soviet planning for the invasion. I will return in a moment to some issues which I want to highlight with regard to the developments in the fall of 1979, on which we can hang the discussion: three or four main events, or stages, in the development of the situation which we can elaborate on and put into context. But before I do that, I know that Vojtech had something that he wanted to follow up on linking this session to what we talked about this morning. Vojtech?

**MASTNY:** It was in response to your question about why the Soviets did not invade at the time of Herat. This raises at least three other questions relating that particular episode with what eventually happened later.

First of all, when one reads the documents from the Herat period, one has the impression that there was a sense of an emergency which was never repeated again. The sense of urgency that comes out of the record of the meetings of the Politburo is much greater here than at any time later that year, including the time of the actual invasion. So my first question to the Russian participants would be: was the immediate sense of emergency—of the fear that the regime might unravel—greater at the time of Herat than it was in December 1979?

The second question concerns the way the crisis was being dealt with. At the time of Herat, there was a very thorough examination of what was happening—a very thorough examination of the options—which was not repeated later on, at least as far as we know. At least, the documents do not show that it did. Why was there such detailed examination of the problem and the options in March, but not in December? Is it because, in March, they were concerned about the downfall of the regime, whereas in December they are concerned with

something else—simply with Amin? Would that be a correct reading?

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Vojtech. Those are important questions that you raised, and I hope that the Russian side would be able to return to them as we go through this stage by stage.

The first turning point, if I may call it that, which I have noticed, in going through the materials relating to the Fall of 1979, is the assassination of Taraki—the coup against Taraki and his subsequent assassination, which obviously played a very important role with regard to decision making on the Soviet side. It was a watershed in Soviet-Afghan relations. The second seems to be the discussions among the top Soviet leadership in early October reevaluating the situation in the light of Taraki's assassination. We do not have the records of those meetings, but we have heard from several sources that there were such discussions, perhaps connected to one or two Politburo meetings. What options were discussed at that time? Third, we do have some documents on the Politburo meeting which takes place on October 31, in which, it seems to me, that the top leadership may have taken a step back in terms of preparing the actual intervention. Those of us who assembled the documents cannot agree on the interpretation of this document, but this is how I read it. It seems to me that the leadership was putting operations on hold, seeing how the situation developed in Kabul, and waiting to determine what Amin actually would be doing. Lastly, there is the last week and a half leading up to the December 12th decision itself, about which we have virtually no documents apart from those reflecting what was going on in the meeting on December 12. Obviously, this is the key period. Some of you who are here are probably in a good position to give us input on the policy options that

were discussed, and the final decisions that were made, on December 12.

Those are the stages around which I thought we might structure our discussion this afternoon. Marshall?

SHULMAN: That is a good list. I would like to add one more question. I am not satisfied with the explanation in the documents of the Poputin episode. Poputin was the Deputy Minister (Ministry of Interior). He went to Kabul, and something clearly went wrong. He went back to Moscow and committed suicide. This episode has never been adequately explained. Was this one of the first attempts on Amin, or not? Garthoff, in his book, says it was not an episode of much significance; but I have not seen any explanation of this.

WESTAD: That's a good point, Marshall; let us get to that when we come to it chronologically.

DOBRYNIN: This episode has nothing to do with Afghanistan. I will explain it later on; but it has no relevance for our discussion.

WESTAD: You are saying that it was a personal matter?

DOBRYNIN: Yes.

WESTAD: Good.

Now, who would like to go first on Soviet evaluations of—and the possibility of Soviet involvement in—the events surrounding the coup and Taraki's subsequent assassination? Valentin?

VARENNIKOV: Thank you. First, I would like to make a digression from our discussion. I would like to show you a Rabani poster showing Brezhnev in a red suit and Reagan in a blue sports coat. It is about how much we love peace and democracy; but they both have bloody tears. This is so that we can remember how the Alliance of 7 treats us—I mean both the U.S. and Russia.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Chairman for using different terms when he began discussing the issues before us. Terms like "intervention" and "aggression" were used before; now he uses the term "introduction of troops." Thank you; this corresponds well to reality.

Now, on to the substance. I would like to begin not from Taraki's death, but from September 1979. In September 1979, Amin held a session of the Politburo where he removed Taraki and all his supporters from power. That already represented a tragedy in our eyes. That action put our government in a very difficult situation. Carrying out the decision made by our government, Gromyko then sent the following telegram to all our representatives in Afghanistan: "It is expedient in view of the current situation in Afghanistan not to refuse to deal with Amin and with his leadership; to try to restrain him from repressions; and to clarify his political position and intentions." He instructed all the advisers to stay put, to carry out their duties, and not to participate in Amin's repressions. As you can see from this, for us the most important task was to secure the country as a friendly neighbor. The tragedy that happened there was one thing; but globally, if you assess the situation, to have a friendly neighbor was more important. The American representatives understood our situation very clearly. Take for example the telegram of September 17, number 69/36, from the American *chargé d'affaires*. The American diplomat said that the Soviets



had no other option than that of accepting what happened *de facto*.

I wanted to say also that, in light of what happened already on October 2, October 15, and October 17, our KGB representative, Boris Ivanov, reported that Amin was constantly requesting that we introduce troops. He was requesting assistance. Every time he received negative responses. At the same time, there was a serious reevaluation of the situation in Afghanistan going on in the Soviet leadership. On November 29, in their report to the Central Committee of the party, Gromyko, Ustinov, Ponomarev, and Andropov emphasized that we should carefully follow the course taken by Amin, and we should be attentive to all changes in his position toward the American side. This report is here; I could read it to you, but perhaps I had better give you a short summary. That note of caution was prompted by the fact that on November 27, if remember correctly, Amin had an official meeting at which he appealed to the American side to improve relations. Within two days his Foreign Minister was in the United States. He repeated his request there in front of other U.S. officials. That was a very important factor. It was not a secret for us. Hence, the decision was made to be cautious. However, when that was discussed on November 29, there was still no decision on the introduction of troops. I would like to draw your attention to this fact. And that report that I mentioned above—if you would like, I can read it to you—said that there was no decision on the introduction of troops on November 29.

As far as the following events are concerned—

WESTAD: I am sorry, Valentin, I am sorry to interrupt. We have a document in our briefing book that reaches basically the same conclusions as the one you mentioned now, but it is dated October 29.

Is that the same document to which you are referring?

DOBRYNIN: It was in October.

VARENNIKOV: Excuse me; yes, October.

I would also like to say that if you take all the chronological developments into account, the situation was unique. The opposition was active militarily in 12 out of 27 provinces, and were virtually holding power there. Of course, all that irritated the Afghan leadership, who insisted that we should introduce troops. Then there was the tragedy with the American Ambassador, and all that. Personally, I believe that that was a provocation on Amin's part. The Soviet side, together with the Americans, asked the Afghan leadership not to storm the hotel where the Ambassador was at the time. But Amin did that to give himself some leverage. Then followed developments in Herat; the Politburo meetings in March 1979; and discussions of various kinds over the summer's developments—the riot of a regiment and of a special battalion in Kabul in August; we have not yet mentioned that here. It was a very important factor, and concerned us very much. In September, the CIA made a decision, together with Zia ul-Haq and Chinese officials, that Pakistan would become a home base for all Mujahadeen. We knew that.

I would like to ask, how would you expect the Soviet Union to react to all of those developments? Amin requested troops repeatedly throughout the months of September and October. He did so again after the Politburo meeting I mentioned earlier, and after Taraki's murder. After all that, our leadership was beginning to think about introducing troops. We had very serious concerns.

I agree with Marshall—or maybe it was Bill—who said that

Afghanistan was not an alternative to Iran. However, at that time—at the time of the Cold War and its suspicions—the Soviet Union saw a lot of negative developments. We were concerned that if the United States were forced from Iran, they would move their bases to Pakistan and grab Afghanistan. That was our logic at that time. We thought that they would try to put their intelligence centers in the north of Afghanistan, from where they would be able to monitor all of the testing grounds where we tested our most important weapons, such as missiles, aircraft, air defenses, and so on. If they succeeded in this, they would not need to send their agents to our institutes and laboratories; they would be able to get all the information they needed from the training and testing grounds. That would be excellent for the U.S. Those concerns were, of course, present. Leonid suggested that the United States had something of that sort in mind. Admiral Turner said otherwise. I fear that he is hiding something. He is not telling us everything.

We thought everything was possible. I personally conducted certain exercises with troops of the Turkestan military district on the Iranian border, and all the way up to the Caspian Sea. These were exercises for the commanders, just in case the Americans introduced troops into Iran. That, of course, was inadmissible. That was our view.

Now, what do we have here? Here is the picture we saw at that time: the Afghan leadership, both with Taraki and later with Amin, was persistently trying to get us to introduce the troops. On December 4, Andropov and Ogarkov—who was the Chief of General Staff—wrote in their report to the Central Committee that it would have been expedient to send a battalion to defend the Afghan leadership. We conducted exercises preparing troops in the Turkestan military district in case

the political leadership made a decision to do this. We are military people; we have to work with some advanced warning. The political leadership could have made any decision, so we carried out the necessary preparations. However, there was no suggestion that we should introduce troops. I would even say the opposite. But just in case, the troops prepared. However, a battalion was sent just to protect—

**WESTAD:** I am sorry, Valentin; which time are you talking about now?

**VARENNIKOV:** I am talking about December 4. On December 4, Andropov and Ogarkov signed a document sending a battalion to defend the Afghan leadership—only for that. We believed that if we did not introduce troops, then at least we should send some units to defend certain buildings—the most important buildings—so that they were not threatened.

On December 10, there was a historic meeting at Brezhnev's [dacha?]. Andropov, Gromyko, Ustinov, and Ogarkov were present. At that meeting, the suggestion was made to introduce troops, and the suggestion assumed the form of a decision to introduce approximately 75,000 troops into Afghan territory. I would like to mention that Chief of General Staff Ogarkov spoke against it. We, in the General Staff, had very solid arguments against this. We believed that it would have been possible to avoid introducing troops—to continue our line that the Afghans should solve their problems themselves, with our technical assistance. But already on that day, when that question was resolved at the Politburo, Ustinov called the Military Collegium into session and told them that, apparently, a government decision on introducing troops was coming. He issued a corresponding directive. The directive was

signed by the Defense Minister and by the Chief of General Staff.

On December 12 there was one more meeting at Brezhnev's [dacha?], at which the final decision was made and the corresponding documents were signed. All the Politburo members were present except Kosygin. He did not agree with the decision. I think that was why he did not attend that meeting.

**DOBRYNIN:** Which meeting?

**VARENNIKOV:** The meeting of December 12.

**BRUTENTS:** He was sick; he was in the hospital.

**WESTAD:** I am sorry, again; we have the resolution from that meeting in the briefing book.

**VARENNIKOV:** The main motives behind the decision were the security interests of the Soviet Union, and securing the results of the April revolution. We linked those two together. The legal background, of course, was found in the treaties we had—in particular, the treaty of 1978.

As far as the international political situation is concerned, our view was that it was pushing—or perhaps provoking—the Soviet Union into introducing the troops. Notwithstanding the fact that Carter and Brezhnev embraced each other at the summit, the reality of our relationship was quite different. First, the United States unilaterally froze the process of ratifying the SALT II Treaty. There may have been various reasons for that. Perhaps the introduction of our troops into

Afghanistan had something to do with that, or Irangate, or something else. Secondly, at the very same time, NATO was talking about increasing the military budgets of every member country. Of course, this was unacceptable for the Soviet Union. Thirdly, the United States created the Rapid Deployment Force. Then, in December 1979—before the introduction of troops into Afghanistan—a session of NATO approved the deployment of new nuclear weapons in Europe. That, of course, was unacceptable for us. And finally, the possibility that the United States would establish a base of operations against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan was unacceptable.

On December 14, our operative group was already in the Turkestan military district, in Termed. First Akhromeev was in charge of it, then Marshal Sokolov. On the 3rd it was relocated to Kabul. Before that, our operative group was stationed at Bagram airport. That group was there to help the airborne troops land. The introduction of troops was planned for 1500h on December 25. It was still daylight, local time. It was planned so that the troops could cross the border in broad daylight, so that the local people could see it. By the way, I do not want to exaggerate—but they met the troops with flowers! It was the same when the troops were leaving. They saw them off with flowers also. So, the troops were supposed to arrive when it was still light, adjust to the situation, and then settle where they were ordered. Only then were they supposed to move on. Everyone had to be stationed in their assigned place by December 27, and that was accomplished. At the same time, our airborne troops were supposed to land. You probably know that, originally, there was supposed to be only three divisions, two regiments, and two brigades, including one air-defense brigade, plus some reserves. Later, the force was augmented.

To sum up, I would like to say that the decision to introduce the troops was made not in haste, but after taking great pains about it. There was no desire to introduce troops. The overall picture, and the views that our leadership held, forced them to make that decision. I also would like to emphasize that when making that decision, our leadership was thinking that it would be a brief action, and that the troops would be withdrawn very soon. That thinking was present. However, it turned out to be completely different. That is all. Are there any questions?

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Valentin. That was an absolutely fascinating run-through of the developments leading up to the intervention itself. I thank you very much for that. That was very valuable for all of us.

Before I give the floor over to the American side to ask some questions, there is one little item I would like to clarify, because it is something that we had trouble with in trying to put together the chronology of what actually happened. It has to do with the attempt to remove Amin on September 14th, 1979. I wonder if someone from the Russian side could briefly shed some light on that episode. Was the Soviet Union involved in that attempt to remove Amin before he got too powerful and before he acted on his own against the leadership in Afghanistan? Briefly, please.

VARENNIKOV: Alexander will speak, and then I will add a couple of words.

LYAKHOVSKY: On September 14, Taraki was returning from Moscow, where he

stopped on his way from back the Non-Aligned Conference in Havana. By the time Taraki arrived in Moscow, our advisers already knew that the confrontation between Taraki and Amin was reaching its peak, and was about to be resolved in some form. It is no secret that we faced the problem of the confrontation of two factions inside the PDPA in Afghanistan—between Khalq and Parcham. Khalqists, who succeeded in getting all major positions in the government, began to squeeze out their Parchamist opponents, and accomplished it in a matter of weeks or months. Parchamists were removed from all major posts, and their leaders were sent abroad as Ambassadors. Karmal was sent like this, Nakhetar Tensad [?], Nur Akhmad Nur, and Najibullah, among others. Gradually, the confrontation began between Taraki and Amin. Amin, in our assessment, had a more forceful personality than Taraki. We have heard a characterization of Taraki here today, so I will not repeat it. Amin used to be the second—a loyal pupil of Taraki—but now did not want to be the second anymore; he wanted to be the first. Therefore, he was preparing the ground for a gradual isolation of Taraki, so that he could assume the leadership of the state. That was the background when Amin advised Taraki to go to Havana, even though our advisers were opposed to it.

Taraki trusted Amin. He called him his loyal pupil and trustworthy comrade, and said he had no reasons not to trust him. When Taraki was in Moscow, he was warned that Amin was plotting against him. Taraki realized that when he arrived in Kabul and saw that Amin had ordered that all the closest supporters of Taraki—the so called "four," who were in the Khalq leadership: Watanjar, Gulabzoy, Mazdooriyar, and Sarwari—be isolated.

When I was writing my book, I studied this problem, and some



comrades from the KGB told me that there existed a plan according to which Amin would have been assassinated while driving to the airport to meet Taraki. For some reason, they said, that plan did not work. I cannot say for sure; I do not have any documents to support it. The only thing I have is the words of the people who said that they knew. Allegedly, Amin took a different route to the airport and got there unharmed. After that, Amin would not come when Taraki invited him over. He rejected all his invitations. He agreed only once—on September the 14th. And here we also have several versions of what happened. One of them is that Amin plotted that provocation himself. Another version is that Taraki wanted to use that occasion to eliminate Amin. These are very different versions. Different people hold different views.

This is what happened: when Amin got there, he began to walk up the stairs and heard shots—his adjutant Tarun was killed. Amin was unharmed; he ran down the stairs, got into his car, and left. A doctor was also killed, and another adjutant, Zerak [?] was wounded. After that, he gave orders to put the army on high alert. Taraki was arrested and isolated.

That was when the Politburo session and a session of the Revolutionary Council were held. The session was held with the Guard loyal to Amin surrounding the building. At that session Amin was elected Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, and General Secretary. Taraki was isolated, but was still alive. It was immediately announced that he was ill. Our leaders, Brezhnev himself, appealed to Amin to leave Taraki alone and not to hurt him. However, Amin did not listen to them. Taraki was suffocated on Amin's orders. He was buried on the Mount of Martyrs in Kabul. His entire family was put in prison in Pulicheki [?].

As Valentin Ivanovich has just said, our leadership found itself faced with a question: what to do now? It was decided to leave it as it was for the time being—to accept the facts, even though, as I have said, they did not trust Amin. They did not trust him because there were reports that he was a CIA agent. I am not going to prove or disprove it, because there are some secondary facts that speak for it, and some that speak against it. For instance, in 1977, when Khalq and Parcham were getting united—even before the April revolution—Amin was not elected to the Politburo because everyone opposed him. He was accused of cooperating with the CIA during his study in the United States. He admitted that he was "playing" with the CIA because he needed money to continue his studies; but he said it was nothing serious, "just playing." There is a transcript of a meeting with Ulyanovsky, where he talks about this. Karen Nersesovich has this document.

Then there was the episode where the American ambassador was killed. What were the circumstances? My account is based on my conversations with our secret services who were in charge of monitoring the crisis. One of the officers of the secret service told me that Dobbs was seen in the company of those same people who kidnaped him later in the same hotel—in the same room—the day before they kidnaped him. And then later Dobbs was in his car, with a travel case. He stopped his car when those same people whom he saw the day before ordered him to stop, as if they were known to him. You understand that we are talking about an ambassador with an armored car, bullet-proof windows, doors that can be opened only from the inside, it has a siren that goes off in an emergency situation. Dobbs did not use any of these emergency measures. He opened the door himself, let the people who

kidnapped him in the car. They came to the hotel and demanded that their extremist friends, who were in prison, be released. And then Amin ordered the hotel to be stormed. Both the Americans and us pleaded with Amin not to storm the hotel.

You can see how this looked like a provocation. After Amin had killed Taraki, the attitude of our leadership to him changed. Our leadership was afraid that Amin might be cooperating with the CIA, and, observing his turn to the Americans and the Pakistanis, was worried that he might abandon us. And at the same time Amin continued his ministry of Socialist slogans. So we were worried that we might find ourselves in a situation when we would be in Afghanistan, and the Afghan leader would be pro-American, but still using Socialist rhetoric. In other words, he would be disguised as a socialist; but he would not be "our man."

In my view, there was no sharp worsening of the relationship, there was no crisis situation, just before the troops were introduced. But Brezhnev's attitude to this entire issue had changed. He could not forgive Amin, because he personally gave Taraki assurances that he would be able to help him. And they disregarded Brezhnev completely and murdered Taraki. Brezhnev used to say, "How could the world believe what Brezhnev says, if his words does not count?" This is how this murder influenced the decision making.

WESTAD: Thank you, Alexander. We will have a chance to return to some of these issues later on, but I appreciate you giving the results of the research that you have been doing on this.

Valentin, is it possible that I could hold you up for just a moment in commenting on some of the same issues, and go to Marshall?

**SHULMAN:** These contributions from both Alexander and Valentin have been very useful. I have two questions, one to each of them.

Alexander, in your account of the September shoot-out, what was the role of Puzanov, the Soviet Ambassador? The accounts seem to be that Puzanov gave his personal assurance to Amin that his safety would be guaranteed; that Amin himself believed that Puzanov was implicated; and that he therefore demanded his withdrawal subsequently. You did not mention Puzanov's role. I wonder if you could add to that?

And to Valentin a question, which occurred to me as you gave your account of the steps taken in November and December. From August to November, Pavlovsky's mission of high military officials was in Kabul, and traveled all around the country. I had the impression then that Pavlovsky must have been charged with assessing what could be done—what the Soviet response should be. It seemed to me that he faced a series of options for the Soviet response: a minimum option, a maximum option, and something in between. The minimum option, it appeared to me then, would have been to strengthen the military advisory group, and to do whatever the Soviet Union decided to do about Amin. At that time, I believe the military advisory group had something on the order of 3,500 or 5,000 people, perhaps. One option was to augment that group. That would have been the minimum response, and it would have involved the minimum of international complications. A maximum option, it seemed to me, would have been to send in a very large force—as Ogarkov and Akhromeev thought would have been necessary to have completed the pacification of the insurgent movement. The intermediate solution would have been a smaller operation, which perhaps, at a minimum would have taken control of the four or five major communication points—Kandahar, Kabul, and so on—and held those without itself becoming operationally

engaged in combat. I never did understand why the option was chosen that was in fact selected: to send in several divisions then, and then build up to a force of somewhere between 16,000 and 18,000 troops engaged in combat. That ensured that the international reaction would be most severe. It seemed to me that it was the least rational response of the possible options you faced.

WESTAD: Thank you, Marshall. Valentin, do you want to comment on this and other points?

VARENNIKOV: I would like to say a couple of words about Puzanov, and Alexander will add to it later. It is clear that the events of September 14, involving Amin, were an excellent provocation prepared by Amin himself. Taraki was not capable of anything like that. Amin did it himself in order to be able to use it against Taraki later on. Now, with regard to Puzanov's role: Puzanov did indeed assure Amin. He did everything he could. But he did not know how Amin himself acted in respect to the provocation against himself.

The second question was about Pavlovsky. I would like to add that Pavlovsky was not alone; Epishev was there also. You were right to suggest that there could have been a minimum option, a maximum option, and something in between. But as I said earlier, we have to look at that situation through the eyes of our leaders of that time. Everything was filtered through the lens of the Cold War. Suspiciousness, mistrust, the expectation of grave consequences—all this dominated their thinking. That is why all those ideological and strategic considerations that pressured them led them to take such a step. Pavlovsky was suggesting some small steps; but the leadership of the

country decided to take very serious measures. Why? Because, in their view, to stabilize the situation, we would have to have Soviet troops stationed in all provincial centers.

By the way, when we introduced the troops, our orders were *not* to get involved in combat, and *not* to respond to provocations. But then the provocations became such that it was impossible not to respond. We had to defend ourselves from attack. So, to achieve any kind of stabilization, we had to have our troops stationed in garrisons in every provincial center. If that could not have been done, the conflict would have smoldered; turmoil would have continued; and it would have been impossible to do anything about it. I am not speaking about all 27 provinces, but at least about those in which there were opposition forces. Our troops needed to be stationed there. That would have given us some guarantee of stability. Those were the considerations driving that particular decision. This is all I wanted to say.

**WESTAD:** Karen?

**BRUTENTS:** In his book, Alexander writes about an episode that Valentin has just mentioned, and I would like to ask him about it. On December 10, Ustinov invited Ogarkov and informed him that the Politburo had apparently made the preliminary decision to introduce troops into Afghanistan. The plan was to prepare 70,000-80,000 troops. The book says that Ogarkov was surprised and outraged by such a decision. I wanted to ask: what was Ogarkov's position on that, and why was he opposed to the introduction of that particular contingent? Did he think there should have been more troops? Or was he in principle opposed to the introduction of any troops? It is very important to know, because

even now some people believe that, apart from the Defense Minister himself, all other military officials below him—and many people mention Akhromeev in that regard—were opposed to the introduction of troops.

**LYAKHOVSKY:** Do you mean Ustinov?

**BRUTENTS:** No, Ustinov was for the introduction; all others were against, including Ogarkov. What arguments did they make?

**VARENNIKOV:** Let me tell you. After the meeting that we have just mentioned, there was one more meeting: a meeting between Brezhnev, Gromyko, Andropov, Ustinov, and Ogarkov in the Kremlin, in the so-called Walnut Room. Probably you have heard about the room where the Politburo held its meetings; behind that room is the Walnut Room.

**DOBRYNIN:** In front of it, not behind it.

**VARENNIKOV:** Yes, in front of it. There is a round table there. That discussion was held around that table. Ogarkov made many arguments that had to be made: first, that the Afghans should deal with their internal affairs themselves, and we should only give assistance; second, that the public would not understand us—neither the American people, nor the Soviet people, nor the world in general—if we introduced those troops; third, that our troops did not know the specific circumstances of Afghanistan very well—the tribal relations, Islam, and various other things would put our troops in a very difficult situation. And he made some other arguments. He rejected our suspicions about the Americans as not having been proved—as being purely hypothetical. He had many

arguments of that sort against introducing the troops. He suggested that we should have limited ourselves to assistance, maybe even to the defense of some specific places, so as not to cause any negative reaction. Therefore, he was arguing against any introduction of troops.

That was not only his personal opinion—it was the opinion of our General Staff. We held a lot of consultations in the General Staff. Even though the General Staff was a military organization, it was built on military-democratic principles. I was the First Deputy of the Chief of General Staff, and at the same time the head of the Main Operative Department which was in charge of everything having to do with military-political issues in the world, including the building of armed forces. I used to gather military officials and allow them to speak out freely, so that we could come to the truth. And the majority of them spoke against the introduction of troops. However, the political decision was made. And since the decision had been made, the General Staff came up with an alternative: let us introduce the troops, but let us not get involved in combat operations. But circumstances made this impossible. This is all I wanted to say.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Valentin. Vlad, do you have a quick question?

**VLAD ZUBOK:** It was fascinating to hear how many people spoke against this invasion; but certainly there were people who recommended the physical removal of Amin, and this factor probably was the greatest factor that influenced the decision to introduce troops—because otherwise the Afghan Army, or some detachments under Amin's control, could have offered resistance.



I have a question for General Shebarshin. We heard from some sources, including Lyakhovsky's book, that cables from Boris Ivanov played a role in convincing the Soviet leadership. We know very little about Boris Ivanov and his role in Afghanistan, but we know that he remained the only senior adviser that survived the rotation of advisers in October-December 1979. There is suspicion that he survived that rotation because he actively supported the Soviet intervention. Could you shed some light on that?

WESTAD: Leonid?

SHEBARSHIN: I am afraid that I am not in a position either to support or to contradict this version. You know, success has many relatives, and failure is always an orphan. I do not want to be an exception. [Laughter.] No, definitely, I do not know whether we were deviating from the general line of not interfering with our troops in Afghan affairs. Possibly yes, possibly not; I am afraid that the truth will be known not now, but at the day of the last judgment, when we will be able to ask those who were taking the decision. Ivanov is alive and well. He has his own view of those events. Exaggerations are possible no doubt about it; the situation dictated it—even demanded it. I am quite sure that everyone of us has been in a situation when, with the benefit of hindsight, we would feel that we were wrong in our assessments, and that we were acting under the influence of emotions.

And I am quite sure that our military colleagues were not so blameless as they are presenting themselves now. They were not united; they were also split. There were some people who welcomed the introduction of our troops in Afghanistan, and there were those who were

really and seriously opposed to it. I do not think that the KGB played any outstanding role in this affair.

**WESTAD:** Before turning to the American side and asking a little bit about what you observed, I would like to clear up any remaining questions on the planning and the decision making. Specifically, I want to turn to Karen and to Anatoly to address the political decisions that were made. We heard a great deal now, and in great detail—for which we are very grateful—about how the planning was done stage by stage. But what is difficult for an outsider such as myself to understand are the reasons behind the final decision. I want to ask both of you your opinion about the most important reason why, after all these problematic preliminary decisions that had been made over almost two years, in the end the leadership—not unanimously, but still with such force—came down on December 10th, it seems now, to the decision to invade. Anatoly, you want to go first?

**DOBRYNIN:** Well, I do not want to make a long analysis; probably I will just quote several documents which were not published before, but I think I could give you now.

On September 20th, Brezhnev stated rather bluntly in his report to the Politburo—and it is a Russian text, so I will not translate, but will let the translator do it; I will speak in Russian—"Events moved so fast that we had little opportunity to decide how we could get involved in those events from Moscow. Now our task is to decide what we can do from now on in order to secure our position in Afghanistan, and to strengthen our influence in that country. It is reasonable to believe that Soviet-Afghan relations will not change significantly as a result

of the recent changes in the situation, and will develop in the present direction. Amin will be pressured to do this by the current situation, and by the difficulties he faces now, and will face, for quite a long time. That notwithstanding, we will need to monitor his actions while working with him. The work will be extensive and quite complex and sensitive."

Here is one more interesting telegram in connection with an order our ambassador received to meet with Taraki and Amin and to try to persuade them by any means to show a sense of responsibility for the revolution: "In the name of saving the revolution"—this is from the letter to them—"you must unite and act in accord, from a united position." That was our Politburo's appeal to them. If they refuse to talk with each other, then our ambassador was instructed: "After consulting with Taraki, meet with Amin separately, and give him the same information."

I have one more interesting telegram. It is a response to another telegram, which, unfortunately, I have not seen, and I do not know where it came from. This telegram gives instructions. It is addressed to Puzanov, Pavlosky, Ivanov, and Gorelov—to four leading officials in Kabul. It says: "We cannot work on the assumption that Amin would be arrested by our battalion in Kabul, because it would be regarded as a direct interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan with long-term serious consequences."

**WESTAD:** Excuse me, Anatoly, what is the date on that one?

**DOBRYNIN:** September 13 or 15. I think it is on the 13th.

**BRUTENTS:** Is that a response to something else?

**DOBRYNIN:** Yes, it is a response to some other request. This is the response that was sent. I did not see the incoming telegram; this is the outgoing one.

Now let us go on. Here is one very interesting memo. I think it sheds some light on many of our questions here. It was written by Andropov, and addressed to Brezhnev. It exists only in one copy, was sent only to him, and was hand-written. There is no date on that. It seems like it was in the beginning of December, judging by the text. I thought I might just read it to you; it is approximately half a page long. He is writing to Brezhnev: "After the coup and the murder of Taraki in September of this year, the developments in Afghanistan assumed a character unfavorable for us. The situation in the government, the army, and in the state apparatus is aggravated. They are practically disorganized as a result of mass repressions carried out by Amin. At the same time we have been receiving information about Amin's behind-the-scenes activities which might mean his political reorientation to the West. He keeps his contacts with the American *chargé d'affaires* secret from us. He promised tribal leaders to distance himself from the Soviet Union and to pursue a neutral policy. In closed meetings, he attacks Soviet policy and actions of our specialists. Our ambassador was practically expelled from Kabul. As a result of that, there are rumors about disagreements between Amin and Moscow, and about a possibility of his anti-Soviet steps in the diplomatic corps in Kabul. Those developments had created, on the one hand, a danger of losing the achievements of the April revolution inside the country; and on the other hand, a threat to our positions in

Afghanistan. Now there is no guarantee that Amin, in order to secure his personal power, would not turn over to the West. An increase of anti-Soviet feelings among the Afghan population has been reported." This is a characteristic of the situation that developed by the beginning of December 1979. Then in the second paragraph he writes: "Recently a group of Afghan communists, who are now residing abroad, contacted us. In the process of consultations with Babrak Karmal and Sarwari we found out—they informed us officially—that they had worked out a plan for moving against Amin and for forming new state and party organs. However, Amin began mass arrests of the politically unreliable. Five hundred people were arrested, and three hundred of them were killed. In these circumstances, Babrak Karmal and Sarwari, without changing their plans for an uprising, appealed to us for assistance, including military assistance if needed. We have two battalions stationed in Kabul, so we can provide certain assistance if there is a need. However, just for an emergency, for extreme circumstances, we need to have a group of forces stationed along the border. If such an operation is carried out, it would allow us to solve the question of defending the achievements of the April revolution, resurrecting the Leninist principles of state and party building in the Afghan leadership, and strengthening our positions in that country." This is a memo for a discussion. I do not know Brezhnev's reaction to it, but judging by the further developments, it is quite clear.

I would like to add to what General Varennikov said. On December 8 there was a meeting in Brezhnev's office of "the three"—not "the four"—on Afghanistan. Now I will be reading in English. "In their argument for a military intervention in case Afghanistan is lost, Ustinov and Andropov cited dangers to the southern borders of the Soviet Union and a

possibility of American short-range missiles being deployed in Afghanistan and aimed at strategic objectives in Kazakhstan, Siberia, and other places." Then came the meeting of December 12. General Varennikov described everything in detail, so I do not need to repeat it.

I would like to point out one more thing: in the last month or month and a half before the invasion, the American factor was not constantly present in our so-called deliberations. In general, if you look at the situation in Afghanistan, we did not have any government-to-government channels to discuss developments in Afghanistan with the Americans. I am not speaking about the military side, or about the intelligence side. I am speaking of the diplomatic level. There was nothing like this at all. I can say that only at the very last moment, in December, this question emerged on the diplomatic level, and only in connection with the NATO decision [to deploy INF in Europe?]-and it was formulated with the worry in the back of our minds that there might be bases in Afghanistan. We thought that if Afghanistan was lost, then, as they say, the vacuum would be filled by the Americans. But overall, I would say, the American factor did not play that big a role until the very end. I am speaking about the political discussions in the Politburo. The exception is the discussion of Amin's possible turn to the West; that has already been noted here. There were no other discussions. Even if you look at the Politburo decisions on the introduction of troops that have been published, and that we have here, it is very interesting to note that America is almost never mentioned in any documents.

There are two possible explanations for this. One is that the Politburo still believed that they would be able to salvage their

relations with the Americans at some level. Our relations at the end of the Carter administration were unfortunately bad. Both sides share the blame equally; but there still was some hope. However, the final decision with regard to the United States was the following: "The risk of inaction was at least as great as the risk of action." That is as far as the American factor was concerned. In other words, what was at stake in Afghanistan was worth the risk. There was one more overall discussion on January 20 where Carter was mentioned, among other things; but the record of that discussion says: "Even though the Carter administration organizes a big campaign on the world scale against us, nonetheless, in our countermeasures against America, we should not allow Afghanistan to affect the wide range of issues in which we are involved together with the Americans." That was put into the decision. It was the last time it was said in the hope that something could have been repaired in the relationship. It was an internal document, and the U.S. government's actions were characterized in it very negatively. That document is very characteristic of our state of mind.

In all subsequent decisions in 1980, we never returned to that issue again. Moreover, we became very harsh in our line with regard to Afghanistan. In fact, it was written in one of the decisions that all attempts to negotiate a settlement on Afghanistan with the Americans were futile and hopeless. And then the events developed following their own logic. There was a campaign against us in your country. We were trying to defend ourselves—I mean the political side, of course.

So this was the way the events developed. And I agree with the General: the decision to introduce troops was very painful for us; it was preceded by a lot of deliberations difficult for both the political and the military sides; and foreign policy considerations played a big

role. Unfortunately, it all developed in such a way that by the beginning of 1980 we had nothing in common. You know the reasons for that situation.

Let me correct you a little about the SALT treaty. It was slightly different from what has been said here. First, we had the "splash"—the summit, the signing, the hugs. By the way, when they were hugging each other, I was standing right behind them, Gromyko was also standing there, and Grechko. Grechko asked him—

**BRUTENTS:** Ustinov.

**DOBRYNIN:** Ustinov, that's right. Ustinov asked Gromyko: "What do you think? Will they kiss each other?" [Laughter.] Gromyko responded: "I think they will!" Ustinov said: "No, they will not!" [Laughter.] But it turned out that Gromyko knew the state of mind of both leaders better. They did kiss after all. It was very unexpected for everybody. But after those tragic events of November and December, our relations became very bad.

You know our current assessment of the situation in Afghanistan very well. We discussed it in our Parliament recently. We can practice autoflagellation now; history has passed its judgment, and we are not going to dispute it. But still it would be nice to analyze what happened day by day, chronologically, and to find out what day-to-day considerations, rather than grand plans on the global scale—"grand designs"—were entertained by the two sides—the concrete issues that both sides dealt with month by month.

The last thing I would like to mention is this. One of you said something about the timetable. I was in Moscow in January; I was in the



hospital. I left on January 20. As always, I met with Brezhnev. Every time I came to Moscow I used to meet with Brezhnev so that he could give some instructions on how I should conduct myself in the United States. Gromyko joined us. He was laconic. He said, "Be careful, and advise us how to be careful—how to prevent Carter from getting us both into a lot of trouble. He is behaving like an elephant in a china shop now." That is what Gromyko said. I told Brezhnev what all this might mean for our relations. I understood that it might lead to a total disruption of our relations. But Brezhnev said to me: "Do not worry, Anatoly, we will end this war in three or four weeks." This was his farewell word to me. I did not argue; I did not know all the details. But it shows the state of mind of our leader then. I am sure that our military thought differently. But he, I do not know why, thought exactly so—that the war would end very soon. And that state of mind influenced very important decisions that were being made—and those that were not made as a result. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Anatoly.

BRUTENTS: What was your source? The meeting on December 8—

WESTAD: We all know Anatoly the diplomat; now we have been introduced to Anatoly the historian. I talked about not expecting any sensations here. I think we actually got a couple of them just now. These are completely new materials that nobody has ever seen before. At least for me, they make several of the loose pieces that I had concerning decision making on Afghanistan fall into place—particularly the December 2 memo from Andropov.

**DOBRYNIN:** I just mentioned that I do not know exactly the date. I presume it was the beginning of December.

**WESTAD:** Thank you. Karen, did you want to add something?

**BRUTENTS:** First, I would like to begin by paying my debt to Ilya. I did not respond to his question, and I apologize, Mr. President, but I need to respond.

Our first contact with the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was in 1966, when Taraki came to Moscow. After that our contacts were very rare. Our attitude to the party was very reserved, especially because there were all kinds of conflicts within the party itself. The party was split along social lines: the Khalquists represented the lowest strata of the population; the Parchamists represented the higher strata. You know that Babrak Karmal himself was from the upper class. They were people from the intelligentsia. The Khalquists were also very strong in the Army, because a military career was often the way out of the lower class. The fact that many Pushtuns considered Karmal "half-bred," because he had half Indian blood, played a role too. All this is very important in Afghanistan. This is a very brief summary; if you like, we can talk about it more after the session. I know for sure that he had Indian blood.

Now, let me just say one thing in regards to what Gary has said. From what you said, I understood that you knew more about Islamic fundamentalism in the United States than we did in the Soviet Union-- because I do not think that at that time anybody explained to our leadership what an ayatollah was. [Laughter.]

DOBRYNIN: Nobody asked. [Laughter.]

BRUTENTS: In any case, I have to tell you, they were not very interested. I have to tell you that in our country the study of Islam at the level of political and scholarly institutions had practically stopped. On the one hand, we probably thought that we had solved that problem once and for all. And indeed, we were very successful in that. On the other hand, perhaps, we did not want to draw attention to that problem. It is hard to say what the reason was. In any case, only a year after the Iranian events was the first department for studying Islam created. It was a return to the study of Islam. The Sector for Islamic Studies was created at the Institute of Eastern Studies.

Now to the substance of Afghanistan. I will not go into detail; I think some natural misrepresentations are possible here in terms of dates, names, positions, and the like—and maybe that is not the most important thing. The most important thing, in my opinion is the following. I think it has already been mentioned here that, already in March 1979, there was a very strongly held opinion in the Soviet leadership that introducing troops into Afghanistan was out of the question, the numerous requests of the Afghan leaders notwithstanding. However, taking that into account, it remains a mystery to me—I have already mentioned it today—why there were such sharp differences of opinion in the Politburo on March 17 and March 18, 1979. If you look at the documents—I see them here for the first time—practically everyone spoke in favor of introducing troops on the 17th. But everything had changed on the 18th. I cannot understand this—not in the framework of the general political position of that time, which I knew perfectly well. I have a vague guess—not more than that—that the situation in

Herat was perceived as desperate, and in the next 24 hours the assessment of that situation changed. That is possible. I remember very well the reaction of some of our leaders when the telegrams from Herat arrived. That was before all those discussions. Kosygin's reaction was very characteristic. And then a shift occurred. Of course, those who took part in those discussions have passed away, and we will not be able to say for sure. But both Kornienko and I noticed the shift sometime in October or November.

What dictated that shift? In my view—and I asked my American colleagues about it, but they are very stingy with responses in general, so they did not respond—what reaction did they expect from our side to the chain of events that occurred? They meant the augmentation of the U.S. military muscles in the region close to us. Meanwhile, I am deeply convinced—and there is a lot of evidence to support it—that security interests were predominant here; nothing else mattered. Of course, psychological and prestige factors played some role: retreat, losing Afghanistan, and the like. But the security considerations were predominant. The situation in Afghanistan was worsening. It was worsening in terms of the armed resistance. It was worsening in terms of the situation within the leadership. It has been said here already that Amin had shown himself to be an unacceptable figure for us at least twice. On the one hand, with his repressive, even sectarian, approach, he was undermining the regime on top of which he sat. On the other hand, his position was unclear. You could interpret that position in two different ways: some people saw it as a connection to the United States; some people saw it as the actions of a person used to acting and thinking independently, or at least more self-reliantly than we would prefer. Those two streams flowed together and resulted in our mistrust

toward him. There was also a third factor: U.S.-Soviet relations by that time had become so bad that they stopped being a deterring factor. Marshall Shulman expressed it perfectly on December 14. I want to give him credit for his insightfulness.

All of that led to the introduction of troops. I have tell you that some of the conversations that I heard then, and that I hear now—and that Kornienko was aware of—were along the lines of, "What have we got to lose?" Everything had already been lost. And they were right. What are we discussing here? What was Afghanistan for us? It was a *coup de grace* for *détente*, nothing else. There were grounds for this point of view.

Now, let me turn to a slightly different issue—one more detail, without which it would be impossible to understand this process. It concerns the situation in the leadership. I have already mentioned that before. In March, the issue was debated at the expert level, and the experts were unanimously and unquestionably against introducing troops, and that opinion was entirely in line with the leadership's opinion. In December, the decision was taken without the experts' input. I am not talking about the telegrams from Kabul, and all that—that is a different issue. The experts were not involved. The decision was made on a very narrow basis, without taking all the factors into account. If you read the documents we have here, you will see that there was no clarity in their approach. One document says that the revolution had a very narrow base, another document says that the revolution had a wide base. And the same people signed both documents. The same people who signed those materials in December wrote in March that the internal situation in Afghanistan was such, and that the base of the regime was so narrow, that it was out of the question to introduce troops. In

March it was pointed out that the counterrevolution had been based internally; but in December there emerged a tendency to explain everything in terms of external interference. The analysis of the situation was limited to social and class analysis. Meanwhile, the struggle itself assumed a religious and nationalistic character on the part of the opposition. All that had not been taken into account because, in my opinion—and I might be mistaken—there was no real expert-level discussion.

Valentin Ivanovich mentioned it very briefly, and it is not very well known, but the military—some of them, at least—objected very strongly. I do not know if they discussed the political factors, but they spoke very actively about the military considerations. By the way, they were saying that it would not succeed. As far as I know, the military argued that it would not be possible to station troops just in garrisons; that events would pull the troops into combat in the field.

Someone asked: "Why 70,000?" Let me ask in return: why, in Vietnam, did you not do as Westmoreland requested—that he be given one million troops?

So, I would like to repeat: there was a complex combination of factors that led to that sad outcome. Thank you.

**WESTAD:** We should thank you, Karen, for that very informative and extremely fascinating outline that you just gave.

I want to turn to the American side now for comments and questions. We are going to take a break in about 15 minutes—perhaps a bit less than that—and then we will come back here for a final session, which, as I have told some of you individually, you can make as long or as short as you want. It is really an occasion for you, the veterans,

to ask questions, and to receive answers, that you have not been getting so far. I will just sit back and enjoy that session, and whenever you are ready, we will go for a stroll.

Who wants to start? Stan actually indicated a minute ago that he wanted to say something. Stan?

**TURNER:** If I can, I will wait till after the break, so that I can have all the time I want. [Laughter.]

I have heard many descriptions of possible relationships between Amin and the CIA, and of the United States and its designs on Afghanistan. I would like to start with a view that Leonid and I share: that people in our business are often accused of doing all kinds of things we never have the capability of doing. And I would refer to the comment Gary made earlier that when the Shah approached us to do something undercover with respect to Afghanistan, we turned our back on that. I would suggest to you that while this conference is on Afghanistan, if you put it in the context of 1978 and early 1979, Afghanistan was not very high on the American foreign policy agenda. We are focusing on it entirely here. We had lots of other things that were of much greater concern to us. There were very few Americans who had been to Afghanistan. It is not an area in our proximity, or in our sphere of influence. The suggestion that NATO was talking about a base in Afghanistan, or that we were talking about short-range missiles in Afghanistan—or even that we were talking about a military intervention in Iran or Afghanistan, or listening posts in Afghanistan—is way beyond the scope of our thinking in those days. While we are now something of an Indian Ocean power, we were not so then. And even today we are limited by the great distances from our country, and by the general lack

of base facilities. You overextended yourself in Cuba; our trying to set up any military installations in that area of the world would have been analogous. For instance, whenever we thought about possible military activity in Iran, we remembered your 1921 treaty with Iran, and your right thereby to intervene, and we looked at the distance from the Caucasus to the Zagros Mountains [?] and the control of the oil fields of the Persian Gulf, and we knew that, unless we turned to nuclear weapons, there would be no way for us to compete militarily in that area, or in Afghanistan.

As far as the CIA and its relations with Amin are concerned, I would ask you to step back and recognize that starting in 1976—1975, actually—covert actions—undercover activities like this—were in bad repute in the United States—as was the CIA—as a result of the Church committee hearings, which roundly criticized past activities of the CIA. As far back as 1974, our Congress had passed a law saying that any time we were going to undertake one of these dirty tricks or covert action campaigns, the President must approve it and must inform the Congress. When I got there in 1977, there was no strong inclination on the part of the Carter administration to exercise covert activities. But, interestingly—and I will talk more about this when we get into the post-invasion period—the CIA itself was running very scared having had this considerable criticism, and was reluctant, even in the case of Afghanistan after the invasion, to get involved in a major covert activity that might backfire and lead to another Church Committee investigation, and another series of criticisms of the CIA.

In the summer of 1979 we did go to the President and get approval for a covert action for Afghanistan. We called that a "finding," because the law says that the President must find it in the national



interest to approve this action. And the President found it was in the national interest to do an undercover activity in Afghanistan in July of 1979. That activity was propaganda in support of the insurgents, and medical support for the insurgents. It did not include armed support, the provision of arms, training, and so forth. I can assure you, if it had, we would have had considerable trouble with the Congress, because the Congress had to be informed. I see Jim [Hershberg] smiling, because there are some loopholes in this, but—

**BRUTENTS:** You did not need to do it, because you had Saudi Arabia and—

**TURNER:** No, no; well, we can get into that detail later, I do not want to digress now. But there is no question that the finding in the summer of 1979 was revealed to the Congress in its full extent promptly, and they would have been very concerned about our moving into any kind of undercover military activity in a country about which there was not any great concern at that time. Afghanistan was not in the newspapers; people in the Congress were not upset about it, and so on. In my opinion, we could not have easily gotten away with anything like that at that time. Our covert activities in Afghanistan until December 1979 were limited to rather insipid actions intended to give *some* kind of support to the insurgents; but they really were of a very limited nature.

**SICK:** Can I add to that?

**WESTAD:** Yes, sure, Gary; go ahead.

**SICK:** I am not a specialist on covert action, and I am not a specialist of Afghanistan; but I did happen to go with Brzezinski to Pakistan after the invasion when he was beginning to talk to people about a—what did he call it?

**SHULMAN:** "Arc of crisis."

**SICK:** That's right. I was in the Khyber Pass with Brzezinski, standing right beside him. [Laughter.] Let me tell you that story some time.

**DOBRYNIN:** You were standing together?

**SICK:** It wasn't exactly the way the pictures made it look. The news reports actually missed the really good story, and reported falsely what actually happened. But, in any event, because I was going along with him, I had a meeting in Pakistan with the CIA chief of station. I can tell you from my own experience that they were just beginning to think about how to conduct a covert action in Afghanistan. This was after the invasion. If there had been any infrastructure there; if there had been any planning; if there had been anything else—that would have been very evident to me, and to anybody else who was involved at that time. There simply was not. So, regardless of what the perceptions were, there was no U.S. covert action in advance of the invasion.

One other quick point: Karen mentioned that he found this decision making process extremely confusing. I do too. The more I have listened today, the more confused I have become about what it was. Anatoly was saying that U.S. activity was important at one time, and then not at another; other people said the relationship with the U.S. was important,

and others said it was not. But one thing jumps out at me as having been very important: the meeting between the [U.S.] ambassador—the *chargé*—and Amin. On one hand, we are hearing from some people on the Russian side that there Amin was keeping his connection secret from Moscow, and others—Leonid, I believe—said, "Of course we knew about this immediately." and "we saw it even as a deliberate provocation." This only confuses me all the more; but worries about Amin did appear to reverberate in Moscow, perhaps because of the overall mind set. Something was going wrong in Afghanistan; the Soviet position was being lost; and people were grasping at one explanation or another to justify some kind of action. But I found the decision making, as described in these various documents, extremely confusing.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Gary, and Stan. Geir, very briefly?

**GEIR LUNDESTAD:** This is all very well and quite interesting, but I do have a slight problem created by the minutes we have here of the meeting of the Special Coordinating Committee on December 17, 1979, which had a considerable attendance. In attendance were at least three people who are here today: Stansfield Turner, William Odom, and Gary Sick. The minutes record a decision that "we will explore with the Pakistanis and British the possibility of improving the financing of the army and communications of the rebel forces to make it as expensive as possible for the Soviets to continue their efforts." In addition to this, there is clearly a reference also in Brzezinski's memoirs—I am sure that Jim [Hershberg] can give the exact page reference—[Laughter]

**HERSHBERG:** Pages 426-427. [Laughter.]

**LUNDESTAD:** --to something going on before December. I feel there is something missing here. You are downplaying what was going on.

**WESTAD:** Bill, on this?

**ODOM:** I think Geir put his finger on some important evidence here. The general context for most of the policy community in Washington at the time was very much as Gary described it. I had the impression--and I think Brzezinski did increasingly, too, maybe even earlier than I did--that we were in bad shape in the Persian Gulf region.

We had that impression because in the spring and the fall of 1977 we essentially launched four intersecting, self-defeating policies in that region. Let me name them for you. The first was our global policy on arms transfers. Iran we considered very important. Marshall Shulman just told me after the last session about attending a meeting that the Shah hosted in 1974, I think it was, and the impression most of the world had at that time was that this was a terribly stable and a terribly important regime. But one of the policies that the Carter administration came in committed to very strongly was to reduce arms sales. Although it was a global policy, its greatest impact would be on countries like Iran, because they bought most of the weapons. So we were suddenly telling this very important ally, "We will not sell you arms any more--or, at least, we will not sell you nearly any many as you want." At the same time, we launched negotiations with the Soviet Union on conventional arms transfer talks. We did these two things in parallel, to try to make them fit. Third, we launched the Indian Ocean Arms Talks. We had a large edge in naval presence in the Gulf at that time; therefore, to negotiate equivalence appeared to be a unilateral

concession on the U.S. part. The next policy was non-proliferation, as it applied to Pakistan. Pakistan also became a victim of arms transfer policy. We said, "We will no longer sell you so many conventional weapons." And the Pakistanis said, "But we need them for the balance with India." At the same time we were saying, "And you better not build a nuclear weapon." Well, I think it was possible to get Pakistan to hold off on their nuclear weapons program if you sold them conventional arms; but if you refused to sell them conventional arms, you were encouraging them to accelerate their nuclear program.

Now, as those policies began to have their effects, you could see the intelligence and the Embassy reporting coming in from many sources—and I watched this all through the summer of 1977 and the fall of 1977—indicating the reaction of the local governments in the region: the Saudis, the Yemenis, the Somalis, Pakistanis, Omanis, and everyone else. They said, "These Americans have gone crazy. They are following the British west of the Suez. These policies do not make any sense. They are essentially turning this region over to the Soviet Union." But if you made a policy recommendation on our side to the effect that we should be more active in this area, the answer you got from the Middle East people in the State Department was, "Oh, the people out there do not want us." The reason they were saying they did not want us was that they concluded that we were leaving! To say openly that they did not want us was like telling the Soviets, "Well, we are not really your enemy; we may even, in a few weeks or months, have to make the best deal we can with you."

So, those policies were really coming together to hurt us, and, of course, the collapse of Iran was the biggest blow. I think that explains why some of us were focusing on Afghanistan. I, myself, in

watching the intelligence on Afghanistan, remember writing a memorandum in August—we on the NSC staff had a responsibility to write short notes to Brzezinski each night—saying that, looking objectively at the high degree of Soviet activity in this area, we should consider that the intervention had already taken place *de facto*. A whole range of institutional developments there had an inexorable momentum that would lead to intervention. You could see the Soviets going into that area. My reaction, and that of others, was that, if they were going to get in there, we could cause them some trouble. That would be a very good thing to do.

Quite honestly, I did see a kind of implicit Soviet strategy in taking advantage of the situation in the Horn. But I could not see one with respect to Afghanistan. I thought it was an absolutely stupid strategy for the Soviet Union to make a big investment there. So, I thought that if they were going to do it, it would, objectively speaking, be a very good thing from the U.S. viewpoint.

Now, let me just end with a question for the Soviet side. I found Karen Brutents's claim that the Soviets thought there was nothing else to lose in U.S.-Soviet relations very compelling. I believe Anatoly said that, too. At our last meeting in Fort Lauderdale, General Gribkov reported that, in the view of the General Staff and the Defense Ministry, they had achieved a rough equivalence with the United States by 1979. You could see that the Soviets had more confidence about the central strategic balance in 1978. Since they had more confidence about the strategic level, the General Staff could turn its attention to improving its theater operational capabilities and war plans in Europe and elsewhere. That strikes me as a strong expression of strategic confidence. To what degree did we create the misimpression that there

was nothing to lose in the U.S.-Soviet relationship by signing these pieces of paper saying we were equivalent? Had we left ourselves no option but to accept your going into Afghanistan? Did you feel that the correlation of forces enabled you to treat us with disdain, more or less as Brezhnev did in his communications to Carter? I certainly sensed a strategic optimism in military circles, and perhaps in the Politburo, too.

**DOBRYNIN:** I just quoted to you the decision of the Politburo after the invasion, made after Carter made a number of very anti-Soviet statements concerning our internal domestic affairs, saying that we should do everything possible not to spoil the broad and wide relations we had with the United States. That statement was made only for the members of the Politburo. So I must dispute what you are telling us. U.S.-Soviet relations were on our minds, and were very important. But there was not a lot of optimism. Brezhnev was very glad to have signed the {SALT II} treaty; but other events, such as the Cuban brigade affair, signaled major problems in our relations. And, finally, it became very clear that there would be no SALT. The United States was not going to ratify it. It was very clear; you know how it happened. So, this question about the strategic relationship was rather irrelevant in the minds of the Politburo at that time. We signed a very good treaty, but it went out the window.

**ODOM:** Can I ask Karen Brutents to respond also?

**WESTAD:** I think we will have to get back to that question in the next session, because we really need to take a break now. But before we take

that break, I wanted Stan to have a last word.

**TURNER:** Geir, the phrase you read to us does not say, "To improve U.S. financing and arming."

**LUNDESTAD:** That is right.

**TURNER:** And there is no question that the Pakistanis were doing that at that time. We were not participating in that. But at the point about which we are speaking now—just before the invasion—we were anticipating that we may want to get a covert action finding from the President and from the Congress, and then join with the Pakistanis in this activity.

**BRUTENTS:** May I regard this as supporting my statement that you did not need to be involved directly, because somebody else was doing it for you?

**WESTAD:** We will take a quarter of an hour break, and then we will assemble here for the last session of the day.



SESSION 4

QUESTIONS

**WESTAD:** Okay, we should get going again for the last session for today, which we are going to structure in a somewhat different way from the others. This is really a session in which we open up for the veterans from both sides to pose questions and get answers to each other on issues that they feel have not been addressed satisfactorily so far. You can make this as long or as short as you want to. According to the schedule, we are going to have cultural event—Sigrid will return to explain to you what that is all about after we break—and then we will have dinner at 7:45. It is up to you how much time you want to use for the session.

I made one promise. It is the only promise I made to someone who is not here as a veteran from either side. That is to Jim Hershberg, who wanted to take up one brief point that was not addressed at the end of the last session. So I will give the floor first to Jim, and then for any of you from either side who would like to pose questions to the other side. Jim?

**HERSHBERG:** You can consider this a very brief extension of the previous session, so that it does not violate your principles.

This is to follow-up on Karen's comments, and to try to reach closure on the issue that was being discussed at the end of the last session. Stan will be glad to hear that, neither in the briefing book, nor in the hundreds of pages of documents from the Teheran Embassy that did not make it into the briefing book, was there any evidence of a

direct CIA role in arming the Afghan rebels prior to December 1979. However, it is becoming very clear that the issue was not direct CIA covert operations to arm the rebels, but the American attitude toward the Pakistanis, the Saudis, the Egyptians, and now we see the British efforts to support the rebels prior to December 1979. Bill's comment indicates that, at least by December 1979, some in the administration thought it in the American interest to make the Soviets pay as high a price as possible in Afghanistan. Perhaps we could reach closure on this issue from the American side if you could describe the administration's attitude and policy towards these other actors, who were, as we now know, providing military support to the rebels in the period prior to the invasion?

**WESTAD:** Stan?

**TURNER:** I do not recall any Saudi or Egyptian activity. My recollection is that when we did get going after the invasion, we had to sell the program to the Egyptians and the Saudis. They were not already on board. It was a negotiation that we undertook very rapidly once we made the decision to go.

As far as the Pakistani effort is concerned, we were not discouraging it, but I do not believe that we were not feeding it, or that we were financing it. Doing otherwise would have contravened our laws. Now, I do not know if some people on our side were laughing at our laws or not. But at any rate, Pakistan was not engaged in major activity. The Pakistanis did not have the wherewithal to make it a very big thing. But they certainly were in contact with the rebels on the other side.

WESTAD: First on my list is Marshall.

SHULMAN: My first intention is to respond to your question earlier about how things appeared on the American side as the events in Afghanistan were approaching their climax. I will make some comments, but I wanted to make a modest disclaimer at the outset: I was not myself a major actor in these events. I was not in the most important seat of action, either, in the State Department. This will perhaps recall to you Winston Churchill's comment about Clement Atlee. Churchill said that Atlee was a very modest man who had a great deal to be modest about. [Laughter.] But I would like to preface my account with just a few observations on some of the matters that were discussed before. I also want to pay tribute to the contributions of our Russian colleagues. I think the very high-level reconstruction of events that we had today was very important. I want them to know that we appreciate it.

Now, a few words on the question of Amin and whether he was or was not an American agent. It seems to me, to put the issue in those terms, is a little too black and white. What seems to me more plausible—and this is especially strengthened by my reading of the excerpt from the book by Diego Cordovez and Selig Harrison that Malcolm included in the readings, was that, throughout that period, Amin seemed to be searching for other orientations. It was quite possible that he was seeking some role more independent of the Soviet Union, either through the Pakistanis, because of that abortive invitation to Zia to come to Kabul, or through his contacts with the Americans. This did not necessarily mean that he was an agent; but it may be that in his maneuvering he was seeking a more independent role for himself. It is clear that this could have been misinterpreted from Moscow. It could also have

represented a danger to Moscow. But the issue should not be limited to the question of whether he or was not formally an American agent. I think the issue is more complex than that.

Secondly, it is interesting to me that, on several occasions in the post-war period, we had crises which were not primarily a function of the territorial strategic significance of the area involved, but of the nature of the event that took place. Let me illustrate this with Korea. In the case of Korea, there had been an examination in the United States of whether Korea was of strategic significance to the United States. The finding of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was that it was not critical. The question that was put to the Joint Chiefs for examination was whether South Korea was critical to U.S. security in the event of an attack as part of a general war. The answer was that it was not. And that was what led to the speeches by Dean Acheson, General MacArthur, and others, that indicated that South Korea was not in the defense perimeter of the United States. But what was important in the event was not South Korea's territorial significance: it was the nature of the attack. *That* was critical; that determined the response. Aggression across the border seemed to be an event that we could ignore, and that we had to respond to. That was the sense in which fighting the Korean war came to be seen as in the American interest.

Afghanistan was a similar case. Afghanistan was not thought to be a place of primary strategic concern to the United States, and several of us here have spoken of the fact that it was not on our front burner. But, in a way, it was the nature of the attack that galvanized the response, and that explains how vehement the response was. It was the first instance in which the Soviet Union had used its forces across the border outside the Warsaw Pact area. It also fitted into one of the

streams of thought within the American government—that the Soviet Union was engaged in a program of strategic expansion.

So a lesson to draw from these experiences is that the response to an event may not be determined simply by the question of whether there is oil in the area concerned, whether a narrow sea passage is implicated, or whether the area has other strategic significance. Sometimes it is the nature of the attack that tends to determine the scale of the response.

A third general observation I would like to make has to do with the decision making process as it has been described in the documents and in the discussions we have had here. What comes through to me very strongly in the accounts is that bodies or institutions such as the Politburo, the General Staff, the KGB, and the International Department of the Central Committee were far less important than the positions of two men in the process: Andropov and Ustinov. I recognize that Gromyko was a player, too; but as I understand it, a small group of one or two people took the lead on that issue, and the Politburo followed. Thus when Andropov and Ustinov concluded that the Soviet Union should not interfere, others held back from disagreeing. When they decided to send in troops, others went along. It was not a Politburo decision as such. Now, we do not know a great deal, I guess, about their personal feelings, and what led them to hold the views they held; but the important thing is that to explain this essentially as a *Politburo* matter tends to mislead us a little bit as to the institutional character of the decision making process. As happens in politics in other countries also, to some extent, when you have a very strong figure with a lot of political will and a lot of testosterone, he tends to push his way through, and other people often do not interfere in the process.

From the psychological point of view--and from the political point of view--it is necessary to take that into account, rather than to make the mistake that diplomatic historians sometimes make, which is to make the whole process seem more tidy and rational in retrospect than it really was in practice.

I come back now to the main point: how it looked in the period leading up to the intervention at Christmas of 1979. As we witnessed the successive missions that we described--Epishev's, Pavlovsky's, and Poputin's before that, among others--which I probably attributed too much significance to at the time--it was evident that something was building up for a long time, and that something was going to happen there. What was going to happen I did not know. But in the months of October and November--particularly in the latter part of November--I was beginning to get briefings three times a day from our I&R intelligence people, who were relating stuff they were getting from the other agencies. They would bring in the maps and the charts and would go over it all. There was a series of events that were partly puzzling. There were movements of transport planes; there was unloading of what we called cartridges, carrying compartments for transport aircraft--onto a field nearby--

**ODOM:** Containers?

**SHULMAN:** Yes, but there is a name for them. Anyway, large containers were unloaded onto airfields. Some of them were along the border near Termez, where the headquarters was established, and elsewhere. And then the next day they would be gone. Then there were reports of call-ups of reservists in the Turkmen military district; people were called up for a

90-day period of service, and then nothing much would happen to them. It was puzzling. It was all very unclear. A lot was going on, but it was not clear what.

Now, this was a period, as Stan and Gary have said, when the American government was preoccupied elsewhere. After November 4th, the Iranian hostage issue was, of course, the hot political issue within the United States. With the election coming on, it was getting a lot of attention. Cy Vance was out somewhere traveling in connection with this; Warren Christopher was somewhere else. The top leadership of the State Department was preoccupied with other matters. As I was getting more and more excited watching what was happening in Afghanistan, I began to cry, "Hey, something is going on here." But it was very hard to get anybody's attention. In any case, the State Department was not the most important place to be at that moment. The White House was the critical scene of action. But it was clear that something was going on. Matters were coming to a head. All the logic pointed toward some kind of action from the Soviet Union. I did not know what would happen; but it was increasingly clear that *something* was going to happen.

At that time, and under instructions from the Secretary, at least on five occasions in the period leading up to Christmas I was responsible for communicating with the Soviet Embassy in Washington, or for sending communications to Moscow, saying that this was a very serious matter, and that our reaction would be very serious if anything dramatic happened. But it was true, as we have said, that at that time relations between the two countries were very bad; that they were declining; and that they did not carry much weight. In any case, I had the feeling, which I have recorded somewhere in my testimony to Congress, that what the American reaction would be was not cutting much

ice with the Soviets anyway—that Moscow was preoccupied with the disintegrating situation in Afghanistan, and that that was the really important thing. My guess is that, in the minds of Ustinov and Andropov, that was the critical question. The United States was really irrelevant to that, I believe. I recall, for example, on one occasion, when we were entertaining a man who was visiting Washington (and who is now a Deputy Minister of Defense). We sat him down in our kitchen, and said to him: "Do not underestimate the reaction; there will be a powerful reaction in this country." But there was no sense that that would have any effect whatsoever.

I think the important thing was that, when the time came to react afterwards, there was obviously a strong personal reaction from the President. People often misread the Frank Reynolds interview that we saw last night, in which the President was quoted as saying, "I have learned more about the Soviet Union in the last couple of week than I did in the last four years." I would not take that literally. My reading is that that was simply a bit of southern hyperbolae. He was saying, in effect, that he was damn mad. He had no illusions about the Soviet Union before that; it did not really change his mind about the Soviets. He did not think they were any damn good anyway, before that. So I would not hold him literally to that statement. But it was an emotional reaction.

I do not think that it really cost us SALT. I should say that Cy Vance has a different opinion on this point. His feeling was that, had it not been for Afghanistan, there still would have been a possibility of getting SALT ratified. I did not think so. I thought that the case was lost already. But in any case, it would have been an uphill battle at the very best without Afghanistan. The important thing, in my



judgment, was that the whole sequence of events—even before the Vienna summit—would have doomed it. It came too late. By the time Vienna came, it was too late for any real dialogue. The impression left by the communiqué of orderly discussion was totally misleading. The two sides read prepared statements. The efforts to have a meeting of Defense Ministers came to naught at that point. It was too late, really, for any kind of personal chemistry to make a substantial difference in the situation. We had gone through some very tough issues, especially with respect to theater nuclear forces. The final two-track decision came around the same time as the formal decision of the Politburo on December 12 to invade Afghanistan. The timing was off. The tragedy was that, by that time, there really was no opportunity left to try to moderate the relationship to any substantial degree. Thank you.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Marshall. Mark?

**GARRISON:** I got some clarification this afternoon for a question that has bothered me for several years now, and that is the question of the dog that did not bark in Washington in the first three weeks of December of 1979. That is to say, given the information that was available about what the Soviets were doing—and preparing to do—in Afghanistan, why did not the United States at the highest level say something to the Soviet leadership at the highest level, even if it would have been in vain? It always seemed to me that that would have been a useful thing to do. I discount the possibility that it was incompetence. I would not lay that charge at the door of my colleagues in Washington.

**SICK:** Why not? [Laughter.]

**GARRISON:** Let me illustrate why this question arose in my mind. On December 13th, we received in Moscow a letter about the Kampuchean border from Carter to Brezhnev that we were supposed to pass on to the Foreign Ministry, which we did. If you were going to send letters about Kampuchea, why not also send a letter about Afghanistan?

Marshall, I think, has illuminated some of the reasons for us here. He pointed out that it was the nature of the action in Afghanistan that caused the serious problem, which suggests that, to some extent, we were still operating under the assumption that Afghanistan was more or less in the Soviet sphere of influence, and that while we might object to actions intended to protect Soviet influence there, they would not necessarily lead to disastrous consequences. And, of course, he mentioned Washington's preoccupations, and the numerous lower-level representations that were made.

Bill Odom, in the previous session, illuminated another possible reason why the White House may not have taken any action to tell the Soviets not to do it when he said that in August, as he was predicting that the Soviets would intervene in Afghanistan, he personally thought that might not be such a bad thing, because we could cause them a lot of trouble, and we could beat them over the head with it.

So now I think I understand completely why the dog did not bark.

[Laughter.]

I do have a question, however, following up on Marshall's comment about what we have heard about Soviet decision making. Marshall said that we now realize that it was an Andropov-Ustinov decision, primarily. I am wondering whether we have the kind of evidence of Ustinov's involvement in this that we have of Andropov's. Anatoly read a document that made it clear that Andropov pushed this decision onto Brezhnev. We

do not have any indication, as far as I know, that Ustinov took a similar position, rather than being pushed into it by Brezhnev's decision based on Andropov's input.

WESTAD: Thank you, Mark. Gary?

SICK: Just one very brief addition to what Marshall said: I came in the middle of this, but I think you used the example of Korea as a case where the United States expected something less, or thought that they could live with something less, but when the reality of the magnitude of the decision took place, the United States had to respond. I would simply offer one other example: Iraq and the invasion of Kuwait. If Iraq had, in fact, settled for extending its control of the oil fields in the north of Kuwait—which is what people largely expected—and if their invasion had been limited and oriented strictly toward the control of those resources, probably Saddam would have gotten away with it. In fact, many of us who were monitoring the situation at the time simply could not understand Saddam's behavior, because we thought it was fairly clear that he could take small actions and be successful. Instead, he tried to do far too much, which then provoked the response. I do not know what the lesson is here; maybe it is simply that our early warning capabilities should be taken more seriously, and we should send clearer messages at an earlier stage. Or we may simply have very seriously misread the intentions of the other party. In this case, we seriously underestimated what Saddam really had in his mind.

In Afghanistan, I think we seriously underestimated what the Soviet Union had in mind, in terms of its interests and so forth. We underestimated the kinds of things that they might do. In that sense,

there was a miscalculation on our part about their objectives, and we did not really understand their action. It might have been useful for the Soviets also to signal to the United States just how seriously they viewed this in advance, so that the United States was not so shocked and surprised when the thing happened. There was a clear misunderstanding—a clear misperception, I think—on both sides, of what they could expect from the other.

**WESTAD:** Bill, and then Leonid, in answer to Mark's question.

**ODOM:** I just want to make two brief points in response to Marshall, and somewhat to Mark Garrison. I do not want to leave the impression in the record that we all agree with this. The impression I get from Marshall—and little less so from Mark—is that this was all a great disaster, and that the fact that we did not do things differently from 1977 to 1981 was a big mistake. I do not share this view at all. If we had done things differently, the Cold War might still be on; we might still have the nuclear arms race; lots of things terrible things might have transpired that did not transpire. I want to be sure that that view is a part of the record here.

The other point for the record, I think, should be that it is not extraordinary for two men—or for one man—to have a lot of testosterone and force decision making in the Politburo. Every major decision since 1917 was made by some senior Bolshevnik ramming it down other Bolshevniks' throats. What we have here is just one more example of an extremely well-known and much-studied decision process, which many in the Soviet studies field in the West had tried to convince themselves had given way to a new form of decision making. What we are seeing, in fact, is that

it had not.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Bill. I think it was important to get that for the record. Leonid?

**SHEBARSHIN:** This is about decision making in the Soviet Union, and especially about this specific decision to send troops into Afghanistan. I am afraid that our verdict that only two persons were responsible for the decision—Andropov and Ustinov—is not well-founded. We lack evidence. We ignore, for instance, the evidence of certain Mr. Shelest, who was a member of the Politburo, and was one of the insiders. In his memoirs, he writes, first, about Brezhnev's flippancy in external affairs matters. He said that, "I was surprised how lightly he took external matters." Second, Shelest is sure that the decision to introduce our troops into Afghanistan was taken by Brezhnev under the influence of Mr. Suslov, who somehow escapes any mention in our discussions, though he was, in fact, the second-ranking member of the Politburo, and no major decision could have been initiated—and least of all, taken—without his consent. Brezhnev, even in 1979, was under the predominant influence of Suslov. So, I think, we have some ground for doubt about the role of Andropov and Ustinov. That is my opinion.

**WESTAD:** Valentin, please?

**VARENNIKOV:** I totally support Bill's remarks about the fact that nothing catastrophic happened in 1979. But at the same time I do not share Marshall's view that it was not the introduction of troops into Afghanistan that undermined SALT. I do not believe that the fragile but

hopeful situation in which the world found itself in 1979 was broken because of Afghanistan.

Second, I think that it is an appropriate time for our side to pose the following question: in the American view, what were the reasons of the Soviet introduction of troops in Afghanistan? What were the causes? You said here that it was an intervention—an aggression, as a part of intervention. All of this implies acquisitiveness, or the extraction of some goods for oneself: political, material, or something else. Nothing like that was present, or even desired. And our leaders suffered before they made that decision. What kind of intervention are you talking about? There was a treaty. There were many requests to introduce the troops. Even you admit that there were requests. What kind of intervention was that? It is strange for me to hear that. So I would like to pose this question: what, in your view, was the main reason for our introduction of troops into Afghanistan? What did the Americans think?

We are saying that our main reason for introducing the troops was to help the Afghan people stabilize the situation, and to ensure our own security—the security of the Soviet Union—in the south, taking into consideration the harsh, tense context of the Cold War. The Americans could have play tricks with us there. However, as far as we, the military, were concerned, we did not expect anything serious there. The politicians did, though.

If you Americans were worried that something bad might happen in the area near Afghanistan, then surely you saw that the Soviet Union was preparing troops. It is impossible that the CIA did not see the preparations for the introduction of troops, especially after December 10 and December 12, when the final decision was made. On the 14th our

operative group was in Termez. The CIA must have known this. It simply is not possible that the CIA did not know this. Of course the CIA knew. If you were guided by your interest in peace in the world, then you had to prevent the Soviet Union from taking that misstep. Why did you not prevent us? Because, as you said yourself, the dog did not bark—because the Americans had an interest in us getting stuck in Afghanistan, and paying the greatest possible price for that, politically, morally, and socially, militarily, and in all other respects. This is what it was all about.

I would like to add something about Saddam Hussein. This is behind us, of course, but it is interesting nevertheless. The Soviet Union refrained from taking a step that could have put the United States in a very complicated situation. What kind of step? The Soviet Union did not advise Saddam Hussein. What could the Soviet Union advise him to do? I will tell you. When you were staging your troops in Saudi Arabia over several months, one unit after another—flying them in, unloading, setting up tents, and so on—you felt very secure. Nobody bothered you. At that point, two or three months before the end of deployment, Saddam Hussein should have attacked you with his combat-ready forces. If he came in contact with your ground troops, the American Air Force would not have been able to do anything—because he had many tank divisions there: very powerful, combat-ready tank divisions. It would have been a nightmare for the Americans—something like Pearl Harbor, I assure you. A second option, which could have also been proposed by the Soviets, was the following: when you were near the end of your deployment in the Persian Gulf, we could have advised Saddam Hussein to quickly withdraw his troops inside his state borders. And you would have been left there like that, like a naked king. There

would have been no enemy. This is what he should have been done. We, being noble as we are, did not do it to you Americans. [Laughter.] But you Americans did not advise the Soviet Union not to get into Afghanistan. This is what I wanted to add.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Valentin. I would expect that somebody from the American side would like address this. But I have Sergei Tarasenko on my list.

**SERGEI TARASENKO:** Thank you. I would like to sound a somewhat cynical note, and pose a somewhat provocative question. I was involved in this at a very late stage only, when we began receiving protests from Mark—from the Embassy. By the way, these protests were very calm. There were so many other hot topics; these protests were rather formal. For instance, the U.S. Embassy merely pointed out that our presence was increasing. We did not feel that these protests were very serious, or that you were trying to exert a lot of pressure. This was the attitude, at least at our working level in the Foreign Ministry.

At a later stage, after the invasion and the U.S. response, we had to defend our position. We created something like a fire brigade in the Ministry, and I was a part of that fire brigade. We had to invent all kinds of arguments to defend our position. I thought that the weakest point in our defensive strategy—in our chess game—was when we murdered Amin. It was a bit uncomfortable to say that Amin invited us in, and then to go in and kill him immediately. [Laughter.] I thought another option was possible. There was Babrak Karmal; there were coup plans; there was a reserve brigade that was waiting for our orders to engage in combat—would it not have been possible to keep an appearance of loyalty



to Amin for some period of time, then to introduce the troops—to assist Amin—and then, in three weeks or so, have Amin suffer some kind of accident? For instance, his plane or helicopter could have crashed, or something of that sort. That might have made more sense, and it would have made it easier for us. It would have made it more difficult for you to “roll the barrel,” as the Russian saying goes, and to blame us for that. In that case everything would have been fine. But as it happened, our position was very weak.

I would like to know why that particular option was chosen: the simultaneous introduction of troops, and the murder of Amin? Maybe our leadership wanted to economize—to deal with all problems at once, and then begin with a clean slate? [Laughter.] But my feeling was that had we chosen a slower, longer path, it would have made it easier for us and harder for the Americans. Thank you.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Sergei. We have five minutes left and three people on the list: Gary, Stan, and Bill. Gary?

**SICK:** I will take less than a minute. In response to Valentin's point on why the Russians did not advise Saddam Hussein to withdraw: I would argue, first of all, that you did. There were people going back and forth between Baghdad and Moscow all the time. Saddam Hussein simply would not listen. Not only did you advise him to withdraw; we did too. Bill and I appeared regularly on television at that point saying that Saddam would certainly withdraw before there was a chance to attack, just because—

**ODOM:** I did not say that.

SICK: Well, I guess, you did not say that, that is right.

ODOM: I absolutely never said that.

SICK: But it seemed so obvious—

ODOM: And I do not know why you did. [Laughter.]

SICK: It seemed so obvious at the time that he had a lot to gain and a great deal to lose if he kept pursuing the course that he pursued. It seemed self-evident that, in the final analysis, he would find an excuse—his contacts with Moscow, for instance—that would enable him to find a way out of this.

I do not think the whole question about Iraq and Kuwait, which I unfortunately raised, is the issue to debate. But the point here is that in this case—as in the case of Korea, which Marshall mentioned, and many other cases—the decision making process does not appear to be particularly rational or logical. People do not act in the most economical way, to use another expression. Sometimes decision makers seem bent on a particular course of action and pursue it regardless of what an observer would consider to be the logical thing to do, and when less provocative options are available. It is the provocative nature of the decision that made it the disaster that it was. Whether this disaster worked to various people's benefit or not was another matter.

WESTAD: Thanks, Gary. Stan?

TURNER: Valentin suggests the CIA must have known that the Soviet

buildup was taking place, and what Geir read a while ago—or part of what is in that same document—shows clearly that we did know. I think it is ironic to suggest, however that we are now responsible for the Soviet debacle, because we did not call you off. [Laughter.] It is odd to blame us on the ground that we had the foresight and we were Machiavellian enough to understand that it would do you in over the long run. [Laughter.] I can only assure you that, for politicians in our democracy, the long run is the day after tomorrow, not several years, and there is no way that we would have operated in that way.

I would also like to suggest that the opportunity for the Soviet Union to call our hand in Iraq was not nearly as clear cut. I sincerely believe that there is no way Saddam Hussein could have marched down into the territory where our forces were massing, and where the oil fields of Saudi Arabia were. First of all, they had no logistical capability to do this, as was proven in the war with Iran. Iraq is very poor at moving forces. Beyond that, we only needed a small amount of air power—and we had it in an aircraft carrier and some land-based air—to interdict an armored force coming two hundred miles down a single desert road. It would have made for easy shooting. We could have stopped any such move, in my opinion, very handily. There is a great deal of misinformation going on about how easy it would have been for Saddam Hussein simply to overrun Saudi Arabia.

WESTAD: Thank you. Bill?

ODOM: I will be brief. I want to make one comment about foreseeing a bad end for the Soviet Union if it intervened in Afghanistan. I would not want to convey too much prescience on my part, or on anybody else's

part; but some of us could see that this was possible. It was difficult to be very confident that that would happen; there were a lot of other variants that I know I considered at the time, and they were not at all favorable to the U.S. So I think it would be a mistake to infer that we had foresight on this, at least on my part—and I presume, on Brzezinski's part, or maybe on the part of three or four other people who were farsighted on this. I do not want to make the case that we were prescient.

One last quick point: one of the problems a president has—and I suspect a top leader in the Politburo would have it too—is that people at all levels are trying to advance their careers on the basis of how things are going. Therefore, they very often use methods of decision making to completely mislead their subordinates until the last minute. Could it be that the Politburo decided to intervene much earlier, confused the process at the staff level, but at the same time issued orders to the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff, and to the Ground Forces to deploy? How is it that I sit and look at the intelligence on those activities, and infer that they look objectively like a very serious intervention developing? Possibly because I did not know anything about the internal discussions. I just want to throw that out as an alternative hypothesis about making inferences about the decision process in the Politburo.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Bill.

I would like to congratulate the veterans on the insights and the stamina that you brought to the table today. This has been a very, very long day for all of you; I apologize for that. I can tell you that the two remaining days—tomorrow and Wednesday—will not be half as

strenuous. Actually, they will not be one third that strenuous. We will just have one session each day for the two remaining days of the conference. But we are very grateful that you shared with us your insights today, and put them on record.

Some practical information before we break up: I am informed that the bar is open at the back of the building downstairs, on the way to the swimming pool. At 7:00 o'clock there will be a performance of some Norwegian folk music and folk dancers outside on the terrace, for those of you who are interested in taking that in. And then, at 7:45, we will have dinner in the same place we had dinner last night. So thank you all very much. Have a good rest. I will see you tomorrow.

SEPTEMBER 19

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SESSION 5

AFTER THE AFGHAN INTERVENTION

WESTAD: It is a glorious morning outside. I hope all of you had a chance to look around a little bit before we called you in here, and if that is not the case, or if you want more of it—which I hope you do—there will be a chance during the break between lunch and when we leave for the boat trip. And, of course, we are hoping that the weather will hold up while we are on the boat this afternoon as well.

Let me tell you a little bit about the boating trip. Sigrid gave me instructions to mention to you that this is a real ship. It is not one of those small things that some of you may have seen when you were landing out at the airport. It is called the *Johanna*, and it was built in 1893. It is one of Norway's oldest ships still in use.

ODOM: I hope that doesn't mean it's due to sink. [Laughter.]

WESTAD: Well, if it sailed for this long, Bill, it will probably make another trip on the fjord. We will leave from here at 2:30. Those of you frightened off by Bill's warning should let Sigrid know at the end of this first session, because we need to know how many of us will be going along.

LUNDESTAD: Let me say that the trip is highly recommended. There will be something to eat and something to drink, and there will be a very

pleasant surprise for you. I will leave that hanging in the air.

**WESTAD:** In the session this morning, we are going to take as our point of departure what happened in Washington the morning of December 27, 1979, when it became obvious to the Carter administration that the Soviet Union had introduced its forces into Afghanistan. In many ways, this is one of the dividing lines, not only in the history that we are preoccupied with here—the history of the late 1970s—but in the Cold War as a whole. Whether or not that specific event was crucial all by itself in the breakdown of détente and in triggering a new Cold War, it is obvious that it came to symbolize that development. Afghanistan became a very potent symbol throughout the 1980s for the renewed intensity in the conflict between East and West—between the Soviet Union and the United States. Similarly, the withdrawal from Afghanistan was perhaps the most potent symbol for the new relationship that emerged later between the two power blocs, between the former adversaries.

What we want to look at in this session, then, is the initial reaction in Washington when it became clear that the Soviet Union had intervened. We know that some of you knew this could happen; we know that some of you suspected that it might happen; but what was your initial reaction when you discovered that it *did* happen? We had on-screen some very strong testimony from President Carter himself our first evening here. Marshall added yesterday that he did not think that this really reflected the President's broader thinking on this topic. But it would be good to have Marshall and others elaborate a little bit on that during this session.

Turning to the Russian side, I would like us to address a topic that we did not have time to touch on yesterday: what kind of reaction

to the intervention did the Soviet leaders foresee in the West? We ought then to move on to broader questions concerning the period after the Afghan intervention: the significance of the Afghan intervention on policy making on both sides in the spring and summer of 1980, as the final months of the Carter administration approached.

I think I should do two things before I turn it over to the veterans. First of all, I should alert you again to the documents that are available on this—both those that are in the briefing book, and some of those which we got yesterday from different sources. Some of those are very important to the discussion that we are going to have here this morning. Secondly, I want to introduce Michael Sohlman from the Nobel Foundation, who arrived this morning, and who is sitting right over here. It is good to have you with us.

May I turn to the American side first? Marshall?

**SHULMAN:** I think a useful starting point is to pick up on a note that Anatoly started at the very beginning of our discussions—and that is to keep freshly in mind the broad context of what was happening in this period as a background. This will help to explain some of the reactions to the intervention.

Several factors in this period are important to bear in mind. One is the changing nature of international politics. This was the closing phase of decolonization. What this meant—particularly after the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa—was that there was a new fluidity in international politics. It opened up new opportunities for competition and conflict, in places such as Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. This upset the definition of détente as it had been understood in the Nixon-Kissinger period. That had begun to fall apart.



Many in the American public tended to see events in Angola and Ethiopia as provocations that were created and exploited by the Soviet Union. Whether or not that was the case, the judgment of history will surely be that the degree of stability that seemed to have been reached in a tenuous way during the Nixon-Kissinger period gave way to a new period of confrontation.

One of the things that confused the American side was that, as the Soviet Union was engaged in an ongoing polemic with the Chinese, it was vocally defending itself against the charge that the Russians had gone "soft" on the Americans, beginning with Khrushchev's visit. The Soviets always responded that the class struggle continued even under détente. From the American point of view, this appeared to be a repudiation of the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, and it inflamed fears that the Soviet Union was not a trustworthy companion on the road to détente. This, of course, exacerbated the relationship as well.

In addition, this was a period in which the military balance changed. People have different notions of "parity," and it is uncertain exactly when the Soviet Union finally reached military parity with the United States; but certainly by almost any definition of the term, the two superpowers became military equals by the end of the 1970s. Both sides, clearly, were conscious of this. There was an expectation in the United States that the Soviet Union would begin to play a more forward role in world politics accordingly; and to some extent, we were predisposed to interpret Soviet actions in that light. Developments in military technology also opened up new terrain for competition, and also tended to exacerbate the relationship in this period.

I think it is important to keep all of those things in mind.

Internally in the United States, the most important thing to bear

in mind is that this was a period of a rising conservative tide in American politics. The election of Ronald Reagan that was to come in 1980 had cast its shadow ahead of it, and profoundly affected the second half of the Carter administration. In the first period of the Carter administration, there was a sense of reacting against the *realpolitik* of the Nixon-Kissinger period, and asserting the principles that the President enunciated in the very early months of the administration, which included the human rights issue, and included also an effort to react against what had been seen as the lack of morality in foreign policy. But the second part of the Carter administration was very much influenced by external pressures from the Right, and that had particular relevance for policy toward the Soviet Union, because that was a period in which efforts at negotiating on arms control (SALT), cultural exchanges, the development of trade, and mutual accommodation became subject to attack in the American political scene as being soft and inadequately assertive of the American interest. This gave rise not only to the pressures from the Republicans, but also from within the Democratic party itself, with the organization of groups such as the Committee for the Democratic Majority, representing the wing of the Democratic party that was committed to a stronger line toward the Soviet Union, and that challenged arms control.

Arne, did you want to interrupt?

**WESTAD:** Marshall, before we get to far into this very interesting material—which we eventually do need to deal with—I wonder if I could be rude enough to force you a little bit towards the issue of the immediate reaction in Washington to the invasion of Afghanistan.

**SHULMAN:** All right. I suppose my didactic academic mind tends to begin with first causes, and then move on to the present; but I will abide by the ruling of the chair. [Laughter.]

I thought that Anatoly was quite right in saying that there was some confusion about the meaning of détente, and that it was already being undermined before Soviet troops were introduced into Afghanistan. This is something that we ought to bear in mind. The introduction of Soviet troops in large numbers into Afghanistan aggravated an already perilous situation. Now, to be fair, the colloquy between Bill Odom and myself at the end of yesterday's session raises a rather fundamental point. Bill and I—to no imperilment of our friendship—had different views on this. It is not my intention to argue at all, merely to point out that that difference represented an unresolved question in American politics. The most important thing Afghanistan did was to strengthen the view of those who saw the relationship with the Soviet Union as inexorably one of hostility and conflict. We had been through a whole series of episodes up to this point, and we had been through the fight about the deployment of theater nuclear forces in Eastern Europe, which also fed into that debate. We had been through the issues associated with the various efforts to constrain the competition in the Indian Ocean, with the Persian Gulf, and, of course, with the unfolding situation in Iran. Thus one thing that exacerbated feelings in the United States was the perception that the Soviet action in Afghanistan validated the approach of those who saw the relationship as basically a hostile one, and who had not supported Carter's cooperative approach toward the Soviet Union, manifest in arms control—SALT was the key element here—but also in trade and cultural exchanges, efforts to deal with the competition in the proliferation of weapons, anti-satellite

weapons, the Indian Ocean, and so on. I think there were eleven working groups that had been set up on these kinds of issues. They were essentially wiped out during this period. So, to understand the intensity of the American reaction, it helps to note that the Soviet action in Afghanistan was seen as strengthening the view of those who had not supported the movement toward close relations, or efforts to moderate the relationship. People such as myself, who were strongly committed to arms control as being the most important means toward moderating the competitive level of the relationship, were very much weakened as a consequence of it.

For the Russians who felt that our reaction was unexpectedly severe, it is necessary to understand that, as the issue came to a head in December—when we were sending messages to Moscow warning against an intervention in Afghanistan—we had very little leverage. There were very few arrows left in our quiver. There was little that we could threaten with, because so much of it had been wiped out in the previous period. There was little more that we could do other than complain in rather shrill tones. It may have appeared, from Moscow's point of view, that things could hardly get worse; but, in fact, they did, and partly it was that component of it that accounted for the severity of reaction.

You will notice in the testimony that I distributed that, when I was asked by the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee whether we warned the Soviets what we would do if they moved into Afghanistan militarily, I had to say, "No." We had not worked out in advance exactly what we were going to do. Nevertheless, in the previous period, whenever we ran into situations of difficulty, there was a list of punitive measures that would surface from time to time. Occasionally we would invoke one item or another. These tended to ratchet up the

punitive measures against Russia. We brought forth that list when we first met immediately after we figured out what had happened—on the 27th or 28th of December. The documents show that we had a menu of measures to choose from. Everyone brought forth what they could think of, and the list grew to include many measures that had not been thought of beforehand—boycotting the Olympics, for example. That one led to a feeling on the part of the Europeans that we were acting somewhat impulsively. They felt that we had not consulted them, and so on; but the feeling was such that each of those measures had support—

**WESTAD:** Excuse me, Marshall; I have just a quick question relating to the Olympics. Looking through the materials that we have in the briefing book, do you remember whose suggestion it was to boycott the Olympics? Was that the President's own suggestion?

**SHULMAN:** It was Brzezinski's.

**TURNER:** That was my impression, too.

**SHULMAN:** It may be that my colleagues here ought to comment on that at this point.

**WESTAD:** I have just one question before we leave you, Marshall. I want to get you on the record about your own personal reaction when you first learned about the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. We heard about the briefings you had before the invasion in December; but when you actually heard what had happened in Kabul, in the period from the 25th to the night of the 26th, what was your reaction?

**SHULMAN:** The main thing was that it undermined the position I had been supporting. I felt that I had to support the punitive measures that were proposed. I was sent out, among others, to explain to farmers' groups about why we were cutting off the additional sales of grain. I had to go out and explain to groups that had been preparing for the Olympics why we could not participate. And I had no reservations about supporting the list of punitive measures. As I was saying yesterday, it was partly the nature of the attack that was important. I deplored it. It was not the strategic importance of the area that concerned me, but I felt that we had to respond to the use of force on a large scale across the border in a way that might set a precedent. So, despite everything I had been arguing for for many years, I found myself joining without reservation in supporting the punitive measures that had been undertaken by the administration.

**WESTAD:** Bill, I want to turn to you next. But before I do, I want to mention that Dr. Brzezinski told me in a conversation I had with him about these matters that he did not see the Afghan intervention—even at the time—just as a tragedy. He saw other long term effects of it as well. I suppose that you would be able to elaborate on that?

**ODOM:** I am not sure I can elaborate on that. I am not much of a mind-reader, you know. I have some basis for knowing what Brzezinski thinks about some things, but one who worked fairly closely with him can never be completely sure.

I will speak briefly to Marshall's point about the general mood. I think he describes it fairly accurately. Yes, there was a very severe divide within the administration—and, I think, within the country, and

within the Democratic party. The Carter administration had not been in office but for five or six months when two senior Democratic Senators—Nunn and Kennedy; Nunn in particular—were angry with us over the East-West military balance. That was an annoying issue throughout. Unfortunately, President Carter did not take credit for what he was doing. He reversed the decline in the U.S. military spending, which had gone down in real terms 38% between 1968 and 1978. He turned it up; but he coupled that with a rhetoric, which Marshall was describing here, that did not convince people in the Congress, and it did not convince the public that we were doing much to rectify that overall balance. It allowed Paul Nitze and the Committee on Present Danger to seize the initiative on this.

Moving from the general to specific, let me give you my personal experience. I got a call from the White House Situation Room on the 25th—on Christmas Day—at about 2 or 3 o'clock. I went down there, and lo and behold, we had pretty good evidence of up to two hundred aircraft having either left the Soviet Union, or in the air. I think, when I arrived, we had evidence that 50 or so had actually crossed the border. So we knew that the invasion was under way before the 27th. We knew it on the 25th.

The next week was pure pandemonium in the NSC and in the White House, and the most explicit thing I remember was a day or two—or three—afterwards. I got an intercom call from Brzezinski, and he said, "Pull out all the work you have done on punitive sanctions and things we can do." So I started preparing the list, and then, when I had pulled that list together, he said, "Call the interagency group in." Most of these issues affected Treasury, Commerce, and some of the other departments, so we had to invite their representatives.

I remember the meeting. I took in a list of things to suggest for starters, and almost every representative there was hostile to the list. They did not want to do anything! I was accused of having an exaggerated list, because I took the CoCom list and said, "Let us not put anything new on the CoComm list; let us just apply the CoComm list as it now stands, and cease making exceptions." Well, the Commerce Department became hysterical about this! There was toing and froing inside. I think this reflected the split attitude that Marshall described.

A large number of people in the administration went through that initial phase feeling as if the Soviet side had betrayed them. And even then they tried to resist punitive measures. In that meeting, and in others, I felt as if I was the enemy instead of the Soviet Union! I felt as though they thought I was culpable for this invasion. And then they began to hear themselves talk, and that became too ridiculous to refute. They had not convinced themselves, as they thought about it; and then they turned around and went from that extreme to the other extreme. They became hard-line. On some issues, they agreed on tougher measures than I proposed. After a month or a month and a half of negotiating high technology transfer controls, the list that I had initially put on the table at the interagency meeting was approved, and I more or less dropped out of the process.

I have a couple of other minor episodes to relate to you. Up in the Roosevelt Room, there would be periodic meetings over the grain embargo. I remember the Secretary of Agriculture being there, and several others as well. Somebody from the office of Management and Budget with his pencil and paper would calculate the dollars needed to pay off the farmers if they did not sell their grain to the Soviets. We went through all these kinds of gyrations and arguments, and ironically,



the government never had to spend a nickel on grain, because the market absorbed it all.

Then we had to listen to great perorations about how this would have no effect on the Soviet side. I began to see intelligence reports indicating a much more serious concern about it on the Soviet side than I would have anticipated. Now, our Russian counterparts can speak more accurately to that than I can, but I must say I was surprised at what seemed to be the seriousness with which the grain embargo was taken. I did not expect that.

**WESTAD:** Stan, do you want to add to this?

**TURNER:** When it was clear that there was an invasion, our approach in the CIA was immediately to consider whether a covert action would be appropriate. I always felt that my responsibility when there was a major development in foreign policy was to ask the Agency people whether there was something we could contribute in a covert way. If I thought that we could do something sensible and possibly effective, I would present it to the National Security Council to decide whether they wanted to add that to the list of option, such as the list Bill has described. In this case I had a problem of conscience, because I did not foresee what was going to happen. I assumed that 75,000 Soviet troops arrayed against a disorganized rebel force was going to succeed. Therefore, in my conscience, I felt that our supplying weapons to the rebels would be asking them to commit suicide. And although that might still have benefited the United States—by slowing down the Soviet consolidation of their position in Afghanistan—I asked myself whether it was morally justifiable to encourage people to commit suicide when

the primary benefit would be to U.S. foreign policy. As I went through this dilemma with the CIA analysts on Afghanistan, they persuaded me that the rebels were going to fight regardless of what weapons they had. Such was their nature. I determined, therefore, that I was not, in fact, encouraging them to commit suicide. But none of us at that time on the intelligence side, I believe, thought the chances for success on the rebel part were very high.

With that behind me, we went to the National Security Council, and within a couple of days—I cannot remember precisely what day—the National Security Council approved, and the President signed, a "finding," as we call it, for a covert action to provide lethal weapons to the rebels through the Pakistanis. At that point I became very frustrated, perhaps because I had been a military officer, and liked to see operations proceed smoothly. I was persuaded that the CIA had the capability to move out very smartly and very efficiently on an undertaking such as this. I was anxious to get the delivery of the first weapons to the Pakistanis within a matter of days. I think there were several things behind my impatience apart from my military background. One was the fact that the Carter administration had been accused of having a bias against covert action in general. I do not believe there was such a bias, but we had not been doing a lot of covert actions, because they had not been called for. Of course, just six weeks before this we had the problem in Iran. That spurred our thinking about covert action. We were exploring what we could do covertly to undermine the Khomeini regime, and now came the second opportunity as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan. I was anxious to show that we could—and would, in fact—perform in a very efficient way. I was frustrated, because I perceived a reluctance to pursue this at high

levels inside the CIA until they were really sure the administration was going to support it and back them if it went sour. This was all because of the criticism of the Church Committee, and because of a perception within the CIA itself that Carter himself, and some of his top people, perhaps were not enthusiastic about covert action. There was a concern that the CIA might be left hanging out on the limb if anything went wrong, or if there was a reversal of attitude towards this, and so forth. I have an article written by my principal officer in charge of this, and he says that the first arms—mainly .303 field rifles—arrived in Pakistan on January 10th 1980, fourteen days after the Soviet invasion. He took pride in that, and I think he probably is entitled to it. But I wanted it done in five or six days. We did not make that because of the foot dragging I have been talking about. I had to keep calling people into my office, asking them what the status of the operation was. I knew we had Soviet arms in a warehouse in Texas; it was just a matter of getting them on an airplane and getting them over there. I saw no reason that could not have been done in a matter of hours. I just mention that by way of background to the culture of the CIA at that particular time.

We were very insistent that all of the lethal arms be of Soviet origin, because of our desire to provide some cover to Pakistan. The Pakistanis were quite willing to participate, but whether they asked for our help or not, I am not sure. We felt a great responsibility not to expose them unnecessarily to Soviet retribution. We went out on the international arms market—we went to Egypt, and I think to several other Soviet client-states—in an effort to get particular kinds of Soviet weaponry that we could supply. But the most important weapon that we wanted to obtain was the SA-7 hand-held anti-aircraft missile.

We had lots of other kinds of Soviet equipment in our own inventory, but we did not have very many of these. We went to the Saudis very quickly and got their agreement to help finance this. They were a major part of the cost.

From then on, as the operation proceeded, it went quite smoothly, from our point of view, with one interesting exception: the SA-7s. We had great difficulty making them operationally useful. We were able to procure a reasonable number of these, and we were able to infiltrate them into Afghanistan. But for some reason that I still do not understand, we could not get the Afghan rebels to operate them successfully. When you look back at what happened in the mid-1980s, when Reagan finally provided the Stinger, which enjoyed such great success, this becomes all the more puzzling. I really would like to hear from the Russian side their analysis of what was successful here, or what was not; but apparently the Stinger was very successful in inhibiting Soviet helicopter and other air operations.

SHULMAN: Do you mean 1981, Stan? You said the 1980s, but with Reagan it must have been before—

ODOM: He said *mid*-1980s.

TURNER: I think Reagan supplied the SA-7s until 1983 or '84.

LYAKHOVSKI: It was 1985.

TURNER: What I do not know is whether the SA-7s were no good. I thought at the time that they were the best hand-held anti-aircraft

weapon in the world. I thought they exceeded what we had in capability. I do not know whether we improved our Stinger before 1985, thereby making it more effective. I remember going over in great detail how we were training the Afghans, and where we were training them. I kept pushing people to find ways to teach these people how to use the SA-7 effectively, but we never did. I am not sure whether Soviet military tactics at that time were not as dependent on helicopters and other aircraft as they became later on. I simply do not know why we were not more successful earlier in having the rebels use to advantage the equipment we were providing them.

I believe that even when we left office in early 1981, we still did not have a sense of confidence that the rebels could hold out indefinitely, let alone succeed as well as they did eventually.

WESTAD: Thank you, Stan. Gary?

SICK: I do not have a great deal to add to what has been said. But from my perspective—which was much more parochial, and very much focused on the hostage crisis, on Iran, and the Gulf, as opposed to Afghanistan per se—there were a number of things that happened. I agree with Bill entirely that there was a sense of pandemonium, or panic. Nobody knew what was going to happen next, or how it was going to happen. I think there was a sense that the Soviet forces probably would be successful, and there probably was very little that we could do about it. But there were silver linings in that cloud, as far as Iran and our relations with the Gulf states were concerned. For a period of several years we had seen a progressive collapse of the U.S. strategic position in the region, capped by the Iranian revolution that undercut

our entire strategic position in the region. Although this latest phase appeared to be still one more blow, the fact that you had a European country intervening in a Muslim country gave us a degree of leverage in talking to the Muslim countries that was really rather substantial. In a sense, I would mark that as the major turning point in our development of a new strategy in the region. It gave us--potentially, at least--an opportunity to begin to talk seriously to the Iranians, who were as outraged and as panicked as we were about the invasion of Afghanistan, if not more so. They saw it as totally unacceptable from their point of view. We suddenly found that we had at least that much in common with the Iranians, and although we did not collaborate with them in any sense of developing a direct relationship, we found that we were saying essentially the same thing in public. That was quite a change from what had happened before.

Our strategy with the Iranians from the very beginning was to try to convince them that the Soviet threat was overwhelming, and that they needed to collaborate with us to try to avoid it. The intervention in Afghanistan underlined that strategy and added some heft and seriousness to it that had not been there before, especially with people like Gozbadeh, who was the acting Foreign Minister at that time. He was clearly ready to collaborate, at least at a distance. He was not ready to do anything direct--there were no direct contacts--but his statements did mirror our statements very much, and this was an interesting thing.

On the negative side, although the Soviet Union had been not supportive of the U.S. position with regard to the hostages at the UN, neither had it opposed the kind of efforts that we were making; but that stopped at the time of the invasion. Suddenly the Soviet Union became very hostile to everything that we were doing everywhere. And so our

attempt, for instance, to get sanctions imposed on Iran—which was coming right about the end of December—was vetoed by the Soviet Union. Thus the strategy that we had put in place of mustering international opprobrium against Iran in the form of international sanctions—to try to force them to give up the hostages—pretty much began to unravel at that point. Soviet opposition was not the only problem, but it was certainly one of the problems that we faced.

Bill Odom did not mention—and I would actually welcome further comments from him—that we had talked for years about what we called “the Soviet overhang” in the Gulf region: that is, although the United States had a significant military presence in the region, we could never, in some respect, match the Soviet Union, which was right there—just north of the border—very much closer to it, with tremendous forces operating from land bases. There was no way that we could ever compete with that directly. The fact that you now had Soviet forces operating out of Afghanistan meant that people immediately began to draw a radius around various air bases in Afghanistan to show how far Soviet aircraft could operate into the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Those circles on the map were quite dramatic in terms of the area that they covered. If, in fact, the Soviet Union intended to take advantage of their new strategic position to project air forces into the Persian Gulf-Arabian Sea region, the invasion of Afghanistan gave them a new capability that they had not had before. That, in turn, put new life into the Rapid Deployment Force. As Bill mentioned yesterday, efforts had been made to create a Rapid Deployment Force for years—well, not for years, but from fairly early on in the Carter administration—and people had mostly given it lip service. Some things had been done, but not very much. With this event, suddenly everybody got serious. I think that you would have to

say that the movement of Soviet forces into Afghanistan marked the real birth of the Rapid Deployment Force. Again, Bill may have other things to add to this.

That was my impression about the result. The other thing that I would add, just to underline in a somewhat more poignant way what Marshall said very elegantly, is that this marked the end of the battle between Cy Vance and the State Department on the one hand, and Zbig Brzezinski and the NSC on the other. Cy lost that battle, and Brzezinski was very much the dominant figure from that point on when it came to U.S.-Soviet relations. That, I think, speaks for itself in terms of the effect the invasion had on the nature of U.S. policy. Ultimately, of course, this led directly to the adoption of the Carter Doctrine. That is where it came from. It was a Brzezinski-drafted statement, in effect challenging the Soviet Union in the region of the Persian Gulf. That has had a tremendous importance ever since.

From what I heard from our Russian colleagues yesterday, it is fairly clear to me that their thinking was primarily oriented toward the domestic situation in Afghanistan. They were trying to salvage a bad situation—trying to rectify it, in terms of Russian interests. But the effects were totally different. The effects were overwhelmingly international. It affected the relationship with the United States at every level. I regard it as a fundamental watershed. All kinds of things that we had simply talked or thought about until that time suddenly became real. It was a tremendous watershed in our entire approach toward that region, and has remained so ever since.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Gary. That was very informative.

I am going to turn to Mark for a brief comment before I turn to



the Russian side. Could I return to you later on, Marshall?

**SHULMAN:** All I wanted to do is to ask three questions.

**WESTAD:** We must get to that in the next round, because I really need to turn to the Russian side in a moment. Mark?

**GARRISON:** Just briefly to round out the picture: our Embassy in Moscow, compared to what I hear about the situation in Washington, was an oasis of tranquillity. [Laughter.] Everything seemed quite clear to us. We saw this as a major watershed in Soviet policy—the use of massive military force to install a regime outside the Warsaw Pact was an action that needed a strong reaction.

To answer your question about who suggested the Olympics: I am sure this occurred to a lot of people, but we came up with a laundry list, which we sent to Washington on the 29th of December, which included everything, I think, that was on the list in Washington—except closing the Kiev Consulate General, which I think was kind of a dumb thing for us to do; but—

**SHULMAN:** Did we do that? [Laughter.]

**GARRISON:** So, we sent in our laundry list, with an analysis of the pros and cons of each item, and then, a day or two later, Ambassador Watson sent in his recommendations, which included, first and foremost, the Olympic boycott—if it could be organized properly—and the grain embargo. Our view was that if we wanted to make a point with Moscow, we had to do things that might hurt us, or might be difficult from the

political point of view in order to demonstrate our seriousness.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Mark.

I would like now to turn to the Russian side. Anatoly, I wanted to start with you. I see that you are ready. But before you get started, let me just alert everyone to the important materials that we have about this in Anatoly's newly-published memoir, which all of us have been frantically trying to read. There is quite a bit of fascinating material there about the immediate aftermath of the Afghan intervention, and about some of the conversations Anatoly had with Brzezinski and others.

**DOBRYNIN:** Well, I presume that at some point we will discuss what we did after the introduction of the troops. Are we only going to discuss what happened during the immediate reaction now?

**WESTAD:** I think we could start with the period immediately after the troops were introduced, and then we can see how far we can get.

**DOBRYNIN:** Okay.

Mark here was in the same shoes as I in Washington. Was it tranquil? I would not say so. [Laughter.] It was a rather hot spot. I sat there reading all those speeches day after day. We are all emotional people—even diplomats are, sometimes. I had a rule: I would sit for one hour, completely alone—without any of my assistants—after we discussed things, just to give my own feelings a chance to subside.

But I would like to say a few general words of interest to all of you. Our government did not have the same good habit yours did of

communicating with its embassies. When your embassies wrote an assessment, you would get feedback from your government, saying this was good, and that was not quite so good, and so forth. But for us, it was like sending an assessment into a black hole. If I sent a telegram to Moscow, I would never know what the reaction was until I went there myself and had a chance to discuss it with people. While I was in Washington, we received not a single piece of information—not me, nor my colleagues—from our own intelligence people on Afghanistan. Nothing. There was a splendid ignorance We were trying to guess what was going on.

So, I come to the second question on your agenda: what kind of reaction did the Soviet leaders foresee? There was no energy spent in Moscow at all on this. There was no discussion of what other actions we should take besides sending in the troops. One reason for this, first of all, is that they thought that our relations were so bad that the intervention would not change very much. This was their way of thinking—this was Gromyko's, at least. In addition, we really did not have plans for an invasion throughout 1978 and 1979. We had none until the very last minute—in December. That is why, as Karen mentioned yesterday, nobody was involved on the expert side. On the 6th of December there was the first decision, made by three fellows. On the 12th of December, there was another. made by three plus Brezhnev. Though in our protocol it said "all the members of the Politburo" agreed. they were not there. Look at the way they signed it: on the 28th. There was a bureaucratic trick. They were not present, but then later on this was given to them to sign onto. Only a very few people knew about it. Who could have prepared for the international reaction? Presumably, that was the Foreign Ministry's job; but nobody—not even

Kornienko, who was number one at the time—knew anything about it. We did not have any contingency discussions. The military, I am sure, did some contingency planning with respect to their own business; but they never told Gromyko. So we did not prepare any elaborate list of possible American or Western reactions.

Of course, there was a general understanding at the top level that there would be a bad reaction. There would be propaganda, and so on; everybody knew this. But as far as I know, nobody discussed at the Politburo what concrete actions the West might take. Nothing. The Soviet leaders did not foresee any specific Western reaction; just a negative one. You will notice from the briefing materials that only on January 20th did the Politburo discuss for the first time the Western reaction. There was a meeting of the Politburo, and they gave instructions to different Ministries, to prepare in a general way a response to the Western reaction. The instructions were not very concrete—merely to prepare to denounce the Americans, and so on. There was not a single specific proposal. You see in this decision of the Politburo. What exactly did they want? I will now read in Russian the decision of the Politburo on the 28th of January: "In our relations with the United States, now and in the future, we should contrast the confrontational position of the Carter administration with our steady and firm line in international relations"—this is the directive that went to all of us diplomats!—"notwithstanding the fact that Washington will continue to conduct an anti-Soviet campaign, and that it will make efforts to coordinate the actions of its allies. Our countermeasures"—Soviet countermeasures, it means, but it does not specify what kind of countermeasures—they were never discussed, but it was assumed that there would have been some sort of countermeasures—"Our countermeasures

should be carried out on the axiom that we should not exacerbate the entire complex of our relationship with the United States."

What kind of message could we, the professional diplomats, extract from that directive? What kind of conclusions could we take from that? I remember receiving that part of the directive in the Embassy. On the one hand, we needed to follow a firm line. Did it mean that I, sitting in Washington, should speak firmly to Brzezinski? I tried to speak firmly with him when it was necessary, but was that the point? What could I do concretely? There was no guidance here. They only give us an abstract goal: the right one, I should say; we certainly should have tried to avoid straining our relationship with the United States further. I totally agreed with that. But how were we to do it practically?

The U.S. position was absolutely clear, especially after Carter spoke in Congress about the Carter Doctrine. Unfortunately, at that moment, our leadership did not think seriously and deeply about what political, diplomatic, and other consequences there might be besides military consequences. Of course, they understood that this was a bad thing to do, and that we had to be ready, especially with propaganda.

So, in responding to your question, I can say that we did not seriously consider the U.S. reaction. I asked people later about this. There was no consideration of this either in the Foreign Ministry or in the Central Committee. Later, certain things were prepared; but they were prepared for specific issues. For example, you wanted to boycott the Olympics, and we had to respond to that—and so on, for each of the individual questions. But there were no countermeasures.

I have to say, also, that when I read Turner's report yesterday—the CIA report—I was a little bit surprised. According to the report,

the CIA told the American leadership that they should not expect any kind of large-scale intervention. This was in the period immediately before the introduction of our troops. He even said when the first troops were moving into Afghanistan that the CIA expected that only a very small force would move into the country. At first, I thought that your intelligence was not very capable; but then I realized that your failure to foresee the intervention was not your fault. It was our fault, because we decided to introduce troops only on December 6. You simply did not have time to figure it out, because we ourselves had just learned about the decision. For us it was finalized on the 6th. There was very little time left for you to orient yourself; and there was very little time for our diplomatic service to orient itself as well.

Thus, unfortunately, I have to tell you that our diplomatic service was not ready to carry out any kind of effective counter propaganda, or to attempt to justify what had already been done in Afghanistan.

I think that that explains the state of relations between you and us at that time. I can tell you about one interesting little meeting with Brzezinski on December 6. I knew nothing about the coming decision in Moscow, and as far as I understood, he had no idea either. What did we discuss? We talked about the ratification of SALT II. He was telling me that it would probably be ratified by March. "After SALT II is ratified," he told me, "we can talk about SALT III." That was planned for April. He also said that we could talk about controlling the deployment of middle-range missiles in Europe. He was just thinking aloud; we were examining the horizon. But that was on December 6, when the introduction of troops was about to begin! We were quietly sitting and discussing those things.! He also said that the President would be

glad to receive the General Secretary in Washington in June—in the summer or in the fall of 1980. He said that it would not be necessary to sign a treaty at that meeting; just to meet to exchange opinions would be very good. I agreed with practically everything that he said. I wrote to Moscow that that would have been a good idea. Moscow did not respond. Naturally—they were in the middle of making decisions to introduce troops into Afghanistan.

Afterwards, the American side did not make any significant presentations to us, to be very honest—at least, not at the diplomatic level. Tom Watson went to the Foreign Ministry twice. Once he met with Komplektov—he was head of the department—and he also met with Maltsev, who was not the best expert on those issues. Their discussion was, of course, absolutely useless. After that—or maybe a day before that—Marshall Shulman met with my deputy in Washington. I was in Moscow at the time. He talked with Vasev. Marshall told him that there was a concern in Washington that we had our contingent of troops near the Afghan border, and that the troops were moving toward Afghanistan. He said, "We would like to know what the purpose of that movement of troops toward Afghanistan is, in accordance with the treaty of 1972." You remember that treaty, which was signed during the Nixon administration; Vasev was not an expert on this. So the conversation went nowhere. And that was it. There was no warning of any sort. There was nothing like that. I do not want to accuse you of anything here. You did not know either. But, still, you were already signaling to us that there was something wrong. We did not respond.

So the decision was taken at the top level. Only five men—or three men—knew. None of them was an expert on the United States. There was no mechanism for anticipating the American reaction—nothing.

After we introduced our troops, nobody organized an interdepartmental body. There was a commission of three or four; Ponomarev was sometimes invited, and sometimes he was not invited. Three were permanent members. That was it! This demonstrates that there was a great deal of ignorance among our leadership about the United States. Obviously this action would have foreign policy implications. But they simply ignored this. They were probably very much concerned with the military consequences; but they ignored the diplomatic ones. After your reaction, we simply tried to defend our position in our propaganda. But of course this put us on the defensive internationally.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Anatoly. I will return to you later on for some follow-up comments on your later meetings.

I want to go to Sergei Tarasenko now; then I will turn things over to Marshall.

**TARASENKO:** Anatoly Fedorovich raised the question of how it all looked on the diplomatic front from the Embassy's point of view. At that time, I was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I would like to share my personal impressions of how it all happened.

I personally—and the entire Ministry—learned about the invasion five minutes after Ambassador Thomas Watson left Maltsev's office, where Maltsev told him that the entire world knew that a massive military interference was being carried out against the Republic of Afghanistan, and that was why we were introducing our troops. When the person who took notes during the discussion came down, we immediately saw in his face that something was wrong. He said, "Troops have been introduced." My heart sank. I immediately realized that it would lead to no good.



We—the fire brigade—would have to defend a very indefensible position. That became clear immediately.

The practice of those years was such that if any kind of crisis was emerging anywhere, it would have been automatically transferred to the American desk. In other words, the American desk had to deal with practically every crisis that arose. It worked that way purely because of some personal factors. For example, Kornienko preferred to work with people whom he knew personally. By its composition, the American desk was very strong, and very efficient. It was used to working under crisis conditions of all kinds. Whatever came up—Ethiopia, Yemen, Iran—led to the creation of a working group built around the U.S. desk— with representatives of other departments, such as the Middle Eastern desk, because we on the American desk did not know anything about the local specifics. We understood what the consequences of that action would be. We knew big trouble lay ahead of us.

I was very interested to find out who was the author of that statement which had been made to Ambassador Watson. Typically, the Foreign Ministry would make such statements. They would be written by Komplektov or Kornienko, and I would know, to some extent, what the statement would be in advance. Judging by the style of that particular statement, it was not done in the Foreign Ministry. It was not the Ministry's style; it was not Kornienko's style, and he was the final editor of all papers that came out of the Foreign Ministry. I think that that statement was most probably prepared by Alexandrov—Brezhnev's assistant. It came out of Brezhnev's office—nowhere else: not from any other department or ministry. It was also very characteristic that the Foreign Ministry was pushed aside even at that stage, even on technical details such as this. I think that we would have been able to prepare a

much better statement. It would have been more sensible, and more logical. Maybe I am overestimating our talents; but still, we had some experience and some knowledge of the United States, and a closer understanding of those problems.

I would like to mention one more thing that might interest you. We had a practice of holding mini-conferences in our American desk. People would gather and discuss immediate problems and issues. Immediately after that happened, we gathered for a conference, and absolutely everyone in our department was outraged and spoke against that action. Everyone agreed that it was stupid; that it should have not been done; that it was a big blunder that would have serious consequences. In other words, internal opposition to the Politburo decision was forming inside the U.S. desk. Since I was in charge of one of the sectors, by virtue of my "leadership" position I had to defend the Politburo position, citing everything up to the importance of supporting the world revolution. That was the situation.

What I would like to stress here is that vocal opposition to the decision of our leadership immediately emerged in the Foreign Ministry.

As far as the sanctions are concerned, I have to tell you that the one that hit us hardest—and here I am speaking only for the Foreign Ministry; I am not knowledgeable enough to speak for other departments, ministries, or for the whole country—but the hardest for Gromyko was the refusal by the United States to allow him to come to the session of the UN General Assembly in September 1980. Kennedy Airport refused the special plane carrying Gromyko permission to land. It was a terrible catastrophe for Gromyko. When we learned of that in the Foreign Ministry, the atmosphere was like a funeral.

DOBRYNIN: Sergei, they did not only refuse permission to land at Kennedy Airport; they also refused permission to land at Newark. They proposed a military airport. Gromyko was very angry: at first he said, "I am not going to suffer such humiliation!" But deep in heart he was satisfied. He understood--he was clever enough to know--that he would be in a very difficult position in the United States, speaking with American representatives, and especially with the American press. He knew that it would be no easy task to defend our position. So, while his first reaction was quite right--he was mad, angry--on second thought, he agreed to put up with it.

VARENNIKOV: I am very glad that he understood.

DOBRYNIN: He was not very deeply offended. I spoke with his assistant.

WESTAD: David?

DAVID WELCH: I had a question about the American reaction, but now we have moved on to the Soviet response. Do you want me to go back and ask my question, or shall we let it pass?

WESTAD: Go back and ask it.

WELCH: Okay.

Marshall mentioned that there were two schools of thought in the U.S. government about the Soviet Union and about U.S.-Soviet relations, and that the introduction of troops into Afghanistan strengthened the faction that saw the Soviet Union as implacably hostile to the United

States, and inherently expansionistic. It certainly seems that President Carter drew more or less the same conclusion from the action. But what the United States observed—the movement of the Soviet troops into Afghanistan—was fully consistent with very different Soviet motivations. It was certainly consistent with the interpretation that the Soviet Union was attempting to expand opportunistically to the South; but it was also fully consistent with the view that the Soviet Union was trying to protect its own security interests, and that it was not, in fact, attempting to make any statement about U.S.-Soviet relations. So my question is: why did what you observe strengthen one particular school of thought rather than another? Why draw one conclusion from an action consistent with many others? Presumably, you could not read the minds of the decision makers in Moscow.

This is especially puzzling, because someone mentioned yesterday that the administration acknowledged that Afghanistan was in the Soviet sphere of interest, and that the United States did not have any particularly strong interest in Afghanistan. Someone mentioned that this was one reason why the U.S. government did not pay that much attention to Afghanistan.

**ODOM:** I do not recall anybody on the American side saying this.

**WELCH:** I think it was Gary who said it.

**ODOM:** Certainly that was not a view uniformly accepted. [Laughter.]

**WESTAD:** We realize that now, Bill. Marshall, could you try to answer David's question, as well as get back to the points you wanted to make?

I am sorry for holding you up for so long.

**SHULMAN:** Yes, it came just in time. I would probably have exploded from some internal pressure if you had not.

I wanted to respond first to Anatoly and Sergei about the Soviet response, and then to David; then I will make one other point and stop. The one bit of diplomatic action that we were aware of was the note given to Watson. But also, if I remember correctly, there were communications sent to European powers—to Italy, Germany, France, and Britain—which said essentially the same thing: that this was a limited action of limited duration. The note sounded as though this would be a sixty-day containment job, and then you would be out. What was interesting to me about it was that, although I was inclined to read it as a weak attempt at damage limitation, it seemed to me that it probably also reflected a serious judgment on the part of the military planners that this was going to be an operation of limited duration. I am not sure whether I read it rightly, but it seemed to me that it did represent a military judgment, although, as things turned out, it represented a serious military miscalculation, similar to some of those that we made on Vietnam.

In response to David's question, the interesting point here is that it was very much like the reaction after the Korean War began. At that time there was also a debate. It happened by chance that I was in the government then, too. There was no causal relationship; but I was there. [Laughter.] At that time we also had a debate within the American government about the meaning of the attack on South Korea—whether it was a local thing, primarily, or part of a general worldwide offensive. And the prevailing view in the government was that it had

worldwide implications. It was intensified by an interview that Gromyko gave, as I remember, it in July in Berlin, in which he was reported as saying something like, "What happened in Korea could happen in other divided countries," which also sent a shiver throughout Germany. As a consequence of that, at a meeting of the NATO foreign ministers in September, Acheson put forward his plan for the rearmament of Germany, and the inclusion of Germany in NATO. The Korean war intensified apprehensions about the defensibility of Germany, which led to discussions about the EDC, and eventually, in 1954, to the inclusion of the Federal Republic in NATO.

What happened after Afghanistan was very similar structurally. There were debates in the United States about whether the Soviet leadership was reacting to the disintegrating situation in Afghanistan, or whether, as others argued, it was part of a broader strategic purpose extending to the so-called Arc of Crisis—to the effort to move toward the oil-bearing areas of the Middle East; to embrace the Persian Gulf; and so on. The latter interpretation led to the Carter Doctrine, and to the intensification of our military efforts to take account of that possibility. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was understood in that climate as supporting the second view—with which I disagreed, but nevertheless, it was the prevailing view.

**WELCH:** But why?

**SHULMAN:** Because of the emotional climate. And because, as I was starting to say earlier, in this conservative tide, the prevailing view about the Soviet Union was to attribute to it a rather unlimited strategic ambition in that area.

I wanted to make just one other point. I wanted to make a little bit more vivid what I was trying to say earlier about the dismantling of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. For a couple of years before this, I had been serving, at Brzezinski's request, as the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee, something called ICCUSA—I think it stood for "Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee on U.S.-Soviet Affairs," or something like that. The interesting thing was the reason that we set it up: there were many relations between various parts of the American government and the Soviet Union at that time, and they were each operating more or less independently. When we typed up the list of all the activities in the different parts of the government—the Departments of Commerce, Education, everything else—it came to at least four pages, single-spaced. This committee met monthly, and we would lay out what was happening, and try to achieve some degree of coordination. I just wanted to give you a sense of the multiplicity of contacts that were developing between various parts of the American government on U.S.-Soviet relations, which made the dismantling of the relationship a very large-scale operation. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Marshall.

We are going to have a 15-minute break, and after the 15-minute break, I will turn to Valentin, and then to Alexander Lyakhovskii.

SESSION 6

QUESTIONS

WESTAD: Before I give the floor to Valentin, I know that Ilya wanted to ask a question. Ilya, please?

GAIDUK: Thank you. Perhaps my question will have a somewhat academic character.

Reading the documents related to this period—both Soviet and American documents—I often saw mention of the Vietnam War. For example, Kosygin mentioned it when he was talking with Taraki, and then later Brezhnev in his conversation with Taraki was constantly citing the experience of Vietnam in order to persuade the Afghan leader to rely on their own forces without the direct involvement of Soviet troops. Then in September, in American analytical documents, the U.S. experience in Vietnam was cited in order to substantiate the conclusion that the Soviet Union would not introduce troops into Afghanistan. Jim [Hershberg] has just shown me a memo from Brzezinski to the President saying that, for the Soviet Union, the introduction of troops into Afghanistan be a repetition of Vietnam.

In this connection, I have a question for both sides: to what extent did the experience of the Vietnam War have an influence on decision making in Moscow, and on the evaluation of events related to Afghanistan? Can we draw a parallel between the results of the Vietnam War and Afghanistan? Thank you.

WESTAD: Valentin, please?



VARENNIKOV: Thank you. Before I talk about Africa, I would like to start with Asia, and with Mark's comments in particular. Mark said that in Moscow they were feeling calmer than people in Washington, and that the list of sanctions they drew up—the Olympics, the grain embargo, and the like—looked stupid. Indeed, I agree with that. Even now, when they talk about Russian imports of grain from somewhere, it looks very stupid. You should not have sold grain to the Soviet Union, and you should not sell it to Russia now. You should have forced them to produce that grain themselves. They were and are capable of that, I know for sure.

Now let me say a couple of words about that catastrophe that happened with Gromyko, which Sergei mentioned, and to which Anatoly made some critical corrections. I have to tell you that that was a miscalculation by Washington, in my view. On the one hand, it was simply impolite—ungentlemanly. But on the other hand, they should have welcomed Gromyko in order to press him on everything related to Afghanistan, if I can speak openly. But that did not happen.

Now, let me turn to the principal question about what kind of reaction the Soviet Union was expecting from the United States. I can tell you sincerely that we absolutely did not expect the kind of reaction that we got. We did not think that the United States would react in that manner. What does the Warsaw Pact have to do with it? The point is that, beside the Warsaw Pact, we had a bilateral agreement—bilateral treaties—between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. That is why we thought that this would have been uncomplicated. Carter's reaction was a surprise for us, I tell you sincerely. But later we understood that, taking into account the strong opposition in Congress, and in the country, Carter did the right thing—he used

Afghanistan for his own political interests—as a distraction from the Iranian crisis, and to help him resolve his various other problems. He had to do that. It was unfortunate for us that it was not only the United States, but many others who mobilized opinion against us—including the United Nations, for example.

Gary and others said that there was panic in the United States when the troops were introduced. I can relate to that feeling, Gary. I can understand that, because we also experienced panic and confusion when you invaded Grenada, when you invaded Panama, and when you bombed Libya. We did not know what to do. We could help Libya to some extent, by providing—

**DOBRYNIN:** Only there was no panic.

**VARENNIKOV:** Well, okay; that is right; there was no panic. But we felt very uncomfortable and awkward. And I have to tell you that Brzezinski was the one who was able to use that step—the introduction of troops into Afghanistan—to the most political benefit, and in the interest of the United States. When some people wanted to play it down in 1980, he resisted them, and said that he wanted the Soviet Union to get pulled in and then pay dearly for what happened. And in his article about the end of the Cold War in 1992, he openly said that it was good that the Soviet Union fell apart—that the great Russian empire fell apart, which existed for more than 300 years. His love for us clearly shows here; at least he talks about it honestly. We can see all this. Brzezinski's actions with regard to Afghanistan are easy to understand for us, especially in that light.

Now, let me turn to weapons issues—to Stinger and other things.

Firstly, I would like to remind you that Senator Church said succinctly and clearly in his report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Congress that, in January 1980, the United States confirmed that they were supplying weapons to the Afghan opposition in Pakistan in accordance with the covert action program of the Central Intelligence Agency (this is on page 14 of the report). It was confirmed then; therefore, it was going on earlier than has been said here. It therefore makes no sense for us to talk about it. The supplies to those so-called guerrillas had been organized long ago, and in a very thorough and efficient way. We knew about that from the Afghans themselves. They informed us about the locations where those training camps and arsenals were organized, and so on.

Now, with regard to Stinger, let me say a few words. It is just one issue among many, but it might be interesting to the American side. It is a good weapon. It appeared in 1985. I saw it myself being fired at our planes. I was in charge of the operation in Kunar Gorge, just to the north of Jelalabad, and Stingers were fired at our aircraft. The Stinger had a very high initial velocity; very good target acquisition; and reacted well to the heat traps produced by the plane. It was a good weapon. But, on the one hand, we changed our tactics as a result of it. We improved the protection for the planes and the tactics for helicopters. Somebody was asking why such a weapon was not widely used. It was because our reaction was very appropriate.

Why did you not know how many troops were to be introduced? As you probably remember, from the very beginning—in 1973—we placed various units in full combat readiness, and conducted military exercises, all with the goal of impressing some of the hot heads in Afghanistan. All that, of course, confused everybody—including the

intelligence services, which could not figure out exactly how many troops were introduced.

Why did we introduce as many troops as we did, rather than more, or less? It was because we believed that if only the troops were introduced and stationed in garrisons in the most critical locations, the situation would stabilize. We presumed that our troops would not be involved in combat. However, we did not exclude the possibility of provocations, and we considered our responses to them, and so on. As I said yesterday, the Mujahadeen were well established in twelve provinces along the border with Pakistan in the East, and with Iran in the West. Our troops were sent to those provinces. Our calculations showed that we needed to strengthen Kabul, as the major strategic center, then the airfield at Bagram to the north of Kabul, and then station troops along the border. That is how we calculated the number of troops to introduce. We could not do all of this with less than that. That was the basis for our calculations—not the intention to “win,” to destroy, or to take over. We had no such plans.

I would also like to mention the issue of Vietnam, which Ilya has raised. It is clear that in its goals; in the manner of action; in the number of troops; and especially in the results, the introduction of troops into Afghanistan had no parallels with Vietnam—absolutely no parallels. It was an entirely different issue. Kosygin was right when he said that we needed to draw our own conclusions from the complex developments in Vietnam, and that we should not repeat anything even distantly reminiscent of Vietnam. But I would like to emphasize once again that we did not set ourselves the goal of defeating the enemy and winning a war. There was no task like this for our troops in Afghanistan. This is all.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Valentin. That was very informative, and very useful for our further proceedings.

I wanted to turn to Alexander Lyakhovsky now, but, before I do so, unfortunately, there is one thing that I have to do, and that is to introduce a limit to your speaking time—because if I do not, we will not be able to get through this session; I have so many people on my list now. At least for the next half hour or so, we will have a seven-minute speaking limit.

DOBRYNIN: We can continue on the boat. [Laughter.]

WESTAD: Absolutely; we are going to do that, but in a slightly different form from the way we are doing it here.

Alexander, I have one question to put to you before you start. I wanted to know about the operational terms of the events in the period from the 25th to the 27th or 28th of December 1979 in Kabul. As viewed from your perspective, how did this work out? Was it a successful operation? Was it difficult? I am thinking both in terms of planning and execution. I am also thinking in terms of objectives. One thing that we do not know, for instance, is whether Amin's death was part of the plan that had been developed beforehand, or whether it was an accidental consequence of the introduction of Soviet troops.

LYAKHOVSKY: From our point of view, in purely military terms, the operation was carried out successfully. The tasks that were put before the troops were fulfilled at the outset. The tasks to take Amin's palace and to kill Amin himself were also fulfilled. I do not have any documents to prove what was the main goal of the introduction of troops

into Afghanistan, even though we know the official statement of the goal: to repel an external aggression. But there is a view that the main goal was to remove Amin from power, and to install Karmal. If that is the case, then it explains the timetable which Anatoly Fedorovich had mentioned—he was told that the troops would have been withdrawn in two months. Once Karmal had been installed, that task would have been fulfilled, and the troops could leave Afghanistan.

In my opinion, had everything happened that way—if the troops had left immediately after fulfilling that task—it would have been the best course of events for the Soviet Union. But, of course, we can only speculate here on what might have happened if things had been done differently. In my strong personal opinion, the troops in Afghanistan served as a red cloth for a bull. They only exacerbated the negative trends that were developing in Afghanistan.

Frankly, I found it difficult to understand when our American colleagues were speaking about the panic and confusion in Washington, and when they said that they did not know what to do. I suspect that they are being coy here, because the introduction of our troops was very profitable for the Americans. They said here that they regarded the Afghan problems in the light of the more general background of issues in the Middle and Near East—the oil resources, our alleged encirclement of the area, and so forth—and they cited the examples of South Yemen, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Iran. Our introduction of troops into Afghanistan served as, for the Americans, the ace of trumps—although they probably did not recognize it as such from the beginning. It allowed them to switch all attention to Afghanistan.

Also, some people here said that there was opposition to the introduction of troops in the Foreign Ministry. We are saying this

wholly in retrospect. At that time—at least I can speak for the Defense Ministry—there was no such opposition. Perhaps in the process leading up to the decision, some of our leaders spoke against it; but once the decision had been made, the Defense Ministry carried out the orders given to it by our political leadership without vacillation. When some people say now, after the troops had been withdrawn, that there was opposition at the outset, I can testify otherwise. Maybe some people were against it in their hearts; but nobody spoke openly against it.

I would like to mention one more issue. I think that the sanctions applied by the Americans were ineffective, and that they failed to do the damage they were supposed to do to the Soviet Union. The reasons for our lack of success in the Afghanistan campaign were completely different. We did an analysis at the time. I can read one memo that was sent to the Central Committee discussing the possible negative consequences that could follow from our introduction of troops into Afghanistan, if our Chairman allows me.

WESTAD: I am sorry, Alexander, what is the date on this document?

LYAKHOVSKY: It is January 20, 1980:

With the introduction of our troops into Afghanistan, our policy exceeded the acceptable limits of confrontation in the Third World. The benefit from this action turned out to be insignificant as compared to the damage done to our interests. First, in addition to the two existing fronts of confrontation—with NATO in Europe and with China in Asia—now we have a third

hotbed of political confrontation on the south flank of the USSR in unfavorable geographic and socio-political conditions. Second, there has been a significant widening and consolidation of the anti-Soviet front of states encircling the Soviet Union from the West to the East. Third, Soviet influence in the Nonaligned Movement suffered serious damage. Our image in the Islamic world suffered especially. Fourth, détente became blocked, and the political preconditions for limiting the arms race were liquidated. Fifth, technological and economic pressure on the Soviet Union significantly increased. Sixth, Western and Chinese propaganda were given serious trumps for widening their campaign against the Soviet Union with the goal of undermining its prestige in the public opinion of the West, of the developing nations, and of the socialist countries. Seventh, the Afghan events wiped out all the preconditions for normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations. Eighth, these events served as a catalyst for the normalization of relations between Iran and the United States. Ninth, mistrust of Soviet policy, and self-distancing from it, increased in Yugoslavia, Romania, and the Korean People's Democratic Republic. Some reservedness in regard to the Soviet Union for the first time appeared in the Hungarian and Polish press in connection with Soviet actions in Afghanistan. It probably reflected the public mood and the concern of the leadership of those countries about being pulled into Soviet global actions for which our partners do not have sufficient resources. Tenth, the differentiation of policy of Western countries toward socialist countries increased, and now it actively interferes with the relations between the Soviet Union



and other Socialist countries, openly playing on the contradictions and differences of opinion between us. Last, the Soviet Union is now burdened with the need to provide economic assistance to Afghanistan.

I think this very clear and timely analysis was sent to the central Committee on January 20, 1980. But nobody listened to it. The reason for that, in my view, is the following: there were mass uprisings against Karmal's regime in Kabul in February. Right before that, the Soviet leadership had been discussing the issue of troop withdrawal.

**WESTAD:** I am sorry, Alexander, I will have to interrupt you. This is extremely interesting and useful information, but we have to pass on to Karen now, who is next on my list. I have just one request for you, Alexander, and for others who have been presenting documents at the table: please make sure that we get a copy of these documents, so that we can include them in an accurate form in the transcript of the meeting.

Karen?

**BRUTENTS:** Anatoly said that the U.S. government was in constant contact with its Embassy, and that it more efficiently took expert opinion into account. I cannot agree with this compliment. Why? Because, if that was the case, then I just cannot understand why you speak of the Soviet introduction of troops into Afghanistan as an unexpected surprise. In the stack of documents that we have right here, there is not one, but several predictions of such a development by American officials—one of whom is sitting right across the table from me: Marshall Shulman. There

are several telegrams from Kabul that also say that the Soviets—or the Russians—faced the dilemma of whether or not to introduce troops into Afghanistan. The date could have been unexpected, but the decision itself, I think, could not have been a surprise to anyone.

Second, I think we can say that the Soviet government underestimated the possible reaction by the United States most of all. It was not all that mistaken about the European reaction—recall the position of Giscard d'Estaing and some other European leaders, such as the German leaders. But they underestimated the U.S. reaction. And there are certain reasons for that. As far I know from some indirect sources, there were good professionals, represented by Gromyko himself, present at the decision making discussions. However, due to his character, he may have abstained from expressing his opinion loudly. As far as I know, the most serious action that was foreseen from the United States was the grain embargo, although there were some doubts expressed about whether the U.S. would do this, owing to the commercial interests. And it was not all that wrong—we can see it in the documents that we have here. We see the Vice President arguing against the grain embargo on the ground that the interests of the agricultural lobby should be taken into consideration.

However, the question remains: why did they underestimate the U.S. reaction? I see several possible reasons here. Of course, we can only guess. First, I think, they were working from a very simple assumption that has been already mentioned here. What is Afghanistan? It is in the sphere of our security interests. It is right under our nose. I do not know whether that was specifically mentioned during the discussions, but I am positive that everyone knew that the United States would not have tolerated such developments in Mexico, for example, if there was a

hostile regime installed there, or something like that. We sincerely believed this. I did not intend to return to this question again, because today everybody said that they were against the introduction of troops into Afghanistan. However, in the beginning of December there was a request for all the institutions involved to send in their recommendations—not from all, I should say, but from those involved in the future discussion. Every one of them wanted to have a document to go in with. I got a request from Boris Nikolaevich Ponomarev to write up our opinion for him. It was not an official opinion; I repeat, they did not listen to the experts. While I was writing it with one of my colleagues, I got a telephone call from Alexandrov, Brezhnev's assistant, whom we have just mentioned. I would like to stress that he was a very intelligent and educated person, whom you would never accuse of being ignorant, and he was very experienced in things like this. He was an old hand. He asked me what I was doing. When I told him, he asked, "And what exactly are you writing there?" When I told him that I was going to write a negative opinion. He said only one thing in response: "So, do you suggest that we should give Afghanistan to the Americans?" And he immediately ended the conversation. That was very characteristic of the mood at the very top. By the way, I have to tell you that it seems to me that the American side suffers from the same problem that the Soviet side suffered from in the past—it cannot put itself in the other side's shoes. It cannot feel their position, or appreciate their arguments. So this is the first reason.

Second, and additionally, we already had a regime there that called itself pro-Communist. The United States had accepted that regime. Brzezinski, as I heard in Moscow—and as Anatoly Fedorovich told me here—was ready to accept even a Finlandization of Afghanistan.

And we had the treaty. So why was it surprising that we should do what we did? Why was such an action unnatural?

Third, relations with the United States were so bad that it was impossible for them to get worse. If you asked me, I would tell you that the road to Afghanistan began in Angola, passed through Ethiopia, through the mini-Cuban crisis, and so on and so fourth. After all that, we came to Kabul. We need to draw this line.

Lastly, I think, they were hoping to end it quickly: in several days, or a few months—you know how it is: it easier to reconcile yourself to something when you expect it to be brief.

**WESTAD:** Sorry, Karen, your time has run out.

**BRUTENTS:** I am finishing.

I will add only one thing. I have already asked this question here. I did not get an answer to it, perhaps because I did not address it to someone in particular. I would like to repeat it, and address it this time to Bill, to Marshall, and to Gary. Two questions: let us double it.

My first question is this. Taking into consideration all the scope of the American actions—the buildup in the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean; the situation with negotiations on the Indian Ocean; the sharp turn in relations with China from trilateral diplomacy to a de facto anti-Soviet entente; the budget; the medium-range missiles; the massive assistance to the Mujahadeen, and so on—Stan's argument is not compelling. Geir spoke about this yesterday. There are plenty of documents demonstrating American activity in Afghanistan—for example, Brzezinski's statement in April that you should have strengthened aid to

the rebels with weapons, financing, and so on. Taking this massive involvement into account too, what kind of reaction did the American policy makers expect from the Soviet Union at that moment?

My second question is this. Marshall, you correctly mentioned that the right wing—or the hawkish wing, we can say—got support for their position from Soviet actions in Afghanistan. You are absolutely right. But I would like to ask you the following: What kind of actions of the Soviet Union would have been sufficient to pacify that wing? I address this question to both of you. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Karen. That was very informative, and I hope the American side will respond to your questions. I will take brief questions from Jim Hershberg and Carol Saivetz, and then turn to Leonid.

HERSHBERG: I am willing to defer to so that Karen can have answers to his questions.

WESTAD: Okay, would anyone from the American side like to answer Karen? Bill?

ODOM: The short answer to an example from the Soviet side that would have justified Marshall's position and caused it to prevail is Gorbachev's declaration in his book that international class struggle was dead, and that the common interests of humankind took precedence are class interest. In other words, when you gave up the international class struggle and adopted ideological principles upon which we could build cooperation, Marshall's approach was vindicated. George Shultz

told me to read that book in 1987. I read it, and I was staggered. Originally, I thought it would be *chepukha* ["nonsense"]. I saw this stuff, and I said, "This is amazing! This man has decided to change the basis of East-West relations." From that time forward I said: I am all for this. This I can take seriously. But I also said to myself: knowing the nature of the system, he risks blowing it up. And I wrote that in an article in 1987 titled, "How Far Can Soviet Reform Go?" But I was quite prepared to see it blow up. So, I think, he made a very good choice. That is my short answer.

WESTAD: Jim?

HERSHBERG: Do Marshall and Gary want to address Karen's questions?

WESTAD: Please pose your question, and then I will get back to Marshall and Gary.

HERSHBERG: Okay. I have a very quick question for each side. Anatoly, Sergei, and Karen agree that Soviet leaders underestimated the Western—and specifically the American—response to the invasion. Let me quote one paragraph that Zbig wrote in his diary on January 4th, 1980; this is on page 432 of his memoirs. Zbig wrote: "Had we been tougher sooner, had we drawn the line more clearly, had we engaged in the kind of consultations that I had so many times advocated, maybe the Soviets would not have engaged in this active miscalculation. As it is, American-Soviet relations will have been set back for a long time to come. What was done had to be done"—referring to the reaction by Carter—"but it would have been better if the Soviets had been deterred

first through a better understanding of our determination." So my question to the Russians—especially considering what Anatoly and others have said about the decision making process in Moscow—is this: would it have mattered to Soviet leaders if they had foreseen the U.S. reaction correctly, or would they have considered that price worth paying?

My question for the Americans is: when you were deliberating in January and February—after the invasion—and making the decision to step up aid to the rebels in a much more direct way, as Stan described, how concerned were you that this would trigger a Soviet move into Pakistan? In general, was there a considerable debate over whether you should hold back on a more direct role because this might give the Soviets a justification to move further, especially given that there had been this unexpected, dramatic Soviet thrust into Afghanistan?

WESTAD: Thank you, Jim. Carol?

CAROL SAIVETZ: Actually, Jim, you and I are thinking on the same wavelength. I have been struck repeatedly, both yesterday and today, by statements from the Russian side that the U.S. factor did not seem to enter into the calculation when the decision was finally made. This leads to several questions, some of which Jim has already asked.

I would ask the American side whether, in retrospect, you think your signaling to the Soviet Union that this was unacceptable behavior—that this really would signal the end of détente—should have been more forceful?

I would like to ask the Soviet side whether or not there was anything that the United States should have or could have done sooner—perhaps in response to Ethiopia, or in response to South Yemen—that

would have made the U.S. factor more important in your calculations as the decision was made to intervene in Afghanistan?

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Carol. These are very good questions. I will turn to Leonid now, and then to Marshall and Gary.

**SHEBARSHIN:** I will deviate a little from the mainstream of the discussion.

On December 27, 1979, the Embassy in Teheran received a message from Moscow about the introduction of our troops to Afghanistan, and directed the Ambassador to meet Imam Khomeini, and to explain the situation to him. Mr. Vinogradov, who was at that time our Ambassador, immediately got in touch with Imam's Chancery, and—surprisingly enough, I think—the Imam already knew that this had happened. Vinogradov was invited to pay a call on the Imam, who at that time stayed in Kumas, about one hundred kilometers from Teheran.

The Imam was very considerate, and very attentive. He did not comment on the decision; he did not criticize it. He asked certain questions; but his only commentary was, "This was a mistake, and you will come to regret it." That was all. He was a wise old man.

As far as our relations with Iran were concerned, Gary is right. The introduction of troops into Afghanistan complicated them greatly. We lost a lot as far as Iran was concerned. Of course, if the operations were successful, we could acquire additional means to put pressure on Iran and force certain unpleasant actions on the part of Khomeinist leadership; but the operation soured, and so we had to bear the brunt of it.

As far as the Pakistani reaction is concerned, on the surface



there was concern and even alarm; but I believe that—not so deep in their hearts, but under the surface—they were jubilant about that day. It meant favorable changes for them in their relations with the United States and with India. By the way, if you did not read Salman Rushdie's book *Shame*, this reaction is very vividly described there. I advise you strongly to read that passage.

Now, the purpose of the entire operation was not to introduce our troops into Afghanistan to occupy territory or to establish garrisons. The purpose of the operation was to replace Amin with Karmal. The question remains—even for me; I talked to many of my colleagues about the genesis of the operation—who first came up with the idea of introducing our troops to support Karmal's regime? Knowing the mentality of KGB—knowing my own mentality—I would think that we would have preferred to do this without any military support. And it could have been done. At later stages, when the operation was completed—or aborted, I should say—I had several opportunities to talk with Babrak Karmal. He tried to shift the blame on to the Soviet side. The Soviet side tried to shift the blame for the initiative onto his shoulders. So the question still remains. That is all. Thank you.

WESTAD: Thank you very much, Leonid. Gary?

SICK: I will not attempt to answer the questions about the signaling. I think Marshall and Bill are probably better equipped to discuss that.

I would like to make two very brief points that came up in the course of the discussion. First, there were several remarks on the sense of pandemonium, which was the word that was used on this side, to describe the American response. In using this word, I did not mean to

imply that there was no purposeful activity, or that the possibilities of a gain here were ignored—not at all. It was very clear from the very beginning that this gave us certain advantages, especially in dealing with the Islamic countries, where our credibility had declined almost to the vanishing point. Suddenly, we were in a position to recoup those losses. So when I used the word "pandemonium," what I meant by that was simply that there was so much to be done. The whole strategic position had been destroyed by the Iranian revolution, and in some respects it was changing again as a result of the invasion of Afghanistan. But to deal with that involved a tremendous number of different things that needed to be done.

We certainly expected that the Soviet Union would do something to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan. Only the date was in question. But Marshall made an excellent point when he said that the nature of the action—the way this was done—was not really anticipated. We did not expect a massive influx of troops; and we certainly did not expect the immediate death of Amin, and so forth. These were things that had not been foreseen. So once that initial shock was over, and once people had a chance to get their minds around the various possibilities, I would say that the system engaged in a lot of rather purposeful activity in a very straightforward way, and, in fact, that it performed rather well. We mobilized support from places like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other Islamic countries; we carried out a sort of classic diplomatic maneuver to get all of them on board. The whole concept of the Rapid Deployment Force was invigorated, and it went forward—the Defense Department and others were cooperating in that; where people had been dragging their feet in the past, there was now coordinated action. The whole business of putting together a list of sanctions and getting the government

agencies to agree to re-analyze our entire range of relations with the Soviet Union was complex but speedily executed. Once the initial shock was over, things went very smoothly. Of course, there was a certain amount of debate. The whole business about the Carter Doctrine implied a much more vigorous U.S. military presence in the region, and involved taking on responsibilities that we had not had there before. That would have been unthinkable beforehand. You simply could not have had a Carter Doctrine before the invasion of Afghanistan; suddenly, it was accepted by just about everybody.

So, it would be incorrect to say that we did not realize that there were opportunities here, or that there was a lack of purposeful activity. But, as always happens with the creation of any new strategy or policy, there were a lot of dead ends at the beginning, and people did a certain amount of thrashing around as they figured out where to go.

One final point: Valentin mentioned--and he keeps coming back to the point--that you had a treaty with Afghanistan, and that this explains everything. It does not. I can say that the invocation of the Soviet Union's treaty with Afghanistan made the Iranians extremely nervous, since they also had a treaty with the Soviet Union dating from 1921, which had a clause which said that if there was instability in Iran, the Soviet Union was formally permitted to send troops in to quell it. Having watched the way they quelled instability in Afghanistan--particularly the immediate death of the leader and the imposition of the new regime--the Iranians and other people had reason to be a little concerned, and the treaty was not something that gave them any comfort.

WESTAD: Thank you, Gary. Marshall?

**SHULMAN:** Several years after these events I wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs*, which bears a title that you are welcome to use if you like for this section of our discussion. The title was, "The Dance of the Dinosaurs." It strikes me that it is an appropriate characterization of the inter-reaction we have been discussing.

I would like to respond briefly to the questions Karen and others asked. First of all, since some of us, at least, foresaw that a military intervention was likely, why did not we reflect on and communicate more effectively what our reaction would be? Well, there were representations, as I said: I made five of them myself. But only one of them seems to register on Anatoly's consciousness. It did not have much of an impact. I was not in a position to say what the reaction would be. All I could say was that it would be bad.

But I did not know even that. I was strongly influenced in my thinking at the time by the misfortunes that the Soviet Union began to suffer in Afghanistan in April 1978. It was bad luck for the Soviet Union that people like Taraki and Amin were the ones to take over there. They were ideological zealots. They were people whom the Soviets could not control, and they were taking the situation to the point where by their ideological rigidities and extremism they were building up a domestic insurgent movement. Now, many of the Soviet documents refer to the insurgency as being fueled externally. There was some degree of external aid, but that was not the really important point. The important point was the domestic resistance that Taraki and Amin stirred up by means of their own policies. It was just bad luck, from the Soviet point of view, that they were the people who were the leaders. Their actions led to a disintegration of the country. That was the fundamental problem that the Soviet Union had to deal with.

Now, to the extent that I foresaw a Soviet action, my judgment was parallel to what Leonid suggested he would have advocated. I thought that the Soviet response to the disintegrating situation in Afghanistan would be a rifle shot instead of a shotgun blast. That is, if your problem was, essentially, to change the government—to take out Amin and to put in Babrak—I thought that you would choose the less extreme option of those that were available to you. I believe that if you had done it under the cover of an expansion of the military advisory group, for example, without a large introduction of troops, the world reaction would have been much less severe. I also believe that that would have been a more characteristic Soviet response.

**ODOM:** You should have been working in the International Department.  
[Laughter.]

**SHULMAN:** But they would not have listened to me. [Laughter.] I do not think the Soviet side would have listened to me any more than the American side did. [Laughter.]

**BRUTENTS:** Good advice, but too late. [Laughter.]

**SHULMAN:** But you see, that would have been a more rational response, and the international community could have absorbed it. But, as I said earlier, it was the extreme nature of the large-scale military operation—and the clumsiness of it; the mishandling of the politics of it—that fed into the divisions of opinion in the United States and triggered an extreme response. So, I come back to the dance of the dinosaurs.

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Marshall. Valentin, quickly, just two minutes, please.

**VARENNIKOV:** I would like to correct myself. In regards to the rude nature of our introduction of troops, I think we had the same methods. If you look at the methods that the Americans use, you will notice that we have very similar methods. We did not deceive each other here.

I would like to respond to the questions that were asked here, in particular, by Gary. He said that our treaty with Afghanistan did not mean anything. I understand this issue differently. A treaty is a treaty. What do you mean it did not mean anything? I understand that an invasion is when one intervenes in a country with which they do not have a treaty—when they take over the country and pursue their goals there. This is called aggression, or intervention, in my understanding. But when there is a treaty, and the recipient country is asking for troops, I think it is a completely normal thing. The method might have been rather rude, as was said here; but we will both try to improve the methods. [Laughter.] We use the same methods.

Now let me say a word about Taraki and Amin. You know, I agree that both figures were unfortunate for us. There is still a lot of confusion about the way it ended, however. I spoke with the Chief of the Operative Department of the Afghan Army, and he showed me the spot where he had shot and killed Amin. I found myself in a very strange position. But this is not the main point. The point is that neither figure was satisfactory for us, or for you. But the person who came to power later—Najibullah—believe me, he would have satisfied both you and us. He was a person of the same type as Daud and Zahir Shah. This is the type of person he was. It is very said that it all happened that

way. I regret it very much.

I would like to end my remarks with the following note. Tomorrow—or even today on the boat—we can continue our conversation taking into account what our chairman told us: we should bring our discussion closer to the real world of today. We are still trying to manage the situation in Yugoslavia, and we may face other such situations. We need to draw some conclusions, and to learn some lessons from this episode. We will try to do it. Thank you.

**WESTAD:** Two quick questions: Olav Njølstad first, and then Alexander Chubarian.

**NJØLSTAD:** This goes back to the question raised by David earlier about how we explain the U.S. reaction to the Soviet invasion. I think there is one factor here which has not been given the focus it really deserves: that is the role of Carter's domestic advisers. As we can see, they were present at many of these crucial meetings, and, of course, the presidential election was coming very soon. This was very important. We can see from the record that Hamilton Jordan and his people had been pushing for a lot of political measures from the summer of 1979 which resurface as part of the U.S. response to the invasion—for instance, an increase in the defense budget; things having to do with the draft, and so on. These were measures discussed by Hamilton Jordan's people—especially with Senator Nunn, as part of the strategy to win his support for SALT—to improve Carter's chances for reelection. I think we should put some emphasis on this. Perhaps this factor was also important to explain why the Soviet side miscalculated and did not expect the kind of response they received. Perhaps they did not

calculate in this dynamic factor: the presidential campaign.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Olav. Alexander?

**CHUBARIAN:** To begin with, I would like to say to Marshall that his article, "The Dance of the Dinosaurs," did not pass unnoticed in the Soviet Union. I remember very well when another department of the Central Committee—the Science Department—asked us—the History Department—to give them a summary of that article, and to write up a memo about Marshall Shulman's position on Soviet-American relations. I have to tell you, Marshall, that we wrote that memo.

**SHULMAN:** When was that?

**CHUBARIAN:** It was sometime in the mid-1980s. When was the article published?

**SHULMAN:** In 1984-85.

**CHUBARIAN:** In 1985; I remember.

**VARENNIKOV:** The dance was going on.

**CHUBARIAN:** Yes.

Now, I would like to say something in response to my colleague Alexander Lyakhovsky. He cited the memorandum which was sent to the Central Committee on January 20, 1980. I have to tell you that that memorandum was unusual. I agree with Karen that before the decision was



made, nobody asked any advice from the analytical institutions. There was no analysis, and nobody was interested. But, already in the beginning of 1980, some of our special institutions created, as you know, on Andropov's initiative, took some of their own initiatives. That memorandum was written by the Institute of the World Socialist System. I remember it very well; Bogomolov was telling me about it. It was sent to the Department of Socialist Countries of the Central Committee. At the same time Arbatov—who was on very good terms with Alexandrov, Brezhnev's assistant—expressed his opinion on behalf of the Institute of the U.S. and Canada about the impact of the introduction of troops into Afghanistan on Soviet-American relations. I think that those were the first symptoms of the reaction of, let us say, the academic community—of the scholarly establishment—to the possible serious consequences of the introduction of troops into Afghanistan. Bogomolov, by the way, then wrote a piece—which was not understood then—about the possible negative consequences of the introduction of troops for our relations with the socialist countries. This was what interested him most.

I would like to finish by saying that the reaction was very apparent. Those requests were sent to appropriate departments. But I know that Suslov was extremely unhappy about it. He was responsible for the entire ideological and propaganda activity. The institutes that had the reputation of being liberal-revisionist organizations before now became even more suspicious in the eyes of our ideological establishment. But I also know that at the later stage—and I was told this by a person who was very close to Andropov—not long before his death, Andropov praised those institutions and those people that even at that difficult time did not fear expressing their opinions and their

first doubts concerning the wisdom of that action.

**WESTAD:** Thank you, Alexander. Stan, you asked for the floor?

**TURNER:** I will respond briefly to Jim Hershberg's question about whether we were seriously concerned about Soviet action against Pakistan. We were, in my department. There were a couple of incidents of cross-border activities, and I really feared that these were the beginning of what I thought was very logical for the Soviets: to stage occasional incursions across the border, not by Soviet troops, but by Afghans supported by Soviets. It seemed to me it was a very logical alarm. And I would like to ask the Russian side why they did not subtly harass Pakistan more, to send them a stronger message.

But I would also like to ask our Russian compatriots about their analysis of the military operations overall in Afghanistan. We, in the United States military, spent several decades trying to analyze why we lost so badly in Vietnam. We came to various conclusions, some perhaps good, some perhaps erroneous; but I am interested in what conclusions the Soviet military reached about their lack of success against the Afghan insurgency.

**WESTAD:** We have seven minutes left before we need to take a break, and I think those minutes can be well-spent with someone from the Russian side responding to the questions that Stan asked. Karen?

**BRUTENTS:** I would like to come back to the response formulated by Bill. The main virtue of that response was that it was formulated very clearly. I do not argue with that, because it is a fact. And I even

think that it could be one of the conclusions of our entire work here. In other words, whatever the Soviet Union did as the Soviet Union would have dissatisfied part of the American political establishment. From that follows a practical conclusion: that part of the American establishment had to have a similar attitude to détente also. This is my first point.

Secondly, I would like to draw your attention to the following. Some Politburo documents have been cited here; I would like to make sure that you understand that some of them were written in the propagandist style. You should not consider them without taking that into account. Very often realism was abandoned for the benefit of propaganda. Politburo members, of course, talked more openly, and maybe very differently from what you see here.

Thirdly, I would like you to look at us realistically. When we are saying that some people were expressing some doubts about the wisdom and the justifiability of the Afghan action, I have to tell you that in most cases we are not talking about moral or legal objections, but simply about considerations of expediency. People were thinking and saying that that was simply inexpedient—that it would be detrimental to the Soviet national interest in a general sense. This is what motivated their apprehensions. Moral and other considerations were only invoked later, if at all.

WESTAD: Thank you, Karen. That is very useful.

I will give the last three-and-a-half minutes to anyone who would like to attempt to answer briefly the questions Stan raised. Alexander?

LYAKHOVSKY: I would like to respond to Stan's question. We have

analyzed all the operations that were carried out in Afghanistan. The analysis concluded that most of the operations were carried out successfully—their goals were reached. The reason for our withdrawal from Afghanistan was not that we suffered great losses in Afghanistan, in terms of people or equipment, nor that we could not have carried on military operations against the Mujahadeen any further. The reasons were totally different: the situation had changed. You know that. In purely military terms, our troops were very successful in Afghanistan.

I would also like to respond to Marshall. He said that he did not understand why Soviet troops were introduced into Afghanistan when it was possible to kill Amin with the help of our special services. The problem here was that Amin had very strong support in the Army. The Soviet leadership thought that some of the Afghan forces on Amin's side could turn against us. Our troops were introduced in order to neutralize those possible actions. When that operation was carried out in Kabul, practically all Afghan military units were blocked and under control by the Soviet troops that were introduced on the 25th—the airborne division and a regiment. They were already in Kabul on December 25. The operation to get rid of Amin was carried out on the 27th. By that time all important objectives in Kabul were already in Soviet hands. And the battalion that was protecting Amin played a major role in capturing him. This was the battalion that was sent to Kabul on his personal request to protect him. That battalion played the major role. It was the Trojan Horse. This is the answer to your questions.

**BRUTENTS:** Some protection. [Laughter.]

**WESTAD:** Thank you very much, Alexander.

My watch says that it is now 12:15. We are going to break for lunch. First, let me welcome General Gareev, who has just arrived. [Laughter; applause.] You are very welcome. We are looking forward to seeing you for the last session tomorrow.

We are going to continue this discussion, I am sure, on the boat. The bus leaves from here at 2:30 sharp. I am going to enjoy the boat trip so much more because I know that Bob Legvold will be here chairing tomorrow! Thank you all very much.

SEPTEMBER 20

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SESSION 7

WHY DID DÉTENTE COLLAPSE?

**BOB LEGVOLD:** I would like to call the meeting to order, please. I want to welcome all of the participants to this last session of what has been an extraordinarily interesting project. My name is Bob Legvold. I am very sorry that I missed the first part of this meeting. I understand that it has been an extremely productive, well-led, and interesting meeting up to this point. I am also sorry that I missed two days of the Nobel Institute's generous hospitality. I know it has been a marvelous three days for everyone up to this point.

Before I say a word about the morning agenda, let me explain that the paper that you have in front of you is a translation of the first chapter of General Lyakhovsky's book on Afghanistan.

We have a very big agenda before us this morning. We are now putting the Afghan case behind us, and we are turning to thoughts about the entire period that we have been looking at over the last two years—that is, the entire Carter-Brezhnev period, from 1977 through 1980. Today we ought to let our minds run over not merely this meeting, but over what we talked about at Musgrove, and in Florida last March.

I proposed to divide the morning in the following way. The first part, before the coffee break, will belong to the people we have been calling the veterans: those who participated in the decision making at the time. The second half of the morning—after the coffee break—will belong to the scholars.

Let me turn first, then, to those of you who are the veterans, and let me say that at this concluding session of the project, there is one more service that we are going to ask of you; there is one more contribution that we would like to you to make to this project. That contribution is to reflect on the importance of the period at a fundamental level.

Thinking about the significance of the history of the Carter-Brezhnev period, in my mind, involves two basic tasks. They are very ambitious, and we will have some trouble accomplishing them here this morning. To get the process going, I think it would be very useful if one, two, or—at the most—three people from each side would say a little bit about what you believe may be the pitfalls—the hazards—in reconstructing the history of this period twenty years from now, or fifty years from now. Fifty years from now most of us, including most people who are the veterans, will be gone; but there will be a distinguished historian at Oxford University, or at the University of Oslo, who will be writing a history of the Carter-Brezhnev period. I would ask two or three of you from each side to pick one item—you may have a long list; but pick one item—of warning that you would give to that historian, who will have available the documents, Anatoly Dobrynin's memoirs, Zbig Brzezinski's memoirs, General Lyakhovsky's book, and the various other things that you are all writing. What is it that he or she is not going to understand by looking at those materials? What else would you want that historian to know about? Pick one thing. We will do this very briefly; let us see if we can do this in no more than fifteen or twenty minutes.

After that, we will turn to this fundamental problem: what is the significance of the period? If you will permit me. I will take three or

four minutes at the outset to outline what seems to me to be the two tasks to which I referred. The first task in dealing with the significance of this period is to try to answer the question: why did things happen the way they did from 1977 to 1980? In a way, of course, that is what all of us have been doing at every step of all three conferences. You have just spent a day and a half explaining why things happened the way they did in the case of Afghanistan. We did the same for the SALT negotiations and other arms control issues at Musgrove, and for other dimensions of the relationship—including some of the conflicts in the Third World—at the meeting in Florida. But here I am asking us to pose the question of why things happened the way they did from a greater distance. The aim is not to answer it the way we have been answering it specifically—in the case of Afghanistan, or in the case of the SALT treaty, and things of that kind.

Let me give you an idea of what I have in mind, although you may devise a different strategy for answering the question. One way to think about this problem of answering the question of why things happened the way they did from 1977 to 1980 is to recognize that there have been two basically different kinds of explanations, both among those of you who participated, and among those of us who tried to understand and write about it on the outside. I label those two explanations, first, "the essence of the players"—by which I mean the states: the Soviet Union and the United States—and, alternatively, "the essence of the interaction." People who argue that the explanation for why things happened the way they did lies in the nature of the players—in the nature of the two states—offer the first explanation. But that explanation divides further. Take the American player, for example. There are those who would argue that the essential problem in the



essence of the American player was that it was not prepared to accept the Soviet Union as an equal in the superpower relationship. It was not prepared to acknowledge what the Soviet leadership saw as a legitimate role for the Soviet Union in international politics. There are others who would say, however, that the problem with the essence of the United States as a player was very different: it was the period of time which the United States was going through. Post-Vietnam, the essential characteristics of the United States were insecurity about its role abroad, and divisions at home about what the United States should be doing in world politics and foreign policy. There was not much that the Soviet Union could have done about either aspect of the essence of the American player. On the other side, in the case of the Soviet Union, there are those who would say that the essence of the player was a leadership that in some vague way believed this was a period of opportunity for Soviet foreign policy, because of the growth of its military power, and because of the improvement in its strategic position. For whatever set of reasons, that is the essential explanation for what happened. But there are others who would say, in contrast, that this was not the essence of the actor. There was no hubris on the part of the Soviet Union, nor a sense of strategic momentum. To the contrary, there was a strange combination of fears and ambitions, and the peculiar way that the Soviet leaders thought about the world led them to do things that produced the predictable results in other people's behavior, including that of the United States. You will notice that all four of these explanations—two each; two competing accounts of the essence of the actor—suggest that there was not much that the other side could do about it. What happened was pretty much in the cards. The role for *policy* was limited to the margin during this

period of time.

There is a second kind of explanation for why things happened the way they did, I suggested, appeals not to the essence of the players, but to the essence of the interaction between them. On this view, what happened was not necessarily in the cards. Things did not necessarily have to turn out the way they did between 1977 and 1980. The choices of Soviet and American leaders shaped this period and determined what happened in the course of it. Now, in this case too, I think, people have different ways of applying this explanation. There are those who argue that the critical moments of choice in this four-and-a-half year period are what we ought to understand. There are others who would argue that what was more important was what I called at the first meeting the "tyranny of small decisions"—the regular incremental effect of the way each specific thing got done. On this second view, it was not the choices that were made at major moments that were fundamental, but the daily and weekly choices on matters small and large that had a cumulative effect and that established the downhill momentum.

There is also another way in which people could disagree who use this second explanation. Some would argue that the essence of the problem was misperception: neither side did a very good job of interpreting the other side's psychology, or the other side's intentions, or even the factors that were influencing the other side more broadly. In a somewhat separate, but related way, there are others who would say that we basically understood one another, but we miscalculated the effect of our own actions. We did not understand what would happen if we did what we did, even though we had a pretty good sense of the other side.

I am not saying that you have to follow that framework, or even

that you have to react to it. I say all of this—and I apologize for taking the time to do it—in order to suggest to you the level at which I would like to address the question of why things happened the way they did.

The second basic task this morning is to address what I would call the relevance of this history to the contemporary period. That is the basic problem of drawing the lessons from the period of 1977 to 1980 for the present? What are the useful lessons of that period for the moment? I would caution you that this issue of the lessons from history is a two-edge sword. It is often as important to avoid taking the wrong lessons from history as it is to avoid overlooking the lessons of history. So when we think about the lessons of this period, I think we want to be very hard-headed about it. I think we want to be frank both about those lessons that are relevant to the present period, and those lessons which could be "mislearned" from that earlier period.

That is what I wanted to say by way of introduction. The time before the coffee break belongs to the veterans, and I will ask us to attend to those three tasks. After the coffee break, the time belongs to the scholars, and I will ask them to address exactly the same three tasks. So you can begin thinking about how you want to put your mind to the problem, and we will see what will come out of it. I will not in some artificial or arbitrary way force the agenda; if we are being productive in one area, we will tailor the agenda accordingly. But in general, this is what I think we should try to do.

The last thing that I would say is that, just as it was for the policy makers whose decisions we are studying,, time is the enemy for us this morning. We are going to have to do a lot within a very short period. I will ask each of you to be as efficient and as brief as you

can be in making your points. If I interrupt you or push you in the course of your intervention, I hope that you will forgive me.

I have not had a chance to meet some of the participants on the Russian side before, but I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you after the session.

Also, I do not know what Arne has been doing, but I have a habit of using people's first names even when I not know them. Please forgive me for the familiarity. That is reinforced by the fact that we are in Norway, and Geir Lundestad yesterday was telling me that, in Norway, there is a very strong ethos of equality among people. That makes it even easier for me to use your first names.

For the next fifteen minutes, then, let us turn to the first of the issues that I raised. Not everybody needs to weigh in; I would like to have two or three people from both the Soviet/Russian side, and from the American side, talk about what may be the pitfalls in this history. What do you want to say to that Oxford historian fifty years from now, when she is writing the critical history of this period?

**DOBRYNIN:** It sounds very pessimistic when you speak about what will be in 40 or 50 years.

**LEGVOLD:** What should they know, Tolya, that they do not know by reading the record?

**DOBRYNIN:** We have many new members of our team, so to speak—very good ones—and I yield to them the right to address this question. I will intervene later on.

LEGVOLD: Okay. Who is willing to take a crack at this? What is not in the record that should be there?

SHEBARSHIN: I would say to the future historian, "Do not believe that human reason plays the predominant role in human affairs."

LEGVOLD: Others? Marshall.

SHULMAN: One lesson that clearly comes through from our working back and forth between documents and people's memories is that it is very difficult for future historians to know how much weight to give the documents. I believe that there is a great danger that historians will infer a pattern of coordination and rationality from the appearance of the documents that misses the messiness and the disorder of decision making, and that overlooks the informal communications that actually played a very important part. When I left government this second time, and I left behind my classified documents, I dropped into the folders just a card or two to warn any future people making use of these that a lot of the documents in there—which sounded plausible and persuasive—may have had nothing to do with the decision making process. There are documents—people arguing the case for something or other—which perhaps no one ever read, or which had no relationship to the proximate pressures under which the decision makers were, in fact, operating.

Now, I think that this is a problem that increases with time. Over time, the gap between decision making as it appears in the documents and as it actually took place gets wider and wider. Partly it is the fear of investigative journalism and of leaks (which increases as the technology of reproduction improves—the Xerox, the fax, and so on)

that make people involved in politics leery of committing things to paper. Partly it is that the political process leads people not to put certain things in the documents. Leaders are politicians, and they have to take account of a constituency, re-election concerns, and other things of that kind. These are either understood tacitly, or communicated orally, or communicated by body language; but generally they do not find their way into the documents, even when they are decisive. That is a difficult thing for a future historian to measure.

**LEGVOLD:** Anatoly, what Marshall said should resonate with you. I remember, at the Florida meeting, that you were uncomfortable because many of us had made a good deal out of a quarterly report that you had done—a routine report—in the summer of 1979. It was a good illustration, you thought, of how historians fifty years from now, running across that document, may misunderstand what actually happened during that period.

**DOBRYNIN:** Well, that particular episode happened because your people, who were looking through our archives, were so eager to get something that they picked up the first thing they saw. More knowledgeable people reading all of the documents would not have seized on that report in particular. In the Foreign Ministry, neither Gromyko nor Kornienko read it.

**LEGVOLD:** Leonid, I take it that the point that you made earlier, about how people should not overestimate the rationality of the decision making process, was broader and more basic than Marshall's? Were you suggesting that it is not simply that the documents may create a

misleading impression of orderliness and rationality, but, indeed, that it is easy to overestimate the rationality of the way people behaved?

**SHEBARSHIN:** Not only that. I was quite serious when I said that. When you see decisions in terms of grand designs and master plans, you see that they look very logical, and very convincing. But then events would go their own way. The people who initiate them lose control of them. That happened in Vietnam; it happened in Afghanistan; it happened with our *perestroika*. I think that the element of reasoning—of conscious logic—is much less than future historians would try to find in these events, and in these decisions. That is what I wanted to say.

**LEGVOLD:** Bill Odom?

**ODOM:** Bob, you have asked a really fascinating historiographical question, and we can bog ourselves down in answering it. I was going to ignore it. But Leonid and Marshall have provoked me to respond.

Looking back and thinking about the history of this period, three or four problems strike me straightaway. The first is the illusion that you are going to find one more document, or one more bit of information, that would be the key to unlock the truth. There has been a tendency in our gatherings to think that if we get one more document, we will have the unvarnished truth. In that regard, I think historians can make a big mistake by losing sight of the bigger picture. But I would like to state Leonid's point in a slightly different way, although I think it comes very much to the same thing. I am not as disdainful of the role of human choice and control as you are, because I think we can see some situations where individual leaders understand the likelihood of events

getting out of control. I suspect that some of my fellow Army officers here might share this view. As one rises up higher in command, one must overcome a company commander's mentality: when you issue an order, you expect to see an exact result. The quality of the command mind that can handle the higher level understands that you are not going to see that quick result. Timing, fluidity, and uncertainties become much greater, and some leaders account for that, accommodate these uncertainties and unanticipated circumstances, and also, to some extent, influence them.

I do think, looking back at this period, that, if this discussion is anything to go by, historians will probably impute far more significance to some of the decisions by leaders than I think they deserve. What seems to me to come out in these documents are sets of interacting structural conditions that would be fairly hard for any leader to change. Now, those constraints probably operated more significantly on the Soviet side than on the American side. I think that if Carter had not changed his mind fundamentally—not just in January 1980, but in the fall of 1978 and the spring of 1979—he could have let the whole thing just unravel from the American side. In that respect, I do think he played a fairly significant role in the events. On the Soviet side it looks to me so though the aging status of the leadership and the narrowness of the decision circle left little room for an individual to change the outcome. Brezhnev's mental state was not conducive to reframing or restructuring the problem. Other Politburo members—Andropov, Ustinov, and maybe Suslov (whose mysterious absence in our discussion is somewhat puzzling)—could have influenced events, but probably only at the margin. They were not leaders so much as courtesan manipulators. I doubt that it would be accurate to say that that kind of person can knowingly control events. So I see less of



a case to make on the Soviet side, and a better case for it on our side.

Let me end by saying that the real answer to your question, Bob, is that history is the contemporary distortion of the past. It is a dialogue with the past. And unless we know what problems will be bothering society in general fifty years from now, we do not have much of an idea of what kinds of questions they will be asking.

LEGVOLD: Fair enough, Bill. Valentin?

VARENNIKOV: Thank you. I totally share Bill's opinion on what he said just now. And I also join Bill in saying that if Carter had changed some of his views between 1978 and 1980, that would have had a cardinal impact on history. And I agree with him in regard to the Soviet Union that those who were at the top—our élite—based their actions on the opinions of those around them. There is no doubt about it; Brezhnev was ill, and he could not, of course, properly carry out the tasks that he was supposed to carry out.

But I would like to return to the call that our Chairman made in the morning that we need to somehow reflect on the importance of the period for today's events. I understand that it is important that veterans and historians not only have to leave something for the historical record, but that it is even more important to be able to influence the situation that is developing in the world today. We—the veterans—have to do it. You see what kind of situation is developing right now: each side is trying to do as much harm as possible to their opponent on the other side. It is absurd. And I believe that it is precisely historians and veterans who need to call their governments to take action. In the United States, one person can make a decision that

influences events; in Russia, we need legislation which would make it impossible to act the way leaders did in the past. That legislation should define and regulate the way the country lives in a way that would enable it to be perceived positively in the entire world.

In this respect, and in the light of our discussion, I would like to say something about the reasons of the breakdown of détente. It is clear that both countries—the United States and the Soviet Union—contributed to that disintegration. There is no doubt about that. Maybe their contributions were different in scope; but we remember that Helsinki was in 1975. What were the goals that the countries set for themselves after Helsinki? Speaking not as a representative of the former Soviet Union, but as an objective observer, I can say that our goal was reducing military confrontation. It was very important. Why was it so important for us? Because everywhere in the country when you met with people—and I was People's Deputy, a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet at that time—their first question was: will there be a war, or not? What do you do to prevent war? This was the first question that the Soviet people were asking. That is why this question of reducing military confrontation was so important for us. The way to do this was through mutual disarmament in accordance with the principle of equal security; the principle of mutual trust; and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. But still we had Afghanistan. It is absurd; but Afghanistan happened.

We also had the goal of improving our economy, of course, taking into account the defense expenditures we had to make. But I had the impression then—and I have it now—that the goal of the United States was a direct attack on the Soviet Union. You said here that the United States did not perceive the Soviet Union as an equal, and that they

wanted to straighten it out. That attack did not work, so Americans came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union needed to exploded from within. And that is exactly what happened later. U.S. politicians often talked about it. They talked about it pompously and disrespectfully in Russia in these years. In order to bring about the collapse of the system from within, the United States had a clearly worked-out program of action. They wanted porous borders, free movement of people, and open skies. You will all remember these issues being raised then. Hiding behind the rhetoric of freedom of speech were our dissidents. I could list also trade restrictions, threatening military developments, and many other things as well. That was pressure. Take, for example, Carter's Presidential Directive 59. In that directive, the ultimate goal of the United States was defined as the elimination of the socialist socio-political system. That speaks for itself. The rest of it was about the use of nuclear weapons.

To sum up what I have just said: I would like to stress that we have to take certain steps to influence today's politicians—the leaders of the states—so that the past will never be repeated again. We need to draw the appropriate conclusions from this seminar. What we do here should not become just one more document. I am calling on you to join me in that. That is all.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you, Valentin. We are already beginning to drift into the other part of the agenda, but before we do so formally, let me ask for one other warning for the future historian. If that is what you want to do, Sergei, I will give you the floor.

After Sergei's comment, we will turn to the first of the two tasks I mentioned about the significance of this history for current events:

namely, answering the question, why did things happen the way they did? As I say, people are already beginning to touch on that, but I would like you to speak specifically about it. I will then give the floor first to Makhmud Gareev, who has some things to say on this issue. Let me remind you to keep your interventions brief, please. Sergei?

**TARASENKO:** It seems to me that we could introduce one more concept that would be helpful to a future historian: the problem of mutual ignorance, especially at the level of the highest leadership of the two countries. This problem relates to a lesser degree to the United States, because there, in a democratic country, they enjoyed freedom of discussion: they could argue, and they could come closer to making rational decisions. For us it was a great problem, because our leaders did not have sufficient knowledge of the external world, or of the United States. But both sides had this problem. Neither side was able to understand the way the other system worked—its limits and opportunities.

Brezhnev was not omnipotent. There were limits to what he could do. You may think he was almost like a Tsar, but still he was very far from being omnipotent. His knowledge of the world was limited, and the people who surrounded him—his advisers—were always giving him the picture of the outside world that they knew he would have liked. That aggravated the problem.

During summits, meetings of the Ministers, and other official contacts, philosophical discussions took up a major portion of the available time. The two sides did not discuss the details of specific issues—missiles; other sorts of weapons, and so on—but conversed about life in general—how to make life better; why things should be done one way, rather than another, and is on. Those were seminars, really.

So I think we are missing one problem here: the issue of mutual understanding, mutual adjustment, and mutual trust between the two states. The problem was not the quantity of information. We had enough information—an overwhelming quantity of information. We had more than we needed. But the leadership did not read all that information. The process of learning about another country, and the process of understanding the limits and opportunities of another system, is very important. It is at the root of misunderstandings that have important consequences. Thank you.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you, Sergei.

Okay, let us turn, then, to this hard question: why did things happen the way they did between 1977 and 1980? I recognize that this is a large and difficult question. Makhmud, do you want to start?

**MAKHMUD GAREEV:** Thank you.

First I would like to tell you a story. In 1990, when I returned from Afghanistan, I was very ill. My vision was deteriorating. One of my eyes could not open. So I went to our famous eye surgeon, Vyacheslav Fedorov, and he told me this story. Once somebody brought 28 blind people to his office. Those people had been blind for 15 to 20 years; they could see nothing. And he said to them, "I can perform an operation that would restore your vision, but only if you agree." And Fedorov—and myself later—were struck by their response: out of 28, only two agreed to have the operation. All the rest of them refused. Why? Because they were used to that way of life. They received their pensions; they did not want to change the way they lived, even though it is common sense that to be able to see is better than being blind.

I think that something similar to that is happening with us. We are constantly saying that the world has changed; that so many events have happened that have changed the world; that there are so many new things that we do not know. But still, we continue to look at the world with the old stereotypes.

Maybe you could allow me to speak a little longer than the limit, since you have been speaking here for three days now, and I came later? I apologize.

**LEGVOLD:** How long do you need?

**GAREEV:** I hope to be able to finish in eight minutes, as you told me.

I think that future historians should begin by leaving all their prejudices behind. We may be missing some documents on Afghanistan, and on other issues; but as a rule, some people focus on one set of facts, while other people focus on another set of facts. Nobody takes the entire event in all its complexity, and with all its contradictions. We need to leave our stereotypes behind: we need to make objective conclusions from the past events, even though they could be hard and unpleasant.

What are those stereotypes that I am calling you to leave behind? It has been said in recent years that war is no longer a continuation of politics. But nobody has tried to answer the question, what is war, then? Because wars are continuing. When we say that wars and military conflicts emerge outside of politics, we lose the opportunity to influence the source of war itself. It would be correct to say that politics *should not* be connected with military force in the world today—that we should try to solve all difficult political problems

politically. We should be striving for that. But if a war is already going on, it could be nothing but a continuation of politics, because no other sources of war exist.

Now, we repeatedly say that problems should be solved by political means—the Vietnam problem, and the Afghan problem, for example; other problems, too, including the current Yugoslav problem. But both in our country and in your country, leaders are not used to taking responsibility for the failure to solve such problems by political means. When our military failed to take Grozny, they immediately asked, why? Why was the task not fulfilled? But we are not used to asking our Foreign Ministries, for example, why they did not solve a given problem by political means. That is why we constantly talk about solving problems by political means and end up using military force. And often military means are applied before all political tools have been used up.

Now my second conclusion: I think that people make a mistake when they say that the threat of a big war has disappeared—when they say that only local conflicts are possible—and that, therefore, armed forces should be reduced: only small armed forces are necessary now. However, even in small local conflicts, when war is already going on, military means should be used decisively and massively. Let us take an example. Maybe not all of you know, but the term "limited contingent" did not emerge when we were introducing troops into Afghanistan; it was created in 1968 when we and other countries of the Warsaw Pact introduced troops into Czechoslovakia. Our initial plan was to introduce only five divisions there; but Marshal Grechko insisted that we should introduce twenty-five divisions, at a minimum. I am not speaking about the political side of the action here; the political evaluations of that step have been already made. I am speaking about

the military aspect of the problem. And the military aspect was such that when our troops entered the country and were stationed in garrisons, the Czech troops were not able even to make small movements. Had we introduced only five divisions, we would have had a war there. War was prevented by using massive force. Turning to Afghanistan, I have to tell you that when we were discussing the introduction of troops into Afghanistan, there were proposals to act with massive force. Had we done that, the situation would have developed very differently there.

And the last thing: experience shows—and future historians should also learn this lesson for themselves—that when we want to resolve a conflict—to bring a peaceful solution to a conflict—the world community—the United Nations, or any other international organization—should never associate itself with just one side. The other side might be making political mistakes; they could be wrong; but they are people, too. They also have rights. Look what the Russian Foreign Ministry did in Afghanistan. There was an opportunity to reconcile the two warring sides—the Najibullah government and the Mujahadeen. The United Nations told Najibullah that if he left, the two sides would reach a reconciliation. Our Foreign Ministry turned completely to the side of the Mujahadeen. This simply inflamed the civil war. People are dying there. Now they are calling people to join the Mujahadeen in Tajikistan; next they will be making the same attempts in Uzbekistan. Such one-sided actions could create a potentially very big threat to Russia.

Now, agreements should be abided by. We have the Geneva agreements. The Soviet Union—Russia—and Afghanistan completely fulfilled their part. But the other side did not carry them out.

Now, let us take Yugoslavia. On the one hand, we have



peacekeeping forces there that are trying to help all sides reach a reconciliation, while on the other hand, somebody is carrying out unilateral activity to support one side. American advisers are working with the Croatian Army. What kind of peacekeeping is that if one side is being favored over the other? And let us speak as scholars, since we are engaged in a scholarly discussion here. Let us find out what are the criteria that are being applied when some countries are given the right for national self-determination? Why is it, for example, that Slovenia and Croatia have received support for their struggle for self-determination? Why do we refuse the same right to Abkhasia? Why do we refuse this very right to the Kurds? I am not trying to decide who is right and who is wrong here; but if we do not work out scientific criteria for how to approach all these questions, we will be doomed always to having double standards. And we will repeat ourselves.

If future historians do not learn these lessons, they will repeat the same mistakes that are being made today. Thank you.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you very much. On the question now before us of why things happened the way they did, who else will weigh in? You do not have to provide a full answer. Let us start by just picking at the problem with a small point. From your point of view, looking back on the period 1977 to 1980, what is the basic explanation for why things turned out the way they did? Stan?

**TURNER:** I am not sure if I am going to answer your question directly, but let me make a couple of observations. One of the reasons they turned out the way they did, Bob, is that we each had an image of the other's decision making process that was unrealistic. I was

tremendously impressed yesterday at the discussion on the other side about how few people on the Soviet side made the decision to go into Afghanistan—about how that decision making process lacked a systematic approach, and how it lacked intellectual input. I forget who said it—Sergei, perhaps—but I was struck by the comment that historians of the future had better be aware that most of the papers generated at the time were never read.

In that connection, we did not discuss the impact of personalities. I would suspect that the decisions made by those three or five men on the Soviet side who had a real say on what would happen were influenced very much more by their hang-ups and preconceptions than by a studious look at what was going on—what the United States was doing, and so on. For instance, Brzezinski's name comes up here every five minutes; but nobody has as yet mentioned that he is a Pole. This is an important part of the equation, it seems to me. None of us can escape our individual backgrounds; but in this case, the fact that Brzezinski is a Pole, it seems to me, was terribly important.

Second, I would like to suggest, in the same vein, that we both overestimated the other's strengths. I heard a great deal in the first two days here about how we may have been playing Amin as a puppet. General Shebarshin and I both understand that it is not easy to play people like that as puppets. We simply did not have that degree of influence. I can understand your perception of it; but it was an overestimation of our strength. I had a similar reaction when I heard that you thought that we sent military forces into Iran with a much broader purpose than simply rescuing our hostages. I have never heard that before; but, again, you were overestimating our strength. We stumbled on just rescuing the hostages; we were far from capable of

overturning the government in the process. We simply were not anywhere near that capable. We had no broader purpose in that.

I am sure that we greatly overestimated your strengths. As I told you, there was no question in my mind that the Soviet Army was going to be able to subdue Afghanistan, and I questioned whether we should go to the support of the Afghan resistance, because it was such an uneven battle. It turned out that we completely overestimated the capability of your military in that circumstance.

This brings me to my final point, which was stimulated by General Gareev's comment about the application of military power. We all ought to think more about more the proper application of the military force, reflecting upon our experience in Vietnam, your experience in Afghanistan, and our experience in Iran with the rescue mission. The General pointed out that one uses military force for political purposes; therefore, political leaders have a right to have a say in how military force is applied. I heard both of the distinguished Army Generals—Lyakhovsky and Varennikov—say yesterday that the Soviet Army was successful in Afghanistan. I thought about that, and about the fact that you had to leave. Politically, it was not a success: it was a catastrophe for the Soviet Union. And I asked myself, can that be a success militarily? And yet, I know that if we were questioning five American Admirals or Generals who participated in the Vietnam War, they would say something very similar. We left without a military or political success in Vietnam. So, we, military people are really saying that, although politicians make mistakes, it is not just the politicians who are to blame. It is the interplay—the lack of a clear understanding of how to divide the political direction of military effort between political authorities and military authorities. More and

more, as we find ourselves increasingly in lower-level conflicts rather than total wars, military power is being used for clearly political purposes. That dividing line as to who directs how the military power is applied must be thought through more carefully. Clausewitz did not give us much guidance as to where the dividing line was; he simply told us there had to be political direction at some level of military endeavor. I believe that thoughtful political leaders and thoughtful military leaders—in the kind of combination we have here around this table—must address this issue in the years ahead in order that we better understand why it can be bad for a country to be successful militarily—as the Soviet Union was in Afghanistan, and as the United States was in Vietnam.

**LEGVOLD:** Stan, thank you very much. From your first comment, I would put you in the category of people who believe that choices that were made mattered during this period of time. They mattered fundamentally. And the problem with choice was this issue of misperception that I referred to: it was very important that we did not make accurate assessments of the motivations, capabilities, and intentions of the other side. Secondly, you are suggesting that, from 1977 to 1980, we were the victims of an inadequate integration of military power and foreign policy choice. That is an issue which has not been resolved today, and which may only be getting worse.

Now, on the list I have Anatoly Dobrynin next; then Marshall; and then Bill Odom. I would appreciate it if each of you would be brief. Anatoly?

**DOBRYNIN:** Two points. First, I would not like to leave the impression

for the future historians that détente was a complete failure in Soviet-American relations. Today all we have discussed is failure. It was only another five years before we had another détente—although no one used the word “détente;” the word was anathema for President Reagan. But still, it was détente. We had a very good relationship; there were very good developments on many points that we are now discussing in a critical way. They were solved, or on the way to being solved. We should not lose perspective on this: détente was not doomed because it was détente, but rather because of the objective circumstances.

To answer your second point: the principal reason for failure in this period was definitely the existence of completely contradictory conceptions of détente in your country and in my country. This was a fatal contradiction. The ideological approaches were completely different. We had entirely different views of how the world would develop. There was no clear vision of a common goal at all, except for avoiding nuclear war—and that was a good result of détente, by the way. But it was the only common goal. On all other issues, and on all other interpretations of the meaning of détente, each side was thinking, of course, that it was right, and the other was wrong. So, as you mentioned, misconceptions played an important role in the failure of détente.

Now, about military misconceptions: both sides were looking at the most worst possible scenario. You were thinking that we were going to seize the Middle East oil fields; we were thinking that you wanted to overrun us militarily—to force us into a new arms race, and to press us from a position of strength. We were convinced that, in Afghanistan, we were engaged in a very local conflict; but you did not accept that. That was our feeling.

Of course, there were mutual suspicions and mistrust all through the period. Brezhnev had them; same for Carter. I know that many of you, of course, know President Carter; but I happened to meet both of them. On the basis of my personal encounters with them, I had the impression that they both wanted peace, and they both wanted to have good relations. They were both sincere on this. I discussed this with Carter; I discussed it with Brezhnev. They were for peace, for better relations, for agreements—but you know how it happened. Circumstances conspired against this, and they were not strong enough leaders to impose their will on the situation.

Of course, military détente is impossible without political détente. We had no political détente. Of course, it was very bad that we did not attempt to find common or collaborative measures to find a way out of our difficulties. Diplomacy was completely absent during this period. There were only a few discussions on Afghanistan, but they were very vague, I would say. But domestic conceptions of détente were very important to its fate, in your country and in my country. In your country, as you know, the majority of the American public sincerely came to believe that détente was a bad thing; they came to believe that we outplayed the Americans; that the U.S. government was always on the defensive; that Russia was using détente as a cover for imposing its will. In my country, there was no problem supporting détente, because in our minds détente was very simple: détente meant peace—no nuclear war. Beyond that, no one really looked into what détente meant.

Two final things. First, you made our troops in Afghanistan a single issue for the whole of your foreign policy, and for relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. There was nothing else that you wanted to discuss—only the presence of our troops there.

During Vietnam War, two weeks before Nixon came to Moscow for the first time in 1972, there was a huge bombardment of Hanoi. The Soviet government held an eight-hour discussion on whether or not to accept Nixon, or to refuse to accept him, because Vietnam was our ally. The view prevailed that the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was so important that we could not really cancel Nixon's visit. I do not want to blame you entirely, because we share the blame for the failure of détente: but in this case, you put everything on this one issue—either we had to make a complete withdrawal very soon, or there would be no U.S.-Soviet relationship at all.

Second, during that period we had very narrow foundation for our relationship. By the end of the Carter administration, there was very little left on our bilateral agenda. There was really only one small link—the SALT talks—which we tried to maintain as a bridge between us. But when it failed, we had nothing left—only contradictions. That was a very dangerous situation.

We made a mistake, too, by the way, in stubbornly refusing to have a meeting until we had SALT. This was a diplomatic mistake. If we had a meeting in 1977 or 1978, probably we could have found some way to help turn around Soviet-American relations. Perhaps we could not have finished SALT; but still we might have saved the relationship. Instead, the irritants and challenges piled up. We were moving steadily apart until we came to the middle of 1979. It was a very bad situation. We finally reached an agreement on SALT and had our meeting, but there was no ratification, and we had not even a single bridge remaining between us.

Those are not all of the reasons for the failure of détente, but they are important. I would like to repeat, however, that the

dismantling of détente in the late 1970s did not mean that détente did not come back later on. Even a very anti-Soviet figure like Reagan could come to the conclusion that this confrontation was not favorable to the United States, ultimately. We came to that conclusion, too. There was a later positive development in our relations based upon a new détente.

In the present post-Communist time, we need, if you like, to redefine our goals and our means. Unfortunately, we both still do not have a clear vision of common goal in a post-Communist world. There is no common goal. Yugoslavia demonstrates this. There is discord in the United States over how to handle Russia; there is great disillusionment in Russia about the United States. Let us face it. Of course, our great asset is that there is no threat of a nuclear war. From this point of view, we have a clear horizon. But our two countries have not yet found a common vision of the future, and they have not worked out a partnership—because as of now, we do not have equal partnership; let us admit it. But there is a possibility. The whole history of Soviet-American relations proved that it was possible to have a good partnership. So, I finish my comments on a more hopeful note.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you, Anatoly. Marshall?

**SHULMAN:** Mr. Chairman, I hope you will regard this as a mini-intervention. I would like at some appropriate time to take the floor to respond to Anatoly's discussion of the deterioration of relations. But my purpose in raising my hand was to respond to something that Stan Turner said. It is something that I want to get onto the record promptly in the discussion.



I agreed with most of what Stan said, and as you know, I have high regard and affection for him. But I am troubled a little bit by a side comment he made suggesting that the fact that Brzezinski was a Pole was part of the problem. I am very much worried about the danger of that kind of a characterization. No one really accused me of being in sympathy with Brzezinski's views; he and I had great disagreements, and we still do. But I think the important thing is to examine those differences on the merits, rather than to seek an explanation in terms of his Polish background. Certainly, his life experiences influenced his outlook—all our experiences do—but there is a great danger, I think, in that kind of a level of explanation, which is subject to abuse, and I would warn against our working at that level of interpretation.

At a later point I would like to enter into the merits of the disagreements, because I think there are fundamental issues that address the problems that Anatoly was beginning to lay out on the reasons for the disintegration of the relationship in this period. I hope we will get to that more fundamental level of the argument on the merits.

**LEGVOLD:** Marshall, I am going to invite you to go ahead with a second mini-intervention, because time is moving along, and you are not going to have a chance to do that in a leisurely way later. Would you like to do some of it now?

**SHULMAN:** All right.

I will go back to your opening comment, Bob, in which you laid out a number of alternative explanations for why things happened the way they did. My feeling, listening to your list, was those were not

either/or propositions. You laid out a number of factors, both in the external situation and in the internal situations of the two countries, all of which must be taken into account.

I think the disintegration began before Afghanistan. By the time of Afghanistan, there was very little possibility left of moderating the level of conflict between the two countries. I think the reasons for this are to be found first in the external situation. This was a period of great fluidity in the world. Anatoly did not get into the Third World disputes, but the important point was that this was a period of fluidity. The last stages of decolonization generated the sources of conflict in Africa, in Angola, Ethiopia, etc. The collapse of the Portuguese holdings created opportunities that the Soviet Union sought to turn to its advantage, even though they were not of the Soviet Union's making. That was part of the reason for the disintegration. This was also a period of great developments in military technology, which created its own instabilities, uncertainties, and anxieties on both sides.

Internally, significant things were happening within both countries. In the American case, there was—and there had been, ever since the beginning of the Cold War—some unresolved fundamental issues in the American outlook toward the Soviet Union. They came out a little bit in the exchange between Bill and myself, for example, about whether it was desirable, from our point of view, to maximize Soviet problems so as to reduce the Soviet Union's capability to do mischief in the short run, and so as to bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union in the long run. What is at issue here are the starting points one makes—the assumptions one makes about the nature of the other side. These are affected by ideological stereotypes and rigidities on both sides, and it

works in both directions. On the American side, the fundamental disagreement that Bill and I expressed was whether the Soviet Union was incapable of change; whether it was completely totalitarian; and whether it was committed to the further expansion of its power and influence. If so, the logical consequence of that was to seek to bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union. The alternative view, which I and many others had been arguing for, was that moderating the level of military competition was in the self-interest of both sides, and that it was possible to reach the appropriate agreements with the Soviet Union. To do this, it was important to develop lines of contact through exchanges, through trade, and so on, that would in the long period bring about a degree of behavior modification. Now, if you did not believe that was possible—as Bill and Zbig did not—then the logical consequence was to reject that kind of cooperation, and to seek instead to bring about the collapse of the Soviet system. That was the fundamental issue.

This has continuing relevance for those who still see in the former Soviet Union a possibility of a future threat. There is an unwillingness to accept Russian equality. There is a worry that the steps that Russia may take in seeking a reintegration with the former parts of the Soviet Union represents an effort to reconstitute the old empire. This is largely what impedes people's willingness to embrace Russia as an equal, which Anatoly was referring to. It reduces, for example, the degree of assistance that Americans are willing to give Russia. Above all—more than anything else—what it obscures, it seems to me, is the fact that we are facing a period that may last several generations or more in which Russia and the other parts of the former Soviet Union go through a long, painful, and very uneven transition, in which there are inevitably going to be setbacks. Handling this smoothly

is going to require a degree of insight, of tolerance, and of restraint. It will require not overreacting to the inevitable differences that will exist on issues like Bosnia, or the expansion of NATO. Much depends upon how we, on our side, understand this and deal with it. With a degree of resilience and tolerance, we can maintain a working relationship in spite of the differences, rather than make these differences more intractable. Thank you.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you very much, Marshall. Now Bill Odom, and then Alexander Lyakhovsky.

**ODOM:** The real point of my raising my hand was to challenge once more the tone that is emerging here: that this whole period was a big disaster. I think there is a real danger that historians will take that seriously. I would say that this was a dramatically successful period. We turned the corner. I do not accept Anatoly's view—although I can understand why he would have it—that we could have made détente work if we had wrestled more with the details. That does not make sense to me, because I accept the role of ideology. I accept the “two camps” struggle, and I accept your acceptance of your ideology. I acknowledge Western ideology as driving the relationship on both sides. Marshall is right about the division on the U.S. side; but I would state it a little differently. My view—and there are a number of people who share my view—was that the Soviet system could not transform itself. It did not matter what we did. We could give you aid; we could engage in détente; but there was an inexorable degeneration occurring in the bureaucratic nature of the system. The system was vital as long as you had blood purges to restore the ideological purity of the cadres. But when

Khrushchev destalinized, he took away the dynamic character of the situation. After that, you entered the period of bureaucratic degeneration. But there was still tremendous momentum in force-building, and that sort of thing.

So the real question was how this system would play itself out. Periodically, I hear members on the Russian side and the U.S. side—General Gareev, I think, and Anatoly—talking about accepting the Soviets as equals. I think this is a misconception of what it was all about. Equality was a non-issue. The two underlying sets of concepts of interstate relations were irreconcilable. The real issue was which set of interstate relations and political norms would prevail.

That is very relevant to what we are doing today. The issue in Russian-American relations today is not whether we accept you as equals. The issue is the set of political norms which will characterize the relationship. You are not equal today. You are not equal economically; you are not equal militarily. To talk about equality is almost a propagandistic presentation of what is at stake.

Now, if I were Russian, and looking out for Russian interests, I would be concerned not about being accepted as equal, but being accepted under a set of political terms and economic principles that allowed me to develop my own internal energies. I do not think that we should get too much credit for "causing the Soviet Union to collapse." I think we played a role in containing the Soviet Union. I think we can take some credit for ensuring that the Soviets did not go further than Afghanistan and elsewhere, so that the internal domestic dynamic could play itself out. We can take credit for that. I would turn your own characterization on its head. You used to say that you cannot export revolution; it develops from internal contradictions—the dialectic of

the class struggle—in society. We saw that happen in the Soviet Union itself. The real issue today is coming to terms with that. I wanted to make that point.

One last minor point. I wanted to add that I am not a Pole.

[Laughter.]

**TURNER:** You have other hang-ups. [Long laughter.]

**ODOM:** Not only am I not a Pole, but we have not talked about the Russian mentality. How do we explain the Russian mentality?

**LEGVOLD:** Alexander, how do we explain the Russian mentality?

**LYAKHOVSKY:** The Russian mentality can be explained in different ways and from different points of view.

With respect to the question at hand, I would like to say that we had very different views of détente altogether. We saw ourselves as equal partners. Bill has just said that we could not have been equal partners either in military terms, in economic terms, or in political terms. Meanwhile, we considered ourselves to be equal partners with the United States at that time. We believed that we had reached a certain military parity, and that meant some kind of equality. That is why we saw ourselves as equals in this regard. Our goal was to decrease the burden of military spending on our economy. In order to achieve parity, we had to overburden our economy. It had to work at its extreme limits. The economy was oriented toward military production. The goal was to reach parity, and we attained it. It is not surprising why we had that goal. Do not forget that the Soviet Union suffered great losses in

World War II.

Talking specifically about the Russian mentality, I have to tell you that that war is embedded in our mentality. It is not an abstraction for the Soviet people; it was very real. The generation that lived in this period also lived through World War II. A person who survived such a war has a totally different attitude to war in general. It is one thing to hear that there is a war somewhere, and that people are being killed in that war somewhere—but it is totally different if that is your country going through that war; when it is your home that is being destroyed; when it is your loved ones who are being killed in front of your eyes. It is absolutely different. So when our leadership began the policy of détente and peaceful negotiations with the United States in order to save the world from another war, it had a very positive response throughout the country. Valentin Ivanovitch said that he met with people, and their overwhelming concern was to avoid another war. That was certainly the prevalent concern in our country. That was the position of our people. We were ready to make any sacrifices necessary to avoid another war. We did not enjoy very high standards of living; we were not rich, by American standards. But we were doing everything for parity in order to ensure our own security and to prevent another war.

In my view, the Americans treated us as a younger brother—as an unequal partner—and therefore, in my personal opinion, there was only the appearance of détente. It had a propagandistic flavor to it. There was an illusion of sorts—an illusion of détente. A genuine détente simply could not have existed under those conditions.

Also, where détente was concerned, we acted as if there were only two states on the globe—the United States and the Soviet Union. We

were negotiating about arms reductions in isolation from the entire complex of international relations. I may be exaggerating a little, but that was the general approach. We were counting warheads between us; we were discussing what to cut; we talked about which kinds of missiles affected each other, and in what ways. And we did not trust each other. Each wanted to deceive the other in some way—to get an advantage in certain issues. For example, we accelerated the deployment of some missiles in Europe, and then the Americans decided to deploy Pershings and cruise missiles. There was no trust between us; there was no tolerance of the other's position. There was no desire to understand the other's position—no desire to react less harshly and more flexibly. Since these were absent, détente was doomed to failure. This would be true anywhere and at any time.

Let us turn to today. Bill has said that the Americans cannot consider Russia an equal partner. Probably that it is really so. It is not the best of times for our country. But I think it would be a grave mistake to put the question in those terms. Do not forget that Russia is a nuclear power. Even though we say that the threat of a new world war is now removed—that nuclear weapons will never be ever used—I do not share this opinion. Let us say, at least, that I am not firmly convinced that this is the case. History may turn different ways. Yesterday, when we were talking about our treaty with Afghanistan, Geir, I believe, said that a treaty is only a treaty. The same was true with the Geneva agreements on the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan: we fulfilled our obligations, but Pakistan and the United States did not. Treaties are concluded so that the weaker part will fulfill their obligations. That is how it often happens. But even the weaker part, if it finds itself in a critical situation, can violate the treaty. I



am saying this just because the situation now is much like the one that existed at the end of the 1970s. There are similarities in many areas. Now we have the opportunity to build our relations so as to avoid such a failure in our relationship. That is why I believe that this conference could potentially have considerable influence, in terms of avoiding a repetition of the mistakes that were made before. It can have that influence not only on the Russian-American relationship, but, since that relationship largely defines the situation in the world, on the prospects of a new world war.

ODOM: May I make one point?

LEGVOLD: You will have to be very, very quick, Bill.

ODOM: I fear that I have set in place a misperception. When I said that we cannot accept you as equals now, I meant in the sense of two powers struggling with each other. The relationship to achieve the goals you have just stated must be based on shared political principles and rules. Equal rules are absolutely necessary. I want to be clear that I am *not* saying that we cannot have a very good relationship. I think the way we tested it earlier was part of the problem.

I just want to be sure I am not misunderstood by the Russian side in that regard.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Bill.

DOBRYNIN: May I add only one—

LEGVOLD: No; I apologize. We are now into our coffee break, and I am going to give the last word to Valentin, because he has been on the list for a long time.

VARENNIKOV: I will be laconic.

I want to stress that we need trust, openness, and cooperation. The briefing book is wonderful; just wonderful. I am not exaggerating. I am not being sarcastic. But I would like to ask you—what kind of trust is this? [Holds up several pages of American documents blacked out by censors; leads to burst of laughter.] Let us look further. There are no black pages in the Soviet documents. I want us to take this into account.

Now, Stan mentioned here that they changed their evaluation of the Soviet Army after it had been in Afghanistan. General Gareev was right: he said that if the goal had been to win, we had to have introduced as many troops as necessary for that goal. That was not our goal. Today, some people are saying, "Look at the way the Army has shown itself in Chechnya." In Chechnya, Soviets are fighting Soviets, not somebody else. They have the same weapons; they are the same people; everything is the same. It is not a very good example.

I would like to remind you that the capabilities and the skills of the Soviet Army have been tested and proven by history. If Russia poses some kind of threat to somebody, as some people were saying here—if Russia makes plans for some kind of re-unification of the republics—that is an internal affair of Russia. This is our internal affair. If some people find that unacceptable, then that is their misfortune.

I want to remind you, my friends, that in its industrial potential, in its intellectual and human potential, in its countless

natural riches, in its quality of life—when I say quality of life, I do not mean bubble gum and pornography; I mean social achievements—we were among the very first. We are not begging anybody to accept us as equals—no, Bill. We were among the most progressive countries in the world. This is why we Russians will do everything to ensure that our country is at a very high level of development, and that Russia is resurrected. That is all.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you very much, Valentin. We now break for coffee; please come back to the table at five minutes after the hour.

SESSION 8

QUESTIONS

LEGVOLD: We now enter the last hour of this conference. But even more than that, we are entering the last hour of what was a three-year project. For some, I think—Marshall and Anatoly; maybe Stan, I am not sure; and for Jim Blight, it goes back to the preliminary meeting at Pocantico Hills. Most of the rest of us were not part of that. So, this is the last hour of what has been an extraordinarily interesting—and I think in the long run a very valuable—project. I do not expect those of you who were in Florida to remember what I said at this stage of the Florida meeting; but my view—which I continue to believe in deeply—is that this project is more important than merely a reconstruction of the history of the period. For the entire post-war period, this is the first time, to my knowledge, that something like this has been undertaken between the principals on both sides. Therefore, in some ways, it is an illustration of what can—and probably what cannot—be done in studying the history of the post-war period. What we have accomplished in this project, it seems to me, has much broader implications for post-war history than merely what we have had to say about the period 1977 to 1980. It has been unusual in that respect.

Throughout these meetings, the scholars have been silent, or have participated by nudging and prodding the so-called veterans. And, indeed, that was supposed to be their role. But now in this last hour, I think it would not only be fair, but also interesting and productive for us to turn to them to see how they answer the same questions that I

put to the veterans this morning. And I will even allow one or two—not many, but one or two—interventions from the historians in the group to say what warnings they would give to future historians. They are not children; they have been doing a lot of this work in the past, and they, too, know the pitfalls and perils of working from these documents. So, if there are one or two comments, I will take them. Otherwise, I would like the scholars to begin answering this question: why did things happen the way they did? Jim Hershberg.

**HERSHBERG:** It is obviously premature to explain everything. We are just beginning to do the work. But I wanted to make one comment that goes to this question of why things happened the way they did.

**LEGVOLD:** Jim, I am going to hold you off on that, the big question. What I am asking for right now is: does any historian want to warn future historians?

**HERSHBERG:** Well, what I have to say is also a warning.

**LEGVOLD:** Okay.

**HERSHBERG:** It has to do with the principal issue—or one of the principal issues—that needs to be critically reconsidered by future historians as they look at the historic process that has led to the opening of the archives, and to the possibility of joint explorations by both sides of this period—not only Russians and Americans, but others who were involved. That is: that is it is necessary to reexamine what became the conventional explanation, at least in the Western and

American historiography, of the collapse of détente. Almost every single account prior to the opening of the archives and the beginning of this project focused on the "objective" correlation of forces, and viewed the processes in the Third World, and the general deterioration of relations, as intimately connected to a historical change in the correlation of forces between the two sides, and how that was viewed in Moscow. To a large extent, that was the product of a process of inference on the Western side both from what we saw the Soviets doing, and what we suspected that they were thinking. The internal debate on the American side, which Marshall spoke to, was largely resolved by Afghanistan. That event established what would be prudent for us to presume the Soviets were up to. And yet, there was always a minority which saw the weaknesses which led ultimately to the Soviet collapse; there was always an alternative point of view that stressed that while the Soviets seemed to be advancing in the Third World, they were losing in China and Egypt, and that the correlation of forces in non-military terms—in social terms; in economic terms; in terms of the appeal of popular culture; and in terms of political cohesion and confidence—favored the West. There was more to the correlation of forces than counting weapons. I would urge future historians to critically reexamine this perspective.

It may well be that Bill Odom is right—that strategic confidence animated the Soviets in a lot of these issues, and that this made it impossible for détente to work in the way that people in the West wanted it to. But it may also be, as the March 1979 Politburo minutes show, that there was a sense of vulnerability that translated into actions that were *misinterpreted* in the West as offensive. Most likely—human beings being inconsistent characters—different individuals held both

points of view; and probably the same individuals held different views at different times, or even at the same time. But I think a reexamination of that is critical to a reassessment of the history of this period, because, so far, the conventional wisdom—and it is the conventional wisdom that needs to be corroborated, discarded, or modified—has dominated the interpretation of these events. With better access to archives on both sides, we will have a better perspective on why things really happened the way they did on each side.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you, Jim. On my list now I have Alexander Chubarian, and then John Lewis Gaddis. Alexander?

**CHUBARIAN:** If I understood you correctly, Bob, now you would like people to speak only on one issue—about our warnings to future historians—and that we will speak about the actual processes later?

**LEGVOLD:** If you have a quick warning to make, make it now; but you are also welcome now to comment on the more basic question of why things happened the way they did.

**CHUBARIAN:** First of all, I would like to join those who called us not to dramatize the situation too much, and not to exaggerate the negative meaning of the events of the period from 1977 to 1980. It is clear for those who lived in it that, while this was a dramatic time, it was but a little piece of the history of the post-war world, and in more general terms of the history of the twentieth century. It must be put into context. If it had not been for the Khrushchev-Kennedy thaw of 1963, and if it had not been for Helsinki 1975 and all that happened after

that, I do not know how both sides would have had reacted to the events of the late 1970s. The outcome might have been much worse. Therefore, I do not find the concept of the "collapse of détente" very productive. Détente was simply modified, in political terms; it was not just a phenomenon, but also a process with its own highs and lows, successes and failures.

The main conclusion is that, while Afghanistan was a difficult crisis, it did not lead to what détente was supposed to prevent. There was no major conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. That did not happen over Cuba earlier, and it did not happen over Afghanistan. We must not sweep this under the rug. That is why I think that we should look not at isolated events, but analyze them systematically. I would say that we should start from World War II. We should begin from the dissolution of the great alliance of the war years—an alliance, by the way, which also was very tense and complicated.

In essence, this is the problem of system in international relations. For a historian, a specific historic moment is important as a part of a larger process. I think this period has shown that, as a science, history is also changing a great deal. And I would like to give my warning to future historians: we should always be on top of contemporary methods of historical science. Five or seven years ago, we were actively discussing and focusing on objective factors in history—social and economic factors. Today, the human dimension is coming to the forefront of research. Look at all big congresses and meetings, and the issues they are discussing: childhood in history; aging in history; men and women in history; education in history—all these are factors that have a great future. The future is not only in the computer, but



it is also in understanding the human factor.

This has an even wider dimension. Although we were always afraid to admit it in our Marxist methodology, we learn history through the mind of the historian. History passes through the historian himself. Therefore, while it strove for objectivity, it still carried the imprint of the person who wrote about it. It reflected the historian's choice of facts, and the historian's interpretation. All this comprises what in contemporary science is called "the individual in history."

I think these factors influenced the actors of that time also. Consider Kissinger, who had an impact on Soviet historians as well. I remember trying to understand Kissinger's concepts, and his world view. I found them in his doctoral dissertation, which, as you know, was about Metternich and Castlereagh, and the world after the Congress of Vienna. He was so involved with Metternich, and with the other actors of the day, that his interpretation of those events shaped his entire vision of European politics. By the way, that post-Vienna period is very interesting. Nobody would understand it from documents, even though we are now discovering millions of documents having to do with it. Nobody would ever know from documents and official statements what the people at the table thought. It is impossible to understand what happened without understanding Talleyrand, Metternich, and what they were like. A future historian, writing about this period, has to know what kind of education Brezhnev—the Soviet leader—had, and what kind of education his Politburo colleagues had. Their deficiencies were not of their own making, but were products of the educational system. Most of them were technocrats with a specific vision of history, and of events. The United States had its own very different political culture. Most people on the other side were lawyers, or people educated in the social

sciences and humanities. All of this had a great impact on the mentality—on the political culture—of the people who were involved.

There is one more problem that a historian must know: historical definitions have different meanings. The same words have different interpretations at different times and places in history. We see this in international relations. When Stalin and Churchill were drawing crosses next to percentages—how much of Romania, and how much of Bulgaria each would get—in their minds, those were completely different crosses. They understood what they were doing very differently. Last year, we were trying to figure out exactly what Stalin understood that to be, and what Churchill understood that to be. Both leaders signed the UN Charter, but I doubt that people in Moscow and Washington had similar interpretations of the meaning of those noble words about democracy and human rights. I do not want to say who was right and who was wrong; there was simply a different mentality. There were two different political cultures—two systems. It is very important, in my opinion, for a future historian to see everything through this lens.

I am against a total fascination with documents. What I see here in this book, and what I saw in Moscow—even in the Presidential Archive—cannot explain much, and will not show us anything extraordinary, if we do not supplement it with a more general vision of history, and of the historical processes. We must take into account many factors not present in documents. Historical science is coming to acknowledge this, and this is why I say that it is changing very fast. It now encompasses elements of sociology, political science, law, and so on; it looks at the world more systematically.

Finally, I would like to say a couple of words about what lessons the history of this period taught us. You have probably all heard the

saying that history teaches us only the facts; it does not teach anything. But still, I think that this period yields some general lessons. One of them is that, now—at the end of the twentieth century—there are some common truths and human values understood by both leaders, as well as by common people. For different reasons, people in our country do not like to speak about common human values. But I still would like to mention that I am convinced that they do exist. This is the moral factor in history. These are not mere words: we must move in the direction of finding alternatives to violence as a means of solving various problems. We must understand the basic democratic principles of social life, and basic democratic principles of decision making. If we had had a truly democratic decision making process in 1979, I think the decision with respect to Afghanistan might have been very different. Today we have a parliament; we have other checks and balances—we can argue about their efficiency—but Russia is painfully finding its own place in this global system as a democracy. In principle, everything is very clear and simple. Checks and balances are necessary. A mechanism must be built into the system to ensure against making mistakes. It will not always work; but I believe it encourages sounder decisions—decisions based on democratic principles and the principle of the minimal use of force.

We cannot exclude force completely. It has been said here that, when the détente of 1970s collapsed, catastrophe followed. Well, by that standard, today is a catastrophe also. Three years ago, in a general euphoria, we all decided that we had not only reached the end of the Cold War, but that all people had become friends and brothers to each other. And now the world is in flames again. Europe itself is in flames—Europe, which was supposed to be the core of stability.

By the way, during the Cold War, the situation in Europe was more stable than it is now. It turned out that there is an important ethnic factor over which our decisions have no power. I think the conclusion is that we need better mechanisms for anticipating and dealing with ethnic conflict. In the former Yugoslavia, we all see a complete failure of the global community. It had no mechanisms capable of dealing with something like this. Partly, this was because of the nature of the conflict itself, which is impossible to resolve until it burns itself out. I have a personal point of view here—it should either resolve it, or it would completely discredit itself. But partly what we see happening is a result of the failure of international mechanisms to work adequately. Therefore, we must think about this aspect.

We need some general categories which would allow us to speak about future concepts. Anatoly, our Ambassador of many years to the United States, who knows your country very well—maybe better than anyone else here, at least on the Russian side—said very well that they were discussing conceptual issues with Brzezinski. I think it remains a principal issue today as well. We need to find some sort of common vision of the world. War is always present in history, but peace is as well. Some time ago in our country, we disliked the word "pacifist." Now we have a very different attitude towards it. *À propos*, we published a book on the history of pacifism. As one Italian historian said at one of the congresses that I attended, "There were always people in history who thought war and made war; but there were also people—not many of them—who thought peace and made peace." His words were greeted with an ovation.

Again, we are speaking about the moral-ethical factor. It has to

be present in the minds and in the eyes of historians when they analyze events.

I am finishing, Bob.

I just would like to say that you began today by saying that this project had been very successful. You mentioned that our project was born in Florida, or in Georgia. I would like to say that, in my recollection, the project was born at a business breakfast at the Slavyanskaya Hotel in Moscow. It was at 8:00 o'clock in the morning—which was very unusual for me then, but I have now come to understand that busy people in America, in England, and now also in France do not have time to meet any more, so they have to use the 8:00 o'clock breakfast for that. At that breakfast, some of my American colleagues present here were discussing this project. At that time, there was much that they did not know. They were asking me who Pikhoya was, for example, and what our archives were like—what our documents were like.

DOBRYNIN: Now they know—even better than do Russians. [Laughter.]

CHUBARIAN: Yes; now we have this rather positive result. I have to tell you that, even though we criticize our *Rosarkhiv*—yes we do, Bob—we have learned a great deal. Seven years ago, none of us could have even imagined that we would be holding such a briefing book as this in our hands—with Politburo documents without any blackouts. The process is developing. It is developing slowly and painfully, but it is going ahead.

And since I probably will not get the floor again, I would like to say that our Institute will be glad to continue to participate in this project. I think that it had political, scientific, and mental

benefits. Many of us have become friends during this project (although many of us knew each other for years before). And we are greatly helped by the atmosphere here in Norway. I did not participate in the conferences in the United States, but the atmosphere here in Norway, in the Nobel Institute, helps us greatly.

I hope our American colleagues felt the friendly atmosphere in Moscow during their business meetings, and also in the famous restaurant that we discovered all together. When I asked one American today, "When did it all start?" he said, "It all started at the restaurant—at *Babushka's*." So, it seems to me that, as one of the conclusions of this meeting, we should think about a continuation of our discussions, and of our conferences. On behalf of Russian scholars, I can tell you that we are ready. Thank you.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you very much, Alexander. John?

**JOHN GADDIS:** Well, as Fidel Castro said the first time he addressed the United Nations, "Comrades, I will be brief." [Laughter.]

I would like to pick up on a comment that General Gareev made this morning about getting used to being blind—getting used to not seeing things clearly. I think that is a challenge for all of us, in both of our professions. We have talked about the difficulties that the actors and the participants in the events had in seeing things clearly. General Varennikov has alluded to the difficulty that historians today have in seeing things clearly because of the blank pages—or the black pages—that still exist in our own documents, and also because of the documents that we cannot even see. We have alluded to the danger that historians in the future—the prototypical female Oxford historian of

yours, Bob, in the twenty-first century--will have blank spots in her own vision, looking back at the past. I think that all of these are very valid concerns. We need to try to find ways to bridge this gap--to clear up this myopia--and certainly, as Alexander has suggested, this enterprise has been a very useful start. I have always found, though, that one of the most useful ways to do that is to do just the kind of exercise that you suggested to us, Bob: to put yourself in a position of somebody a hundred years from now, looking back on these events, and asking the kinds of questions the students themselves might ask. And it seems to me that certain substantive issues, yet to be resolved, that we might refer for future discussion come out of such a perspective.

You have asked, why did things turn out the way they did? This whole issue of parity and equality is the one that has been put on the table by several of the Russian participants. I think, though, that there is one element of that which we do not clearly understand, and which would stand out to a historian looking back from the twenty-first century: namely, that at the beginning of the Cold War, the two superpower had multidimensional capabilities. The whole history of the Cold War, in some ways, can be understood as the process by which one of those superpowers lost the multidimensionality of its power. The Soviet Union sacrificed all other dimensions of its power to the military dimension, as Alexander was suggesting to us. Trying to adopt a long-term perspective helps us notice that, and can help us understand how things came out the way that they did accordingly.

A second element that relates to this has to do with what we mean by "success." Yesterday and this morning it was suggested that the military performance of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan--and the performance of the American military in Vietnam--were, in military

terms, a success. Anatoly made the point a while ago that, in some ways, détente was a success. But it seems to me that our student and perhaps even our professor in the twenty-first century might suggest that if this is what we mean by "success," no one would want it. That is implied in our own attempt to try to find lessons for policy makers for the future. I think our judgment must be that neither of these operations, in broad terms, were particularly successful. I think we need to be very careful not to let the blind spots conceal from us the fact that what we may call a success in an immediate context may well be a failure in a much larger context.

That brings me to the third point, which I think is probably the most important point, and one that I have not heard raised to this point in the conference. There is an old question that Marshal Foch used to ask: What is it all about in the first place? It seems to me that we have not asked the question yet. What was détente all about in the first place? What was it really supposed to achieve? Was it a way of trying to end the Cold War, or was it simply a way of trying to manage the Cold War? These are two very different things, and it is quite important where you come down on this issue. Indeed, if détente was an effort to end the Cold War, we have to say that it certainly failed. We could even say, perhaps, that it wound up through its failure perpetuating the Cold War longer than might otherwise have been the case. If, on the other hand, we want to say détente was an effort to manage the Cold War—to keep the Cold War from becoming a hot war; to keep it from becoming something worse, as Anatoly was suggesting this morning—then, I think, in that sense, it was a success; we are still here to talk about it, and that is testimony to the extent of the success.



This whole question relates to some of the points that Bill has been making as well. Was it a good thing or a bad thing that the Cold War lasted as long as it did? Were there ways to have ended it earlier? There might well have been; but then it seems to me it is equally important to try to inquire into what the costs and risks of trying to do that might have been. I can imagine somebody asking questions such as "Why do we have to have a Cold War?" and "Why do we have to have a Soviet Union?" earlier in the post-war period, prompting the kinds of aggressive policies that we had in the Reagan administration. Someone asking those questions at an earlier stage in Cold War history might have provoked a much more dangerous response from the Soviet Union than Reagan did.

I do not know how the historians of the twenty-first century are going to come out on these issues; but it seems to me that these are some of the issues that they are going to be concerned about. Thanks.

LEGVOLD: John, that was very helpful. I appreciate that.

Now, the list that I have includes every scholar at the table! The next three are Vlad, Arne, and Carol. Vlad?

ZUBOK: Thank you for this unexpected opportunity to speak. I must admit that I had no hope. [Laughter.] But I still prepared a few points.

Let me stress that I played already the role of the female Oxford student, being a male and a Russian and writing about the history of the Cold War. In a way it started—well, almost exactly fifty years ago. I wrote a book on Stalin, and some other players that were around Stalin, and that followed him. I encountered great difficulty reconstructing

and understanding those people as players, although I had many, many documents. I believe future historians will have tremendous difficulty in reconstructing some of the players involved in this episode. We are in a somewhat better position than they are, because we can see some of the players around this table, and we can form judgments about them from firsthand experience.

For me, I think the crucial question is the one John Gaddis raised: what was this détente all about? And what role did détente play in the overall history of the Cold War? I do agree with John that détente, as a process, played only the role of managing the Cold War. It could never have been an instrument or mechanism to end the Cold War. But the fact was that the Soviet Union saw it as a way to end the Cold War. From the very beginning—from the time of Khrushchev, and certainly later under Brezhnev—Soviet leaders wanted to use détente to end the Cold War.

Returning to American perceptions, I cannot help but observe that John Gaddis has just formulated the attitude towards détente that was held in the 1970s by some of the more or less liberal interpreters of détente: détente was just a way to escape reality—to continue the Cold War. It was a way of keeping the arms race intact, instead of cutting armaments, or stopping the buildup. In other words, détente helped perpetuate the Cold War. I am not persuaded by this argument, because it loses sight of the domestic dimension in both societies.

Let us return to the Soviet Union. If we accept the fact that détente continued the Cold War, I cannot understand why the Cold War ended after all. In my view, it ended because of domestic developments—because of a new generation of Soviet leaders who had a deep desire to renew détente with the United States in order to create a

better life for the citizenry. They sought to get out of the mess that had been created by 50 years of social and economic experimentation. It had nothing to do with an arms race imposed on Soviet leaders by Reagan. I would not totally exclude that factor, but it played a marginal role at most. What was more important for the generation of Gorbachev—and I am even more persuaded of this having spoken with some of the participants on the Russian side—was the experience of the failure of the domestic reforms in the 1960s, the experience of anti-Stalin reforms of the Twentieth Party Congress, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. That experience was critical and crucial for them in starting reforms at the end of 1980s. Whatever happened starting with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—and the aftermath of Afghanistan—was, of course, important; but it was not crucial for their generational experience. At least, that is my belief today.

Now we look at the American reaction to Afghanistan. I am really struck that when American historians assess the attitude of Kennedy towards Khrushchev during the Berlin crisis of 1961—I have in mind in particular Michael Beschloss in his book—they tend to treat Kennedy as unwise, and too emotional, and they criticize him for his sharp reaction to Khrushchev's pronouncements and bluff. But when we deal with Afghanistan, we tend to agree totally and unreservedly with the reaction. Many Americans agree with the Carter administration's sharp and overblown reaction to the Soviet invasion. I totally agree with what Ambassador Dobrynin wrote: that there opportunities in the first month after the invasion to make that invasion a short episode. In fact, the documents and the chronology in the briefing book show one interesting possibility: that if the Americans had reacted differently—more subtly—the Soviet leadership might have decided to withdraw troops

in February. Certainly Andropov vacillated; we see other people following Andropov's lead on that matter after he returned from his trip to Afghanistan. In the discussion among the Soviet leaders, we see how much importance they attached to the United States' unequivocal hostility to their attempt to manage the situation in Afghanistan. The United States became the power that demanded all or nothing, and that forced the Soviet leadership at the moment to reformulate the task before the troops. Instead of staying there for sixty days, achieving stabilization for the Babrak Karmal regime, and withdrawing—Babrak might later have fallen; but that would have been another history—instead of that, the Soviet leaders decided: "A-ha! If the United States reacted in that way, we must stay until the external conditions for the Karmal regime become tolerable." That prolonged the war for ten years.

Now, maybe for Bill Odom it was all for the better; but I cannot help thinking that my generation suffered because of that for several years. Basically, the leaders on both sides screwed up a large part of the life of my generation. Thank you.

**LEGVOLD:** Thank you, Vlad. Arne, you are next, and then Carol.

**WESTAD:** Bob, I will be brief, for the very good reason that my voice is breaking. I think this conference has been far too exciting for me so far.

I want to go back to some of the things that John was saying, particularly with regard to the role played by the early part of the détente process itself. I have been intrigued by a suggestion made at the first conference—when we were discussing issues relating to the

arms race—that images of equality on the Soviet side played a crucial role in how the process developed. I see absolutely no reason to deny that in the concepts of détente developed on both sides during the Nixon-Kissinger years, some degree of formal recognition of equality was implied. Now, of course the way equality was read on both sides turned out to be very different, even at that time; but in terms of the essence of the concepts of equality—in the way that it was read out in meetings, and terms of discussions on both sides—this did play an important role.

Now, what has been intriguing to me is that, in some way, it was this very conception of equality on the Soviet side which, in the mid-1970s, led to Soviet overextension and overinvolvement in Third World areas, to the maintenance of high levels of armament, and to high rates of arms production, which in the long run were bound to create difficulties for the Soviet system. There may be a link here between the development of détente and the ultimate outcome of the process of competition—the fall of the Soviet Union—that we have not thought much about so far. There is no doubt in my mind, at least, that this Soviet overextension in terms of overseas involvement, arms production, and resources allocated to the military, contributed significantly to the Soviet collapse. It was not the only factor; there were many other important factors. But it was one important element. It made the Soviet leadership pay less attention to its people's welfare than to increasing the country's status abroad.

This was the situation that lasted up to 1985, when Gorbachev decided to end it. He instituted reforms—and then, in the end, the Russian people decided that in order to complete these reforms, it was necessary to abolish the Soviet system. There may be connections

between what you have seen here, in the early part of our discussions, and what happens in the period subsequent to that which we have been focussing on. That is not yet easy to observe, because we have not looked at the whole process in the context of what came before and what came after.

Let me just end by saying that, in my opinion, I have been very impressed by the central accomplishment of the leaders in this period. I think it would be terribly wrong of us to end this series of conferences without noting that leaders on both sides, through this very difficult process, were able to avoid war. Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Arne. Carol, then Geir, and David.

SAIVETZ: Thank you. I take a risk here because I am a political scientist, and not a historian. I respond to your question, Bob, as an international relations theorist of sorts.

I saw you asking which level of analysis we should address in order to explain what happened. This is a classic IR theory question. I guess that my answer—and my caveat to future political scientists or historians looking at this—is: all of them. What I learned over the last couple of days was that ideology—a factor which we in the West who were writing about Soviet foreign policy tended to dismiss as pure rationalization—played an important role. It set up categories—little boxes, in a sense—into which data were sorted, and decisions were made accordingly. To some extent, an ideological perspective—an ideological world view, let us call it—played an important role. I think that was true of the American side as well. Whether or not Zbig was from Poland or from some place else, he had a world view, and he tended to interpret

events as they unfolded in the light of it. To some extent, his fears became self-fulfilling prophecies: he was looking for certain kinds of behaviors, and he saw them—rightly or wrongly.

I was also struck by how poorly Soviet foreign policy decision making fit a "rational" ideal. Maybe this is a function of my own failing; in what I had written in the past, I attributed to the Soviet Union a more rational foreign policy decision making calculus than there actually seems to have been. Here personalities and perceptions seem very important. The idea that there was real antipathy between Brezhnev and Amin, and great resentment over the assassination of Taraki, seems to have been an important consideration behind the invasion. Before I came here, I would have argued that Soviet leaders would have looked at the American factor in some detail. I am really struck by how absent this was. As we get closer to December 1979, no one seems to have cared about factoring into the equation what the American response would have been to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

I think Ambassador Dobrynin was right when he said at the very beginning that you have to look at this event—or any event that we are analyzing—in a larger context. Afghanistan came at the end of a period in which everybody saw exactly what he or she wanted to see—whether the issue was the SALT negotiations, Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen, or whatever. Nobody looked at Afghanistan and what was happening there all by itself.

I would still love to hear an answer to the question that Jim Hershberg and I tried to raise yesterday: was there something else that the United States might have done earlier—a more forceful response to one of the earlier crises, for example—that might at least have put the American factor on the agenda as the Afghanistan decision was made?

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Carol. Geir?

LUNDESTAD: I am a historian. Historians are terrible at predicting the future. But we are very good at proclaiming whatever happens inevitable once it has happened. And I am pretty sure that this will be our weakness. We will see the Cold War as inevitable, and we will not pay sufficient attention to the element of interaction. I am pretty sure that we will see the Cold War as a 45-year conflict. It will be seen, more or less, as one coherent whole with ups downs. There was a certain need to regulate matters between East and West—particularly nuclear arms—and there was a stabilization in Europe, which was very important. The situation after the war more or less froze, and that provided perhaps the most important basis for détente in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

From this perspective, the Carter years will not be seen as very important. But we will be fascinated by the comparison with what followed. I think we will be influenced very much—maybe too much—by what followed on the Soviet side. I think we will see this period as a surprisingly strong last gasp of a collapsing system—a tremendous arms buildup; an insistence on equality; intervention in many different parts of the Third World. And we will also be surprised, I think, by the hesitation on the American side. The United States was tremendously strong. But in the 1970s, there was a curious hesitation—partly a result of Vietnam, but also partly a result of a very misleading analysis of the correlation of forces. We will be fascinated by how Nixon and Kissinger could possibly have analyzed the situation as they did and conclude that the United States was weak. I think there was a strong relationship, on the American side, between the perception of



relative weakness and interest in détente.

What followed would, of course, be very important in the analysis of this. We will see the Soviet Union insisting upon equality in many important areas; but of course, this insistence on equality was the most important contributing factor to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Thank you very much, Geir.

Now, before I turn to David, I have to begin delivering apologies, because we are not going to get through the full list. So I begin by apologizing to Vojtech, to Olav, to Malcolm, and to Dan [Caldwell]. We will not have time to get to everyone, because the schedule is now being driven by Embassy luncheons and other things—by life itself, as is often said. So, there will be two more interventions: one by David, and then—even though my ancestors come from this country—from Norway—I will give the last word to a Swede, Kjell Goldmann. David?

WELCH: I simply want to say a few words by way of socialist self-criticism. I do not really pretend to know why things happened the way they did; but I have a strong feeling that scholars did not help. Perhaps we even made things worse.

At the Musgrove conference, it became very clear that the American preoccupation with the concept of crisis stability frustrated an arms control agreement. That was a concept that came out of the American scholarly community. The Soviet Union did not understand it, did not buy it, or was suspicious of it. The concept itself put great upward pressure on the size of nuclear arsenals. Ultimately, I think, it made it much more difficult to achieve arms control.

The scholarly community was also charged with the task of trying to understand the Soviet Union in the absence of hard information about how people were actually making decisions in Moscow. They used a dubious deductive apparatus to do that—drawing inferences about the behavior of Brezhnev and his colleagues on the basis of deep-cultural interpretations of ancient Russian characteristics, on the basis of Bolshevik operational tendencies, and so forth. Why fourteenth-century Russian peasant culture should provide a key to understanding Cold War Soviet foreign policy is beyond me.

The scholarly preoccupation with understanding the world through the lens of rationality gave a false impression of a unity of purpose, and of instrumentality in calculation, on all sides. It deflected attention from important considerations such as personality and emotion. The very powerful effect of so-called "rational deterrence theory" on American foreign policy led to decisions that provoked as often as they deterred.

I would like to voice the hope that in fifty years, when scholars are trying to understand this period—and why things went wrong—they spend a little bit of time looking at themselves.

**LEGVOLD:** Fair enough; I think the point is well taken. Kjell?

**KJELL GOLDMANN:** Thank you. Being the only citizen of the European Union present at this meeting, I would like to say, first of all, that I have been listening for three days waiting for somebody to say something about the European factor in the calculations of at least one of the sides. Not a word has been said about this. I do not know what conclusion to draw from this; I will have to think about that.

But what I was going to say was different. A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity of making a comparison between what happened with Soviet-American détente on the one hand, and Soviet-German détente on the other hand. More happened in the former case than in the latter, toward the end of the 1970s. I was trying to account for this in terms of the differences between the two relationships. And there are a number of suggestive ones.

I have to limit myself to mentioning only one, which has not come up explicitly during this meeting. It has to do with that vague concept "political culture"—specifically, differences between American and German political culture. In the United States, there are always institutionalized polarizations in the political system. Especially relevant in this case were opposing views of the Soviet Union. Every German official that I have spoken to has told me that this was not the case in Germany. In Germany, there was more of a consensual view; a more nuanced view—a more complex view, as the Germans like to say—than there was in Washington. Now, assuming that there is something to this, one would think that in the United States, there would be a much greater sensitivity to disturbances, such that an unexpected problematic event could produce a larger change in policy than would happen in the German case. I think that some of the things that have come out here about American policy making tend to support this. There were always two sides debating what to do with the Soviet Union, and as a result of a particular incident, one side sort of gave up, and the other side sort of took over.

All of this leads to a suggestion to future historians that they devote some of their interest to political cultural factors of this kind. Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Thank you very much, Kjell.

I want to finish with three "thank yous" of my own, before I turn the floor over to Jim Blight. The first is to all of you this morning for putting up with this outrageous agenda and taking a crack at it. I know this was unsatisfying in many ways, because we could only begin to scratch the surface of it. I sympathize with your frustration in what we could not accomplish this morning. But thank you for making the attempt. I would further like to apologize again to those who were not able to speak. I hope, though, that both those who did speak, and those who did not have a chance to speak, will, in fact, take the next step and write out some of what they were going to say in a more elaborate form, so that we will all have a chance to read it. This session should be a good provocation for doing that; I am looking forward to seeing what you have to say.

The second "thank you" from me must be even greater for the rest of you: that one goes to Geir, Arne, Sigrid, Inger, and the Nobel Institute for what they have done in organizing the conference. Jim wants to say a little more about that, so I am only expressing my own view—I hope somewhat on your behalf. It has been an enormously gracious and effective conference, and I am grateful to you for that.

A final "thank you" is to the interpreters. We always do this in a formal way, and then we normally applaud their excellent work. [Applause.] When I arrived at the meeting, I asked one of my colleagues on the American side—who is very good in both languages—"How is the interpretation at the meeting?" He answered that it was outstanding. So, I want to say to you quite directly that we are grateful not merely because you did the job, but because you did it so well. So thank you very much.

Jim?

**JIM BLIGHT:** At the conclusion of this particular part of the process, I now regard Brown University, the National Security Archive, Professor Chubarian's Institute, and several other organizations as part of one team. So I will not bother to congratulate ourselves. But I, for one, personally found this completely fascinating.

I want to offer a couple of "thank yous" without trying to sound like the guy at the end of vacation who comes home and thanks that all his relatives for making his life worthwhile. First, I want to thank Bob Legvold. No one here--other than Arne Westad, whose voice has been ruined, and whose health has been put at risk by what he has just done [laughter]--understands what an enormous talent lies behind the ability to orchestrate all of these bullfrogs at the same time and to have them wind up not only liking each other, but also liking the guy who had to shut them up. [Laughter.]

Second, I have to say thank you to Lena and Irina. I say thank you as a person who does not understand a word of Russian. If somebody were to ask me how good the interpreters were, I would simply say, "What interpreters?" The ultimate compliment for interpreters, I think, is to say that they disappear.

Next, I would like to offer a very heartfelt "thank you" to all of the veterans. Scholars--especially those of us who claim to be political scientists--have their favorite theories, and their favorite models. That's what they do--they model for a living. [Laughter.] Historians run one after one another looking for documents in the pockets of their colleagues, wondering if they got the latest document, or only the second latest document, and so forth. What is at risk here

for us scholars in a meeting of this kind is merely our professional pride. But what is at stake for the veterans is the meaning of their life in history. When our veterans go to these documents and rediscover in the light of history, as they understand it, what happened—the things they did not know; the things they did not understand; the screw-ups they made; the bad advice they gave—

**DOBRYNIN:** Or took.

**BLIGHT:** —or took—I believe they exhibit tremendous courage. You did not have to do this, and we deeply appreciate it, because if you had not, we would stand an even greater risk of making the kinds of mistakes that have been talked about around this table this morning. We are going to screw up royally—you can count on that—but, thanks to you, I think we are going to do a much better job of understanding things that were not written down, decisions that were not taken, and many subtleties that would otherwise escape us.

Finally, I have join Bob in thanking Geir, Arne, and everyone else from the Nobel Institute who made this conference possible. In addition to Lysebu; in addition to perfect weather; in addition to ten-course meals; in addition to a yacht such as I have never been on, seen, or imagined; in addition to this being basically a perfect country [laughter]—last night, Irina Arm thought at one point she had discovered a piece of garbage in Oslo harbor, but it turned out only to be something being pulled by a police boat [laughter]—I can only say that I am stunned by the hospitality, and we are very grateful. But, beyond that—beyond the peripherals, as it were—I am thinking back to February of 1993 when Janet and I were invited here to talk about the

Cuban missile crisis because Arne, Geir, and their staff had gotten the idea that there might be something to this idea of getting veterans together with each other—and scholars with veterans, all with documents. Since then, the Nobel Institute has been an integral part of this team that has grown up now on both sides of the Atlantic. On behalf of all of us, I extend my heartfelt thanks for your courage in getting into this wild and woolly exercise, and for your skill at consummating it with such perfection. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

LEGVOLD: This meeting is adjourned.