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TOP SECRET



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

25X1, E.O.13526

April 10, 1980

~~TOP SECRET~~ []

TO : The Secretary
 THROUGH: S/MS - Dr. Shulman *MS 28*
 FROM : INR - Ronald I. Spiers *R.I.S.*

Soviet Highlights

(U) Iran. On April 8, TASS claimed the Carter Administration's action was part and parcel of its year-long efforts to blackmail the Khomeini regime and undermine the revolution. The report came as close to defending Iran's position on the hostages as any Soviet comment since last November. A later Kornilov commentary carried by TASS claimed that the current US steps were linked to the new round of Israeli-Egyptian negotiations and further demonstrate Washington's desire to extend its influence in the region.

Moscow probably hopes that the downturn in US-Iranian relations will take some of the heat off the USSR generated by Afghanistan, and enable it to curry some favor with Khomeini. Unhappy with Bani-Sadr's and Ghotbzadeh's anti-Soviet remarks, Moscow may have welcomed the chance to undercut their positions while appearing to defend Iran from the US.

(TS) [] Afghanistan. The Soviets appear to be settling in for the long haul:

--Moscow and Kabul on April 4 and 5 ratified the agreement governing the "temporary" Soviet troop presence in Afghanistan.

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Detente in Europe. There have been two vague hints from Polish officials that some new initiative may be in preparation:

- One alluded to a possible Polish call for a conference on a governmental level in Krakow which would inter alia deal with TNF issues.
- The other predicted that a new proposal at the Warsaw Pact summit in mid-May might involve a change in Moscow's present stand on TNF negotiations.

While both reports are very tentative, the idea that a new initiative is being readied is plausible. (S) []

The Soviets have approvingly reported the French and Polish Parties' call for a meeting of European Communist parties on detente and disarmament later this month. Soviet media have not mentioned the refusal of the Italian, Spanish and Yugoslav Parties to attend. (U)

(S) SALT. The Soviet Embassy on April 4 notified the US of plans to launch "two strategic ballistic missiles" in the Kamchatka impact area. The next day, the USSR launched two strategic missiles--an SS-N-8 SLBM and an SS-11 ICBM--within a two minute interval. Since the SALT II provision on advance notification only involves ICBM launches, notice of this launch would not have been required under the treaty. The Soviet gesture appeared to be a signal that Moscow wishes to preserve the strategic arms control component of our current relationship.

(e) Sino-Soviet Relations. Pravda's most authoritative and comprehensive polemic against China since the intervention in Afghanistan included a call for resumption of the Vice Ministerial "normalization" talks that were begun in Moscow last fall. Moreover, the commentary under the authoritative pseudonym "I. Aleksandrov" pointed out that the dormant border negotiations constitute an additional, unused channel of communications in which "definite opportunities" exist for resolving questions of interstate relations. The proposal may reflect some Soviet procedural flexibility, but the main thrust of the article was a bitter attack on the Beijing leadership and its policies.

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(c) Southern Africa. Deputy Foreign Minister Il'ichev has apparently returned from southern Africa without accomplishing the main goal of his trip, a meeting with Rhodesia's prime-minister elect, Robert Mugabe. Il'ichev visited Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia and on each stop reportedly asked for help in arranging such a meeting. He evidently remained in Zambia several days longer than planned in hopes of seeing Mugabe when he attended the Frontline meeting in Lusaka on April 1.

(c) Brezhnev on Vacation. Brezhnev left Moscow yesterday for a vacation, presumably in the Crimea. This is not the customary time for him to take a holiday; the most likely explanation is that he is probably resting in preparation for a busy schedule next month including May Day festivities in Moscow and a Warsaw Pact summit in Warsaw.

CHRONOLOGYApril

- 3 : Afghan Deputy Premier Soltan Ali Keshtmand met separately with Foreign Trade Minister Patolichev and Gosplan head Baybakov in Moscow. On same day Kabul radio announced that the Soviets agreed to provide \$150 million in economic aid to Afghanistan; 70 percent is to be delivered over the next two months.
- 3 : Deputy Foreign Minister Il'ichev met Zambian President Kaunda in Lusaka.
- 4 : USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium ratified treaty with Afghanistan on the "temporary stay" of Soviet forces in that country. The Presidium of the Revolutionary Council of Afghanistan followed suit April 5.
- 7 : Vice Foreign Minister Firyubin arrived in New Delhi after a two-day stay in Katmandu. (Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Van Dong and Cuban Foreign Minister Malmierca arrived in New Delhi the same day.)
- 7 : "I. Aleksandrov" article in Pravda suggested reopening Sino-Soviet "normalization" talks as well as the border negotiations.
- 7 : TASS claimed President Sadat's trip to Washington was another effort by President Carter to exact concessions from Egypt in order to meet the demands of the "powerful pro-Israel lobby" in the US and thus secure his re-election; Egypt will in turn receive new financial and economic aid, and the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians will be "trampled underfoot."
- 8 : TASS criticized US countermeasures on Iran as further evidence of efforts to "blackmail" Tehran.
- 9 : Soviet delegation headed by Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Manzhulo began talks in Buenos Aires on expansion of trade and commercial ties with Argentina.