

March 22, 1979
**Transcript of CPSU CC Politburo Session on
Afghanistan**

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SESSION OF POLITBURO OF
CC CPSU
22 March 1979

Chaired by Comrade Brezhnev, L.I.

In attendance: Comrades Andropov, Iu.V.; Gromyko, A.A.; Kosygin, A.N.; Pelshe, A.Ia.; Ustinov, D.F.; Chernenko, K.U.; Demichev, P.N.; Kuznetsov, V.V.; Ponomarev, B.N.; Solomentsev, M.S.; Tikhonov, N.A.; Kapitonov, I.V.; Dolgikh, V.I.; Zimianin, M.V.; Rusakov, K.V.; Gorbachev, M.S.

I. Regarding the issue of the situation in Afghanistan

BREZHNEV. We reviewed the fundamental issues about measures to assist Afghanistan at the last meeting of the Politburo on Monday, and the measures envisaged by our decision are being realized in practice.

The situation in Afghanistan is pretty complicated. Now the affair seems to have improved.

GROMYKO. But all the same the situation continues to remain complicated.

BREZHNEV. We will continue to proceed for our common position which we determined at the last meeting of the Politburo, and we will not change anything which we noted regarding assistance to Afghanistan. As we viewed it from the very beginning, our actions in relation to the situation in Afghanistan were entirely correct.

Comrade Taraki arrived in Moscow in a somewhat excited condition, but during the discussions he gradually cheered up and towards the end he behaved calmly and sensibly.

In my conversation with Comrade Taraki I said that the main thing now is political work among the masses and with particular stress I repeated this. I said that the Afghan leadership should pay its main attention to the broadening of the base among which it conducts revolutionary re-education. Here the activity of the People's Democratic Party and its ideo-political cohesion has primary significance.

Taking into account that the Afghan leadership has made not a few mistakes regarding repressions, in the conversation attention was paid to the fact that primarily political and economic means should play the main role in attracting broad strata of the population to support the current regime. I directly said to Comrade Taraki that repressions are a sharp weapon and it must be applied extremely and extremely cautiously, and only in the case when there are serious legal grounds for it.

Comrade Taraki was told about the decisions which we made in support of Afghanistan both in the international plane and in the area of bilateral cooperation. At the same time it was directly declared that we consider the introduction of Soviet military detachments inexpedient, insofar as in the current situation this would only play into the hands of our common enemy.

Comrade Taraki thanked us for receiving him in Moscow and accepted the thoughts

which had been expressed to him with understanding. He assured me that the Afghan leadership is doing everything so as to continue the development of the country along a revolutionary path.

Overall I believe that the conversations were useful. Demonstrating solidarity with the Afghan revolution and our faith in the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation, we at the same time warned the Afghan leadership about the danger of extremism and the underestimation of mass political work, and oriented him towards conducting a more well-considered and thought-out course.

As was reported to me, Comrade Taraki remained very satisfied with the discussions in Moscow and left in a good mood.

Perhaps, the participants in the discussion will add something to what was said above?

KOSYGIN. I accompanied Comrade Taraki to the airfield. He thanked the Politburo [and] Leonid Il'ich for the nice reception and for the favorable attitude towards Afghanistan. The new year, by the way, has begun by their calendar. They celebrated it here. Comrade Taraki said that he had not expected that over such a short time it would be possible to decide so many questions, to conduct such a broad consideration of all the problems which so greatly interest the Afghan leadership.

About equipment, Comrade Taraki expressed a request that measures be accepted regarding an improvement in radio transmissions to Afghanistan, and in particular, asked for a more powerful transmitter.

CHERNENKO. Proposals about that have been received.

KOSYGIN. I said that we are reviewing that issue attentively.

ZAMIATIN. Yesterday that issue was reviewed by the Ministry of Communications and Gosteleradio [State Television and Radio]. Comrades Talyzin and Lapin submitted proposals which are entirely acceptable. The issue is how to redirect a booster transmitter with a strength of 1000 kilowatts which is located close to Dushanbe near the border with Afghanistan. This transmitter is sufficient for the entire territory of Afghanistan.

KOSYGIN. Herat for all intents and purposes is now in the hands of the government.

ZAMIATIN, CHERNENKO say that in Herat the situation is more normal now.

ZAMIATIN. The radio transmissions will be conducted, of course, in the Afghan language.

BREZHNEV. In conclusion, Comrade Taraki thanked us for the reception which was shown him and for the solutions to the issues which we announced to him. I think that it would be possible to:

1. Approve the conversations which we had with Comrade Taraki.
2. Agree with the proposals of Comrades Lapin and Talyzin regarding the organization of the radio relay to Afghanistan, and also to make a corresponding notation in the nature of an instruction regarding the creation of a more powerful transmitter.

ANDROPOV. That is a very good measure.

The proposal is accepted.