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# Biggest Shock Yet

It has been a painful learning experience for Jimmy Carter—discovering that the Russian threat is as serious as ever. The lesson is forcing the President into a far-reaching reassessment of his foreign policy.

Russia's invasion of Afghanistan confronts Jimmy Carter with the most clear-cut challenge of his Presidency.

The Soviet drive to conquer its small and primitive neighbor is widely viewed as an act of Communist aggression unparalleled since North Korea's invasion of South Korea in 1950—and a potential threat to vital American interests in the oil-rich Persian Gulf region.

Whether détente can survive the shock is considered doubtful. In fact, many in the U.S. and Europe see as inevitable a return to a form of cold war with Russia and a sharply escalating arms race. That conviction was summed up by Senator Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.): "Détente is dead and the Soviets killed it."

In a televised address to the nation on January 4, the President announced a radical shift in the administration's foreign policy, which for the past three years has given high priority to cooperation with Moscow and ratification of a strategic-arms-limitation treaty.

His words: "Neither the United States nor any other nation which is committed to world peace and stability can continue to do business as usual with the Soviet Union."

Carter spelled out key features of a strategy aimed at making Russia pay a price for its aggression in Afghanistan. These were:

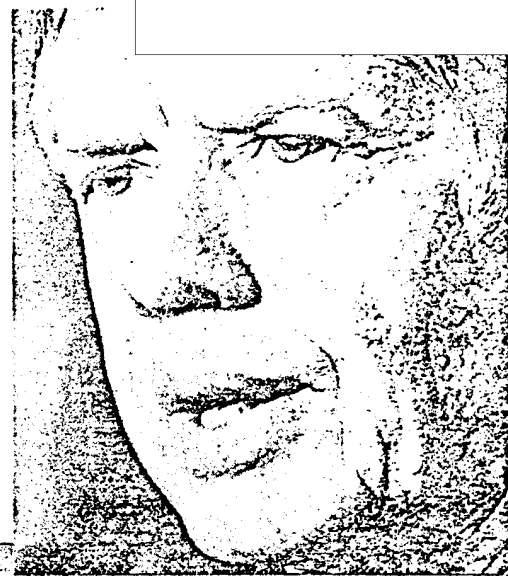
1. **Food.** A limited embargo was imposed on grain shipments to the Russians. Only 8 million tons of grain that the U.S. is committed to sell this crop year under a five-year agreement will be delivered. The delivery of an additional 17 million tons that Russia was authorized to buy this year to cope with a crop disaster will be barred. To cushion the impact on American farmers, the embargoed wheat and corn will be bought by the U.S. government—or its price supported—at an estimated cost of 2 to 3 billion dollars.

The food weapon, which Carter in the past ruled out, will be used in other forms. Soviet fishing privileges in American waters will be severely curtailed. And licenses for the sale of farm machinery and equipment to manufacture phosphate fertilizer will be reviewed.

2. **Technology.** All sales of high technology and other strategic items to Russia will be barred until further notice. The entire licensing procedure for these exports is to be revised with the aim of tightening the screws.

3. **Cultural and economic exchanges.** Most of the plans for exchanges in these fields will be deferred, and for the time being no new American or Soviet consular facilities will be opened. Carter raised the possibility that American athletes might not compete in the Moscow Olympics.

Besides these measures, the President moved on other fronts in retaliation against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which he called "an extremely serious threat to



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peace." He asked the Senate to delay consideration of the SALT II treaty, generally regarded as the cornerstone of Soviet-American détente. However, the State Department announced that the U.S. will observe the terms of the pact as long as Russia does the same.

Also, Carter threw American support behind a drive for United Nations condemnation of Russian aggression and a call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

To meet the danger that Soviet aggression would go beyond Afghanistan, Carter announced a multinational plan to provide military equipment, food and other aid for Pakistan. This will require congressional action to rescind a ban on all American aid to that country because of its efforts to produce nuclear weapons.

White House aides suggested that the administration is ready to send arms and other assistance even to Iran to counter the Soviet threat if and when that nation is ruled by a government friendly to the U.S.

Diplomatic observers in Washington said that the reprisals so far ordered by Carter against Moscow are unlikely to induce the Russians to abandon their invasion of Afghanistan—although the squeeze on grain deliveries will prove hurtful and doubtless came as something of a surprise to Kremlin leaders.

Carter had under consideration other options that, if implemented, would have a harsher effect on the Russians than anything yet announced. These would—

■ Revive Central Intelligence Agency covert operations to help the Moslem rebels resisting the Soviet conquest of Afghanistan. Pentagon officials stressed that the effectiveness of the insurgents' stand would depend on availability of weapons, particularly hand-held antiaircraft missiles that can destroy Soviet gunships. These officials advocated American clandestine support also for anti-Communist guerrillas in Angola and Ethiopia who are fighting Moscow's Cuban proxy forces. Said a high-level American strategist: "With a little backing for the guerrillas, we could increase Communist casualties by a factor of three."

■ Cooperate actively on defense with China, Russia's

archenemy. The early-January visit to Peking by Defense Secretary Harold Brown gave special urgency to this proposal. Some ranking officials pressed for a change in the administration policy that barred the sale of American arms to China but that did not oppose weapons sales by European allies. With most European countries reluctant to risk Moscow's displeasure, these officials argued that the U.S. at least should provide China with technology to modernize its own defense industry.

Expand the American military presence in the Middle East and Indian Ocean region quickly to counter Soviet ambitions in this strategically vital region. Somalia, Kenya and Oman already have offered the U.S. access to naval and air facilities. Some U.S. officials urged the administration to accept a new offer by Egypt's President Anwar Sadat to use bases in the Sinai.

Whatever the long-term impact of Carter's strategy, one thing was clear: Moscow's massive invasion of Afghanistan struck at the very heart of Carter's foreign policy and shocked the President.

Early in his administration, Carter emphasized that his foreign policy would give reduced priority to the Soviet threat, which he tended to discount. In a speech at Notre Dame University on May 22, 1977, he set the theme of his approach toward Russia: "We are now free of . . . inordinate fear of Communism."

**A change of heart.** Now the President apparently has a far different perception of the Soviet threat, as evidenced by this confession in a December 31 ABC-TV interview: "The action of the Soviets has made a more dramatic change in my opinion of what the Soviets' ultimate goals are than anything they've done in the previous time that I've been in office."

Soviet-affairs experts say that Carter's shock reflected a lack of understanding of the fundamental difference between the American and Russian definition of détente. From the outset, Washington has viewed détente not only as a way of reducing the risk of nuclear war but also as a device for restraining Russian behavior around the world. For example, as recently as October 16, the State Department's special adviser on Soviet affairs, Marshall Shulman, said the U.S. has failed to establish "a broad understanding on ground rules for our continuing political competition, especially in the Third World."

The Russians, by contrast, have insisted all along that détente permitted them to continue and even intensify the

international class struggle and to support "national-liberation struggles" so long as they avoided a nuclear confrontation with the United States. Repeatedly since 1972, they have used that principle—and on an escalating scale.

In the 1973 Mideast war, they were aware of an imminent Arab attack and failed to honor a pledge to consult the U.S. to avert a potentially dangerous crisis. In Angola and Ethiopia, Russian military intervention, with the help of an army of Cuban proxies, had a decisive impact on the course of a local conflict. In South Yemen, they supported an abortive invasion of North Yemen, again with the backing of Cuban proxies. And in Indo-China they gave active encouragement plus large-scale material support to Communist Vietnam for its invasion of Cambodia.

Administration officials assert that the invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army rather than by proxy forces represents "a quantum jump in the nature of Soviet behavior." In fact, strategic analysts—including former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as well as experts in the Pentagon—for the past year have warned that Moscow was setting the stage for just such direct military intervention in local conflicts in the 1980s.

They pointed to two ominous developments. First, under the umbrella of nuclear parity with the U.S., Soviet policymakers were revising their estimate of how far they could go without risking a superpower conflict. Second, the impressive buildup of the Soviet Navy and airlift was providing the Kremlin with the capability to intervene militarily in distant regions. Considering these circumstances, strategic analysts say, the Russians' decision to cross a historic threshold by sending their own military forces into Afghanistan was not surprising. The invasion, they maintain, has profound strategic implications far beyond the borders of Afghanistan—even though the primary Soviet objective apparently was to prevent a Communist government from being overthrown by anti-Communist Moslem insurgents.

**Two-sided squeeze:** The military occupation of that country by the Red Army, the analysts maintain, is part of a double squeeze aimed at confronting China on one side and the oil wealth of the Persian Gulf region on the other.

In this the Russians are posing the most serious threat to American interests in a quarter of a century—namely, oil supplies vital to the U.S., and even more so to its European and Japanese allies. To quote Egypt's President Anwar Sadat: "The battle around the oil stores has already begun."

Growing turbulence in Iran—where 50 American hostages were still in captivity in Teheran—was seen as an invitation for a further move by Russia in the developing "battle" for Persian Gulf oil. Besides its traditional interest in expanding its southern borders and pushing toward warm-water ports, Moscow now has a powerful new incentive to expand its influence in this area. The CIA predicts that the Soviet Union will require substantial oil imports in the 1980s.

It was against this somber background that President Carter was forced to reassess his foreign policy in the wake of the Soviet power play in Afghanistan.

In the view of some analysts, the Kremlin's willingness to use the Afghanistan operation as a model for future takeovers would depend in large part on the price they are forced to pay for their effort to absorb that nation into their Communist empire. □

