

Decision to Send Troops to Afghanistan

by Decision To Send Troops To Afghanistan Marka

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Introduction

The decision to invade Afghanistan was reached by several foreign key decision makers. The decision making process was dominated by four people who were; the foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, Dmitrii Ustinov who was the defense minister, the KGB chairman Yuri Andropov and Mikhail Suslov who was a long time Politburo Member. It was because Brezhnev was ailing. They held a meeting in L. I. Brezhnev's private office and discussed the situation in Afghanistan and around it for a lengthy period, while considering all the pros and contrast of introducing the Soviet troops in the area. The defense minister was quick to cite the reasons for the purpose of justifying the necessity of such step, such as the efforts, undertaken by the CIA of the USA for creating territories which would have included the Southern republics of the USSR. At the end, the meeting decided, as a preliminary plan, to remove H. Amin by the hands of KGB special agents and replace him with Babrak Karmal. The second decision made was to send some number of Soviet troops on the territory of Afghanistan. On December 10, 1979, the Defense Minister of the USSR D. F. Ustinov summoned the Chief of General Staff N. V. Ogarkov, and informed him that the Politburo had reached a preliminary decision of a temporary introduction of the Soviet troops into Afghanistan. Thus, he ordered him to prepare approximately 75 to 80 thousand people. N. V. Ogarkov, who was known to be liberal-minded, was surprised and outraged by such a decision. Instead, he argued that 75 thousand would not be able to stabilize the situation, meaning that he was against the introduction of troops.

On the same day, Nikolai Vasilievich, who was the chief of general staff, was promptly summoned to L. Brezhnev's office. The Chief of General Staff who liked pushing for his ideas, once again tried to convince those who were present that the Afghan problem should be decided by the political means, instead of relying on using force. He cited the traditions of the Afghan people, who never tolerated foreigners on their soil. He also warned them about the possible involvement of the troops in military operations. However, in the end of the conversation they tentatively determined that for the time being they would not make the final decision on the immediate military assistance, but, in any case, the troops should start preparing.

In the evening, D. Ustinov gathered the Ministry of Defense Collegium and informed the narrow circle of officials from among the highest military leadership that possibly in the near future the decision would be made to use the Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Therefore, they had to start preparations for the appropriate forces. For this purpose Directive # 312/12/00133 was sent to the troops. Beginning from December 10, D. F. Ustinov started giving oral instructions to the Chief of General Staff regarding formation of a new Army in the Turkestan military district. On the basis of these instructions, selective mobilization of troops was carried out, and airborne and other military units were transferred to the Turkestan military district.

All the arrangements concerning the sending of the troops were done in secret. The Soviet leaders believed that that step was intended to promote the interests of strengthening the state. The protocol of that session, handwritten by K.U. Cherenkov, which for a long time was super-secret, was not shown to anybody. The secret was sealed in a special folder of the CC CPSU. This document to a large extent clarifies who were the initiator and executor of the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. The protocol was signed by all the CC CPSU Politburo members, who were present at the session.

Conclusion

The period of the sending of the troops to Afghanistan had records of unified thinking. The strict system of hierarchy created by the party nomenclature did not allow even one step outside the line. The people, who occupied the key posts in the government, were under the total control of the system. The decision to invade Afghanistan was reached by several foreign key decision makers. The decision making process was dominated by four people who were; the foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, Dmitrii Ustinov who was the defense minister, the KGB chairman Yurii Andropov and Mikhail Suslov who was a long time Politburo Member. Many believe that if that issue was raised at the Supreme Soviet, it would have been decided unanimously positively.

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PAGE 1

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 4
