

Meeting of Federal Open Market Committee

March 20, 1979

MINUTES OF ACTIONS

A meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee was held in the offices of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington, D. C., on Tuesday, March 20, 1979, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Miller, Chairman
Mr. Volcker, Vice Chairman
Mr. Balles
Mr. Black
Mr. Coldwell
Mr. Kimbrel
Mr. Mayo
Mr. Partee
Mrs. Teeters
Mr. Wallich

Messrs. Guffey, Morris, Roos, and Winn,
Alternate Members of the Federal Open
Market Committee

Messrs. Baughman, and Eastburn, Presidents of
the Federal Reserve Banks of Dallas and
Philadelphia, respectively

Mr. Altmann, Secretary
Mr. Bernard, Assistant Secretary
Mr. Mannion, Assistant General Counsel
Mr. Axilrod, Economist

Messrs. Brandt, Ettin, Henry, Keir, Keran,
Kichline, Scheld, Truman, and Zeisel,
Associate Economists

Mr. Holmes, Manager System Open Market
Account
Mr. Pardee, Deputy Manager for Foreign
Operations

- Mr. Sternlight, Deputy Manager for
Domestic Operations
- Mr. Coyne, Assistant to the Board of
Governors
- Mr. Kalchbrenner, Associate Director,
Division of Research and Statistics,
Board of Governors
- Ms. Farar, Economist, Open Market
Secretariat, Board of Governors
- Mrs. Deck, Staff Assistant, Open Market
Secretariat, Board of Governors
- Messrs. Gainor and McIntosh, First Vice
Presidents, Federal Reserve Banks
of Minneapolis and Boston, respectively
- Messrs. Balbach, J. Davis, and Eisenmenger,
Senior Vice Presidents, Federal
Reserve Banks of St. Louis, Cleveland,
and Boston, respectively
- Messrs. Broaddus, Burns, Danforth, T.
Davis, Fousek, and Mullineaux, Vice
Presidents, Federal Reserve Banks
of Richmond, Dallas, Minneapolis,
Kansas City, New York, and Philadelphia,
respectively
- Ms. Clarkin, Securities Trading Officer,
Federal Reserve Bank of New York

In the agenda for this meeting, it was reported that advices of the election of the following members and alternate members of the Federal Open Market Committee for the year commencing March 1, 1979, had been received by the Secretary and the named individuals had executed their oaths of office.

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The elected members and alternate members were
as follows:

Robert P. Black, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of
Richmond, with Frank E. Morris, President of the
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, as alternate,

Paul A. Volcker, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of
New York, with Thomas M. Timlen, First Vice President
of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as alternate;

Robert P. Mayo, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of
Chicago, with Willis J. Winn, President of the Federal
Reserve Bank of Cleveland, as alternate;

Monroe Kimbrel, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of
Atlanta, with Lawrence K. Roos, President of the
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, as alternate;

John J. Balles, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of
San Francisco, with Roger Guffey, President of the
Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, as alternate.

By unanimous vote, the following officers of the Federal
Open Market Committee were elected to serve until the election
of their successors at the first meeting of the Committee
after February 29, 1980, with the understanding that in the
event of the discontinuance of their official connection
with the Board of Governors or with a Federal Reserve Bank,
as the case might be, they would cease to have any official
connection with the Federal Open Market Committee:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| G. William Miller | Chairman |
| Paul A. Volcker | Vice Chairman |
| Murray Altman | Secretary |
| Normand R. V. Bernard | Assistant Secretary |

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Neal L. Petersen
James H. Oltman
Robert E. Mannion
Stephen H. Axilrod

General Counsel
Deputy General Counsel
Assistant General Counsel
Economist

Harry Brandt, Richard G. Davis,
Edward Ettin, George Henry,
Peter M. Keir, Michael
Keran, James L. Kichline,
James Parthemos, Karl
Scheld, Edwin M. Truman,
Joseph S. Zeisel

Associate Economists

Secretary's note: On March 6, 1979, certain continuing authorizations of the Committee, listed below, had been distributed by the Secretary with the advice that, in accordance with procedures approved by the Committee, they were being called to the Committee's attention before the March organization meeting to give members an opportunity to raise any questions they had concerning them. Members were asked to so indicate if they wished to have any of the authorizations in question placed on the agenda for consideration at this meeting, and no such requests were received.

The authorizations in question were as follows:

1. Procedures for allocation of securities in the System Open Market Account.
2. List of Treasury Department officials to whom weekly reports on open market operations may be sent.
3. Authority for the Chairman to appoint a Federal Reserve Bank as agent to operate the System Account in case the New York Bank is unable to function.
4. Resolutions providing for continued operation of the Committee and for certain actions by the Reserve Banks during an emergency.

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5. Resolution relating to examinations of the System Open Market Account.
6. Guidelines for the conduct of System operations in Federal agency issues.
7. Regulation relating to Open Market Operations of Federal Reserve Banks.
8. Rules of Organization, Rules Regarding Availability of Information, and Rules of Procedure.

By unanimous vote, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York was selected to execute transactions for the System Open Market Account until the adjournment of the first meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee after February 29, 1980.

By unanimous vote, Alan R. Holmes, Peter D. Sternlight, and Scott E. Pardee were selected to serve at the pleasure of the Committee in the capacities of Manager of the System Open Market Account, Deputy Manager for Domestic Operations, and Deputy Manager for Foreign Operations, respectively, on the understanding that their selection was subject to their being satisfactory to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Secretary's note: Advice was subsequently received that the selections indicated above were satisfactory to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

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By unanimous vote, the minutes of actions taken at the meetings of the Federal Open Market Committee held on February 6 and March 2, 1979, were approved.

By unanimous vote, System open market transactions in foreign currencies during the period February 6 through March 19, 1979, were ratified.

By unanimous vote, System open market transactions in Government securities, agency obligations, and bankers' acceptances during the period February 6 through March 19, 1979, were ratified.

With Messrs. Coldwell, Kimbrel, Volcker, and Wallich dissenting, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York was authorized and directed, until otherwise directed by the Committee, to execute transactions in the System Account in accordance with the following domestic policy directive:

The information reviewed at this meeting suggests that in the current quarter growth in real output of goods and services has moderated from the rapid rate in the last quarter of 1978, while the rise in prices has accelerated. In January and February the dollar value of total retail sales rose slightly further. Nonfarm payroll employment continued to expand over the two-month period, but in part because of severe weather, industrial production increased little. The unemployment rate in February, at 5.7 percent, was virtually unchanged from its level in January and in late 1978. Over recent months, on balance, the index of average hourly earnings has continued to rise rapidly.

The trade-weighted value of the dollar against major foreign currencies has shown no net change since early February. The U. S. trade deficit in January was larger than the monthly average in the fourth quarter of 1978, to some extent because of a bulge in imports of oil.

M-1 declined in both January and February, in part because of the continuing effects of the growth of the automatic transfer service. With market interest rates continuing high, inflows of the interest-bearing deposits included in M-2 and M-3 remained at reduced levels, despite substantial flows into money market certificates at both commercial banks and nonbank thrift institutions. Over the two months, consequently, M-2 changed little and M-3 grew at a relatively slow rate. The behavior of all three monetary aggregates was affected by shifts of funds from deposits to money market mutual funds and other liquid assets. Most market interest rates have risen in recent weeks, after having declined in January.

Taking account of past and prospective developments in employment, unemployment, production, investment, real income, productivity, international trade and payments, and prices, it is the policy of the Federal Open Market Committee to foster monetary and financial conditions that will resist inflationary pressures while encouraging moderate economic expansion and contributing to a sustainable pattern of international transactions. The Committee agreed that these objectives would be furthered by growth of M-1, M-2, and M-3 from the fourth quarter of 1978 to the fourth quarter of 1979 within ranges of 1-1/2 to 4-1/2 percent, 5 to 8 percent, and 6 to 9 percent, respectively. The associated range for bank credit is 7-1/2 to 10-1/2 percent. These ranges will be reconsidered in July or at any time as conditions warrant.

In the short run, the Committee seeks to achieve bank reserve and money market conditions that are broadly consistent with the longer-run ranges for monetary aggregates cited above, while giving due regard to the program for supporting the foreign exchange value of the dollar and to developing conditions in domestic financial markets. Early in the period before the next regular meeting,

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System open market operations are to be directed at maintaining the weekly average federal funds rate at about the current level. Subsequently, operations shall be directed at maintaining the weekly average federal funds rate within the range of 9-3/4 to 10-1/2 percent. In deciding on the specific objective for the federal funds rate the Manager shall be guided mainly by the relationship between the latest estimates of annual rates of growth in the March-April period of M-1 and M-2 and the following ranges of tolerance: 4 to 8 percent for M-1 and 3-1/2 to 7-1/2 percent for M-2. If, with approximately equal weight given to M-1 and M-2, their rates of growth appear to be significantly above or below the mid-points of the indicated ranges, the objective for the funds rate is to be raised or lowered in an orderly fashion within its range.

If the rates of growth in the aggregates appear to be above the upper limit or below the lower limit of the indicated ranges at a time when the objective for the funds rate has already been moved to the corresponding limit of its range, the Manager will promptly notify the Chairman, who will then decide whether the situation calls for supplementary instructions from the Committee.

By unanimous vote, renewal for further periods of 3 months of System drawings on the German Federal Bank maturing March 31, 1979, through April 27, 1979, was authorized.

It was agreed that the authorization for the lending of Government securities from the System Open Market Account, contained in paragraph 3 of the Authorization for Domestic Open Market Operations, should be retained at this time, subject to review in six months.

By unanimous vote, the Authorization for Domestic Open Market Operations shown below was reaffirmed:

AUTHORIZATION FOR DOMESTIC OPEN MARKET OPERATIONS

1. The Federal Open Market Committee authorizes and directs the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, to the extent necessary to carry out the most recent domestic policy directive adopted at a meeting of the Committee:

(a) To buy or sell U. S. Government securities, including securities of the Federal Financing Bank, and securities that are direct obligations of, or fully guaranteed as to principal and interest by, any agency of the United States in the open market, from or to securities dealers and foreign and international accounts maintained at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, on a cash, regular, or deferred delivery basis, for the System Open Market Account at market prices, and, for such Account, to exchange maturing U. S. Government and Federal agency securities with the Treasury or the individual agencies or to allow them to mature without replacement; provided that the aggregate amount of U. S. Government and Federal agency securities held in such Account (including forward commitments) at the close of business on the day of a meeting of the Committee at which action is taken with respect to a domestic policy directive shall not be increased or decreased by more than \$3.0 billion during the period commencing with the opening of business on the day following such meeting and ending with the close of business on the day of the next such meeting;

(b) When appropriate, to buy or sell in the open market, from or to acceptance dealers and foreign accounts maintained at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, on a cash, regular, or deferred delivery basis, for the account of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York at market discount rates, prime bankers acceptances with maturities of up to nine months at the time of acceptance that (1) arise out of the current shipment of goods between countries or within the United States, or (2) arise out of the storage within the United States of goods under contract of sale or expected to move into the channels of trade within a reasonable time and that are secured throughout their life by a warehouse receipt or similar document

conveying title to the underlying goods; provided that the aggregate amount of bankers acceptances held at any one time shall not exceed \$100 million;

(c) To buy U. S. Government securities, obligations that are direct obligations of, or fully guaranteed as to principal and interest by, any agency of the United States, and prime bankers acceptances of the types authorized for purchase under 1(b) above, from dealers for the account of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York under agreements for repurchase of such securities, obligations, or acceptances in 15 calendar days or less, at rates that, unless otherwise expressly authorized by the Committee, shall be determined by competitive bidding, after applying reasonable limitations on the volume of agreements with individual dealers; provided that in the event Government securities or agency issues covered by any such agreement are not repurchased by the dealer pursuant to the agreement or a renewal thereof, they shall be sold in the market or transferred to the System Open Market Account; and provided further that in the event bankers acceptances covered by any such agreement are not repurchased by the seller, they shall continue to be held by the Federal Reserve Bank or shall be sold in the open market.

2. The Federal Open Market Committee authorizes and directs the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, or, under special circumstances, such as when the New York Reserve Bank is closed, any other Federal Reserve Bank, to purchase directly from the Treasury for its own account (with discretion, in cases where it seems desirable, to issue participations to one or more Federal Reserve Banks) such amounts of special short-term certificates of indebtedness as may be necessary from time to time for the temporary accommodation of the Treasury; provided that the rate charged on such certificates shall be a rate $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent below the discount rate of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York at the time of such purchases, and provided further that the total amount of such certificates held at any one time by the Federal Reserve Banks shall not exceed \$2 billion.

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3. In order to insure the effective conduct of open market operations, the Federal Open Market Committee authorizes and directs the Federal Reserve Banks to lend U. S. Government securities held in the System Open Market Account to Government securities dealers and to banks participating in Government securities clearing arrangements conducted through a Federal Reserve Bank, under such instructions as the Committee may specify from time to time.

4. In order to ensure the effective conduct of open market operations, while assisting in the provision of short-term investments for foreign and international accounts maintained at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the Federal Open Market Committee authorizes and directs the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, (a) for System Open Market Account, to sell U. S. Government securities to such foreign and international accounts on the bases set forth in paragraph 1(a) under agreements providing for the resale by such accounts of those securities within 15 calendar days on terms comparable to those available on such transactions in the market; and (b) for New York Bank account, when appropriate, to undertake with dealers, subject to the conditions imposed on purchases and sales of securities in paragraph 1(c), repurchase agreements in U. S. Government and agency securities, and to arrange corresponding sale and repurchase agreements between its own account and foreign and international accounts maintained at the Bank. Transactions undertaken with such accounts under the provisions of this paragraph may provide for a service fee when appropriate.

By unanimous vote, the Authorization for Foreign
Currency Operations shown below was reaffirmed:

AUTHORIZATION FOR FOREIGN CURRENCY OPERATIONS

1. The Federal Open Market Committee authorizes and directs the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, for System Open Market Account, to the extent necessary to carry out the Committee's foreign currency directive and express authorizations by the Committee pursuant thereto, and in conformity with such procedural instructions as the Committee may issue from time to time:

A. To purchase and sell the following foreign currencies in the form of cable transfers through spot or forward transactions on the open market at home and abroad, including transactions with the U. S. Treasury, with the U. S. Exchange Stabilization Fund established by Section 10 of the Gold Reserve Act of 1934, with foreign monetary authorities, with the Bank for International Settlements, and with other international financial institutions:

Austrian schillings
Belgian francs
Canadian dollars
Danish kroner
Pounds sterling
French francs
German marks
Italian lire
Japanese yen
Mexican pesos
Netherlands guilders
Norwegian kroner
Swedish kronor
Swiss francs

B. To hold balances of, and to have outstanding forward contracts to receive or to deliver, the foreign currencies listed in paragraph A above.

C. To draw foreign currencies and to permit foreign banks to draw dollars under the reciprocal currency arrangements listed in paragraph 2 below, provided that drawings by either party to any such arrangement shall be fully liquidated within 12 months after any amount outstanding at that time was first drawn, unless the Committee, because of exceptional circumstances, specifically authorizes a delay.

D. To maintain an overall open position in all foreign currencies not exceeding \$1.0 billion, unless a larger position is expressly authorized by the Committee. For this purpose, the overall open position in all foreign currencies is defined as the sum (disregarding signs) of net positions in individual currencies. The net position in a single foreign currency is defined as holdings of balances in that currency, plus outstanding contracts for future receipt, minus outstanding contracts for future delivery of that currency, i.e., as the sum of these elements with due regard to sign. 1/2/

1/ Effective December 28, 1976, the Federal Open Market Committee authorized the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to maintain an overall open position in foreign currencies exceeding the figure of \$1 billion specified in this paragraph by an amount equal to the remaining forward commitment associated with the System's outstanding 1971 Swiss franc swap drawings. At this meeting, the Committee reaffirmed this special authorization.

2/ On December 19, 1978, the Committee authorized all overall open position in foreign currencies of \$8.0 billion (excluding the authorization relating to outstanding 1971 Swiss franc swap drawings cited in the preceding footnote).

2. The Federal Open Market Committee directs the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to maintain reciprocal currency arrangements ("swap" arrangements) for the System Open Market Account for periods up to a maximum of 12 months with the following foreign banks, which are among those designated by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System under Section 214.5 of Regulation N, Relations with Foreign Banks and Bankers, and with the approval of the Committee to renew such arrangements on maturity:

| <u>Foreign bank</u> | <u>Amount of arrangement (Millions of dollars equivalent)</u> |
|--|---|
| Austrian National Bank | 250 |
| National Bank of Belgium | 1,000 |
| Bank of Canada | 2,000 |
| National Bank of Denmark | 250 |
| Bank of England | 3,000 |
| Bank of France | 2,000 |
| German Federal Bank | 6,000 |
| Bank of Italy | 3,000 |
| Bank of Japan | 5,000 |
| Bank of Mexico | 360 |
| Netherlands Bank | 500 |
| Bank of Norway | 250 |
| Bank of Sweden | 300 |
| Swiss National Bank | 4,000 |
| Bank for International Settlements: | |
| Dollars against Swiss francs | 600 |
| Dollars against authorized European currencies other than Swiss francs | 1,250 |

Any changes in the terms of existing swap arrangements, and the proposed terms of any new arrangements that may be authorized, shall be referred for review and approval to the Committee.

3. Currencies to be used for liquidation of System swap commitments may be purchased from the foreign central bank drawn on, at the same exchange rate as that employed in the drawing to be liquidated. Apart from any such purchases at the rate of the drawing, all transactions in foreign currencies undertaken under paragraph 1(A) above shall, unless otherwise expressly authorized by the Committee, be at prevailing market rates.
4. It shall be the normal practice to arrange with foreign central banks for the coordination of foreign currency transactions. In making operating arrangements with foreign central banks on System holdings of foreign currencies, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shall not commit itself to maintain any specific balance, unless authorized by the Federal Open Market Committee. Any agreements or understandings concerning the administration of the accounts maintained by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York with the foreign banks designated by the Board of Governors under Section 214.5 of Regulation N shall be referred for review and approval to the Committee.
5. Foreign currency holdings shall be invested insofar as practicable, considering needs for minimum working balances. Such investments shall be in accordance with Section 14(e) of the Federal Reserve Act.
6. All operations undertaken pursuant to the preceding paragraphs shall be reported daily to the Foreign Currency Subcommittee. The Foreign Currency Subcommittee consists of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, the Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors, and such other member of the Board as the Chairman may designate (or in the absence of members of the Board serving on the Subcommittee, other Board Members designated by the Chairman as alternates, and in the absence of the Vice Chairman of the Committee, his alternate). Meetings of the Subcommittee shall be called at the request of any member, or at the request of the Manager, for the purposes of reviewing recent or contemplated operations and of consulting with the Manager on other matters relating to his responsibilities. At the request of any member of the Subcommittee, questions arising from such reviews and consultations shall be referred for determination to the Federal Open Market Committee.

7. The Chairman is authorized:

A. With the approval of the Committee, to enter into any needed agreement or understanding with the Secretary of the Treasury about the division of responsibility for foreign currency operations between the System and the Treasury;

B. To keep the Secretary of the Treasury fully advised concerning System foreign currency operations, and to consult with the Secretary on policy matters relating to foreign currency operations;

C. From time to time, to transmit appropriate reports and information to the National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Policies.

8. Staff officers of the Committee are authorized to transmit pertinent information on System foreign currency operations to appropriate officials of the Treasury Department.

9. All Federal Reserve Banks shall participate in the foreign currency operations for System Account in accordance with paragraph 3 G(1) of the Board of Governors' Statement of Procedure with Respect to Foreign Relationships of Federal Reserve Banks dated January 1, 1944.

By unanimous vote, the Foreign Currency Directive was amended to read as follows:

FOREIGN CURRENCY DIRECTIVE

1. System operations in foreign currencies shall generally be directed at countering disorderly market conditions, provided that market exchange rates for the U. S. dollar reflect actions and behavior consistent with the IMF Article IV, Section 1.
2. To achieve this end the System shall:
 - A. Undertake spot and forward purchases and sales of foreign exchange.
 - B. Maintain reciprocal currency ("swap") arrangements with selected foreign central banks and with the Bank for International Settlements.
 - C. Cooperate in other respects with central banks of other countries and with International monetary institutions.
3. Transactions may also be undertaken:
 - A. To adjust System balances in light of probable future needs for currencies.
 - B. To provide means for meeting System and Treasury commitments in particular currencies, and to facilitate operations of the Exchange Stabilization Fund.
 - C. For such other purposes as may be expressly authorized by the Committee.
4. System foreign currency operations shall be conducted:
 - A. In close and continuous consultation and cooperation with the United States Treasury;
 - B. In cooperation, as appropriate, with foreign monetary authorities; and
 - C. In a manner consistent with the obligations of the United States in the International Monetary Fund regarding exchange arrangements under the IMF Article IV.

With Mr. Coldwell dissenting, the Procedural Instructions with respect to Foreign Currency Operations were amended to read as follows:

PROCEDURAL INSTRUCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO
FOREIGN CURRENCY OPERATIONS

In conducting operations pursuant to the authorization and direction of the Federal Open Market Committee as set forth in the Authorization for Foreign Currency Operations and the Foreign Currency Directive, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, through the Manager of the System Open Market Account, shall be guided by the following procedural understandings with respect to consultations and clearance with the Committee, the Foreign Currency Subcommittee, and the Chairman of the Committee. All operations undertaken pursuant to such clearances shall be reported promptly to the Committee.

1. The Manager shall clear with the Subcommittee (or with the Chairman, if the Chairman believes that consultation with the Subcommittee is not feasible in the time available):
 - A. Any operation which would result in a change in the System's overall open position in foreign currencies exceeding \$300 million or any day or \$600 million since the most recent regular meeting of the Committee.
 - B. Any operation which would result in a change or any day in the System's net position in a single foreign currency exceeding \$150 million, or \$300 million when the operation is associated with repayment of swap drawings.
 - C. Any operation which might generate a substantial volume of trading in a particular currency by the System, even though the change in the System's net position in that currency might be less than the limits specified in 1B.
 - D. Any swap drawing proposed by a foreign bank not exceeding the larger of (i) \$200 million or (ii) 15 per cent of the size of the swap arrangement.

2. The Manager shall clear with the Committee (or with the Subcommittee, if the Subcommittee believes that consultation with the full Committee is not feasible in the time available, or with the Chairman, if the Chairman believes that consultation with the Subcommittee is not feasible in the time available);

A. Any operation which would result in a change in the System's overall open position in foreign currencies exceeding \$1.5 billion since the most recent regular meeting of the Committee.

B. Any swap drawing proposed by a foreign bank exceeding the larger of (i) \$200 million or (ii) 15 per cent of the size of the swap arrangement.

3. The Manager shall also consult with the Subcommittee or the Chairman about proposed swap drawings by the System, and about any operations that are not of a routine character.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday, April 17, 1979, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Secretary