

GR 180

DESKBY FCO 301000Z

UNCLASSIFIED

FM KABUL 300956Z

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY FCO

TELEGRAM NO 291 OF 30 DECEMBER 79.

IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK.

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, ISLAMABAD, NEW DELHI, UKDEL

NATO. **SAVING TO TEHRAN**

GENERAL SITUATION.

AIRPORT WAS RE-OPENED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FOR CIVIL FLIGHTS. I WAS AT AIRPORT THIS MORNING FOR (DELAYED) DEPARTURE OF ARIANA FLIGHT TO LONDON AND SAW ONE CONVOY OF OVER THIRTY SOVIET BMD TANKS AND SUPPORTING VEHICLES LEAVING THE AIRPORT. I WAS TOLD THESE HAD JUST ARRIVED BY AIR. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS ANOTHER CONVOY OF THIRTY-SIX BMD TANKS, SIX TRACKED VEHICLES TOWING FIELD GUNS AND SUPPORTING VEHICLES, APPARENTLY ALSO JUST LANDED, FORMED UP AND DROVE AWAY, ALONG THE TAXI-ING RUNWAY.

2. AN AIRPORT OFFICIAL TOLD ME THAT FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND TROOPS HAD LANDED ALTHOGETHER. HE ALSO SPOKE OF SOVIET LANDINGS IN HERAT, SHINDAN (MILITARY AIR-BASE SOUTH OF HERAT) AND JALALABAD BUT WE HAVE NO (NO) CONFIRMATION OF THESE.

3. I ASSUME THAT TEXT OF BABRAK KARMAL'S SPEECH OF 28 DECEMBER IS AVAILABLE TO YOU. THERE ARE NO NEWSPAPERS HERE AND WE HAVE NOT SEEN AN OFFICIAL TEXT BUT WE CAN TELEGRAPH SUMMARY IF DESIRED.

FCO PASS SAVING TEHRAN.

HILLIER-FRY.

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

**[ COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST ]**

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