

CONFIDENTIAL

GRPS 1165  
CONFIDENTIAL  
FM SALISBURY 171741Z APR 80  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1367 OF 17 APRIL  
INFO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI WASHINGTON NEW YORK MOSCOW PEKING  
KABUL ISLAMABAD PARIS BONN TEHRAN

SECRETARY OF STATE'S CALL ON MRS GANDHI  
FOLLOWING FROM WALDEN

1. LORD CARRINGTON CONGRATULATED MRS GANDHI ON HER RECENT ESCAPE FROM AN ASSAILANT. MRS GANDHI AT FIRST DISMISSED THIS AS ONE OF THE HAZARDS OF LIFE, BUT THEN SAID SHE WAS SURE THAT SOMEONE WAS BEHIND THE ASSAILANT, AND MENTIONED ONE GEORGE FERNANDEZ.
2. LORD CARRINGTON THANKED MRS GANDHI FOR HER LETTER TO MRS THATCHER ABOUT AFGHANISTAN, AND SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO READ ABOUT SIR J THOMSON'S DISCUSSIONS WITH MRS GANDHI WITH INTEREST. MRS GANDHI SAID THAT IT WAS HER IMPRESSION THAT BOTH SIDES HAD MOVED A BIT ON AFGHANISTAN. MR FRASER HAD TOLD HER THAT MORNING PROVIDED THE RUSSIANS WITHDREW, PEOPLE DID NOT MIND WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT WAS LEFT BEHIND. IN RESPONSE TO A QUIERY FROM LORD CARRINGTON, MRS GANDHI SAID SHE PRESUMED THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE IF NOT EXACTLY PRO-SOVIET, NOT UNFRIENDLY TO MOSCOW, AND A GOVERNMENT THAT THE RUSSIANS COULD TRUST. LORD CARRINGTON OBSERVED THAT IF THE RUSSIANS LEFT A PRO-SOVIET GOVERNMENT BEHIND, IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO LAST LONG. THE MORE REASSURING SUCH A GOVERNMENT WAS TO THE RUSSIANS, THE LESS ACCEPTABLE IT WOULD BE TO THE AFGHANS. MRS GANDHI WAS INCLINED TO CONTEST THIS. SHE HAD RECENTLY BEEN TOLD BY AN INDIAN WHO HAD TRAVELLED IN AFGHANISTAN THAT AMIN'S DISAPPEARANCE HAD BEEN WELCOMED BY PUBLIC OPINION. ONLY WHEN IT HAD BECOME CLEAR THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE THERE TO STAY HAD THIS FEELING CHANGED. SHE THOUGHT THAT THE PAKISTANIS WERE TAKING A MORE REALISTIC VIEW OF AFGHANISTAN AT THE MOMENT, PARTLY BECAUSE FEELING AGAINST ZIA INSIDE THE COUNTRY WAS RISING. LORD CARRINGTON THOUGHT THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOME CRITICISM THAT ZIA WAS NOT BEING TOUGH ENOUGH OVER AFGHANISTAN. MRS GANDHI DISAGREED.
3. ON INDO-PAKISTANI RELATIONS, MRS GANDHI SAID THAT BOTH SIDES WERE TRYING TO IMPROVE MATTERS. BUT PRESIDENT ZIA WAS IN A VERY WEAK POSITION. THE BALUCHIS HAD BEEN AGAINST HIM FOR SOME TIME, AND THERE WAS NOW NO GROUP THAT WAS NOT OPPOSED TO THE PRESIDENT, INCLUDING THE PUNJABIS WHOSE ALLEGIANCE HE HAD WEAKENED BY HIS DISMISSAL OF A NUMBER OF GENERALS. HANGING BHUTTO HAD NOT DONE HIM MUCH GOOD, AND HAD CONSOLIDATED OPPOSITION AGAINST HIM.
4. LORD CARRINGTON DESCRIBED PROGRESS ON OUR INITIATIVE FOR A NON-ALIGNED AFGHANISTAN, STRESSING THAT HE DID NOT INSIST TOO MUCH ON THE WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE OUR PROPOSAL. IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO WORK, IF IT EVER DID. BUT IT HELPED THE NON-ALIGNED AND THIRD WORLD MOVEMENT TO KEEP UP PRESSURE ON THE RUSSIANS. IT WOULD BE DAMAGING FOR EVERYONE IF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN BECAME REGARDED AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI. MRS GANDHI OBSERVED THAT NO COUNTRY TOOK MUCH NOTICE OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION

*Read in full (+ compare with conversation with Zia, attached)*

CONFIDENTIAL

/ IF IT FELT

CONFIDENTIAL

IF IT FELT THAT ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS WERE AT STAKE. THE RUSSIANS HAD THOUGHT THAT THEY HAD A PROGRESSIVE PRO-SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN, AND WERE DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW THE COUNTRY TO BECOME A SPRINGBOARD FOR TROUBLE-MAKING AGAINST THEIR ASIAN REPUBLICS UNDER AMIN. THEY WERE ALSO AFRAID OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

5. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT THERE AS A DANGER THAT THE ISSUE MIGHT NOW BECOME CONFUSED WITH THAT OF THE IRANIAN HOSTAGES. AMERICAN PATIENCE WAS NATURALLY WEARING THIN, BUT ANY MEASURES AGAINST IRAN COULD SPREAD CONFLICT IN THE WHOLE AREA. HE ASKED HOW MRS GANDHI THOUGHT PRESSURE COULD BE PUT ON THE IRANIANS TO RELEASE THE HOSTAGES. MRS GANDHI WAS NOT SURE WHO WAS IN CHARGE IN IRAN, AND WONDERED WHO WAS BEHIND THE STUDENTS. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT KHOMEINI'S SON AND THOSE IN THE AYATOLLAH'S ENTOURAGE, ESPECIALLY BEHESTI, WERE VERY POWERFUL, AND HOPED THAT PRESSURE COULD BE BROUGHT ON THEM.

6. AFTER A BRIEF AND UNORIGINAL DISCUSSION ON THE MIDDLE EAST, MRS GANDHI RAISED THE QUESTION OF PAKISTAN RE-JOINING THE COMMONWEALTH. SHE HOPED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF THE PAKISTANIS BEING INVITED TO RE-JOIN. THE TIME WAS NOT RIPE, AND THERE WERE ENOUGH REGIONAL PROBLEMS IN THE COMMONWEALTH ALREADY. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT THE CANADIANS, RATHER THAN OURSELVES, WERE ACTIVE OVER THIS. IT WAS A QUESTION FOR THE COMMONWEALTH AS A WHOLE TO DECIDE. HOWEVER, HE WONDERED WHETHER THE INDIANS WOULD OBJECT IN THE LONGER TERM. MRS GANDHI PREFERRED TO SEE HOW THINGS WENT FIRST.

7. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HE HOPED MR RAO COULD VISIT LONDON SOON. MRS GANDHI SAID THAT SHE HAD TOLD HER MINISTERS TO AVOID GOING ABROAD UNLESS IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE. MANY MEMBERS OF THE LAST GOVERNMENT HAD SPENT MOST OF THEIR TIME ABROAD. THIS HAS CAUSED POPULAR RESENTMENT. LORD CARRINGTON HOPED THAT MRS GANDHI MIGHT RELAX HER RULE IN THE CASE OF MR RAO LATER IN THE YEAR, AND THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER COULD VISIT BRITAIN, PERHAPS AROUND THE TIME OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE U N.

FCO PASS ALL

SOAMES

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING-ST]

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION

SAD	WED
EESD	TRED
N AM D	SEAD
MED	UND
NENAD	FED
FED	ECD (E)
SED	CABINET OFFICE

ADDITIONAL DISTN.

AFGHANISTAN