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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 577 OF 14TH SEPTEMBER

FOR INFO ROUTINE ISLAMABAD UKMIS NEW YORK AND NEW DELHI

FOR INFO SAVING KABUL JEDDA UKDEL NATO UKMIS GENEVA TEHRAN

TOKYO PEKING WASHINGTON AND EC POSTS.

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YOUR TELNO 572: AFGHANISTAN.

1. I SAW ZEMSKOV TODAY. I TOLD HIM I WANTED TO PURSUE THE QUESTION OF AFGHANISTAN. AFTER YOUR VISIT WE HAD RECEIVED THE RATHER NEGATIVE SOVIET AIDE MEMOIRE OF 22 JULY AND HAD SEEN THE STATEMENT MADE IN KABUL ON 24 AUGUST. A NUMBER OF SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES HAD COMMENDED THE LATTER AND WE HAD NOTED SOME PARALLELS IN LANGUAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY PROPOSALS FOR INSTANCE IN PARAGRAPH 1 OF THE KABUL STATEMENT AND PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE COMMUNITY PROPOSALS. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND I WAS NOW INSTRUCTED TO EXPLORE SOVIET THINKING, TO SEE HOW IT HAD DEVELOPED AND TO DISCUSS POINTS IN THE KABUL STATEMENT AFFECTING THE USSR, IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THERE WAS IN FACT ANY COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US.

2. A CENTRAL ISSUE ON WHICH I WISHED TO KNOW THE SOVIET POSITION WAS THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE PROPOSED GUARANTEES AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS. THE 24 AUGUST PROPOSALS SUGGESTED THAT INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES MIGHT BE WORKED OUT AT THE SAME TIME AS TALKS TOOK PLACE BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAN. PRESUMABLY THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ITSELF BE ONE OF THOSE GIVING GUARANTEES OF THE CESSATION OF ARMED AND OTHER INTERFERENCE INTO AFGHAN AFFAIRS? ZEMSKOV RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIET UNION FULLY SUPPORTED THE AFGHAN POSITION AND THAT THE ANSWER TO MY QUESTION WAS CONTAINED IN THOSE PROPOSALS. THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE USSR AND THE USA WOULD BOTH BE AMONG THE GUARANTORS. I SAID I TOOK IT THAT THIS MEANT THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD THEREFORE GIVE A GUARANTEE THAT IT WOULD NOT INTERFERE BY MILITARY OR OTHER MEANS. ZEMSKOV SAID THAT THIS WAS THE CASE AND THAT AS THE PROPOSALS MADE CLEAR THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ACT TOGETHER WITH THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER POWERS ACCEPTABLE TO THE THREE COUNTRIES MOST IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAN. THE SOVIET UNION HAD SAID THIS ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHO THE OTHER GUARANTOR POWERS MIGHT BE.

3. I ASKED ZEMSKOV WHAT WOULD BE THE EXACT LINK BETWEEN NEGOTIATING SUCH A GUARANTEE AND SETTING THE TIMETABLE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS REFERRED TO IN THE 24 AUGUST STATEMENT. HE REPLIED THAT THE ANSWER TO THIS WAS ALSO IN THE PROPOSALS AND QUOTED THE PASSAGE IN THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH FROM THE END OF THE STATEMENT SAYING THAT TROOPS WOULD BE PULLED OUT TO THE EXTENT OF THE REALISATION OF THE AGREEMENTS TO CEASE OUTSIDE INTERVENTION.

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THE SOONER IT WAS MADE IMPOSSIBLE TO INTERFERE IN AFGHANISTAN'S AFFAIRS, THE EARLIER SOVIET TROOPS COULD BE PULLED OUT. I SAID THAT A TIMETABLE WOULD PRESUMABLY MEAN SETTING DEFINITE DATES FOR WITHDRAWALS. WOULD THE IDEA BE TO WORK THESE DATES OUT IN PARALLEL WITH THE AGREEMENTS ON NON-INTERFERENCE? ZEMSKOV SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE. DID I HAVE ANY IDEA OF A TIMETABLE FOR REACHING AGREEMENT BETWEEN PAKISTAN, IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN? I SAID THE IMPORTANT POINT WAS THAT THE HORSE AND CART SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE SAME POINT AT THE SAME TIME. WOULD ANY AGREEMENT BE ONE WITH DATES FOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL CLEARLY LINKED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GUARANTEES AND WOULD THE WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE BE BOTH PUBLIC AND BINDING? ZEMSKOV AGAIN SAID THAT ALL WOULD DEPEND ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS ON NON-INTERVENTION AND REFERRED AGAIN TO THE KABUL TEXT. I SAID THAT THIS BROUGHT US BACK TO THE LINKAGE OF GUARANTEES AND WITHDRAWAL. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT IN A PARALLEL NEGOTIATION SUCH AS THAT SUGGESTED ON 24 AUGUST IT WAS NECESSARY THAT A TIMETABLE FOR GUARANTEES AND FOR WITHDRAWALS SHOULD BE EQUALLY PUBLIC AND BINDING AND SHOULD BE SIMULTANEOUSLY ARRIVED AT. WOULD THIS ALSO BE THE SOVIET UNDERSTANDING? AT THIS POINT SUSLOV, WHO EVIDENTLY FEARED ZEMSKOV MIGHT BE GETTING INTO DIFFICULTIES IF HE CONTINUED TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS WITHOUT PRIOR BRIEFING, INTERJECTED TO POINT OUT THAT WHAT I WAS ASKING WAS WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE COMMITTED TO WITHDRAWING ITS TROOPS ON SET DATES AT THE SAME TIME AS OTHERS WERE COMMITTED TO CEASING THEIR INTERFERENCE, WHEREAS WHAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNEMENT HAD PROPOSED WAS THAT INTERFERENCE SHOULD FIRST CEASE AND THAT WITHDRAWALS SHOULD SUBSEQUENTLY COMMENCE. ZEMSKOV THEN SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD TO WHAT WAS IN THE AFGHAN PROPOSALS, WHICH THE SOVIET UNION FULLY SUPPORTED.

4. IT WAS IN SOME WAYS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS THE TOPICS I HAD RAISED. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. I TOLD HIM MY PURPOSE WAS SIMPLY TO EXPLORE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON POINTS ARISING OUT OF THE AFGHAN PROPOSALS WHICH PARTICULARLY AFFECTED THE USSR. THIS MEANT ABOVE ALL THE QUESTION OF SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWAL. HE REPEATED THAT IT WAS TOO SOON TO GO INTO THESE MATTERS. THE SOVIET UNION FULLY SUPPORTED THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS AND WOULD THEREFORE BE PREPARED TO IMPLEMENT THEM. IF THE BRITISH SIDE WISHED TO MAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE POLITICAL RESOLUTION OF THE EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM OF AFGHANISTAN THEY SHOULD PERSUADE PAKISTAN TO TALK TO AFGHANISTAN. I REMARKED THAT THERE WAS A BASIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US. I DID NOT WANT ON THIS OCCASION TO GO OVER THE GROUND OF OUR EARLIER TALKS, BUT AS MY GOVERNEMENT SAW IT, THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM WAS THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN, WHICH WAS WHY WE WANTED TO EXPLORE WITH THE SOVIET UNION THE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR WITHDRAWAL. HE REMINDED ME THAT GROMYKO HAD TOLD YOU THAT THE FIRST THING TO BE DONE WAS TO CEASE FOREIGN INTERVENTION, END THE UNDECLARED WAR AGAINST AFGHANISTAN AND IMPLEMENT GUARANTEES THAT IT WOULD NOT BE RENEWED. I REPLIED THAT THE PRIMARY PROBLEM WAS THAT OF INTERFERENCE IN AFGHANISTAN BY THE SOVIET UNION.

5. WE THEN GOT BACK TO MY QUESTIONS. WOULD THE SOVIET UNION GUARANTEE NOT TO REINTRODUCE THEIR TROOPS AS PART OF THE SETTLEMENT? ZEMSKOV SAID THE QUESTION WAS INCOMPREHENSIBLE. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO REINTRODUCE ITS TROOPS IF FOREIGN INTERVENTION WAS NOT RENEWED. THEY WERE ONLY THERE BECAUSE OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD NO DESIRE TO ESTABLISH BASES OR TO KEEP HER FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN OVER THE LONGER TERM. SHE HAD ALWAYS SUPPORTED THE AFGHAN INTENTION TO REMAIN NON-ALIGNED.

6. MY FINAL QUESTION WAS ON AFGHAN PARTICIPATION. THE 24 AUGUST STATEMENT HAD SAID THAT THE WORKING OUT OF INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES AS WELL AS THE SOLUTION OF OTHER QUESTIONS TOUCHING UPON AFGHANISTAN'S INTERESTS MUST BE CONDUCTED WITH AFGHAN PARTICIPATION. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF AFGHAN GROUPS WITH A LEGITIMATE INTEREST IN THE NATURE OF ANY EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT. WOULD THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AGREE THAT ALL SUCH GROUPS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT SUCH DISCUSSIONS? ZEMSKOV SAID THE SOVIET UNION RECOGNISED ONLY THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. THE OTHERS WERE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS. SUSLOV SAID THAT THE KARMAL GOVERNMENT HAD MADE A PUBLIC OFFER TO GRANT AN AMNESTY TO ANY REFUGEES WHO WISHED TO RETURN. I SAID IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF THE RETURN OF REFUGEES BUT WHO WOULD TAKE PART IN DISCUSSIONS. EXPERIENCE HAD SHOWN THAT SITUATIONS SUCH AS THIS, ALL NEEDED TO BE INVOLVED IN WORKING OUT A SETTLEMENT. ZEMSKOV SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION DEALT WITH THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. THE SOVIET UNION WAS PREPARED TO TAKE PART WITH APPROPRIATE COUNTRIES IN A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE AFGHAN PROBLEM. THE INTERNAL QUESTIONS WERE THE CONCERN OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. THOSE WHO HAD LEFT THE COUNTRY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO RETURN AND THERE WOULD BE AN AMNESTY. THAT SOLVED THE PROBLEM.

7. WE CONCLUDED BY AGREEING THAT YOU WOULD NO DOUBT WISH TO PURSUE THE ISSUE WITH GROMYKO IN NEW YORK. IF, MEANWHILE, THE MINISTRY THOUGHT THAT A FURTHER DISCUSSION WOULD BE HELPFUL I WOULD BE GLAD TO CONTINUE.

FCO PSE PASS SAVING TO KABUL, WASHINGTON, JEDDA, UKDEL NATO, UKREP BURSSELS, PARIS, BONN, ROME, BRUSSELS, THE HAGUE, LUXEMBOURG, COPENHAGEN, ATHENS, DUBLIN, UKMIS GENEVA, TEHERAN, TOKYO AND PEKING.

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