

# RESTRICTED

GR 220

DESKBY FCO 310900Z

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FM KABUL 310554Z

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY FCO

TELEGRAM NO 293 OF 31 DECEMBER 79.

INFO ROUTINE UKMIS NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, NEW DELHI, UKDEL NATO AND ISLAMABAD.

## A. SECURITY SITUATION.

SOVIET TANK MOVEMENT CONTINUED ON OUTSKIRTS OF KABUL ALL DAY YESTERDAY. MY ITALIAN COLLEAGUE (WHO MAY EXAGGERATE) SAID THAT A SQUADRON (12 TANKS) WAS PASSING HIS EMBASSY (WHICH IS ON THE MAIN AIRPORT ROAD) EVERY HALF HOUR AND THEN TURNING EAST. MORE TANKS, PROBABLY A REGIMENT OF 36, CAME FROM THE BACK AIRPORT ROAD BEHIND THIS EMBASSY JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT WHEN IT WAS BEGINNING TO SNOW. IT HAS SNOWED HEAVILY SINCE SO THE AIRPORT IS NOW CLOSED.

2. SOVIET SUPPLY CONVOYS HAVE BEGUN ARRIVING HERE BY ROAD VIA SALANG. THESE TROOPS ARE ORIENTAL-LOOKING LIKE THE FEW FOOT PATROLS IN KABUL WHO HAVE BEEN HEARD SPEAK IOB DARI.

3. THERE ARE RELIABLE REPORTS OF FIGHTING BETWEEN SOVIET TROOPS AND REBELS (OR PERHAPS LOCAL AFGHANS) IN THE LOGAR VALLEY SOUTH OF KABUL AND ALSO TO THE EAST OF KABUL WHERE TWENTY-ONE SOVIET TANKS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.

4. FROM UNITED NATIONS SOURCES WE HAVE HEARD OF TEN OR TWELVE RUSSIAN CIVILIANS BEING KILLED IN KABUL YESTERDAY. OTHER REPORTS SPEAK OF TEN BEING KILLED THE DAY BEFORE.

## B. POLITICAL SITUATION.

5. WE HAVE RECEIVED A CIRCULAR NOTE FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS GIVING THE NAMES OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT BUT THE WHEREABOUTS OF BABRAK KARMAL REMAIN

A MYSTERY.

THERE HAS HOWEVER BEEN A REPORT THAT WATANJAR AND SOME

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OTHER MINISTERS (BUT NOT BABRAK) HAVE BEEN CONFERRING WITH SOME OF AMIN'S MINISTERS IN THE RADIO STATION (WHICH IS ON THE AIRPORT ROAD AND GUARDED BY SOVIET TROOPS).

HILLIER-FRY.

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