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TO IMMEDIATE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE,
TELEGRAM NUMBER 002 OF 01 JANUARY 1980

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, PARIS, BONN, MOSCOW, UKMIS NEW YORK,
INFO PRIORITY OTTAWA, ROME.

INFO ROUTINE OTHER NATO POSTS, WARSAW, BUDAPEST, PRAGUE, SOFIA,
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INFO SAVING TOKYO, JAKARTA, SINGAPORE, MANILA, BANGKOK, KUALA
LUMPUR.

YOUR TELNOS 173 AND 174 (NOT TO ALL) : NATO COUNCIL MEETING:
AFGHANISTAN

1. THE COUNCIL MET THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS AFGHANISTAN. THE US DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE , WARREN CHRISTOPHER, OPENED THE DISCUSSION WITH A STATEMENT OF THE US POSITION. HIS MAIN POINTS WERE AS FOLLOWS.
2. CHRISTOPHER SAID THAT THE SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN WAS THE FIRST OCCASION SINCE WORLD WAR 11 ON WHICH SOVIET TROOPS HAD BEEN USED FOR MILITARY ACTION OUTSIDE THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. IN ETHIOPIA AND ANGOLA THE SOVIET UNION HAD USED PROXIES. AFGHANISTAN REPRESENTED A QUALITATIVE CHANGE IN THE SOVIET APPROACH. THE JUSTIFICATION PROVIDED BY THE SOVIET UNION WAS GROUNDLESS. CHRISTOPHER RECALLED THE PASSAGE ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE IN 1968. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THAT WERE EQUALLY RELEVANT TO AFGHANISTAN AND PERHAPS MORE SO BECAUSE OF AFGHANISTAN'S HISTORY AS A NON-ALIGNED BUFFER STATE.
3. AS REGARDS POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THE SOVIET ACTION, IT APPEARED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOT SATISFIED IN HAVING AFGHANISTAN AS AN ALLY BUT WANTED FULL CONTROL OVER THE AFGHAN REGIME AND ITS POLICIES BECAUSE OF ITS CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFECT ON ITS MOSLEM POPULATION OF ITS POSSIBLE EMERGENCE OF AN ISLAMIC STATE. THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT HAVE DECIDED TO ACT NOW IN THE

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BELIEF THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF US REACTION WAS LESSENER BY THE DIFFICULTIES THE US WAS FACING IN IRAN. IF SO THE RUSSIANS HAD MISJUDGED SINCE, AS A RESULT OF THE IRANIAN CRISIS, US DOMESTIC OPINION WAS MORE UNITED THAN EVER BEFORE. TIMING WAS PROBABLY ALSO RELATED TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON. THE SOVIET UNION APPEARED READY TO

TO PUT SALT11 AT RISK OR HAD PERHAPS CONCLUDED THAT SALT11 WOULD NOT BE RATIFIED. THE SOVIET UNION MAY ALSO HAVE CALCULATED THAT HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE US IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT WOULD WORK TO ITS ADVANTAGE.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN FOR THE FUTURE WOULD VERY MUCH DEPEND ON WESTERN AND WORLD REACTION. IF THE SOVIET UNION COULD BE SHOWN THAT ITS INTERVENTION WAS TOO COSTLY IT MIGHT BE DISSUADED FROM REPEATING IT ELSEWHERE AND MIGHT REMOVE ITS TROOPS FROM AFGHANISTAN.

5. AS REGARDS THE PRESENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, THE US ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE NOW 30 TO 40 THOUSAND SOVIET TROOPS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY WERE OCCUPYING KABUL, FORMING A DEFENSIVE PERIMETER AROUND KABUL AND MOVING OUT INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THEY WERE ALREADY BELIEVED TO HAVE CLASHED WITH MOSLEM INSURGENTS AND REPORTS OF MASS DEFECTION FROM THE AFGHAN ARMY. BABRAK KARMAL'S REGIME WAS TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON SOVIET SUPPORT AND HAD A VERY NARROW POLITICAL BASE.

6. THE EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN WOULD CONFIRM THE FEARS OF MANY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION ABOUT SOVIET AIMS. PAKISTAN WOULD LOOK FOR WESTERN SUPPORT. PRESIDENT ZIA WOULD NO DOUBT USE THE EVENTS TO TRY TO FOSTER NATIONAL UNITY. THERE WERE SIGNS THAT PAKISTAN MIGHT MOBILISE A MOSLEM CONFERENCE TO CONDEMN THE SOVIET INTERVENTION . ALLIANCE ME

ALLIANCE MEMBERS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THIS. ALTHOUGH THE INITIAL INDIAN RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET ACTION HAD BEEN CAUTIOUS THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE INDIANS WOULD BE VERY CONCERNED. THEY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO RECOGNISE THE DANGERS OF THE SOVIET ACTION.

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● IRAN HAD ALREADY CONDEMNED THE SOVIET INTERVENTION. THIS COULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WESTERN COUNTRIES TO ENCOURAGE IRAQ TOWARDS CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. IN THE HORN, MENGISTU MIGHT WELL BE VIEWING EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN WITH SOME ALARM: THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA WOULD BE CONFIRMED IN THEIR ANTI-SOVIET POSITION. CHINA WOULD BE CONFIRMED IN ITS LONG HELD OPINION OF SOVIET EXPANSIONISM AND MIGHT OFFER FURTHER ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN.

8. ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE AND EAST/WEST RELATIONS, THE SOVIET ACTION HAD UNDERSCORED THE VITAL NATURE OF ALLIED DEFENCE PROGRAMMES, SPECIFICALLY THE NEED TO PURSUE TNF AND THE LONG RANGE DEFENCE PROGRAMME AND THREE PER CENT GOAL FOR INCREASES IN DEFENCE EXPENDITURE. THERE WOULD BE A HEAVY PRICE TO PAY IF THE SOVIET UNION SAW A DIS-UNITED ALLIANCE, FOR EXAMPLE ON TNF ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS IN THE CONTEXT OF TNF AND MBFR WERE AT PRESENT IN THE SOVIET COURT. THE US INTENDED TO MOVE FORWARD ON SALT 11 RATIFICATION BECAUSE OF ITS VITAL IMPORTANCE ALTHOUGH IT WOULD NOW BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO SECURE THIS. IT WAS FOR CONSIDERATION HOWEVER WHETHER IT WOULD BE RIGHT FOR THE ALLIANCE TO AGREE TO A EUROPEAN DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE AS A FOLLOW-UP TO MADRID.

9. THE SOVIET ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN WOULD HAVE AROUSED CONSIDERABLE UNEASE IN EASTERN EUROPE, NOTABLY IN ROMANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA WESTERN CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF THESE COUNTRIES SHOULD BE REINFORCED. THE US AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE HAD CALLED ON THE YUGOSLAVE GOVERNMENT. THE AMERICANS HOPED THAT OTHER WESTERN AMBASSADORS MIGHT FOLLOW THIS EXAMPLE. YUGOSLAVIA WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN THE CONTEXT OF MOBILISING NON-ALIGNED CONCERN ABOUT THE SOVIET ACTION.

10. CHRISTOPHER SAID THAT IT WAS A TIME FOR SOLIDARITY AND RESOLVE BY THE ALLIANCE. HE HOPED THAT ALLIANCE MEMBERS WOULD SHOW A STRONG RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET ACTION. SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES SHOULD BE EXPLORED. THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME. THE US HAD NO AMBASSADOR IN KABUL AND DID NOT INTEND TO HAVE POLITICAL CONTACTS WITH THE NEW REGIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IT MIGHT GO FURTHER AND REDUCE ITS EMBASSY STAFF OR SUSPEND RELATIONS. THE US ADMINISTRATION WAS

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ALSO CONSIDERING ACTION WITH REGARD TO ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, IN THE ECONOMIC AND OTHER FIELDS. THE AMERICANS WERE ALSO GIVING HIGHER PRIORITY TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH INDIA , AND WITH PAKISTAN, INCLUDING POSSIBLY MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN COMPATIBLE WITH LEGISLATION ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION AS WELL AS AID FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN. THE US INTENDED TO ENHANCE ITS PRESENCE ON DIEGO GARCIA AND WAS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF A MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOMALIA, KENYA AND OMAN. SOVIET ACTION SHOULD MAKE IT IN THE INTEREST OF IRAN TO SOLVE THE HOSTAGES PROBLEM QUICKLY. THE US WOULD ALSO REVIEW THE POSITION WITH CHINA DURING SECRETARY OF DEFENCE BROWN'S FORTHCOMING VISIT. ACTION IN THE UN WOULD BE NECESSARY . IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO MOBILISE AND SUSTAIN A STRONG PUBLIC REACTION IN THE NON- ALIGNED AND MOSLEM COUNTRIES.

11. AT THE END OF THE COUNCIL DISCUSSION CHRISTOPHER SAID THAT HE WOULD BE HAVING MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS TOMORROW 02 JANUARY TO DISCUSS AFGHANISTAN. THE VIEWS WHICH HAD BEEN EXPRESSED IN THE COUNCIL WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL AT THESE MEETINGS. THE US WAS NOT CONSIDERING ANY IMMEDIATE CHANGE OF POLICY OVER THE HOSTAGES IN IRAN AS A RESULT OF EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION PASSED YESTERDAY PROVIDED A BREATHING- SPACE FOR THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO MEDIATE WITH THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT. THE US ADMINISTRATION NATURALLY HOPED THAT DR WALDHEIM'S EFFORTS WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL THOUGH THEY WERE NOT OVERLY OPTIMISTIC. AS FAR AS ACTION IN THE UN ON AFGHANISTAN WAS CONCERNED, THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL WERE CONSULTING ON HOW BEST THIS MIGHT BE PURSUED. THERE WERE THREE POSSIBILITIES: THE UNGA, THE SECURITY COUNCIL UNDER CHAPTER VI OR UNDER CHAPTER VII . ACTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD RAISE THE ISSUE OF A SOVIET VETO. THE US WAS DETERMINED HOWEVER TO PROCEED WITH SOME FORM OF UN ACTION.

12. MIFTS CONTAIN SUMMARY OF COUNCIL DISCUSSION, AND MY COMMENT. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO TOKYO, JAKARTA, SINGAPORE, MANILA, BANGKOK, KUALA LUMPUR. [REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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