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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 262 OF THE 6TH JULY 81

FOR INFO IMMEDIATE EC POSTS, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, UKREP BRUSSELS, ISLAMABAD, KABUL, DELHI, JEDDA, UKMIS NEW YORK, PEKING, TOKYO, TEHRAN, CANBERRA, OTTAWA, WELLINGTON, WARSAW, BELGRADE, BUCHAREST, BUDAPEST, EAST BERLIN, SOFIA, BERNE, VIENNA, STRASBOURG, STOCKHOLM, MADRID, AND PRAGUE.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S TALKS WITH GROMYKO 6 JULY: AFGHANISTAN

FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

1. DISCUSSION OF AFGHANISTAN OCCUPIED THE WHOLE MORNING.
2. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HANDED GROMYKO THE TEXT OF THE TEN'S STATEMENT OF 30 JUNE. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN REQUESTED BY THE TEN TO PRESENT THE PROPOSAL ON THEIR BEHALF. IT WAS A GENUINE EFFORT TO FIND A SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL. PAST PROPOSALS HAD HAD LITTLE IMPACT ON THE SITUATION. WE HAD NOTED WITH INTEREST BREZHNEV'S REMARKS ON AFGHANISTAN IN HIS SPEECH TO THE CPSU CONGRESS ON 23 FEBRUARY AND HIS STATEMENT IN TBILISI ON 22 MAY. THESE HAD GIVEN HOPE THAT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT COMMON GROUND TO MAKE REALISTIC THE PROSPECT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.
3. THE PROPOSAL WAS A FRESH ATTEMPT TO OPEN THE WAY TO A POLITICAL SOLUTION. LORD CARRINGTON THEN DESCRIBED THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL, EMPHASISING THAT STAGE ONE WOULD WORK OUT INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS BUT NOT TAKE DECISIONS SINCE AFGHAN REPRESENTATIVES WOULD NOT BE PRESENT. THE PROPOSAL ENVISAGED QUOTE SAFEGUARDS UNQUOTE WHERE MR BREZHNEV HAD REFERRED TO THE SIMILAR CONCEPT OF QUOTE GUARANTEES UNQUOTE. NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE NOW TO DEFINE WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE WOULD ATTEND STAGE TWO, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE AT THIS STAGE THAT WOULD CREATE AN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO LAUNCH A NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND TRY TO CREATE A CLIMATE IN WHICH THAT PROBLEM COULD BE SOLVED.
4. THE TEN REGARDED COMPLETE SOVIET MILITARY WITHDRAWAL AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A SOLUTION BUT RECOGNISED THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD A LEGITIMATE INTEREST IN A STABLE AND FRIENDLY AFGHANISTAN. THE PROPOSAL WAS NOT IMMUTABLE.
5. GROMYKO NOTED THAT THE CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL WAS FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME AS THAT TRANSMITTED BY HM AMBASSADOR, MOSCOW ON 23 JUNE. THE SOVIET UNION CONSIDERED IT UNREALISTIC. IT WAS COMMON GROUND THAT AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT AND NON-ALIGNED. BUT THE WAY TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION WAS TO END THE EXTERNAL

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MILITARY INTERFERENCE WHICH HAD BECOME THE OFFICIAL POLICY OF SOME COUNTRIES. IF MILITARY INTERVENTION CEASED, AND IF GUARANTEES AGAINST ITS RESUMPTION WERE GIVEN, SOVIET FORCES WOULD WITHDRAW IN AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN. THE FIRST STEP SHOULD BE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN, AND ULTIMATELY IRAN. THE MAJORITY OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE WERE HOSTILE TO AFGHANISTAN.

6. GROMYKO ADDED THAT THE PROPOSAL THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF AFGHANISTAN SHOULD NOT (NOT) TAKE PART IN THE FIRST STAGE WAS DIVORCED FROM REALITY. THE AUTHORS OF THE PROPOSAL WERE GUIDED BY A DESIRE TO ESTABLISH A REACTIONARY REGIME IN KABUL. THE DEFINITIVE SOVIET CONCLUSION WAS THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS NOT REALISTIC. THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD PERHAPS PRESENT A FORMAL REPLY IN DUE COURSE BUT ITS POSITION SHOULD BE CLEAR FROM WHAT GROMYKO HAD SAID.

7. THE SECRETARY OF STATE SAID THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD IF ITS AUTHORS HAD CONSIDRED IT UNREALISTIC. MANY OTHER IDEAS, INCLUDING THAT OF BILATERAL PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN TALKS, HAD BEEN TRIED BUT HAD FAILED. MUCH OF THE THINKING BEHIND THE PROPOSAL WAS BASED ON BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINLSTER OF 6 MARCH, FROM WHICH LORD CARRINGTON QUOTED. THE FACT THAT THE FIRST STAGE AIMED ONLY AT A PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT AND ONLY OF INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS EXPLAINED WHY AFGHAN REPRESENTATIVES WOULD NOT BE PRESENT. THE TEN DID NOT ENVISAGE A SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT IN KABUL HOSTILE TO THE SOVIET UNION. WE SOUGHT ONE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN. OVER TWO MILLION AFGHAN REFUGEES DID NOT FIND THE PRESENT REGIME ACCEPTABLE. AS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE CONFERENCE, WE HAD SUGGESTED THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATES BUT THIS MATTER COULD BE DISCUSSED. WE HAD TALKED TO A NUMBER OF THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WHO HAD ENCOURAGED US TO GO FORWARD (THOUGH CHINA WAS RATHER NON-COMMITTAL).

8. GROMYKO SAID THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF PRINCIPLE: THE SOVIET UNION DID NOT BELIEVE OTHER COUNTRIES HAD ANY RIGHT TO SAY WHAT AFGHAN REGIME WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. THIS WAS TANTAMOUNT TO QUESTIONING WHETHER THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA SHOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE. LORD CARRINGTON REPLIED THAT THERE WAS

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A DIFFERENCE OF PERSPECTIVE. IN THE SOVIET VIEW, INTERFERENCE CAME FROM ONE DIRECTION., IN THE WESTERN PERSPECTIVE FROM ANOTHER. THE PROPOSAL WAS DESIGNED TO REMOVE ALL EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE, FROM WHEREVER IT CAME.

9. GROMYKO THEN ARGUED, IN QUICK SUCCESSION, FIRST THAT THE ORGANISATION OF ARMED INTERFERENCE WAS AN INTERNAL MATTER, THEN THAT IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL ONE. HE COULD NOT SEE WHY PEOPLE WERE SO SCARED OF THE AFGHAN REGIME. WE SHOULD INVITE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REGIME TO VISIT THE UK OR SEND OUR REPRESENTATIVES TO AFGHANISTAN TO SEE THE SITUATION FOR OURSELVES.

10. LORD CARRINGTON SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON THE SOVIET REACTION AND WOULD REPORT GROMYKO'S COMMENTS TO HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE TEN. IF THEY HAD ANY COMMENTS HE WOULD CONVEY THEM TO GROMYKO. THE PROBLEM WAS STILL LIKELY TO BE WITH US WHEN HE MET GROMYKO IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER. GROMYKO REPLIED THAT THE DISCUSSION SHOULD CERTAINLY CONTINUE THEN. BUT ANY PROPOSALS SHOULD "STEER CLOSER TO REALITY".

11. LORD CARRINGTON LATER GAVE REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNITY EMBASSIES IN MOSCOW A SUMMARY BRIEFING BASED ON THE ABOVE. EC POST AND WASHINGTON MAY DRAW UPON IT AND SAY THAT WE SHALL BE IN TOUCH WITH GOVERNMENTS ABOUT POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS IN DUE COURSE. UKDEL NATO MAY BRIEF NATO COLLEAGUES. OTHER POSTS TO WHOM THIS TELEGRAM IS REPEATED SHOULD REGARD ITS CONTENTS AS BEING FOR THEIR OWN INFORMATION FOR THE TIME BEING. WE SHALL LET THEM KNOW SHORTLY HOW MUCH OF THE ABOVE SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS AND WHAT SHOULD BE SAID TO THEM ABOUT NEXT STEPS.

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