

Afghanistan

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GRS 375

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FM F C O 161200Z MAY 80
TO FLASH VIENNA
TELEGRAM NO 126 OF 16 MAY
INFO FLASH ISLAMABAD

*Summary of PLO
reaction to Soviet
proposals*

FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY FROM MAITLAND

AFGHANISTAN

MIPT. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MESSAGE TO AGHA SHAHI.

BEGINS:

1. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO YOU TO KNOW OUR REACTIONS TO THE PROPOSALS ANNOUNCED BY THE BABRAK KARMAL GOVERNMENT ON 14 MAY AND TO THE CALL BY THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES FOR A WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE.

2. I THINK THAT IT IS CLEAR TO US ALL THAT THESE MOVES HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY TIMED WITH A VIEW TO INFLUENCING DISCUSSION CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE BETWEEN WORLD LEADERS IN VIENNA AND THE DISCUSSIONS THAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HOLD IN ISLAMABAD. BOTH MOVES ARE INSPIRED BY THE RUSSIANS. BOTH WOULD INVOLVE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF BABRAK KARMAL BEFORE ANY QUESTION OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL ARISES. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CONFIRM THE STATUS QUO IN AFGHANISTAN. FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW THE PROPOSALS ARE UNSATISFACTORY.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, THESE SUGGESTIONS COULD BE AN INDICATION THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE AFGHAN PROBLEM WHICH IS OF COURSE WHAT BOTH YOU AND WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING. THAT THIS IS SO IS I THINK DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE SUSTAINED POLITICAL PRESSURE THAT THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES, WE IN THE WEST AND OTHERS HAVE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE ISSUE.

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4. THE RESPONSE TO THE KABUL PROPOSALS WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT IF THE RUSSIANS ARE TO BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT A MORE REALISTIC SETTLEMENT THAT THE FACT OF THESE PROPOSALS BEING MADE SHOULD NOT REDUCE OUR RESOLVE TO CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL AND FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE AFGHANS TO DECIDE ON THEIR OWN FUTURE. I HOPE THAT THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE WILL GIVE STRONG SUPPORT TO THESE DEMANDS.

IT IS CLEARLY IMPORTANT THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO MOVE TO RECOGNISE THE BABRAK REGIME AND THAT THE POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THEM IS MAINTAINED.

5. AS YOU KNOW WE HAD ALREADY BEEN CONSIDERING HOW A CONFERENCE COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN. THERE ARE VARIOUS FUNDAMENTAL POINTS TO RESOLVE: AN AGENDA, TIMING, WHICH COUNTRIES SHOULD PARTICIPATE, HOW AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE REPRESENTED, WHO SHOULD PRESIDE. THE WARSAW PACT PROPOSALS FOR A WORLD CONFERENCE ARE SOMETHING RATHER DIFFERENT. THEY ENVISAGE A LARGE GATHERING EMBRACING COUNTRIES FROM ALL REGIONS OF THE WORLD TO DISCUSS A WIDE RANGE OF GLOBAL ISSUES, NOT JUST AFGHANISTAN, AND FOCUSING PARTICULARLY IN EUROPE. THIS IS NOT AT ALL WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING IN RELATION TO AFGHANISTAN AND WE WILL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL THAT IT IS NOT USED BY THE RUSSIANS TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE CAREFUL PREPARATION OF AN INITIATIVE WHICH OFFERS A REAL PROSPECT OF A SOLUTION. ENDS

CARRINGTON

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