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TO IMMEDIATE DELHI

TELEGRAM NO 276 OF 1 MARCH

INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NATO, WASHINGTON.

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T41/80

FCO TELNO 126 TO ANKARA

MESSAGE FOR MRS GHANDI.

PLEASE ARRANGE DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE
PRIME MINISTER TO MRS GHANDI A S A P:

BEGINS:

WHEN LORD CARRINGTON CALLED ON YOU ON 16 JANUARY HE DISCUSSED
DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. YOU EXPRESSED YOUR CONCERN THEN ABOUT
AN AREA OF CONFLICT INCHING TOWARDS THE BORDERS OF THE SUB-CONTINENT.

WE HAVE HAD YOUR REMARKS MUCH IN MIND IN RECENT WEEKS AND I
THOUGHT IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO TELL YOU THAT THEY HAVE BEEN AN
IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON THE WORK WE HAVE BEEN DOING.

WE ARE TELLING THE RUSSIANS THAT IN OUR VIEW THE INTERESTS OF
WORLD STABILITY AND OF FRUITFUL EAST/WEST RELATIONS WOULD BE GREATLY
ADVANCED BY AN AGREED SOLUTION TO THE CONTINUING PROBLEM IN
AFGHANISTAN. THAT COUNTRY HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN NEUTRAL. THE
SOVIET UNION HAS APPROVED ITS NEUTRALITY. FOR INSTANCE IN
OCTOBER 1963 MR BREZHNEV SAID: QUOTE IN THE SOVIET UNION THE
POLICY OF NEUTRALITY AND NO PARTICIPATION IN MILITARY BLOC
PURSUED BY AFGHANISTAN IS HIGHLY VALUED. THANKS TO THIS POLICY
AFGHANISTAN WAS GREATLY RESPECTED IN THE WORLD. UNQUOTE.

WE HAVE NOTED THE SOVIET UNION'S EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT
SECURITY ON ITS SOUTHERN BORDER AND THE SOVIET POSITION, RESTATED
BY PRESIDENT BREZHNEV IN HIS SPEECH ON 22 FEBRUARY, THAT SOVIET
FORCES WILL WITHDRAW ONCE THE CLAIMED REASONS FOR THEIR PRESENCE
NO LONGER EXIST. WE HAVE ALSO NOTED MR GROMYKO'S STATEMENT ON
13 FEBRUARY THAT THERE ARE QUOTE NO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS
UNQUOTE UPON WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NOT BE READY FOR
NEGOTIATIONS ON AN EQUAL BASIS. WE HAD ALSO NOTED VERY RECENT PRESS
REPORTS SUGGESTING THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE INTERESTED
IN NEGOTIATION.

WE BELIEVE, AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THAT THE IDEA OF AFGHANISTAN
RESUMING ITS TRADITIONAL NEUTRALITY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ON A
FLEXIBLE BASIS, AS A SERIOUS APPROACH TO A POSSIBLE SOLUTION WHICH
WE HOPE WILL BE CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY.

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THE ELEMENTS IN A NEUTRALITY ARRANGEMENT MIGHT INCLUDE UNDERTAKINGS ASSUMED BY AFGHANISTAN ON AN APPROPRIATE NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED STATUS. I SHOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE THAT OUR IDEAS IN NO WAY EXCLUDE AFGHANISTAN REMAINING A MEMBER OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. THERE COULD IN ADDITION BE UNDERTAKINGS, IN LINE WITH PRESIDENT BREZHNEV'S SPEECH OF 22 FEBRUARY, BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE NEIGHBOURS OF AFGHANISTAN, AND PERHAPS OTHER COUNTRIES, THAT THEY WILL RESPECT THE UNDERTAKINGS BY AFGHANISTAN AND WILL NOT INTERFERE IN THAT COUNTRY'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS: AS WELL AS OTHER PROVISIONS TO BE DISCUSSED.

OUR IDEAS HAVE NOT BEEN WORKED OUT IN DETAIL. WE ARE NOT PROPOSING A CUT AND DRIED ARRANGEMENT. ANY SUGGESTIONS BY PAKISTAN AND INDEED OTHER COUNTRIES, WILL BE WELCOME AND WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY INTO ACCOUNT. WE ARE ALSO OPEN MINDED ABOUT THE SEQUENCE IN WHICH ALL THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN A NEUTRALITY ARRANGEMENT MIGHT BE PUT IN PLACE. IN OUR VIEW NEITHER SIDE SHOULD ASK THE OTHER TO DO SOMETHING FIRST. ALL SHOULD STEP FORWARD TOGETHER. REPORTS THAT OUR PROPOSALS ARE CLOSELY MODELLED ON THE AUSTRIAN STATE TREATY OF NEUTRALITY ARE NOT TRUE. THAT IS SIMPLY ONE OF A NUMBER OF PRECEDENTS WHICH REQUIRES STUDY.

OUR THINKING IS FLEXIBLE ON PROCEDURE TOO. WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE NEED IN DUE COURSE FOR SOME SPECIAL CONFERENCE, BUT DISCUSSION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS MIGHT BE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY.
ENDS

CARRINGTON

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