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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 July 1980

for news 2/3

Dear Michael,

Sayed Ahmed Gailani

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You have asked to see the record of Mr Gailani's discussions with Mr Hurd and FCO officials. These are attached. Mr Gailani accepted that these meetings should take place on a confidential basis and he has not in subsequent public statements said anything about the content of these discussions. After his call at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office he gave a press briefing. He has also recorded an interview for the BBC World Service and has spoken at Chatham House.

Mr Gailani is a figure with quiet dignity and with an apparent bias in favour of moderate democratic government. But he admitted that he had not himself been into Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion and was vague in most of what he said about the situation on the ground within the country: he did not give the impression of being a dynamic leader and there must be some doubts as to whether his group is as effective as he claims.

Mr Gailani's general appeal to Western nations for arms has been picked up in the media. Although Mr Gailani did not specifically ask us to supply 303 ammunition, Lord Carrington has asked for this question to be examined.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)

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SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER OF STATE
THE HON DOUGLAS HURD CBE MP, AND SAYED AHMAD GAILANI AT
NOON ON FRIDAY 27 JUNE IN THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Present

The Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP
Mr G R Archer
Mr C T Humfrey
Mr R D Lavers

Sayed Ahmad Gailani
Mohammed Gailani

1. After welcoming Mr Gailani, Mr Hurd asked him for his assessment of the military situation in Afghanistan. Mr Gailani said that 'with empty hands our people are fighting very well'. The Soviet Union was using the latest weapons especially helicopter gun-ships. The freedom fighters were doing their best against the Soviet invaders and their puppet government. Mr Hurd asked in which part of the country were Mr Gailani's resistance fighters active. He replied mostly in the South and North-east especially Paktia, but nevertheless he had groups operating throughout Afghanistan.

2. Turning to the question of co-operation between the different resistance organisations, Mr Gailani said that he was not satisfied with this. There was a basic problem. He believed in democracy but others favoured dictatorship, albeit of an Islamic nature. Mr Gailani thought that the extremists had little support within Afghanistan. Conversely as a religious leader, he had a following perhaps as large as 4 or 5 million. When asked by Mr Hurd whether the groups were trying to overcome their differences of approach, Mr Gailani said they were doing their best. A Loya Jirga had been set up in Peshawar. Mr Archer asked for more information about the Jirga. Mr Gailani gave an account of the historical origins of the Jirga as an institution. He mentioned that he himself had attended Jirgas in the reign of the last king. All tribes were represented on the Jirga; they selected members who were sent to it. Mr Archer asked whether the Jirga had the backing of all the parties in the alliance. Mr Gailani said that he could not say that this was true of other /groups.

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groups. But power was in the hands of the people. The parties had a role in the Islamic Front. If they wished they could enter the Jirga as representatives of the various components of the alliance.

3. Mr Hurd asked about the meeting the previous weekend in Switzerland with the Islamic Conference's Standing Committee. Mr Gailani thought it had not been bad. The resistance groups had explained their ideas to the Committee and provided details of their requirements. As an aside Mr Gailani said that he recognised that any government of an independent Afghanistan would have to reach a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union. But they did not want Soviet troops in Afghanistan nor did they want their puppet government. Mr Hurd said we recognised that the Babrak Karmal regime would not survive long without Soviet troops.

4. Returning to the question of greater unity among the resistance groups, Mr Hurd asked whether Mr Gailani saw any further possibilities. He thought Mr Gailani would be asked about this when he met MPs in the House of Commons. Mr Gailani reiterated that some leaders favoured a Khomeini-style course of Islamic fundamentalism. He instanced the Aizb-e-Istani and Jamick-e-Islami parties. But this did not fit in with Afghanistan's own traditions.

5. Looking ahead, Mr Gailani told Mr Hurd that the fighting would go on over the next five months and for longer, though in the winter it was hard to fight effectively. But if the freedom fighters had help from Arab countries and Western Europe, the fighting would continue for over 50 years. Mr Hurd asked whether Mr Gailani had noticed the increased publicity, which we had been striving for, in the British press in recent months. Mr Gailani said yes. When asked about the type of help the freedom fighters needed, he said anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons together with ammunition. In particular, ammunition was required of 303 calibre as that was what the resistance fighters used. They also needed food.

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6. The conversation turned briefly to the desperate plight of the refugees, the complete absence of any form of government in the countryside, and Soviet tactics. The latter had not changed. Russian troops did not leave their tanks as they knew they would otherwise get shot. Mr Gailani said he was skeptical about the reports of Soviet troop withdrawals. Mr Hurd said we would keep up the pressure on the Soviet Union. We would have to consider the question of helping the Afghan resistance movement. Mr Gailani said time was of the essence. The summer was the fighting season. In the winter his people would be at a disadvantage.

7. The meeting ended at 12.30 pm with Mr Hurd expressing his admiration for the bravery of the freedom fighters.

cc: Private Secretary
PS/LPS
PS/Mr Hurd
PS/Mr Blaker
PS/PUS
Mr Bullard
Sir A Acland
Mr A E Donald
EESD
MED
Planning Staff
Research Dept
News Dept
PUSD
Chanceries:
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Kabul
Delhi
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MEETING BETWEEN MR ARCHER AND MR LAVERS OF SOUTH ASIAN DEPARTMENT WITH SAYED AHMAD GAILANI AT THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY CLUB, 5.30 PM 25 JUNE 1980

1. Mr Gailani, his son Mohammad and Mr George Miller, who has been arranging a programme for Mr Gailani in the United Kingdom, accepted an invitation to meet the Acting Head of South Asian Department and Mr Lavers for a private meeting outside the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Our idea was that this should be a preliminary to a decision whether to invite Mr Gailani for a discussion in the office. (It has subsequently been agreed that Mr Hurd will see him for a private meeting.
2. Mr Archer welcomed the opportunity to meet Mr Gailani and ask him about the United Islamic Front of Afghanistan, the Islamic Alliance and the meeting in Switzerland with the Committee of Three established by the Islamic Conference.
3. Mr Gailani said that he had come to Britain to see his family but that he also was interested in obtaining publicity for the struggle of the Afghan people against the Soviet Union. He welcomed the opportunity to obtain a Foreign Office view about this. In response to a question he said that he represented only his own group. There was no suggestion of a mandate from the other leaders of the Alliance. He was critical of some of the other leaders and in particular of the Hizb-e-Islami and Jamiat-e-Islami. He said that both were ultra conservative groups aiming to replace the one party dictatorship of the Parcham group with a one party dictatorship led by other groups. His own group had substantial following within Afghanistan, but none of the groups could claim to represent the Afghan people. The only way of forming a truly representative national government would be for election to be held. Questioned on this, he qualified his statement to say that it would probably be necessary to use a council or jirga system to elect representatives. The Afghan people would want a non-communist government, but he accepted that any government would have to have a viable relationship with the Soviet Union. In this he differed from some of the other resistance leaders. But it was a fact of life. The Soviet Union would settle for nothing less and geographical and economic needs made this inevitable.
3. Mr Archer asked about Soviet tactics. Mr Gailani said that the Soviet Union had discovered that the only way to deal with the national resolve to oppose their invasion was to aim at the total destruction of Afghan villages. Most of the engagements were commenced at Soviet initiative. He thought that they were deliberately trying to clear border areas with a view to disrupting supply routes. The Afghans needed not only arms but also food and clothing. He alleged that the Soviet Union was using both gas and napalm, but was unable to substantiate his allegations about napalm when pressed. He said there was plenty of evidence of the use of disabling gas. The Soviet forces were experiencing considerable casualties. The Afghans could not attack them effectively during the day and were vulnerable to attacks by helicopter/gun-ships. But at night Soviet troops were vulnerable and many were being killed. The Soviet Union had withdrawn all the Moslem forces from the Soviet Islamic Republics as they were buying copies of the Koran and saying that they were increasingly out of sympathy with the war.

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4. Mr Gailani confirmed that there were major rifts between the Parcham and Khalq wings of the Karmal regime.
5. The meeting ended with discussion about publicity. Mr Gailani has not brought publicity material with him but will give a press conference, and interview to the BBC World Service and will be willing to appear on television if this can be arranged. This is being pursued through News Department who have given details of Mr Gailani's whereabouts to the BBC.
6. Mr Gailani's English appears to be good. He hesitated only a couple of times where he was prompted by his son. He is a Westernised figure, mild mannered and not outwardly aggressive. He had to be drawn by questions to presenting his case and there was a disappointing absence of detail in what we obtained from him during the meeting.

South Asian Department
26 June 1980