

GRS 280

UNCLASSIFIED

FM WASHINGTON 102345Z MAR 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 831 OF 10 MARCH

INFO PRIORITY ISLAMABAD, MOSCOW, KABUL ROUTINE NEW DELHI,
PEKING, CAIRO, JEDDA

INFO SAVING UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN.

MY TEL NO 809: US AID TO AFGHAN RESISTANCE.

1. US PRESS OF 10 MARCH HIGHLIGHTS REAGAN'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS YESTERDAY IN A TV INTERVIEW ABOUT US READINESS TO SUPPLY ARMS TO THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE. HE SAID THAT IF SUCH REQUESTS WERE RECEIVED, HE WOULD CONSIDER COMPLYING WITH THEM. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE RUSSIANS COULD REALLY OBJECT BUT THE POINT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS STATEMENT HAD BEEN MADE WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH HAIG AND OTHERS, AND WITHOUT REFLECTION ON ALL THE RAMIFICATIONS.

2. REAGAN ALSO REACTED STRONGLY AGAINST THE USE OF THE WORD QUOTE REBELS UNQUOTE FOR THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE. THEY WERE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR THEIR OWN COUNTRY WHO DID NOT WISH TO BECOME A SATELITE STATE OF THE SOVIET UNION.

3. THESE REMARKS WERE RAISED AT STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS CONFERENCE ON 10 MARCH. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD NO INTENTION OF TRYING TO INTERPRET THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS, WHICH WERE VERY CLEAR. THE US HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN AND REGISTERED THEIR ADMIRATION FOR THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS THERE. IN ANSWER TO FURTHER QUESTIONS, THE SPOKESMAN CONFIRMED THAT GAILANI HAD RECENTLY BEEN SEEN BY MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT. HE ADDED THAT SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE US TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE BREZHNEV LETTER AND SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR A SUMMIT MEETING.

FCO PASS SAVING UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN.

HENDERSON

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

AFGHANISTAN STANDARD

SAD
EESD
MED
FED
UND
ECD (E)

CABINET OFFICE

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED