RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS HELD IN THE INDIA OFFICE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE AT 10 AM ON MONDAY 31 DECEMBER 1979

THOSE PRESENT:

UK

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Mr Douglas Hurd, MP Minister of State

Mr H Cortazzi, Deputy Under Secretary of State Mr J Bullard, Deputy Under Secretary of State

Mr K White, Head of South Asia Department

Mr C Mallaby, Head of Eastern European and Soviet Department

Mr G Archer, South Asia Department Mr R Lavers, South Asia Department

US

Mr Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State
Ambassador Brewster, US Embassy
Mr George Vest, Assistant Secretary European Affairs
Mr Peter Constable, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Middle East & South
Asian Affairs

Mr John Trattner, Executive Assistant to Mr Christopher Mr Marshall Brement, White House Mr James Siena, Department of Defence Miss Glaspie, US Embassy

CANADIANS

Mr Alan Gotlieb, Under-Secretary
Mr Klaus Goldschlag, DUS
Mr Tom Delworth, Director General Asia Pacific
Mr Christien Hardy, Acting Canadian High Commissioner
Mr Robinson, Canada House

FRENCH

M. de Leusse, PUS Quai d'Orsay HE M Sauvagnarges, French Ambassador M. Noiville, Quai d'Orsay M. Vilmorin, French Embassy

GERMANS

Dr Van Well, State Secretary
Dr Steger, Head of South and South East Asia Department
Dr von Studintz, PS/Dr Van Well
Dr Burger, Deputy to Dr Steger

ITALIANS

Sr Francesco Malfatti, PUS MFA
HE Sr Roberto Ducci, Italian Ambassador
Sr Ludovico Incisa, Minister/Counsellor Italian Embassy
Sr Luigi Amaduzzi, Counsellor, PUS's Office

- 1. Mr Hurd welcomed other delegations. There was general agreement that Mr Christopher should take the chair.
- Mr Christopher expressed appreciation that other delegations were participating. The United States had suggested consultations because of the very grave view that they took of Soviet action and the need which they saw for agreement between allies on an appropriate response. The United States saw this as a most important development as it was the first time since World War II that Soviet forces had been used outside the Soviet bloc. What had happened was naked aggression for which the Soviets had offered an unconvincing explanation. It was a travesty to suggest that the intervention had been invited by Amin. He and other members of his Government had been assassinated within hours of the attack. To instance the Soviet/Afghan Friendship Treaty as grounds for Soviet involvement was equally false. Similar grounds could be claimed by as many as ten countries with comparable treaties. question that needed to be asked was why the Soviet Union had chosen the present time to make this direct and massive further escalation of their involvement in the country. It followed an attempt to get rid of Amin earlier in the year which misfired.
- The Afghanistan rebels now appeared to have been operating more 3. effectively than had been assumed. Amin had failed to win support and the Soviets had removed him. What was initially a massive Soviet airlift had been complemented by a massive cross border invasion bringing their troop levels up to 25-30,000. The Soviet troops were reaching out throughout the country and occupying strategic lines including the border area between Afghanistan and Babrak Karmal was not yet believed to be in Afghanistan. Pakistan. The Soviets could expect to have continuing trouble with insurgents. To deal with this they would probably need to bring in more troops from the substantial forces lined up inside the Soviet border. An increasing number of Afghans could be expected to cross the The present 350,000 refugees there might border into Pakistan. Their traditional soon become 500,000. Pakistan faced a dilemma. They would wonder fears of Soviet intentions had been confirmed. whether help from the West would be sufficiently strong to provide They might wonder whether they needed a rapprochement security. with the Soviet Union. The Pakistan Government was weak.

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However the Government was trying to bolster its position by stressing its Islamic commitment. The President and Foreign Affairs Adviser were thinking of calling for a meeting of the Islamic Conference. The United States wished to encourage them to do so but this would not be an alternative to the West providing assistance to Pakistan. Any Indian Government could be expected to follow a cautious approach in public but their underlying concern would be that South Asia was becoming an area for super power confrontation. Mr Desai had been careful about dealings with Pakistan. Mrs Gandhi might not be so cautious. relations between Mrs Gandhi and Babrak were reported to have been close. The Soviet action in Afghanistan might help us with US/Iran relations. But there could be no certainty. The Americans thought that Iraqi suspicions of Soviet motives would be increased. Elsewhere President Mengistu would be worried. The governments of Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti would be reinforced in their anti-Soviet attitudes. The Chinese could be counted upon to speak out and even to take an initiative. They might offer more aid to Pakistan. Recent events would have a special message for Yugoslavia and Romania. The West should reinforce their contacts with them and watch their reactions. It was necessary to review the consequence of Soviet action on general East/West relations. The TNF modernisation programme seemed wise and necessary. Soviet arms control measures needed to be looked at with new scepticism. President Carter's desire was to push ahead with SALT II which he saw as in the interest of the West but the Soviet Afghanistan venture would make it much more difficult to achieve agreement in the Senate. Congressional reaction would be apparent only after Congress The general American conclusion was that the events returned. in Afghanistan reinforced the need for Western solidarity and Did events mean that the Soviet Union would in future move to support pro Soviet regimes in other countries whenever they seemed threatened? Their intentions would be influenced by the reaction to them. If this was weak the threshold for Soviet interference would be lowered. A firm reaction would lessen the likelihood that the Soviet Union would pursue similar action in future.

4. Mr Hurd noted the elements of opportunism, ruthlessness and secrecy in the Soviet action. He said that the UK analysis of the

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situation was close to the American. We saw three main Soviet objectives: to ensure that there was no reversal of Afghan commitment to furtherance of the communist revolution of April 1978; to ensure that there was no opportunity for a regime hostile to the Soviet Union to be established in Kabul; and for the longer term to build up a position of strength in Afghanistan from which it would be possible to influence events in Central and South Asia. The Soviets had probably not yet decided how to use Afghanistan as a satellite. But it was not possible to dismiss the prospect that the Soviet Union would seek to tie in Afghanistan very closely to the Soviet Union. Karmal's prospects of acceptance by the Afghans had started badly because of the way he had come to power. The Soviet immediate priority would be to build up his regime. The opposition was chaotic and incoherent but the Soviet intervention had neutralised the Afghan Army. Hence the Soviet Union would need to carry through operations in the field themselves. might be the reason for the size of the Soviet intervention. The prospects were for massive intervention over a considerable period.

- 7. Pakistan was seriously worried. They feared that the new regime in Kabul might revive the case for Paktunistan with which Karmal had in the past been closely identified. The Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan had told the Pakistan Government that Pakistan was an external power whose interference in Afghanistan had necessitated Soviet intervention. Reports from other capitals however indicated that the Iranians and the Americans had also been named in some capitals as interfering powers.
- 6. The Indians could be expected to put the best face possible on what had happened. They would be concerned to see an Islamic regime in Kabul and might prefer a pro-Soviet Government. But there would be deep concern at the role that Soviet forces had played in the country even if this was not publicly expressed.
- 7. Mr Christopher interjected that he had seen a report that one Soviet Ambassador had commented, when asked to identify the third country accused of interference by the Soviet Union, that he could not remember which country it was.
- 8. Dr Van Well analysed the situation at some length on similar lines to previous speakers. He said that the Germans doubted

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whether the Russians were intent on absorbing Afghanistan into the Soviet Union. But Afghanistan now provided a new platform for the Soviet Union to extend its influence in the region. The alliance should take this new factor into account. The Russians would have difficulty controlling the tribal rebels. Although the opposition was disunited there was intense hatred of the Russians. Appeals for national reconciliation would have little attraction. Nonetheless, any reaction indicating acquiescence in the intervention would psychologically undermine the rebels. The West should be alert to this consideration.

- 9. He thought that the Soviet timing of their move had been influenced by the Iranian crisis. There were parallels with Hungary in 1956. Initially his government had thought that the Iranians must now recognise where their true interests lay. Unfortunately the climax to the Security Council debate had come at the same time. Meanwhile the Iranians still thought their battle with the Americans was the main priority.
- 10. Turning to other countries in the region, Dr Van Well commented on Pakistan's lack of direction and governmental weakness. On India, he thought it unlikely that a caretaker government would make strong statements. But the Russian action would have a deep impact on Indian policy planning. The Chinese would issue strong statements but were not in a position to do much else. The Germans thought that the Western response should be framed with the wider region in mind, including the Gulf and the Horn. A strong reaction would stiffen governments uncertain how to play things.
- 11. Detente had lost ground. The German press had strongly condemned the Russians. Confidence building measures would hardly seem appropriate now to German public opinion. The Russians would not wish to negotiate with the Americans while there was so much uncertainty in East/West relations.
- 12. M. de Leusse asked if the Soviet action was really a move over a completely new threshold. He accepted that there had been no intervention of this size in a non-Soviet bloc country since 1945 but the Soviet Union had supplied armed troops and military hardware in Viet-Nam and had used the Cubans as surrogates in Africa. There had been no protest over Soviet action in Eritrea. He thought that the most appropriate response to the situation in Afghanistan would

- be from third world countries. So far they had said very little. The idea of Pakistan convening a meeting of the Islamic Conference was extremely desirable. The reactions of Romania and Yugoslavia would be important.
- 13. Sr. Malfatti agreed with previous assessments. He pointed to the problems for the Soviet Union from the anti-Islamic policies of Presidents Taraki and Amin. He thought that one of the reasons for the timing of the Soviet intervention might be that they felt that the winter season would be a good opportunity to end the revolution while lines of supply were interrupted by winter. The Italians had considered that a suitable response to the present situation was to recall their Ambassador from Kabul immediately. They supported action in the Security Council.
- 14. Mr Gotlieb said that Canada agreed with views already expressed. He thought that the Russians had taken the opportunity to position themselves in the arc of instability. The Pakistanis were particularly worried. They saw a prospect that they might be sandwiched between two hostile countries that might establish a close cooperation if Mrs Gandhi won the Indian election. He agreed that third world countries should be engaged in any action at the United Nations to the maximum extent possible.

Action at the UN

- now discuss the various possibilities for action at the UN. He thought that action under Chapter 6 would underestimate the gravity of the situation. Action under Chapter 7 involved the threat of a Soviet veto. Some might see some advantage in forcing the Soviets to that position. Taking action to the General Assembly tended to be sequential to Chapter 7 action. Another alternative would be a letter to the Security Council but the Americans believed that this also underestimated the gravity of the situation.
- 16. Mr Hurd said that the United Kingdom felt that there should be recourse to the United Nations through the Security Council. There was provision in the UN Charter for countries to have the right to choose their own governments and a requirement for members to refrain from use of force against independent states. This could provide

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the framework for an approach. The operative paragraph could condemn Soviet action. A call for a withdrawal of Soviet troops would be a necessary consequence of condemnatory action. Another operative paragraph could perhaps establish a commission of three members to examine progress by, for example, 1 February. Early action was important. It was essential to act when the tide of protest in non-aligned countries and particularly the Muslim world was flowing strongly. Indignation subsided quickly. remained but the inclination to do or say anything faded. It would be a pity to wait until after the second stage of the Iranian discussion and better to use the window between stage one and two. He saw no hope of persuading the Soviet Union to reverse their The aim should be to make the Soviet Union uncomfortable action. about what they had done in order that it would be less likely that they would repeat similar action elsewhere.

- 17. Mr Gotlieb said that it would be logical to use Chapter 7, as Chapter 6 referred to the peaceful settlement of disputes. By referring to Article 51 as their pretext for action the USSR had themselves necessitated Security Council attention as the Article required a Council report. It would not be desirable to take action to the General Assembly under peace procedures without widespread support. He thought it would be more desirable for a non-aligned country or countries to sponsor a resolution than for the rest to take the lead. It would be worth a 24 or even 48 hour delay to see if this could be achieved.
- 18. Mr Christopher agreed that it was desirable to involve Third World countries but no dependence could be placed on them to be self starting.
- 19. Sr. Malfatti said that the best solution would be to persuade an Asian member of the Security Council to take the lead.
- 20. Mr Gotlieb commented that any one of the 150 members could bring a complaint.
- 21. Mr Christopher added that the Indonesians, Niger and the Philippines would be the new members of the Council from 1 January. Third World countries could play a very helpful rôle in a resolution. Nigeria had played an important rôle over Iran.

- 22. M. de Leusse suggested that Permanent Representatives in New York should consult together and try to get a Third World country, if possible from Asia, to take the initiative.
- 23. Mr Hurd commented that Bangladesh was, in principle, in favour of action in the Security Council but it would be a considerable jump for them to take the initiative themselves.
- 24. Mr Gotlieb thought that Sri Lanka, Singapore and the Philippines might perhaps jointly be persuaded to take the lead.
- 25. Mr Christopher hoped that the other countries present would take action in capitals around the world to urge other countries to take action. He hoped other countries would make similar demarches to those which the US had issued.
- 26. M. de Leusse thought it important not to make Afghanistan just an East/West quarrel; it should be dealt with as a world problem.
- 27. Mr Hurd asked whether all could agree to work for an early meeting of the Security Council. He did not think there was any need to decide at the meeting how or by whom the action should be taken forward.
- 28. There was general agreement but the <u>French</u> said that they must reserve their position on a Western initiative in the UN at least until 1 January.

Recognition

- 29. Mr Christopher proposed that there should be an exchange of views on the question of recognition of the new Afghanistan government. The US Embassy staff were down to about 30. The US had not yet reached a decision on what to do. There were a range of possibilities from breaking relations, removal of Ambassadors without a break and the drawing down of staff.
- 30. Dr Van Well said that a consideration for the Germans was the number of the German technical experts, school teachers and UNDP staff. It would be difficult for them to withdraw their mission.
- 31. If one country withdrew its Ambassador that would increase the pressure on the others. The Italians were going to withdraw their representative. Mr Hurd said we did face a problem of recognition. We would not take an early decision. The British Ambassador had

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been asked not to have any political contacts with the new government. The UK would be ready to fall in with any consensus.

- 32. Mr Gotlieb said that Canada had no resident Ambassador to withdraw. Afghanistan had been virtually annexed. It created an exceptional situation for the legal criteria for recognition.
- M. de Leusse said France recognised states not governments. Recognition was not, therefore, a problem. They had not made a decision on the future of their small embassy in Kabul. There was no question of political contacts yet.
- 34. Dr Van Well saw a dilemma. The Germans would like to withdraw their Ambassador but found his presence useful. They would be prepared to go along with the general consensus to withdraw.
- 35. Mr Christopher agreed with Mr Hurd that all should abstain from political contacts with the new regime.

Aid

- Mr Christopher said that the Americans had cancelled their programme. Under Taraki the Afghans had been at least nominally non-aligned. The new government was a puppet. He asked for views.
- 37. Dr Van Well said his government would reassess their programme. They would be reluctant to provide money to multilateral organizations for projects in Afghanistan.
- Mr Hurd said the British programme was small but diminishing. We might not terminate the scholarships of students in the United Kingdom. But it would now be hard to justify bilateral projects. He hoped international organizations would adopt a similarly critical attitude.
- 39. Mr Gotlieb thought his government should see whether the World Bank could suspend its aid.
- 40. M. de Leusse said the French programme now amounted virtually to nothing.
- 41. Mr Christopher said that all the countries represented had either suspended or were phasing out their programmes. They would continue to do this and would encourage multilateral institutions to

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- re-evaluate their involvement in Afghanistan. The US Government would urge them to suspend programmes and not initiate new projects.

 Bilateral Relations with Soviet Union, Pakistan and India
 - Mr Christopher said the United States had contemplated granting most favoured nation status to the Soviet Union. They were looking at that again now. They were also reviewing their policy on export licences, grain sales, scientific exchanges, and the whole gamut of social and official contacts. In effect this amounted to the totality of their bilateral relations. Mr Christopher invited comments on the intentions of other governments.
 - 43. Mr Gotlieb said that the Canadians had not yet reviewed their position. He would advise his Ministers of the sense of the meeting. He envisaged two immediate possibilities. The first priority should be the suspension of visits in both directions. Secondly they could postpone signature of new agreements. Both were visible signs of good will. They bore re-examination.
 - Sr Malfatti said his government would review the question. It was important that all the allies should adopt a common line. Dr Van Well outlined his government's intentions. Firstly they would reply to the Soviet communication about their intervention. The Germans planned to criticise the use of force against the Afghans, to call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and to reject the pretext and arguments used to justify the Russian invasion. Thereafter they would examine the possibility for reprisals, starting with participation in the Olympics. Careful study was required in the context of East/West relations. His government had a tight schedule of visits, including Mr Schmidt's to the Soviet Union and bloc countries. Should the East Europeans be included in the West's disapproval? In the immediate future though it was more important to establish our attitude in the region with, for instance, visits to Pakistan. Pakistan was suffering from a refugee problem. His government was ready to join an international programme to help Another possibility was a conference on debt Afghan refugees. relief for Pakistan. His government was ready to consider an Moreover, these were signals which should be increase in aid. After a brief reference to Iran and the noted in Moscow. possibility of a community gesture, Dr Van Well commented that the

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West should not allow the Soviet Union to exert additional pressure to complicate an already serious situation.

- 45. Mr Christopher said the United States had re-stated its commitment of the 1959 Treaty with Pakistan (the so-called Eisenhower doctrine). They intended to speed up the supply of weapons in the pipe-line. His Government would be more forthcoming to Pakistan in every way not prevented by the statutes on nuclear proliferation.
- 46. Mr Hurd described the public reaction here and the Prime Minister's message to Mr Brezhnev. The United Kingdom would also reply to the Soviet communiqué. The range of contacts with the Soviet Union planned for 1980 would be reviewed. He cited examples such as the proposed delegation to be led by Sir Harold Wilson and the Royal Air Force Staff College visit. Mr Gromyko had been invited for February. That might be cancelled but any action had to be the same as taken by the others. It would be particularly important to know whether Mr Schmidt went to Moscow. Credits to the Soviet Union presented another possibility. own were due soon to expire. Britain was prepared to consider this weapon but it would only be sensible if all acted together. Alliance also needed to think of ways of reassuring the Pakistanis without upsetting the Indians. Perhaps action could be categorised under the headings firstly of implications for contacts with the Soviet Union and, secondly, measures of support to Pakistan.
- 47. Mr Hurd mentioned that Mr Blaker would be in Delhi from 24-26 January which would provide an opportunity to speak to the Indians.
- 48. Dr Van Well said that a German Minister would also be going to New Delhi for discussions shortly.
- 49. Mr Christopher asked whether one way of following up the present discussions could be through a working group. He asked if there was a consensus that Governments should increase aid to the refugees in Pakistan.
- 50. The <u>Canadians</u>, <u>British</u> and <u>French</u> commented that there could be difficulties because of the squeeze on bilateral aid programmes.
- 51. Mr Gotlieb commented that for Canada there was the problem with Pakistan of the nuclear issue. Nevertheless the Canadians

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thought that something should be done to help with Pakistan's sense of isolation. Ought they to be re-invited to join the Commonwealth?

Non Aligned Movement

- 52. Mr Christopher asked how best to approach the Non Aligned Movement. If the Movement stood by their principles they should be concerned at the overthrow of a non-aligned government.
- 53. Mr Gotlieb said that he was pessimistic about the NAM taking any firm action.
- 54. Mr Christopher thought that Yugoslavia and possibly India could be approached.
- 55. Mr Hurd thought that some members of the Movement might be prepared to raise the case for the Movement considering the suspension of Afghanistan.
- 56. Mr Christopher commented that there was already an Executive Committee set up after the Havana meeting which might cut back on the power of Cuba as the Chairman.
- 57. Mr Gotlieb suggested that it might be useful to contact countries supporting Cuba in the current stalemate with Colombia. If some of these, eg Islamic countries, changed sides, this would be a useful signal to the Soviet Union of the damage done by their Afghan venture.

China

- 58. Mr Christopher reported that Harold Brown, the US Secretary for Defence, would be visiting China in the next few days. The trip now had a new importance.
- 59. Mr Hurd thought that the Chinese might now see advantage in offering material support to Afghan rebels as an attractive option.
- 60. Mr Gotlieb said that the Canadians had heard from their mission in Peking that the Chinese were asking about action in the UN and about the present meeting. He proposed that the Chinese should be informed of the substance of the day's discussions. Mr Christopher agreed.

East/West Relations

61. Mr Gotlieb thought that it was important to consider the cost /to

to the West of any action. The West had an interest in arms control, détente and the CSCE. Policies should not be abandoned where Western interests would suffer, but there might be areas where we could without damage adjust our approach to issues. The style, timing and substance of our approach to such issues should be carefully examined.

- 62. M. de Leusse thought that the West must be careful not to over react so as to damage their own interests. They thought that the West should abide by the principles that had guided them for the last 15 years or so.
- Mr Hurd agreed that the framework of détente should be maintained. Countries should, however, look at their bilateral dealings with the Soviet Union. British and other credit agreements with the Soviet Union were expiring about now. The Russians would interpret the conclusion of the next few months as a signal of business as usual and none of the Western countries concerned should conclude an agreement without consulting the others. He suggested that two groups of officials might be set up in which other NATO countries could participate if they wished: one would study the implications of the Afghan crisis for our contacts with the Soviet Union, and the other the measures we should take to support regional countries like Pakistan. He also pointed to the need to consider means, including leverage, in which the West could try to reduce the likelihood of Soviet interference in yet more countries.
- 64. Mr Gotlieb said that no one was advocating not pursuing détente but the credibility of détente would be in question with the public.

Summing up

- 65. Mr Christopher, in summing up what had been agreed, made the following points:
 - (a) Our reaction should be sustained. It should be pursued by demarches, public statements, etc.
 - (b) All countries were considering what action they should take in their bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. Our displeasure should be shown in some way. We would keep in touch.

CONFIDENTIAL (c) Countries might decide to change the nature of their diplomatic relationship with Afghanistan. recognising, drawing down our Missions and recall of Ambassadors were among the possibilities discussed. The United States would be guided by what the rest

- (d) We should take the opportunity to point out the lessons of the Soviet action to the Iranians.
- (e) Help should be given to Pakistan. This could be done through aid, possibly an early debt rescheduling meeting. Additional ways of easing the burden of the refugees should be considered.
- (f) There was a need to bring to Indian attention the real significance of the Soviet move, and to point out that what we did to help the Pakistanis was not a threat to India.
- (g) China could be expected roundly to condemn the Soviet Union and to support Pakistan and anti-Soviet groups in Afghanistan.
- (h) The Soviet aggression should be taken to the United Nations without delay.
- (i) We should point out the anti-Islamic nature of Soviet policy, the disregard of non-alignment and the increasing threat to regional countries.

He concluded that it had been agreed that continuing action was necessary. Possibilities included an early meeting of Ministers or the establishment of a working group, or groups, but no agreement had been reached on how to proceed.

Mr Hurd noted that there was also general agreement with Mr Christopher's view that it was not in the Western interest to make threats about ending general arms control measures which were to the benefit of the West, and that the SALT process should be pursued.

South Asian Department Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1 January 1980

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Distribution:

PS/Prime Minister (Mr Alexander) PS

PS/LPS

PS/Mr Hurd PS/Mr Blaker

PS/Mr Ridley

PS/Mr Luce

PS/PUS

Sir D Maitland

Mr Cortazzi

Mr Murray

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