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TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1076 OF 13 MARCH 1980
INFO BCNN, PARIS, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO
INFO SAVING NEW DELHI ISLAMABAD KABUL AND OTHER EEC POSTS

MIPT :AFGHAN NEUTRALITY.

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF U S COMMENTS.

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1. THE FOLLOWING IS OUR ANALYSIS OF THE SOVIET ORAL STATEMENT: ALTHOUGH SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN SOME KIND OF DIALOGUE SUGGESTS THAT THEY ARE LEAVING OPEN THE DOOR FOR A POSSIBLE EVENTUAL POLITICAL SOLUTION, WE SEE LITTLE EVIDENCE OF CURRENT FLEXIBILITY IN THE POSITION CONTAINED IN THE NON-PAPER PROVIDED TO THE BRITISH. IN FACT, IN CERTAIN RESPECTS, IT APPEARS TO REPRESENT A STEP BACKWARD FROM THE FORMULATION IN BREZHNEV'S FEBRUARY 22 SPEECH:

— THE PAPER REFERS ONLY TO A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT TO ELIMINATE TENSIONS QUOTE AROUND AFGHANISTAN. UNQUOTE THIS MAY BE A SIGN OF A SOVIET EFFORT TO BLOCK ANY DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN ALONE THROUGH INSISTENCE THAT GUARANTEES OF PAKISTANI AND IRANIAN QUOTE NEUTRALITY UNQUOTE MUST BE A PRECONDITION FOR A SOVIET WITHDRAWAL. SUCH APPROACHES WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO US. IF THE SOVIETS ARE MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION, WE MAY OVER THE COMING WEEKS SEE THEM PUSHING REGIONAL INITIATIVES FOCUSING ON AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS.

— THE PAPER STATES THAT THERE CAN BE NO SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION WITHOUT A COMPLETE AND GUARANTEED END TO ALL OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE (IE COMPLETE PACIFICATION). THIS IS SIMILAR TO WHAT FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER KORNIYENKO TOLD AMBASSADOR WATSON ON FEBRUARY 24 AND IS CLEARLY DESIGNED TO LEAVE THE SOVIETS FREE TO DO WHAT THEY WANT IN AFGHANISTAN. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY UNACCEPTABLE.

— THE PAPER SAYS THAT THE QUOTE INTERNATIONAL STATUS AND SOCIAL SYSTEM OF AFGHANISTAN UNQUOTE CANNOT BE THE SUBJECT OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THIS COULD INDICATE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT ANY RETURN TO A PRE-TARAKI FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND AN INSISTENCE ON QUOTE PRESERVING THE AFGHAN REVOLUTION. UNQUOTE SUCH A TRACK WOULD CLEARLY BE A DEAD-END IN GAINING SUPPORT FROM A BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF AFGHANS.

2. OUR ANALYSIS OF THE SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE BRITISH IS FRANKLY COLORED BY OUR APPRAISAL OF SOVIET ACTIONS ON THE GROUND AND WHAT WE AND OTHERS HAVE HEARD FROM THE SOVIETS SINCE THE INVASION. IN SUM, OUR VIEWS ARE:

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— AT SOME FUTURE POINT THE MILITARY SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, CONTINUED STRONG ISLAMIC OPPOSITION TO AFGHANISTAN, SUSTAINED AND IMPROVED WESTERN SOLIDARITY, OR THE EMERGENCE OF A MORE POPULAR AND STABLE GOVERNMENT MIGHT CAUSE THE SOVIETS TO ENTERTAIN SERIOUSLY A PROPOSAL FOR AFGHAN QUOTE NEUTRALITY AND NON-ALIGNMENT. UNQUOTE HOWEVER, ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THIS IS NOT A REALISTIC POSSIBILITY AT PRESENT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

— THE SOVIETS PREPARING THEIR UNITS FOR AN EXTENDED STAY IN AFGHANISTAN CLEARLY SUGGESTING THAT THEY ARE THERE FOR THE LONG PULL.

— THERE ARE NO IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF A MORE BROADLY BASED GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS MAY HOPE TO FIND FIGUREHEADS WHO MIGHT GAIN AN ILLUSION OF POPULAR SUPPORT, WE DO NOT SEE THIS AS VIABLE WHILE SOVIET TROOPS OCCUPY AFGHANISTAN.

— THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT THEY CAN EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US AND ITS ALLIES.

— WESTERN SANCTIONS HAVE NOT YET BEEN IN EFFECT LONG ENOUGH OR BEEN SUFFICIENTLY COORDINATED TO EXACT A REAL PRICE FOR THE INVASION.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT ANY FURTHER APPROACHES TO THE SOVIETS, IN ADDITION TO BEING BASED ON A COORDINATED UNDERSTANDING OF THE TYPE OF SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO WESTERN INTERESTS, SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE FOR PROMPT AND COMPLETE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL CLARIFY SOVIET VIEWS ON THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A SETTLEMENT (INCLUDING THE POINTS DISCUSSED IN PARA 2 ABOVE) WITHOUT HARDENING THE SOVIET POSITION IN WAYS UNACCEPTABLE TO US, AND AVOIDING MAKING PREMATURE CONCESSIONS ON THE PART OF THE WEST WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF ACCEPTING PART OF THE SOVIET POSITION BEFORE THE SOVIETS INDICATE ANY GENUINE INTEREST IN UNDERTAKING SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.

4. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS POSITIVE AND HELPFUL DIALOG WITH THE BRITISH AND HOPE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE TO BE ABLE TO CONVEY OUR FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE ELEMENTS OF AN ACCEPTABLE NEUTRALITY PROPOSAL.

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 1075 OF 13 MARCH
INFO BONN, PARIS, MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO
INFO SAVING NEW DELHI, ISLAMABAD, KABUL, OTHER EEC POSTS, UKMIS
NEW YORK.

MY TELEGRAM NO. 1004: AFGHAN NEUTRALITY.

1. BARRY (DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT) GAVE FRETWELL TODAY A US PAPER CONTAINING COMMENTS ON OUR ASSESSMENT (YOUR TELNO 175 TO MOSCOW), AND ON SOVIET READINESS TO CONSIDER A SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO WESTERN INTERESTS. TEXT IN MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM.

2. READING FROM PREPARED SPEAKING NOTES, BARRY ADDED THAT THE US WOULD FOLLOW UP THESE COMMENTS WITH FURTHER CONSIDERED VIEWS ON THE ELEMENTS NECESSARY FOR AN ACCEPTABLE NEUTRALITY SETTLEMENT. THEY AGREED WITH THE UK VIEW THAT IT WAS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS SUCH ELEMENTS IN DETAIL WITH THE RUSSIANS AT THIS POINT. THEY HOPED THAT WE WOULD AGREE TO WAIT FOR THESE FURTHER VIEWS BEFORE ENGAGING IN ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS WITH THE RUSSIANS. BARRY EXPECTED THAT US VIEWS WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO US NO LATER THAN THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK. (THEY WOULD BE CLEARED AT THE PRESIDENT'S BREAKFAST MEETING WITH HIS SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY ADVISERS TOMORROW).

3. BARRY CONTINUED THAT THE US DEEPLY APPRECIATED OUR READINESS TO ADVISE THEM OF OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS AND TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR VIEWS. THEY WERE WILLING TO SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS AND LOOKED FORWARD TO A CONTINUING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. THEY WERE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING ALL OPPORTUNITIES WHICH SUGGESTED A SOVIET READINESS TO NEGOTIATE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL ON ACCEPTABLE TERMS. IT WAS WELL WORTH-WHILE TO PURSUE EFFORTS AT PROBING FOR SIGNS OF SOVIET FLEXIBILITY. CLOSE AND CONTINUING WESTERN SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION WERE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN SUCH APPROACHES TO THE RUSSIANS.

4. IN ANSWER TO BARRY'S QUESTION, FRETWELL SAID THAT WE HAD HAD NO FURTHER EXCHANGES WITH THE RUSSIANS SINCE 6 MARCH AND DID NOT ENVISAGE ANOTHER CONTACT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. BARRY REPORTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RECENT US/SOVIET EXCHANGES APART FROM A LUNCHTIME DISCUSSION IN MOSCOW ON 10 MARCH BETWEEN AMBASSADOR WATSON AND ARBATOV, WHICH GAVE NO HINT OF SOVIET INTEREST IN US IDEAS ON HOW TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM.

5. FRETWELL UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEUTRALITY IDEA IN EXPOSING THE FALSITY OF THE SOVIET POSITION AND IN PROVIDING AN OBJECTIVE TO WHICH NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES MIGHT RALLY: THIS ASPECT WAS NOT COVERED IN THE US COMMENTS. BARRY ACCEPTED THIS AND NOTED

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THAT, WHILE THE VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF THE YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER THIS WEEK HAD HAD TO BE CANCELLED BECAUSE OF TITO'S HEALTH, THE US HOPED TO HAVE TALKS TOMORROW WITH THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT AT THE G77 MEETINGS IN NEW YORK. HE THOUGHT THAT THE YUGOSLAV WING OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT STILL ACCEPTED THE NEED FOR EMPHASIS TO BE KEPT ON SOVIET WITHDRAWAL. THEY DID NOT WANT A SETTLEMENT WHICH ALLOWED FOR A CONTINUED PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS ON AFGHAN TERRITORY. HOWEVER, WHILE THEY ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLES ESPOUSED BY THE WEST, HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN PUSHING THEM.

F. FRETWELL QUERIED THE APPARENT ACCEPTANCE, IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF THE US COMMENTS, OF THE IDEA THAT THE END OF ALL OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE COULD BE EQUATED WITH COMPLETE PACIFICATION. BARRY SAID THAT THIS WAS HOW THE STATE DEPARTMENT INTERPRETED SOVIET THINKING: THEY CERTAINLY DID NOT ACCEPT IT. HE AGREED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO DRIVE HOME THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOVIET WORDS AND ACTIONS.

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