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 GR 388

**IMMEDIATE**

*Prime Minister*  
*referred to Chequers*

DESKBY FCO 291400Z  
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 TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY FCO

TELEGRAM NO 298 OF 29 DECEMBER 79.  
 AND TO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK.  
 INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, NEW DELHI, UKDEL NATO AND ISLAMABAD.  
 SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN.  
 THE RUSSIANS CLAIM TO HAVE BEEN REQUESTED TO SEND TROOPS HERE BY THE AMIN GOVERNMENT. IT IS HARDLY LIKELY THAT AMIN WOULD HAVE REQUESTED SUCH LARGE NUMBERS OF COMBAT TROOPS. THAT THIS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN AN EXERCISE IN DUPLICITY BY THE RUSSIANS IS SUGGESTED BY THE FOLLOWING.  
 2. AT THE TIME OF THE RUSSIAN AIR-LIFT MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE WAS OFFICING POST (THEN POLITICAL DEPUTY MINISTER MFA AND NOW



THAT THIS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN AN EXERCISE IN DUPLICITY BY THE RUSSIANS IS SUGGESTED BY THE FOLLOWING.

2. AT THE TIME OF THE RUSSIAN AIR-LIFT MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE WAS SEEING DOST (THEN POLITICAL DEPUTY MINISTER MFA AND NOW MFA) ON ANOTHER MATTER AND DOST ASSURED HIM CATEGORICALLY THAT NO RUSSIAN COMBAT TROOPS WERE ARRIVING : THE AIR-LIFT WAS TO BRING IN SUPPLIES AND ANY RUSSIAN TROOPS INVOLVED WERE ONLY A FEW NEEDED FOR UNLOADING. AT THE SAME TIME THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY MFA TOLD ANOTHER COLLEAGUE THAT BECAUSE THE SALANG PASS WAS BLOCKED BY SNOW THE RUSSIANS WERE HAVING TO FLY IN URGENTLY NEEDED SUPPLIES.

3. BOTH OFFICIALS MAY HAVE BEEN ACTING VERY DISINGENUOUSLY (WHICH IS NOT UNKNOWN FOR THEM) BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD ESTABLISHED A PRETEXT FOR BRINGING IN TRANSPORT PLANES TO KABUL AIRPORT AND BY THE TIME AMIN DISCOVERED WHAT WAS HAPPENING IT WAS TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

4. PRESENT SITUATION. OUTWARDLY THINGS ARE NORMAL IN KABUL ITSELF. MOST OF THE CIVILIAN MILITIA HAVE DISAPPEARED AND THE FIFTY OR SO SOVIET TANKS AND SUPPORT VEHICLES PARKED ALL DAY YESTERDAY BY THE ORBITAL ROAD INTERSECTION NEAR THIS EMBASSY HAD GONE BY THIS MORNING. LARGE SUPPLY CONVOYS (FUEL ETC) HAVE HOWEVER BEEN MOVING IN OUR VICINITY, POSSIBLY FOR ARMOUR WITHDRAWN TO OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN. THE AIRPORT APPROACH ROAD IS GUARDED BY RUSSIAN TANKS AND CIVIL FLIGHTS ARE SUSPENDED.

HILLIER-FRY.

IMMEDIATE

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