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Subject copy: United Nations  
Visit of Sec-General

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NOTE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS  
SECRETARY GENERAL, DR. KURT WALDHEIM, AT 10 DOWNING STREET, ON  
THURSDAY 12 JULY 1979 AT 1700 HOURS

Present:

The Prime Minister

Dr. Kurt Waldheim

The Foreign and Commonwealth  
Secretary

Mr. Brian Urquhart (Under-Secretary  
General for Special Political  
Affairs)

Sir Anthony Parsons

Mr. W.B. Buffum (Under-Secretary  
General for Political and General  
Assembly Affairs)

Mr. B.G. Cartledge

Mr. A. Rohan (Deputy Executive  
Assistant to the Secretary General)

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Refugees from Indochina

After welcoming Dr. Waldheim, the Prime Minister raised the problem of Vietnamese refugees and stressed that the British Government's objective was not only to achieve progress over their resettlement but also to put a stop to the enforced exodus at its source. The Prime Minister said that the United States had succeeded in holding communism at bay in Vietnam over a long period, for which she had received scant thanks: the exodus from communism was now beginning. The only source of effective pressure on Vietnam was the Soviet Union but, the Prime Minister said, her conversation with Mr. Kosygin in Moscow had shown not only that the Russians had no intention of exerting pressure on the Vietnamese but that, on the contrary, they supported the Vietnamese policy. A major operation was in progress in South East Asia designed to destabilise the region. The Chinese were already unpopular in the area, because they were successful; this was being deliberately exploited. For these reasons, the British Government had not hesitated to pillory Vietnam in Parliament. Lord Carrington told the Prime Minister that he had already warned Dr. Waldheim that he would have some unpleasant things to say about Vietnam at the forthcoming Geneva meeting; he knew that Dr. Waldheim did not altogether approve but he did not think that he would stand in the way. The Prime Minister said that it was essential that the West should demonstrate that it stood for certain values.

CONFIDENTIAL Dr. Waldheim

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Dr. Waldheim told the Prime Minister that he was very well aware of her preoccupation with the refugee problem and shared her deep concern. He had deliberately stressed the humanitarian aspect of the problem for consideration in Geneva, since if the argument became too political before the meeting took place Vietnam might refuse to attend it and the meeting would degenerate into a shouting match instead of doing anything to help the refugees themselves. A political debate on the refugee problem would simply lead to sterile confrontation. Dr. Waldheim said that there could be no doubt that the Vietnamese Government was deliberately forcing the refugees to leave: he had raised the matter repeatedly, both with Mr. Pham Van Dong and with the Vietnamese Ambassador at the United Nations. The Vietnamese argued that the refugees were leaving voluntarily and retorted with counter-accusations that a propaganda campaign was being waged against them. He had suggested to Mr. Pham Van Dong that Vietnam should arrange for a phased and orderly departure of the refugees, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner. Despite his representations, the Vietnamese were continuing to behave exactly as before. The Vietnamese Ambassador was now pleading that his Government could not completely control the long Vietnamese coastline and that the Chinese were deliberately exacerbating the problem. Dr. Waldheim said that he had pointed out to the Vietnamese that they were rapidly losing the widespread international sympathy, for example in Scandinavia, which their country had previously enjoyed.

The Prime Minister commented that, meanwhile, Vietnam was continuing to confiscate the wealth and possessions of those whom they were throwing out and was shooting<sup>at</sup> them as they left. This was a question not of a shouting match but of sheer barbarism. It should be pilloried publicly: this could produce an effect, as the Belgrade meeting to review the CSCE had produced an effect on the East Europeans, who witnessed the pillorying of the Soviet Union in that forum. It was essential that the United Nations should be seen to stand for something and to condemn barbarism.

Dr. Waldheim explained that, under the United Nations Charter, the Secretary General had no authority to convene a conference such as that which was about to take place in Geneva. He had nevertheless

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gone ahead out of respect for the Prime Minister and in the belief that her objective was to promote a humanitarian solution of the refugee problem. He had decided to break the United Nations rules of procedure, since he knew that if he had adhered to them by taking the matter first to the Security Council, the discussion would have been long and contentious. For the reasons he had explained to the Prime Minister, he had throughout stressed the humanitarian aspect of the meeting and had done his best to invite a representative selection of countries. Despite all his efforts, he was already coming under fire, for example, from the Chinese for not inviting Kampuchea. The Prime Minister said that attacks should not concern one if the policies were right. The fact was that Vietnam was pursuing a policy of barbarism, under the protection of the Soviet veto in the Security Council. Under the same protection, a number of developments which the UN had been established to prevent were gathering momentum, such as the spread of Soviet subversion through the use of proxies. The Prime Minister told Dr. Waldheim that she was very grateful to him for convening the Geneva meeting and congratulated him on his decision to bypass the rules of procedure. She was nevertheless very concerned by a number of current trends affecting the UN, such as the growing number of small islands, especially in the Caribbean, which were being taken over by Cuban or other communist influence and, despite their small size, commanded a vote in the General Assembly. Although the UN had been designed to protect freedom, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the organisation to fulfil this objective.

Dr. Waldheim said that the UN was indeed handicapped by some of the shortcomings in its Charter and also by the behaviour of some Western Governments, who, for example, voted for political reasons in favour of help for the third world but then voted against providing money for it. Too many UN members were ambiguous in their approach to the world's problems: they were keen to win political credit but reluctant to pay the price. Mr. Gromyko had told him that the Soviet Union was just as concerned as the West about the problems of the UN, but the Soviet Union nevertheless continued to vote against the UN budget.

/ Dr. Waldheim

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Dr. Waldheim told the Prime Minister that he would do everything possible to make the Geneva meeting on refugees a success and hoped that positive results could be achieved; his concern was to avoid a political conference, which could not produce results. He was certain that many delegates would nevertheless speak their mind about Vietnam and he himself proposed to include a reference to Vietnam's responsibility for the situation in his opening statement to the meeting. The Prime Minister, referring to the United Nations as a whole, said that every procedural device should be employed in order to put the Western point of view across and the Western objective should be to perpetuate the values which the West stood for, rather than tolerating perpetual retreat in the face of barbarism and tyranny. Referring to the problems which the refugee situation had created for Hong Kong, the Prime Minister said that Hong Kong constituted a remarkable tribute to the free world and to what the Chinese could achieve when they were free.

Dr. Waldheim gave the Prime Minister an account of the separate but related problem of the 160,000 refugees from Kampuchea who had crossed the border into Thailand and whom the Thais, despite an undertaking to the contrary which General Kriangsak had given him, were forcibly repatriating into Kampuchea. This policy had resulted in a very large number of deaths. The Thais had now said that they would suspend their repatriation policy provided the international community would assist them, with money, in housing and caring for the Kampuchean refugees. Dr. Waldheim mentioned the two islands, in Indonesia and the Philippines, which were being used as processing centres, but agreed with Lord Carrington that these were being used only for refugees who already had a new destination to go to.

The Prime Minister expressed the view that the OPEC countries, with their great financial resources which would now be further increased by the rise in oil prices, should be persuaded to make a direct contribution to solving the refugee problem. Dr. Waldheim told the Prime Minister that OPEC would be represented at the Geneva meeting, as would be Latin America.

/ Tokyo Economic Summit

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Tokyo Economic Summit

Dr. Waldheim asked the Prime Minister if she had derived any encouragement from the Economic Summit Meeting in Tokyo. The Prime Minister said that the meeting had simply re-affirmed the basic truth that if demand and supply were out of balance the price mechanism had to be adjusted so that balance could be restored. The European participants had already agreed that the demand for oil had to be depressed, but that this could not be done by Europe alone. It was agreed at Tokyo that if it could be demonstrated to Saudi Arabia that, by depressing demand, the shortfall in the supply of oil to the West was only, say, 5 per cent, Saudi Arabia might agree to increase her output sufficiently to fill that gap. As Sheikh Khalifa had told her in Bahrain on her way back to London, the Arabs had no desire to hurt the West since this hurt their own interests as well.

Lord Carrington commented that all the Tokyo participants had chosen the base line for their restriction of demand which happened to suit them best.

The Prime Minister went on to say that most economic problems had their origin in political problems. The Middle East was a prime example of this: the first great oil shortage had sprung from the conflict between Israel and Egypt and the new shortage had resulted from the internal political problems of Iran. A major success in Tokyo had been agreement on the importance of developing new sources of energy supply, especially nuclear power. There had also been agreement on the need to improve communication with the OPEC countries and to make them feel that they were being included in the political dialogue. In the last resort, however, the problem of oil could only be solved through a solution to the political problems of the Middle East. The West was at present witnessing the creation by the Soviet Union of a belt of instability across Africa and Asia. A settlement which could restore stability to the Middle East would be a great prize.

Middle East

/ Lord Carrington

Middle East

Lord Carrington asked Dr. Waldheim whether he had it in mind to take any new initiative on the Middle East. Dr. Waldheim said that he fully shared the Prime Minister's view of the situation: without a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, there could be no solution to the West's economic problems. For this reason, he had proposed that a preparatory conference should be held, under UN auspices, one purpose of which would be to re-involve the Arab states and the Soviet Union in the negotiating process. He had recently discussed this question with President Ceausescu of Romania, who agreed with him that a new international conference offered the only hope of progress. The first step would be to take soundings among the Arabs and then to organise a conference in which both they and the PLO could take part. There would be little hope of progress, however, if the Israelis maintained their present policy on new settlements on the West Bank. To his surprise, Mr. Gromyko had told him recently that the Soviet Union no longer wished to return to Geneva; this had indeed been a Soviet objective before the Camp David Agreement, but to go back to Geneva now would, in the Soviet view, imply approval, or at least recognition, of the bilateral treaties. Dr. Waldheim commented that the Russians were very adept at hiding behind the positions of the Arab extremists.

Lord Carrington asked Dr. Waldheim whether he would wait for the Camp David process to run into the sand before launching his own initiative, or whether he set a time limit to it. Dr. Waldheim said that he proposed to make it clear, when he spoke at the Conference of the OAU, that it was important to begin consultations with the Arabs on how to move forward.

Sir Anthony Parsons expressed the view that Geneva was now tainted by history, as well as bedevilled by the problem of Paléstinian representation. What was now needed was a fresh resolution in the Security Council which would formally establish the rights of the Palestinians but not in terms which would inevitably attract a United States veto. The Camp David process could then be allowed to continue until Mr. Strauss was obliged to admit that no further progress could be made. The problem

/ could then

could then go back to the Security Council so that the Secretary General could be given a new mandate. Dr. Waldheim said that he agreed with Sir Anthony Parsons' comments about Geneva: if he waited too long to launch his initiative, however, President Sadat would find himself in serious difficulties. He remained convinced, that an international conference offered the only way forward. The Prime Minister said that a new Security Council resolution could perhaps go a bit further than Resolution 242 on the question of the national identity of the Palestinians; but the difficulty lay in securing the cooperation of Mr. Begin.

#### Southern Africa

Dr. Waldheim asked the Prime Minister for her view of the situation in South Africa. The Prime Minister expressed the view that if they were not constantly being put in the public stocks, the South Africans might move faster than anybody expected. South African industry was a dynamo in promoting Africanisation. The Nationalist Party had recently been defeated in a by-election. The Prime Minister said that the best catalyst for further progress in Southern Africa would be a settlement in Rhodesia. The West should constantly bear in mind the strategic position which South Africa occupied, across the West's life-lines for oil and raw materials.

Dr. Waldheim said that negotiations with South Africa over Namibia had been very difficult, despite the help which the Group of Five had given. He thought that the British Government might now be in the best position of the Five to resume the effort; it was important to pick up the loose ends and try to put a settlement package together again.

Turning to Rhodesia, Dr. Waldheim said that President Kaunda had kept him informed of his contacts with the Prime Minister. Dr. Waldheim expressed the view that Bishop Muzorewa's Government should be regarded as a transitional stage towards a final settlement in Rhodesia.

/ The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister said that it should be constantly borne in mind that Rhodesia had recently conducted elections on the basis of one person, one vote in which the people had been able to choose between four different political parties. The elections had produced a black president, a black Prime Minister, a black majority in the Cabinet and a black majority in the Parliament. This was a colossal advance. The situation in Rhodesia now was infinitely closer to democracy than the situation which existed in many of the countries most critical of Bishop Muzorewa's regime. If the UK were now to go too far in pressing for changes in the constitution, this might upset the white population and the Rhodesian economy could collapse. President Kaunda, for example, had turned out too many whites and the result was that he was now unable to feed his people. Rhodesia could be self-sufficient in food and could also help her neighbours. Bishop Muzorewa had expressed the view that it was essential to encourage the whites to remain so that the economy could be efficiently run in the interests of the black population. The Prime Minister said that Bishop Muzorewa had done everything which had been asked of him: he had been advised to work for a substantial turnout in the elections and he had achieved this. The present constitutional position was not perfect, but few constitutions were.

Dr. Waldheim said that it would be possible to help Bishop Muzorewa by means of new elections to be held under international supervision. He thought that Rhodesia's problems could be solved if the Muzorewa Government were regarded as transitional. The Prime Minister recalled that Rhodesia's last elections had been assessed by observers both from the UK and Australia. The many representatives of the media who had been in Rhodesia at the time had found no defects in the electoral procedures. The conflict in Rhodesia now was not between black and white but between black and black. It was essential that the internal settlement should not be upset: it should be built upon. Joshua Nkomo had made it very clear to Mr. Callaghan's envoy, Mr. Cledwyn Hughes, that he intended to achieve his aims by force.

/Dr. Waldheim

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Dr. Waldheim said that he feared that if no solution could be found soon, there would simply be an endless guerilla war. The Prime Minister said that the British Government would do everything possible to achieve an acceptable settlement: but the UK would have to take others along with her. Lord Carrington agreed and said that recognition by the UK alone would not be much help to Rhodesia. It was essential to chart a middle course between changes which would be acceptable to international opinion and changes which could be accepted by the white population. It was certainly necessary to give Bishop Muzorewa reassurance: but it was also important to convince him of the necessity for changes to the constitution. The Prime Minister said that too radical changes might bring the whole structure down. One way of achieving a better Parliamentary balance would be to add more black members instead of reducing the number of white members.

Concluding the discussion, the Prime Minister said that she greatly looked forward to Dr. Waldheim's official visit to the UK later in the year. The meeting ended at 1810.

*John*

12 July 1979