



Ronnie Parvula

(1)

Would you like  
to see the film? It  
sounds interesting.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 November 1980

Yes  
Rud 8/x1

Dear Rudael,

Film on Afghanistan

The Prime Minister may be interested to know that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office recently commissioned the Central Office of Information to produce a film on the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The COI completed the film, entitled "Afghanistan 1980", last week and copies are being distributed worldwide (except in North America for copyright reasons) through our posts.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been active in producing written material on Afghanistan and since shortly after the Soviet invasion have been producing an attributable round-up of Afghanistan topics called "Afghanistan Report". Our aim has been to ensure that international opinion does not forget, or acquiesce in, the Soviet occupation and that pressure on the Russians to withdraw their troops is maintained.

We are now seeking to drive this message home visually. The film, which lasts 28 minutes, has been compiled from news film available commercially from British, French, American and Soviet sources. It emphasises the suffering, destruction and loss of life caused by the occupation and makes it clear that the Russians remain unwelcome in Afghanistan. It makes good viewing and should make a strong impression on the audiences we aim to influence. Versions with the commentary in Arabic, French and Spanish are being produced and we hope that the film will make a definite impact in the Third World, and especially in the politically important Islamic countries. While it is mainly for television, our posts will also be able to show it to invited audiences or loan it to influential contacts. Distribution of the film has been timed to coincide with the current session of the UN General Assembly, which is likely to debate Afghanistan some time in mid-November.

/The





The film contains no reference to its origins, though credits name the sources of the material. Our posts have, however, been authorised to agree to its being attributed to the London Television Service (a branch of the COI) if overseas television stations insist. The Russians are in any case certain to learn of the film's origin fairly quickly and could criticise the Government for having authorised it. We do not however believe that we should take any such criticism too tragically; the film does no more than present in a different medium the facts of the situation, on which the Government has made its position clear.

If the Prime Minister would like to see the film at any stage, we could arrange, in conjunction with the COI, for a cassette to be provided for No 10.

*7/11/52*  
*GGH*

(G G H Walden)  
Private Secretary

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