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FM SALISBURY 171515Z APR 80

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1365 OF 17 APRIL

INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING WASHINGTON NEW YORK MOSCOW BONN PARIS  
KABUL ISLAMABAD

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER  
FOLLOWING FROM WALDEN

1. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT, DURING HIS VISIT TO KUALA LUMPUR, HE HAD FOUND THE A S E A N COUNTRIES, AND ESPECIALLY THE THAIS, VERY CONCERNED ABOUT CAMBODIA. HUANG HUA THOUGH THAT THE THAIS WERE WORRIED THAT THE SOVIET ADVENTURE IN AFGHANISTAN HAD INCREASED THE POSSIBILITY OF VIETNAMESE RETALIATION ACROSS THEIR BORDER. BUT IT SEEMED THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT HAVE RESTRAINED THE VIETNAMESE IN ORDER NOT TO PROVOKE FURTHER INTERNATIONAL HOSTILITY. THEIR PRESENT AIM WAS TO AVOID PUBLICITY ABOUT AFGHANISTAN, ISOLATE THE AMERICANS BY SPLITTING THEM FROM EUROPE, AND CONDEMN CHINA. THEY WERE REINFORCING THEIR MILITARY ACTION ~~IN AFGHANISTAN~~, BUT COMBINING THIS WITH A PEACEFUL OFFENSIVE, HINTING THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT, BUT ON THEIR OWN CONDITIONS. THEY WOULD WANT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO GUARANTEE THE NEUTRALITY OF AFGHANISTAN AND UNDERTAKE NOT TO INTERFERE. THEY WANTED THE WORLD TO RECOGNISE THE LEGITIMACY OF THEIR INVASION AND MILITARY PRESENCE, AND TO DEPRIVE THE AFGHANS OF THE RIGHT TO RESIST AND OTHERS OF THE RIGHT TO ASSIST THEM. IN THIS WAY THE RUSSIANS HOPED TO TURN THE TABLES ON THE WEST. THE SIGNATURE OF THE SOVIET-AFGHAN TREATY ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS MEANT THAT ANY REAL NEGOTIATION WOULD NOT BE IMPOSSIBLE.

2. THE RUSSIANS WERE IN AFGHANISTAN TO PAVE THE WAY FOR A THRUST TO THE GULF. IT WAS NOT A LOCAL, ISOLATED ACTION, BUT A DECISION TAKEN AFTER DUE CALCULATION. THE CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD BEEN TRYING TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE PAKISTANIS AT SOVIET BEHEST TO PROMOTE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. EVEN A PRELIMINARY CONTACT WOULD BE DANGEROUS SINCE IT WOULD DETRACT FROM THE RESOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS, AND BEGIN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH KABUL.

3. LORD CARRINGTON AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE A VERY BAD MOVE. BUT THE QUESTION WAS WHERE WE WENT FROM HERE. OUR VIEW WAS THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO SECURE THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED AFGHANISTAN, IE ~~WHAT THE AFGHANS WOULD LIKE~~ IF LEFT ALONE. THE EXCUSE THE SOVIET UNION HAD USED FOR THEIR INTERVENTION WAS FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND THE THREAT TO THE SOVIET BORDERS. UNDER OUR NEUTRALITY PROPOSALS, THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THIS EXCUSE. EVEN IF THE PROPOSAL WERE NOT PRACTICABLE IMMEDIATELY, IT WAS A GOOD POLITICAL MOVE, AND THE THIRD WORLD AND THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES MIGHT TAKE IT UP. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE WAS THAT OF GRADUAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOVIET PRESENCE AS A FAIT ACCOMPLI, WHICH WOULD BE THE WORST OUTCOME OF ALL.

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4. HUANG HUA REPEATED THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE USING TALK OF NEGOTIATIONS AND A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO GAIN TIME AND TO PREVENT COMMON ACTION AGAINST THEM. THEY KNEW THAT THERE WAS AN ECONOMIC DEPRESSION IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THAT TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE EAST WERE IMPORTANT. LORD CARRINGTON AGREED THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE TRYING TO SPLIT THE WEST AND PLAY FOR TIME IN THE HOPE THAT WE WOULD ALL FORGET AFGHANISTAN. THIS MADE IT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE ON THE RUSSIANS, NOT ONLY FROM THE WEST BUT THROUGH THE THIRD AND ISLAMIC WORLDS. THE ONLY WAY THIS COULD BE DONE WAS BY A CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSAL INVOLVING PRIOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL AND GURANTEES. AN ADDED DANGER WAS THAT THE AFGHANISTAN PROBLEM WAS GETTING CAUGHT UP IN THE QUESTION OF THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN TEHERAN. THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN VERY PATIENT, BUT ANY ACTION THEY TOOK IN IRAN COULD RUB OFF ON THE AFGHAN SITUATION.

5. HUANG HUA AGREED WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S AIMS, BUT HAD DOUBTS ABOUT OUR APPROACH. THREE THINGS WERE NECESSARY:

A) WE SHOULD INSIST ON THE RUSSIANS ABIDING BY THE U N AND ISLAMIC RESOLUTIONS, IE ON THE TOTAL, UNCONDITIONAL AND IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL TROOPS:

B) THE AFGHANS SHOULD REGAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE, NEUTRALITY AND ISLAMIC CHARACTER OF THEIR COUNTRY.

C) JOINT ACTION SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AGAINST THE RUSSIANS, AND THEIR ATROCITIES SHOULD BE EXPOSED. THE AFGHAN PEOPLE SHOULD BE GIVEN POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT IN THEIR RESISTENCE. WE SHOULD NOT TIE OUR OWN HANDS.

6. ALL THIS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO FORCE THE RUSSIANS OUT. BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE AND TO CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE RUSSIANS IN AFGHANISTAN AND IN THEIR OWN BLOC, AND TO ISOLATE THEM INTERNATIONALLY. ONLY IN THIS WAY COULD ONE PREVENT THEM THRUSTING FURTHER TOWARDS THE SOUTH AND THE SEA LANES. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH THIS ANALYSIS, BUT THOUGHT THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO PURSUE HIS NEUTRALITY PROPOSALS SIMULTANEOUSLY.

7. HUANG HUA RAISED VERY BRIEFLY THE ANGLO-CHINESE AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT. HE HOPED THAT THE BRITISH WOULD EXAMINE THE PROBLEMS IN DETAIL. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ABOUT TO MAKE THE SAME POINT TO HUANG HUA.

8. HUANG HUA SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO RECEIVING THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN PEKING AT THE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER.

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