

OPS

Subject copy:  
Afghanistan, Sit, PLS

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T138/80

PARIS FROM LONDON  
60302/001  
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IMMEDIATE 091730Z JUL  
PARIS FROM LONDON  
SECRET GOVERNMENTAL 0018  
BT  
FROM THE PRIME MINISTER  
TO PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING

MY DEAR PRESIDENT,  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 26 JUNE ABOUT YOUR  
AMBASSADOR'S DISCUSSION WITH MR. GROMYKO. I AGREE WITH  
YOU ABOUT THE NEED TO CONTINUE PROBING THE SOVIET POSITION  
IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WITHDRAWAL  
OF SOME SOVIET TROOPS LAST MONTH. OUR OWN AMBASSADOR IN  
MOSCOW HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE RUSSIANS RECENTLY AND  
MY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YOURS ABOUT  
THE CONTENT OF THESE EXCHANGES. IN THE LATEST DISCUSSION,  
ON 2 JULY, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZEMSKOV WAS TOTALLY  
NEGATIVE AND INDICATED NO MOVEMENT IN THE SOVIET POSITION.  
THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE  
COMPLETE LACK OF GIVE ON THE SOVIET SIDE DURING HELMUT SCHMIDT'S  
TALKS WITH PRESIDENT BREZHNEV IN MOSCOW.

I NOTE THAT IN HIS REMARKS TO YOUR AMBASSADOR, MR. GROMYKO  
DID NOT MENTION BARBRAK KARMAL BUT REFERRED INSTEAD TO AN  
AGREEMENT WITH AFGHANISTAN OR WITH KABUL. THIS MIGHT SUGGEST  
THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE CONSIDERING SOME CHANGES OF PERSONNEL  
IN THE AFGHAN REGIME. PERHAPS THE POINT WILL BECOME CLEARER  
WHEN YOU RECEIVE MR. BREZHNEV'S CONSIDERED REPLY TO YOUR  
MESSAGE.

I ENJOYED OUR DISCUSSIONS AT VENICE AND HOPE THAT WE CAN  
CONTINUE TO KEEP IN TOUCH ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING  
AFGHANISTAN.

WITH BEST WISHES,

MARGARET THATCHER

BT