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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

This is the follow up to your conversation with the Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary last week.

The link between Afghanistan & the visit to Moscow is clearly made.

I continue to find the timing a little odd in the Polish context. But one can argue that once the Ten have endorsed the initiative, the sooner Lord Carrington puts it to the Russians the better. It is of course well understood that if the Russians take overt action against the Poles, the visit will be instantly cancelled. Would you wish to proceed as he proposes? Yes - Poland secretary.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 June 1981

Dear Michael,

Afghanistan

Clive Whitmore's letter of ~~21~~ 20 May conveyed the Prime Minister's agreement to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's minute of 20 May in which he described the steps he would be taking to promote a proposal by the Ten for an international conference on Afghanistan.

First reactions to the proposal have been most encouraging. Genscher and Cheysson have both said that they support it. The Americans have also said that they see no difficulty and we understand that a message to this effect will shortly reach us from Haig. We made a particular point of carefully consulting the Netherlands Presidency who again reacted favourably. Sir John Graham visited Pakistan at the end of last week to present our ideas to the President and Foreign Minister. President Zia (who asked Graham to convey his good wishes to the Prime Minister) and Agha Shahi were also attracted by the proposal and said that Pakistan would support it - but they will be careful as to how they react initially to the announcement to avoid the appearance of collusion. They made no objection to the participation of India, although they hope this can be presented as representation of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware of the further action that Lord Carrington contemplates. We shall be giving the rest of the Ten an outline of our proposal today in the hope that they will have time to study it and convey their agreement at the next meeting of Political Directors on 16 June. Before the formal announcement of the proposal at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Ten on 22 June we propose to brief the Saudi Foreign Minister (on 10 June), the Australian Foreign Minister (on 12 June), and the Japanese Foreign Minister (on 17 June). On 17 June we would also brief NATO and, in capitals, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. On the following day we shall brief the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference, the Saudis (in Jeddah), India, Iran and Japan. We are still considering the best time to brief the Chinese.

The important step, however, is the approach to the Soviet Union. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary intends to instruct HM Ambassador, Moscow, to reply on 19 June to the message passed to Lord Carrington by Ambassador Popov on 23 April. Sir Curtis Keeble would tell the Soviet Union that Lord Carrington was interested in a meeting with Gromyko at which he would discuss a number of subjects, in particular

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Afghanistan, on which we had some ideas about a possible solution. He would then describe in outline the proposed international conference on Afghanistan and suggest that Gromyko and Lord Carrington should meet on 3/4 July.

An approach on these lines would, as agreed, tie the visit to Moscow clearly to the Afghanistan initiative. It would give the Russians advance notice before the Foreign Ministers of the Ten announced the proposal on 22 June. We believe that some advance warning is desirable since our general approach is to give the Russians no easy excuse for rejecting the proposal (if they were simply informed by public announcement they could the more easily reject it as a propaganda move). But the proposed timing should be insufficient for the Russians to make disparaging public comment or to come back with a formal rejection, before 22 June; and the offer of a visit to discuss it should have a similarly inhibiting effect on Soviet public comment.

Lord Carrington believes that a visit at the time proposed (there is no easy alternative in the first half of July) would have the additional advantage of creating another reason for the Russians to hesitate over intervening in Poland. As the Prime Minister knows, Lord Carrington has invited the Polish Foreign Minister to come here next week, partly for the same purpose.

yours ever

Roderic Lyne

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