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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 155 OF 15 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, ISLAMABAD, MOSCOW, KABUL,  
INFO PRIORITY HAVANA, PEKING, PARIS, BONN, UKDEL NATO BRUSSELS.

FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR KREISKY

1. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT THE CHNCELLOR SEEMED SCEPTICAL ABOUT PROPOSALS FOR A NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED AFGHANISTAN. THE CHANCELLOR EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS BECAUSE EVERYONE HAD RECOGNISED THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD LONG EXERCISED A CERTAIN INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH THEY WOULD NEVER GIVE UP. MOREOVER, BABRAK KARMAL WAS NOT A QUISLING. THE WEST SHOULD NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AS IT HAD WITH KADAR. THE FIRST NEED WAS FOR AN INTERNAL POLITICAL SOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN, THEN ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE AFGHANS AND THE PAKISTANIS (WHOM HE DISTRUSTED). KARMAL WAS IN HIS VIEW READY TO DO SOMETHING ON REFUGEES, EG OVER THE RETURN OF PROPERTY. THERE WAS ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION. BUT HE RECOGNISED THAT THESE MOVES NEEDED TO BE CONNECTED WITH THE EVACUATION OF TROOPS.

2. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT THE MILLION REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN WERE A MEASURE OF THE UNPOPULARITY OF KARMAL'S GOVERNMENT. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE A SOLUTION WHICH DID NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS FACT. PERHAPS THE WEST HAD TOO EASILY ACCEPTED THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND THE RUSSIANS. BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN A PUPPET GOVERNMENT. HE COULD NOT SEE A SITUATION IN WHICH THE RUSSIANS WOULD WITHDRAW WITHOUT LEAVING BEHIND A SITUATION FAVOURABLE TO THE SOVIET UNION: YET SUCH A SITUATION WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE. THE CHANCELLOR SUGGESTED THAT THE FINNS WERE AN EXAMPLE WHERE THE RUSSIANS HAD RESPECTED THE DETERMINATION OF A PEOPLE NOT TO SUCCUMB TO OCCUPATION, AND WHERE THE RUSSIANS HAD DRAWN THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY SHOULD NOT STAY ON. THE SAME WAS NOT TRUE OF EG THE CZECHS, BUT COULD BE OF THE AFGHANS. DEMOCRACY IN AFGHANISTAN WAS AN ILLUSION, BUT THERE HAD TO BE A POLITICAL SOLUTION. HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A 'NON PAPER' BY A FORMER AFGHAN PRIME MINISTER ARGUING FOR A MEETING BETWEEN DIFFERENT INTERNAL POLITICAL AFGHAN GROUPS (THE EXTERNAL GROUPS WERE ALL ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS), IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE PARTICIPANTS WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO PRESSURE OR INTERFERENCE. THE PAPER HAD SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS NO CHOICE BUT TO COLLABORATE WITH KARMAL, WHOSE ENTOURAGE WAS BETTER THAN THAT OF AMIN.

/s. LORD

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3. LORD CARRINGTON RECALLED THAT HISTORICALLY AFGHANISTAN HAD BEEN A BUFFER STATE. WE KNEW THAT THE AFGHANS WISHED TO BE NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED, IF LEFT TO THEMSELVES. HE HAD NOTHING AGAINST KARMAL, PROVIDED THAT THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES WANTED HIM.

THE TROUBLE SPRANG FROM THE IMPOSITION OF A GOVERNMENT BY THE RUSSIANS, WHO SEEMED TO RESERVE THE RIGHT TO GO BACK IN AGAIN EVEN IF THEY WITHDREW. WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR THEIR OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN, THE FACT WAS THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD DESTABILISED THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION BY THEIR ACT. THEY HAD ALSO UPSET INDIA, PAKISTAN AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM, AS WELL AS IRAN, AND HAD ALSO GIVEN SATISFACTION TO THE CHINESE,

HO WERE CONTENT TO SEE THE RUSSIANS BOGGED DOWN. WHAT WORRIED HIM ABOUT THE CHANCELLOR'S APPROACH WAS THAT IT IMPLIED ACCEPTANCE OF THIS INSTABILITY, BY ACCEPTING THE SOVIET RIGHT TO MAINTAIN A PUPPET GOVERNMENT AND TO WALK IN WHEN THEY WISHED.

4. THE CHANCELLOR DISPUTED THIS. HE HAD TOLD THE CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY WAS AN INTERNAL POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND NOTE A SETTLEMENT BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND THE PRESENT AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. REPORTS OF THE CUBAN'S TALKS WITH THE YUGOSLAVS AND THE INDIANS SUGGESTED THAT HE HAD UNDERSTOOD THIS POINT. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HIS ANALYSIS SEEMED TO COINCIDE WITH THAT OF THE CHANCELLOR. BUT PROGRESS COULD ONLY BE MADE THROUGH PRESSURE FROM THE NON-ALIGNED, THIRD WORLD AND ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS. OUR PROPOSALS FOR NEUTRALITY AND NON-ALIGNMENT GAVE THE RUSSIANS A FACE-SAVING WAY OUT, AND WERE ATTRACTIVE TO THE NON-ALIGNED. HOWEVER, HE RECOGNISED THE PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTATION.

5. THE CHANCELLOR SAID THAT HE SAW NO DIVERGENCE BETWEEN THEIR VIEWS. ONE OF HIS VICE PRESIDENTS HAD TOLD FIDEL CASTRO THAT ON THIS OCCASION THE CUBANS WERE THE SPOKESMAN OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT RATHER THAN A COMMUNIST COUNTRY, AND SHOULD PROTECT THEIR MEMBER WHO HAD BEEN INVADED AND AVOID A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE WORLD SITUATION. CASTRO HAD APPEARED TO ACCEPT THIS. THE CHANCELLOR THOUGHT THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT AS HOPELESS AS IT LOOKED. HE AGREED THAT AFGHANISTAN, AS A NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY, WAS NOT IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY, THE SUBJUGATION OF WHICH THE WEST HAD ACCEPTED. BUT HE ALSO OBJECTED TO PARALLELS IN THE PRESS BETWEEN OUR NEUTRALITY PROPOSALS FOR AFGHANISTAN AND THE SITUATION IN AUSTRIA. (LORD CARRINGTON AGREED THAT THERE WAS NO COMPARISON). SOME NEUTRAL COUNTRIES IN EUROPE COULD HELP THE SITUATION EVEN IF THEY COULD NOT SOLVE IT.

2  
CONFIDENTIAL 16. LORD



CONFIDENTIAL

5. LORD CARRINGTON SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE CHANCELLOR'S THINKING. KREISKY WELCOMED THIS, AND ASKED FOR A FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THE ARAB/ISRAEL SITUATION. THIS IS BEING ARRANGED FOR THE EARLY EVENING OF TOMORROW 15 MAY.

GORDON

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3

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