

12/7/84

Bernard Ingham

The attached copy note is self-explanatory.

Michael Alison has agreed that he will meet Mr Ses-Haq on the Prime Minister's behalf, at Downing Street, on Thursday 12th July at 4.30 p.m.

When I spoke to Mr Cooper, he asked if they could bring a camera crew to film Mr Ses-Haq meeting Mr Alison at the Front Door. I spoke again to Charles Powell who said that he thought it would be better not to have a film-crew, but that they should have a still photographer only. I spoke to Mr Cooper to explain this, but he was a little stubborn and said that he might telephone you to ask your agreement for a film-crew outside Downing Street when Mr Ses-Haq comes.

This is just to alert you so that you know what Charles Powell's point of view (and Michael's) is.

Tessa

10.7.84

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Michael

Robert Cranborne telephoned on Friday afternoon to ask if he could bring in Engr. Izaak Ses-Haq, who is Commander Massud's Number 2 in the Pancho Valley in Afghanistan to "shake hands with the Prime Minister". He is in London this week. (The Prime Minister met Commander Massud when he was in London 2 summers ago).

Charles Powell's advice, and that of the Foreign Office, is that she should not see him, chiefly because if she starts seeing seconds-in-command as well as all the top people, the flood gates would open.

The contact Robert Cranborne gave me is Mr Tim Cooper at the Afghanistan Support Committee (379-7218). I did speak to him yesterday to say that we would get a reply to him "tomorrow."

However, as the answer is a negative one, do you think you could possibly telephone him? Charles did say to me that you might, possibly, feel that you should see Engr. Ses-Haq on the Prime Minister's behalf.

Tessa

10.7.84

COVERING RESTRICTED



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 July 1984

Dear Charles,

*M.A.
I hope this
will be helpful.
C D P
12/7*

Afghanistan

/ I enclose a short background brief
for Mr Alison's meeting with Engineer
Es'Haq on 12 July.

Yours ever,

Len Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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CALL ON MR ALISON, NO 10 DOWNING STREET BY ENGINEER MOHAMMED ES'HAQ

BACKGROUND

1. Well over 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan have failed to crush continuing countrywide resistance. They show no sign of withdrawing. Factional rivalry within the Karmal regime continues.

Engineer Mohammed Es'Haq

2. 'Engineer' (used as a title in Afghanistan) Es'Haq, the Public Relations Officer for the resistance group in the Panjshir Valley, led by Jamiat-i Islami (Islamic Society) Commander Mahsood, is currently touring Western Europe to seek support for the resistance. His visit to the UK 9-16 July, is being arranged by the Afghanistan Support Committee, whose Chairman is Lord Cranborne. Appointments have been made for Mr Es'Haq to call on officials in ODA and FCO (South Asian Department). Es'Haq gave an interview to the BBC Eastern Service on 11 July, when he spoke in general terms of the resistance and its attitude to a political settlement in Afghanistan.

A Resistance groups (see attached note)

3. Jamiat is one of several resistance groups, many of which are in competition with each other, fighting to expel Soviet troops from Afghanistan. While we support the resistance cause, we do not wish to show preference for individual leaders or groups. On this basis neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary has received Afghanistan resistance leaders or fighters. But in January 1983 the Prime Minister received a delegation of Afghanistan civilians who witnessed the massacre in Logar of 105 unarmed civilians. FCO Ministers have, however, agreed to requests for meetings from resistance leaders, most recently Professor Rabbani, leader of Jamiat, and Pir Syed Ahmed Gailani of the National Islamic Front. Rabbani called on Mr Hurd in April 1983 and Gailani on Lady Young and Mr Whitney in August 1983.

Situation on the ground

4. A seventh major Soviet/Karmal regime assault on the strategic Panjshir Valley north of Kabul began in April. This was supported by high-altitude bombing, but only succeeded in securing part of the valley floor. It failed to crush the local Jamiat resistance under Mahsood, who was forewarned and evacuated the valley. However many civilians are reported homeless as a result of the bombing. Resistance activity continues at a high level elsewhere, particularly around the major cities of Herat and Kandahar. Meanwhile factional rivalry within the regime persists: unconfirmed reports suggest that Defence Minister Abdul Qader, of the ruling Parcham faction, shot and wounded Minister of Communications Watanjar, of the Khalq faction in early July.

HMG's condemnation

B 5. HMG have made clear their condemnation of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the latest offensive in Panjshir, most recently in Lady Young's winding-up speech in the House of Lords debate on Afghanistan in April. At our suggestion, Ministers of the Ten issued a joint statement of protest at the Foreign Affairs Council in May.

UN talks

6. A further round of 'indirect talks' in Geneva between Pakistan and Afghanistan is scheduled for late August. These aim to find a solution based on the principles of successive UN resolutions, principally the immediate withdrawal of foreign (ie Soviet) troops. The resistance will not participate. These talks follow a visit to the area by the UN Secretary-General's personal representative, Cordovez. Perez de Cuellar is now in Moscow for talks on Afghanistan. But there is no sign of Soviet concessions on the crucial issue of a timetable for troop withdrawal.

Aid for Refugees

7. Since January 1980 the UK has provided £21.6 million aid for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. We intend to maintain assistance at a substantial level in future years.

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PESHAWAR RESISTANCE GROUPS

1. The resistance groups based in Peshawar divide broadly into two camps, the fundamentalists and the moderates. They are represented by two umbrella organisations, one for each persuasion, both using the name Islamic Unity of the Mujahideen of Afghanistan.
2. There are six major groups, three in each camp:

Fundamentalists

(a) Hizb (Hekmatyar): The Hizb-i-Islami (Islamic Party) is led by Engineer Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who models himself on the Ayatollah Khomeini. It is strong in eastern and north-eastern Afghanistan.

(b) Hizb (Khalis): This is an offshoot of (a), led by Maulavi Mohammad Yunis Khalis. It is active in the south-east.

(c) Jamiat: The Jamiat-i-Islami (Islamic Society) is led by Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani. A mainly Tajik group, it is active in the north and north-east, particularly the Panjshir Valley area.

These three are now also nominally united with four smaller fundamentalist groups in an alliance led by Professor Abdul Rasul Saiyaf.

Moderates

(d) Harakat: The Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) is led by Maulavi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi. It is strong in the south, the west and around Kabul.

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(e) NIFA: The Mahaz-i-Milli Islami (National Islamic Front), is led by Sayed Ahmed Gailani, whose title, 'Pir', indicates he is the hereditary leader of an Islamic sect. This group is active around Kandahar and the south-east.

(f) NLF: The Jabha-i-Milli Nijat (National Liberation Front), is led by Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddedi and is active in the north and east.

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refugees, although numerically they are not so great, is more tragic than the problem of those in the refugee camps.

What support for these heroic people is being given by Her Majesty's Government? Help for the refugees, yes. I welcomed the last announcement made of additional contributions partly through the EC and partly directly. Votes at the United Nations, yes, I welcome them. The statement of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Soviet invasion was as good a statement as any Foreign Office official could draft. Having been Foreign Office Minister, I have seen statements drafted by Foreign Office officials. And jolly good they are. However, they are words. What about action?

The noble Earl, Lord Selkirk, asked whether we are being complacent. The noble Earl, like other noble Lords, referred to the French who have sent over 160 doctors and nurses. They have equipped hospitals in the areas controlled by the Mujahadin. There is, as we know, a growing need for food and medical supplies in the many parts of Afghanistan that are still held by the Mujahadin. I am not arguing the case for arms and equipment. I shall simply say that at a very large meeting at one of the refugee camps where questions had been asked of me, as I had been asking them of others, one of my questions was, "What is your greatest need?". They said with one voice, "Arms". "Give us arms", they said. I have not got anything to offer them and I am not going to make any comment on that at this stage. But those who are fighting for their freedom are entitled to expect of us more than mere words, more than resolutions. If they think that they are on their own then their cause is lost, and it is part of the responsibility of this House, this Government, to see that they are upheld in their belief, in their conviction, that their cause is not lost, that their courage is not simply being wasted, because the sacrifices they face are very great.

A Prime Minister who tried to stop athletes from going to the Moscow Olympics ought to show more determination to help the people themselves. I have been concentrating not so much on the refugees but on those who are in Afghanistan now. The noble Baroness, Lady Young, has had her own experiences and I am looking forward intensely to hearing what she has to say. She has heard the strong feelings from all sides of the House this evening. I look forward to hearing from her some positive indications of the policies of Her Majesty's Government as well as her impressions from her recent visit.

I do not believe that it is enough simply for us to pass resolutions and make pious statements. Those people are fighting for their country, their very survival, their existence, their freedom. When I say "freedom" I do not mean democracy; I mean freedom to live as they have lived, with their own religion and their own social and political customs. They are entitled to expect from us some sort of support which shows they are not left alone in an isolated world.

10.17 p.m.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Young): My Lords, I am sure we are all grateful to my noble friend Lord Selkirk for asking

this Unstarred Question this evening. There has been a quite remarkable unanimity of view among all those who have taken part in the debate. I hope that the noble Lord, Lord Kennet, will understand if I do not follow him in his arguments this evening, because the question before the House is on Afghanistan. We have had a most interesting analysis of possible future events from my noble friend Lord Beloff and a number of constructive ideas for possible diplomatic solutions.

I agree with my noble friend Lord Selkirk when he says that the issues at stake in Afghanistan should be of urgent concern to everyone in the free world. What is taking place in Afghanistan is not only a crime against international law, but a crime against humanity. For over four years now Afghanistan has been illegally occupied by Soviet troops, now numbering well over 100,000 men. These troops are inflicting untold devastation and suffering on the Afghan people. They have killed or injured tens of thousands of Afghans in increasingly brutal and indiscriminate attacks. They have rendered millions more homeless by destroying their crops and villages, driving them abroad as refugees. They have installed a client régime which remains wholly dependent on Soviet military might for its survival, and which pursues a viciously repressive policy against the very people it purports to represent.

In the last few days we have learnt that the Russians have stepped up their brutal campaign even further. Yesterday one of the Afghan resistance leaders was quoted as describing Soviet policy in Afghanistan as genocide, saying that the Russians had intensified their assaults on towns and villages in an attempt to terrorise the civilian population.

The latest news is that the Russians have launched a seventh major offensive against the people of the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul, who have provided some of the most stalwart resistance to the invader. Indeed, it appears that this latest offensive has included high-altitude bombing, a particularly indiscriminate and terrifying tactic. Kabul Radio has reported that the valley has been captured but the resistance have denied this. I have no information about the fighting; nor have I any information about the scale of the casualties among the brave Afghan resistance and civilians or the whereabouts of Ahmed Shah Masood, the young resistance commander who has become a symbol of his people's fight to regain their country.

One might have expected the Afghan people to have been subdued by this relentless brutality. No doubt the Soviet leaders entertained such expectations when in December 1979 they took the foolhardy and callous decision to invade. How wrong they were. The Afghan people have refused to be cowed. Their spirit remains unbroken. Indeed, despite their appalling suffering, their determination to defend their way of life against an invader and an alien régime has, if anything, increased. Their spontaneous resistance now extends throughout the country, and even into the heart of the capital, Kabul.

Of course, the resistance lacks the capacity to drive Soviet forces out of their country. But what they achieve against such overwhelming odds and in face of such massively superior fire-power is indeed remarkable. They have learnt over the years to avoid

[BARONESS YOUNG.]

ge-scale pitched battles, which would only cause heavy casualties. They have learnt also to co-ordinate their operations and to co-operate between local groups in the interests of a particular objective. Through their attacks on Soviet convoys, on régime installations and on army out-posts, the resistance have succeeded in denying the invaders control of all but a fraction of the country. In some provincial towns which the régime claims to control, that control extends to little more than the ground within range of their own weapons.

A number of noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Gladwyn, the noble Lord, Lord Caccia, the noble Lord, Lord Greenhill of Harrow, and the noble Lord, Lord Ennals, have asked about the supply of arms. I am sure that they will understand when I say that it is clear from the continued resistance activity that arms are getting through and that really it would be helpful not to discuss this matter any further.

The Soviet Union's client régime is thus no nearer to controlling Afghanistan now than it was when Babrak Karmal was installed in December 1979. Indeed, the campaign of repression may even have increased the Afghan people's resolve not to accept it. The régime remains riven by factional feuding between the minority Parcham faction headed by Karmal himself and the disaffected majority Khalq faction. Its failure to win domestic support is matched by its failure to win international credibility and recognition. The unreliable and demoralised Afghan army continues to be depleted by desertions and defections to the resistance, and is now estimated to number only about 40,000 men, half its strength before the Soviet invasion. The régime has attempted to stem the tide of desertions by draconian conscription drives. But like the fruitless attempts to bludgeon the Afghan people into submission, these measures have had the opposite effect, and have served only to demoralise the army even further. The Soviet Union's claim that it now provides only logistical support to Karmal's troops is a travesty of the facts. It is the Soviet army that carries the brunt of the fighting. Without Soviet support, the Karmal régime could not survive.

Nearly all noble Lords—who have spoken in this debate have asked: What can we do? First, we can look at how the international community has responded to this deplorable state of affairs. The outcry at the Emergency Session of the General Assembly in January 1980 has not died away. The General Assembly has adopted a total of five resolutions calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the preservation of Afghanistan's independence and non-aligned status, self-determination for the Afghan people, and the voluntary return of the refugees. All have been adopted with overwhelming majorities with the nations of the third world joining those of the West in almost unanimous condemnation of the Soviet invasion. Indeed, the most recent resolution, in November 1983, was adopted by a record majority of 96. Other international fora, such as the Non-Aligned Movement—and the noble Lord, Lord Gladwyn, asked what part they had played in this—the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and the meetings of Commonwealth Heads of Government,

have reaffirmed the urgent need for an internationally acceptable political settlement based on the principles set out in the United Nations resolutions. It remains clear that the international community will not accept as a *fait accompli* this blatant act of unprovoked aggression against a non-aligned third world country.

For their part, the nations of the European Community have repeatedly called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and it was the noble Lord, Lord Caccia, who particularly asked about the Community. On the fourth anniversary of the Soviet invasion on 27th December 1983, the Greeks issued a statement on behalf of the Ten stressing the urgent need for the withdrawal of Soviet troops as the key to any lasting settlement. On the same day, my right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs issued a parallel British statement calling upon the Soviet leaders to honour their international obligations under the United Nations charter and to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan, so that the suffering of the Afghan people could be brought to an end. I was glad to hear the support of the noble Lord, Lord Ennals, for this statement.

We have also contributed directly to the search for a political settlement through the proposals for an international conference on Afghanistan launched by my noble friend Lord Carrington on behalf of the Ten in June 1981. These proposals gained the support of some 70 non-EC countries. We continue to regard them as a realistic and practicable means towards promoting a political settlement, and they remain on the table.

The Ten have also given their firm and consistent support to the efforts of the United Nations secretary-general to find a solution to the problems. These efforts date from early 1981, when the then secretary-general, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, appointed Mr. Perez de Cuellar as his personal representative with the task of promoting a political settlement. When Mr. Perez de Cuellar himself became secretary-general, he appointed Mr. Diego Cordovez to take over the task. Since then Mr. Cordovez has succeeded in arranging for three rounds of indirect talks to be held in Geneva between the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and the Karmal régime. A draft package has been drawn up setting out the four elements of an integrated settlement: troop withdrawal, non-interference in Afghanistan, international guarantees of the final settlement, and consultation of the refugees. Mr. Cordovez has recently completed a further tour of the area in an attempt to carry his initiative forward, and I had an opportunity to discuss the outcome with the secretary-general when he visited London last week.

Mr. Cordovez's efforts are welcome. They offer the only prospect of movement. But despite Mr. Cordovez's painstaking work, there are no signs of a breakthrough. For, of the four elements of the package drawn up by Mr. Cordovez, the most crucial one is surely the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, whose presence in the country has given rise to the conflict in the first place. And on this crucial issue the Russians appear to remain intransigent. They have refused to give any firm undertaking to withdraw within a specific time-frame agreeable to all the parties involved. Instead, they have sought to brand the

spontaneous resistance of the Afghan people as the source of the trouble, arguing that this "external interference", as they misleadingly call it, must end before they can consider withdrawing their troops. They then go on to argue that this troop withdrawal is a bilateral matter for themselves and the Karmal régime.

This is patently unrealistic. The Afghan people are not going to give up their struggle so long as the Russians refuse to commit themselves to withdrawing. Nor are the refugees going to agree to return on this basis. The international guarantors of a settlement, so far unidentified, cannot be expected to underwrite a settlement which effectively legitimises the *status quo*. These elements of the settlement, vital as they are, will only fall into place when the Russians agree to withdraw. Unfortunately there is no sign that the Soviet leadership is about to give such an undertaking. Our recent talks in London with the Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Kornienko, showed that the Russians are as intransigent as ever. I need hardly say that we made our views clear to Mr. Kornienko, as we have done consistently at other meetings with Soviet Ministers.

The Pakistan Government, with whom I had talks in March, are committed for their part to the United Nations process. They have co-operated with the secretary-general and his personal representative throughout the difficult negotiations so far and rightly insist that any settlement must be in line with the basic principles of the resolutions adopted with such resounding majorities by the General Assembly. Their firm and principled stand deserves our full support.

One vital element of a settlement is of course that it should allow the refugees to return to their homes. Soviet actions in Afghanistan have now driven over one-fifth of the population into exile as refugees. There are up to 3 million refugees in Pakistan alone, where the camps administered by the Pakistan Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees form the largest concentration of refugees in the world. I saw some of those camps last month when I visited Pakistan. One of the most tragic sights I shall always remember was to see the camp specially set aside for widows and orphans; a stark reminder of the tragic suffering of the Afghan people. Pakistan's generous and skilful handling of this immense humanitarian problem deserves our wholehearted admiration and support.

The British Government have played their part in the international relief effort to alleviate the sufferings of these unfortunate people. Our total aid since January 1980 now amounts to £21.6 million of cash and food aid, including some £7.6 million channelled through the European Community. This includes the recent allocation of £1.6 million, of which I was pleased to tell the refugees when I visited one of their camps on 10th March. The bulk of our aid goes to UNHCR; but we have also contributed to the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, the British Red Cross, Christian Aid, Oxfam, the Save the Children Fund, and the Afghanistan Support Committee. Of our aid to UNHCR, £1 million has been allocated specifically to a scheme launched by the World Bank and UNHCR to set up income-generating projects for the

refugees, including activities in agriculture, forestry, and irrigation. We have also set up a scheme to provide scholarships for Afghan refugees to come to the United Kingdom for training, mainly at university level. I was glad to hear the noble Lord, Lord Greenhill of Harrow, refer to this. Since its inception in 1982, this scheme has proved successful, and there are 25 further awards available in 1984-85.

We attach great importance to the assistance we provide for these people, but the real need is of course for peace in their country so that they can return home. So once again we come back to the need for the withdrawal of the Soviet forces whose actions have driven them out. The fighting, destruction and suffering have gone on too long already. The secretary-general has provided the means for a political settlement which will bring them to an end, and we wish him success. The call from the international community is clear: The Soviet Union must honour its obligations under the United Nations Charter, withdraw its troops immediately, and allow the Afghans to determine their own future.

The Earl of Selkirk: My Lords, before the noble Baroness sits down, may I ask whether we recognise the Karmal Government?

Baroness Young: Yes, my Lords, we recognise the State of Afghanistan.

Barclays Bank Bill

Brought from the Commons; read a first time, and referred to the Examiners.

Selby Bridge Bill

Brought from the Commons; read a first time, and referred to the Examiners.

House adjourned at twenty-six minutes before eleven o'clock.

Written Answers

SCANDINAVIA: SPEED LIMITS AND ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Lord Jenkins of Putney asked Her Majesty's Government:

What are the road speed limits in Norway and Sweden; and how do the road death and accident rates in those countries compare with those in the United Kingdom.