

From Vienna

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Following from Private Secretary:

Secretary of State's Meeting with Mr. Gromyko

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1. Lord Carrington met Mr. Gromyko for just over an hour this morning. He began by asking Gromyko about Soviet ideas on OSCE and the Madrid meeting. The Soviet Union had put forward proposals on CBM's and disarmament which were not dissimilar to those of the French. Perhaps we could all make a step forward on this basis, though progress would also be needed on other baskets. He agreed with the Soviet view that Foreign Ministers should not be involved at Madrid unless something useful seemed likely to emerge from the meeting. Gromyko said that Madrid must be well prepared, and held in a positive atmosphere. The Soviet Union wanted to be constructive, but would give as good as she got if others used the meeting for demagogic declarations, as had happened in Belgrade. The Soviet Union wanted what it called a conference on military detente and disarmament, but could conceive of a two stage meeting, the first on CBMs and military detente and the second on disarmament. Madrid might give life to this idea, though he did not rule out the possibility of something concrete being put forward at Madrid itself. If not, a mandate could be given by the Madrid meeting to an ensuing conference. Such a conference could inject some warm air into the atmosphere in Europe.

2. Lord Carrington said that Madrid would be less warm if a solution were not found over Afghanistan. The historical background showed that Afghanistan was a natural buffer state, and that the only answer to that country's problems was to ensure

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that no power exercised influence there to the detriment of others. But there was now a revival of fears in the West and especially the US (Britain was self sufficient) about oil and the Gulf. Hence our proposals for a neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan, which had not been badly received in the Third World. We had also looked carefully at the recent Afghan proposals to see whether they could be built on. There seemed to be a germ of an idea in all this. A neutral and non-aligned Afghanistan, with guarantees of non-interference, might suit both the Soviet Union and the West.

3. Gromyko dismissed Western "propaganda" over Soviet ambitions in oil producing areas as "sheer nonsense". His Government had no intention of affecting the oil interests to the US, Britain or anyone else in that area, though everyone was entitled to their own interests. The Soviet Union wanted to see Iran as an independent State. If British neutrality proposals meant interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, (and there seemed to be a strong dose of this in them) they were unacceptable. But if we meant respect for the present independent regime, that was a different matter.

4. Lord Carrington welcomed and took note of Gromyko's assurances on the Gulf area. Yet the scale of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan had aroused concern. Gromyko asked whether we accepted the present Afghan leadership, or whether we wanted to change it? Lord Carrington said that we believed that the *BABRIK* regime only existed because of Soviet support. If it were shown that the Afghans themselves wanted it, that was fine, though a million refugees seemed to have voted with their feet. Gromyko said that we could believe what we wanted. But what was needed was agreement

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between Afghanistan and Pakistan with appropriate international guarantees on non-interference. This would create the conditions for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops. We would then see that the Afghans could manage their own affairs. He denied categorically that Soviet troops were fighting in Afghanistan, or interfering there in any way, but there must be political guarantees on non-intervention before they could be withdrawn. Lord Carrington agreed that all outside interference must stop. But agreement to withdraw troops must be reached at the same time. We would object to circumstances where outside interference continued.

5. Gromyko repeated that there must be prior agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and also between Afghanistan and Iran (though there were less armed intrusions from Iran) on the cessation of all interference. Such an agreement must have the appropriate political guarantees. The Russians were not opposed to other states taking part in such guarantees, if those directly concerned considered this necessary. He knew the Pakistanis had doubts about their frontier with Afghanistan, and this problem must also be resolved. We must get it into our heads that the Russians would definitely withdraw once agreement was reached. This withdrawal would however be a process in itself, and could not be accomplished as quickly as the signature of the agreement itself. But the process of withdrawal too was open to negotiation, and could be raised by Pakistan in talks with Afghanistan. A non-aligned Afghanistan would suit the Soviet Union. Muskie had not objected to it, and it should suit us too. We should explain to the Pakistan leadership the need for talks with the Afghan Government. There was no way to settle the situation in the region without such discussions.



6. Lord Carrington said that a guarantee of non-interference and the withdrawal of troops had to go hand in hand. It might take time to withdraw, but the decision to do so could be taken in a few seconds. Some people might be suspicious if there were a delay between the signature of an agreement on non-interference and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. The Afghans must be allowed to decide who they wanted to govern them and there should be no Soviet interference either through troops or political advisers. We wanted a truly neutral Afghanistan.

7. Gromyko claimed that Soviet forces had entered Afghanistan by request under an agreement with the Afghan Government, and could only be withdrawn by agreement with that Government, and not by agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But both the Soviet and Afghan Governments had said that the troops would go following an agreement with political guarantees. Lord Carrington surely had no doubts in his own mind. Why therefore was he making difficulties?

8. In a brief private exchange at the end of the meeting, Lord Carrington told Gromyko that our positions might not be as far apart as they seemed, though simultaneity was important. Gromyko agreed that we should keep in touch.

9. The only other subject raised was the proposed memorial in London to the "victims of Yalta". Gromyko affected amazement that HMG should be involved in a project of this nature, given that the United Kingdom had participated at Yalta. He gathered that the Prime Minister herself had agreed to its erection. He could only regard this as a hostile act, of which due account would have to be taken. Lord Carrington explained that the Government's involvement was limited to the decision not to withhold permission for the memorial to be erected on Crown land. Some of his fellow countrymen interpreted history rather differently from Mr. Gromyko.

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