

RESTRICTED
FM PEKING
TO DESKBY 070730Z FCOLN
TELNO 1071
OF 070641Z JUNE 89
INFO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG

YOUR TELNO 545 (NOT TO HONG KONG).

CHINA INTERNAL: EVACUATION.

1. ON THE AUTHORITY GIVEN TO ME IN YOUR TELNO 525 I HAVE DECIDED TO SEND ALL EMBASSY DEPENDANTS AND A CERTAIN NUMBER OF NON-ESSENTIAL STAFF OUT OF PEKING TODAY ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS. WE ARE NOT (NOT) TREATING THIS AS A FORMAL EVACUATION. THE PROPOSED MEANS IS BY A BA FLIGHT EXTENDED TO PEKING AS DESCRIBED IN YOUR PARA 2. WE AWAIT FINAL CHINESE CLEARANCE BUT THINGS ARE SHAPING UP WELL.
2. A FULL LIST OF DEPENDANTS AND STAFF TAKING THIS FLIGHT WILL FOLLOW IN DUE COURSE. IT WILL INCLUDE A NUMBER OF NON-EMBASSY PERSONNEL WHOM WE HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP, E.G. THE FAMILY OF A BRITISH CITIZEN WORKING IN THE EC OFFICE. REMAINING SEATS WILL BE OFFERED BY BA ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS WITH PREFERENCE GIVEN TO BRITISH AND HONG KONG CITIZENS.
3. DECISION TO TAKE THIS STEP WAS BASED ON GENERAL SITUATION (INCLUDING WORSENING LIVING CONDITIONS) RATHER THAN ANY NEW EVENTS OR INFORMATION OVERNIGHT. WITHIN THE LAST HOUR, HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF DISTURBING DEVELOPMENTS. A LARGE BODY OF CIVILIANS, SOME WITH WEAPONS, HAS BEEN REPORTED APPROACHING EASTWARD DOWN CHANG'AN TO THE JIANGUOMENWAI INTERSECTION. SEVERAL TROOP MOVEMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE AT THAT POINT, WITH VOLLEYS BEING FIRED IN THE AIR. ONE BRITISH FLAT WAS HIT BY A STRAY BULLET (NO CASUALTIES). MOST RECENTLY (1400 LOCAL) THE GATES TO THE JIANGUOMENWAI DIPLOMATIC COMPOUND ON THE CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION (WHERE MANY EMBASSY FAMILIES ARE IN FLATS) HAVE BEEN LOCKED WITH A SOLDIER PLACED ON GUARD, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE REASON IS TO ALLOW TROOPS TO DEAL WITH A SNIPER ON THE ROOF OF A NEARBY BUILDING. MEANWHILE THE TROOPS HAVE IMPOSED A TOTAL BAN ON MOVEMENT IN THE VICINITY AND WE HAVE WARNED ALL PERSONNEL IN THE COMPOUND TO OBSERVE THIS ABSOLUTELY AND TO CONTINUE TO KEEP THEIR HEADS DOWN. WE UNDERSTAND EMBASSY POLICE GUARDS ARE BEING REPLACED BY PLA SOLDIERS AT THIS TIME.

4. IN THE LIGHT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS I IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONED THE MFA AND LEFT A MESSAGE FOR ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ZHOU NAN (WHO WAS SAID TO BE 'IN A MEETING') EXPRESSING MY EXTREME CONCERN ABOUT THE SAFETY OF STAFF IN THE JIANGUOMENWAI COMPOUND AND REMINDING THE MFA OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR SAFETY (RECENTLY REAFFIRMED BY QIAN QICHEN). THE AUSTRALIANS HAVE DONE THE SAME. I HAVE INFORMED THE U S AND SOVIET AMBASSADORS OF MY ACTION (THEY ALSO HAVE STAFF IN THE COMPOUND). IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES I RECEIVED A PROMPT REPLY FROM THE HEAD OF W E D, MFA SAYING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD MY CONCERN AND HAD RELAYED IT AT ONCE TO 'THE DEPARTMENT CONCERNED', ASKING THEM TO TAKE MEASURES TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF BRITISH DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. I THANKED HIM BUT ASKED HIM TO ENSURE ZHOU NAN WAS INFORMED OF THIS EXCHANGE.

5. WE HAVE TO LIVE WITH AN UNPREDICTABLE SITUATION FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT. MY OBJECTIVE WILL BE TO GO FORWARD WITH THE PLANNED MEASURES TO SEND OUT STAFF, AND GATHER REMAINING STAFF INTO THE SAFEST PREMISES AVAILABLE, AS AND WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY MOVEMENTS IN SAFETY.

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