

SECRET

cc Mr. Jackling

MR. COLES

Prime Minister

De Fall (FCO)

(2)

THE RUSSIANS

Brian Urquhart lunched with me today. He is returning to New York this evening after accompanying the Secretary General to Moscow and other capitals.

He gave me a detailed description of Andropov and of the talks with the Secretary General. He said that Andropov was intellectually brilliant. Unlike his predecessor, his speech was concise and devoid of Marxist/Leninist jargon. He had a wide grasp of foreign affairs, going far beyond his prepared brief. Physically, Urquhart felt that there was quite a lot wrong with him. His hands never stopped shaking and, at the end of long sentences, his voice tended to die away into a rather embarrassing stammer. As a layman, Urquhart guessed that he might be suffering from something like Parkinson's Disease. It was interesting that, after less than two hours of conversation, the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations, who was present, passed Urquhart a desperate message suggesting that the meeting should break up. Urquhart thought that the Russian side had concluded that Andropov's physical endurance was wearing out.

On disarmament/arms control, Andropov had given a lucid presentation which had contained nothing new. The Americans were unpredictable and frightening. The Russians wanted a reduction in nuclear weapons at all levels but were not prepared to accept American superiority at any level. The Russians had been horrified at Reagan's "Star Wars" speech and were very pessimistic about the Geneva talks.

On Afghanistan, Andropov was interesting. He had said unreservedly that the Soviet Union had suffered nothing but casualties, expense and international disapproval through intervening in Afghanistan. They had no desire to stay there and would leave as soon as other "armed intervention" stopped. Andropov was optimistic that the Pakistanis had had a change of heart. He thought that General Zia might be cooperative "unless he was tied to the Americans by the amount of military aid which they were providing to Pakistan". Andropov added that the world must never forget that Afghanistan was vital to the security of the southern border of the Soviet Union. If "armed intervention" continued, the Soviet Union was prepared to remain in Afghanistan indefinitely. But he went out of his way to encourage the continuation of the UN Mission.

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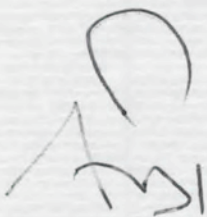
/Andropov

Andropov described the Iran/Iraq war as senseless, but had no ideas as to how it might be brought to an end. He expressed the fear that something might happen internally in Iran which would require the Soviet Union to react. There would then be a counter-reaction from the United States which would bring about a dangerous confrontation.

On the Middle East, Andropov had outlined well-known Soviet attitudes. He was critical of the Reagan Plan and said that there must be a State for the Palestinians. Such a State would be "symbolic" and harmless. He encouraged the Secretary General to call a UN Conference on the Middle East. The Secretary General refused to do so, saying that it would be useless. He told Andropov that, if he wished to internationalise the problem, the Security Council was available.

Andropov showed virtually no interest in Namibia or in the other problems of Central and Southern Africa.

Urquhart summed up by saying that he believed that Andropov was someone with whom the West ought to be able to do business. Andropov had been careful to present the impression of a practical, pragmatic and experienced leadership which was anxious to de-fuse the main danger points in the world, without putting Soviet interests at risk.



A.D. PARSONS
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