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cc: I gao (17/2)
FCO*



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

21 February, 1983

Dear Julian.

Thank you for your letter of 9 February about your recent visit to Pakistan.

I entirely agree with you about the need to support Pakistan on the Afghanistan issue. We have done much to help the international relief effort for the Afghan refugees. Since January 1980 we have given or pledged over £11 million in cash and food aid. We must not allow this grave humanitarian problem to be forgotten.

I also share your views about the need to keep Afghanistan in the news. This is one of the most effective ways to maintain pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops. We are doing a good deal ourselves. The COI has produced three films which have been shown widely on foreign television stations. The BBC Farsi and Pashto broadcasts and the World Service do much to maintain awareness of the Soviet occupation. Here at home, we cannot of course hope to achieve continuous news coverage. Much depends on the available material and the stories of the day. But we do seize whatever opportunities arise to keep the crisis in the public eye. For example, I recently received a delegation of Afghan witnesses of Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan, and was deeply shocked by the story they had to tell.

/ Finally,

fw

Finally, you may be aware of the all-party Afghanistan Support Committee, which has recently launched a programme to promote publicity and relief work for Afghanistan. I am sure that Robert Cranborne, the Chairman of the Committee, would welcome your support.

Y
Lansdown
Raymond

Sir Julian Ridsdale, C.B.E., M.P.

SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

16 February, 1983

Dear Sir,

~~AE~~
re. 5m letter
WHL 1/2

Afghanistan/Pakistan

Thank you for your letter of 10 February enclosing a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Sir Julian Ridsdale MP about his recent visit to Pakistan.

Sir Julian visited Pakistan for six days from 30 January together with Mr Teddy Taylor MP. They met President Zia on 1 February. Since his return, Sir Julian has also written to the Daily Telegraph (copy enclosed) in terms similar to those of his letter to the Prime Minister.

* As regards Sir Julian's point about publicity, you will know from John Holme's letter of 23 December, Brian Fall's letter of 25 January, and my letter of today's date, that we have been doing what we can in this area. You should also know that Lord Cranborne, Chairman of the Afghanistan Support Committee, has some interesting ideas of his own about speeding up the flow of TV news reports from Afghanistan using satellites. He has discussed these with us but we have some doubts about their cost effectiveness and would not want to draw this aspect to Sir J Ridsdale's attention.

Yours
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

* Brian Fall to ASE 25.2.83 is filed in Afghanistan: Aid to Afghan resistance movement (July '81) (Cab 2)

SECRET

DRAFT: minute/letter/teletype/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Sir Julian Ridsdale CBE MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 9 February about your recent visit to Pakistan.

CAVEAT.....

sub
I agree with you about the need to support Pakistan ^h ~~over~~ the Afghanistan issue. We have ~~for example,~~ done ^{on} ~~a lot~~ ^{much} to help the international relief effort for the Afghan refugees. Since January 1980 we have given or pledged over £11 million in cash and food aid. ^{We have} ~~It is~~ ^{must not allow} ~~most important~~ that we do not lose sight of this ^{grave} humanitarian problem. ~~to be forgotten~~.

I also share your views about the need to keep Afghanistan in the news. This is one of the most effective ways to maintain pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops. We ^{are doing a good} ~~ourselves~~ do a great deal to ensure ~~that the world does not forget~~ Afghanistan. For ^{which have been} ~~example,~~ The COI has produced three films ^{and} shown widely on foreign television stations, ~~and~~ The BBC, ^{and} with its Farsi and Pashto broadcasts, ~~as well as~~ the World Service, does much to maintain awareness of the Soviet occupation.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

Here at home, we cannot of course hope to achieve continuous news coverage. Much depends on the available material and the stories of the day. But we do seize whatever opportunities arise to keep the crisis in the public eye. For example, I recently received a delegation of Afghan witnesses of Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan, and was deeply shocked by the story they had to tell.

Finally, you may ~~like to~~ be aware of the all-party Afghanistan Support Committee, which has recently launched a programme to promote publicity and relief work for Afghanistan. ~~You might like to contact~~ Robert Cranborne, the Chairman of the Committee, ~~to find out more about its work.~~ I am sure they would welcome your support.

MR 1/2 .

cutting dated 14 FEB 1983 19

Message to Britain from Afghan refugees

From Sir JULIAN RIDSDALE, M P (Con.)

SIR—I have just returned from a visit to Pakistan where I met a number of the three million refugees from Afghanistan, not far from Peshawar, on the way to the Khyber Pass. There are another two million refugees, I am told, in Iran. That makes a total of five million out of the Afghan population of 15 million.

Nearly all these refugees were the elderly, women and children. Those of fighting age were left to battle for Afghanistan's freedom from their Russian oppressors; sturdy individuals fighting for their freedom.

I could not help but be moved by the refugees I met; they came from all walks of life, from High Court judges to sturdy peasants. All were living in mud huts, well wrapped up against the cold of winter. Yet far from being down-hearted their eyes sparkled. "When you get home," they said, "just tell as many as possible that we are fighting for our freedom."

A more experienced politician from Pakistan said it reminded him of the Spanish Civil War. Others who had been in Afghanistan and seen the fighting asked: "Can't you get them more modern arms to fight the helicopter gun-ships of the Russians?"

I visited the Save the Children Fund camps and the Red Cross and heard what a wonderful job the hospitals were doing to care for the wounded that came out of Afghanistan.

Yet, arriving home in the midst of the CND campaign I cannot help but wonder whether what is being organised here, largely from the political Left, is but a smokescreen to take our eyes, and the eyes of the Western World, off the British oppression of individual freedom being perpetrated by Russia in Afghanistan.

If only those ladies who camp out at Greenham Common could camp out instead outside the Soviet Embassy!

JULIAN RIDSDALE
House of Commons.

J.W.

1/P
Disarmed
USSR.

PW/Z
DWS/G
PWS/R

EN/B
RR/E/P
MOS/Z

PS/S
RR/S
GV
D. GOWAN

PB

(18)



FILE
Sir Julian RIDSDALE MP 17/2
R07

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 February, 1983

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN

I enclose a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Sir Julian Ridsdale, MP, about his recent visit to Pakistan.

In the last sentence, he refers to the possibility of securing a "continuous news coverage" of Afghanistan. I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature by Thursday, 17 February, dealing in particular with this point.

A. J. COLES

J. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

From Sir Julian Ridsdale, CBE., MP.,



Feb. 9th. 1982.

Dear Prime Minister

I hesitate to burden you with another account of my visits.

I have just spent six days in Pakistan with Paddy as a guest of the President, General Zia, following my visit to Japan. Once again we followed in some of your footsteps and saw your picture taken with the Khyber Rifles.

We dined with the Governor of the North West Frontier Province who spoke so warmly about you. Indeed our visit was one of warmth.

I met the President, I met the Afghan tribesmen, we visited the Save the Children Fund. What emerged was that the Afghans want something better than rifles to shoot down the Russians helicopter gun-ships. The Ministers compared the battle in Afghanistan to the Civil War in Spain. You know how much Pakistan is in the front line and that we need to give them all the encouragement that we can. Can we find some means of getting continuous news coverage on Afghanistan so as to keep the story alive and counter the smokescreen that the Left are deploying in their CND campaign?

Yours ever,

Julian

The Rt. Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP.,