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SIR. S. G. MANS
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CONFIDENTIAL
FM WASHINGTON 282359Z NOVEMBER, 1983
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 3581 OF 28 NOVEMBER
INFO ISLAMABAD, KABUL, MOSCOW, NEW DELHI AND UKMIS NEW YORK.

YOUR TELNO 450 TO ISLAMABAD: SOVIET DEFECTORS FROM AFGHANISTAN

1. WE SPOKE TO KIRBY, DIRECTOR FOR PAKISTAN IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT TODAY. HE SAID THAT RYZHKOV AND VORONOV'S ESCAPE TO THE WEST APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN ORGANISED BY AN AFGHAN EMIGRE GROUP CONNECTED WITH THE FORMER RUSSIAN DISSIDENT NOW IN THE US, BUKOVSKY. THE US GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO KIRBY, HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED, AND HAD LEARNED OF THE TWO SOLDIERS' PRESENCE IN THE WEST ONLY AT THE END OF LAST WEEK. HOWEVER, THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALISATION SERVICE HAD GRANTED THEM REFUGEE STATUS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THEY WOULD BE ARRIVING IN NEW YORK TODAY, WHERE THEY WOULD BE LOOKED AFTER BY THE "INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE", A PRIVATE ORGANISATION WITH A LONG RECORD OF ASSISTING RE-SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES, EXILES AND DEFECTORS FROM THE SOVIET BLOC.
2. KIRBY SAID THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN RECEIVING A SMALL FLOW OF LETTERS RECENTLY URGING THE US TO OFFER A BLANKET ASYLUM TO SOVIET SOLDIERS IN AFGHANISTAN. THEY HAD TAKEN THE SAME LINE AS OURSELVES, IE THAT THEY WOULD CONSIDER INDIVIDUAL CASES ON THEIR MERITS BUT COULD NOT GIVE A BLANKET ASSURANCE. KIRBY THOUGHT THIS LINE WOULD CONTINUE. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING THE ARRIVAL OF RYZHKOV AND VORONOV IN NEW YORK, HE THOUGHT IT ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED SOUGHT PUBLICITY AND POSSIBLY MEETINGS WITH SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION.
3. KIRBY SAID THE FIGURE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED SOVIET ARMY DEFECTORS QUOTED IN THE DAILY MAIL ARTICLE (PARA 2B OF YOUR TELNO 447 TO ISLAMABAD) WAS FAR HIGHER THAN THE ADMITTEDLY ROUGH AND UNCONFIRMED FIGURE OF APPROXIMATELY 100 ON WHICH THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN WORKING.
4. KIRBY ALSO SAID THAT THE SWISS HAD ASKED THE AMERICANS WHETHER THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE 7 OR 8 RUSSIAN SOLDIERS WHO ARE IN THEIR HANDS UNDER ICRC ARRANGEMENTS, AND WHOSE PERIOD OF DETENTION EXPIRES NEXT SPRING. THE SWISS WERE NOT PREPARED TO FORCE THEM BACK TO THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST THEIR WISHES. THE AMERICANS HAD TAKEN THE SAME LINE AS IN PARA 2 ABOVE. IN THIS CASE HE HOPED.

HAD TAKEN THE SAME LINE AS IN PARA 2 ABOVE. IN THIS CASE HE HOPED,
WESTERN GOVERNMENTS WOULD DO LIKEWISE.

5. KIRBY SAID THE PAKISTANIS HAD NOT WISHED TO TALK, EVEN IN
PRIVATE, ABOUT SOVIET DEFECTORS, BUT HE BELIEVED THEIR ATTITUDE TO
BE AS DESCRIBED IN PARA 3 OF YOUR TUR. HE WAS FAIRLY RELAXED ABOUT
THE CONSEQUENCES FOR US POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN IN THE
HYPOTHETICAL CIRCUMSTANCE OF THE US TAKING IN ANY SIZEABLE NUMBER
OF SOVIET MILITARY DEFECTORS. THE RUSSIANS WOULD MAKE PREDICTABLE
NOISES, BUT IT WOULD NOT AFFECT THEIR PRACTICAL DECISIONS.

6. KIRBY SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT OUR RESPECTIVE MISSIONS IN
ISLAMABAD HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE, AND HE SAW SOME MERIT
IN OUR KEEPING IN TOUCH AND, WITH OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN PARTIES,
COORDINATING OUR POSITIONS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. IN PRINCIPLE, HE
SAID, THERE WAS NO REASON WHY THE U.S. ALONE SHOULD BE THE PREFERRED
DESTINATION OF THESE DEFECTORS. HE WOULD BE CONSULTING THIS WEEK
WITH OTHERS IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO
KNOW WHAT POSITION WE WOULD BE TAKING.

WRIGHT

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RR ISLAMABAD

RR KABUL

RR MOSCOW

...AND THE SAME LINE AS IN PARA 2 ABOVE. IN THIS CASE HE HOPED
...THEIR GOVERNMENT WOULD DO OTHERWISE.
...HE SAID THE PARTISANS HAD NOT WISHED TO TALK, EVEN IN
...STATE, ABOUT SOVIET DEFECTORS, BUT HE BELIEVED THEIR ATTITUDE TO
...BE AS DESCRIBED IN PARA 3 OF YOUR TUE. HE WAS FAIRLY RELAXED ABOUT
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...MOVES, BUT IT WOULD NOT AFFECT THEIR PRACTICAL DECISIONS.
...G. KERRY SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT OUR RESPECTIVE MISSIONS IN
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...... HE WOULD BE CHECKING THIS WITH
...WITH OTHERS IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO
...... WHAT POSITION WE WOULD BE TAKING.

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STATE

AFGHANISTAN

DEFECTORS

RUSSIA