

GR 306

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIA

FROM MOSCOW 271520Z JUNE

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 789 OF 27 JUNE

INFO IMMEDIATE OSLO (FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY)

INFO PRIORITY ISLAMABAD AND KABUL

INFO SAVING UKDEL NATO, BONN, PARIS AND WASHINGTON

SOVIET SOLDIERS FROM AFGHANISTAN.

1. I WAS CALLED TO THE MFA ON 27 JUNE , TO HEAR FROM SUSLOV, HEAD OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT AT THE MFA, A PROTEST ABOUT THE ADMISSION TO THE UK OF THE TWO SOVIET SERVICEMEN. FOLLOWING IS OUR TRANSLATION OF SPEAKING NOTE OF WHICH HE HANDED ME A COPY .

BEGINS " ACCORDING TO REPORTS IN THE BRITISH PRESS, SOVIET SERVICEMEN RYKOV AND KHLAN (WHO SPENT NEARLY A YEAR IN THE HANDS OF AFGHAN AND INTERVENTIONIST BANDS WHERE THEY WERE SUBJECTED TO HEAVY DOSES OF NARCOTICS) HAVE BEEN FLOWN TO THE UK. CERTAIN PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS , INCLUDING A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS ,LORD BETHELL, WHO WAS AN INITIATOR OF THIS "OPERATION", ARE PREPARING A SERIES OF UNSAVOURY PROPAGANDISTIC ACTIONS, INCLUDING USE OF THE BBC, WITH THE AIM OF FANNING ANOTHER SLANDEROUS CAMPAIGN TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION.

ALL THIS CANNOT BUT PROVOKE STRONG OBJECTIONS FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

THE ACTIONS IN QUESTION, EVEN IF CONDUCTED BY PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS COULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT THE DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF OFFICIAL BRITISH AUTHORITIES. EVEN THE BRITISH PRESS, REFERRING TO "HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS", REPORTED THAT RYKOV AND KHLAN HAVE BEEN ACCORDED THE RIGHT OF RESIDENCE IN THE COUNTRY WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE SOVIET UNION LODGES A RESOLUTE PROTEST AGAINST THE ABOVE ACTIONS BY THE BRITISH SIDE SEMICLN THESE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH "HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS " EVEN LEAVING ASIDE THE FACT THAT THEY CONSTITUTE A CONSCIOUSLY UNFRIENDLY ACT TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION .

CONFIDENTIAL

11F

CONFIDENTIAL

IF THE BRITISH SIDE IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, IT SHOULD STOP ANTI-HUMANITARIAN SPECULATION THE FATE OF SOVIET SERVICEMEN, WHO WERE VICTIMS OF THE BARBARIC ACTIONS OF THE BANDITS AND WERE DRIVEN TO A STATE OF ACUTE MENTAL DERANGEMENT SEMICLN THE BRITISH PRESS REPORTS THAT THEY DID NOT EVEN KNOW THAT THEY WERE BEING BROUGHT TO THE UK. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT EXPECTS THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN LONDON INCLUDING THE EMBASSY DOCTOR, WILL IMMEDIATELY BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE ABOVE SOVIET SERVICEMEN AND THAT MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THEM FROM ANY FURTHER EXPLOITATION FOR UNSEEMLY PURPOSES AND RETURN THEM TO THEIR HOMELAND ". ENDS.

2. IN REPLY, DRAWING ON PARA 1 (A) 1 OF YOUR TELNO 545, I SAID THAT THE SOVIET PRISONERS HAD BEEN ADMITTED ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, THAT THEY HAD FREELY APPLIED TO ENTER THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE NORMAL ENTRY PROCEDURES. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT BRITISH POLICY ON AFGHANISTAN WAS WELL - KNOWN, CONTINUING IN THE TERMS OF PARA 1(A)IX OF YOUR TUR. I CONCLUDED BY STRESSING, WITH REFERENCE TO THE SOVIET STATEMENT, THAT THE ADMISSION OF THE TWO SOLDIERS IN NO WAY AFFECTED THE DESIRE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO SEEK BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. SUSLOV REPEATED THAT THE ACTIONS REFERRED TO IN HIS SPEAKING NOTE COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT THE AID OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND DID NOT APPEAR TO REFLECT THE WILL TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. HE PREFERRED NOT TO DISCUSS THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN BUT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE PRACTICAL POINTS IN THE NOTE. BUT HIS RESPONSE WAS BRIEF AND MILDLY SPOKEN.

FCC PLEASE PASS SAYING TO UKDEL NATO, BONN, PARIS AND WASHINGTON.

SUTHERLAND

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING ST]

AFGHANISTAN

STANDARD(PALACE)
SAD
SOV D
MED
FED
UND

ECD(E)
SEAD
NAD
NENAD
MR WILSON
CABINET OFFICE

COPIES TO:
COL.JURY D14 MODUK

2
CONFIDENTIAL