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APGHANISTAN

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MR SLATER

HD/SAD (4)
DEP HD/PUSD (2)
HD/UND
HD/FED

SECRET FM WASHINGTON

HD/SOVIET DEPT
HD/NAD
HD/DEFENCE DEPT
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HD/NEWS DEPT

NO.10 DOWNING STREET

- ASSESSMENTS STAFF CABINET OFFICE

RESIDENT CLERK

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INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS NEW YORK, INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW, ISLAMABAD, KABUL, NEW DELHI, UKMIS GENEWA INFO ROUTINE UKDEL NATO

YOUR TELNO 1857: AFGHANISTAN: SOVIET WITHDRAWALS SUMMARY

ADMINISTRATION CONCLUDE THAT THE SOVIET WITHDRAWALS WERE
LARGELY A SHAM! AND PLAN TO GO PUBLIC WITH THE EVIDENCE SHORTLY.

DETAIL

2. CLARK (DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU FOR INTELLIGENCE
AND RESEARCH, STATE) BRIEFED NATO EMBASSIES PLUS JAPAN ON 28
OCTOBER. HE WAS INTENDING TO BRIEF THE CHINESE LATER THAT DAY,
AND ASEAN AND GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL EMBASSIES ON 29 OCTOBER.
3. DRAWING ON SATELLITE PHOTOGRAPHY, CLARK MADE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS:

- (1) GORBACHEV UNDERTOOK IN HIS YLADIYOSTOCK SPEECH TO WITHDRAW SIX REGIMENTS: ONE TANK, TWO MOTORISED RIFLE, AND THREE AIR DEFENCE:
- (11) THE US ACCEPTED THAT THE THREE AIR DEFENCE REGIMENTS WITH THEIR EQUIPMENT HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN. BUT THEY HAD NEVER BEEN IN COMBATA
- (111) THE TANK REGIMENT CONCERNED (AT SHINDAND) HAD BEEN BELOW STRENGTH DURING THE SUMMER (20 OUT OF THE NORMAL 60 TANKS). AO TANKS WERE BROUGHT IN FROM THE SCYIET UNION IN MID-SEPTEMBER: ALL 60 WERE THEN WITHDRAWN:
- (IV) IN THE CASE OF THE MOTORISED RIFLE REGIMENTS, THE SHAM WAS EVEN CLEARER. IN EARLY AUGUST TWO REGIMENTS WITH STANDARD EQUIPMENT LEFT THEIR GARRISONS IN SHINDAND AND KUNDUZ. THEY WERE REPLACED BY TWO REGIMENTS BROUGHT IN FROM SOVIET CENTALL ASIA, EQUIPPED WITH OLDER BTRTO ARMOURED VEHICLES, TOWED ARTILLERY AND LARGE NUMBERS OF TRUCKS. NO OTHER MOTORISED RIFLE REGIMENT IN AFGMANISTAN WAS SO EQUIPPED. THESE TWO NEW REGIMENTS PARADED BEFORE JOURNALISTS AND DEPARTED (BUT MANY OF THEIR BTR TO VEHICLES IN FACT REMAINED IN AFGMANISTAN). RECENT PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWED THE ORIGINAL UNITS RETURNING TO THEIR GARRISONS. THE MET RESULT WAS THAT THERE WERE 12 MOTORISED RIFLE REGIMENTS IN AFGMANISTAN BEFORE YLADIVOSTOCK; AND 12 STILL REMAINED.

4. CLARK ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WERE CONVINCED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO ADDITIONAL WITHDRAWALS OF MOTORISED RIFLE REGINERATED, AND THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE THEREFORE BLATARILY CHEATING. THE RESONS WERE INCLEASE THE MOST LIKELY CONTINUED.

4. CLARK ADDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WERE CONVINCED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO ADDITIONAL WITHDRAWALS OF MOTORISED RIFLE REGISTRY.

IMENTS, AND THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE THEREFORE BLATANLY.

CHEATING. THE REASONS WERE UNCLEAR. THE MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION WAS THAT THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF STILL FELT UNDER SUCH PRESSURE WAS THAT THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF STILL FELT UNDER SUCH PRESSURE AND THAT THE DECEPTION EFFORT HAD BEEN BUNGLED. SOME BELIEVED THAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT EVEN SEE ADVANTAGE IN A PUBLIC ROW WITH THE AMERICANS ON THE EVE OF THE UN VOTE — ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE US WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PRODUCE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO SUSTAIN THEIR ACCUSATIONS, AND THAT THE RESULTING EAST/WEST ACRIMONY MIGHT HELP THE RUSSIANS WHIP IN A FEW WAVERERS.

ON PUBLICITY, CLARK SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD

5. ON PUBLICITY, CLARK SAID THAT THE OF THEY PLANNED TO NOT BE ABLE TO RELEASE THE PHOTOGRAPMS. BUT THEY PLANNED TO MAKE A STATEMENT, SUPPORTED BY A FULL BACKGROUND BRIEFING BRINGING OUT THE POINTS ABOVE, PROBABLY ON 30 OCTOBER (CONTACTS IN THE PENTAGON TELL US THAT THIS MAY SLIP TO 31 OCTOBER). STATE HAVE GIVEN US SEPARATELY AND IN CONFIDENCE THE CURRENT DRAFT OF THE STATEMENT, EMPHASISING THAT IT REMAINS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. TEXT IN MIFT (NOT TO ALL).

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