

Restricted

RESTRICTED

FM MOSCOW

TO DESKBY 291200Z FCO

TELNO 920

OF 281115Z JULY 86

INFO IMMEDIATE KABUL, WASHINGTON, BONN, PARIS, UKDEL NATO

SOVIET PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

1. TASS IN ENGLISH HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THAT, SPEAKING IN VLADIVOSTOCK, GORBACHEV HAS SAID THAT 6 SOVIET REGIMENTS WITH EQUIPMENT AND ARMS WILL RETURN TO THE USSR BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. BY TAKING THIS STEP, THE SOVIET UNION WAS 'STRIVING TO SPEED UP A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND TO GIVE IT ANOTHER IMPETUS'. AS SOON AS A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WAS FINALLY WORKED OUT, THE RETURN OF ALL SOVIET TROOPS COULD BE SPEEDED UP. SCHEDULES FOR THEIR STAGE BY STAGE RETURN 'HAVE BEEN AGREED UPON WITH THE AFGHAN SIDE'. IN CONCLUSION HOWEVER GORBACHEV IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT IF THE INTERVENTION AGAINST AFGHANISTAN CONTINUED, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD 'STAND UP FOR ITS NEIGHBOURS'. THOSE IN ASIA WHO STROVE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY WOULD FIND THE SOVIET UNION TO BE 'BENEVOLENT INTERLOCUTERS AND HONEST PARTNERS'.

2. THE REGIMENTS TO BE WITHDRAWN INCLUDE ONE ARMoured REGIMENT, 2 MOTORISED RIFLE REGIMENTS AND 3 ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY REGIMENTS. (BY OUR CALCULATION THIS WOULD INVOLVE ABOUT 7000 MEN).

3. THE NEWS BROKE DURING LUNCH IN MOSCOW. IN RESPONSE TO BRITISH JOURNALISTS' REQUESTS FOR COMMENT, THOSE AVAILABLE DURING THE LUNCH-HOUR DECLINED. IF APPROACHED AGAIN WE WOULD PROPOSE TO SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE FULL TEXT OF WHAT GORBACHEV IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID AND TO REFER ENQUIRERS TO YOU FOR SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT. UNLESS YOU SEE OBJECTION WE WOULD PROPOSE TO ADD UNATTRIBUTABLY THAT ON THE BASIS OF THE TASS REPORTS GORBACHEV WOULD HAVE APPEARED TO HAVE STATED AN INTENTION TO TAKE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BUT UNFORTUNATELY, SO FAR, ONLY A VERY SMALL ONE.

MARSHALL

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DORNING 511]

AFGHANISTAN

STANDARD (PALACE)

SAD

SOVIET D

MED

FED

UND

ECD(E)

NAD

MR WILSON
CABINET OFFICE

COPIES TO :

COL A KENNEDY, DIA, MOD
COL R WILLIAMS DI3, MOD**Restricted**

RESTRICTED



RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED