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Top Secret
SPECIAL FILE

RECORD OF MEETING*
of **A.N.KOSYGIN, A.A.GROMYKO, D.F.USTINOV** and **B.N.PONOMAREV** with
N.M.TARAKI

20 March 1979

A.N.Kosygin. The Politburo has entrusted us with discussing with you all questions which you think necessitate an exchange of opinions. As I have already mentioned to you, your meeting with L.I.Brezhnev is scheduled for 18-18.30.

At first we proposed that the first word should be given to you, but since one important question from your side has already been raised, I would like to first set forth our opinion, and then we will attentively hear you out.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the friendship between Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is not conditional, dictated by some temporary viewpoints, but calculated for ^{the (?)} ages. We have given and will continue to give you assistance in the fight against all enemies which act against you at the present time and against those enemies with which you may clash in the future.

We have carefully discussed the situation which has developed in your country, we looked for ways to assist you which would best serve the interests of our friendship and your relations with other countries. There may be various ways of solving the problems which have developed in your country, but the best way is that which would preserve the authority of your government in the eyes of the people, not spoil relations between Afghanistan and neighboring countries, and not injure the international prestige of your country. We must not allow the situation to seem as if you were not able to deal with your own problems and

x) This record has not been seen by the participants

invited foreign troops to assist you. I would like to use the example of Vietnam. The Vietnamese people withstood a difficult war with the USA and are now fighting against Chinese aggression, but no one can accuse the Vietnamese of using foreign troops. The Vietnamese are bravely defending by themselves their homeland against aggressive encroachments. We believe that there are enough forces in your country to stand up to counter-revolutionary raids. One only needs to unify them and create new military formations. During our telephone conversation with you we spoke of the need to begin creating new military groups, keeping in mind that a certain amount of time will be needed for their training and preparation. But even at this time you have at your disposal a sufficient force in order to deal with the current situation. One need only deal with it correctly. Let's take the example of Herat. It seemed that all would fall apart, that the enemy had firmly entrenched itself there, that the city had become a center of counter-revolution. But when you really took charge of the matter, you were able to seize control of the situation. We have just received word that today, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the military town in Herat, the location of the mutinous section of the 17th infantry division, has been taken by a battalion of paratroopers supported by tanks from Kandagar, following air-strikes. Troops loyal to the government are securing and further taking advantage of this success.

In our opinion, our assignment for the current time period is to defend you from various international complications. We will give you assistance with all available means - ship weapons, ammunition, send people who can be useful to you in managing military and domestic matters of the country, specialists to train your military personnel in the operation of the most modern types of weapons and military machinery which we are sending you. The deployment of our forces in the territory of Afghanistan would immediately awake the international community and would invite sharply unfavorable, multipronged consequences. This, in effect, would be a conflict not only with imperialist countries, but also a conflict with one's own people. Our mutual enemies are just waiting for the moment when soviet forces appear on Afghan territory. This would give them an excuse to deploy on Afghan territory military formations hostile to you. I would again like to underline that the question of deploying our forces has been examined by us from every direction; we carefully studied

all aspects of this action and came to the conclusion that if our troops were introduced, the situation in your country would not only not improve, but would worsen. One cannot deny that our troops would have to fight not only with foreign aggressors, but also with a certain number of your people. And people do not forgive such things. Besides, as soon as our troops cross the border, China and all other aggressors will be vindicated.

We have come to the conclusion that in the given period, the most effective support that we could give you would be through methods of our political influence on neighboring countries and through the rendering of extensive and manifold assistance. This way would accomplish much more than through the deployment of our troops. We are deeply convinced that we can overcome the enemy using the political means being undertaken both by your side and by our side. We have already discussed with you that Afghanistan should work towards good relations with Iran, Pakistan and India by eliminating any pretexts they may have for meddling in your affairs. As for us, today we are sending two documents to the leaders of Iran and Pakistan, in which we tell them with all seriousness not to meddle in the affairs of Afghanistan. We are taking care of this matter ourselves, without drawing you into it. These are, in essence, the thoughts which we wanted to share with you openly, as comrades.

N.M.Taraki. I am very grateful to you for the detailed account of the position of the Soviet government on the question which I wanted to discuss. I also speak forthrightly and openly, as your friend. We in Afghanistan also believe that emerging problems should first be dealt with through political means, and that military actions must be auxiliary in nature. In the political arena, we have taken a number of steps and are convinced that the majority of the people remain on our side. Within a day after my appearance on the radio where I explained the nature of events in Herat, throughout the country there took place 102 demonstrations, the participants of which carried placards condemning Khomeini and his minions. This convinced us that our internal enemies are not so numerous. We were also happy to hear the news that a segment of our armed forces, taking part in the mutiny, had put down their arms.

On my part, I also want to emphasize that the relations between our countries are more than just routine diplomatic exchanges. They are based on a class foundation and on

mutual ideology and politics. In our country, as in yours, the government belongs to the working class and to the peasants, who wrested it from the hands of the aristocracy and the feudalists. Our revolution has provoked a malicious reaction from our class enemies. The revolutionary reorganization undertaken by us - liberation of peasants from dependency to landlords and feudalists resulting from debt, redistribution of land to landless peasants, and other measures - have secured the authority of our government among the people of Afghanistan, and have had a positive response from the people of Pakistan and Iran. This has driven fear into the reactionary forces of these countries, which have increased their subversive activities against our country, intensified slanderous propaganda, and begun to send terrorist gangs into our territory. They began their propaganda against us by proclaiming us apostates of Islam. Then they began to accuse us of all other mortal sins. The Pakistani propaganda perverted the measures undertaken by us towards social liberation of women, whom we gave a dignified position in society. When we set to work on land reform, the ruling circles in Pakistan, seeing its revolutionary influence on their people, crossed over to the politics of sabotage and subversive activities against us. The rulers of Pakistan were very frightened by the demonstrations that rolled across the country, protesting under banners "Long live the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan!" and "Long live Taraki!" Our country was not only being infiltrated by members of "the Moslem brotherhood" who had fled the country after the revolution, but also by entire subdivisions, dressed in Afghan military uniforms, which are involved in subversive activities and sabotage. After my visit to ^{the} Soviet Union and the signing of a very important Treaty between our countries, the American imperialists and other reactionaries became strongly antagonistic against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. They understood that Afghanistan had been finally lost by the West. Through their means of mass information the USA, Pakistan, and Iran spread all sorts of slanderous material defaming us. It is in the close friendship of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union that one finds the main reason for anti-Afghan activity of imperialists and reactionaries.

Today we spoke with you concerning the fact that Afghanistan should maintain good ties with Pakistan, Iran and India. This will be difficult to achieve, as Iran, and especially Pakistan don't want friendship with us.

or below

A.N.Kosygin. A statement has just been received from Ziah-ul-Khaq, in which he notes that events in Afghanistan are the internal matter of that state and that Pakistan will not interfere in them. This statement also notes that the government of Pakistan will only deliver humanitarian aid to the 35 ⁰⁰⁰ ~~thou~~ refugees from Afghanistan as long as their activities do not undermine relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

N.M.Taraki. They only speak of humanitarianism, but are themselves creating camps to train commandos against us.

A.N.Kosygin. We are not so naive as to believe every word of Ziah-ul-Khaq, but whatever the case may be, the statement has been made and it is binding.

B.N.Ponomarev. It seems that the statement of Ziah-ul-Khaq is Pakistan's reaction to the story in the newspaper "Pravda."

A.N.Kosygin. Clearly Pakistan has become worried. They have felt the pressure from not only your side, but also from ours.

N.M.Taraki. The article in "Pravda," analyzing the schemes against the DRA, was published exactly at the right time. This article has made a deep impression on our neighbors. I, of course, agree with you that it ^{is} necessary to take active political steps, and that war is a very risky proposition. It would be superfluous to delve into the question of why the Pakistanis, the Iranians, the Americans and the Chinese are undertaking such active steps to undermine us. I would only like to emphasize that we have been and will continue to remain friends, and that we shall never be as close to anyone as we are with you. We have learned and continue to learn from Lenin. We are well aware of Lenin's instructions on how to build relations with neighboring countries. We strive towards good relations with neighbors, but we are hindered by the Americans who are trying to increase tensions by undermining progressive governments. They have acted thus against the young Soviet republic in the past, and are now continuing to act thus against Cuba, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and South Yemen. We are resisting these schemes, and are doing everything to rule the country not by the force of arms, but by winning the people's respect through revolutionary-democratic reforms in the interest of the working people. For this we have already spent 200 bln. afghani. The people can tell who is their friend and who is their enemy. Having seen that propaganda against our government has not found a broad response from the

Afghan people, the spiritual leaders have changed tactics and have begun to shout that Afghanistan has become pro-Soviet, pro-communist, that there are now 10 thousand Soviet people in the country who are bossing everyone around.

To sum up, I would like to say that we are worried by the possibility of infiltrators being sent across from Iran and Pakistan, though, of course, your verbal confrontation with the leaders of Pakistan and Iran will be very useful, and will have a sobering effect on them.

(A.N.Kosygin. Some more news. The Iranian government has issued a directive)
ordering all foreign workers to leave the country by April 21 and for foreign specialists to leave by June 21. As for specialists deemed highly important for the Iranian economy, their cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.

N.M.Taraki. This remark most likely is directed towards the Americans. We have information that the Iranian government has already returned to the country American specialists who have been working there on helicopter assembly.

A.N.Kosygin. Yes, we have heard about it as well, but it is possible that we may have more specialists in Iran than do the Americans. If there arises the question of our specialists leaving, then a large metallurgical factory as well as other important enterprises in Iran will be unable to function. And how many Afghans are working in Iran?

N.M.Taraki. No less than 200 thousand people. They moved to Iran 5-6 years ago, during the regime of Daoud and even earlier. If they are going to be expelled, then under the guise of Afghan workers there will be guerillas coming as well, since it is very difficult to determine who is Iranian and who is Afghan from one's appearance. I wanted to touch on the question of the needs of the Afghan army. We would like to receive armored helicopters, an additional number of armored transports and military infantry vehicles, as well as modern means of communication. Also, maintenance personnel would be of great help to us.

F.D.Ustinov. It seems that we are talking about MI-24 helicopters, which have bullet-proof armor. We will give you ^{six} such helicopters during June-July and 6 more in the fourth quarter of this year. Perhaps we will be able to move up the timetable for deliveries.

N.M.Taraki. We have great need for these helicopters, and it would be good if they

arrived together with pilots.

A.N.Kosygin. We can send you maintenance specialists, which would take care of these helicopters at the airport, but, of course, not battle crews. We have already spoken about the matter.

D.F.Ustinov. You must prepare your own pilots. We are training your officers, and we can expedite their release.

N.M.Taraki. Perhaps we can get helicopter pilots from Hanoi or some other country, for example, Cuba?

A.N.Kosygin. As I have already said earlier, we have helped and are helping Vietnam a great deal, but they never asked us to send them our pilots. They only asked for technical specialists. We are training 400 Afghan officers. Choose the people you need, and we will expedite their training.

N.M.Taraki. We would very much like the delivery of helicopters to be expedited. We have a great need for them.

A.N.Kosygin. We will further examine your request, and, if possible, will expedite the shipment of helicopters.

F.D.Ustinov. But, at the same time, you must worry about pilots for these helicopters.

N.M.Taraki. Of course we will do that. If we cannot find them in our country, then we will look elsewhere. The world is big. If you do not agree with that, then we will search for pilots from among the Afghans studying in your country, but we need trustworthy people, and among the Afghan officers whom we sent to study in the Soviet Union earlier there are many "Muslim brothers" and Chinese sympathizers.

A.N.Kosygin. Of course, you need to sort this out with the people we are training. We can send the "Moslem brothers" back, and we can make early graduation of those people whom you trust.

F.D.Ustinov. This year 190 Afghan officers are finishing their training, among whom 16 are airplane pilots and 13 helicopter pilots. We will send you, through the chief military advisor in Afghanistan general Gorelov, the list of graduates, by their specialization.

N.M.Taraki. Good. We will do that. However, the problem is that we don't know the people belonging to counter-revolutionary groups by name. We only know that, during Daoud's regime, members of the "Muslim Brotherhood" and the pro-Chinese "Shoal-i-Jawid" organizations were sent over to the Soviet Union. We will try to work this out.

A.N.Kosygin. You seem to raise questions about the deliveries of military machinery with regard to the resolution which we made known in Kabul yesterday evening? In this resolution we speak of large military deliveries, of the delivery of 100, ^{thou} ~~thou~~ tons of wheat, and of the price increase of Afghan natural gas from 24 to 37 dollars per 1000 m³. Are you familiar with this document?

N.M.Taraki. No. It seems that they did not manage to brief me on it.

A.N.Kosygin. Most likely this document arrived in Kabul before your departure to Moscow. Here are the decisions that the document contains: in March of this year you will be sent additionally and without charge 33 pcs. of BMP-1, 5 pcs. of MI-25, 8 pcs. of MI-8T, as well as 50 pcs. of BTR-60pb, 25 pcs. of armored reconnaissance vehicles, 50 pcs. of mobile anti-aircraft units, and an anti-aircraft unit "Strela" [Arrow]. On March 18 we already sent 4 MI-8 helicopters, and on March 21 you will receive 4 more helicopters. All of this is delivered to you without charge.

N.M.Taraki. Thank you for such great help. In Kabul I will acquaint myself in greater depth with this document. Right now I would like to say that 100, ^{thou} ~~thou~~ tons of wheat is not enough for us. This fall we will not be able to reap the entire harvest because the landlords whose land was confiscated did not sow it, and in a few places the crops were destroyed.

A.N.Kosygin. You will receive 100 thousand tons of wheat at the rate that you can transport it from the border to the country. It seems that you will have difficulties with the transport of wheat because, judging from what transport specialists told us, your transfer stations can only handle 15 thousand tons of wheat per month. While the 100, ^{thou} ~~thou~~ tons are processed, we will think about what to do in the future.

N.M.Taraki. Earlier, Pakistan promised to sell us 200 thou. tons, but then recanted on its promise. Turkey also declined to deliver 70 thou. tons. We need at least another 300 thou. tons of wheat.

A.N.Kosygin. Since you were ready to pay for Pakistani wheat, you must have money? We can buy wheat from the Americans and transfer it to Afghanistan. For example, 200 thou. tons of wheat would cost 25 mln. rubles (40 mln. dollars).

N.M.Taraki. It will be difficult for us to find such a sum.

A.N.Kosygin. Find as much as you can, and with that sum we will buy you wheat.

N.M.Taraki. If we are unable to find the means, then we will ask for your help with wheat. We would also like to receive a deferment of payment on your loans and on their interest. Our military budget is planned with the hope that such a deferment will be given.

A.N.Kosygin. With the free delivery of military technology we have already given you significant help for your military budget. We will further think about that so as to provide you certain deferral of payments on the credits. We will review the issue and will inform you of what can be done with regards to this question.

N.M.Taraki. We also need a large radio station, which would allow us to broadcast propaganda throughout the world. Our radio station is weak. While any slanderous declaration of some religious leader is spread throughout the world through foreign organs of mass propaganda, the voice of our radio station remains almost unheard.

B.N.Ponomarev. We are taking energetic measures to spread propaganda about the successes of the DRA. We already spoke about the article in "Pravda." Today's edition contains your speech. It will be broadcast by radio to Iran, Pakistan and other countries. In this way we are helping compensate for the weakness of your radio station.

N.M.Taraki. Your help with propaganda is very valuable to us, but we would like for the world to hear our own voice. That's why we ask you to help us build a 1000(kW) radio station.

A.N.Kosygin. We will study this question, but, as far as I know, building a radio station requires a considerable amount of time.

B.N.Ponomarev. We will send you a specialist in propaganda. You may relate to him your ideas on how to secure a large propaganda support through socialist countries.

D.F.Ustinov. Concerning additional shipments of military machinery, a need will arise for additional military specialists and advisors.

N.M.Taraki. If you believe that such a need exists, then, of course, we will accept

them. But won't you allow us, after all, to use pilots and tank operators from other socialist countries?

A.N.Kosygin. When referring to our military specialists, we mean mechanics who service military machinery. I cannot understand why the question of pilots and tank operators keeps coming up. This is a completely unexpected question for us. And I believe that it is unlikely that socialist countries will agree to this. The question of sending people who would sit in your tanks and shoot at your people - this is a very a pointed political question.

N.M.Taraki. We will see how we can use those Afghan soldiers who were sent to study with you earlier. Perhaps we will ask you to accept for training those people who we will select ourselves.

D.F.Ustinov. We will, of course, accept them for training.

A.N.Kosygin. To sum up this conversation, we can ascertain that there remains the question of the construction of a powerful radio station. There remains also the question of expediting the deliveries of military technology. You, as we understand, will select helicopter pilots from the officers training with us. If you have any other requests or desires, you may inform us through the Soviet ambassador and the chief military advisor. We will carefully review them, and will react accordingly.

We have also agreed to take political measures in defense of DRA from imperialists and plots of the reactionaries. We will continue to exert political influence on them. Our press will also provide continuous support for the DRA.

We think it important that within your country you should work to widen the social support of your regime, draw people over to your side, insure that nothing will alienate the people from the government. And finally, not as a matter of discussion but as a wish, I would like to express my ideas on the importance of a very careful and cautious approach towards your staff. One should take ^Pcare _A of one's staff and have an individual approach towards it. Have a thorough and good understanding with each person before hanging any labels on them.

N.M.Taraki. Are we talking about officers and generals?

[page 14 is missing from the copy on file at the NSA]

A.N.Kosygin. If an armed invasion of your country takes place, then it will be a completely different situation. But right now we are doing everything to insure that such an invasion does not occur. And I think that we will be able to achieve this.

N.M.Taraki. I pose this question because China is persistently pushing Pakistan against us.

A.N.Kosygin. When aggression takes place, then a completely different situation arises. The Chinese became convinced of this through the example of Vietnam and are wringing their hands now, so to speak. As for Afghanistan, we have already taken measures to guard it from aggression. I have already said that we have sent corresponding messages to the president of Pakistan, Khomeini, and the prime^gminister of Iran.

N.M.Taraki. The members of our Politburo are aware of my visit to Moscow. Upon arriving in Kabul I will have to inform them of the results of our meetings. Must I tell them that the Soviet Union will give the DRA only political support and other aid?

A.N.Kosygin. Yes, both political support and extensive assistance in the line of military and other shipments. This is the decision of our Politburo. L.I.Brezhnev will tell you about this during ^(his)the meeting with you, which will start in 10 min. I think that you will return to Afghanistan confident of our support, confident of your own actions.

N.M.Taraki. Expresses great ^{satisfaction}translation for the conversation that took place and thanks for the great assistance that is being provided to Afghanistan during this critical moment.

Interpreted by the graduate student of the Diplomatic Academy of MID USSR, comrade Kozin V.P., transcribed by the adviser of the Middle East Department of MID USSR comrade Gavrilov S.P.

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