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PP RUCMHR
DE RUSBY #4030 176930
ZNY CCCC ZZH
P R 25084ZZ JUN 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4449
INFO RUS30D/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0041
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1693
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5979
RUCMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 266
BT

25 JUN 79 11 29z

Pol
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4000

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/25/05 (AMSTUTZ, J. RUCES) OR/1
TAGS: PINT, UR, AF, PINR
SUBJECT: (C) MEETING WITH SOVIET DIPLOMAT: PART I OF III -
OBSERVATIONS ON THE INTERNAL AFGHAN POLITICAL SCENE

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SUMMARY: HIGH SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIAL DISCLOSES SOVIETS HAVE BEEN URGING DRA TO ESTABLISH A "NATIONAL FRONT" TO BROADEN BASE OF THE GOVT - BUT SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS. THE DIPLOMAT DESCRIBED THE INSURGENCY AS CONFUSING. END SUMMARY.
3. THE NEW SOVIET MINISTER-COUNSELOR, VASILY STEPANOVICH SAFRONCHUK, PAID ME AN HOUR-LONG COURTESY CALL JUNE 24. UNQUESTIONABLY THE MOST INTERESTING SOVIET DIPLOMAT I HAVE EVER MET, I FOUND HIS OPENESS FASCINATING, ESPECIALLY FOR WHAT HE HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE INTERNAL AFGHAN POLITICAL SCENE AND SOVIET-AFGHAN POLICY (SEPTEL, PART II).
4. FROM HIS REMARKS, SOME OF WHICH WERE VEILED AND SOME NOT AT ALL, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY FINDS THE AFGHANISTAN SITUATION VERY "DIFFICULT". SOME OF SAFRONCHUK'S MORE INTERESTING COMMENTS I PRESENT BELOW:

5. THE NARROW POLITICAL BASE OF THE DRA. WHEN I MENTIONED THAT THERE WERE REPORTS CIRCULATING THAT THE DRA LEADERSHIP WAS TALKING WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTERS ETEMADI AND YOUSEF ABOUT JOINING THE GOVT SO AS TO BROADEN ITS POLITICAL BASE, AND THAT THE SOVIETS WERE PLAYING SOME ROLE IN THIS, SAFRONCHUK SHOOK HIS HEAD. "WHAT IS TRUE," HE CONFIDED, "IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN URGING THE DRA LEADERSHIP TO BROADEN ITS BASE BY BRINGING IN NEW PEOPLE INTO THE GOVT, BUT WHAT IS NOT TRUE IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUSEF OR ETEMADI." CONTINUING, HE SAID, "ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL FRONT, LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE DONE, WOULD BE SENSIBLE FOR THEM." SAFRONCHUK COMPLAINED HOWEVER THAT: "THEY (DRA) WILL NEITHER ALLOW ANY OPPOSITION, OR DO THEY WISH TO SHARE POWER. THEIR IDEA ABOUT BROADENING THE POLITICAL BASE IS SOLELY TO ORGANIZE STUDENT, YOUTH, WOMEN AND WORKERS ORGANIZATIONS, BUT THOSE ARE ALL PART OF THE SAME POLITICAL PARTY. THIS IS NOT BROADENING THE POLITICAL BASE." HE REMARKED, "THEY (DRA) ARE VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT ANY SUGGESTION OF SHARING POWER. THEY ARE STUBBORN PEOPLE."

6. REFLECTING ON THE PROBLEMS FACING THE DRA, HE SAID ONE NOTABLE WEAKNESS (AND HE KEPT RETURNING TO THIS POINT) WAS THE "VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF INTELLECTUALS IN THE GOVT." HE SAID: "YOU SEE THIS ABSENCE IN MANY WAYS. THE NEWSPAPERS ARE TERRIBLE, AND THE CULTURAL LIFE IS BARREN." IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE GOVT, SAFRONCHUK SAID, TO ATTRACT TO ITSELF "MORE INTELLECTUALS."

7. THE INSURGENCY - SAFRONCHUK SAID HIS EMBASSY FINDS THE INSURGENCY "VERY CONFUSING". THEY CANNOT IDENTIFY ANY SINGLE REBEL LEADER WHO DOMINATES THE OPPOSITION SUCH AS KHOMEINI OR HO CHI MIN DID IN THEIR COUNTRIES. HIS EMBASSY DOES BELIEVE THAT THE IRANIAN AND PAKISTANI GOVTS ARE ABETTING THE REBELS, THE IRANIANS BY PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND RADIO BROADCASTS, AND THE PAKISTANIS BY CLANDESTINELY SUPPLYING ARMS AND MATERIAL SUPPORT. HE BLAMED RELIGION (-ISLAM, IT IS A TERRIBLE RELIGION") AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR THE INSURGENCY. THE POPULACE, HE SAID, ASSUMES "COMMUNISTS ARE AGAINST ISLAM," AND THIS HE OBSERVED MAKES THE DRA'S TASK VERY DIFFICULT.

See!

8. WHEN, AT ONE POINT, I TOLD HIM THE US GOVT WAS NOT AIDING THE INSURGENTS, THAT WE HAVE SEVERAL TIMES TOLD THE DRA THIS, AND THAT I WAS CONSEQUENTLY UPSET BY THE REPEATED PICTURE CAPTIONS IN THE DRA PRESS THIS PAST WEEK, IMPLYING THAT THE SHOWN "CAPTURED" WEAPONS ORIGINATED WITH THE USA (AND CHINA), HE HAD THIS TO SAY. "IN MY MANY CONVERSATIONS WITH TOP LEVEL DRA MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS," HE SAID, "NOT ONCE HAVE I HEARD THE US ACCUSED AS ASSISTING THE INSURGENCY". WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT MOST OF THE FOREIGN MILITARY WEAPONS IN PAKISTAN WERE OF US OR CHINESE ORIGIN, AND THUS IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE FOR THE INSURGENTS ALONG THE PAK FRONTIER TO HAVE SUCH WEAPONS, HE SAID THAT THE DRA LEADERSHIP "KNOWS THIS". RETURNING TO AFGHAN-US RELATIONS, SAFRONCHUK SAID THAT, "THE MAIN DRA COMPLAINT ABOUT THE USA IS NOT ABOUT YOUR GIVING ARMS BUT ABOUT YOUR VERY CRITICAL PRESS."

No concern about US arms + rebels

9. THE TIME TO EVACUATE WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAS NOT COME. I TOLD SAFRONCHUK THAT ONE OF MY GNAWING CONCERNS WAS WHEN AND IF TO EVACUATE AMERICAN DEPENDENTS. INCIDENTS LIKE THE JUNE 23 OUTBREAK IN KABUL, I SAID, COMPELLED OUR EMBASSY TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION. SAFRONCHUK RESPONDED THAT, WHILE HE HIMSELF DID NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THIS KIND OF QUESTION ("THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AMBASSADOR AND THE OTHER MINISTER-COUNSELOR"), HE SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND MY WORRY. "WHO KNOWS," HE SAID, "WHAT NEXT WEEK OR NEXT MONTH WILL BRING?" AS FOR WHAT HIS EMBASSY HAD DONE, HE SAID IT HAD EVACUATED TO THE USSR "ALL WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF SOVIETS WORKING OUTSIDE KABUL." AS FOR THOSE IN KABUL, HE SAID, ALL THE DEPENDENTS WERE STILL HERE. "WHEN THERE IS TROUBLE, LIKE YESTERDAY," HE SAID, "WE BRING THEM INSIDE THE EMBASSY COMPOUND FOR SAFETY." HE THOUGHT THE DRA WAS IN CONTROL OF KABUL AND DIDN'T THINK THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE CITY REQUIRED AN EVACUATION.

*SV document
non-Kabul dependents*

10. BIO DATA. FOR A SOVIET DIPLOMAT, SAFRONCHUK IS EXTRAORDINARILY OPEN. HE IS WILLING TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, AND HE STRUCK ME AS BOTH INTELLIGENT AND A MAN YOU CAN REASON WITH. WITHIN THE HIERARCHY OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY, HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS "PROFESSIONALLY" HAVING THE RANK OF "AMBASSADOR," BUT PROTOCOL-WISE WAS HERE RANKED ONLY AS NO.3. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE OTHER MINISTER-COUNSELOR, YURIY K. ALEXEEV, HAD PRECEDED HIM TO KABUL, AND SINCE HE ARRIVED (FIRST, 771-3 2- 53: #, 8: -)) 6, 9.2 AFTER AMEASSADOR PIZANOV. AS FOR HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITIES, SAFRONCHUK SAID HE WAS CONCERNED WITH "EXTERNAL QUESTIONS" WHILE ALEXEEV WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR "INTERNAL QUESTIONS." WHAT HE MEANT BY THIS WAS NOT CLEAR, BUT LATER HE REFERRED TO ALEXEEV'S FIELD AS "AMINISSTRATION."

Safronchuk's role = external 9/13

AMST UTZ
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KNNVVV ESA106MJC359
PP RUQYHF
DE RUSBLK #4889 1760945
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P R 25 0642Z JUN 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4450
INFO RUSBOD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8942
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1694
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 6987
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BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4889

25 JUN 79 12 11z

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/25/85 (AMSTUTZ, J. BRUCE) OR-M
TAGS: PINT, UR, AF, PINR
SUBJ: (C) MEETING WITH SOVIET DIPLOMAT: PART II OF III -
SOVIET-AFGHAN RELATIONS

Pol
CHG
ECON
RF
CARON

REF: KABUL 4888

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SUMMARY. THE MOST INTERESTING COMMENTS SAFRONCHUK MADE DURING OUR MEETING RELATED TO SOVIET-AFGHAN RELATIONS, SPECIFICALLY HIS DENIAL THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD CONSIDER BRINGING IN SOVIET TROOPS TO SAVE THE DRA. SAFRONCHUK QUOTED LENIN AS SAYING, "EVERY REVOLUTION MUST DEFEND ITSELF." END SUMMARY.
3. DURING OUR DISCUSSION OF THE INSURGENCY, I TOLD HIM THAT THERE WAS SPECULATION IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS THAT HIS GOVT WOULD, IF NECESSARY, BRING IN TROOPS TO SUPPORT THE DRA. SAFRONCHUK DENIED ANY SUCH INTENTION. HE REFERRED TO ~~BREZHNEV'S JUNE 11 SPEECH IN MOSCOW~~, IN WHICH THE LATTER SAID, "WE SHALL NOT ABANDON IN TROUBLE OUR FRIENDS - THE AFGHAN PEOPLE," BUT EXPLAINED THAT IN SAYING THAT, "BREZHNEV DID NOT MEAN TO IMPLY THIS INCLUDED MILITARY INTERVENTION." SAFRONCHUK WENT ON TO REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES THAT LENIN HAD SAID, "EVERY REVOLUTION MUST DEFEND ITSELF." → see Plans March 88
4. PURSUING HIS THEME, HE SAID THAT WERE THE SOVIETS TO BRING IN TROOPS, THIS WOULD HAVE BAD REPERCUSSIONS INTERNATIONALLY. HE EXPLAINED, "IT WOULD HARM SAIT AND THE POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE WORLD," HE THEN ADDED, "QUITE ASIDE FROM INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, IT WOULD BE BAD POLICY IN TERMS OF INTERNAL AFGHAN AFFAIRS." I OBSERVED THAT SOVIET TROOPS WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME IN THIS RUGGED, MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY. HE NODDED HIS HEAD VIGOROUSLY.

5. ENLARGING ON SOVIET POLICY, HE SAID, "LIKE YOUR COUNTRY, OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE HERE IS TO PROMOTE REGIONAL STABILITY" (HE MUST HAVE STUDIED SOME OF OUR POLICY STATEMENTS). "WHAT WE WISH TO SEE," HE SAID, "IS A PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL AFGHANISTAN."

6. WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, HE CONTINUED, WAS TO ELIMINATE ILLITERACY. IF EVERYBODY COULD BE LITERATE AND ACHIEVE A BASIC EDUCATION, THAT WOULD BE THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN. THEN HE COMPLAINED, "INSTEAD, THE AFGHANS KEEP ASKING US FOR MORE AND MORE ARMS - NOT FOR MORE HELP IN EDUCATION."

7. IN RESPONSE, I CONFIRMED THAT IT HAD BEEN LONG-STANDING AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN TO PROMOTE STABILITY IN THE REGION. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE AFGHANISTAN AT PEACE WITH ALL ITS NEIGHBORS, NOT ONLY WITH THE SOVIET UNION, BUT ALSO WITH IRAN, PAKISTAN AND CHINA. FOR DECADES TOO, WE HAVE HAD A HUMANITARIAN INTEREST HERE, INVESTING ROUGHLY \$20 MILLION PER ANNUM IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. TO THE EXTENT THE AFGHANS COULD UPLIFE THEMSELVES SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY, WE BELIEVED THIS WOULD PROMOTE STABILITY. SAFRONCHUK AGREED.

8. I ALSO TOLD SAFRONCHUK THAT AS A COROLLARY TO OUR POLICY OF WORKING FOR REGIONAL STABILITY, WE HOPED THAT AFGHANISTAN WOULD NOT BECOME AN AREA OF CONFRONTATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. TO THIS SAFRONCHUK RESPONDED, "I AGREE WITH YOU COMPLETELY." GOING ON, I WARNED HIM, THAT WERE THE SOVIETS TO BRING IN TROOPS INTO AFGHANISTAN, THIS WOULD VERY MUCH COMPLICATE AND HARM SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HE NODDED HIS HEAD.

9. COMMENT: I CONSIDER SAFRONCHUK'S REMARKS SIGNIFICANT. I APPRECIATE THAT ONE COULD ARGUE THAT HIS DENIAL OF ANY SOVIET INTENTION TO INTERVENE PHYSICALLY WAS THE ONLY ANSWER A SOVIET DIPLOMAT COULD HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO GIVE TO MY QUESTION, AND FURTHER THAT THE QUOTATION FROM LENIN WAS HYPOCRITICAL IN THE LIGHT OF SOVIET ACTIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE. YET, REFLECTING ON OUR CONVERSATION, I THINK HE GENUINELY BELIEVED WHAT HE WAS TELLING ME, NAMELY THAT SOVIET PHYSICAL INTERVENTION WOULD BE MORE HARMFUL THAN HELPFUL FOR SOVIET INTERESTS, AND THEREFORE IT WOULD NOT OCCUR. AMSTUTZ

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