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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DATE: September 20, 19

SUBJECT: Activities of Afghan Dissidents

PARTICIPANTS: Nanguy Tarzi Afghan exile; former officer of Afghan Embassy in Washington, and of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

George G. B. Griffin M/FSI/LT/DARI

DATE & PLACE: September 12, 1979, at Griffin home in Washington

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Tarzi came to see me to tell me about his recent trip to Europe. He had planned to take his family to England for a visit, but just as he was about to leave, news had come of the formation of a rebel "coalition" in Germany. His brother-in-law, Syed Ahmed Gailani, telephoned to ask him to take a message to the "coalition" members about to meet in Hamburg. (Gailani did not attend the meeting.) In his message Gailani explained that his group would consider favorably an invitation to join the group. However, before his group could take such a step, Gailani and representatives of other would-be coalition members would have to discuss (and, by implication, agree upon) the "basis" for the coalition.

When Tarzi arrived in Germany, he sensed that things had changed. The group meeting there had become the creature of General Abdul Wali, King Zahir's son-in-law, who seemed to be in charge. (Also present were former General Mustagni and former Ambassador to the US Karim.) Tarzi met twice with Abdul Wali in his hotel room, but he declined an invitation to attend the group's meetings because he had no authority from Gailani to do so. (During our conversation

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POC See p. 3.
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- 2 -

Tarzi several times protested that he did not represent any group; he was "just Gailani's messenger.")

Tarzi revealed that the "coalition" had decided to try to determine whether the rebel leaders in Pakistan would accept Abdul Wali's involvement in their activities. (It was not clear to him whether Abdul Wali was acting on his own or whether he was representing King Zahir, even after he had closely questioned the king's cousin. The cousin said that until recently Zahir had not wished to become involved with the dissidents, while Abdul Wali obviously wanted to play "his" role. He implied that Zahir now wanted to help, but wanted to probe for likely reactions before committing himself.) The group in Germany asked Tarzi to offer support to the king on behalf of the Afghans in Washington, but he refused to do so because he "could not speak for the hundreds of different Afghans in Washington." He had telephoned Zahir (in Rome) from Germany "just as a courtesy," but did not discuss anything of substance. Meanwhile, Ambassador Karim was to make preparations for Abdul Wali to go to Peshawar. (They had not yet been able to obtain a Pakistani visa for the general.)

Tarzi claimed that, at his urging, the "coalition" considered drafting a set of broad policies. They agreed that such a step was necessary to avoid having Afghanistan end up like "other places" (Iran). They feared that even though the Khalqis might be ousted, they would return even stronger if their successors fell to squabbling over personalities. Thus, they also agreed that they needed to form the basis for a government where individuals could come and go without affecting its stability. However, Tarzi was told that their immediate goal was to topple the Khalq government, an effort which left no time to work out policies or build grass roots support.

Tarzi recalled that several members of the "coalition" became unnerved when they heard that the Soviets had made "tentative contact" with King Zahir. He tried hard to find out what I knew about the story, noting that it had been printed in the New York Times. I told him that I had no idea about its validity, but commented that it would be conceivable if it were true that the Soviets were trying to quell the fighting in the country by inducing Afghan dissidents to join the regime. Tarzi apparently viewed the notion of Soviet contact with the Zahir camp as dangerous.

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In any case, Tarzi noted that Ambassador Karim planned to visit Peshawar to test the Abdul Wali idea on the rebels there. Other members of the "coalition," including former Generals Mustagni and Arif (another son-in-law of the King), were to travel in Europe and the US to try to gain the support of exiled Afghan intellectuals for a "council of 10 or 12" to guide the various rebel groups, including those in Pakistan.

According to Tarzi, some "coalition" members suggested supporting those rebels most experienced in fighting Kabul -- Gul Badeen and Rabbani. However, he had urged them first to investigate Muslim Brotherhood infiltration into the rebel groups, noting that the Brotherhood had never been crushed in Egypt, Syria or Iraq, and that Nasser had jailed Haroon Mujadidi for 8 years because of his role in the Brotherhood. He said that he warned them that if Brotherhood members ever come to power in Kabul, the leftists would return within two years. He conceded that religious leaders had a role to play in charting Afghanistan's future but argued that only "moderates" should serve on governing councils. He had informed the group that Gailani insisted that extremists of any sort be excluded from the government. To illustrate his concern, he called for careful screening of his own followers, noting that they were completely under the sway of their pirs (local religious leaders).

In passing, Tarzi commented that most Afghan exiles know little about the situation in Afghanistan, and doubt that joining the mujahedin (freedom fighters) will help to guarantee their future.

Tarzi asserted that the rebels had received about \$1 or \$2 million, mostly from the Saudis. He claimed that most of it had gone to Gul Badeen and Rabbani via the (Pakistani) Jamaat-i-Islami (which took very large cuts). (He added that religious leaders in Iran had given some support to Afghan Shias, who refused to share any of it with the majority Sunnis, or to cooperate with the rebels in Peshawar.) He commented that Rabbani and Gul Badeen had used a ruse to obtain money from the Saudis. Apparently, the Saudi oil company (which handled the transaction for the SAG) had refused to make a donation until the four rebel groups in Peshawar formed a joint front. To meet this condition, Rabbani split his organization into three or four groups. He then drew up a coalition agreement, had it signed by his own men and Gul Badeen, and showed it to the Saudis as "proof" of a front. The Saudis swallowed the story and sent the money.

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- 4 -

Discussing other possible sources of support, Tarzi doubted that the Iranians would help if King Zahir were involved with the rebels, since Khomeini is opposed to monarchs, even if Tehran were convinced that Zahir did not want to retrieve his throne. Because Islamabad was in a "mess," with preparations for elections and its problems with the USG over the nuclear weapons issue, Pakistan was not likely to supply much aid. The Saudis would never provide support openly because of their fears of Soviet reactions.

Tarzi archly observed that Ambassador Karim had implied (without ever saying as much) that he had some sort of USG support or backing: the others had scoffed at the notion. I responded that neither Karim nor any other Afghan was supported by the USG in his efforts to overthrow the Khalqis.

Outlining his views of the situation, Tarzi noted that Afghans are slow to grasp change. This meant, he argued, that they always hailed new governments, naive in the belief that any change would be for the better. However, they now understand the dangers represented by the Khalqis and are beginning to talk openly against the regime (as they had about every other government in the past). Tarzi saw this as a healthy sign which could be of considerable benefit to the dissidents.

On the other hand, Tarzi repeated that the rebels' most urgent needs are material, mostly ammunition and fuel. (He never hinted that the USG should meet any of these needs.) He asserted that the dissidents are still hopeful that the Khalqis can be ousted before winter, but if that does not happen, they will continue their fight. In saying so, however, he expressed the fear that the winter would allow the Khalqis to further entrench themselves, and perhaps gain more acceptance in the eyes of the Afghan public.

BIO NOTES: Tarzi has never complained (as some Afghans do) that he is in need of money or other material goods. He continues to dress well and obviously travels a lot. However, he did confess to a search for employment, saying that he had been turned down by the UN because of a Kabul veto. He reported that his brother had escaped from Afghanistan in the trunk of a car in late July via Pakistan. The brother is now in Paris.

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LONDON FOR GLASPIE
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WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED
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1. (S) SAUDI ARABIA-AFGHANISTAN REBELS: A CIA ANALYSIS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING: SAUDI ARABIA IS PROVIDING LIMITED FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT TO THE TRIBAL DISSIDENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE SAUDI SUPPORT REFLECTS RIYADH'S WISH TO DESTABILIZE THE MARXIST REGIME IN KABUL, WHICH THE SAUDIS VIEW AS A SOVIET-CREATED THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF ALL ISLAMIC GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA, ESPECIALLY PAKISTAN. THE LIMITED NATURE OF SAUDI SUPPORT IS IN PART AN INDICATION OF THE SAUDIS' DISENCHANTMENT WITH COVERT OPERATIONS AS A FOREIGN POLICY TOOL.

2. (S) SAUDI MOTIVATION: THE SAUDIS LONG HAVE HAD FAIRLY GOOD TIES WITH AFGHANISTAN. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO THE AFGHAN MONARCHY BEFORE IT WAS TOPPLED IN 1973, AND THEY REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH FORMER KING ZAHIR SHAH AND PRINCE ABUL WALI. PRESIDENT DAUD MADE A PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA SHORTLY BEFORE HIS OVERTHROW AND DEATH IN APRIL 1978, AND THE SAUDIS AGREED TO PROVIDE SOME FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HIS REGIME.

3. (S/NF) THE SAUDIS INTERPRETED THE MARXIST TAKEOVER IN AFGHANISTAN LAST YEAR AS PART OF A SOVIET-DIRECTED CAMPAIGN TO ENCIRCLE THE PERSIAN GULF AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA WITH RADICAL REGIMES IN PREPARATION FOR THE SUBVERSION OF THE CONSERVATIVE, OIL-RICH MONARCHIES IN THE AREA. THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND THE MARXIST COUP IN SOUTH YEMEN ARE SEEN IN RIYADH AS OTHER PARTS OF THE SOVIET EFFORT TO SEIZE THE OIL WEALTH OF THE MIDDLE EAST. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR IN PAKISTAN REPORTED IN MAY 1978 THAT THE AFGHAN COUP WAS INSTIGATED BY THE SOVIETS TO DEVELOP A BASE FROM WHICH TO SUBVERT IRAN AND PAKISTAN. THE ISLAMIC NATURE OF THE PRESENT AFGHAN REVOLT IS AN ADDITIONAL MOTIVE FOR THE SAUDIS, WHO SEE THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION AND THE MARXIST COUP IN SOUTH YEMEN ARE SEEN IN RIYADH AS OTHER PARTS OF THE SOVIET EFFORT TO SEIZE THE OIL WEALTH OF THE MIDDLE EAST. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR IN PAKISTAN REPORTED IN MAY 1978 THAT THE AFGHAN COUP WAS INSTIGATED BY THE SOVIETS TO DEVELOP A BASE FROM WHICH TO SUBVERT IRAN AND PAKISTAN. THE ISLAMIC NATURE OF THE PRESENT AFGHAN REVOLT IS AN ADDITIONAL MOTIVE FOR THE SAUDIS, WHO SEE THEMSELVES AS THE DEFENDERS OF ISLAMIC VALUES AND INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

4. (S) ALTHOUGH THE SAUDIS RECOGNIZED THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN KABUL RELATIVELY SOON AFTER ITS ESTABLISHMENT, THE SAUDI MEDIA WERE AN EARLY CRITIC OF THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME--OFTEN CHARGING IT WITH ANTI-ISLAMIC PRACTICES AND WIDESPREAD HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. BY EARLY 1979 AFGHAN DISSIDENT LEADERS WERE TRAVELING REGULARLY TO SAUDI ARABIA TO ELICIT SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE. ONE GROUP--THE AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT--OPENED AN OFFICE IN JIDDA IN LATE 1978. SAUDI FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE REBELS APPARENTLY BEGAN IN EARNEST SOME TIME AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR.

5. (S) THE LIMITS OF SAUDI AID: THE LIMITED NATURE OF SAUDI ASSISTANCE TO THE AFGHANS REFLECTS SEVERAL FACTORS. THE SAUDIS ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE NUMEROUS SIONS WITHIN THE AFGHAN DISSIDENT-MOVEMENT AND HAVE TO USE AID AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE GREATER UNITY. THE SAUDIS HAVE TOLD THE VARIOUS AFGHAN LEADERS THAT GREATER COOPERATION AMONG THEM IS A PREREQUISITE FOR GREATER SAUDI AID. THE SAUDIS ALSO MAY BE DISAPPOINTED THAT NOT ENOUGH OF THEIR AID ACTUALLY GOES TO THE INSURGENTS BUT RATHER IS KEPT BY EXILES.

6. (S) THE HALFHEARTED NATURE OF SAUDI SUPPORT ALSO REFLECTS SOME DISENCHANTMENT IN RIYADH WITH COVERT FUNDING OF ANTILEFTIST GROUPS. IN THE EARLY AND MID-1970S THE SAUDIS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTERS OF ISLAMIC GUERRILLA GROUPS IN SOUTH YEMEN AND THE HORN OF AFRICA. ALTHOUGH THE SAUDIS STILL GIVE THEM SOME AID, THESE GROUPS FAILED TO UNSEAT THE LEFTIST REGIMES THEY OPPOSED. THE SAUDIS WERE ALSO DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO SECURE GREATER WESTERN, ESPECIALLY US, SUPPORT FOR THESE CAUSES.

7. (S) DESPITE THESE DISAPPOINTMENTS, SAUDI SUPPORT FOR THE AFGHAN REBELS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE. THE SAUDIS HAVE BEEN PLEASED BY THE REBELS' MILITARY SUCCESSES AND WILL DOUBTLESS ENCOURAGE THEM TO KEEP UP THE GOOD FIGHT FOR ALLAH.

8. (C) BLACK LEADERS-HISTADRUT: HISTADRUT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAS INVITED A GROUP OF AMERICAN BLACK LEADERS TO ISRAEL AND THAT THE GROUP HAS ACCEPTED. THE GROUP WILL BE HEADED BY BENJAMIN HOOKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NAACP.

9. (U) ARAB SUMMIT: ACCORDING TO RADIO BEIRUT, THE FORTHCOMING ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCE WILL BE CONVENED ON NOVEMBER 17. THE MAJOR ISSUE AT THE CONFERENCE WILL BE THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

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