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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5820  
INFO RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 777  
RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9376  
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7464  
RUERMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1949  
RUQMR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 522  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 7218

EXDIS  
CHARGE'  
CHRN

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1977-211-113

EXDIS

E.O.12065: GDS 9/27/85 (AMSTUTZ, J. BRUCE) OR-M  
TAGS: PEPR AF US  
SUBJ: CHARGE'S CALL ON PRESIDENT AMIN

REF: A) STATE 250412 (NOTAL), B) STATE 250278 (NOTAL)

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY. I HAD AN AMICABLE, RELAXED MEETING WITH PRESIDENT AMIN THIS MORNING. HE WAS ALL CHARM AND FRIENDLINESS AND MADE A PITCH FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. NO REALLY SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED. END SUMMARY.

3. THESE LAST FEW DAYS, AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES HAVE BEEN QUEUING UP TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO PRESIDENT AMIN ON HIS "ELECTION" AS NEW AFGHAN PRESIDENT AND GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PARTY. I WAS THE FIFTH ENVOY TO SEE HIM THIS MORNING, AND I WAS TOLD A SIXTH WOULD BE FOLLOWING ME THIS AFTERNOON.

4. AMIN WAS RELAXED, POISED AND OUTWARDLY FRIENDLY. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF HIS BEING WOUNDED IN THE REPORTED PALACE SHOOTOUT OF SEPT 14. IN OBSERVING THIS GENIAL MAN, IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS HE WHO HAS SURVIVED PLOT AFTER PLOT AND HAS EMERGED ON TOP. AS I LOOKED AT HIM, I COULD NOT HELP BUT RECALL THAT ONLY TWO YEARS AGO, IN 1977, WHEN WE DID ONE OF THOSE REQUIRED PERIODICAL EXERCISES TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL LEADERS, WE DIDN'T INCLUDE AMIN. IT WAS ALSO HARD TO REALIZE IN TALKING WITH THIS FRIENDLY FELLOW THAT IT WAS HE TOO THAT HAS BEEN DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE

EXECUTION OF PROBABLY 5,000 POLITICAL OPPONENTS. IN EVERYTHING HE SAID, HE SOUNDED REASONABLE AND PROJECTED THE IMAGE OF A MAN YOU COULD REASON WITH AND REACH UNDERSTANDING.

5. ~~AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, I WAS UNDER TWO TIGHT INSTRUCTIONS: ONE TO KEEP THE MEETING SHORT; AND THE OTHER TO SAY NOTHING SUBSTANTIVE OTHER THAN TO DESCRIBE THE USG DESIRE TO SHAPE AMIN'S OFT-REPEATED REQUEST FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS.~~ WHEN YOU KNOW THAT THE OBLIGATORY TEA-DRINKING DRILL WILL NOT START FOR SOME MINUTES, AND THAT A TOO HASTY RETREAT WILL BE SEEN AS AN AFRONT, MY STAFF AND I HAD WRAPPED OUR BRAINS BEFOREHAND AS TO WHAT SMALL TALK I COULD RESORT TO TO PASS THE TIME. BUT IT ALL TURNED OUT TO BE LESS OF A PROBLEM THAN I FEARED. AMIN WAS IN A LOQUACIOUS MOOD, AND I LET HIM DO MOST OF THE TALKING. WE HAD OUR PICTURES TAKEN -- IN FACT, THAT TOOK ABOUT FOUR MINUTES -- AND TO MY ASTONISHMENT THE TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS TOOK NINE PICTURES. SINCE MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES HAVE HAD THEIR PICTURES WITH AMIN FEATURED IN THE LOCAL PRESS ALL THIS PAST WEEK, I SUPPOSE MINE WILL SHOW UP THERE IN DCS COURSE.

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5521  
INFO RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY PEIJING 778  
RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMAEAD 9377  
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7465

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1957  
RUQHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 523 ✓

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 7219

EXDIS

6. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PHOTOGRAPHERS LEFT, AMIN SAID THAT HE WANTED IT MADE CLEAR TO WASHINGTON THAT HE DESIRED "BETTER AND FRIENDLIER RELATIONS". THANK GOODNESS, I WAS ABLE TO RESPOND THAT WASHINGTON SHARED A SENTIMENT FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS, TOO. HE THEN MADE THE PITCH, WHICH HE HAS MADE SO OFTEN TO VISITORS IN THE PAST, THAT THE DRA HARBORS NO ILLWILL TOWARD ANY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, IN FACT WISHES TO BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH EVERY NATION, AND THAT IT SINCERELY DESIRES PEACE. HE ALSO REPEATED HIS FAMILIAR PREVIOUS LINE THAT AFGHANISTAN IS A BACKWARD COUNTRY WHICH DUPERATELY NEEDS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS, AND IT CAN ONLY DO SO WITH THE HELP OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THOUGH HE DIDN'T MENTION USAID SPECIFICALLY, IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE CONTEXT OF HIS REMARKS THAT HE HOPED WE COULD SOMEDAY SEE OUR WAY TO SUPPORT THE DRA'S DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS.

7. HE ALSO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO APOLOGIZE FOR NOT HAVING AN AMBASSADOR IN "MANY COUNTRIES/S (READ AMONG THESE THE USA), EXPLAINING THAT THE PARTY WAS DESPERATELY SHORT OF QUALIFIED PEOPLE WHO COULD ADEQUATELY REPRESENT THE REGIME. AS A CONSEQUENCE, HE LOOKED TO ME, HE SAID, TO BE THE PRIMARY CONDUIT FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND AFGHANISTAN. PURSUING THIS THEME, HE TWICE SAID THAT HIS DOOR WAS ALWAYS OPEN TO RECEIVE ME WHENEVER I WISHED TO CONSULT HIM. GOING BEING MINDFUL OF THE DEMAND OF THE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT WE REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE U.S. MISSION, I TRIED TO SAY SOME POSITIVE THINGS TO LEAVE A SALUTARY IMPRESSION. I BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION THAT THE DC-7: FOR ARIANA AFGHAN AIRLINES WAS NOW SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN KABUL ON OCTOBER 7, AND I SAID THAT, "I HOPED NOTHING WOULD DEVELOP TO PREVENT ITS COMING." I THEN POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY REDUCED ITS TARIFF LEVELS ON SEVEN ITEMS WHICH AFGHANISTAN EXPORTED TO THE U.S. (AS A RESULT OF THE TOKYO ROUND), AND THAT THOUGH THIS MEANT A REVENUE LOSS TO OUR TREASURY, I HOPED IT WOULD HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT FOR AFGHANISTAN BY INCREASING EXPORTS. FINALLY, I REFERRED TO HIS INTEREST IN SOLAR ENERGY, AND HIS HAVING MET A VISITING AMERICAN EXPERT IN THIS FIELD IN KABUL LAST JULY, AND SAID THAT USICA PLANNED A FULL-SCALE EXHIBIT ON THIS SUBJECT NEXT YEAR. HIS RESPONSE TO THAT WAS ONE OF ENTHUSIASM, AND HE SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT PRESENTATION.

9. THAT'S ABOUT ALL. I THINK MY HAVING CALLED ON HIM WAS A WISE MOVE. I THINK HE WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEND THE DEPT A MESSAGE THAT HE WANTED BETTER RELATIONS, AND HE STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED ANY CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT. WHEN I NEXT MEET WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DOST, I PLAN IF NECESSARY TO REFER TO AMIN'S DESIRE FOR BETTER RELATIONS AS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE MFA TO EASE UP ON US ON THE MISSION STAFFING ISSUE.

10. BEARING IN MIND THE DEPARTMENT'S STRICTURE THAT I KEEP THE MEETING SHORT, I LOOKED AT MY WATCH WHEN I LEFT AND, COUNTING TO BE FOUR MINUTES WHEN THE PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE THERE, I WAS IN AMIN'S RECEPTION ROOM FOR 19 MINUTES. THE TIMING ALL AROUND WAS, I THOUGHT, JUST ABOUT RIGHT.

AKSTUTZ

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#7218