

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
AID-05 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
/106 W

-----057008 221234Z /46

R 220717Z OCT 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0637  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 8484

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, PINR, EAID, EFIN, AF, UR, US  
SUBJ: UPI INTERVIEW WITH AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN

REF: KABUL 8306

1. SUMMARY: IN AN OCTOBER 11 DISCUSSION WITH AN AMERICAN  
CORRESPONDENT, AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN: (A) DENIED THAT  
HIS GOVERNMENT IS "SOCIALIST," (B) STATED THAT AFGHANISTAN  
EXPECTS INCREASED U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND (C) CLAIMED  
THAT FEWER THAN 100 POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE BEING HELD IN THIS  
COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCTOBER 11, JOHN NEEDHAM, NEW DELHI-BASED CORRESPONDENT  
FOR UPI, WAS GRANTED AN INTERVIEW WITH HAFIZULLAH AMIN,  
AFGHANISTAN'S DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER. A  
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HIGHLY SELECTIVE TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW WAS PUBLISHED THE  
FOLLOWING DAY IN THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED KABUL PRESS. AN  
EMBASSY OFFICER WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN A MORE CANDID VERSION  
FROM NEEDHAM. UNLESS SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED AS PUBLISHED  
REMARKS, ALL AMIN QUOTATIONS IN THIS TELEGRAM ARE AMONG THOSE  
PROVIDED PRIVATELY BY NEEDHAM.

3. DISCONTINUATION OF THE TERM "COMRADE" IN THE MEDIA:

NOTING THAT THE AFGHAN MEDIA HAD DROPPED THE USE OF THE TITLE "CONRADE" ("RAFIQ" IN PERSIAN) IN LATE SEPTEMBER, AFTER HAVING EMPLOYED IT VIGOROUSLY IN THE PRESS SINCE EARLY AUGUST, NEEDHAM ASKED AMIN WHY THIS HAD BEEN DONE. AMIN REPLIED THAT "COMRADE" WAS A PARTY TERM, USED AMONG PARTY MEMBERS, AND IN REFERENCE TO PARTY MEMBERS. IT HAD BEEN USED PUBLICLY FOR A SHORT TIME, BUT HAD BEEN DISCONTINUED "BECAUSE ITS MEANING COULD BE MIS-UNDERSTOOD AND BECOME THE CAUSE FOR UNDUE UNREST AMONG THE PEOPLE." (COMMENT: IT IS THIS SENSITIVITY FOR THE REGIME'S DOMESTIC IMAGE AMONG THE TRADITIONALISTIC, RELIGIOUS AFGHAN PEOPLE THAT CAUSES THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP TO CONTINUE TO AVOID ANY PUBLIC DESCRIPTION WITHIN AFGHANISTAN OF THIS GOVERNMENT AS SOCIALIST, MARXIST-LENINIST, OR COMMUNIST. WE HAVE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT "COMRADE" IS STILL BEING USED IN CONVERSATIONS HERE, AND IS REPORTED IN THE PRESS WHEN EMPLOYED IN SOME SPECIAL SITUATION, E.G., VISITING NORTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER HO TANG'S SO ADDRESSING AMIN AT A RECENT WELCOMING DINNER. END OF COMMENT)

4. IS AFGHANISTAN "SOCIALIST?" WHEN NEEDHAM TOLD AMIN THAT INDIAN JOURNALISTS WHO HAD INTERVIEWED HIM IN SEPTEMBER REPORTED THAT HE HAD DESCRIBED AFGHANISTAN AS A "SOCIALIST" STATE (NEW DELHI 14440), AMIN DENIED THAT HE OR ANYONE ELSE IN THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAD EVER REFERRED TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN (DRA) AS A "SOCIALIST" COUNTRY. CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTING THAT AMIN HAD ALSO REPORTEDLY TOLD THE INDIAN JOURNALISTS THAT AFGHANISTAN WAS THINKING OF JOINING COMECON, NEEDHAM ASKED HOW THE NONALIGNED DRA COULD CONSIDER BECOMING INVOLVED WITH AN ORGANIZATION RELATED TO THE WARSAW PACT. AMIN APPARENTLY MADE NO CONNECTION BETWEEN COMECON AND THAT ALLIANCE, OBSERVING THAT "COMECON IS AN ALLIANCE OF SOCIALIST NATIONS, NOT SOMETHING TIED TO A MILITARY BLOC." AMIN DECLINED TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER FURTHER.

5. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: AMIN WAFFLED ON MOST OF NEEDHAM'S QUESTIONS INVOLVING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, THE DEBTS AFGHANISTAN OWES TO FOREIGN POWERS, AND RELATED TOPICS. AMIN WELCOMED THE FACT THAT "THE UNITED NATIONS HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPED NATIONS TO SHARE INCREASINGLY THEIR WEALTH WITH THE UNDERDEVELOPED NATIONS." HE OBSERVED THAT IF AFGHANISTAN HAS ANY PROBLEMS WITH SERVICING ITS DEBTS, IT WILL HAVE "FRIENDS" TO HELP IT OUT. (COMMENT: THE MAIN FRIEND AMIN OBVIOUSLY HAS IN MIND IS THE USSR, TO WHOM AFGHANISTAN OWES THE LARGEST SHARE OF ITS FOREIGN DEBT. END OF COMMENT)

6. THE PUBLISHED INTERVIEW TEXT CONTAINS AMIN'S RESPONSE TO NEEDHAM'S OBSERVATION THAT THE GREATER PART OF U.S. AID

HAS BEEN IN THE FORM OF GRANTS, WHILE SOVIET AID IS MOSTLY  
IN THE FORM OF LOANS. AMIN REPLIED, "THE GRANTS-IN-AID WHICH  
WE HAVE RECEIVED WITHOUT ANY POLITICAL STRINGS FROM FRIENDLY  
COUNTRIES ARE NOT SUFFICIENT FOR US. WE ARE INTERESTED IN  
INCREASES OF GRANTS BY OUR FRIENDS WITH EASIER TERMS. WE  
AGREED TO THE TERMS OF AID WE HAVE TAKEN FROM THE SOVIET  
UNION. THE USSR HAS HELPED US ON THE BASIS OF DISINTERESTED  
FRIENDSHIP ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MUTUAL RESPECT FOR  
FREEDOM, INTERNATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, AND INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT  
THE SLIGHTEST INTERFERENCE IN EACH OTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
AND WITH A SPIRIT OF FRATERNITY AND EQUALITY. WE ARE CERTAIN  
THAT THE USSR WILL PROVIDE US WITH MORE AID. IF THE ASSIS-  
TANCE OF THE U.S. INCREASES ON THE SAME TERMS AND PRINCIPLES  
-- AND WE EXPECT SUCH AN INCREASE, IT WILL BE WARMLY WELCOMED.  
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(COMMENT: NEEDHAM WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT MANY OF AMIN'S RESPONSES.  
HE FREQUENTLY USED THE QUESTIONS, SUCH AS THIS ONE, TO MAKE  
VAGUELY RELATED PROPAGANDA POINTS. END OF COMMENT)

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TRSE-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

7. STATUS OF THE ANTI-REGIME PLOTTERS: AMIN "REGRETTED" THAT NONE OF THE SIC RECALLED PARCHAMIST AMBASSADORS HAD YET RETURNED TO AFGHANISTAN. HE STATED THAT, IF THEY RETURNED, THEY WOULD BE "DEALT WITH ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REVOLUTION." AMIN ACCUSED THE SIC OF HAVING TAKEN MONEY FROM "FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS," BUT DID NOT IDENTIFY THE LATTER. NEEDHAM THEN ASKED HOW MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE CURRENTLY INCARCERATED (HE HAD PURPOSELY SAVED THIS SUBJECT FOR AN ORAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTION, AVOIDING ITS INCLUSION IN THE LIST OF WRITTEN QUESTIONS WHICH CUSTOMARILY MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE OF SUCH INTERVIEWS). AMIN REPLIED THAT THERE ARE FEWER THAN ONE HUNDRED POLITICAL PRISONERS UNDER DETENTION, INCLUDING FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER ABDUL QADER. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE FIGURE IS MUCH HIGHER AND WILL BE REPORTING SEPARATELY. END OF COMMENT)

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8. THE PUBLISHED INTERVIEW CONTAINED A REPLY TO NEEDHAM'S QUESTION ABOUT DRA ACCUSATIONS THAT A "FOREIGN POWER" WAS BEHIND THE "BABRAK-QADAR PLOT." AMIN IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WE HAVE AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS AND EVIDENCE THAT THE FOREIGN POWERS AND SOURCES OF REACTION, IMPERIALISM, AND LEFT-EXTREMISTS WERE NOT ONLY BEHIND THE PLOT AGAINST OUR PEOPLE'S REGIMS, BUT THEY ALSO TOOK PART IN IT PRACTICALLY. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY STRAIN IN OUR GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, THE NAMES OF THESE SOURCES HAVE NOT BEEN DISCLOSED." (COMMENT: THE TERM "LEFT" EXTREMISTS" PROBABLY REFERS TO THE PARCHAMISTS. END OF COMMENT)

9. U.S.-AFGHAN RELATIONS: WHEN NEEDHAM ASKED WHY AMIN HAD RECENTLY SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THE STATIONING OF "FOREIGN TROOPS" IN SOUTH KOREA AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE NAVAL BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA, AMIN REPLIED THAT THE DRA FELT FREE TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT ANY ISSUE IT DESIRED TO ADDRESS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. HE EXPLAINED THAT, AS A PEACELOVING, PROGRESSIVE NATION, THE DRA HAD A OBLIGATION TO UPHOLD THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN THESE FORA.

10. IN THE PUBLISHED INTERVIEW TEXT, NEEDHAM'S QUESTION ABOUT AMIN'S IMPRESSIONS OF HIS STUDENT YEARS IN AMERICA DREW THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE: "I HAVE VERY PLEASANT IMPRESSIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES FROM MY STUDY PERIOD IN THE U.S., AND I AM DESIROUS OF THE GREAT AND VAST VICTORIES OF THE TOILING AND BRAVE PEOPLE OF THIS BEAUTIFUL AND ADVANCED LAND SO THAT ALL THE AFFLUENT RESOURCES AND TALENTS OF THIS LAND WILL NOT ONLY BE USED FOR THE PROSPERITY AND HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA, BUT ALSO FOR ALL LIBERATING PEOPLES

OF THE WORLD FOR THE SAKE OF THE DEFENSE OF WORLD PEACE,  
GENERAL AND TOTAL DISARMAMENT, FULL ELIMINATION OF COLON-  
IALISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, AND APARTHEID, AND THE  
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TOPPLING OF IMPERIALISM. WE ARE CERTAIN THAT THE TOILING  
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ALSO SHARE THESE  
DESIRES."

11. AFGHAN-PAKISTANI RELATIONS: IN THE PUBLISHED TEXT,  
NEEDHAM ASKED AMIN WHETHER THE NEW AFGHAN-BALUCH NEWSPAPER  
"SOUB" ("VICTORY") (KABUL 8146) MIGHT NOT BE REGARDED AS A  
PROVOCATION AGAINST PAKISTAN. AMIN REPLIED THAT THE JOURNAL  
WAS ESTABLISHED SOLELY FOR THE DOMESTIC PURPOSE OF PROVIDING  
AFGHAN BALUCHIS WITH A CULTURAL VOICE, OBSERVING, "IT IS  
NOT OUR OBJECTIVE TO PROVOKE ANYONE."

12. ATMOSPHERE OF THE INTERVIEW: NEEDHAM WAS NOT ALLOWED  
TO USE HIS TAPE RECORDER, BUT NOTED THAT AMIN HAD ONE GOING.  
DUBS

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 22 oct 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Review Markings:**  
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