SUBJECT: FURTHER COMMENTS BY EAST GERMAN AMBASSADOR ABOUT SOVIET EFFORTS TO ALTER AFGHAN REGIME

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: EAST GERMAN AMBASSADOR SCHWIERSAU HAS IDENTIFIED CERTAIN NON-PUSHTUN CABINET MINISTERS AS BEING IN SUPPORT OF CURRENT SOVIET MACHINATIONS TO ALTER THE AFGHAN REGIME. SCHWIERSAU THINKS IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE TO ACHIEVE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT MESS IN AFGHANISTAN. END OF SUMMARY.

3. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH THE A/DCM AT A SOCIAL EVENT ON JULY 18, DR. KARL SCHWIERSAU, AMBASSADOR OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, EXPANDED SOMewhat ON THE PRESENTATION HE MADE TO CHARGE AMSTUTZ ON JULY 17 CONCERNING CURRENT SOVIET EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURE THE AFGHAN REGIME (REFTEL). SCHWIERSAU EXERCISED CARE TO CONVEY HIS VIEWS ONLY TO THE AMERICAN OFFICER, CHANGING THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION WHEN THE BRITISH AND JAPANESE AMBASSADORS JOINED THE GROUP.
4. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT PRIME MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN, THE PRIMARY TARGET OF THE SOVIET MACHINATIONS, IS AWARE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING, SCHWIESAU AFFIRMED THAT AMIN IS VERY ALERT TO DEVELOPMENTS, BUT—PROBABLY—not—AWARe OF EVERYTHING THAT HAS OCCURRED DURING THE PAST WEEK, WHEN THE SOVIET EFFORT HAS MOVED INTO A MORE ACTIVE PHASE. WHEN ASKED WHETHER AMIN WOULD ACCEPT HIS FATE QUIETLY OR FIGHT, SCHWIESAU REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW.


6. WHEN THE ADCMI OBSERVED THAT IT NOW SEEMED A LITTLE LATE IN THE GAME FOR AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE KHALQI MESS, SCHWIESAU GRAVELY NODDED HIS AGREEMENT. SCHWIESAU FURTHER AGREED THAT A GENUINELY EXPANDED POLITICAL BASE WOULD NOW APPEAR DIFFICULT TO CONSTRUCT SINCE THE KHALQIS SEEM TO HAVE ALIENATED ALMOST EVERY ELEMENT OF AFGHAN SOCIETY.
7. Schiesau went on to complain bitterly about the rash incompetence of the Khalq leadership that inevitably led to the current situation. As an example, he cited the controversial land reform program, which has been responsible for much of the opposition in this country. Schiesau recalled that he had warned the Khalqis last year to go slow with a complicated program of this type, advising them that the German Democratic Republic, "the most advanced society in the Socialist Camp," had carefully phased its land-reform program over a fifteen-year period. Schiesau added glumly that the overly enthusiastic Khalqis rejected his advice -- and stated their conviction that the Afghan people would support their accelerated program. After six months, Schiesau observed, it was clear that land reform was a disaster. He recalled how many landless and "land-poor" peasants had wanted to refuse to accept land because of religious scruples or fear of future retribution by the deprived landlords. The Khalqis forced them to accept the land, threatening them with imprisonment if they refused. According to Schiesau, several of these peasants later committed suicide.

8. Comment: Through Schiesau, the Soviets would seem to be trying to make certain that we are being kept "informed" 15/J5.

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they have in mind. (AN INTERESTING NOTE, INCIDENTALLY, IS THAT SCHIESAU HAD A LARGE BOUQUET OF FLOWERS DELIVERED CHARGE AMSTUTZ AFTER THEIR JULY 17 MEETING.)

9. This Embassy remains skeptical that the Soviets will be able to broaden the political base of the Afghan regime sufficiently to still the widespread insurrection in Afghanistan. We frequently hear rumors that the Soviets are still trying to build a new regime around former royalist Prime Minister Yusuf, who would probably serve as a figurehead personage. The large numbers of Afghans who have now been incited to blood-feud action are unlikely to be fooled by old wine in new bottles. Any solution involving the replacement of Khalqis by Parchamists would also be a loser. The latter are also regarded by Afghans as pro-Moscow atheists.

AMSTUTZ

By 5470