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| DEPARTMENT OF STATE TRANSMITTAL SLIP | | CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENTIAL |
| | | DATE July 30, 1979 |
| TO INR/RSE, EUR/SOV, Amembassies MOSCOW, <u>TEHRAN</u> | | For the Attention of |
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| ITEMS/REMARKS | | |
| <p>Attached is a UK paper on the impact of Islamic fundamentalism in the USSR, circulated by the UK Delegation to members of the Political Committee.</p> | | |
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| FILE NO. | SIGNATURE James H. Madden | |
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Informal
USSR

UK DELEGATION TO NATO.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE SOVIET UNION

1. During his visit to Delhi on 2-3 July Lord Carrington, the Secretary of State, was told by Mr Vajpayee, the Indian Foreign Minister, that while in Moscow last month he and Mr Desai had received strong indications that the Russians were concerned about Islamic Fundamentalism. They were worried (Vajpayee thought with reason) that the virus might spread to the Soviet Moslem population.
2. The UK view has been that the likelihood of the Soviet Moslem population being infected by the Islamic revival in Iran and elsewhere was small, principally because of the different social conditions in the USSR and the fact that Shiites account for only a small proportion of Soviet Moslems. However, the Russians, though they affect to support Khomeini, are clearly uneasy about developments in Iran, and will not have taken kindly to Iranian broadcasts in Arabic criticising the state of Islam in the USSR. The head of the Iranian broadcasting authority complained in May that the Soviet Union was jamming Iranian wave-lengths by making use of high-powered transmitters. In particular he claimed that jamming had taken place during one of Khomeini's televised speeches in Azerbaijan. If there is any truth in this it would imply an attempt to prevent Soviet Moslems in Soviet Azerbaïdzhân (~~who~~ are Shiites) from tuning in to the Ayatollah.
3. Soviet statements on the possible effects of the Islamic revival on the Soviet Moslem population, although rare, have started to appear. According to a report in the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter of 11 June, Pachayev Allokshukur, Imam of Baku's largest mosque and vice-chairman of the spiritual administration for the Caucasus, held a press conference for foreign journalists in Baku in the presence of representatives of the Soviet MFA Press Department. Allokshukur said, inter alia:
 - (a) It was not the Moslems' business to interfere in regional or republic policy. There were other organs and other elected people to look after politics.
 - (b) Moslems in Baku did not hide their joy over what happened in Iran. They had sent a telegram of congratulations and welcomed Khomeini when he returned to Iran, and had sent another when the monarchy was overthrown.
 - (c) "I cannot see that events in Iran mean that Islam will also make new inroads in the Soviet Union. We have no need of secret societies. We work completely openly with the authorities' approval."
4. Another report broadcast recently on Moscow Radio's Swedish Service said that a journalist had asked the leader of the Kazakh Moslem whether Islam was under-going a renaissance in the USSR because of the events in Iran and Afghanistan. He had replied that there had been no drastic increase in believers, although success in neighbouring countries obviously pleased Moslems.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

5. These statements indicate that the Soviet authorities wish to appear relaxed about the possibility of the Iranian and Afghan events having any serious impact among Soviet Moslems. Recent (and frequent) broadcasts stressing the freedom allegedly enjoyed by Soviet Moslems and respect on the part of the Soviet authorities for the cultural heritage of Islam (restoration of mosques, celebrations for the new Islamic century) carry the same implicit message: the spiritual and cultural demands of the Soviet Moslems are already being met, so there need be no fear of influences from abroad. A recent article in *Kommunist* (No 5, 1979) by the First Secretary of the Daghestan obkom, however, provides further evidence that the Soviet party authorities continue to be sensitive to the possible effects of outside influences on Soviet Moslems. Umakhanov complains that "Imperialist propaganda" has latterly begun more actively to speculate on nationalist feelings and prejudices in order to get socialist nations against each other. "The ideological centres of imperialist states, emigre nationalist organisations which are in the service of the bourgeoisie, make use of the ideas of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism for the purpose of intensifying subversive activity against the peoples of the North Caucasus. They place no little emphasis on religion, on using it in anti-Soviet interests. This in its broadcasts bourgeois radio lays stress on the religious feelings of believing Moslems." Such expressions of concern are not new (although references to Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism are rare) and were probably not provoked by events in Iran and Afghanistan.

6. All this does not take us much further and we are not inclined, for the moment, to revise our earlier judgement. Nevertheless, things can change. Although evidence on the influence of Islamic Fundamentalism on Soviet Moslems is hard to come by and difficult to interpret, we would welcome the views of other Allies.