



Department of State

TELEGRAM



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ROGERS AND I HAD ASKED FOREIGN MINISTER DINESH SINGH FOR CHAPTER AND VERSE CONCERNING ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPROPER ACTIVITY BY AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTERS. I SAID HAD TALKED TO FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO, WHILE NOT DEFENDING METHODS, DID DEFEND CLOSURE ACTION. I SAID I FIND THIS DIFFICULT TO SQUARE WITH ASSERTION HE DOES NOT WISH TO CURTAIL CULTURAL ACTIVITIES. I OFFERED MRS. GANDHI A COPY OF SECRETARY ROGERS' MESSAGE TO DINESH SINGH (STATE 29569) WHICH SHE TOOK AND READ.

4. I TOLD MRS. GANDHI THAT DINESH HAD STATED THAT AFTER RECEIPT OF EMBASSY RESPONSE (DELIVERED MARCH 3) TO MEA NOTE OF FEBRUARY 10, GOI CULTURAL PEOPLE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH US. I ADDED WE ARE NOT WEDDED TO ANY ONE FORM BUT STILL HOPE SOMETHING CAN BE WORKED OUT, PERHAPS ALONG LINES OF BRITISH COUNCIL. I CITED MY VISITS TO THREE CULTURAL CENTERS AND PERSONAL ASSURANCE OF THEIR NON-PROPAGANDISTIC AND CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.

5. MRS. GANDHI SAID SHE QUITE HONESTLY NOT IN TOUCH WITH CULTURAL CENTER ISSUE. SHE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME PATTERN MUST BE EVOLVED, AND THAT THIS MUCH HAD BEEN RAISED WITH HER AND SHE HAD AGREED. THERE IS A PROBLEM, SHE SAID, OF ONE COUNTRY BEING ALLOWED TO DO SOMETHING AND ANOTHER NOT, AND IN THIS REGARD CITED USSR WITHOUT CLARIFICATION. WHEN I SAID THE TRIVANDRUM EPISODE APPEARED THE ORIGIN OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS, SHE AGREED TO EXTENT IT HAD FOCUSED PUBLIC ATTENTION ON ISSUE.

6. IN CONCLUSION, I SAID WE WISHED TO COMMENCE PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, LOOKING TO EXPLORE CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE CULTURAL CENTERS THAT WOULD MEET GOI AND US REQUIREMENTS. I ADDED THAT 73 DAYS REMAINING UNDER 90-DAY CLOSURE DEADLINE STIPULATED BY MEA WOULD HARDLY BE SUFFICIENT TIME TO EVOLVE CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVE. ACCORDINGLY WE WOULD TAKE IT AS A GOOD SIGN IF THAT DEADLINE WERE SET ASIDE OR RELAXED. OTHER HAND, I ADDED THAT WE COULD, OF COURSE, EFFECT CLOSURE WITHIN THE STIPULATED PERIOD. SHE NOTED THAT SHE UNABLE TO SAY MUCH AT THIS JUNCTURE AND WISHED TO CONSULT WITH HER MINISTER.

7. WHILE LEAVING, I NOTED THERE SOME EDITORIAL COMMENT IN INDIAN PRESS TO EFFECT ALL FOREIGN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE BANISHED. MRS. GANDHI REACTED THAT SHE DIDN'T THINK THAT WOULD BE RIGHT. SEEMING TO AGREE WITH MY OBSERVATION THAT MORE, NOT

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