

ADVANCE COPY

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FM ISLAMABAD
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 471

OF 060958Z APRIL 88
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, UKMIS GENEVA, UKMIS NEW YORK, KABUL,
INFO IMMEDIATE MOSCOW
INFO PRIORITY ROME, PARIS, BONN, NEW DELHI, RIYADH

MY TELNO 468: AFGHANISTAN: GENEVA TALKS

SUMMARY

1. INDICATIONS FROM PAKISTAN AND US EMBASSY SOURCES THAT AGREEMENT AT GENEVA MAY NOW AFTER ALL BE CLOSE. AMERICANS TELL US IT IS LIKELY TO BE BASED ON US/SOVIET AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE SUPPLYING THEIR CLIENTS. PAKISTAN WOULD ACCEPT ONUS OF DECIDING WHETHER TO PASS US SUPPLIES TO MAJAHIDEEN.

DETAIL

2. THE GENEVA LOG-JAM MAY FINALLY BE MOVING. BEFORE GOING WITH MR TEDDY TAYLOR MP TO CALL ON THE PRESIDENT I WAS TOLD MY AZIZ KHAN (ADDITIONAL SECRETARY MFA) HE HAD BEEN UP ALL NIGHT WITH MESSAGES TO AND FROM GENEVA CONTAINING ALTERNATIVE TEXTS TO PROVIDE A COMPROMISE ON THE SYMMETRY POINT AND ALSO ON THE BORDER QUESTION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. EVIDENTLY SHEVARDNADZE HAD BEEN INITIATING NEW PROPOSALS FROM KABUL WHERE HE WOULD BE STAYING UNTIL 7 APRIL.

3. THE PRESIDENT HAD TIME TO SAY ONLY THAT "THINGS WERE NOW AT LAST MOVING", BUT HE SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT SIGNATURE AT GENEVA WAS NOT FAR OFF. AZIZ KHAN EXPECTED PAKISTAN'S TEAM TO RETURN FAIRLY SHORTLY.

4. IN CONFIRMATION A CONTACT WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELLOR IN THE US EMBASSY (NECESSARILY BRIEF BECAUSE CARLUCCI ARRIVE TODAY) HAS CONFIRMED TO US THAT THE PARTIES ARE VERY CLOSE TO AN AGREEMENT IN GENEVA. THIS HAD BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY A MODIFICATION OF THE SOVIET STANCE IN THAT THEY (AND THE KABUL REGIME) WERE NOW PREPARED TO ACCEPT "POSITIVE SYMMETRY", IE BOTH SIDES HAVING THE RIGHT TO CONTINUE SUPPLIES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THEIR CLIENTS. THE PAKISTANIS WERE APPARENTLY PREPARED TO TAKE ON THEMSELVES RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECIDING WHETHER US SUPPLIES SHOULD BE PASSED ON TO THE RESISTANCE, EVEN THOUGH THIS COULD MEAN A VIOLATION OF THE TERMS OF THE FIRST INSTRUMENT.

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5. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE SKETCHY INFORMATION GIVEN US BY THE AMERICANS HERE WHETHER THE US WOULD GUARANTEE THE AGREEMENT THOUGH AZIZ KHAN SEEMED TO THINK THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM. ON THE FACE OF IT, THEY SEEM TO BE GUARANTEEING THAT PAKISTAN WOULD NOT VIOLATE THE AGREEMENT WHILE KNOWING THAT THE PAKISTANIS INTENDED TO DO SO.

6. ACCORDING TO THE AMERICANS, THE PAKISTANIS HAVE PUT FORWARD A VARIETY OF FORMULATIONS TO GET AROUND KABUL'S OBJECTION TO THE PHRASE "INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED BORDERS" IN INSTRUMENT I. THE US EXPECT THAT THIS WILL NOT PROVE TO BE AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE.

COMMENT

7. IT LOOKS AS IF, GIVEN THE WILL TO REACH AGREEMENT, ALL SIDES ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO FIND FORMULAS THAT WILL ENABLE GENEVA TEXTS TO BE SIGNED, AND SOVIET WITHDRAWAL TO BE STARTED. WE SHALL NEED TO DISCOVER MORE DETAIL TO DECIDE WHETHER AMBIGUITIES COULD LEAD TO DAMAGING MISUNDERSTANDINGS. I IMAGINE WE CAN TRUST THE US ADMINISTRATION NOT TO RECOMMEND THAT THE PRESIDENT GUARANTEES AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL NOT STICK.

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