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FM WASHINGTON
TO DESKBY 110900Z FCO
TELNO 933
OF 090056Z APRIL 88
INFO IMMEDIATE ISLAMABAD, MOSCOW, UKMIS GENEVA
INFO PRIORITY NEW DELHI, KABUL, BONN, PARIS, ROME

UKMIS GENEVA TELNO 219: AFGHANISTAN
SUMMARY

1. US WELCOME CORDOVEZ'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GENEVA ACCORDS WILL BE SIGNED NEXT WEEK. STILL NO FORMAL RESPONSE FROM THE RUSSIANS ON SYMMETRY. PROVIDED THIS IS POSITIVE, SHULTZ PLANS TO SIGN IN GENEVA.

DETAIL

2. WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF HOWARD BAKER TOLD THE PRESS ON 8 APRIL THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WERE ENCOURAGED BY GORBACHEV'S COMMENTS IN TASHKENT ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL BEGINNING ON 15 MAY. HE ADDED QUOTE WE HAVE MADE IT KNOWN THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO AID THE MUJAHDEEN IF THE SOVIETS CONTINUE THEIR AID TO THE KABUL GOVERNMENT UNQUOTE. ONCE THE ADMINISTRATION HAD SEEN THE FINAL GENEVA TEXTS AND HEARD THE FORMAL SOVIET RESPONSE ON SYMMETRY, THEY WOULD DECIDE WHETHER ALL THE CONDITIONS HAD BEEN MET FOR THE US TO PARTICIPATE AS A GUARANTOR OF THE AGREEMENT. 'THE GOVERNMENT OF THE US CONSIDERS THESE DEVELOPMENTS TO BE POSITIVE. WE VIEW THE SITUATION AS HOPEFUL.'

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, BAKER DENIED A REPORT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES OF 8 APRIL THAT THE US AND SOVIET UNION HAD REACHED A PRIVATE UNDERSTANDING TO SUSPEND ALL ARMS DELIVERIES TO AFGHANISTAN FOR A PERIOD OF 9 MONTHS. BAKER ADDED 'IF BOTH SIDES HAD A CUT-OFF OF AID THAT WAS VERIFIABLE, THEN THAT WOULD BE AN OUTCOME WE COULD ACCEPT. BUT AS LONG AS THE SOVIETS RETAIN THE RIGHT AND ARE PROVIDING AID, WE RETAIN THE SAME RIGHT AND WILL PROVIDE AID AS WE FIND IT NECESSARY.'

4. WHITEHEAD CONFIRMED TO ME ON 8 APRIL THAT SHULTZ WAS NOW PLANNING TO FLY TO GENEVA ON 13 APRIL TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT. OTHER CONTACTS IN STATE AND NSC TOLD US THAT LATE ON 8 APRIL THE FORMAL SOVIET RESPONSE TO THE US PROPOSAL ON SYMMETRY HAD NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED. BUT THERE HAD BEEN INTENSIVE US/SOVIET CONTACTS IN MOSCOW, GENEVA AND WASHINGTON, AND THE RUSSIANS WERE SIGNALLING THAT THEY WOULD ACQUIESCE. THEIR FORMAL RESPONSE WAS EXPECTED OVER THE WEEKEND. SHULTZ (BACK FROM THE MIDDLE EAST LATE ON 8 APRIL) WOULD REVIEW THE PACKAGE AND CONSULT THE PRESIDENT. THE US WOULD THEN MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THE SYMMETRY POINT

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AND WOULD EXPECT THE RUSSIANS AT THE LEAST NOT TO GAINSAY IT.

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