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FM FCO

TO IMMEDIATE ISLAMABAD

TELNO 314

OF 151800Z APRIL 88

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKMIS GENEVA, MOSCOW

INFO IMMEDIATE KABUL, NEW DELHI, PARIS, BONN

AFGHANISTAN: VISIT OF PAKISTANI ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TO LONDON

SUMMARY

1. NOORANI SAID PAKISTAN STILL REGARDED INTERIM GOVERNMENT AS VITAL STAGE ON ROAD TO PEACE. BEST WAY FORWARD WOULD BE FOR CORDOVEZ TO ESTABLISH POST-GENEVA INTRA-AFGHAN DIALOGUE. BUT DE CUELLAR LUKEWARM. PAKISTAN LOOKING TO HER FRIENDS TO PUT PRESSURE ON DE CUELLAR OVER THIS: AND TO RALLY INTERNATIONAL OPINION BEHIND GENEVA AGREEMENT. DESPITE GENEVA PROVISIONS ON NON-INTERFERENCE, PAKISTAN WOULD NOT LEAVE RESISTANCE IN LURCH. PAKISTAN EAGER THAT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AID SHOULD NOT BE CHANNELLED VIA EXISTING KABUL REGIME.

DETAIL

2. ZAIN NOORANI STOPPED IN LONDON OVERNIGHT 14/15 APRIL ON HIS WAY BACK FROM GENEVA TO ISLAMABAD. HE CALLED ON LORD GLENARTHUR THIS MORNING AT OUR SUGGESTION. DISCUSSION CENTRED ON AFGHANISTAN, ALTHOUGH LORD GLENARTHUR ALSO OFFERED CONDOLENCES OVER THE AMMUNITION DEPOT EXPLOSION, AND BRIEFLY RAISED INDIAN ALLEGATIONS OF PAKISTANI SUPPORT TO SIKH EXTREMISTS (WE ARE REPORTING THIS SEPARATELY).
3. NOORANI SAID THAT THE GENEVA AGREEMENT'S MAIN ADVANTAGE WAS THE FRONT LOADED TIMETABLE FOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL. BUT, WITHOUT PROGRESS ON AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, FIGHTING WOULD CONTINUE AND THE BULK OF THE REFUGEES WOULD NOT RETURN, ALTHOUGH SOME WOULD TRICKLE BACK TO CONFLICT FREE, RESISTANCE-HELD AREAS.
4. THE PAKISTANIS STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT CORDOVEZ SHOULD PROCEED WITH HIS PRIVATE EFFORT TO ESTABLISH AN INTRA-AFGHAN DIALOGUE, POSSIBLY INVOLVING TRI-LATERAL PROXIMITY TALKS BETWEEN THE RESISTANCE, EXILES AND REGIME. ONE PROBLEM WAS THE ATTITUDE OF DE CUELLAR: ON 14 APRIL HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO NOORANI THAT HE WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT CORDOVEZ CONCERNING HIMSELF WITH INTERIM GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS. NOORANI THREATENED THAT, IN THAT CASE,

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PAKISTAN MIGHT ASK THE SECURITY COUNCIL OR UNGA TO FACILITATE SUCH NEGOTIATIONS DE CUELLAR AGREED TO REFLECT FURTHER. PAKISTAN LOOKED TO THE UN AND OTHER FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS TO PUT PRESSURE ON DE CUELLAR OVER THIS ISSUE: AND TO PROMOTE PUBLICLY THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE GENEVA AGREEMENT. IF INTERNATIONAL OPINION WERE IN FAVOUR OF THE AGREEMENT, THIS WOULD INCREASE THE CHANCES OF THE SOVIET UNION IMPLEMENTING IT PUNCTILIOUSLY. IT MIGHT ALSO ENCOURAGE THE PDPA AND RESISTANCE TO COMPROMISE.

5. NOORANI WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR COMPROMISE. ALTHOUGH THE RESISTANCE'S REACTION TO THE GENEVA PROCESS HAD HITHERTO BEEN ADVERSE, MANY OF THEIR COMMENTS HAD BEEN MADE FOR EFFECT. WE SHOULD DISREGARD WHAT HAD BEEN SAID BEFORE 14 APRIL. THE AGREEMENT WAS NOW A FAIT ACCOMPLI. THE PAKISTANIS WOULD NOW WORK HARD TO SELL THE FULL AGREEMENT TO THE RESISTANCE. A WEEK OR TWO'S REFLECTION MIGHT SUBTLY CHANGE RESISTANCE ATTITUDES. THE REGIME MIGHT ALSO BE MORE FLEXIBLE, NOW THAT THEY WERE FACING THE REALITY OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL.

6. THERE MIGHT BE A CASE FOR A LOYA JIRGA, PERHAPS TO BE HELD ON THE PAKISTAN-AFGHAN BORDER. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE TRADITIONAL LOYA JIRGA (TRIBAL LEADERS MEETING AT THE KING'S BEHEST - RATHER LIKE A VICE-REGAL DURBAR) WAS NOT REALLY RELEVANT TO MODERN AFGHANISTAN. IT MIGHT NOT CARRY CONVICTION: MANY OF THE CURRENT RESISTANCE AND PDPA LEADERS WOULD BE EXCLUDED. AND NO ONE KNEW WHO COULD LEGITIMATELY CONVENE IT.

7. NOORANI CLAIMED THAT THE SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF SYMMETRY OVER ARMS SUPPLIES IMPLIED THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE NOW PREPARED TO REGARD THE RESISTANCE AS BEING ON AN EQUAL FOOTING WITH THE REGIME. THE US POSITION ON SYMMETRY (MATCHING WHATEVER POLICY THE RUSSIANS ADOPTED OVER ARMS SUPPLIES, WHILST HOPING THAT THE LATTER WOULD OPT FOR RESTRAINT) HAD PUT THE BALL IN THE RUSSIAN COURT. PAKISTAN'S OFFICIAL POSITION WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THAT (AS IN THE PAST) THEY WOULD NOT ALLOW ARMS TO CROSS THEIR BORDER OR THE RESISTANCE TO OPERATE FROM BASES IN PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, NOORANI MADE IT CLEAR PRIVATELY THAT, NOT WITHSTANDING THE GENEVA AGREEMENT, THE PAKISTANIS WOULD NOT LEAVE THE RESISTANCE IN THE LURCH.

8. LORD GLENARTHUR EXPLAINED THAT WE WERE MAKING ?10 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR REFUGEE RELIEF/RESETTLEMENT IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR. HE EMPHASISED THAT WE WANTED TO ENSURE THAT OUR MONEY WAS NOT USED TO SUPPORT PROGRAMMES WHICH BOLSTERED THE REGIME. NOORANI

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SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE UNHCR THAT THEY SHOULD ENSURE THAT ANY AGREEMENT WITH THE REGIME OVER REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT GAVE UNHCR FREE ACCESS THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN AND THE RIGHT TO DISTRIBUTE AID DIRECT RATHER THAN VIA THE REGIME. IF UNHCR DEVIATED FROM THIS, PAKISTAN WOULD NOT COOPERATE AND WOULD ENCOURAGE DONORS TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE TO UNHCR AS A CHANNEL FOR FUNDS (EG THE ICRC) 9. LORD GLENARTHUR ASKED IF THERE WERE LIKELY TO BE A SHIFT IN INDIAN POLICY FOLLOWING THE GENEVA AGREEMENT. NOORANI SPOKE CRITICALLY OF INDIAN CLAIMS TO HAVE AN INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN BY VIRTUE OF THEIR OCCUPATION OF JAMMU - KASHMIR. INDIAN ADVICE TO THE KABUL REGIME OVER THE REFERENCES TO THE BORDER IN THE GENEVA AGREEMENT HAD BEEN UNHELPFUL, AS FAR AS PAKISTAN WAS CONCERNED. PAKISTAN HAD NO OBJECTION TO INDIA SUPPLYING HUMANITARIAN AID TO AFGHAN REFUGEES: OTHERWISE INDIA SHOULD KEEP OUT OF AFGHANISTAN.

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