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AFGHANISTAN

SUMMARY

1. BENAZIR BHUTTO CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET THREATS AND FAILURES OF INTELLIGENCE IN JALALABAD. AIMS TO HELP INTERIM GOVERNMENT BROADEN ITS BASE AND KEEP OUT FUNDAMENTALISTS. DISTRUSTFUL OF ISID CONSIDERS APPROACHING SAUDIS ABOUT EXTREMIST MUSLIM ELEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. UNCERTAIN OF WAY FORWARD.

DETAIL

2. LAST WEEKEND I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS AFGHANISTAN INFORMALLY WITH BENAZIR BHUTTO. GENERAL BABAR WAS PRESENT. I THEN PAID A TWO DAY VISIT TO PESHAWAR MAINLY TO OPEN THE NEW PREMISES OF A PROSTHETICS CLINIC FUNDED BY SANDY GALL'S CHARITY, WHICH GAVE ME THE CHANCE NOT ONLY FOR CONTACT WITH PROF MOJADDEDI BUT TO MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME GEN NAWROZ, THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND ALSO THE TWO BROTHERS OF AHMED SHAH MAHSOOD WHO LIVE IN PESHAWAR. ON 17 MAY SEVAN, THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFGHAN QUESTIONS, WHO IS TRYING TO FIND COMMON GROUND FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION ON AFGHANISTAN, CAME TO CALL. MY IMMEDIATE FOLLOWING TELEGRAMS COVER WHAT I LEARNED IN PESHAWAR AND FROM SEVAN.

3. BENAZIR BHUTTO STARTED THE CONVERSATION BY REFERRING TO SOVIET THREATS TO ESCALATE THE WAR INTO PAKISTAN, WHICH MIGHT NOW BE BECOMING SERIOUS. THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT WAS THEIR POSTPONEMENT OF THE VISIT TO MOSCOW OF PAKISTAN'S MINISTER FOR PRODUCTION. BABAR WAS DISMISSIVE, SAYING THAT BULLYING TACTICS WERE SECOND NATURE TO THE RUSSIANS BUT THAT THERE WAS LITTLE THEY COULD DO AGAINST PAKISTAN. THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO RE-ENGAGE IN AFGHANISTAN FOR DOMESTIC REASONS. I CONCURRED.

4. BENAZIR THEN DREW ATTENTION TO THE MAJOR FAILURE OF INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN, IN

PARTICULAR THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FALL OF JALALABAD. SHE BLAMED BOTH ISID AND THE CIA (WHO WERE IN CONTINUAL CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER). MY COMPANION AND I SUGGESTED THAT SUCH ERRORS OF ASSESSMENT COULD OCCUR WHEN THE SAME ORGANISATIONS WERE RESPONSIBLE BOTH FOR CONDUCTING OPERATIONS AND FOR ASSESSING THEM. THE WISH COULD BECOME FATHER TO THE ANALYSIS.

5. IT WAS CLEAR THAT MS BHUTTO STILL HOPED FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE PDPA GOVERNMENT AND SUCCESS FOR THE MUJAHIDDEEN IN AFGHANISTAN. SHE RECOGNISED THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN NEEDED TO DO MORE TO BROADEN THE BASE OF THEIR INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND GET IT WORKING EFFECTIVELY. THE PAKISTANIS 2343 5468, & 59 #3)0 ?6 049=8^8, & - D-5#-, 2#9 COULD OPERATE AS CHIEF SECRETARY OR CABINET SECRETARY. BENAZIR ALSO REITERATED THAT HER GOVERNMENT WISHED TO AVOID THE EMERGENCE OF A FUNDAMENTALIST GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN. SHE SPECULATED ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH HEKMATYAR, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS A FUNDAMENTALIST RATHER THAN AN OPPORTUNIST.

6. I EXPLAINED THE BACKGROUND TO HEKMATYAR'S ANIMUS AGAINST THE UK (INCLUDING GUILT ABOUT SKRZPKOWIAK) AND TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THAT HIS ACCUSATION REPORTED THAT DAY IN THE PRESS, WAS IN CAHOOTS WITH INDIA AND RUSSIA TO BRING BACK THE KING TO AFGHANISTAN, WAS ABSOLUTE NONSENSE. (I REFUTED THIS ON THE RECORD IN A SPEECH IN PESHAWAR).

7. I SAID I HAD ALREADY HEARD (IN FACT FROM BENAZIR BHUTTO'S AMBASSADOR AT LARGE, MINWALLA) THAT A PAKISTANI CIVIL SERVANT WAS BEING PROVIDED FOR THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. IN MY OWN PERSONAL VIEW THIS MIGHT CAUSE RESENTMENT SINCE THE AFGHANS WANTED TO DO THINGS THEMSELVES. WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER TO FIND SOME SUITABLE AFGHAN FOR THE JOB? I QUESTIONED BABAR'S VIEW THAT NONE OF THE QUALIFIED EXILED AFGHANS WOULD BE PREPARED TO COME AND WORK IN PESHAWAR. BENAZIR BHUTTO TOOK THE POINT ABOUT THE AFGHAN'S WISH TO BE SELF-RELIANT BUT SAID THAT AT LEAST PROVIDING A CIVILIAN OFFICIAL WOULD HELP GET DEALINGS WITH THE MUJAHIDEEN OUT OF THE HANDS OF ISID. SHE OBVIOUSLY REMAINED DISTRUSTFUL OF ISID'S INVOLVEMENT. SHE SAID THAT IT HAD COME TO THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT'S NOTICE THAT SAYYAF, ONE OF ISID'S CHIEF PROTEGES, WAS NOW SELLING WEAPONS TO THE JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI RELIGIOUS PARTY IN PAKISTAN. BABAR INTERJECTED THAT HEKMATYAR AND SAYYAF RARELY TRAVELLED WITHOUT ISID ESCORTS.

8. I GAVE IT AS MY VIEW THAT THE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR THE FAILURE BY THE MUJAHIDEEN TO TAKE JALALABAD WERE:

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(I) THAT THE DEFENCES HAD BEEN EXTREMELY WELL PREPARED AND STOCKED WITH AMMUNITION:

(II) THE MUJAHIDEEN WERE SADLY STILL NOT WORKING TOGETHER:

(III) THAT ATROCITIES AND STORIES OF ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY THE MUJAHIDEEN, CLEVERLY EXPLOITED BY THE REGIME, WERE DISCOURAGING THE ORDINARY AFGHANS LIVING IN THE CITIES TO DEFECT OR SUPPORT THE MUJAHIDEEN.

MS BHUTTO WAS AWARE OF THE STORIES OF THE ATROCITIES, INCLUDING THOSE COMMITTED BY WAHIBIS AND FOREIGN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS, OFTEN FUNDED FROM SAUDI ARABIA. SHE SAID THAT PRINCE TURKI (WHO WAS "AS THICK AS THIEVES" WITH GENERAL HAMID GUL, HAD TOLD HER THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS FOLLOW PAKISTAN'S LEAD ON AFGHANISTAN. SHE WONDERED WHETHER THE TIME HAD NOT COME FOR A HEART TO HEART TALK WITH THE SAUDIS TO PERSUADE THEM TO RESTRAIN THE MUSLIM ELEMENTS WHO WERE BEING SUPPORTED BY SAUDI FUNDS. I SAID THAT PROF MOJADDEDI SHOULD MAKE A WELL PUBLICISED STATEMENT SAYING THAT ALL ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY THE MUJAHIDEEN WERE A CRIME AGAINST THE JEHAD. HE SHOULD ALSO, IN MY VIEW, MAKE A MAJOR APPEAL TO QUALIFIED AFGHANS LIVING OVERSEAS TO COME AND HELP THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

9. BENAZIR BHUTTO GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SHE WAS UNCERTAIN ABOUT HOW THINGS WOULD OR SHOULD DEVELOP IN AFGHANISTAN, BUT WAS NOT YET READY FOR RADICAL NEW SOLUTIONS. WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT SHE IS COLLECTING WHAT INFORMATION SHE CAN FROM ALL SOURCES IN AFGHANISTAN PRIOR TO HER TALKS IN WASHINGTON IN JUNE.

10. SEE MIFT.

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