

Afghanistan

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RUSSIAN ATROCITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

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1. WE HAVE OBTAINED ON LOAN FROM THE MUJAHIDEEN FRAGMENTS OF TWO OR POSSIBLY THREE RUSSIAN BOOBY TRAPS, WITH CLEARLY VISIBLE RUSSIAN MARKINGS, CURRENTLY SAID TO BE IN USE IN AFGHANISTAN. THEY ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE DESCRIBED IN RADIO NEWSREEL ON ABOUT 16 JULY BY THE RESIDENT BBC CORRESPONDENT HERE, TOWYN MASON.

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2. THE DEVICES ARE REPORTEDLY DROPPED BY AIR IN A CONTAINER WHICH SCATTERS SMALLER PLASTIC DEVICES DESCRIBED AS HAVING TWO QUOTE WINGS UNQUOTE, ONE QUOTE FAT UNQUOTE WITH EXPLOSIVE IN IT AND THE OTHER QUOTE THIN UNQUOTE AND INNOCUOUS. THE BOOBY TRAPS ARE GREEN IN COLOUR AND HARD TO SPOT AGAINST GRASS OR BUSHES, BUT ALSO SEEM TO BE DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE TOYS OR BIRDS SO THAT WOMEN AND CHILDREN MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO PICK THEM UP (OTHER DEVICES WHICH WE HAVE NOT SEEN ARE SAID TO LOOK LIKE WATCHES OR BUNDLES OF BANK NOTES). PEOPLE INJURED BY THESE DEVICES ARE NOW IN THE ORTHOPAEDIC WING OF THE LADY READING HOSPITAL IN PESHAWAR.

3. THE NINE FRAGMENTS WE HAVE OBTAINED HAVE BEEN SENT TO COLES, SAD, BY BAG TOGETHER WITH A ROLL OF FILM. WE HAVE DISCREETLY ASKED THE MUJAHIDEEN AND THE PRESS TO LET US HAVE MORE OBJECTS (ESPECIALLY LARGER OR MORE PHOTOGENIC PIECES) OR PHOTOGRAPHS AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. BUT WE ARE NATURALLY MOST ANXIOUS NOT TO EMBARRASS THE PAKISTANIS.

4. THESE BOOBY TRAPS WOULD SEEM TO BE PARTICULARLY UNPLEASANT DEVICES AIMED AT INJURING WOMEN AND CHILDREN. WHETHER OR NOT THEIR USAGE VIOLATES GENEVA CONVENTIONS OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL CODES, WE BELIEVE THEY WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR WIDE-SPREAD USE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS AND WITH THE PRESS AND TELEVISION TO SHOW UP THE RUSSIANS.

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FCO PSE PASS SAVING TO WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, UKMIS NEW YORK.

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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