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Agghanistan

CONFIDENTIAL



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AND TO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK, ISLAMABAD, MOSCOW

INFO DELHI, WASHINGTON, UKMIS GENEVA, UKDEL NATO, TEHRB, PEKING, BONN.

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AFGHANISTAN.

1. MY FRG COLLEAGUE TOLD ME IN CONFIDENCE (PLEASE RESPECT) OF A CONVERSATION WHICH THE FRG AMBASSADOR TO THE UN HAD WITH PEREZ DE CUELLAR FOLLOWING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S RETURN FROM MOSCOW.
2. DE CUELLAR SAID THAT IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH GROMYKO, HE HAD DISCERNED SOME CHANGE IN THE SOVIET ATTITUDE ON AFGHANISTAN: ~~FOR~~ THIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT. FOR THE FIRST TIME, GROMYKO HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE UN HAD A ROLE TO PLAY AND SAID THEY WERE THE BEST HOPE OF REACHING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. HE ALSO SEEMED CONCERNED THAT THE CONTINUED FAILURE TO FIND A SOLUTION WAS SERIOUSLY UNDERMINING DETENTE.
3. DE CUELLAR TOLD GROMYKO THAT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SOME GIVE ON THE PART OF BOTH SIDES AND HE WAS, ACCORDINGLY PREPARED TO MAKE GROMYKO AN OFFER. IF THE RUSSIANS WOULD AGREE TO A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE REPLACEMENT OF KARMAL BY SOMEONE MORE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL UNITY, THEN THE PAKISTANIS COULD PROBABLY BE PERSUADED TO AGREE TO STOP THEIR TERRITORY FROM BEING USED AS A BASE FOR COUNTER-REVOLUTIONAIRES. DE CUELLAR SAID THAT GROMYKO DID NOT REJECT THE OFFER OUT OF HAND AND HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING IT FURTHER WITH HIM IN NEW YORK SHORTLY. SO FAR AS BAUCH KNOWS, DE CUELLAR'S OFFER WAS HIS OWN IDEA AND HE HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED IT WITH THE PAKISTANIS OR ANYONE ELSE.
4. THE DE CUELLAR PROPOSITION, IF CORRECTLY REPORTED, SUGGESTS NOT ONLY THE REMOVAL OF KARMAL BUT ALSO THE REPLACEMENT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION, OR PERHAPS ITS DILUTION, TO CREATE A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. THERE HAVE SO FAR AS I AM AWARE, BEEN NO INDICATIONS THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE YET REACHED THE POINT WHERE THEY FEEL IT NECESSARY OR ARE PREPARED TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS. SO FAR AS THE SOVIETS ARE CONCERNED, KARMAL IS PROBABLY EXPENDABLE, BUT IT HARDLY SEEMS CONCEIVABLE THAT THEY WOULD AGREE TO THE PDPA STANDING DOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN. SO FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED THE REVOLUTION IS IRREVERSIBLE. AS VIEWED FROM HERE, GROMYKO'S APPARENT REASONABLENESS, WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE IMPRESSED BOTH DE CUELLAR AND CORDOVEZ, IS MERELY PART OF THE USUAL SOVIET POSTURING IN THE RUN UP TO THE UNGA.

GARNER

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