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YOUR TELNO 1769: AFGHANISTAN AIR ATTACKS ON PAKISTAN

SUMMARY

1. THE STATE DEPARTMENT AGREE BROADLY WITH OUR ANALYSIS BUT ARE LESS CONCERNED THAT THERE WILL BE A SERIOUS ESCALATION OF ATTACKS AGAINST PAKISTANI TERRITORY. AIM 9-L AIR TO AIR MISSILES TO BE SUPPLIED TO PAKISTAN IN 1985. NO CHANGE OF SUBSTANCE IN US COMMITMENT TO PAKISTAN.

DETAIL

2. WE HAVE DISCUSSED TUR WITH HAGERTY (STATE DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR FOR PAKISTAN) AND INR. STATE DEPARTMENT AGREE BROADLY WITH OUR ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET OBJECTIVES. THERE HAD BEEN THE USUAL ATTACKS BEFORE THE LAST ROUND OF INDIRECT TALKS. THE RUSSIANS PROBABLY WANTED TO INCREASE POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE PAKISTANIS FOLLOWING THEIR RECENT DEMARCHE ABOUT PAKISTANI RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE KILLING OF SOVIET SOLDIERS. BUT A PRINCIPAL SOVIET PURPOSE MAY HAVE BEEN TACTICAL—TO RELIEVE MUJAHIDEEN PRESSURE ON GARRISONS IN THE IMMEDIATE BORDER AREA. THE RUSSIANS WERE NOW AUTHORIZING OPERATIONS UP TO 5KM FROM THE BORDER AND OCCASIONAL STRIKES AGAINST MUJAHIDEEN CONCENTRATIONS ON TRAILS AND ACCESS ROUTES ACROSS THE BORDER. HAGERTY NOTED THAT INCURSIONS INTO PAKISTAN HAD BEEN ONLY SHALLOW AND THAT RECENT INCIDENTS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN A RELATIVELY SMALL AREA. HE SPECULATED THAT THE RUSSIANS INTENDED THIS AS A SIGNAL TO THE PAKISTANIS.

3. BOTH HAGERTY AND INR EXPECTED CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS TO CONTINUE BUT DOUBTED WHETHER THEY WOULD ESCALATE TO THE EXTENT WE FEARED. IT WAS NOT IN THE SOVIET INTEREST TO PROVOKE THE PAKISTANIS TO SEEK MORE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY EMBARRASSED IF AN AFGHAN AIRCRAFT WERE SHOT DOWN OVER PAKISTAN (THE PAKISTAN AIR FORCE HAVE ORDERS TO SHOOT DOWN INTRUDERS ONLY IF THE DEBRIS FALLS WITHIN PAKISTAN). HAGERTY DOUBTED WHETHER THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BAK DOWN IN THE EVENT OF PAKISTANI RETALIATION IF ONLY BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF FACE THIS WOULD ENTAIL. BUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE NO COLLATERAL FOR NAIK'S CLAIM THAT RUSSIANS FIGHTERS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED IN SUPPORT OF AFGHAN AIR STRIKES.

4. STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THAT PAKISTAN AIR FORCE WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERCEPT INTRUDERS UNTIL THEY ARE EQUIPPED WITH AIM 9-L AIR TO AIR MISSILES. THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE CONSIDERED DELIVERING A SMALL QUANTITY OF THESE MISSILES UNDER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES, BUT CONCLUDED THAT PAKISTAN'S NEED WAS NOT SO URGENT AS TO JUSTIFY A CONFRONTATION ON THIS ISSUE WITH HER CRITICS IN CONGRESS. A PROPOSAL TO SELL 500 AIM 9-L WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE NEW CONGRESS WHEN IT ASSEMBLES IN JANUARY.

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5. NO DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON THE PROVISION OF EARLY WARNING AIRCRAFT. BUT THE PENTAGON HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT A CARRIER-BORNE E2C SHOULD VISIT PAKISTAN THIS MONTH OR IN JANUARY TO DEMONSTRATE ITS CAPABILITIES OVER MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN. THEIR PREFERRED SOLUTION WOULD BE FOR THE PAKISTANIS TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL C130S WITH APPROPRIATE RADAR EQUIPMENT, WHICH WOULD BE CHEAPER AND EASIER TO OPERATE.

6. HAGERTY AGREED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DIRECT COLLUSION BETWEEN THE INDIANS AND RUSSIANS BUT ADDED THAT SIMULTANEOUS ACTION ON TWO FRONTS WAS WHAT WORRIED THE PAKISTANIS. THE INDIANS WOULD BE UPSET BY GREATER US/PAKISTAN MILITARY COLLABORATION. THIS OF ITSELF WOULD NOT DETER THE AMERICANS FROM GOING AHEAD: AVAILABILITY AND COST OF THE REQUIRED AIRCRAFT WERE MORE IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATIONS. THE PAKISTANIS, TOO, HAD CAUSE FOR ANXIETY: FOR EXAMPLE ABOUT THE REPORTED DISCUSSION OF THE SUPPLY OF MIG 29S DURING THE INDIAN DEFENCE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MOSCOW.

7. HAGERTY CONFIRMED THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S RECENT MESSAGE TO ZIA (WASHINGTON TEL NO 2760 - NOT TO ALL) INCLUDED THE ASSURANCE MENTIONED BY NAIK THAT THE US WOULD NOT STAND IDLY BY IF PAKISTAN'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY WERE THREATENED. THIS LANGUAGE WAS DELIBERATELY AMBIGUOUS, AND WAS NOT QUOTE FRONTIER-SPECIFIC UNQUOTE. THE STATE DEPARTMENT INTERPRETED IT AS IMPLYING A MORE ACTIVE COMMITMENT WITH REGARD TO PAKISTAN'S WESTERN FRONTIER, WHERE THE US AND PAKISTAN SHARED A COMMON ENEMY, THAN WITH REGARD TO INDIA. IT WAS NOT TO BE READ AS A COMMITMENT TO INTERVENE MILITARILY AGAINST INDIA OR INDEED TO SUGGEST ANYTHING MORE THAN THE OBLIGATIONS THE US HAD ASSUMED IN 1959 (ISLAMABAD TEL NO 641). IF PAKISTAN WERE THREATENED FROM INDIA THE US WOULD OF COURSE DO ALL IT COULD BY DIPLOMATIC MEANS TO PREVENT A CONFLICT AND, IF THAT FAILED, TO BRING IT TO AN REALY CONCLUSION.

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