

CONFIDENTIAL
FM ISLAMABAD
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 188

ADVANCE COPY

OF 050822Z FEBRUARY 88
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, KABUL, UKMIS NEW YORK
INFO IMMEDIATE UKMIS GENEVA, PARIS, ROME

AFGHANISTAN CORDOVEZ'S SHUTTLE

SUMMARY

1. CORDOVEZ REPORTS ANOTHER FRUITLESS VISIT TO KABUL. HOPES TO MEET ALLIANCE LEADERS TEMPORARILY FRUSTRATED. STILL IN BUSINESS, HOWEVER.

DETAIL

2. CORDOVEZ CAME FOR A DRINK ON 3 FEBRUARY TO DISCUSS THE LATEST STATE OF PLAY ON HIS MISSION. CROOKE WAS ALSO PRESENT.

3. CORDOVEZ SAID THAT HIS SECOND VISIT TO KABUL HAD BEEN AS UNFRUITFUL AS HIS FIRST. HE HAD ONE SESSION WITH WAKIL, ONLY 40 MINUTES WITH NAJIB AND THEN A FURTHER LONGER SESSION WITH WAKIL. THE AFGHANS IN KABUL SEEMED PREPARED TO MAKE VIRTUALLY NO CONCESSIONS. THEY APPEARED NERVOUS ABOUT WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR THEM. THEY WERE STILL ANGRY ABOUT PRESIDENT ZIA'S STATEMENT TO THE WASHINGTON POST THAT HE WOULD NOT SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NAJIB GOVERNMENT. CORDOVEZ SAID THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE KABUL REGIME NOW HAD LITTLE INTEREST IN THE GENEVA PROCESS BUT THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE INSISTING THAT THEY GO THROUGH WITH IT. LITTLE FURTHER PROGRESS WOULD BE POSSIBLE NOW EXCEPT BY DEALING WITH THE RUSSIANS.

4. CORDOVEZ ACCEPTED THAT THE PAKISTANIS WERE NOW MAKING CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO ARRANGE A MEETING FOR HIM WITH THE MUJAHIDEEN LEADERS IN PESHAWAR. A LUNCH HAD BEEN SET UP FOR 4 FEBRUARY, THE ALLIANCE CONDITIONS BEING SATISFIED BY STATEMENTS TO BE MADE BY THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT AND BY CORDOVEZ HIMSELF. THE LATTER WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR, IN PERHAPS UNPRECEDENTED TERMS FOR A UN OFFICIAL, IN EXPLICITLY REFERRING TO A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT WHICH IS SEEKING TO OVERTHROW A GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED IN THE UN, THAT THERE WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ANY SETTLEMENT FOR THE AFGHAN MUJAHIDEEN.

5. UNFORTUNATELY THE CONJUNCTURE OF THE BBC'S REPORT OF 2 FEBRUARY ON MEETINGS IN QUETTA SUPPORTING THE KING, TOGETHER WITH NATWAR

SINGH'S VISIT TO SEE THE KING IN ROME, HAD MADE THE MUJAHIDEEN LEADERS SO SUSPICIOUS THAT THEY HAD CALLED OFF THE MEETING ON 4 FEBRUARY. ONE WOULD HAVE TO SEE NOW WHETHER THE PAKISTANIS COULD EXERCISE ENOUGH PRESSURE TO GET A MEETING REINSTATED. CORDOVEZ WAS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT HOW ANY SUCH SESSION MIGHT GO, WITH THE MUJAHIDEEN TAKING HARDLINE POSITIONS, BUT HE ACCEPTED MY VIEW THAT A FIRST MEETING WAS VERY IMPORTANT NOW TO BREAK THE ICE AND TO LET EACH SIDE HEAR WHAT THE OTHER HAD TO SAY. HOPEFULLY THEN MORE INFORMAL TALKS MIGHT TAKE PLACE, INCLUDING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL PARTIES. CROOKE EXPLAINED THE CURRENT THINKING OF THOSE RESISTANCE PEOPLE HE HAD SEEN RECENTLY IN PESHAWAR: SUPPORTING A TOUGH STANCE THOUGH PREPARED AT LAST TO TALK ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IN KABUL. THE ALLIANCE STATEMENT ENVISAGED A FINAL (NOT INTERIM) GOVERNMENT COMPRISING AN ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP WITH REFUGEES/EXILES AND NON-COMMUNIST INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN A SUBORDINATE ROLE.

6. CORDOVEZ TOLD ME THAT WHEN HE HAD ASKED PRESIDENT ZIA WHY PAKISTANIS DID NOT GIVE VISAS FOR AFGHAN EXILES, INCLUDING SOME MODERATE PEOPLE IN THE KING 'S ENTOURAGE, TO COME TO PAKISTAN, ZIA HAD SAID FRANKLY THAT HE HAD NOT WANTED TO DO THIS UNTIL THE TIMING WAS RIGHT. CORDOVEZ PRESSED THE CASE FOR SULTAN MAHMOOD GHAZI TO VISIT, BUT ZIA ONLY TOO NOTE.
7. CORDOVEZ BELIEVED THAT THE ISSUES OF TIMEFRAME FOR WITHDRAWAL AND FRONT LOADING WOULD PROVE TO BE NO PROBLEM AND THAT AGREEMENT ON THEM COULD BE REACHED. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE QUESTION OF WHO SHOULD INITIAL THE AGREEMENT COULD BE RESOLVED BY A CERTAIN DELIBERATE AMBIGUITY ON THE BASIS OF TACIT UNDERSTANDINGS BUT NO FORMAL STATEMENT.
8. CORDOVEZ SEEMED PREPARED TO KEEP IN ORBIT FOR A LITTLE LONGER. HAVING SEEN THE ALLIANCE LEADERS HIS AIM WOULD BE TO MAKE A BRIEF DAY'S VISIT TO KABUL AND THEN RETURN TO ISLAMABAD, WHERE HE WOULD HOPE TO HAVE ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE MUJAHIDEEN BEFORE RETURNING TO NEW YORK.
9. SEE MIFT.

BARRINGTON

ADVANCE 29 19

.AFGHANISTAN
PS + PS/Mrs CHAKLER
PS/MR EGGAR
MR BOYD
SIR J FRETWELL
MR GILLMORE
MR MCLAREN
MR SLATER
HD/SAD
HD/PUSD

DEP HD/PUSD
HD/UND
HD/SOVIET
HD/NAD
HD/DEFENCE
HD/MED
HD/NEWS
NO. 10 DOWNING ST
ASSESSMENTS STAFF CAB OFF
RESIDENT CLERK