



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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Prime Minister

Accept this advice?

8 February 1988

(Personally I would have thought that provided you were clear that you would see Khaled, this could be no objection to your seeing Haq. He deserves support. Call 072

Having received
Haq's own - I should
submit briefing again
When Khales comes,
I will see him,
Dear Charles,

Afghanistan: Visit of Abdul Haq

We have just learned that Abdul Haq, one of the Afghan Resistance's more prominent military commanders, is stopping off in the UK in February on his way to West Germany where he is to receive medical treatment (a routine operation to counter the long-term effects of a war wound).

You will recall that he came here as a sponsored visitor in March 1986, when we wanted to boost the standing of the resistance leaders and remind the world of the quality of the resistance commanders. The Prime Minister received Abdul Haq on that occasion. This prompted protests by the Soviet Embassy here and by the Kabul regime - a clear indication that we had got our point across successfully.

Despite the short notice, we are offering Abdul Haq another Category II visit, originally scheduled for 9-10 February but now postponed until after 20 February at Abdul Haq's request. We have given careful thought to the level at which it would be appropriate to receive Haq this time. The situation in Afghanistan is very different from what it was in 1986. The resistance commanders have chalked up significant military successes and their political leaders in Peshawar have united behind a common leadership. The President of the Resistance Alliance, Younes Khales, has performed more effectively than expected when he was first appointed in October. The Alliance decided that Khales (to whom Haq owes direct loyalty) should be their main spokesman with foreign leaders. And he himself has assumed an increasingly important role in the negotiations about an interim government behind the scenes of the UN settlement negotiations. The Foreign Secretary believes that it would not be helpful to the fragile unity of the Alliance if we received a field commander at a higher level than has so far been generally accorded the political leadership.

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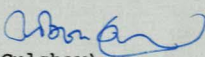
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The Western objective at this stage in the Afghan negotiations is to get the Russians to deal directly to the Resistance both about the modalities of the troop withdrawals which they claim they want to make in 1988, and about the composition of the interim government. We know from other sources that the Russians are inclined to disparage the political leadership in Peshawar and are tempted to negotiate with individual commanders. This is a recipe for the Lebanonisation of Afghanistan. The attitude of the military leaders will be a decisive factor in any peace settlement and we shall look forward to talking to Haq about this aspect of the problem. But our aim must be to persuade him of the importance at this stage of Resistance unity.

The Foreign Secretary has accordingly decided that he will not receive Abdul Haq himself, and recommends that the Prime Minister should not receive him this time. If the Prime Minister agrees, Abdul Haq would be seen by Lord Glenarthur.

Done

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

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From the Private Secretary

9 February 1988

AFGHANISTAN: VISIT OF ABDUL HAQ

Thank you for your letter of 8 February about the visit of Abdul Haq.

The Prime Minister has considered carefully whether she should see Abdul Haq again. She has decided that on balance it would be right to do so. The negotiations on Afghanistan are clearly reaching a crucial stage and there are important points to be made to the Afghan Resistance privately. They also need to feel that they continue to have the public support of Western leaders. Any Soviet criticism can be countered by saying that it is obviously important to discuss the issues raised by Mr. Gorbachev's latest statement with the Resistance leaders. Your point about Younes Khaled can be dealt with by the Prime Minister making clear that she would be perfectly ready to see him were he to visit the United Kingdom. We shall obviously need to bear in mind the timing of the Foreign Secretary's visit to Moscow: I assume that you would prefer to avoid any public announcement of the Prime Minister's intention to see Abdul Haq until after the visit.

Bf // I should be grateful if you could let me know the dates when Abdul Haq will be here so that we can find a time in the diary; also for briefing in due course.

Charles Powell

Robert Culshaw, Esq., M.V.O.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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