

CONFIDENTIAL
FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 390
OF 182340Z FEBRUARY 88
INFO IMMEDIATE ISLAMABAD, KABUL, MOSCOW,
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS NEW YORK

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SUMMARY

1. US AND PAKISTAN AGREE TO PRESS AHEAD ON BOTH TRACKS AND TO REVIEW PROGRESS ON INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS WHEN GENEVA INSTRUMENTS COMPLETED (BUT NOT INITIALLED/SIGNED). U.S. TO SEEK SOVIET AGREEMENT TO STOP MILITARY AID TO THE AFGHAN REGIME AFTER WITHDRAWAL. POSSIBILITY OF US-SOVIET-PAKISTAN SIDE-LETTERS TO COVER ELEMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN THE GENEVA INSTRUMENTS.

DETAIL

2. THE PAKISTAN MINISTER OF STATE VISITED WASHINGTON ON 16-18 FEBRUARY, PRIMARILY TO COORDINATE U.S. AND PAKISTAN'S POSITIONS AFTER CORDOVEZ' SHUTTLE AND BEFORE SHULTZ' VISIT TO MOSCOW. HIS MAIN MEETINGS WERE WITH SHULTZ AND ARMACOST ON 17 FEBRUARY.

3. FLATEN (AFGHANISTAN OFFICE DIRECTOR, STATE DEPARTMENT) TOLD US ON 18 FEBRUARY THAT A BASIC UNDERSTANDING WAS REACHED TO PRESS AHEAD ON BOTH TRACKS AND TO DEFER FINAL DECISIONS ON LINKAGE UNTIL THE PRECISE CONTENT OF THE GENEVA INSTRUMENTS WAS KNOWN AND THE DEGREE OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED (AND ACHIEVABLE) ON THE SECOND TRACK WAS CLEARER. THE U.S. STILL HELD TO THEIR VIEW THAT AGREEMENT ON AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS DESIRABLE BUT NOT ESSENTIAL. THE PAKISTANI POSITION REMAINED THAT THEY WOULD NEITHER INITIAL NOR SIGN A GENEVA AGREEMENT UNTIL THE SHAPE OF AN ALTERNATIVE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS AGREED. BUT NOORANI HAD AGREED THEY SHOULD MOVE QUICKLY TO COMPLETE THE OUTSTANDING ELEMENTS OF THE GENEVA INSTRUMENTS BEFORE AGAIN TAKING STOCK.

4. FLATEN DID NOT DENY THAT US-PAKISTANI DIFFERENCES HAD THUS BEEN DEFERRED RATHER THAN RESOLVED. COMPLETION OF THE INSTRUMENTS, HOWEVER, MIGHT PROVIDE A FIRMER BASIS ON WHICH TO SECURE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ALLIANCE AND ENCOURAGE THEIR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT. AND THE RUSSIAN ATTITUDE TO THE KABUL REGIME MIGHT HAVE EVOLVED FURTHER BY THAT STAGE AS WELL. (HE DREW ATTENTION TO A LONG ARTICLE IN THE MOSCOW LITERARY GAZETTE OF 17 FEBRUARY, SIGNED BY PROKHANOV, WHICH SEVERELY CRITICISED

THE KABUL REGIME FOR ABANDONING PURE COMMUNIST WAYS AND CONCLUDED THAT QUOTE THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS HAD LOST ITS MEANING UNQUOTE FLATEN INTERPRETED THIS AS FURTHER SOVIET OBITUARY WRITING FOR NAJIB.) BUT HE WAS, EVEN SO, NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT EITHER RESISTANCE OR SOVIET/REGIME ATTITUDES WOULD ALLOW EARLY AGREEMENT ON AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THE U.S. WAS NOT LIKELY THEREFORE TO FAVOUR ANY LONG PAUSE IN THE GENEVA PROCESS, ONCE THE INSTRUMENTS WERE READY TO BE INITIALLED/ SIGNED.

5. ON THE REMAINING DETAILS OF THE GENEVA INSTRUMENTS, FLATEN SAID THAT THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND PAKISTAN. NOORANI HAD REVIEWED IN DETAIL THE TACTICS TO BE PURSUED ON FRONT-LOADING, MONITORING, THE SIMULTANEOUS ACTIVITY OF THE GUARANTORS AND THE BASIC ISSUE OF THE TIMETABLE. IT HAD BEEN AGREED IN ADDITION THAT SHULTZ IN MOSCOW WOULD SEEK SOVIET AGREEMENT TO STOP MILITARY AID TO THE KABUL REGIME AFTER WITHDRAWAL. IN U.S. EYES, THIS HAD MORE POLITICAL THAN MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE, SINCE THE KABUL REGIME WOULD NOT FALL BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF EQUIPMENT BUT THROUGH A COMBINATION OF INTERNAL TENSIONS, EXTERNAL PRESSURE AND THE INCOMPETENCE OF THE AFGHAN ARMY. SOVIET AGREEMENT, TO STOPPING MILITARY AID THOUGH UNLIKELY, WAS NOT TO BE RULED OUT. BUT IT WOULD NOT BE INCORPORATED IN THE GENEVA INSTRUMENTS. SIDE-LETTERS BETWEEN THE U.S., SOVIET UNION AND PAKISTAN MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO RECORD AGREEMENT ON THIS AND OTHER POINTS NOT COVERED IN THE INSTRUMENTS.

6. ON THE CESSATION OF AID TO THE RESISTANCE, FLATEN SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NO INTEREST IN RE-OPENING THE GUARANTOR PROVISIONS AS CURRENTLY DRAFTED IN THE GENEVA INSTRUMENTS AND WERE WILLING IN PRINCIPLE THEREFORE TO STOP THE FLOW OF SUPPLIES TO THE RESISTANCE ACROSS THE PAKISTAN-AFGHAN BORDER FROM DAY ONE OF WITHDRAWAL. BUT THIS DEPENDED ON THE DETAILS OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL BEING SO TIED DOWN THAT FROM DAY ONE THE WITHDRAWAL BECAME IRREVERSIBLE. THE US/PAKISTAN POSITION ON FRONT- LOADING WAS STILL THE REMOVAL OF 50 PERCENT OF SOVIET FORCES WITHIN THE FIRST 90 DAYS. BUT MOVEMENT TOWARDS THIS TARGET WOULD HAVE TO BE VISIBLE FROM DAY ONE, INCLUDING THE DEPARTURE FROM AFGHANISTAN OF THE FIRST SOVIET UNITS.

COMMENT

7. IT MAKES SENSE THAT THE U.S. DO NOT WANT TO RE-OPEN THE AGREED GENEVA PROVISIONS ON CESSATION OF AID TO THE RESISTANCE, SINCE THIS WOULD PLAY TACTICALLY INTO SOVIET HANDS. THEY ARE TRYING BY OTHER WAYS TO ACHIEVE THE SAME DEGREE OF CERTAINTY THAT THE RESISTANCE WILL OUTLAST THE SOVIET PRESENCE. BUT

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IN PUBLIC THE ADMINISTRATION ARE MAINTAINING SOME AMBIGUITY ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS. THIS REFLECTS THEIR NEED BOTH TO KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON THE RUSSIANS TO MAKE THE NECESSARY DETAILED COMMITMENTS AT GENEVA: AND TO WARD OFF US RIGHT-WING ACCUSATIONS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS PREMATURELY COMMITTED ITSELF TO SCALING DOWN, IF NOT ABANDONING, THE RESISTANCE. THE OVERRIDING, AND IMMEDIATE, US OBJECTIVE REMAINS TO PIN THE RUSSIANS DOWN TO A CONVINCING AND DETAILED WITHDRAWAL TIMETABLE.

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