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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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Rene Amster  
COB  
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Dear Charles

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Afghanistan: Message from President Zia

Thank you for your letter of 23 February.

When Noorani, the Pakistani Acting Foreign Minister, was here on 19 February, he asked us to give thought to the problems confronting Pakistan over Afghanistan and to let him have our further advice in due course. Accordingly, we briefed the Pakistani Ambassador last week on the basis of the points covered in our correspondence.

On 29 February, Mr Shaharyar Khan called on us again, to pass on President Zia's response to our advice and to request that this be relayed to No 10, (Apparently President Zia had toyed with the idea of telephoning the Prime Minister direct - a clear indication of the extent to which the Afghanistan issue is preoccupying him at the moment.)

President Zia conceded that it might well be necessary, in the final resort, for Pakistan to sign with the existing regime. However, Pakistan would first be pressing hard in Geneva for a transitional government with which it could sign any agreement. Pakistan was anxious that the Russians and the regime should not form the impression that Pakistan was yet under pressure from her friends to compromise on this issue which is of course also important for the resistance. It was, therefore, important that we did not make public the full extent of our advice, lest we weaken the Pakistani hand at the talks.

President Zia's request does not pose any problem. Our press line has anyway been to describe a transitional government as essential if further bloodshed is to be avoided and to refrain from commenting on what we would want the Pakistanis to do if no progress were to be made over transitional government arrangements. We reminded the Ambassador of the European Community statement of 25 February which referred to the need for a transitional government (I attach a copy of the statement).

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[Signature]

(R N Culshaw)

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## EUROPEAN COMMUNITY STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN

The Twelve continue to follow closely political and diplomatic developments in the Afghan question, which remains a major source of international tension.

They note with interest General Secretary Gorbachev's statement of 8 February announcing the Soviet Union's readiness to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan starting on 15 May, according to a fixed timetable not exceeding ten months.

The Twelve note that the Soviet Union makes the withdrawal of its troops dependent on the formal conclusion of an agreement in Geneva.

The Twelve refer in this connection to the declaration by the European Council of 5 December 1987 on Afghanistan, and reiterate their wish to see the total and irrevocable withdrawal of Soviet troops carried out in the course of 1988.

On the eve of a new round of proximity talks in Geneva, they renew their support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his personal representative to pave the way for a settlement. They pay tribute to the positive and responsible attitude adopted by Pakistan for many years now.

The Twelve stress that in order to establish a lasting peace and bring an end to the ordeal of the Afghan people, it is necessary to re-establish the independence and non-alignment of Afghanistan and enable the refugees to return to their country in safety and dignity.

They consider that it is of the utmost importance that all parties concerned, including the resistance, are involved in the peace process without delay. The establishment by the Afghans themselves of a transitional government, whose independence could not be called into question, is clearly the key to this.



The Twelve remain willing, for their part, to contribute constructively to such a settlement and, when the time comes, to participate in international aid for Afghanistan.

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