

CONFIDENTIAL

FM UKMIS GENEVA

TO DESKBY 081830Z FCO

TELNO 149

OF 081707Z MARCH 88

INFO IMMEDIATE ISLAMABAD, KABUL, UKMIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW, WASHINGTON

INFO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI

ADVANCE COPY

MY TELNO 146: AFGHANISTAN: PROXIMITY TALKS

SUMMARY

1. NOORANI STRESSES NEED FOR PROGRESS ON FORMATION OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT. SIGNATURE BY 15 MARCH IS NOT IMPORTANT, AS SOVIET UNION DOES NOT REQUIRE 60 DAYS TO ENABLE WITHDRAWAL TO BEGIN ON 15 MAY.

DETAIL

2. ON 8 MARCH I CALLED ON NOORANI, PAKISTAN ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER. HE SAID THAT IN HIS RESUMED TALKS WITH CORDOVEZ HE HAD INSISTED ON NEED TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT BEFORE PAKISTAN COULD CONSIDER SIGNING THE AGREEMENTS. UNLESS THERE WAS AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, INTERNAL STRIFE AND BLOODSHED WOULD CONTINUE IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE REFUGEES WOULD BE UNWILLING TO RETURN.

3. NOORANI SAID THAT PAKISTAN WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT TO BE IN PLACE BEFORE SIGNATURE. AT A MINIMUM, THERE SHOULD BE VISIBLE SIGNS OF GENUINE EFFORTS TO START AN INTRA-AFGHAN DIALOGUE. IT WOULD BE UP TO CORDOVEZ TO ORGANISE PROXIMITY TALKS INVOLVING REPRESENTATIVES FROM KABUL, THE RESISTANCE AND THE EMIGRES. THESE TALKS SHOULD BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

TIMING OF SIGNATURE

4. NOORANI CONFIRMED THAT 15 MAY WAS THE KEY DATE AND THAT 15 MARCH WAS NOT SO SIGNIFICANT. THE SOVIET UNION DID NOT NEED TWO MONTHS TO BEGIN WITHDRAWAL. IT WAS STILL NECESSARY FOR THE LOOSE ENDS IN THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS TO BE SORTED OUT, AND CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES WOULD BE NECESSARY IN PAKISTAN BEFORE THE AGREEMENTS COULD BE SIGNED. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES HAD SEPARATELY TO APPROVE THE FINAL TEXTS OF THE AGREEMENTS AND SIGN AS GUARANTORS. THERE WAS NO WAY ALL THIS COULD BE COMPLETED BY 15 MARCH.

SYMMETRY OF WITHDRAWAL

5. NOORANI SAID THAT THE AMERICANS AND PAKISTAN WERE BOTH TAKING UP WITH CORDOVEZ THE QUESTION OF SYMMETRY IN WITHDRAWAL OF MILITARY SUPPORT. THE SOVIET UNION CLAIMED IT HAD A RIGHT UNDER THE 1921 TREATY TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE LEGITIMATE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, WHEREAS PAKISTAN REGARDED THE PDPA AS SIMPLY ONE OF A NUMBER OF FACTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN WITH NO RIGHT TO BE REGARDED AS THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT. HE HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS POINT WITH RUSSIANS WHEN HE PASSED THROUGH MOSCOW, AS VORONTSOV HAD BEEN OUT OF TOWN.

6. WHEN I ASKED IF HE HAD PLANS TO RETURN TO ISLAMABAD FOR CONSULTATIONS, NOORANI SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT TO LEAVE GENEVA IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HOWEVER, HE EXPECTED THAT THERE WOULD BE A NATURAL BREAK IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN DUE COURSE, AND THIS WOULD GIVE HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT IN ISLAMABAD.

COMMENT

7. ONE UNPUBLISHED REASON FOR PAKISTAN DELAYING SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENTS MAY BE THAT NOORANI'S RIGHT HAND IS ENCASED IN PLASTER AND HE IS UNABLE TO HOLD A PEN (EXCLAM). HE WAS RETICENT ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ACCIDENT.

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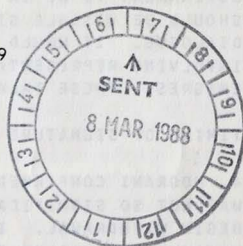
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