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FM UKMIS GENEVA

TO DESKBY 111915Z FCO

TELNO 171

OF 111816Z MARCH 88

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YOUR TEL 77: AFGHANISTAN: PROXIMITY TALKS

SUMMARY

1. AMERICAN OBSERVER SEES SOME HOPEFUL SIGNS ON PHASING AND INTERIM GOVERNMENT. SYMMETRY WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE SHULTZ/SHEVERNADZE DECISION.

DETAIL

2. I CALLED ON PECK ON 11 MARCH. DESPITE HIS COMMENT THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD MARKED TIME, PECK DESCRIBED A NUMBER OF MODERATELY PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS. CORDOVEZ WAS TAKING SOUNDINGS ON PROGRESS TOWARDS AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, BUT WOULD NOT BECOME "VISIBLY ACTIVE". HE WAS ALSO EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF A DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD COMMIT PAKISTAN TO SIGNING THE AGREEMENTS BY A CERTAIN DATE, BUT WHICH WOULD ALSO RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS ON THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. PAKISTAN WAS NOW SEEKING "CLARIFICATIONS" RATHER THAN SETTING PRE-CONDITIONS.

3. PECK HAD HAD A SECOND MEETING WITH KOSYREV. PECK WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SOLVING THE PROBLEMS ON PHASING AND DISENGAGEMENT POSSIBLY BY A SEPARATE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS, BUT A TOUGH EXCHANGE ON SYMMETRY CONFIRMED HIS VIEW THAT THE ISSUE WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED AT A HIGHER LEVEL. PECK HAD TOLD CORDOVEZ ON A PERSONAL BASIS THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE US TO HAVE A CLEAR COMMITMENT ON SYMMETRY, PROBABLY OUTSIDE THE GENEVA ACCORDS, THAT WOULD BIND THE SOVIET UNION AND WHICH COULD BE USED IN PUBLIC (I.E. BY PRESIDENT REAGAN) WITHOUT SOVIET CONTRADICTION.

4. ON PARAGRAPH 2 OF TUR, THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION. SHEVARDNADZE'S ORAL COMMENT WAS ONE OF A SERIES OF HINTS WHICH HAVE YET TO BE TURNED INTO WRITTEN COMMITMENTS. THE RUSSIANS HAD SAID ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION THAT THE PROBLEM FOR THE PDPA WAS NOT MILITARY SUPPLIES, OF WHICH THEY HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH, BUT RATHER THE ABILITY TO USE THEM EFFECTIVELY.

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5. PECK REGARDED PAKISTAN'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, RATHER THAN THE ACTUAL INSTALLATION OF SUCH A GOVERNMENT, AS AN INDICATION OF FLEXIBILITY WHICH COULD BE ENLARGED BY CORDOVEZ. PECK'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT PAKISTAN WAS LOOKING FOR A FACE-SAVING WAY TO BACK DOWN ON THE ISSUE OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. CORDOVEZ WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN REASSURING THE RUSSIANS ON THE SINCERITY OF THE PAKISTAN APPROACH, WHILE THE RUSSIANS WERE CLAIMING TO HAVE DIFFICULTY IN CONTROLLING WAKIL.

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