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FM ISLAMABAD  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 475

OF 071019Z APRIL 88  
INFO IMMEDIATE KABUL, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, UKMIS GENEVA, UKMIS NEW  
YORK, NEW DELHI, PARIS, ROME, RIYADH.

MY TELNO 471 : AFGHANISTAN: PRESIDENT ZIA SPEAKS OF IMMINENT  
AGREEMENT

1. IN HIS FORMAL SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT TODAY, AN ANNUAL EVENT, PRESIDENT ZIA INCLUDED A MAJOR PASSAGE ON AFGHANISTAN. HE SAID THAT PAKISTAN HAD LONG SPOKEN UP FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN AFGHANISTAN. IT WAS IN PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS THAT THE REFUGEES SHOULD HONOURABLY GO BACK TO THEIR COUNTRY. FOR THIS IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE SOVIET TROOPS TO BE WITHDRAWN AND BEFORE THAT FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CHARGE IN KABUL. MR GORBACHEV HAD NOW DECIDED THAT SOVIET TROOPS SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN. THE SOVIETS HAD AGREED TO A MODERATE TIMESCALE, PHASING AND UN MONITORING.

2. THE LATEST ISSUE THAT HAD ARISEN WAS THAT OF FAIR TREATMENT IN THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO BOTH SIDES, IE. SYMMETRY. THIS WAS AN ISSUE BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS. HE COULD TELL THE JOINT SESSION THAT FROM UNOFFICIAL SOURCES HE HAD HEARD THAT A COMPROMISE AGREEMENT HAD NOW BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED BY WHICH THERE WOULD BE A BALANCE IN THE SUPPORT EACH SIDE GAVE TO ITS ALLIES. THE RUSSIANS HAD ALSO AGREED THAT MR CORDOVEZ IN HIS PERSONAL CAPACITY WOULD ENDEAVOUR TO WORK OUT THE COMPOSITION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS A POSITIVE STEP.

3. PAKISTAN HAD REFUSED TO BE RUSHED BY THE PROPOSED 15 MARCH DEADLINE BUT NOW THE GENEVA ACCORDS WERE GOING TO BE SIGNED AT ANY MOMENT. (THIS WAS RECEIVED WITH APPROBATION BY THUMPING OF TABLES ROUND THE CHAMBER.) ZIA SAID HE CONGRATULATED THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT ON WHAT THEY HAD DONE TO ACHIEVE THIS RESULT.

4. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN ALLIANCE WERE STILL RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THE GENEVA ACCORDS IN WHICH THEY HAD NOT PARTICIPATED, BUT THE AFGHANS WERE CLEVER AND REALISTIC AND HE HOPED THEY WOULD COOPERATE IN THE SETTLEMENT. PAKISTAN WOULD CONTINUE TO STAND BY THE MUJAHIDEEN (THIS WAS PHRASED IN GENERAL TERMS).

5. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT PEOPLE WERE ASKING WHETHER THE REFUGEES

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WOULD GO BACK. HE HAD SEEN IN THE EYES OF OLD AND YOUNG THE DESIRE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMETLAND. SOME REFUGEES WERE FRIGHTENED THAT THEY WOULD BE ORDERED BACK, BUT THE PRIME MINISTER AND HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT AFGHANS WERE THEIR BROTHERS AND NO-ONE WOULD EVER BE COMPELLED TO GO. THEY WOULD ONLY LEAVE WHEN THEY COULD HONOURABLY AND SAFELY DO SO. IN HIS OWN VIEW THIS MIGHT TAKE FIVE TO SIX MONTHS, IE TWO MONTHS FOR THE INTERVAL BETWEEN SIGNATURE AND THE START OF WITHDRAWAL AND THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE SOVIETS WOULD WITHDRAW 50 PERCENT OF THEIR OWN FORCES, UNDER THE PHASING ARQNEEMENTS. INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES HAD AGREED TO PROVIDE AID WHEN THE REFUGEES RETURN. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT PAKISTANIS SHOULD CONTINUE TO SHOW MAXIMUM HOSPITALITY TO THEIR AFGHAN GUESTS IN THIS INTERIM PERIOD.

6. PRESIDENT ZIA GAVE CREDIT FOR THE 'MIRACLE' OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE AFGHAN PROBLEM TO HIS GOVERNMENT, TO THE AFGHANS THEMSELVES AND TO PAKISTAN'S FRIENDS OVERSEAS, PARTICULARLY FOR THE WAY THE LATTER HAD HELPED WITH THE UN VOTE. HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY ISLAMIC COUNTRIES, THE US, THE UK AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. A GREAT DEAL HAD BEEN DONE IN EUROPE AND THE US TO KEEP THE AFGHAN CAUSE ALIVE.

7. WONDERING TO MYSELF WHETHER THE PRESIDENT HAD SPOKEN A BIT TOO SOON ABOUT AGREEMENT IN GENEVA I ASKED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR, AS HE WAS LEAVING, ABOUT PROSPECTS. HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT AGREEMENT WAS VIRTUALLY ASSURED AND WOULD BE SETTLED IN ONE OR TWO DAYS, AND SHOWED NO DISPOSITION TO DISAGREE WITH WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID IN PUBLIC.

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