

CONFIDENTIAL

017255
MDADAN 2328

ADVANCE COPY

CONFIDENTIAL
FM ISLAMABAD
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 858

OF 040613Z JULY 88

INFO IMMEDIATE KABUL, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, UKMIS NEW YORK
INFO PRIORITY UKMIS GENEVA, NEW DELHI, ROME, PARIS, BONN

AFGHANISTAN: CORDOVEZ

SUMMARY

1. CORDOVEZ EXUDES OPTIMISM ON IMPLEMENTATION OF GENEVA ACCORDS. HE IS READY TO LEAVE ON THE TABLE THE IDEA OF AN INTERIM ADMINISTRATION OF TECHNOCRATS TO TAKE OVER PEACEFULLY FROM NAJIB AND PREPARE FOR A LOI JIRGA NEXT SPRING, THOUGH HE HAS NOT REVEALED THIS YET IN PUBLIC AND APPRECIATES THE DIFFICULTIES OF OBTAINING AGREEMENT ON SUCH A PLAN.

DETAIL: CORDOVEZ'S PROGRAMME

2. CORDOVEZ ARRIVED IN ISLAMABAD ON THE EVENING OF 30 JULY. HE LUNCHEDED WITH SATTAR AT THE MFA ON 1 JULY AND AT HIS OWN REQUEST CAME ROUND FOR A LONGISH PRIVATE TALK WITH ME THAT EVENING. HE SAW YAQUB KHAN ON THE AFTERNOON OF 2 JULY (YAQUB HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM CHINA AND NEEDING TO BRIEF THE PRESIDENT IN THE MORNING) AND ZIA ON THE SAME EVENING. ON 3 JULY CORDOVEZ TOLD ME HE WOULD BE GOING TO PESHAWAR PARTLY TO LOOK AT A BORDER CROSSING IN HIS "IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS" ROLE AND PARTLY, HE HOPED, TO SEE AFGHANS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS. NEXT WEEK HE WOULD MAKE A VISIT TO SEE NAJIB IN KABUL BUT HE DID NOT ENVISAGE ANY SHUTTLE ON THIS OCCASION.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENEVA AGREEMENTS

3. CORDOVEZ SAID THAT HE INTENDED TO MAINTAIN HIS OPTIMISTIC FRONT. THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL WAS GOING ENTIRELY ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE AS EVEN THE AMERICANS ADMITTED: ANY IDEA THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD DELAY THIS WITHDRAWAL OR SUSPEND IT WAS QUITE WRONG. HE DID NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND WHY THE RUSSIANS WERE MAKING SUCH A FUSS ABOUT PAKISTANI BREACHES OF THE AGREEMENT, BUT HE COULD ONLY IMAGINE IT WAS OUT OF DEFERENCE TO NAJIB. ONLY 10 RUSSIANS HAD BEEN KILLED SINCE 15 APRIL. THE RUSSIANS HAD INDICATED TO HIM THAT THEY WERE PRETTY FED UP WITH NAJIB IN MANY WAYS. FOR EXAMPLE THEY HAD NOT WELCOMED HIS VISIT TO NEW YORK (CORDOVEZ HAD HEARD THAT THIS WAS MAINLY THE IDEA OF THE INDIANS).

4. CORDOVEZ SAID THAT CONTRARY TO HIS EXPECTATIONS THE PAKISTANIS HAD TREATED THE UNGOMAP TEAM BADLY AT THE BEGINNING. THE COMPETENT OFFICERS INVOLVED HAD BEEN (AS WE KNOW) VERY FRUSTRATED. NEVERTHELESS THE SITUATION WAS BETTER NOW. HE ASKED IF I REALISED THAT THEY HAD AS YET FOUND NO EXAMPLES OF ARMS BEING TRANSPORTED OVER THE FRONTIER. I CONTENTED MYSELF WITH SAYING THAT THIS DID NOT SURPRISE ME. AS FAR AS THE SYMMETRY AGREEMENT WAS CONCERNED, CORDOVEZ SAID THAT THE RUSSIANS DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THIS APPLIED TO PAKISTAN, THOUGH I POINTED OUT THAT THE US HAD SIGNED ON THE BASIS THAT IT DID. IN CORDOVEZ'S VIEW THE WHOLE SOVIET/AMERICAN AGREEMENT WHICH HAD MADE GENEVA POSSIBLE WAS A FASCINATING STUDY WHICH OUGHT ONE DAY TO BE WRITTEN UP. IN ANY CASE ALL CONCERNED NOW SHOULD KEEP THE WITHDRAWAL ARRANGEMENTS ON THE RAILS, AS HE HAD AGREED WITH ZIA. HE TOLD ME, INCIDENTALLY, THAT ZIA HAD KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM PRIVATELY THROUGHOUT THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS.

INTERIM GOVERNMENT

5. CORDOVEZ SAID THAT WE HAD NO DOUBT HEARD FROM OUR PEOPLE IN NEW YORK ABOUT THE PROPOSAL WHICH HE WOULD BE PUTTING TO THE VARIOUS PARTIES IN FULFILMENT OF HIS MANDATE TO SEEK AGREEMENT ON AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE WOULD PROPOSE AN ADMINISTRATION OF TECHNOCRATS, INCLUDING FORMER MINISTERS, TAKEN FROM PEOPLE IN PESHAWAR, PEOPLE LIVING IN KABUL (BUT NOT PDPA MEMBERS) AND PEOPLE IN EXILE, PERHAPS TEN FROM EACH GROUP. HE HAD FOUND THAT WHEN HE HAD STARTED TO DISCUSS NAMES THERE HAD BEEN A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF AGREEMENT AND MANY OF THEM WERE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL SIDES. HE WAS PROPOSING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE SET UP ON 1 SEPTEMBER, I.E. SHORTLY AFTER THE 15 AUGUST DATE BY WHICH HALF THE SOVIET TROOPS WOULD HAVE LEFT AFGHANISTAN. HE HAD ARGUED WITH THE RUSSIANS THAT THIS SORT OF NEUTRAL ADMINISTRATION, IF IT TOOK OVER, COULD ENSURE A SMOOTH WITHDRAWAL. (THE RUSSIANS HAD LISTENED BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT.) THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE SIX MONTHS IN WHICH TO ORGANISE A LOI JIRGA WHICH WOULD TAKE PLACE IN AFGHANISTAN, NOT NECESSARILY IN KABUL, ON 1 MARCH 1989, BY WHICH TIME ALL THE SOVIET TROOPS WOULD HAVE LEFT. WHEN I ASKED IF AN ELECTION WAS AN ALTERNATIVE, CORDOVEZ DID NOT RULE IT OUT, BUT SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT AN ELECTION WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ORGANISE.

6. CORDOVEZ SAID TAHT HE WAS FAIRLY CONVINCED AFTER TALKING TO A WIDE RANGE OF AFGHAN OPINION THAT THE SORT OF PROPOSAL HE HAD IN MIND COULD WORK, THOUGH HE DID NOT EXPECT IT TO BE ACCEPTED NOW: IN PARTICULAR NAJIB WAS LIKELY TO REJECT IT FOR IT HAD LITTLE TO OFFER HIM. IT WOULD BE AWAY OF REMOVING NAJIB WITHOUT FIGHTING. CORDOVEZ NEVERTHELESS HOPED TO LEAVE THE PLAN ON THE TABLE SO THAT IT WOULD

BE READY SHOULD THE TIME BE RIGHT.

7. BEARING IN MIND OUR OWN RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL I MADE NO COMMENT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT A CRUCIAL FACTOR WOULD NO DOUBT BE THE ATTITUDE OF THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT, INFLUENCED, PERHAPS, BY WHETHER OR NOT HEKMATYAR COULD BE PERSUADED TO GO ALONG WITH ANY SUCH IDEA. I WONDERED WHETHER THE FORMER MINISTERS WITH WHOM CORDOVEZ HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WOULD WANT THEIR NAMES TO GO FORWARD IF THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT WERE NOT BEHIND THE IDEA. CORDOVEZ ACCEPTED THE LATTER POINT BUT SAID HE HAD FOUND THAT IT WAS NECESSARY WHEN DISCUSSING SUCH OPTIONS TO BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE ABOUT INDIVIDUALS. (CORDOVEZ HAD IN MIND PEOPLE SUCH AS ABDUS SAMAD HAMED, DR ABDUL WAKIL AND SEIRAT). HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT PRESIDENT ZIA'S ATTITUDE WOULD BE TO HIS PROPOSAL THOUGH HE WOULD SHORTLY FIND OUT. CORDOVEZ SAID THAT SOME OF THE SENIOR ARMY PEOPLE IN KABUL MIGHT BE PREPARED TO SWITCH ALLEGIENCE AWAY FROM NAJIB TO THE SORT OF NEUTRAL ADMINISTRATION HE HAD IN MIND. HE ACCEPTED HOWEVER THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN MIGHT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE THE CONTINUATION OF THE AFGHAN ARMY IN ANYTHING LIKE ITS PRESENT FORM AND THAT THE ARMY AND SIMILAR ORGANISATIONS MIGHT HAVE TO BE DISBANDED OR RECONSTITUTED ON A MORE NEUTRAL BASIS.

8. I MENTIONED THAT SOME PEOPLE WERE THINKING IN TERMS OF EXPANDING THE SO-CALLED AHMED SHAH GOVERNMENT TO INCLUDE THE SORT OF PEOPLE CORDOVEZ HAD IN MIND, NOT SO MUCH AS A PEACEFUL TRANSITION FROM THE NAJIB REGIME BUT MORE EFFECTIVELY TO COMBAT IT.

9. CORDOVEZ SAID LITTLE ABOUT HIS VISIT TO IRAN WHERE HE HAD DISCUSSED THE AFGHAN SITUATION FRANKLY WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HOWEVER OBSTINATE THE IRANIANS WERE SHOWING THEMSELVES ON THE WAR WITH IRAQ VELAYATI HAD SEEMED SENSIBLE AND REALISTIC ON AFGHANISTAN. HE HAD SAID THAT GENEVA WAS NOW A THING OF THE PAST. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF MUJAHIDEEN GROUPS IN IRAN WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE AHMED SHAH GOVERNMENT PROPOSED IN PESHAWAR BUT WOULD CONSIDER COOPERATING IN ANY STRUCTURE THAT REMOVED NAJIB AND THE PDPA FROM POWER IN KABUL.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

10. IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS CORDOVEZ HAS MENTIONED HIS IDEAS FOR A LOI JIRGA UNDER THE GENERAL APPROACH THAT THE AFGHANS NOW, WITH THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL, HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURE GOVERNMENT BY THEIR OWN TRADITIONAL METHODS. HE HAS NOT HOWEVER REVEALED IN PUBLIC HIS IDEA FOR AN INTERIM ADMINISTRATION OF TECHNOCRATS TO TAKE OVER FROM NAJIB'S GOVERNMENT AND TO PREPARE THE

WAY FOR THE LOI JIRGA. CORDOVEZ DID NOT IN THE END MEET MUJAHIDEEN LEADERS DURING HIS VISIT TO THE NWFP ON 3 JULY BUT HE MADE NO COMMENT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT HE WAS READY TO MEET ANYONE WHO COULD HELP TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE AFGHAN PROBLEM. HE WAS ALLOWED TO TALK TO A LARGE GROUP OF AFGHAN REFUGEES AT A CAMP NEAR PESHAWAR WHERE HE EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE THAT THE AFGHANS WOULD SURMOUNT THEIR PROBLEMS SUCCESSFULLY AND AMICABLY. THE ENTIRE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE USSR, NOW WANTED PEACE AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN AND WOULD ACCEPT THE DECISION OF THE AFGHANS. IT WAS UP TO THE AFGHANS TO ORGANISE A PROCESS AND FORM A GOVERNMENT THAT HAD LEGITIMATE SUPPORT.

BARRINGTON

YYYY

DISTRIBUTION

20

ADVANCE 20

. AFGHANISTAN

DEP HD/PUSD

PS

HD/UND

PS/MR EGGAR

HD/SOVIET

MR BOYD

HD/NAD

SIR J FRETWELL

HD/DEFENCE

MR GILLMORE

HD/MED

MR MCLAREN

HD/NEWS

MR SLATER

NO. 10 DOWNING ST

HD/SAD

ASSESSMENTS STAFF CAB OFF

HD/PUSD

NNNN

