

CONFIDENTIAL
FM ISLAMABAD
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 1463
OF 280546Z NOVEMBER 88
INFO PRIORITY RIYADH, KABUL, MOSCOW, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK
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AFGHANISTAN: DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE MUJAHIDEEN AND RUSSIANS

1. CONTACTS WITHIN THE RESISTANCE ALLIANCE IN ISLAMABAD HAVE TOLD US THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN ARE DUE TO HOLD DIRECT TALKS WITH THE RUSSIANS IN RIYADH ON 3 DECEMBER. THE MEETING SEEMS TO HAVE EMERGED FROM CONTACTS MADE BY MARUF-AL-DAWALIBI, A SYRIAN ADVISOR AT THE SAUDI ROYAL COURT AND HEAD OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, IN THE COURSE OF A SHUTTLE BETWEEN MOSCOW, ISLAMABAD AND RIYADH. THE MOVE IS SAID TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT.
2. WE ARE TOLD THAT VORONTSOV WILL LEAD FOR THE RUSSIANS. THE MUJAHIDEEN DELEGATION HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED BUT INDICATIONS ARE THAT RABBANI WILL LEAD SUPPORTED BY MOJADIDI (WHO IS DUE TO SUCCEED RABBANI AS ALLIANCE CHAIRMAN SHORTLY). IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THERE WILL BE THIRD PARTY PARTICIPATION BUT THE CHANCES ARE THAT PAKISTAN, SAUDI ARABIA, THE OIC AND POSSIBLY THE UN WILL ATTEND. HEKMATYAR IS SAID TO HAVE VETOED US PARTICIPATION. THERE IS ALSO SOME TALK OF AN INDIAN PRESENCE.
3. RABBANI, WHO HAD DELAYED HIS RETURN TO PAKISTAN FOR TALKS IN SAUDI ARABIA, FINALLY CAME BACK TO ISLAMABAD ON 25 NOVEMBER. GEN HAMID GUL OF ISI INFORMED THE ALLIANCE LEADERS OF THE PROPOSED TALKS ON 26 NOVEMBER AND INVITED THEM TO AGREE ON A DELEGATION AND A NEGOTIATING POSITION. THE ALLIANCE SUPREME COUNCIL IS DUE TO MEET IN PESHAWAR ON 28 NOVEMBER FOR THIS PURPOSE. KHALES AND SAYYAF ARE REPORTED TO BE OPPOSED TO DIRECT TALKS WITH THE RUSSIANS BUT ARE UNDER PRESSURE, INCLUDING FROM THE SAUDIS, TO COME ROUND. IF THEY DO NOT, THEIR OPPOSITION WILL PROBABLY BE IGNORED AND THEY WILL SIMPLY BE LEFT OUT OF ACCOUNT.
4. WE UNDERSTAND FROM OUR CONTACTS THAT NO AGENDA FOR THE TALKS HAS YET BEEN AGREED. HOWEVER, IF VORONTSOV IS INDEED TO LEAD THE SOVIET DELEGATION IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT ISSUES CONNECTED WITH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ARE TO BE DISCUSSED.

5. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN THE RUSSIANS AND MUJAHIDEEN ON RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF WAR WAS HELD AT THE PAKISTAN MFA ON 27 NOVEMBER. ONLY JAMIAT AND HEZB-E-ISLAMI (HEKMATYAR) WERE REPRESENTED FROM THE ALLIANCE.

JOHNSON

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