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MY TELNO 021 (NOT TO ALL): AFGHANISTAN: VORONTSOV'S VISIT TO
PAKISTAN

SUMMARY

1. PAKISTAN MFA REPORT COMPLETE DEADLOCK WITH VORONTSOV OVER INCLUSION OF PDPA IN A CONSULTATIVE SHOURA OR INTERIM BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT. VORONTSOV STOPS SHORT OF UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW BY 15 FEBRUARY. MUJAHIDEEN, WHO INITIALLY AGREED TO FURTHER TALKS WITH THE RUSSIANS, NOW SAY THEY WILL REFUSE FURTHER CONTACT UNTIL THE RUSSIANS COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL UNCONDITIONALLY AND STOP TRYING TO IMPOSE THE NAJIB REGIME. MUJAHIDEEN SAY THEY ARE WILLING TO GIVE SAFE PASSAGE TO WITHDRAWING SOVIET TROOPS. LACK OF AGREEMENT AMONG MUJAHIDEEN ON COMPOSITION AND POWERS OF THE SHOURA PERSISTS.

DETAIL

2. THE PAKISTAN MFA (QAZI, ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, AND MURSHED, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, AFGHANISTAN) BRIEFED EC HEADS OF MISSION ON 9 JANUARY ABOUT VORONTSOV'S TALKS IN ISLAMABAD FROM 4-7 JANUARY. VORONTSOV HAD HAD TWO SESSIONS WITH YAQUB KHAN, A CALL ON THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER AND TWO ROUNDS OF TALKS WITH THE MUJAHIDEEN WHOSE DELEGATION INCLUDED TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE GROUPS BASED IN IRAN.

3. VORONTSOV HAD TOLD THE PAKISTANIS AND THE MUJAHIDEEN THAT THE REMAINING SOVIET TROOPS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM AFGHANISTAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENEVA AGREEMENT. BUT THIS UNDERTAKING WAS NOT MADE ABSOLUTELY UNCONDITIONAL: IF FIGHTING INTENSIFIED AND SOVIET FORCES CAME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK THE SOVIET UNION WOULD HAVE TO THINK AGAIN. THE MFA REGARDED THIS AS A RESERVATION MADE FOR THE RECORD AND BELIEVE THAT THE RUSSIANS WILL INDEED WITHDRAW BY 15 FEBRUARY, SINCE MUJAHIDEEN ARE WILLING TO ALLOW THE DE FACTO ARMISTICE WITH SOVIET FORCES TO CONTINUE.

4. VORONTSOV REFERRED TO GORBACHEV'S PROPOSALS IN HIS SPEECH AT THE

UN ON 7 DECEMBER AND URGED PAKISTAN TO RE-EXAMINE THEM. HE ARGUED THAT A CEASE-FIRE WOULD CREATE A CONDUCIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR AN INTRA-AFGHAN DIALOGUE, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESENCE IN KABUL OF A UN PEACE-KEEPING FORCE WOULD PROVIDE USEFUL PROTECTION TO ANY BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT WHICH TOOK OFFICE. VORONTSOV CONCEDED THAT THE IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WOULD BE PRACTICABLE ONLY AFTER A BROAD BASED GOVERNMENT WAS INSTALLED.

5. VORONTSOV SAID THAT HIS MAIN PURPOSE IN COMING TO PAKISTAN WAS TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSAL, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT, FOR A CONSULTATIVE GROUP OR SHOURA, WHICH SHOULD EMBRACE REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL SECTIONS OF AFGHAN SOCIETY, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH WOULD BE TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT. VORONTSOV DESCRIBED THIS SHOURA AS A GOOD PROPOSAL WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WAS READY TO ACCEPT, BUT INSISTED THAT IF IT WAS TO BE CREDIBLE AND VIABLE ALL SHADES OF AFGHAN OPINION MUST BE REPRESENTED ON IT, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY THE KABUL GOVERNMENT/PDPA. VORONTSOV SAID THAT THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN COULD DEVELOP IN ONE OF TWO WAYS. THERE COULD BE PEACE IF THERE WERE ACCEPTRNCE OF A CEASE-FIRE AND CONVENING OF A CONSULTATIVE SHOURA OF ALL PARTIES WHICH WOULD LEAD TO A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, WAR WOULD RESULT IF, BECAUSE OF ''MUJAHIDEEN RIGIDITY'' THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT ON THE SHOURA. IN THIS CASE, SOVIET TROOPS WOULD LEAVE BUT THE KABUL REGIME WOULD NOT CRUMBLE AND WOULD FIGHT FOR ITS SURVIVAL. IN THAT CASE THE MUJAHIDEEN WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FURTHER BLOODSHED. IF THERE WERE CONTINUED FIGHTING, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD CONTINUE ITS MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE KABUL REGIME INCLUDING THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS SUCH AS HAD NOT YET BEEN SEEN IN AFGHANISTAN.

6. THE PAKISTANIS HAD TOLD VORONTSOV THAT THEY DID NOT SHARE HIS PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION NOR THE ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH THE SOVIET POSITION WAS BASED. THE MUJAHIDEEN WOULD NEVER AGREE TO DEAL WITH THE PDPA, AS VORONTSOV HAD BEEN TOLD AT TAIF, IN IRAN, BY THE EX KING AND BY THOSE INTERNAL MUJAHIDEEN COMMANDERS WHOM HE ADMITTED TO HAVING MET. IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THE PAKISTANIS OR ANYONE ELSE TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE MUJAHIDEEN TO ACCEPT THE PRESENCE OF PDPA REPRESENTATIVES IN THE SHOURA. THE MILITARY SITUATION WAS DEVELOPING IN THE MUJAHIDEEN'S FAVOUR AND IT WAS UNTHINKABLE THAT THEY WOULD RELENT ON THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE PDPA. THE PAKISTANIS HAD THEN SUGGESTED A COMPROMISE: THE SHOURA SHOULD EMBRACE ALL SHADES OF AFGHAN OPINION INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH, BUT NOT MEMBERS OF, THE PDPA AND AGAINST WHOM THE MUJAHIDEEN HAD NO COMPLAINTS (I.E THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE ENGAGED IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY). TO ASK FOR MORE THAN THIS WOULD BE EFFECTIVELY

TO ABORT THE SHOURA. THE PAKISTANIS HAD SAID THAT THE KABUL REGIME WAS RIDDLED WITH FACTIONS, ITS MORALE WAS LOW, THE MILITARY PROGNOSIS DID NOT FAVOUR IT, AND DESPITE CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES WITH THE RESISTANCE ALLIANCE THE MUJAHIDEEN WERE ABLE TO HARMONISE THEIR VIEWS IN ORDER TO PROSECUTE THE JEHAD. VORONTSOV HAD BEEN TOLD IN IRAN THAT THE MUJAHIDEEN GROUPS BASED THERE WERE AT ONE WITH THOSE IN PAKISTAN IN THEIR DEMAND FOR SOVIET WITHDRAWAL BY 15 FEBRUARY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN, AND THE REPLACEMENT OF THE KABUL REGIME BY A BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT. IT WAS THE PAKISTANI UNDERSTANDING THAT ZAHIR SHAH HAD TOLD VORONTSOV PRECISELY THE SAME.

7. IN REPLY VORONTSOV HAD SAID THAT IF THERE WERE NO POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, SOVIET TROOPS WOULD LEAVE BUT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD DEMONSTRATE TO THE WORLD THAT IT HAD DONE ITS BEST TO AVOID FURTHER BLOODSHED. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR CONTINUING WOULD DEMONSTRABLY REST ON THE MUJAHIDEEN.

8. VORONTSOV HAD TAKEN THE SAME LINE IN HIS MEETINGS WITH THE ALLIANCE BUT HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD NO LONGER CONCERN ITSELF WITH INTERNAL AFGHAN AFFAIRS. A MUJAHIDEEN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE READY TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, WOULD ADOPT A NON-ALIGNED POLICY WITH NO FOREIGN BASES AND WOULD POSE NO THREAT TO THE RUSSIANS. BUT THEY ADAMANTLY REFUSED TO HAVE ANY TRUCK WITH PDPA. DESPITE THIS FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT BOTH SIDES HAD AGREED DURING THESE TALKS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF A FURTHER MEETING (BUT SEE PARA 10 BELOW). VORONTSOV INVITED THE MUJAHIDEEN TO GO TO MOSCOW.

9. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS QAZI SAID THAT THE ALLIANCE HAD TOLD VORONTSOV THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED FOR A CEASE-FIRE AT THIS JUNCTURE. THEY WERE, HOWEVER, WILLING TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT VIS-A-VIS THE DEPARTING SOVIET FORCES. THEY WOULD NOT ATTACK THE LAND WITHDRAWAL ROUTES, NOR THOSE AIR BASES USED FOR WITHDRAWAL, AND THEY WOULD EASE UP THEIR PRESSURE ON MAJOR CITIES. THE PAKISTANIS BELIEVE THAT IF VORONTSOV WERE TO MOVE TOWARDS ACCEPTING THE CONCEPT OF A SHOURA WITH 'GOOD MUSLIMS' FROM KABUL INCLUDED, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS THE MODALITIES FOR SETTING IT UP: LISTS OF NAMES COULD BE EXCHANGED ETC.

10. IT HAD BEEN EVIDENT FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH MUJAHIDEEN REPRESENTATIVES SHORTLY AFTER VORONTSOV'S VISIT CONCLUDED THAT THEY WERE INCENSED BY THE THREATENING LINE HE HAD TAKEN AT HIS FINAL PRESS CONFERENCE. IT WAS, THEREFORE, NOT A SURPRISE WHEN MUJADIDI

CALLED APRESS CONFERENCE ON 9 JANUARY AND ANNOUNCED THAT THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ALLIANCE HAD AGREED THAT FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE UNPRODUCTIVE AND UNNECESSARY IN VIEW OF THE SOVIET THREATS AND DISRESPECT FOR THE AFGHANS' RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION. THE MUJAHIDEEN WOULD HOLD NO FURTHER TALKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION UNLESS THE LATTER WITHDREW ITS TROOPS UNCONDITIONALLY AND RENOUNCED ITS INSISTENCE THAT THE PDPA BE INCLUDED IN A FUTURE BROAD-BASED GOVERNMENT. THE SOVIETS PRESS STATEMENT HAD NOT BEEN IN THE SAME SPIRIT AS THAT IN WHICH NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN HELD, THE SOVIET DELEGATION HAD PUT FORWARD NO PRACTICABLE OR SENSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION AND HAD WANTED THE MUJAHIDEEN TO ACCEPT MOSCOW'S TERMS FOR A FUTURE GOVERNMENT. MUJADIDI SAID THAT A CEASE-FIRE WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN THE CAUSE OF THE WAR I.E THE NAJIB GOVERNMENT, WAS REMOVED. HE DID HOWEVER STATE THAT THE ALLIANCE WAS PREPARED TO GIVE SAFE PASSAGE TO SOVIET TROOPS DURING THEIR WITHDRAWAL AND TO CONSIDER AN AMNESTY FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF NAJIB'S GOVERNMENT. ASKED ABOUT THE RODE OF ZAHIR SHAH, MUJADIDI SAID MERELY THAT THIS WAS A QUESTION FOR THE AFGHANS TO DECIDE. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IRAN-BASED GROUPS CONFIRMED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THERE WERE NO DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WITH THE RESISTANCE BASED IN PAKISTAN.

11. FOR COMMENT SEE MIFT.

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