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FM WASHINGTON  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELNO 1768  
OF 272210Z JULY 90  
INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW, ISLAMABAD, RIYADH, UKMIS NEW YORK, ACTOR

US/SOVIET UNION: AFGHANISTAN  
SUMMARY

1. ADMINISTRATION DENY THAT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON AFGHANISTAN IS IMMINENT. BUT THEY HOPE TO MAKE PROGRESS DURING THE IRKUTSK MEETING. SENATE COMMITTEE VOTES TO CUT COVERT AID TO AFGHAN RESISTANCE.

DETAIL

2. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL PRESS REPORTS THIS WEEK THAT THE US AND SOVIET UNION ARE ON THE POINT OF STRIKING AN AGREEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN. AN ABC TELEVISION REPORT CLAIMED THAT AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE WOULD BE ANNOUNCED NEXT WEEK BY BAKER AND SHEVARDNADZE, AND THAT ELECTIONS WOULD FOLLOW WITHIN SIX MONTHS UNDER UN-AUSPICES. IT ALSO SAID THAT THE KABUL GOVERNMENT AND THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE HAD ACCEPTED THIS FORMULA. SECRETARY BAKER SAID ON 25 JULY THAT THESE REPORTS QUOTE ARE THE PRODUCT OF THE RUMOUR MILL UNQUOTE. HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO RULE OUT MAKING PROGRESS, BUT THERE HAD NOT BEEN MUCH TIME FOR DISCUSSION WITH SHEVARDNADZE IN PARIS, AND THERE WAS MUCH TALKING STILL TO BE DONE. QUOTE WE'VE NARROWED THE GAP BUT WE'RE NOT THERE YET UNQUOTE.

3. WE HAVE SPOKEN TO TOMSEN, SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE, KIMMITT'S OFFICE AND TO THE AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN OFFICE IN STATE DEPARTMENT. THEY WERE UNCLEAR WHAT HAD LED TO THE RECENT PRESS STORIES. THEY CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL ISSUES DURING THE 18 JULY PARIS BILATERAL, AND NO PROGRESS ON THE KEY QUESTION OF NAJIBULLAH'S ROLE DURING THE TRANSITION PROCESS. THEY SAID THAT THE PAPER PROMISED BY SHEVARDNADZE, FLESHING OUT SOVIET IDEAS ON AN ELECTORAL COMMISSION (MY TELNO 1600), HAD STILL NOT MATERIALISED. STATE BELIEVE THIS TO BE A CONSEQUENCE OF SOVIET DOMESTIC PREOCCUPATIONS RATHER THAN A CHANGE OF MIND.

4. STATE SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD DECLINED A SOVIET ATUGGESTION OF EXPERTS TALKS AT THE KELLY/ALEXEYOV LEVEL BETWEEN THE PARIS AND IRKUTSK MEETINGS. STATE TOLD US THAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE SOVIET PAPER, THEY SAW NO VALUE IN A FURTHER MEETING WITH ALEXEYOV, WHO WAS CLEARLY NOT EMPOWERED TO TAKE

DECISIONS. THEY ARE NOW HOPING THAT, AT IRKUTSK, SHEVARDNADZE WILL OFFER CLARIFICATION OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION IDEA, PARTICULARLY THE POWERS WHICH THE SOVIETS ENVISAGE BEING DEVOLVED TO IT BY NAJBULLAH. IF THIS WERE ENCOURAGING, STATE ENVISAGED AN EXPERTS MEETING AT KIMMITT/BESSMERTKNYKH LEVEL, WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A JOINT STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN AT ONE OF THE SEPTEMBER BAKER/SHEVARDNADZE BILATERALS.

5. ON THE US DOMESTIC FRONT, THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE VOTED THIS WEEK TO CUT US COVERT AID TO THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE IN FY 1991 BY ABOUT DOLLARS 100 MILLION (IE ABOUT ONE THIRD). ONE COMMITTEE MEMBER SAID THAT THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSED CUT WAS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD ACHIEVED ITS PURPOSE IN AFGHANISTAN WHEN SOVIET TROOPS WITHDREW IN FEBRUARY 1989. HE ADDED THAT SOME SENATORS WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTS OF MUJAHIDEEN INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. THE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE HAS YET TO CONSIDER COVERT AID TO AFGHANISTAN FOR FY 1991. ITS CHAIRMAN SAID THIS WEEK THAT HIS COMMITTEE HAD POSTPONED CONSIDERATION UNTIL AFTER CONGRESS' AUGUST RECESS, ADDING THAT IN THE NEXT SIX OR SEVEN WEEKS QUOTE MAYBE NEGOTIATIONS WILL WORK UNQUOTE.

6. SENATOR HUMPHREY, ONE OF THE MAIN SUPPORTERS OF MILITARY AID TO THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE, HAS SAID THAT HE STILL HAS HIGH HOPES OF THE CUT BEING RESTORED, ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOTED THAT THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE'S ACTION COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A WORSE TIME IN VIEW OF UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. STATE DEPARTMENT SAY THAT, GIVEN THE MILITARY STALEMATE THIS YEAR, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT THERE WOULD BE MOVES TO CUT THE COVERT AFGHAN PROGRAMME. THEY STILL BELIEVE THAT, DESPITE THE SENATE COMMITTEE VOTE, THE ADMINISTRATION COULD, IF THEY WANTED, SUCCESSFULLY LOBBY CONGRESS TO RESTORE MOST OF THE PROPOSED CUT IN THE 1991 PROGRAMME. BUT THE PRESSURE ON THE ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE A DEAL WITH THE SOVIET UNION WHICH WOULD BRING ABOUT AN END TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO BOTH SIDES IS OBVIOUSLY THAT MUCH GREATER: AND THE DESIRE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION TO GET AFGHANISTAN OFF THE US/SOVIET AGENDA IN OUR VIEW REMAINS STRONG.

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