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FM ISLAMABAD
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OF 311036Z JULY 90

INFO ROUTINE MOSCOW, UKMIS NEW YORK, NEW DELHI, RIYADH, PARIS, BONN,
INFO ROUTINE ROME, UKMIS GENEVA, ACTOR.WASHINGTON TEL TO FCO NO. 1768 (NOT TO ALL) *ms*

AFGHANISTAN : US/SOVIET UNION TALKS.

SUMMARY

1. US AMBASSADOR GIVES UNATTRIBUTABLE BRIEFING POINTING TOWARDS US WITHDRAWAL FROM INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN. REPORTS THAT THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE ARE LIKELY TO ACQUIESCE IN ANY US/SOVIET AGREEMENT SEEM WIDE OF THE MARK.

DETAIL

2. I WAS INTERESTED TO LEARN THAT THERE ARE AS MANY PRESS REPORTS IN THE US AS HERE ABOUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN IMMINENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE US AND USSR ON AFGHANISTAN. THIS IS NOT JUST BASED ON SPECULATION. MY US COLLEAGUE GAVE AN UNATTRIBUTABLE PRESS CONFERENCE ABOUT A WEEK AGO WHICH WAS WIDELY REPORTED HERE AS COMING FROM AN AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE IN THE US EMBASSY. A GOOD DEAL OF GROUND WAS COVERED INCLUDING KASHMIR BUT ONE OF THE MAIN THRUSTS OF OAKLEY'S BRIEFING WAS TO EMPHASISE THAT THE US GOVERNMENT WAS SERIOUSLY INTENDING TO WITHDRAW FROM ITS COMMITMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE AREA WAS NO LONGER THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE IT HAD BEEN IN THE PAST. THERE WOULD BE CUTS IN FUNDING. IT LOOKED AS IF OAKLEY MAY HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY TRYING TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR SUCH AN AMERICAN POLICY MOVE.

3. THE REPORTS OF THE SENATE'S PROPOSED CUT IN US COVERT AID TO THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE WAS WIDELY REPORTED SHORTLY AFTERWARDS.

4. WASHINGTON TEL UNDER REFERENCE DESCRIBES AN ABC TELEVISION REPORT TO THE EFFECT THAT THE CONCEPT OF A CEASFIRE AND ELECTIONS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE KABUL GOVERNMENT AND THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE. ON THE LATTER POINT WE HAVE GRAVE DOUBTS. FOR A START, OF COURSE, THERE IS NO UNIFIED ENTITY WHICH COULD BE DESCRIBED AS THE AFGHAN

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RESISTANCE. THE AIG, JUDGING BY ITS PAST STATEMENTS, WILL NEITHER AGREE TO A CEASEFIRE NOR TO US/USSR PROPOSALS FOR ELECTIONS. IT IS TRUE THAT SOME OF THE MORE MODERATE PARTY LEADERS COULD SUPPORT SUCH PROPOSALS. GAELANI HAS HINTED AS MUCH TO US, AND MOJADEDDI MIGHT FOLLOW SUIT. BUT THE OTHERS ARE UNLIKELY TO AGREE NOR DO I THINK THAT THE NEW COMMANDERS SHURA (SEE MY TELNO 936) IS YET SUFFICIENTLY WELL ESTABLISHED TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A POSITIVE POLITICAL STATEMENT IN FAVOUR OF ELECTIONS.

5. THERE HAS BEEN SOME WELL INFORMED AND PERCEPTIVE PRESS COMMENT HERE ABOUT THE LIKELY DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS IN RELATION TO AFGHAN AGREEMENT. THEIR COMMON GROUND IS THAT IT IS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT FOR THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE HOW TO RESPOND, GIVEN THAT MANY OF THEIR AIG CLIENTS WILL TRY TO RESIST THE SORT OF AGREEMENT THAT IS ENVISAGED.

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