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ACTION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ARA/NEA REARCS

PAGE 01 OF 02 ISLAMA 08637 00 OF 02 101150Z 002875 S083759  
ACTION: PK (01)

ISLAMA 08637 00 OF 02 101150Z 002875 S083759  
TO STOP FIGHTING MASOOD AND RABBANI -- "THAT'S A WASTED EFFORT." SHAIKH NOTED A DELEGATION FROM DOSTAM IS COOLING ITS HEELS IN PESHAWAR. HE SAID DOSTAM WANTS TO SEE TALIBAN LEADER MAULVI RABBANI, BUT RABBANI IS ILL (INFJ). THE QUESTION NOW HAS BECOME ONE OF PROTOCOL: IF RABBANI IS UNAVAILABLE, THEN WHOM SHOULD DOSTAM MEET? SHAIKH OPINED THAT ANY SUMMIT MEETING BETWEEN THE TALIBAN AND DOSTAM WOULD TAKE PLACE INSIDE AFGHANISTAN. SHAIKH DID NOT SEEM OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER, THAT PAKISTAN'S EFFORTS TO GET DOSTAM AND THE TALIBAN TOGETHER IN ANY LASTING WAY WOULD SUCCEED -- "HOW SUCCESSFUL WE WILL BE IN THIS ENDEAVOR IS UP IN THE AIR."

INFO: 1N (03) SAF (04) SRA (01) AF (01)  
----- 10/1740Z AS MAH (TOTAL COPIES: 010)  
ACTION SA-00

INFO LOG-00 INLB-01 CIAE-00 SMEC-00 INL-01 OASY-00 DDEE-00  
SRPP-00 EAP-00 EUR-00 OIGO-01 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00  
IO-00 LAB-01 L-00 ADS-00 M-00 NEA-00 NSAE-00  
NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 P-00  
CIO-00 SCT-00 SP-00 SSO-00 TRSE-00 FMP-00 SNIS-00  
NISC-00 PMB-00 PRME-01 DRL-09 G-00 /023W  
-----GEAC06 101151Z /38

0 101122Z OCT 96  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2475  
INFO AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
USIA WASHDC 5959  
AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE  
AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
AMEMBASSY ALMATY  
AMEMBASSY BISHKEK  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
DIA WASHDC  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 008637

DEPT FOR SA/PAB, NEA/NGA, AND EUR/CEN; LONDON FOR POL - TUELLER;  
PARIS FOR POL - RAVELING; ROME FOR POL - NDEMPSEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/01  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, AF  
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: FOREIGN SECRETARY MULLS OVER AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 8520; B. PESHAWAR 916

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY AMB. THOMAS W. SIMONS, JR. REASON: 1.5 (B, D).

2. (C) SUMMARY: FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAIKH CALLED IN THE AMBASSADOR OCT 6 SEEMINGLY TO DISPEL ANY NOTION THAT PAKISTAN IS THROWING ITS CHIPS IN WITH THE TALIBAN; SHAIKH STRESSED THAT PAKISTAN'S FOCUS IS TO GET THE TALIBAN AND JUMBESH LEADER DOSTAM TOGETHER SO FIGHTING IN THE NORTH DOES NOT SPREAD. WHEN ASKED ABOUT REPORTS OF INCREASED PAK ASSISTANCE TO THE TALIBAN, SHAIKH DODGED THE QUESTION, BUT A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER CALLED THE AMBASSADOR TO REPORT THAT HE HAD CHECKED AND COULD CONFIRM THERE HAD BEEN NO SUCH INCREASE. THE AMBASSADOR BRIEFED (AND ON OCT 8 UPDATED) SHAIKH ON THE STATUS OF A USG VISIT TO KABUL. END SUMMARY.

GOP PUSHING RECONCILIATION

3. (C) FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAIKH CALLED IN THE AMBASSADOR OCTOBER

6 TO "DISCUSS AFGHANISTAN." SHAIKH'S POINT SEEMED TO BE THAT PAKISTAN'S MESSAGE TO THE TALIBAN IS TO "GET TOGETHER" WITH DOSTAM TO ENSURE THAT FIGHTING DOES NOT SPREAD TO THE NORTH.

SHAIKH ADDED THAT THE GOP HAS NOT BOTHERED TO URGE THE TALIBAN

4. (C) THE AMBASSADOR ASKED SHAIKH TO COMMENT ON REPORTED SIGNS OF INCREASED PAKISTANI MATERIAL SUPPORT TO THE TALIBAN. SHAIKH DODGED THE QUESTION. (NOTE: ON OCT 9 SHAIKH CALLED THE AMBASSADOR TO REPORT THAT HE HAD "CHECKED THREE PLACES" AND FOUND NO BASIS FOR REPORTS OF INCREASED PAK ASSISTANCE TO THE TALIBAN. HE SUGGESTED THAT ICRC FOOD CONVOYS CONSISTING OF "TRUCKS OF COLOR" ARE PERHAPS BEING MISTAKEN FOR PAK MILITARY VEHICLES. (SEE REFTEL B FOR CONSULATE PESHAWAR'S READING ON TRAFFIC AT THE BORDER CROSSING)

5. (C) REGARDING THE SITUATION ON-THE-GROUND, SHAIKH SAID HE "DOUBLE CHECKED" CONCERNING THE STATUS OF DOSTAM'S FORCES AT SALANG TUNNEL -- "FROM WHAT WE KNOW, DOSTAM HAS ABANDONED POSITIONS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TUNNEL." SHAIKH ADDED THAT DOSTAM HAD APPARENTLY RECEIVED "LOTS" OF AMMUNITION AND

EQUIPMENT FROM MASOOD'S RETREATING TROOPS. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, SHAIKH NOTED, DOSTAM HAD ALSO RECEIVED TANKS AND "THOUSANDS" OF KALASHNIKOV FROM HEKMATYAR'S FORCES AS THEY RETREATED. SHAIKH CITED STILL ANOTHER REPORT -- THIS ONE DESCRIBED AS "UNCONFIRMED" -- TO THE EFFECT THAT DOSTAM HAD RECEIVED 18 TANKS AND 6 PLANES FROM KAZAKSTAN OR, POSSIBLY, UZBEKISTAN. SHAIKH ADDED THAT THE PAK CONSULATE IN MAZAR-E-SHARIF WAS CHECKING OUT THIS REPORT.

6. (C) NOTING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE AGREED THAT STOPPING THE FIGHTING IN THE NORTH WAS THE ISSUE OF THE MOMENT, NOT ONLY TO PREVENT FURTHER BLOODSHED, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF CONCERN OVER HOW AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS MIGHT REACT. THE AMBASSADOR THEN SKETCHED FOR SHAIKH HIS PERSONAL VIEWS ON TWO POSSIBLE SCENARIOS OF HOW EVENTS COULD UNFOLD IN AFGHANISTAN:

-- THE "GOOD" SCENARIO WOULD HAVE THE TALIBAN CONDUCTING THEMSELVES IN A STATEMANSLIKE MANNER, RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES, AND BRINGING PEACE AND PROSPERITY TO AFGHANISTAN. UNDER THIS SCENARIO, AFGHANISTAN WOULD BECOME A BRIDGE -- NOT A BUFFER -- BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND

PAKISTAN.

-- THE "BAD" SCENARIO WOULD HAVE THE TALIBAN TRYING TO DOMINATE THE OTHER ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS, FORCING DOSTAM INTO THE ARMS OF THE UZBEKS AND RUSSIANS, CAUSING A BREAKDOWN IN THE TAJIKISTAN CEASEFIRE, DRIVING THE RUSSIANS CRAZY, AND INSPIRING IRAN TO INTERFERE FURTHER TO PROTECT ITS PERCEIVED INTERESTS IN

AFGHAN AFFAIRS.

THE AMBASSADOR SAID MUCH DEPENDS ON HOW THE TALIBAN PLAY THEIR CARDS. THE TALIBAN, HE NOTED, ARE STILL A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT NOT MUCH GIVEN TO THINKING IN POLITICAL TERMS AND, IN LIGHT OF THEIR MILITARY SUCCESSES, ARE NOW EVEN LESS LIKELY TO THINK POLITICALLY. REITERATING THE USG VIEW THAT THERE CAN BE NO DURABLE MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE AFGHANISTAN SITUATION, THE AMBASSADOR SAID A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TALIBAN AND DOSTAM REINFORCED BY OUTSIDE SUPPORT WOULD BE A RECIPE FOR THE DIVISION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
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OF AFGHANISTAN -- A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD NOT BE IN PAKISTAN'S  
OR ANYONE ELSE'S INTEREST. SHAIKH AGREED THAT THE INTEGRITY OF  
AFGHANISTAN IS VITAL TO PAKISTAN'S INTERESTS.

7. (C) THE AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT THE U.S. INTENDED TO SEND A  
SMALL TEAM HEADED BY THE DCM TO KABUL, MAZAR-E-SHARIF, KANDAHAR  
AND BACK TO KABUL FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE TALIBAN AND DOSTAM,  
BUT THE TRIP HAD BEEN PUT ON HOLD BY THE TALIBAN FOR THE  
MOMENT. (NOTE: AFTER THE DCM'S MEETING WITH A TALIBAN  
REPRESENTATIVE ON OCT 7 (REFTEL), THE AMBASSADOR CALLED SHAIKH  
TO UPDATE HIM ON THE TALIBAN'S DECISION TO DELAY A VISIT BY AN  
OFFICIAL USG DELEGATION UNTIL AFTER THE TALIBAN HAVE BEEN  
"RECOGNIZED" BY SOME ISLAMIC COUNTRIES.)

8. (C) TURNING TO THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF THE AFGHANISTAN  
SITUATION, SHAIKH SAID IJLAL ZAIDI, CHAIRMAN OF THE PRIME  
MINISTER'S POLICY COORDINATION COMMITTEE, WAS LEADING A TEAM TO  
THE THREE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES DIRECTLY BORDERING AFGHANISTAN TO  
DISCUSS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. SHAIKH NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH MOSCOW  
WAS NOT ON THE TEAM'S ITINERARY, THAT WOULD NEED TO BE ADDED.  
CONCERNING IRAN, SHAIKH SAID HE HAD TALKED TO THEM BOTH BEFORE

HE WENT TO THE UNGA AND AGAIN IN NEW YORK. HE SAID IRAN WAS  
OVER-REACTING TO EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. HE ADDED THAT THE  
TALIBAN'S SWIFT ADVANCES WERE AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE FOR IRAN,  
WHICH HAD THOUGHT THAT THINGS WERE GOING WELL FOR IT IN  
AFGHANISTAN -- "THE TEHRAN-PROPOSED REGIONAL CONFERENCE WAS  
SUPPOSED TO PUT A STAMP OF LEGITIMACY ON THE THEN KABUL  
GOVERNMENT." WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT IRAN MIGHT UNLEASH  
ISMAEL KHAN, SHAIKH OPINED THAT THIS WAS NOT A LIVE OPTION --  
"ISMAEL'S VOLUNTEER FORCES ARE NOT VERY ENTHUSIASTIC AND SUCH AN  
OPERATION WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE FOR IRAN."

9. (C) COMMENT: SHAIKH WENT TO GREAT PAINS TO REASSURE US THAT  
PAKISTAN IS NOT THROWING ITS CHIPS IN WITH THE TALIBAN. IN ANY  
CASE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO URGE PAKISTAN TO AVOID THE TEMPTATION  
OF SIDING WITH THE TALIBAN, BUT INSTEAD WORK TO PERSUADE THE  
TALIBAN THAT A DURABLE PEACE IS POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH GENUINE  
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION INVOLVING ALL AFGHANISTAN'S ETHNIC AND  
RELIGIOUS GROUPS. SIMONS

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