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INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PREL, IN, AF

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH GOPI ARORA, JUNE 18: AFGHANISTAN

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. ON JUNE 18 GOPI ARORA, THE GREY EMINENCE OF THE GANDHI GOVERNMENT, CAME TO MY HOUSE WHERE WE DISCUSSED AFGHANISTAN. ARORA HAD JUST RETURNED FROM MOSCOW WHERE HE HAD MET WITH DOBRYNIN DURING WHICH AFGHANISTAN WAS ALSO DISCUSSED.

3. FOLLOWING ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF ARORA'S VIEWS:

-- A. GORBACHEV REMAINS COMMITTED TO COMPLETE TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN ACCORDING TO THE TIMETABLE THE RUSSIANS HAD MADE PUBLIC. ✓

-- B. THE SOVIETS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THEIR TROOPS WILL BE SUBJECT TO UNDUE HARASSMENT AS THEY WITHDRAW. IF ATTACKED, SOVIETS WILL REPOSTE VIGOROUSLY. ✓

-- C. THE PDPA IS NOT THE PUSHOVER THE MUJAHIDIN HAD CLAIMED THEY WOULD BE ONCE SOVIETS START WITHDRAWING. PDPA WILL LOSE SOME PROVINCIAL CAPITALS OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS BUT SO FAR THE PESHAWAR RESISTANCE GROUP HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN CREATING AN IRREVERSIBLE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOOD WHEREBY THE PDPA WOULD CRUMBLE BY THE LATE SUMMER. |

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-- D. NAJIBULLAH MAY AT ONE POINT BECOME DISPENSABLE ESPECIALLY IF HIS ABSENCE FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE COULD LEAD TO AN AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER TECHNOCRATS, MODERATE EXILES, CERTAIN MUJAHIDIN, AND CERTAIN ACCEPTABLE MEMBERS OF THE PDPA IN A TRANSITION GOVERNMENT.

-- E. THE INDIANS FEEL THAT THEY ARE NOT SUPPORTING NAJIBULLAH PER SE BUT RATHER WHAT HE IS TRYING TO DO, I.E., BRING ABOUT A SOLUTION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH KEEPS EXTREME FUNDAMENTALISTS OUT OF KABUL.

-- F. ARORA ASKED WHETHER THE U.S. HAD REALLY EVALUATED WHETHER U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS ARE ABSOLUTELY PARALLEL TO ZIA'S INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN. ARORA THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR AMERICANS TO GATHER THEIR INFORMATION ON AFGHANISTAN FROM AS MANY DIVERSE SOURCES AS POSSIBLE AND NOT RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON ZIA'S VERSION OF WHAT IS GOING ON.

-- G. THE INDIANS ARE INTERESTED IN COOPERATING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AND PERHAPS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN. GANDHI MET WITH SADARUDDIN KHAN WHILE IN NEW YORK. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ITEMS AFGHANS WILL NEED WHICH ARE READILY AVAILABLE IN INDIA SUCH AS HAND TOOLS, TIN ROOFING, TENTING, MEDICINE, SEEDS, ETC. THE INDIANS WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THIS MATTER WITH SADARUDDIN KHAN AND HIS STAFF.

-- H. THE INDIANS ARE, LIKE THE REST OF THE OBSERVERS, UNSURE OF WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING IN AFGHANISTAN. HOWEVER, THEY THINK THE ANSWER LIES MORE WITH THE FIELD COMMANDERS INSIDE AFGHANISTAN RATHER THAN WITH THE PESHAWAR RESISTANCE LEADERS. THEY ARE ALSO ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT GORBACHEV WILL WITHDRAW SOVIET TROOPS COMPLETELY AND PRETTY MUCH ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY.

-- I. FINALLY, DENOUEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN MAY BE SLOWER THAN PREDICTED BY THE PESHAWAR RESISTANCE GROUP.

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4. I THANKED GOPI ARORA FOR HIS READOUT AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT WE COULD REMAIN IN TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT AFTER MY RETURN FROM LEAVE. I ALSO SHARED WITH HIM OUR ASSESSMENT THAT WE THINK SOVIETS REMAIN COMMITTED TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN AS QUICKLY AND PAINLESSLY AS POSSIBLE (STATE 192534). ON THE OTHER HAND, I STRESSED WE SAW NO ROLE FOR NAJIBULLAH NOW OR LATER.

5. KABUL MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. DEAN##

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