

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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R 290338Z OCT 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0731
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 8676

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AF, PGOV
SUBJ: MEETING WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN
MINISTER AMIN

REF: KABUL 8655

1. SUMMARY: ON OCTOBER 26 DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MIKLOS AND AMBASSADOR DUBS HELD WITH MINISTER AMIN THE MOST WIDE-RANGING MEETING SINCE UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S VISIT LAST JULY. DURING THE MEETING, AMIN EMPHASIZED THE FOLLOWING: (A) THAT THE APRIL 27 REVOLUTION WAS INDIGENOUS AND NOT SOVIET-MADE; (B) THAT AFGHANISTAN WAS DETERMINED TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT; (C) THAT THE DRA WOULD BROOK NO INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND IMPLIED THAT PAKISTAN WAS MEDDLING IN DOMESTIC AFGHAN MATTERS; (D) THAT AFGHANISTAN DESIRED INCREASED U.S. ECONOMIC AID, BUT THIS HAD TO BE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF WHAT AFGHANISTAN WANTS; (E) AND THAT AFGHANISTAN'S POSITIONS ON PUERTO RICO, SOUTH KOREA AND DIEGO GARCIA WERE BASED ON LONG-ESTABLISHED PARTY POSITIONS. MIKLOS USED THE OCCASION TO: (A) REITERATE
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THE FOREIGN POLICY POINTS MADE IN UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S SPEECH OF OCTOBER 18 REGARDING SOUTH ASIA; (B) EMPHASIZE THE USG'S DISAPPOINTMENT AND PUZZLEMENT REGARDING AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS ON ISSUES SUCH AS PUERTO RICO AND SOUTH KOREA; (C) EXPRESS THE READINESS OF THE U.S. TO STUDY AFGHANISTAN'S FORTHCOMING FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THERE ARE AREAS IN WHICH U.S. ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE CONSIDERED.

IN A BIO NOTE ABOUT HIMSELF, AMIN DISCLOSED THAT HE DECIDED TO ENTER POLITICS WHILE STUDYING IN THE U.S., AND THAT SUBSEQUENTLY UNDER A PREVIOUS REGIME HE WAS OFFERED MINISTERIAL POSITIONS BUT TURNED THEM DOWN. END SUMMARY.

2. AMIN RECEIVED US IN HIS COMFORTABLE PRIME MINISTRY OFFICE. ON HIS DESK, TURNED SO VISITORS COULD NOT MISS IT, WAS THE FRAMED AND AUTOGRAPHED PICTURE OF HIMSELF WITH FIDEL CASTRO. AMIN WAS RELAXED, AND SEEMED VERY SELF-ASSURED. AS IS HIS CUSTOM, HE WAS ALONE AND TOOK NO NOTES. THE DISCUSSION LASTED 65 MINUTES, WITH AMIN DOING MOST OF THE TALKING. MOST OF WHAT HE SAID MERELY REPEATED POSITIONS HE HAS PUBLICLY TAKEN MANY TIMES BEFORE.

3. THE SOVIETS PLAYED NO ROLE IN THE APRIL REVOLUTION: AT THE OUTSET, AMIN STRESSED THAT THE APRIL 27 REVOLUTION WAS SOLELY AFGHAN-MADE AND CLAIMED THAT "BREZHNEV WAS AS SURPRISED AS CARTER" WHEN IT TOOK PLACE. THE FACT THAT IT HAD BEEN INDIGENOUS WAS A POINT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION FOR THE DRA LEADERSHIP AND THE AFGHAN PEOPLE. SINCE THE REVOLUTION HAD BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY AFGHANS, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WAS, BY IMPLICATION, BEHOLDEN TO NO FOREIGN POWER, AND FURTHERMORE, AFGHANISTAN WAS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE.

4. ANY INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED:
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APROPOS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO BE INDEPENDENT, AMIN, LATER, IN THE CONTEXT OF DISCUSSING ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, MADE CLEAR THAT IT HAD SO-CALLED "IRREFUTABLE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE" OF PAKISTANI INTERFERENCE IN THE COUNTRY'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE SAID THAT, NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS THE DRA'S POLICY NOT TO MAKE THIS INFORMATION PUBLIC IN ORDER TO AVOID CAUSING EMBARRASSMENT.

5. AFGHANISTAN IS POOR AND NEEDS OUTSIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: AMIN REFERRED TO HIS COUNTRY'S GREAT POVERTY AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN PREVIOUS REGIMES. "THE AFGHAN PEOPLE," HE SAID, "SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE AS HUMAN BEINGS--PERHAPS NOT AS WELL AS THOSE IN THE U.S.--BUT BETTER THAN THEY NOW LIVE."

6. BILATERAL AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS: REGARDING UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S OCTOBER 18 SPEECH, AMIN SAID THAT THERE WAS NOTHING SPECIFIC IN IT TO WHICH THE DRA COULD OBJECT. HE DID REGRET, HOWEVER, THE IMPLICATION (AS HE READ IT) IN ONE OF THE VERY FEW REFERENCES TO AFGHANISTAN, THAT "OUTSIDE FORCES" (READ USSR) WERE MANIPULATING THE COUNTRY TO DESTABILIZE THE REGION. HE VEHEMENTLY DENIED THIS. AS FOR AFGHAN-U.S. BILATERAL

RELATIONS, AMIN SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE LOW LEVEL OF U.S. ECONOMIC AID. THE WEST GERMANS HAD INCREASED THEIR AID TO AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE REVOLUTION, AND HE HOPED WE COULD DO SO. OUR AID HAD, HOWEVER, TO BE IN THE CONTEXT OF WHAT AFGHANISTAN THOUGHT BEST FOR ITSELF. WHEN DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MIKLOS EXPRESSED OUR UNHAPPINESS OVER AFGHANISTAN'S POSITIONS ON PUERTO RICO, ON OUR TROOPS IN SOUTH KOREA, AND ON DIEGO GARCIA, AMIN MADE NO EFFORT TO EXPLAIN AFGHANISTAN'S STANCES OTHER THAN TO SAY THEY WERE DERIVED FROM LONG-STANDING POSITIONS OF HIS POLITICAL PARTY. AMBASSADOR DUBS POINTED OUT THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH AFGHANISTAN WAS MULTI-FACETED, AND INCLUDED NOT JUST ECONOMIC AID BUT SUCH THINGS AS CULTURAL EXCHANGES--AND WE HAVE PROBLEMS IN THE LATTER AREA. AMIN RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO GET INTO ANY
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DETAILS AND ASKED THAT ANY PROBLEMS BE TAKEN UP WITH THE MINISTER PARTICULARLY CONCERNED.

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7. RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES: USSR AND CHINA:

AMIN DID NOT DISCUSS HIS COUNTRY'S CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, BUT WITH THE PRC, HE SAID, "ALL IS VERY QUIET. NEITHER SIDE SAYS ANYTHING."

8. RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN: ON PAKISTAN, AMIN SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS GRATEFUL FOR EXISTING TRANSIT RIGHTS AND HOPED THESE COULD BE EXPANDED TO PERMIT MORE DIRECT OVERLAND TRADE WITH INDIA. (THE REFERENCE TO ALLEGED PAKISTAN BORDER INTER-FERENCE HAS BEEN MENTIONED ABOVE.) BESIDES THE ISSUE OF INTER-FERENCE, AMIN SAID THAT HIS COUNTRY'S ONLY OTHER PROBLEM WITH PAKISTAN RELATED TO THE LONG-STANDING ISSUE OF THE PUSHTUN AND BALUCH PEOPLES. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TAKEN ANY POSITION ON THIS BEYOND THAT OF THE DAOUD REGIME BUT CLAIMED THAT "A PROBLEM EXISTS," AND "NO AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER OF ANY PERSUASION CAN NEGLECT OR DROP IT."

9. RELATIONS WITH IRAN: AS FOR IRAN, HE SAID THAT IN CONTRAST
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TO THE SITUATION WITH PAKISTAN, THERE HAS BEEN NO TROUBLE ON THE IRANIAN BORDER AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS NO COMPLAINT ABOUT IRAN. HE ADDED THAT HE DID HOPE THAT IRAN COULD HELP AFGHANISTAN WITH ECONOMIC AID AND SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED HELP IN EXTENDING THE RAILROAD FROM CHAMAN (PAKISTAN BORDER NEAR QUETTA) TO KANDAHAR.

10. BIOGRAPHIC NOTE: AMIN SAID THAT IT WAS DURING HIS FOUR YEARS OF STUDY IN THE U.S. THAT HE DECIDED TO PURSUE A CAREER IN POLITICS RATHER THAN IN EDUCATION. HE CLAIMED THAT SUBSEQUENTLY HE WAS SEVERAL TIMES APPROACHED (IN KING ZAHIR'S TIME) TO SERVE AS MINISTER, AND MAYBE COULD HAVE BEEN PRIME MINISTER--HAD HE CHOSEN TO ACCEPT.

11. COMMENT: THE MEETING WITH AMIN WAS INTERESTING, BOTH FOR ITS ATMOSPHERE AND FOR SEVERAL MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS MORE FRIENDLY THAN WE EXPECTED, AND AMIN REFERRED A NUMBER OF TIMES TO HIS YEARS IN THE U.S. (IN OTHER SMALL THOUGH BELATED GESTURES OF WELCOME, THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, DOST HOSTED A LUNCHEON IN MR. MIKLOS' HONOR AND OFFERED USE OF THE AIRPORT VIP LOUNGE FOR HIS DEPARTURE.) ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE, AMIN IMPLICATED PAKISTAN AS MEDDLING IN AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND SHOWED HIS SENSITIVITY TO FOREIGN PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER BECAUSE OF SOVIET AID AND THEREFORE BY IMPLICATION, LACKS LEGITIMACY. LASTLY, HE REPEATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE FOR INCREASED U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. DUBS

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